

10th March 2009

Dear Parent

You will be aware from my earlier letter that the Governors' held an open meeting for parents on 9th February. In that meeting we outlined the changes made in the school's approach to behaviour and discipline following the consultation process with parents on the subject. As only a small number of parents were able to make the evening we are taking this opportunity to outline these changes in writing.

The limited response from parents to the initial consultation indicates that there is not great concern over behaviour standards and discipline within school, however those that did attend the consultation evening expressed some views that were broadly shared by school management and the governing body. The key points that we derived from the initial consultation process were:

- a desire for stricter discipline generally in school.
- significant concern over behaviour amongst a very small minority of the members of one particular class.
- a strong concern that break times and lunchtimes were a flashpoint for poor behaviour.
- a need for a review of the bullying policy

In light of the issues raised a number of governor sub-committee meetings were held on the subject resulting in a proposal that was subsequently discussed and agreed unanimously and in its entirety by the full governing body.

The agreed actions are:

- The school will employ one further lunch-time supervisor in order to provide cover for a "supervision" room, which will be used to punish persistent or excessive poor behaviour and will be a step up from the current sanction of missing a portion of lunchtime. It will involve the pupil sitting quietly and writing.
- One of the existing Midday Supervisors will be detached from play activities in order to observe and intervene early with developing problems.
- Building of a first aid room and toilets that will be directly accessible from the playground. This should prevent the need for most children being in the main school building during break times.
- School management to enforce the code of discipline sanctions more strictly.

- The head teacher to visit a range of other schools in order to see how poor behaviour is managed elsewhere.
- A commitment to reviewing the bullying policy.

For the benefit of the majority of pupils, who do not cause any disruption, the Governors are committed to supporting school management in its enforcement of the new disciplinary code (a copy of which is enclosed with this letter). Having had the opportunity to help shape these new guidelines, we would hope that parents will also support school management, as it moves forward with implementing the revised disciplinary code.

Finally, we would like to thank all of those who have contributed to this process, as the feedback has been extremely valuable. It is our intention to undertake similar parental consultations on other areas and we hope that you will be prepared to support and participate in this process.

Yours sincerely

Steve Rhodes
Chair of Governors

General Code of Discipline

At Elm School we recognise that our success is measured not by the absence of problems, since it is natural and proper that children explore and test the boundaries of their world. Our success is measured by the way we deal with problems when they arise. In instances where the conduct of a child or group of children is not acceptable some degree of disciplinary action may be necessary.

There is an agreed code of reprimands and punishments available to the teaching and/or supervisory staff.

- a. A reprimand, either visual or verbal, sometimes with an explanation of why a particular instance of behaviour is considered unacceptable, and what could be done to improve it.
- b. Asking a child to change seats either to isolate him/her completely, isolate him/her from one or more individuals or to put him/her in a more positive situation.
- c. Asking a child to repeat or complete work either in class time or in his/her own time (playtime, dinnertime, at home).
- d. The withdrawal of privileges, where appropriate, i.e. playtime, lunch time games, clubs or societies. This may involve asking the child to complete a piece of writing in his or her own time such as playtimes or lunchtimes.
- e. A referral to the Head Teacher or Deputy Head Teacher. (In positive situations this should also be done so that the child might receive extra recognition and praise).
- f. The institution of some kind of "report" system on the behaviour/work and individual either daily or weekly.
- g. In serious situations it may be necessary to draw up a formal "contract" between the child, parents and the school, as to the behaviour/work of that child, any time limits to be imposed, how this behaviour is to be monitored and reported and the sanctions if the contract is not fulfilled. It will be necessary to inform and possibly involve Governors at this stage.
- h. The final sanction would involve the exclusion from school of the individual for either a fixed period or permanently

In Situations of doubt or concern it is vital that help is sought immediately.

Parents may be involved formally or informally at any level within this hierarchy, but must be involved at level "f" and beyond. If parents are involved formally or in a situation involving serious discipline problems, a written record of their own account and the account of the other party will be kept and the parents informed of the contents. If an account of the action or problem cannot be agreed between the school and the parents, then each will be entitled to keep a written record of their own account and that of the other party.