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POSITIVE DISCIPLINE IN SCHOOLS



basic education
Department of Basic Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



Types of misconducts and their levels

5	Levels	Description of Misconduct	Disciplinary Action/ Examples of consequences	Responsibility
Primary Intervention	1 Misbehaviour in the classroom.	Failing to attend class on time Leaving class without permission Cheating in class	Verbal warning Detention Demerits	CLASS TEACHER
		Failing to complete homework Dishonesty with minor consequences	Menial task Extra work	

5	Levels	Description of Misconduct	Disciplinary Action/ Examples of consequences	Responsibility
	2 Misbehaviour by breaking rules/school conduct	Frequent repetition of level 1 Infringement Possession and/or use of tobacco/ cigarettes/snuff Truancy in several classes	Any level 1 Disciplinary action Verbal warning Parental involvement	SENIOR STAFF MEMBERSHIP
		Cheating during exams Verbally threatening safety of another person	Written warning Behavioural contract with learner	

POSITIVE DISCIPLINE IN SCHOOLS

5	Levels	Description of Misconduct	Disciplinary Action/ Examples of consequences	Responsibility	
Secondary Intervention	3	Serious violations of school conduct rules	Frequent repetition of level 2 infringement	Any level 2 Disciplinary Action	PRINCIPAL
			Minor injury to another person	Referral to counsellor, social worker etc.	
			Possession and for use of alcohol	Suspension from extra-curricular activities and support	
			Severely disruptive behaviour	Written final warning	
		Theft/ vandalism	Written final warning		
		Frequent repetition of level 2 or 3 infringement	Any level 3 Disciplinary action		

POSITIVE DISCIPLINE IN SCHOOLS

5	Levels	Description of Misconduct	Disciplinary Action/ Examples of consequences	Responsibility	
5		Threatening with a dangerous weapon	Referral to relevant outside agency	PRINCIPAL AND SGB (School Governing Body)	
			Intentionally causing physical injury to another person		Referrals and for Suspension
			Possession or use of dangerous weapons		Referrals and for Suspension
		Extortion of another person's property	Referrals and for Suspension		

POSITIVE DISCIPLINE IN SCHOOLS

5	Levels	Description of Misconduct	Disciplinary Action/ Examples of consequences	Responsibility
Tertiary Intervention	4 Very serious violations of school code of conduct/rules	Frequent repetition of level 2 or 3 infringement Threatening with a dangerous weapon Intentionally causing physical injury to another person Possession or use of dangerous weapons	Referrals and for Suspension Referrals and for Suspension Referrals and for Suspension	PRINCIPAL, SGB and PROVINCIAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

POSITIVE DISCIPLINE IN SCHOOLS

5	Levels	Description of Misconduct	Disciplinary Action/ Examples of consequences	Responsibility
	5 Criminal acts which violates school code of conduct/rules	Extortion of another person's property Frequent repetition of level 4 infringement Possession and peddling of narcotic substance Assault or intentional use of dangerous weapon Sexual harassment or abuse Robbery or major theft	Referrals and for Suspension Tribunal hearing Suspension Application for expulsion Involvement of other parties Adopt a Copl (law-enforcement) Involvement of other parties Adopt a Copl (law-enforcement)	PRINCIPAL, SGB and PROVINCIAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT



POSITIVE DISCIPLINE IN SCHOOLS

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Positive Discipline in schools is a comprehensive approach that uses discipline to teach rather than punish and, helps learners succeed and enjoy school. Schools that take this approach encourage positive student behavior while preventing negative and harmful behaviors.

Positive Discipline in schools is integrated into the policies and programs of a school and is applied system wide i.e. in the classroom, school, and community in order to create a safe supportive learning environment for all learners.

Positive discipline aims to build a culture of human rights where everyone (including learners and teachers) is treated with **dignity and respect**. The approach actively promotes child participation, positive reinforcement, problem-solving and positive role modelling. This means working with children and not against them in **child-friendly environment**

Positive discipline will flourish in a child-friendly environment that promotes:

Listening to learners opinions when setting the ground rules and consequences for a code of conduct

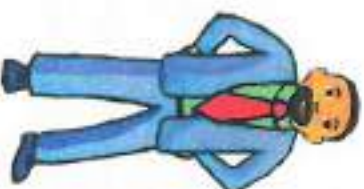


POSITIVE DISCIPLINE IN SCHOOLS

Asking questions before making judgement in order to find the reasons why by a learner has broken a rule; and

Finding ways to solve problems and conflicts together with learners

Positive discipline aims to build on learners strengths instead of criticising their weaknesses and uses positive reinforcement to motivate good behaviour. Learners are encouraged to take responsibilities and given opportunities to succeed. This builds learners trust and self-confidence.



