PHILOSOPHY OF DISCIPLINE

The goal of Christian education is to make disciples of Christ. Praise Academy partners with the family in accomplishing that goal because we believe that the family is the most important institution that God has created and the school is an extension of the family. In order to accomplish that goal, parents and Christian educators alike strive to teach our students to live a Christ-centered life. Part of teaching them is helping them learn to choose desirable behaviors instead of unacceptable ones. When students make wrong choices, we seek to help redirect, guide, heal and restore. Our goal is that hearts are changed in order to make better choices and that hopefully our adult discipline of students is slowly and surely being replaced by self-discipline on the student’s part.

In order to achieve this goal, we are guided by the following principles:

1. Maintain Cooperation between Home and School

We believe the Christian home and school should work in partnership. Both should implement discipline in love and humility, not in anger or in haste. Parents are expected to support the school’s discipline.

2. Deal with Forgiveness and Consequences

We differentiate between forgiveness and consequences. We believe it is important that students learn that their choices do bring consequences. We seek to correct the behavior without rejecting the person.

3. Work with Each Student Individually

In order to see young lives molded, we strive to understand individuals and recognize each may be at a different level of maturity. We also seek to distinguish between those who have made first-time mistakes and those who are repeat offenders or mockers, although in some circumstances, first-time offenses may be of sufficient severity to warrant suspension or expulsion.

4. Maintain Standards

We take very seriously the biblical, community, and school standards that each student pledges to live by when enrolling at Praise Academy. Violations of certain standards or the absence of a repentant heart will not be tolerated.

5. Allow Growth through Failure

We know that some of the most profound opportunities for growth in life come through how we respond to mistakes and failures. Where appropriate, we want to encourage students to grow and change as a result of their mistakes and failures. This is not to say there will not be consequences for these actions, but rather, we want to allow students to appropriately experience consequences and the growth that can result from them.

6. Realize the Limits of Our Discipline

Although we are charged with the duty of educating and supervising students for a portion of the day, we are not the parent, nor the church. As a Christian school, we must carefully weigh our standards and expectations for all students against the personal situations of the individual. Sometimes it is necessary to expel a student or request that the parents withdraw the student from Praise Academy, but it does not
mean it is the end. That student continues to be a part of a Christian home and church. However, a change of school environment may be best for all involved.

**DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES**

The highest of Christian standards are to be maintained at Praise Academy at all times. Praise Academy attempts to provide a positive learning environment for all of our students regardless of race, national and ethnic origin or gender. Behavior that undermines the well-being of students will not be tolerated. It is our expectation that all students and adults will be treated equitably, fairly, and respectfully by the Praise Academy staff and student body.

While discipline by the home or school may become necessary at some point, our goal is for all students to display maturity, develop self-control and self-discipline, and show kindness and respect to others. If there are times when the administration determines that a student’s behavior evidences a lack of assuming responsibility for one’s own actions, and/or a lack of self-control, is in conflict with the Standards of Conduct, or has a negative effect on the overall culture and community at Praise Academy, the student will be disciplined.

The behavior listed in this handbook is not intended as an all-inclusive list of prohibited behavior and activities, but rather to serve as an illustration of the types of behaviors and activities which are unacceptable. Therefore, students should ask permission and not assume questionable behavior is or is not acceptable if it is not listed in the handbook. Students should realize that their commitment to living a life of integrity and following the standards set forth in God’s Word is ongoing, not limited to the school day. Further, if at any time, the administration, in its sole discretion, determines that a student’s influence is harmful, or if his or her presence in the school is regarded by the administration as undesirable, the school may request the student to withdraw, or may expel the student.

Action which evidences disobedience to school rules, lack of courtesy, general disturbance, and other such misdemeanors, will be handled by the teacher in such ways as he or she deems best. Situations which the teacher deems to be chronic, flagrant, or otherwise worthy of special handling, will be referred to the administration. Additionally, Praise Academy will partner with local law enforcement when necessary and deemed appropriate.

