

# CHENGVELO SCHOOL



## Discipline Policy Statement 2010

## **AIMS**

Discipline in a school context, just as in the family, must be seen as a positive activity which functions as an integral part of the pastoral care and development of the child. In disciplining we are trying to achieve the following aims;

### For the School

- achieve a secure and orderly learning environment to enable the other aims of the school to be achieved
- establish a high reputation and public image to attract prospective parents and bring Glory to God

### In the individual

- good manners and behaviour
- respect for elders and peers
- right relationships
- self-discipline
- self-esteem
- high moral standards
- becoming more Christ-like

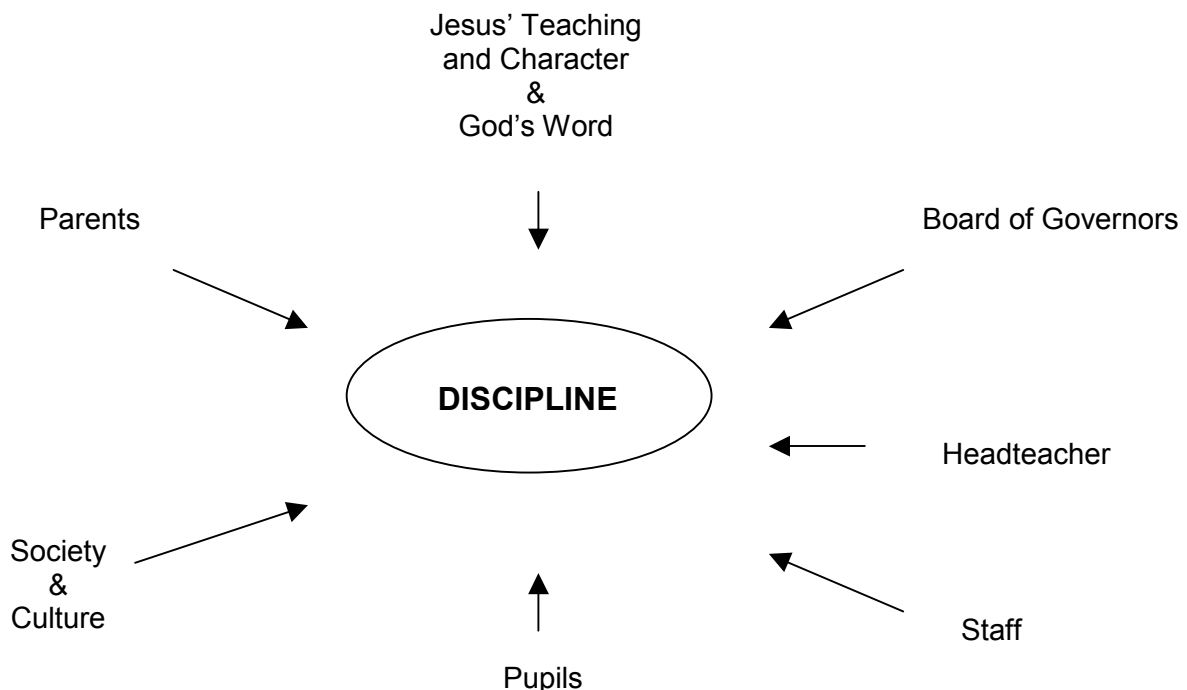
In a Christian School we want to see discipline which brings about a change of heart in pupils and not merely the outward appearance of change. Discipline must be seen as redemptive, restoring the pupil to right relationships and behaviour. There needs to be space for pupils to recognise where they have gone wrong, to repent of their misdemeanours and the chance to try things again. The Bible makes it clear that we have the opportunity to mould the character and ways of the young people in our care with the promise that if we get it right they will not turn from what they have learnt when they become adults.

This represents a huge responsibility, but also an exciting challenge.

## SECTION A : PRINCIPLES OF GOOD DISCIPLINE

### Standards

The standards of behaviour expected in the school are influenced by a variety of sources as shown in figure 1. In a Christian School, Jesus' character and teaching form the basis not only for what is accepted behaviour, but also for the attitude of heart that we are trying to inculcate into the pupils. The Bible teaches that children should honour their mothers and fathers and respect their elders, and also that parents (and teachers) should not provoke them to anger by the way they deal with them. The Board of Governors are informed every term of any serious misdemeanours which occur and try to monitor the level of discipline in the school. They have also clearly stated that they want a school *"where love and understanding prevent the need of a cane and replace indifference."* The Headmaster is responsible to the Board of Governors for the discipline of the school and obviously must take a lead in setting standards. He also deals with the major discipline problems in conjunction with the other senior staff and aims to be strict, fair and consistent, establishing a basis of good discipline which the other staff can work within.