Teachers also emphasise the importance of clear expectations, consistency fairness, taking responsibility and involvement of parents to give more meaning to the definition of positive discipline.

Teachers emphasize on the importance of clear expectations, consistency, fairness, taking responsibility and the involvement of parents to give more meaning to the definition of Positive Discipline.

Key elements of positive discipline

Here are some of the key elements needed to foster positive discipline:

A caring environment

Research indicated that children act out their problems when their basic needs are not being met. Teachers, particularly those working in poor communities, emphasise the importance of a caring teacher who shows empathy, kindness and understanding to connect with learners, make them feel special and create a sense of belonging in the classroom.

Problem-solving

Studies have shown that learners, who come from home where violence is used frequently to solve problems, are more likely to model that behaviour. Teachers agreed that regular problem-solving activities provide opportunities for learners to work together and explore non-violent solutions.

Learner participation

Teachers, who had involved learners in developing codes of conduct, felt that it boosted the learner's self-confidence and encouraged a greater sense of responsibility and ownership. It is observed that learners follow their own rules and monitored their peers' behaviour independently of the teacher because they had been part of the process. There is a recognition that times have changed from learners being seen and not heard, and that learners should have the right to express their views freely in matters that affect them.

Positive reinforcement

Teachers also agree that learners should be praised or given incentives when they showed improvement or got it right. The teachers preferred incentives that did not involve the spending of money such as giving extra time for reading or spending time with friends. They also stress that incentives need to be age appropriate and of interest to the particular learner.

The problem with corporal punishment

It is not uncommon for teacher to initially defend corporal punishment on the grounds that, it worked for them and didn't do any harm. Others may argue that if you "spare the rod, you spoil the child".

But this line of reasoning does not address the **harmful effects** of both corporal and humiliating punishment on learner and the fact that learners are holders of human rights and are entitled to respect for their physical integrity and human dignity in the same way as adults.

Harmful effects of corporal punishment

Corporal and humiliating punishment can perpetuate an ongoing **cycle of violence** as it teaches the child that it's acceptable to use anger and violent to get what you want particularly if you are older or stronger. Studies have shown that there is a greater likelihood of children perpetuating violence in adulthood if they themselves experienced frequent violence as children.

Many people justify using corporal punishment by saying "I am only doing it for your own good". When children are hurt by the very people

who are supposed to love them, this can lead children to believe that **violence is normal and acceptable** in a loving relationship.

The frequent use of violence to solve problems can erode the **trust** between parent and child. It can teach children to fear adults rather than respect them. Without mutual respect and tolerance, we cannot build a culture of human rights. If children cannot trust adults to take care of them, they will not learn to care for others or develop a social conscience.



Comparing corporal punishment and positive discipline

<p>Corporal Punishment</p> <p>Punish Punishment comes from the Latin word, <i>punire</i> which means pain.</p> <p>Authoritarianism Corporal punishment flourishes in schools where principals make all the rules.</p> <p>Force & punishment Teachers use force to make learners obey rules and punish learners for making mistakes.</p> <p>Criticism Teachers criticise learners weaknesses and make feel small.</p>	<p>Positive discipline</p> <p>Teach Discipline comes from the Latin word <i>discipulus</i> which means teach.</p> <p>Participation Positive discipline flourishes in schools where codes of conduct are drawn up in consultation with learners, teachers and parents.</p> <p>Positive reinforcement Teachers use praise, incentives and problem solving to motivate good behaviour and give learners insight into their behaviour and its consequences.</p> <p>Self-esteem Teachers build on learners strengths and make them feel tall.</p>
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A Whole School approach

"I like that school because there is a culture of respect that is visible from the teacher to the children".

The shift from an authoritarian approach involving corporal punishment to a right-based approach involving respect for human rights is not an easy one. Corporal punishment has been a part of our lives for such a long time that we have accepted it as part of child-rearing and teaching. Positive discipline requires a complete **shift in perspective** and the commitment and involvement of all the role-players to bring about change.

The ultimate aim is for parents and teachers to work together towards a common goal namely, the **best interest of the child** and this includes respect for the child's human dignity and physical integrity. One of the best ways to start this process, is for the school to hold a SGB meeting at the beginning of the year to discuss positive discipline and how it can be put into practice in the schools and homes. It does not make sense for learners to have one set of expectations at home and another set at school.

