

DEVELOPMENT OF A DISCIPLINE POLICY

1. POLICY FORMAT

- Make decisions about the format the policy is going to take.

- The one used throughout this process is designed under the following headings:
 - **CONTEXT:** What are the special need of our school?
 - **RATIONALE:** School beliefs/philosophy are discipline.
 - **GENERAL AIMS:** What the school is realistically to achieve.
 - **METHOD:** Classroom strategies teacher employ in next aiming discipline.
 - **RESOURCES:** Both human and material aids to support discipline policy.
 - **ORGANIZATION:** How the school organizes to maintain discipline.
 - **EVALUATION:** How the school monitors how well it is achieving its aims in terms of
 - a) disciplinary infractions.
 - b) pastoral care and preventive discipline.

The Process

STEP 1: CONTEXT

i.e. WHAT ARE THE PARTICULAR NEEDS AND CIRCUMSTANCES OF OUR SCHOOL:

- Information needs to be gathered and shared in relation to the school context so that everyone has a shared framework in which to examine school practice.
- To gather such information the following areas may be useful to consider:-
 - Records of disciplinary action.
 - Teacher perceptions
 - School profile information
 - Parental Support and contact
 - Parental opportunities in school
 - Student records
 - Student attitude inventories
- Information from these sources can be summarised and copies be distributed to all participating members.
- Decisions, therefore, have to be made about;
 - i. What we need to know
 - ii. How we will get the information
 - iii. How we will present it
 - iv. Resources we can use

STEP 2: DIAGNOSIS

i.e. WHAT IS HAPPENING NOW?

- A policy should both reflect practice and the ideal and therefore it is important that there is shared knowledge of the state in which the school currently finds itself in relation to:-

Rationale
General Aims
Methods
Resources
Organisation
Evaluation

- To gather information about this the following questionnaire has been used successfully by our schools. This questionnaire can be distributed to each staff member OR be used as the focus of small group discussions.

The school will be embarking upon formulating a new discipline policy. All members of staff will be given the opportunity to be involved in this process.

A policy acts as a framework of reference or the setting for school practice. It is a guideline which aims at co-ordinating planning, practice and evaluation.

As such it generally contains information related to the following:-

- How we believe discipline is maintained.
- What we aim to achieve with respect to student behaviour (General Aims)
- How we aim to keep order (Method)
- How we organise for the above (Organisation)
- How we know how well the students are behaving (Evaluation)

Should there, however, be other areas that you consider important for inclusion, please note these in the space provided in the questionnaire.

In formulating our new policy, we will be using a strategy that allows us to reflect upon our present practice in relation to some standard or framework i.e. syllabuses & needs of our school.

In order to streamline the process the following questionnaire has been designed to gather information about a practice that will be used as the starting point in formulating our policy.

We would be grateful, therefore, if you could complete the following and return to the office by _____

QUESTIONNAIRE:

RATIONALE:	1. What do you believe school discipline is?
AIMS:	2. Generally what principal behaviour do you expect from your students?
METHOD:	3. a) How do you teach to prevent disciplinary problems? b) How do you maintain discipline? c) How do you cater for problem students?
RESOURCES:	4. a) What access do you feel you have to resources for maintaining discipline? b) Do you have any support e.g. Teacher Aide, Parents, Remedial teacher, withdrawal room, etc.
ORGANIZATION:	5. How do you follow up on problem students/
EVALUATION:	6. How well do you think you and your students are achieving the aims/objectives you set with respect to their behaviour? How do you know?

- Collated information is then recorded in the first column of a sheet outlined below:

COLUMN I	COLUMN II	COLUMN III
WHAT'S HAPPENING NOW	WHAT OTHERS ARE DOING	DECISIONS
RATIONALE		
AIMS		
METHOD		
RESOURCES		
ORGANISATION		
EVALUATION		

STEP 3: ALTERNATIVES

i.e. WHAT ARE OTHERS DOING

- Before deciding on policy it is important that schools are aware of alternative approaches so that they make the 'best' decisions for their pupils.
- Ways that schools have organised for this to take place are as follows:-
 1. Using abstracts of Departmental syllabus & notes
 2. Visiting speakers to address staff at staff meetings
 3. Films, videos etc.
 4. Readings
- Information gathered from this step can be recorded in COLUMN II on the sheet above.