**Fig. 1**

In order to achieve the highest standards it is important that all staff expect excellent behaviour from the pupils in every interaction they have with them. Only with all the staff pulling together will we achieve the standards we desire. Pupils often talk to other staff once they have been disciplined and, whilst we need to provide a listening ear, we must also support the standards

of the school and reinforce with the pupil what they have done wrong and how they should behave in future. It is also important that we have common standards as a staff. The Pupil Handbook which includes rules and procedures is a useful starting point and as a staff we have discussed and agreed on the standards we expect in the dining hall, when greeting and talking to staff, etc. We need to guard against simply trying to replicate the standards of other schools we have known. As Noel Weeks points out we must review our standards to ensure that they are truly Biblical and culturally relevant.

*"It may seem strange to call behaviour an unimportant item. In many ways it is not unimportant. What can be time consuming and divisive is disagreement on the standards and style of behaviour expected. Some want an almost military standard of respect and conformity from the children. Others favour a much more relaxed style. These differences can lead to argument. How do we resolve such differences? We can only resolve them if we are ruled by Scripture. A consequence of being ruled by Scripture is that these extra-biblical standards do not command much weight with us. We may have our preferences but we do not see them as important enough to cause conflict. Where people have strong feelings on such non-moral questions they generally reflect the attitudes of a particular class or group in society. As Christians we are to cut across such social divisions. For a Christian school to take a strong stand on these issues will be to divide the Christian community on class lines. That is wrong."*  
Noel Weeks "The Christian School: An Introduction", page83

Our parents set their own standards in the home and we have to work from these. The parents also have firm views on what standards of behaviour they find acceptable in school and we need to acknowledge this. It is important that the parents are supportive of our standards, not only to avoid conflict when their child is disciplined, but so that parent and teachers are working together in bringing up the child.

Chengelo is a Zambian Christian school and therefore we must consider what is acceptable to the society we live in. We must not compromise our standards, but must acknowledge the good in society and reinforce it. For example, Zambian Christians have very strong views on boy/girl relationships and even courting couples would never be in a house alone together in order to avoid any hint of sin. For this reason our rules on physical contact are very conservative and strictly enforced.

It may seem strange to suggest that the pupils are involved in setting the standards of discipline in the school. This is not intended to mean that the pupils negotiate the standards and rules with the staff, although they are

allowed to comment and make suggestions through the Student Representative Council. What is meant is that discipline is an interactive and continuous process. Pupils come to the school with standards of behaviour set by their parents and previous schools and we need to take them from where they are. Furthermore, with the pupils' co-operation we can achieve much higher standards and so it is important to build relationships and ensure that we are working together towards a common goal. Finally, as the students get nearer and nearer to adulthood they become more fixed in their ways and therefore the potential for change by human means becomes less and only through faith in Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour and Lord can they know release from slavery to sin.

## **Discipline and Love**

One of the foundational passages of Scripture referring to discipline is found in Hebrews 12:4-11. Here Paul uses the analogy of a father disciplining his son as an imperfect example of how God disciplines us. In the same way that Paul uses the similarities between husband & wife and Christ & the Church, we can turn Paul's analogy around to learn more about how we should discipline children.

*In your struggle against sin, you have not resisted to the point of shedding your blood. <sup>5</sup>And you have forgotten that word of encouragement which addresses you as sons:*

*"My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, because the Lord disciplines those whom he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son."*

*<sup>7</sup>Endure hardships as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father? <sup>8</sup>If you are not disciplined (and everyone undergoes discipline), then you are illegitimate children and not true sons. <sup>9</sup>Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of our spirits and live! <sup>10</sup> Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in His holiness. <sup>11</sup>No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.*

In verse 5 the word 'discipline' literally means to 'educate' and could also be translated as to train or teach with an emphasis on correction and guidance. We should not detach 'discipline' from our central task of educating the pupils, and discipline must be seen as a fundamental aspect of what we are trying to achieve at the school.