Instead of focusing on problems and bad behaviour, start by looking at positives and what is already working at your school. Use this as a foundation to build a common vision of a school community that is child-centred and empowering. Then talk about how you can make your vision a reality.

Strive to create a **child-friendly learning environment** where learners, teachers



and parents feel respected, supported and valued; and where children feel free to express their views and are encouraged to reach their full potential

Systematically **teach and reinforce positive behaviour** in order to build respectful and caring relationships.

Design a strategy to **reduce unacceptable behaviour** by involving all role-players namely, teachers, parents, learners and school management.

Positive discipline practice

Here are some of the key practices that have helped parents, teachers and school management to implement positive discipline effectively.

Focus on the positives Build children's self-confidence by acknowledging and affirming positive behaviour. This will encourage the likelihood of children repeating that behaviour. Explain how their positive behaviour can contribute to a safe and caring environment

Show interest and pay attention Create opportunities to talk and listen, so that you get to know each child. In this way children will



feel valued and may not need to seek attentions as often as they do. Asking children about their personal interest and hobbies can also foster self-esteem and a sense of belonging.

Set a good example Children learn by observing the adults around them. If adults regularly behave aggressively, then children may react in the same way towards others. Model the positive behaviour that you expect from the children such as kindness, patience and tolerance.



Shared decision-making Involve children in drawing up the code of conduct and deciding on the consequences. When children are involved in making their rules, they are more likely to follow them and to take responsibility for their actions

Listen before judging Ask questions to find out why children misbehaved or did not complete homework task-only then can you make a fair judgment. Listen to children's explanations because their reason for not doing their homework may be valid and related to conditions at home. Unfair punishment can lead to disruptive behaviour and erode positive relationship.

Positive reinforcement –incentives and rewards

Many schools include incentives and rewards to reinforce positive behaviour. They **involve learners** in drawing up the list of incentives so that they are motivated to behave positively by repeating the behaviour.

Positive reinforcement can be anything that the learner sees as a reward but it must be **earned** for good behaviour. Since every reward has to be earned, it creates an opportunity for the teacher to talk about what it took to earn it and to show this is actually the real reward.

Lunch with the educator The learner earns the opportunity to eat their lunch with the educator. It is a wonderful opportunity to get to know the learner better. You can include additional incentives such as: Letting the learner choose the venue; allowing a friend to join you; buying a small treat to share with the learner (e.g. fruits, nuts)

Principal's office Send the learners to the principal's office for a special acknowledgement of achievement or good behaviour. The learner can receive a principal's certificate or be praised in the school assembly

Glad note sent home Send a note of praise to the learners parents or caregivers describing any positive attributes observed towards his/her school work towards peers or on the sports field. Encourage the parents to paste the note where family members can see the note e.g. on the fridge door. Learners of all ages just love these notes.

LAYERS OF RESPONSE

Teacher

The first person to handle any disciplinary case is the teacher. However if the learners continues to misbehave, the case can be referred to the next layer.



Tips for teachers

"My teacher explains the work nicely when I don't understand she does not get cross when I do something wrong"

"My teacher tells me what I do wrong. She is very kind and I love my teacher"

Implementing positive discipline is not easy and teachers need support and time to care for themselves if they are to continue nurturing others. The following ideas will help make the teacher's load a bit lighter.

Classroom tools and techniques

Teachers can draw on their experiences and compile a list of suggestions for creating a child-friendly learning environment in the classroom. Here are some of the tools and techniques they recommended

Be prepared and well-organised Prepare lessons in advance so that you are ready to receive your learners with a smile and some positive comment. Involve the learners in routines that facilitate the learning process whereby group leaders hand out and collect books and resources in order to start on time. Create challenging activities for learners who complete work quickly, minimise or prevent disruptions while others are still busy working

Know your learners observe the learners carefully and respond appropriately to any unexpected behavioural changes such as poor greeting or a sad smile. Show that you care by making time to talk. Find out how learners feeling especially when they have been ill or absent. Find out what their passions are and try to include those ideas in your lessons.

Involve the learners Give learners a sense of ownership and responsibility by involving them in all aspects of learning so that "my class" becomes outstanding class. Let them help draw up the code of conduct including consequences for breaking the rules and the incentives to get it right. Check with learners to see if the system is working fairly and make changes when needed.

