

German International School Sydney

Student Discipline Policy

1. Purpose

The German International School Sydney (GISS) is committed to providing a safe, respectful, and inclusive learning environment based on the school values of independence, acceptance, multilingualism, and kindness. These values are reflected in ethics, standards, practices, and interactions with all members of the school community. The school strives to uphold high expectations of student behaviour whilst actively supporting students to flourish academically, socially, and emotionally.

The purpose of this Student Discipline Policy is to provide a clear framework for the behavioural expectations of students from Kindergarten to Year 12, ensure disciplinary responses are fair, proportionate, and educational, and support students in developing responsibility for their actions in a bilingual and multicultural school community.

The school affirms that discipline is an essential component of education and plays an important role in maintaining a safe, respectful, and orderly learning environment. Through consistently applied expectations, behaviour guidance and appropriate disciplinary responses, students learn to take responsibility for their actions, respect the rights of others, and contribute positively to the life of the School.

1a. Terminology

In this policy, the following terms are used in a specific way to reflect the School's educational approach.

Behaviour Guidance

Behaviour guidance refers to the proactive teaching and support of appropriate behaviour. It includes explicit teaching of expectations, modelling respectful behaviour, social and emotional learning, and supportive strategies that help students develop skills such as self-regulation, empathy, and responsible decision-making.

Discipline

Discipline refers to the structured responses implemented when behavioural expectations are not met. Disciplinary responses may include restorative conversations, reflection tasks, loss of privileges, suspension or other consequences intended to address behaviour, repair harm, and maintain a safe learning environment.

Restorative Practice

Restorative practice refers to approaches that focus on understanding the impact of behaviour, repairing relationships, and supporting students to take responsibility for their actions.

This policy focuses primarily on **disciplinary processes**, while the School's **Behaviour Guidance Policy** outlines the broader preventative and educational strategies used to support positive behaviour.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all students enrolled at the German International School Sydney from Kindergarten to Year 12.

The School's discipline policy applies to student conduct:

- on school premises;
- during school activities and events;
- on excursions, camps, sport, co-curricular and extra-curricular activities;
- while travelling to and from school where the behaviour affects the school community; and
- in online environments where conduct affects the safety, wellbeing, or reputation of the School or members of the school community.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the School's Conditions of Enrolment and related school policies and procedures.

The School will take disciplinary action in response to student behaviour occurring outside of school where that behaviour has a clear and significant impact on the safety, wellbeing or reputation of students, staff, or the School community.

3. Guiding Principles

The discipline of students at the German International School Sydney is guided by the following principles:

3.1 Respect, dignity, and fairness – all members of the school community are entitled to be treated with dignity, respect, and fairness.

3.2 Responsibility and self-discipline – students are encouraged to develop personal responsibility and self-discipline and to understand the consequences of their choices.

3.3 Restorative practice – the School adopts restorative approaches to discipline wherever possible, supporting students to reflect on behaviour, understand impact and repair relationships.

3.4 Educational approach – discipline responses aim to support learning and personal development rather than relying solely on punitive measures.

3.5 Individual circumstances – every disciplinary matter is considered in its particular context, including the circumstances of the incident, developmental stage, prior behaviour, recency and seriousness of previous incidents, and any inclusion, wellbeing or learning needs.

3.6 Partnership with families – the School works in partnership with parents and carers in supporting students to develop responsible behaviour and in addressing disciplinary concerns.

Proportionality of Discipline

Disciplinary responses will be proportionate to the seriousness of the behaviour and the circumstances in which it occurred. In determining appropriate disciplinary responses, the School will consider:

- the nature and seriousness of the behaviour;
- the student's age and developmental stage;
- the student's previous behavioural history;
- the context in which the behaviour occurred;
- the impact on other students and staff; and
- any relevant wellbeing or inclusion considerations.

4. Commitment to a Respectful and International Learning Community

As an international and bilingual school community, GISS values cultural understanding, respectful dialogue, and responsible participation in a diverse community.