**LEVELS OF DISCIPLINE**

**Level 1 Offense**

These offenses will be handled by the teacher within the framework of the class. Teachers will implement appropriate class consequences for behavior violations. Recurring or disruptive classroom behavior will not be tolerated. Teachers will contact parents to work to solve in-class issues. However, repeated behavior violations in class will be referred to the administration and may result in a meeting with the student, parents, teacher, and the administration.
Level 2 Offense

These infractions can result in being sent to the assistant principal’s office. These infractions may result in school service hours, loss of privileges, loss of driving privileges, suspension or other consequence deemed appropriate by the administration are:

- Dress code violation
- Inappropriate behavior
- Inappropriate language
- Leaving class without permission
- Skipping class
- Disrespect toward a teacher, staff worker, or student
- Excessive tardiness
- Leaving school grounds
- In-class disruptions
- Chewing gum during school hours
- Possession of cell phone or electronic devices without prior permission
- Not being truthful to a teacher or staff member

Level 3 Offense

The following are examples of, but not an exhaustive list of infractions which may result in suspensions, disciplinary probation or expulsion, in addition to the consequences of Level 2 are:

- The use, possession, or distribution of tobacco products.
- The use, possession, or distribution of vaporizers or e-cigarettes.
- The use, possession, or distribution of mood-altering or mind-altering chemicals.
- The misuse or distribution of prescription drugs.
- The use, possession, or distribution of alcoholic beverages.
- The use or possession of fireworks or explosive devices.
- The use or possession of repellent or so-called “self-defense” sprays such as, but not limited to, chemical mace, pepper spray, dog repellent, and similar substances.
- Pulling a fire alarm or tampering with fire or safety equipment.
- Stealing from school personnel, school building, parked cars, or students.
- Vandalizing or misusing school property and other students’ property.
- Planning or committing arson (lighting fires).
- Bullying, fighting, or disruptive behavior.
- Repeated classroom disruption.
- Defiance of staff authority.
- Profanity or profane gestures (sexual innuendos).
- Gang solicitation and/or activities including dress, signage, etc.
- Grossly disrespectful acts or language toward another person – staff or student. Cheating.
- Inappropriate use of technology (including sexting).
- Repeated Level 2 infractions.
- Sexual immorality.
- Lying or dishonesty.
- Gambling.
- Racial slurs or racist behavior (including inappropriate attempts at humor).
- Sexual harassment.
- Use of language (verbal, written, electronic or virtual) that is threatening in nature or could be construed as a threat.
- Any behavior that damages the community or disrespects Praise Academy school culture.

The administration will immediately notify local law enforcement officials of firearm or battery incidents at the school. The administration will also notify such officials of verified incidents involving drugs in the school. Praise Academy may also make reports to the police of other incidents when deemed in the best interest of the school or school community.

Students are expected to cooperate with school personnel and be honest in all investigations regarding conduct. If a student refuses to cooperate or engages in dishonesty, it may result in disciplinary action including but not limited to suspension or expulsion.

Consequences

Work Hours
For certain disciplinary infractions, students may be asked to spend additional time outside of school. Students earn work hours by failing to observe school standards concerning behavior, obedience, respect of authority, etc. As a principle, work hours are scheduled on Saturdays or after school and take precedence over other activities.

Work hours will be assigned periodically. Students will be informed in advance about where and when to report for their work hours. Work hours will not be study or sleep time. Students will be given specific manual work assignments under the supervision of a faculty member and will be kept busy during the entire assignment. If a reschedule is necessary, it must be done at least 24 hours in advance of the assigned work hours. Failure to serve assigned work hours will result in a $20 fine and an additional hour of work. Students will not be permitted to take finals until work hours are completed.

Suspension
Praise Academy is committed to keeping students in the classroom learning environment as much as possible. However, if the administration determines that a student has engaged in behavior or activities which constitute a violation of community standards which warrant removal from the classroom, a suspension may result. If a student is removed from school for a disciplinary reason, the suspended student is not permitted to be on school property or to participate in any school activity. Before a suspended student is permitted to return to school, the student and his/her parents must give assurance that the student is able to control his/her behavior and to follow the school’s Standards of Conduct. The student will be put on behavior probation for the remainder of the school year and will be asked to reapply for the following school year.