Be proactive Reduce disruptions by walking around the classroom so that your presence can be seen and felt by everyone and not only those in the front row. Position your table so that you are near to learners who display poor behavior or move them closer to your table. Model expected behavior because learners learn more from what you do than from what you say.

Create a friendly atmosphere Be friendly, open and honest and treat learners with respect. Encourage the learners to share interesting stories about themselves and their community using art, music and dance. Let the learners display their art on the walls.



Praise learner behavior Acknowledge and praise desirable behavior because it boosts their self esteem. Acknowledge and praise desirable behaviour because it boosts their self-esteem and encourage the learners to repeat the good behavior. For example:

Praise learners when they do good deeds such as: "I liked the way you picked up John's pencil without being asked to do so."

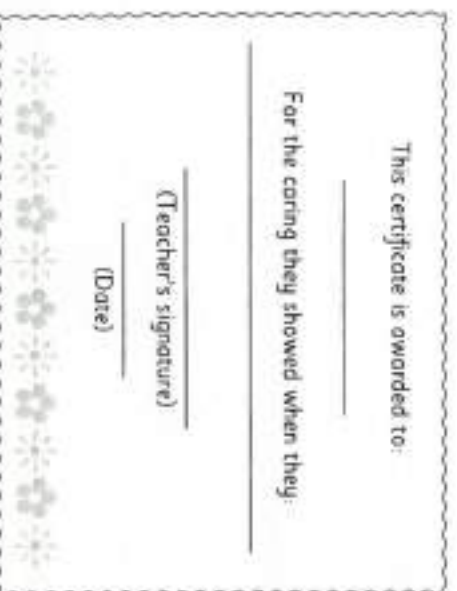
Write positive comments in learner's book when marking their work. For example, "Good work, this is much better than yesterday".

Keep a record of learners who have been praised so that you reach each child once a week or once a month

Share good news with other teachers and make sure that this news get back to the learners. For Example: You could ask the maths teacher to say "I hear you did well in your English test."

Acknowledge learners difficulties and offer handout certificate to honour learners achievements. Don't just focus on sport and academic achievements, remember to acknowledge other forms of good behaviour such as kindness, helpfulness consistent improvement and hard work.





Be willing to ask for help, be prepared to learn from others and ask for help when you need it. If some teachers are coping better with learner discipline, try to arrange a session where you can observe and talk good practice in action

Self-reflection Implementing positive discipline effectively takes time and a willingness to think critically about what is working and to make changes when necessary. Find out from the learners which of your lessons they enjoy the most and use the feedback to improve your teaching. Use examples of misbehaviour as an opportunity to teach learner problem-solving skills.

Peer Discipline Committee

Each class can elect students to serve as a Peer Discipline Committee. The responsibility of this committee is to meet on a regular basis and to handle all cases of indiscipline referred to them by the teacher and to:

- Arrange for selected learners to be trained as **peer counsellors** who can offer support and conflict resolution under the guidance of supportive adults (e.g. trained parent/teacher counsellors)
- Invite local organisation to work with all the learners in raising awareness of children's right and the harmful effects of corporal and humiliating punishment on children.
- Involve learners in deciding how to reduce all forms of violence against children at school including bullying
- Hold exhibitions of learners with work on positive discipline and invite the media to help raise awareness
- Provide learners with their own **venue** where they can discuss issues with their peers and report any form of abuse confidentially to a trained peer/parent/teacher
- Make sure all learners know how to report all forms of abuse and **violence against children including too-free numbers**, peer counsellors and independent counselling services if learners' prefer external support and privacy. Monitor the reporting systems regularly.

School Discipline Committee

If the student continues the misbehaviour after the case is referred to and handled by the Peer Discipline Committee. The case can be referred to the School Discipline Committee which may take actions deemed appropriate according to the Code of Conduct.

Head Teacher

If the offending student continues with her/his misbehaviour, the case can be referred to the head teacher who may take actions deemed appropriate according to the Code of Conduct.

School management has a crucial role to play in mobilising the whole school community and creating a supportive environment in which positive discipline can flourish. This means **leading by example** and working with teachers, learners and parents to protect children from all forms of violence including corporal and humiliating punishment.

Parents

If the student still continues with the misbehaviour, the head teacher may call upon the parents to become involved and a joint decision can be reached as to the appropriate disciplinary action to take.

Outside Referral

Further still, if the student's misbehaviour becomes uncontrollable or dangerous to others, an outside referral may be made to counsellors, police or another relevant agency.