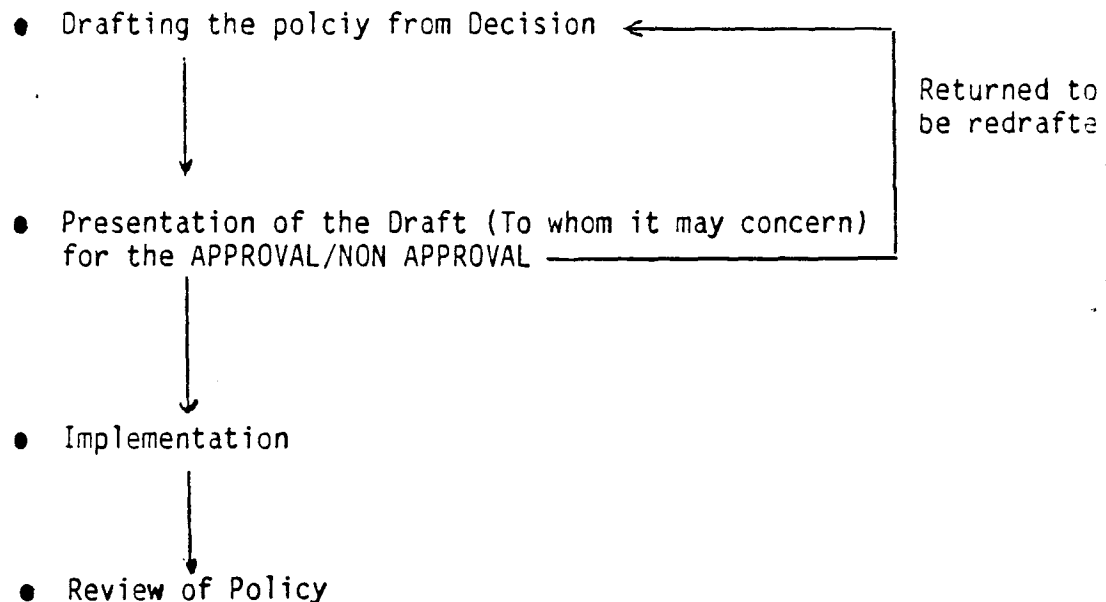
STEP 4: DECISIONS

i.e. WHAT SHALL WE INCORPORATE IN OUR POLICY?

- Decisions to be made consider all the issues of:-
 - Context
 - Diagnosis
 - Alternatives
- Participants together decide upon items for inclusion into their policy. These are recorded in COLUMN III of the sheet outlined on previous page.

STEP 5: POLICY DRAFT → POLICY STATEMENT & PRACTICE.

- The diagram below illustrates this process.



- Implementation and review of the policy are vital to the process for without evidence of the policy being put into effect there is no purpose in the exercise.

- Yearly reviews are being undertaken by some of our schools. Staff meetings are set up to read the document and discuss the question

"DOES THIS STILL APPLY?"

- Modifications or a repeat of the process may then occur.

STEP 1:

Finding out what is happening now.

PROCESS: Sending out a questionnaire to all members of staff & others considered relevant.

SEE SAMPLE

STEP 2:

Collate information under headings nominated in questionnaire on a sheet of paper divided and headed as such
Fill in column 1.

WHAT IS HAPPENING NOW	II WHAT SYLLABUS/DEPT SAYS	III WHAT SHALL WE INCORPORATE -- POLICY
Beliefs about how ● language is learned		
● General Aims		
● methods		
● Resources		
● Organization		
● Evaluation		

STEP 3:

What the syllabus/Dept has to say and how does it suit the needs of our school?

PROCESS: * 1½ staff meeting in conjunction with subject advisory.
* Use Dept. extracts (see samples) to discuss and record factors that are important to your school.

STEP 4:

Collate information in the second column of the divided proforma.

STEP 5:

What do we want to happen for our school?

PROCESS: * 1½ staff meeting with facilitator to discuss and make decisions about what will feature as policy for the school

STEP 6:

Presentation of draft policy.

PROCESS: * Hand out to staff prior to an extended recess or lunch time meeting.

* Clarify and make alterations based on staff reaction.

STEP 7:

Final policy to be implemented.