Verse 6 shows us that love and discipline go hand in hand. We cannot have one without the other, and discipline springs out of love. You cannot have love without discipline otherwise we would not truly be sons (verse 8). Whilst the teacher/pupil relationship is not the same as that between a father and son, as teachers we are *in loco parentis* and this is even truer in a boarding school setting. We may be tempted to love the pupils without disciplining them, but this is not real love. Those of us with children of our own will know that love compels us to discipline them when they go wrong because we are concerned about their development and the consequences if they are not corrected. In the school we may be tempted to adopt a 'grandparent' approach because disciplining is not pleasant, but this will only result in spoiling the pupils. Furthermore, if we turn a blind eye or are too busy or too lazy to discipline then we are really not loving the pupils either.

We can argue that the corollary of this is also true - that discipline without love is also meaningless. Just because we discipline does not mean that we are automatically loving the pupils. Do we care for them almost as if they were our own children? Do we hurt inside when we discipline them? Do we feel that it is love that compels us to discipline? It is also misdirected to say that we discipline because of the school's reputation or because we are serving the Lord. We must care deeply for each individual pupil and our discipline must spring from that, not a concern to avoid behaviour problems or generate a good image for the school. Our loving concern must be for the healthy character development of each child.

A consequence of discipline in love will be that the pupils will respect us (verse 9), although this respect may not always be immediate. Love without discipline, or discipline without love will not 'ring true' and we will eventually lose the pupils' respect if this is how we operate. Respect comes from an eventual understanding of what parents or teachers are trying to achieve. Paul urges us to put God's discipline in the context of our lives and to try to understand how He is moulding us. In the same way we should make the pupils aware of what we are disciplining for and what it is we are trying to achieve in them.

Just as earthly fathers discipline as they think best (verse 10) so we are called to do the best we can in disciplining the pupils. We need to apply our minds and understanding to each situation and to share the experience and expertise of other staff so that we can genuinely say that we have tried our best. We should be creative and introduce fresh thinking, taking time to consider our actions rather than simply reacting. By implication, Paul suggests that we will never be perfect in disciplining since we are only human. This should release us from the guilt of failure and encourage us to do the best that we can.

Only God's discipline is perfect (verse 10). His discipline does not exasperate and He deals with the most important issues in the best way. Only He knows the full situation and what is in our hearts. As Christians we need to 'tap in' to this heavenly discipline and should pray that God will give us supernatural wisdom when dealing with the pupils. This may mean a word of knowledge or discernment being given so that we can get to the heart of a situation and then speak God's word into it. This will be far more successful than trying to discipline in our own strength.

Disciplining is not a pleasant task (verse 11) either for the pupil or the teacher. However it will eventually produce a 'harvest of righteousness and peace'. Good discipline is not just the absence of bad behaviour or an outward semblance of co-operation. It is fruit that is real and permanent, stemming from a changed heart, and of real benefit to the young person for the rest of their lives.

The Bible is realistic in its teaching on discipline. While it is clear that God's desire is always for people to repent and to turn to him, it also teaches that some have hardened hearts and will not repent. Where discipline does not result in a change, and wilful disobedience persists then exclusion might be the most appropriate course of action to take. Exclusion might be necessary to protect other students from harmful and negative influences or it might be necessary to protect the reputation of the School. But exclusion should be carried out with love and a desire that a change of heart may yet come about in the child concerned.

## **Achieving Discipline**

Before considering how we discipline children we must have a framework for understanding their development. Ezzo (*Growing Kids God's Way*, 1990) suggests that there are three building block periods that parents need to pass through before achieving the goal of a friendship relationship with their child. These phases could also apply to a teacher's approach to discipline. Each phase requires different discipline methods to be successful.

AGE	DESCRIPTION
0-5	<p><b>Disciplinarian</b> Your primary goal as a parent is to establish your right to rule in the mind of the child. That is not an oppressive rulership but it is authoritative. It is a phase of tight boundaries, not unlimited freedoms. Your task is to get control of the child so you can effectively train him. If you cannot control the child neither you, nor anyone else, will be able to train him.</p>
6-12	<p><b>Training</b> To borrow a sports analogy, a trainer is one who works with the athlete each day in different settings, going through drills and exercises. He can stop the player any time and make immediate corrections, explaining the reasons and showing him what to do and how to do it. During this phase, our children are not yet in the real game of life - only the practice sessions.</p>
13-19	<p><b>Coaching</b> Now our children are in the game of life for themselves. We can send plays in from the sidelines and huddle during the time-outs, but we can no longer stop the game and show them how it is done. They are now calling the plays themselves and moving forward. How well your children run through the plays of life will be determined by how well you coach them. How they respond to your coaching is determined by what kind of trainer you were. Your ability to train your children is determined by what kind of disciplinarian you were. What type of disciplinarian you are is determined by how well you have established your right to rule.</p>
Adult	<p><b>Friendship</b> This is the goal of our parenting: friendship with our children. Although the parent-child relationship doesn't cease, both parent and child enter into a new season of life. Just as it was with the Lord and His disciples, it should also be with your children: a discipleship relationship culminating in friendship (John 15:15). The process begins with tight boundaries giving way to responsible behaviour, and from that comes freedom. Parents who try to be a friend early to their children only succeed in raising a fool.</p>