1. REFLECTION

The types of discipline measures in this category include:

- a. **Verbal warning.** Talk to the student and tell her or him what they did wrong.
- b. **Imposing timeout.** Ask a child to either leave the class for 10 minutes, or sit in a quiet place and think about their behaviour. To be able to return to class, the student must be able to say what they did wrong and how they will avoid repeating the mistake. This should be done firmly without humiliating the child.
- c. **Letter writing.** Ask the student to write a letter or an essay on why they behaved in a certain way and what they will do to avoid repeating the mistake. If appropriate it should include an apology.



- d. **Oral apology.** This involves apologizing to the wronged person and asking for forgiveness.
- e. **Name slip.** This involves writing the child's name and offence down on a slip of paper. If the child does not stop the behaviour, at the end of the class, the paper will be given to the peer committee to take further disciplinary measures.

f. **Discipline box.** Write the name of the child on a piece of paper and place it in a box in the classroom. The box is checked on a weekly basis and if a child's name appears in the box more than a given number of times, a certain penalty will be imposed.

2. PENALTY

For offences that are persistent and detrimental for all concerned, children may need to experience a penalty to understand that there are consequences to their actions. However you must help the child to reflect on these consequences once the penalty has been imposed.

The types of disciplinary measures in this category include:

- a. **Withdrawal of privileges.** This involves taking away an activity that the student enjoys. However, students should not receive a penalty that will be detrimental to their health or safety.
- b. **Detention.** The student must remain for extra time after school to reflect on what they did wrong.

c. **Signing of discipline or behaviour contract.** This involves writing a one-page contract between the student and teacher that spells out the misconduct and the steps that must be taken to correct it.

d. **Disciplinary talk with the learner.** This involves setting a time to meet with the student to discuss their behaviour and to set a course for correcting.

e. **Demerit.** This involves marking the students' file or the disciplinary book, to record the child's offence in an official manner.

f. **Community service.** This involves having the student do light work that benefits the community in some way. Any community service work requires counselling to explain the purpose of the work.

3. REPARATION

For offences that cause damage to a third party, the learner must undertake public reparation. This involves acknowledging the misbehaviour in front of others and taking responsibility for his or her actions.

The types of discipline measures in this category include:

- a. **Public apology.** The student must apologise for the misbehaviour in the assembly to the entire school or to the group of people s/he offended.
- b. **Replace or repair.** If the offence is accidental, the student must contribute toward replacing or repairing the damage s/he has caused, such as erecting a new fence, chopping wood, or repainting a wall.

c. Official reprimand. The learner must accept a written notice to their disciplinary record and must sign a letter committing to reform, the letter spells out repercussions for failing to reform.

d. Involving parents. The school will involve parents/guardians to contribute towards replacing, repairing or apologizing for the damage caused by the student.

4. LAST RESORT

For persistent and serious offences, sometimes severe action must be taken as a last resort.

The types of discipline measures in this category include:

a. Parent meeting. Summoning and discussing with parents the possible next steps as a warning to the child and the parents.

b. Referral. This involves referring the student to a professional who can assist her/him.

c. Suspension. A time-limited suspension (eg one week) with a written warning and a referral to a counsellor or probation officer.

d. Expulsion. As a very last resort, expulsion from school with the involvement of a probation officer and recommendation of an action plan for next steps to help the child.

How effective are your systems of positive discipline?

Use the following checklist to evaluate your systems of positive discipline and discuss the results at your next staff planning or SGB meeting.

Disciplinary measures and procedures	No	Yes	Comments
1. Is there a code of conduct for learners?			
2. Is there a code of conduct for teachers?			
3. Are parents and learners aware of their rights and responsibilities?			
4. Are the codes of conduct accessible to all?			
5. Is there a system of incentives in place to motivate good behaviour?			
6. Are learners, parents and staff clear about the consequences of different types of offences?			
7. Are the consequences applied consistently and fairly to all?			
8. Are there child-friendly and confidential systems for children to report violence and abuse?			
9. Are the necessary structures and systems in place to deal with disciplinary issues?			
10. Are the structures working?			
11. Are there appropriate support systems or teachers who are struggling with discipline?			
12. Do teachers lead by example and provide positive role models for learners?			
13. Does the school management actively support positive, non-violent forms of discipline?			
14. Are the disciplinary structures and systems evaluated regularly to maintain effectiveness?			
15. Has your school managed to create a safe, happy and caring environment for learners?			