

## ADMINISTRATIVE GUIDANCE

*"A Word to the Wise"*

### MEETING THE NEEDS OF STUDENTS:

#### *1. NEED FOR ACHIEVEMENT*

Interest breeds success

Success breeds success

Success breeds interest

#### DO

- a. Assume the student wants to learn
- b. Provide different media so that more students reveal their talents
- c. Provide a variety of opportunities for success or satisfaction
- d. Be sure students are prepared for each new task
- e. Make sure a student is successful at the beginning of a task-a good start is half the job
- f. Set realistic goals-a student should know clearly what is expected
- g. Set individualized or small goals
- h. Students should understand what they are doing; why; the goal
- i. Create a situation where they can express their feelings of achievement
- j. Minimize failures
- k. Give praise for progress
- l. Give recognition for effort
- m. Provide for periodic knowledge of progress
- n. Find opportunities to praise, reward and encourage
- o. Praise sincerely
- p. Praise and reward should be earned, but awarded according to each student's individual needs

#### DON'T

- a. Set one standard
- b. Set tasks at which students have to struggle
- c. Overlook need to show off
- d. Try to find out what they don't know
- e. Make ambiguous assignments

#### SOME APPLICATIONS

- a. Written assignments in class and for homework should be clear and achievable
- b. Homework must be collected, recorded, corrected and returned
- c. Test results should not be delayed
- d. All written work must be neat and should not be accepted otherwise

- e. Keep in folder all written material; show change and improvement over long period of time
- f. Summarize at the end of the day what was accomplished. Give students opportunity to summarize what was accomplished during day, week, unit, etc.
- g. Sometimes students may want to write to parents what was accomplished.
- h. Ask students to recite what they know
- i. Give a helping hand
- j. Communication with parents-goals, accomplishments, reports of students

## **2. NEED FOR BELONGING**

Feeling of importance and individuality  
 Feeling of being accepted by the teacher  
 Feeling of being accepted by the group

### DO

- a. Notice interesting or different things about student; i.e. new clothes
- b. Try to find opportunities to say "shalom" individually, especially to those that need special attention
- c. Rotate officers and committees
- d. Find some opportunity to give attention individually, I.e. recess, during seat work

### DON'T

- a. Show favoritism
- b. Have a few students chosen all the time
- c. Single out students, i.e. Yaakov is the only one who did not do the assignment
- d. Ridicule or embarrass
- e. Point out or emphasize difference
- f. Isolate
- g. Ignore

### SOME APPLICATIONS

- a. Encourage participation in G.O. and Student Council activities
- b. Elect class officers; committees and appoint committees
- c. Post names of officers, committees, monitors on bulletin board
- d. Teacher and class call when student is ill; committee sends get well cards
- e. Make point to welcome back absent students, "We missed you."
- f. Class newspaper, school newspaper-find opportunities to have student's name printed in different media
- g. Call student's name often-wants to be heard (not "you" or "next")
- h. Concept of belonging (sense of identification) to "Klal Yisrael"; build up pride in being part of Torah Jewry-clippings about Torah Jews etc.
- i. School and interschool religious activities

### ***3. NEED FOR AFFECTION AND ACCEPTANCE***

Understand and accept students' feelings

Be kind but firm

Consequence of lack of affection-aggress, aggressiveness, hostility, submissiveness

#### **DO**

- a. Accept each student as an individual-unique
- b. Care for each student and let him/her know that you like and care for him/her
- c. Treat and talk to them with respect-don't hurt them needlessly (don't nag)
- d. Be sensitive to their dress, plans, hopes, worries
- e. Take an interest in their lives in and out of school
- f. Affection shown by trust in the student, tone of voice, smile, warmth
- g. Avoid rejecting students
- h. A classroom with a secure feeling is more concerned with learning. Guard the student's self-esteem
- j. Agree to discuss the student's progress by phone during period until next conference or parent-teacher conference
- k. Critical comments – if a pupil falls short in any respect (attendance, scholarship, manners, cooperation, etc.) it is our obligation to so inform parents. But it must be done tactfully and directed to getting parents to cooperate in improving the situation.

### **COMMUNICATING WITH PARENTS:**

The school's first line of communication is the report card. It affords the school an opportunity to give parents a rather complete view of their son or daughter's progress.

The comments are keys to the effective use of the report card and should be completed with care.

The follow up conference at the end of the first and third quarters provide for the opportunity for cooperative and parallel efforts of school and home. Both parents and school can learn more out of the "whole" student as a result.