Students are encouraged to demonstrate empathy, respect, and openness towards others and to resolve conflict constructively. The School's discipline framework supports students in developing these skills and in contributing positively to the multicultural and multilingual learning environment of the School.

5. Student Rights and Responsibilities

All students have the *right* to:

- learn in a safe, supportive, and inclusive environment;
- be treated with dignity and respect;
- feel safe from intimidation, bullying, harassment, or discrimination;
- be supported in their learning and wellbeing; and
- have their views heard in matters affecting them, consistent with their age and maturity.

Students have the *responsibility* to:

- respect the rights of others to learn and feel safe;
- behave in a manner that supports a positive learning environment;
- treat peers, staff, and members of the wider community with respect;
- take responsibility for their actions and decisions;
- care for school property and the environment; and
- follow the expectations outlined in the Code of Conduct.

6. Responsibilities of Staff

Authority to Discipline

Teachers and other staff members responsible for the supervision of students are authorised to take reasonable disciplinary action to maintain order and ensure the safety and wellbeing of students and staff. They are the primary managers of student discipline within the classroom and during school activities.

Where appropriate, disciplinary matters will be referred to school leadership, including the Head of Primary School, Head of Secondary School and/or the Principal.

Staff are expected to:

- establish and communicate clear expectations for student conduct;
- respond promptly, consistently, and fairly to disciplinary concerns;
- apply discipline proportionately and in a manner appropriate to the circumstances;
- support students to reflect on their behaviour and repair relationships where appropriate;
- communicate with parents, carers and relevant school staff when required; and
- document significant disciplinary incidents and actions taken and store all documents in Compass against the student's profile.

7. Corporal Punishment

Corporal punishment is not permitted at the German International School Sydney.

The School does not explicitly or implicitly authorise the use of corporal punishment by school staff or by non-school persons, including parents, to enforce school discipline.

GISS does not use discipline practices that are degrading, humiliating or otherwise inappropriate. Any physical intervention (including restraint) is only permitted where reasonably necessary to prevent immediate harm and must be the least restrictive response, used for the shortest time possible, and reported and documented in accordance with GISS's student wellbeing and child protection procedures.

8. Supporting Positive Conduct

The School promotes positive student conduct through clear expectations, explicit teaching of social and emotional skills, respectful relationships between teachers and students, restorative conversations and reflection, consistent expectations across classrooms and activities, and collaboration with families when concerns arise.

Teachers implement preventative strategies and supportive interventions to maintain safe and productive learning environments and to support students in returning successfully to learning following disciplinary incidents.

9. Primary School (K–6)

9.1 Positive Behaviour for Learning

In the Primary School, student discipline is guided by a Positive Behaviour for Learning approach that supports students in developing respectful relationships, responsibility, and self-discipline.

Students are explicitly taught the expectations required to create safe and supportive learning environments. These expectations are reinforced across classrooms, playgrounds, and all school activities.

Positive behavioural expectations are promoted through:

- clear classroom agreements;
- explicit teaching of social and emotional skills;
- modelling respectful behaviour;
- restorative conversations and reflection;
- consistent expectations across learning environments;
- re-teaching behavioural expectations where necessary.

Students are encouraged to reflect on their behaviour and understand the impact their actions have on others.

9.2 Disciplinary Sanctions (K–6)

Where behavioural expectations are not met, disciplinary responses may be implemented to support reflection, repair relationships, and restore a safe learning environment.

Possible disciplinary responses include:

- reflective conversation with teacher;
- written reflection task;
- restorative meeting between students;
- parent communication or meeting;
- temporary loss of privileges;
- Individual Behaviour Support Plan;
- Class Conference;
- internal suspension;
- external suspension;
- probationary enrolment;
- termination of enrolment.

The disciplinary responses listed above are examples of actions the School may take. Depending on the circumstances and seriousness of the behaviour, the School may implement one or more responses and may proceed directly to more serious disciplinary measures where appropriate.

Disciplinary responses may be implemented by:

- Classroom Teacher;
- Specialist Teacher;
- Head of Primary School;
- Principal.

Where behaviour presents a significant concern, the School may proceed directly to suspension or other disciplinary action.