This would suggest that in a Secondary School we need to major on a 'coaching' approach and reinforces the perspective that what has or has not already been built into the child has a major bearing on what we can achieve.

It also makes it clear that a simplistic 'tell them off and punish them' approach is unlikely to bear real fruit.

The Bible emphasises the need for chastisement, or corporal punishment, in driving out foolishness from the heart of the child (Prov 22:15). Ezzo's model would support this, but suggests that most chastisement needs to be done during the 'disciplinarian' phase. He suggests that as a child gets older they should need chastising less as shown in the following chart.

<u>AGE</u>	<u>% Completion of Chastisement</u>
15 months - 5 years	85%
5 years - 10 years	98%
10 years - 12 years	99%
13 years - 15 years	100%

We also need to examine the context in which discipline takes place. If the teacher has built up a good relationship with the pupil based on love, respect and trust, then any disciplinary action is much more likely to be effective; indeed it is much less likely that there will be any discipline problems in the first place. As teachers we need to think through how we can develop such relationships. There needs to be plenty of positive encounters with the pupils with time spent working alongside them. We need to be open, honest, fair, consistent and just in our dealings with them. We need to be ourselves, yet be wary of trying to curry favour with them or attempting to become one of them as they will quickly see through this and lose respect for us.

## **SECTION B: CODE OF CONDUCT & DISCIPLINARY SANCTIONS**

### **Encouraging Respect, Positive Attitudes and Good Manners**

The School recognises that part of good discipline involves developing abilities that enable students to relate well to other people. It is especially important that they interact with adults (visitors, staff and workers) and each other in appropriate ways. It is expected of all Chengelo Students that they involve themselves in a high standard of conduct in their relationship with others in the School.

#### **Good Manners**

- Greet staff and visitors cheerfully and confidently – students should take the initiative with this.
- A class should stand when a visitor is introduced to them.
- Offer assistance to any adult or other visitor to the school in a cheerful and confident manner.
- Stand up to speak to people, especially staff and other visitors.

- No hands in pockets when addressing people or being spoken to by an adult.
- No eating in class, the library, the computer rooms or around the school buildings.
- Show appropriate appreciation to anyone who does something for you.

## **Respect**

- Show all visitors, staff, and workers at the school deserve full respect at all times in the way you speak, dress and present yourselves.
- When someone is addressing a group, (in class, assembly, Fusion, church, sports field, Ndubaluba etc.) it is a mark of respect to listen in silence, unless specifically invited to participate.
- Arriving late for class, meetings, services, games, practices, clubs or rehearsals is disrespectful to others and is not tolerated.
- Do not 'answer back' when an adult is correcting you, unless you are invited to.
- Give way to adults and should show consideration for others.
- Respect others. Rowdy and noisy behaviour is not acceptable.

## **A Positive Attitude**

- Enter wholeheartedly and willingly into events and activities organised for you. Always try your best.
- Do not grumble or complain about having to do things you might not want to do.
- Be appreciative of the effort that people make for you.
- Honour commitments that you have made.
- Be prepared to take on challenges.

*“Small things make a big difference”*

## **Disciplinary Sanctions**

When things do go wrong the School has established a clear and consistent approach towards disciplinary measures so that we do not confuse and frustrate the pupils.

The school currently has a hierarchy of punishments as follows;

1. **Verbal Warning** from Staff / Prefects.
2. **Debit** (15 minutes) from Staff / Prefect / Form Five Monitors.  
This is recorded on a referral slip but students do not receive a detention as long as they receive no further debits that week.