Any student receiving a school suspension will automatically be suspended from all extracurricular activities for the length of the suspension. Students suspended for serious violations of school standards, illegal substance use, and morality issues, etc. (if they are allowed to remain in school) will typically be removed from a team or activity for the season or the semester. Coaches and sponsors may also have a specific code of conduct for the students with which they work.
Disciplinary Probation
In order to ensure that students who have made mistakes seek to change behavior on a long-term basis, students may be placed on disciplinary probation. A student found to have a pattern of inappropriate behavior will be given guidelines of expected behavior. A meeting with the administration and parents will review the terms of the probation. Parents, student, and administration must sign the guidelines of such a probation. Periods of probationary status may result for the following reasons:

- When a student is suspended.
- After a cheating incident.
- When deemed necessary by the administration as a result of other serious or recurring disciplinary situations.

Probation periods typically range from one academic semester to twelve months.

While on probation a student may be ineligible for participation in athletics or other performing groups, at the discretion of the administration. Students should be aware that consequences for behavioral infractions may be escalated for a student on probation.

At the end of the probationary period, the student will most likely be asked to reapply, considered for expulsion, or requested to be withdrawn if the behavior or academic performance has not been satisfactorily remedied.

Reapplication as a Result of Discipline
All students suspended (or disciplined for serious or recurring issues or placed on probation) during a school year will be required to reapply for admission to Praise Academy if they desire to continue as a student. Students may also be asked to reapply for repeated behaviors that didn’t warrant suspension but call into question a student’s maturity level and desire to fit into Praise Academy’s culture. Students and parents will be asked to complete the reapplication materials. Recommendations from all current teachers and sponsors of activities that the student has been involved in will be obtained. Although those students required to reapply may participate in course selection and other pre-registration processes throughout the spring, they will not be considered accepted for the next school year until their reapplication process is completed and readmission is formally granted. Parents will typically receive re-application information by the end of April. Evaluation of re-applications will typically be concluded no later than June 30. Students required to re-apply are typically not eligible for financial aid regardless of prior award.

Expulsion
Expulsion is the most severe form of punishment to be exercised at Praise Academy. It is recommended only after either all previous forms of discipline have been exercised and the problem(s) persist(s), or, when the offense is by its very nature one which even in a single act permits a situation which the school finds untenable or presents a threat to the safety of its staff or students.
Examples of offenses that will almost always result in a recommendation for expulsion are:

- The threat to use, use, or possession of firearms, knives, incendiary, or other such harmful devices, weapons, replicas, imitations, or look-a-likes on school grounds or at any school-related activity.
- Verbal, written, or electronic threats, harassment, intimidation or any language that could be construed as a threat to any student or staff member in or out of school.
- Any action in the school or community which would fit into the broad category of “felony”. Such acts may be under investigation by authorities, in which case a suspension may be levied. When verified, a recommendation for expulsion may be levied.
- Theft.
- Possession or distribution of an illegal substance on Praise Academy property.
- Inappropriate use of technology.
- Repeated cheating.
- Any offense determined by the school to warrant expulsion.

Offenses deemed expellable will result in immediate out-of-school suspension pending an investigation by the school’s administration. In no case will the student be allowed on campus or at any school-related activity on or off campus pending termination of the investigation. Once a student is expelled, the student is not permitted on school grounds or at any school activities.

There may be instances where student misconduct warrants immediate expulsion. The school retains the right to amend, discontinue, or vary from these procedures without prior notice.

**Request to Withdraw a Student**

In some situations, the administration may request that parents withdraw their child from Praise Academy. Such a request may occur when the student’s conduct would otherwise warrant expulsion. If the parents or legal guardians refuse to withdraw their student upon request, the student will be expelled. Once a student withdraws, the student is not permitted on school grounds or at any school activities.