10. Secondary School (7–12)

In the Secondary School, students are expected to demonstrate increasing responsibility, maturity, and self-discipline as they progress through the School.

Teachers are responsible for managing student discipline within their classrooms and school activities, in collaboration with school leadership where necessary. Effective communication between the School, students and parents plays an important role in addressing disciplinary concerns.

10.1 Disciplinary Sanctions (7–12)

Where student conduct breaches the School's expectations, disciplinary responses may include:

- reflective conversation with teacher;
- written reflection task;
- restorative meeting;
- parent communication or meeting;
- temporary removal from class activity;
- Individual Behaviour Support Plan;
- Class Conference;
- internal suspension;
- external suspension;
- probationary enrolment;
- termination of enrolment.

The disciplinary responses listed above are examples of actions the School uses. Depending on the circumstances and seriousness of the behaviour, the School will implement one or more responses and can move directly to more serious disciplinary measures where appropriate.

Disciplinary responses may be implemented by:

- Classroom Teacher;
- Head of Secondary School;
- Principal.

In serious circumstances, the School can proceed directly to suspension, probation, or termination of enrolment (subject to procedural fairness).

11. Class Conference

A Class Conference will be convened when disciplinary concerns are significant or ongoing and require collective consideration.

A Class Conference typically includes teachers who work directly with the student and relevant members of school leadership. The purpose of the conference is to review the circumstances surrounding the concern, consider the student's learning and wellbeing needs, evaluate previous interventions, and recommend an appropriate course of action.

The Class Conference serves as a consultative mechanism within the School's disciplinary processes. It provides a recommendation to the Principal regarding appropriate disciplinary action.

The Principal considers the recommendation alongside all available information and documentation before making a final determination.

Where the Principal does not adopt the recommendation of the Class Conference, the reasons for this decision will be communicated to the conference.

12. Suspension

Suspension may be imposed where the school considers that a student's conduct represents a serious breach of the School's expectations, poses a risk to the safety or wellbeing of others, or where previous disciplinary interventions have not resulted in sufficient improvement. Suspension decisions will be made by the Principal (or a delegated senior leader where authorized) and will be implemented in accordance with procedural fairness. As a minimum, where a suspension is imposed, GISS will (as appropriate to the circumstances): provide parents/carers with written notice of the suspension (including the reason, commencement date, duration and arrangements for learning); consider any immediate safety risk management and supervision requirements; provide work where practicable; and document the decision and actions taken on the student file.

12.1 Internal Suspension

An internal suspension requires the student to remain at school and complete learning tasks separately under staff supervision. Internal suspension is intended as a serious intervention and a circuit breaker while maintaining access to learning.

12.2 External Suspension

An external suspension requires the student to remain at home for a defined period. Where appropriate, the student will be provided with learning materials and guidance during the suspension period.

12.3 Re-entry Meeting

A re-entry meeting will take place before the student returns to regular classes. This meeting may include the student, parent or carer, relevant staff, and school leadership. The purpose of the meeting is to review the incident, clarify expectations and support a successful return to school.

13. Immediate Escalation for Serious Behaviour

Certain behaviours require immediate disciplinary action.

Examples include behaviour that:

- poses a serious risk to the safety of others;
- involves significant physical violence;
- involves prohibited substances or weapons;
- constitutes serious misconduct, serious harassment, intimidation, or illegal activity.

In such circumstances, GISS will proceed directly to suspension, probationary enrolment, or termination of enrolment, subject to procedural fairness.

The Principal or delegated school leader will determine when the seriousness of an incident requires immediate escalation without following the usual sequence of disciplinary responses.

Where a serious incident involves alleged child abuse, reportable conduct, significant harm, or suspected criminal activity, GISS will follow its Child Protection and Incident Management procedures, including making any notifications required by law (for example, top relevant authorities) and engaging external agencies where appropriate.

14. Probationary Enrolment

Probationary enrolment may be implemented where a student's behaviour raises serious concerns or where previous disciplinary measures have not resulted in sufficient improvement.