The following guidelines are offered in this light:

### ***PLANNING THE CONFERENCE***

- a. Make sure that the purpose of the conference is clear in your own mind
- b. Indicate to the parent that the conference is for a short period of up to ten minutes and that if more time is needed another appointment can be arranged
- c. Arrange furniture so that the parent will be comfortable
- d. Have no desk, table or other barriers between you and the parent

- e. Before the conference, analyze any pertinent information you may have concerning the student and parents. Since you are to report progress, be sure that all the information you need is at hand.
- f. Have copies of the student's work on hand

### ***CONDUCTING THE CONFERENCE***

- a. Greet the parents in a friendly, natural way and ask them to be seated
- b. Express your appreciation for their coming to the conference
- c. In approaching the subject of the conference, make the parents feel interested and free to talk with you. Lead up to the subject casually. An excellent means of beginning the conference is to show the parents some work the student has done that is particularly good.
- d. Bring out the purpose of the conference. It is best to get to this point as early in the conference as possible.
- e. Let the parents talk without interruption until they have said everything they want to say. Nothing helps a person who is emotionally upset to gain control of his emotions and to think rationally about a problem more quickly than to have a sympathetic listener who does not interrupt.

Many parents tend to become dominating or cross examine, or to become patronizing in exercising a counseling or guidance function. A conference is almost certain to produce undesirable results unless the teacher is a merely gracious listener, and admits inadequacies and possible errors.

- f. Point out the student's strengths and virtues before you mention his /her weaknesses. Parents always feel better when they know their child is succeeding at something.
- g. Reflect the parents' feelings in your remarks to them. If a parent says, "Debby isn't doing as well in school as she should be," reply with something like, "You think Debby is not doing as well in school as you'd like." Don't say, "I think Debby is doing fine" or "Debby is not doing well."
- h. Use the content of the parents' remarks and questions.
- i. As needed, summarize the main points that are brought out, i.e. "Debby seems to be getting along fine at home but she often has trouble at school. Is that how you see it?" Help the parents see the problems more clearly as the interview progresses.

### ***ENDING THE CONFERENCE***

- a. Outline what you and the parents intend to do as a result of the conference.
- b. End the conference on an optimistic, rather than a pessimistic note, and mention the student's good points rather than the weaknesses.
- c. Complete the parent-teacher conference report form so that the office may have a record of your conference.

## **THE HOMEWORK BILL OF RIGHTS:**

### ***WHAT PARENTS HAVE A RIGHT TO EXPECT FROM TEACHERS***

- a. Parents have a right to expect that teachers will be sure that the student clearly understands the assignment. It should be definite and concrete and should always have been explained in class.
- b. Parents should be able to expect that teachers will not give homework for disciplinary reasons.
- c. When homework is completed and turned in, parents should know that it will be carefully checked by the teacher. Otherwise, it should not be assigned.
- d. Parents can expect that assignments will not require the use of books or other materials which are not available in the home or accessible from school or the public library.
- e. Homework will be assigned only when it clearly serves a purpose. Students often don't know why they are to do this or that. When assigned reading, for example, they need to be told whether they are to learn specific facts, or if they are to look for the main ideas in the material, whether they are to relate detailed thought, or if they are to draw inferences and conclusions.
- f. Parents have a right to expect homework to be within the ability of the student. Otherwise, the student will be forced to "borrow" his classmate's work, prevail on Mom or Dad to do it, or forget the whole matter with unpleasant results for all.
- g. parents have a right to expect some homework when the pupil has been absent or when he is not working up to expectancy and needs special remedial work.

### ***WHAT TEACHERS HAVE A RIGHT TO EXPECT FROM PARENTS***

- a. Teachers have a right to expect that the parents will arrange for the child a quiet, comfortable and well lighted place, with ample work space.
- b. If the assignment is reasonable, teachers have a right to expect that the parents will cooperate by encouraging their child to do it. Teachers have the right to expect that parents will help the child in his development of good study habits.
- c. A student may have difficulty with homework because he/she lacks good study habits.
- d. Teachers have a right to expect the parents to refuse to carry out the assignment for the student. This does not mean parents shouldn't point out principles involved, help give illustrations, and make some suggestions. However, if they take over and force, cajole, bribe or punish they may see to it that the studying is done, but hardly in a way that suggests that learning can be an interesting occupation and certainly without helping the student grow in his/her ability to assume responsibility.
- e. Teachers also have a right to expect parents to take a broad view of the values of various types of homework, since the values differ under different circumstances and conditions.

