



*“That students may know Christ and share their faith, living it out daily as they become successful learners”*

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## **DISCIPLINE POLICY**

### **BURLINGTON CHRISTIAN ACADEMY**

#### **A. Introduction**

At Burlington Christian Academy (BCA), we acknowledge God as central to our existence as a school community. We believe that God is our Creator and that He has made us all in His image. Jesus is our Redeemer and extends grace and forgiveness through His death and resurrection. The Holy Spirit walks with us and in us to place on our hearts the desire to live obedient and faithful lives. These foundational belief statements create the necessary context of our understanding and practice of discipline.

#### **B. Purpose**

To assist in providing a school environment in which students are empowered to thoughtfully reflect in the absence of expected behaviours, to consider the consequences of these behaviours on others, to seek to reconcile with all those negatively affected, and to learn how to improve behaviour in similar situations in the future.

#### **C. Process**

Our staff commits to employing the practices (as outlined below under "Restorative Practices") that will help students learn from their mistakes and reconcile and resolve problems with others.

As such, we subscribe to an approach that allows us to work collaboratively with our students in finding a positive solution that is fair, meaningful, and re-integrative.

When an incident occurs, students will be asked to reflect upon the following questions using the discipline form located in the office. This form may be sent home for parents to review, sign, and return to school.

1. What happened?
2. How did you act?
3. Who was affected?
4. How were they affected?
5. What needs to happen to make things right?
6. How will you behave differently if this situation happens again?

This process can be supplemented with additional conversations and/or inclusion of parents. It is possible suspensions, in school or at home, may occur if warranted.

### Indiscretion vs. Bullying

Teachers need to assess each incident and decide whether the incident is (1) an act of indiscretion, or (2) an act of bullying. Definitions of indiscretion and bullying for this purpose are as follows:

*Indiscretion:* Any act, failure to act, or remark that reflects a lack of good judgment or prudence.

*Bullying:* Unwanted, aggressive behavior that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behaviour is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time.

Bullying is certainly an act of indiscretion, but is more serious than most other acts. Both children who are bullied and who bully others may have serious, lasting problems. Students who bully use their power—such as physical strength, access to embarrassing information, or popularity—to control or harm others. Bullying behaviours happen more than once or *have the potential* to happen more than once. Bullying includes actions such as making threats, spreading rumors, attacking someone physically or verbally, and excluding someone from a group on purpose.

There are three types of bullying:

**Verbal bullying** is saying or writing mean things. Verbal bullying includes: Teasing, name-calling, inappropriate sexual comments, taunting, or threatening to cause harm.

**Social bullying**, sometimes referred to as relational bullying, involves hurting someone's reputation or relationships. Social bullying includes: Leaving someone out on purpose, telling other children not to be friends with someone, spreading rumours about someone, or embarrassing someone in public.

**Physical bullying** involves hurting a person's body or possessions. Physical bullying includes: Hitting/kicking/pinching, spitting, tripping/pushing, taking or breaking someone's things, and making mean or rude hand gestures.

Once the teacher has assessed whether an act is an indiscretion or bullying, the following approach should be taken:

In the case of acts of indiscretion, the teacher should assess each incident and whether to deal with the issue themselves and consider whether parents need to be involved. Should the teacher exhaust all avenues to move the situation forward positively, they can contact the administration for their involvement (administration is also available at all times for consultation).

In the case of bullying, where an act of bullying has actually, or allegedly, taken place, the teacher must inform the administration of the incident or the alleged incident (Note: Where the teacher is also a member of the administration of the school, the bullying incident must be reported to a second member of the administration). The administration will discuss with the teacher the appropriate course of action. It is expected that, in cases of bullying, parents will be involved.

### **Restorative Practices**

At BCA, a continuum of Restorative Practices is used to bring about restitution, forgiveness, and reconciliation. These include:

1. In order to foster a sense of awareness if a student has erred, teachers will use affective statements and questions so that students will come to know what they have done wrong, whom they may have hurt, and what steps can be taken to bring about restitution. This phase usually involves just the one causing harm and the teacher.
2. If ineffective, then teachers will set up small conferences with the student involved in the unacceptable behaviour, including, if appropriate, those also affected by the action. The purpose of this meeting is to promote healing and reconciliation by prompting the students to find a solution acceptable to all parties.
3. If the behaviour has caused considerable hurt and/or the previous steps have proven ineffective, the teacher will call students involved to a large group conference involving those directly involved as well as their peer (e.g. the whole class). The intent of this meeting is to expose how all are impacted by the action in question and working together might find ways to provide support and ways for restoration, forgiveness, and reconciliation to be experienced.

4. In cases where reconciliation has not yet been achieved after using the previous steps, or in the case of bullying, a formal conference is scheduled. This type of conference can include the following individuals:

- those who have caused the harm
- those who have been harmed
- other adults chosen by each student directly involved
- one or two classmates chosen by the teacher
- parents of the child causing the harm
- parents of the child who has been harmed
- the school administrator

This meeting is chaired by the school administration and its purpose is to seek restitution, forgiveness, and reconciliation. Should this goal not be reached and it is not possible for the harm to be repaired, school administrators with Board endorsement will make a final decision that upholds the wellbeing of all in the school.

While the process is being undertaken, to ensure that further harm is not experienced and enough time is provided so that the well-being of all is ensured and pursued, a teacher/administrator may suggest a temporary loss of privileges, appropriate work assignments related to the Restorative Process, in-school or out of school suspensions, etc. If deemed necessary, parents will be contacted to inform them of their child's involvement in the process.

Through grace, God intervened to restore the broken relationship between Himself and His children. He sent Jesus to be our redeemer, bringing us back to wholeness. So we too at BCA follow this Biblical truth of restoration in the middle of our brokenness. Turning the wrong into that which is right, while honouring one another as God's children, leads to the rebuilding of relationships and a new beginning.