Probation provides a structured opportunity for the student to demonstrate improved behaviour while receiving appropriate support.

During probation:

- clear behavioural expectations are established;
- behavioural goals are documented;
- progress is monitored over a defined period;
- additional support strategies may be implemented.

A Behaviour Support Plan is to be developed in consultation with the student, parents, and relevant staff. The probationary period must include regular review meetings to evaluate the student's progress.

Failure to meet the expectations outlined during probation may result in further disciplinary action, including termination of enrolment.

15. Termination of Enrolment

Termination of enrolment may occur where:

- a student commits a serious breach of the School's expectations or Code of Conduct;
- the student's behaviour poses a significant risk to the safety or wellbeing of others;
- repeated disciplinary interventions have not resulted in sufficient improvement.

In determining whether termination of enrolment is appropriate, the School may consider the seriousness of the behaviour, the student's disciplinary history, the impact on the school community and any relevant personal circumstances.

The decision to terminate enrolment rests with the Principal and will be made in accordance with the School's Conditions of Enrolment and the principles of procedural fairness. Before a decision is finalized, GISS will ordinarily provide written notice of the proposed termination, the reasons, and an opportunity for the student and parents/carers to respond within a reasonable timeframe (unless urgent safety considerations require otherwise).

16. Procedural Fairness

The School applies the principles of procedural fairness and natural justice when making disciplinary decisions.

This includes (as appropriate to the circumstances and seriousness of the matter):

- informing the student and parents/carers of the concerns and the substance of the allegations (including relevant evidence where appropriate)

- providing the student with an opportunity to respond and to have their views heard, including with a parent/carer or other support person present where appropriate
- considering relevant evidence and the student's individual circumstances (including any disability, learning, wellbeing, and safety considerations) and any reasonable adjustments that may be required
- making an impartial, proportionate decision, documenting the reasons, and communicating the outcome (including any conditions and next steps) to the student and parents/carers.

The degree to which these steps are applied may vary according to the seriousness of the matter.

Where a parent/carer considers that a significant disciplinary decision (including suspension or termination of enrolment) has not been made in accordance with this Policy and GISS's procedures, they may request an internal review through GISS's Complaints Handling Procedure. Requests should be made in writing as soon as practicable after the decision is communicated. Lodging a complaint does not automatically stay the operation of the decision unless the Principal determines otherwise having regard to safety and wellbeing.

17. Students with Additional Needs

When responding to disciplinary matters, the School considers the individual circumstances of the student, including developmental stage, disability, learning needs and wellbeing considerations.

Where appropriate, reasonable adjustments may be implemented to support the student in accordance with applicable legal obligations and the School's Inclusion Policy.

Where behaviour is connected to a student's disability, learning needs or wellbeing circumstances, the School will consider appropriate support strategies and reasonable adjustments. The implementation of support strategies does not prevent the School from applying disciplinary responses where necessary to maintain the safety, wellbeing, and orderly functioning of the school environment.

18. Record Keeping

Significant disciplinary incidents and actions are documented and retained as part of the student's school record. Accurate record keeping supports consistent and fair decision-making and enables the School to monitor patterns of concern and student wellbeing. Records will be stored securely, handled in accordance with applicable privacy obligations, accessed only by staff with a legitimate need to know. Parents/carers may request access to student records in accordance with GISS's Records Management/Privacy procedures, subject to any lawful limitations.

19. Related Policies and Supporting Documents

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following documents:

- Behaviour Guidance Policy
- Inclusion Policy
- Discipline Policy Supplementary Material for Teachers
- Complaints Handling Procedure (including internal review of significant disciplinary decisions)
- Child Protection Policy / Code of Conduct (including Reportable Conduct Scheme and Mandatory Reporting obligations)
- Anti-Bullying / Harassment and Discrimination Policy
- Privacy and Records Management Policy (including management of student records and information sharing)

20. Interpretation of this Policy

This policy provides a framework for the management of student discipline at the German International School Sydney. While the School will generally follow the processes described in this policy, the School will respond to individual circumstances as required. The School will take disciplinary action that it considers reasonable and proportionate to the behaviour in question, consistent with the principles outlined in this policy and the School's Conditions of Enrolment.