## **HOW TO AVOID DISCIPLINE PROBLEMS, SOME GENERAL RULES:**

- a. Remember that good discipline begins in the classroom, not the principal's office.
- b. Be consistent, fair, firm and prompt in carrying out correction. Seek the cause of the trouble and try to remove it. If you cannot remove it, you are at least more apt to be just if you understand it.
- c. Remove cause of irritation. Check on seating as far as ability to see and hear are concerned.
- d. Never humiliate a pupil in front of the whole class.
- e. Be strict with new groups. Be more severe and firm the first few days than you intend to be after the class gets to know you better. Handle your own discipline problems if you want to retain pupils' respect.
- f. Make classroom rules together with the students at the beginning of the school year. Be positive in your approach to rules and regulations. Say, "In this class we do so and so...," rather than "Don't do..."
- g. Keep rules to a minimum, but enforce those you make.
- h. Never discipline a whole class for the infractions of a few or an individual.
- i. NEVER assign school work as a punishment.
- j. NEVER argue with a pupil. Let him state his case, but do not lower yourself to petty bickering. Keep calm and your voice under control.
- k. NEVER make threats which you cannot carry out or do not intend to carry out. Do not scold or use sarcasm, ridicule or insulting remarks. You will only stir up more resentment and cause more trouble. Deprivation of privileges is a very effective form of punishment. Do not hesitate to consult with parents if necessary. This technique frequently works wonders.
- l. Nearly all cases can be handled adequately by a private "face to face" talk with the offender. (See below)
- m. Only refer disciplinary matters to higher authorities as a last resort.
- n. Petty offenders "sent to the office" indicate a weak teacher. Master teachers seldom have trouble with discipline. The best preventative of disorder is an interesting, purposeful, and well taught lesson. If the pupil is motivated to want to learn he will never be a discipline problem.
- o. Never stand for rudeness at any time.
- p. Make use of the demerit system but do not permit yourself to become a policeman.

## **DEALING WITH DISCIPLINE PROBLEMS**

### ***DETERMINING THE NATURE OF THE PROBLEM***

We've all had our share of discipline problems. If asked, we could relate the names of students as well as the specific nature of each problem. That's why it might surprise us to know that what we believed to be the cause of the misbehavior may not be the problem at all. At least it might not be the real problem as far as the student is concerned. That's because there are always two vital visions in every discipline problem-the teacher's and the student's. And it's amazing how often they differ. It is suggested that teachers could solve many more discipline problems if they would do one thing before beginning-get both visions.

## ***DEFINITE STEPS***

With every discipline problem, the following steps should be taken. Hours of time and frustration searching for possible solutions may be saved.

First, arrangements should be made for a private conference with the student. The tone should be friendly rather than angry and should be open and frank. The purpose is both to give and to receive information and the student should understand at the outset that it is a two way discussion. The teacher should begin by relating in simple and direct terms what he or she perceives as the problem, "You are always talking to and pestering your classmates." "You are inattentive," etc., adding "This is how I see the problem, how do you see it?" This question must never receive a shallow answer, one must continue to dig and find out what the student is really thinking and feeling. The meeting should not be permitted to end until every detail-large or small-is out in the open.

This is a vitally important procedure for two reasons. If the student does not see the problem as the teacher does he or she will not accept responsibility for the problem. Without such acceptance, a student will not participate in the solution. That's why there must be a mutual agreement on the whole problem. If a student will not open up, the support of the principal might be of help in uncovering all the facts from the student's point of view.

More often than not, teachers will find that the student's opinion differs from his/hers. Equally important, he/she will be surprised how often the problem is being caused by something small, insignificant, and even unrelated. For instance, one might see a student's behavior as a clear case of disrespect, while the student claims the misbehaving is caused because the student feels that the teacher is treating others better. Or the teacher might see the problem as being caused by not paying attention in class, while the student is saying that the teacher never pays attention to what he or she says or that, "You embarrassed me in front of the class." Even in apparently clean-cut cases, one will see conflicting opinions getting in the way of a solution. It is wise to remember that the first step in solving a problem is to define it, and discipline problems need two identifications.

That's why the major question is: Who sees what- and why?

This approach facilitates solving the whole problem rather than only part of it; it can also solve the problem at its source.

Once there is a realization that there are usually two sides to most discipline problems a teacher can then take steps to bridge the gap. Then a teacher sees how a student perceives a problem, he/she can begin the task of changing attitudes and behaviors; he/she can deal with the problem effectively because he/she arrived at its root.