Appendix A – Student Discipline Escalation Framework

The examples provided in this framework are illustrative only and are not intended to represent an exhaustive list of behaviours.

The following summary diagram is intended as a quick reference only. Serious behaviour may be escalated immediately according to the circumstances.

<p>Level 1 – Minor Discipline Concerns Examples: calling out, minor disruption, off-task behaviour, minor playground disagreement. Response: reminder, redirection, reflective conversation, re-teaching expectations.</p>
<p>Level 2 – Repeated or Moderate Discipline Concerns Examples: repeated disruption, refusal to follow instructions, disrespectful language, ongoing peer conflict, minor misuse of technology. Response: reflection task, restorative conversation, parent communication, temporary loss of privileges.</p>
<p>Level 3 – Serious or Persistent Discipline Concerns Examples: repeated bullying behaviour, serious disrespect toward staff, ongoing defiance, significant damage to property, repeated Level 2 behaviours. Response: behaviour support plan, parent meeting, Class Conference, internal suspension.</p>
<p>Level 4 – Major Discipline Breach Examples: serious physical violence, threats or intimidation, possession of prohibited substances, possession of weapons, major safety risk. Response: external suspension, probationary enrolment, termination of enrolment.</p>

Appendix B – Staff Discipline Procedures

This appendix provides operational guidance for staff in implementing the Student Discipline Policy. It is intended for internal use and should be read together with the Discipline Policy Supplementary Material for Teachers.

B1. Restorative Discipline Conversations

Staff are encouraged to use restorative questions when responding to student behaviour. Depending on the age of the student and the circumstances, useful questions may include:

- What happened?
- What were you thinking at the time?
- Who has been affected by what happened?
- How were they affected?
- What needs to happen to make things right?
- What could you do differently next time?

B2. Behaviour Levels and Typical Staff Responses

Level 1 – Minor Discipline Concerns

Handled by the classroom teacher. The goal is immediate redirection with minimal disruption to learning.

- Examples may include calling out, talking while the teacher is speaking, being off-task, forgetting equipment and minor playground disagreements.
- Typical responses may include non-verbal reminder, redirection, brief reflective conversation, re-teaching expectations, change of seating, short refocus break and restorative peer conversation.

Level 2 – Repeated or Moderate Discipline Concerns

Teacher intervention continues, with leadership awareness if required.

- Examples may include repeated classroom disruption, refusal to follow instructions, disrespectful behaviour towards peers, minor misuse of technology and repeated Level 1 behaviours.
- Typical responses may include structured reflection conversation, written reflection sheet, temporary removal from activity, restorative meeting, parent communication and monitored behaviour goals.

Level 3 – Serious or Persistent Discipline Concerns

Leadership involvement is required.

- Examples may include repeated bullying, ongoing defiance, serious disrespect toward staff, damage to school property and repeated Level 2 incidents despite intervention.
- Possible responses may include parent meeting, Individual Behaviour Support Plan, behaviour monitoring, Class Conference, and internal suspension.

Level 4 – Major Discipline Breach

Principal involvement is required.

- Examples may include serious physical violence, threats toward staff or students, possession of weapons, possession of prohibited substances or serious harassment.
- Possible responses may include external suspension, probationary enrolment, or termination of enrolment.

B3. Documentation Expectations

Staff are required to document all ~~should document significant~~ incidents on the student's record in Compass, including:

- date and time of the event;
- factual description of behaviour level in accordance with the levels documented in Appendix A;
- staff response;
- student reflection or response;
- communication with parents or carers;
- follow-up actions and monitoring requirements.

B4. Parent Communication

Parents and carers are required to be informed when behaviour concerns persist, when behaviour escalates beyond ordinary classroom management, or when formal disciplinary consequences are implemented. Communication should be professional, factual, and aligned with the principles of procedural fairness.

Document Management

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School responsible	Principal
Board portfolio	Strategy and Governance
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