**3. Hostel & Academic or School Detention (30/45/60 minutes) from Staff / Prefect.**

Recorded on the referral slip with detention organised by the houseparent or within academic departments depending on whether the misdemeanour was in the classroom or hostel. School detention will be organised by the Pastoral Head for occasions when school rules are broken outside the classroom or hostel. School detentions may also be given when a student has accumulated warning debits in more than one area (i.e. Hostel and Academic). Detention punishments are intended to be positive, constructive, appropriate and applicable to the offence committed. They should not be unduly demeaning or degrading. Staff may sometimes wish to give an immediate punishment themselves rather than a debit. This should not be the norm and staff should follow the same guidelines as for detentions. Hostel and academic punishments should not be more severe than those given by Pastoral Heads. Staff may also consider removing some privileges if appropriate. They will consult with the Deputy-Head/Pastoral Head on such issues. A record stating the reason for the punishment and when it was given is to be placed on the students file.

**4. Pastoral Heads Detention (30/45/60 minutes) from Staff / Prefect.**

This is a more serious punishment given for breaking school rules. This may mean the pupil has broken a rule such as insubordination to a member of staff, or has accumulated debits in a variety of areas. It will also be used where the student has previously been disciplined for a similar offence. Administered by the Pastoral-Heads. A record slip stating the reason for the punishment and when it was given is to be placed on the pupils file.

**5. Gating / Daily Report / Detention from Head / Deputies**

Serious offences referred to the Headmaster or Deputy. This may involve the direct breaking of school rules (as outlined in the pupil handbook), it may involve a student who has already received a Pastoral Heads Detention and who repeats a similar offence. Gating will mean the loss of all privileges (see Pupil Handbook), the restriction of pupil to their hostel during free time and they will be required to wear school uniform at all times. A letter will be sent to parents / legal guardian and a copy placed on the pupil's file. Students put on Daily report will see the Deputy Head or Head at the end of each school day. Where appropriate, a combination of these may be used, e.g. a pupil on daily report may also be given detention.

**6. Suspension by Head**

A pupil may be suspended for any repeat offence or deteriorating behaviour after they have already been punished to Stage 5 (gating, Daily

Report or detention by Head or Deputies). Suspension will also be used for serious offences such as smoking, alcohol, wilful damage to property or a serious case of bullying or aggressive behaviour (see pupil handbook). Following suspension, a student will be sent home for up to two weeks. Parents/ Legal guardians will be required to attend an interview with the Headteacher prior to re-admission. Suspensions are only issued by the Headteacher, who will consult with appropriate staff. A letter will be sent home warning that this is the pupil's last chance and a copy placed in the student's file. The Board of Governors will be informed.

## **7. Permanent Exclusion**

For serious offences the Headteacher has the authority to suspend a student pending a Disciplinary Committee [sub-committee of the Board] decision whether they should return to school or be permanently excluded. Some serious offences lead to automatic Permanent Exclusion. Examples of this would include a student found in the possession of drugs or a boy or girl found in each other's room. Students who have been suspended once already may also be subject to this level of discipline. The procedure for this is laid out in Appendix 1.

It should be noted that the punishments become more severe the further one goes down the list. This is deliberate, and serves as an indication to parents and students of how serious an offence has been.

It must be emphasised that there is no obligation on the part of the school to proceed through all seven stages in order. It is permissible to use the maximum punishment at the first instance depending on the circumstances. For example a student found in possession of drugs will automatically be suspended until board decision. Pupils who show a persistent disregard for school rules or deteriorating behaviour will be dealt with severely and where previous punishments have shown no change in a pupil's behaviour, a student may be suspended and even excluded for such persistent poor behaviour. It should be noted that the examples given in this policy are not an exhaustive list and the school reserves the right to review individual cases and the right to define serious offences.

For most pupils these sanctions will be of academic interest only as they will probably never get beyond a school detention. It is useful for difficult pupils as it is possible to use the hierarchy to show how serious their situation is, where they are heading unless they change and ensures that no pupil has to leave the school without being given sufficient warnings.

Having laid out a hierarchy of disciplinary measures it needs to be stressed that we are not intending to charge headlong down the list on every occasion. Indeed, the sign of good disciplinary practice might be to achieve the

standards you set with the minimum of pressure being applied. This means that we need to develop a range of strategies for tackling students when they make mistakes so that we do not provoke anger but lead them through redemption and gain their respect in the process. Obviously the approach depends on the pupil, the member of staff, the misdemeanour and the history of this happening in the past, but some suggestions might be;

- disapproving glare
- politely pointing out what they have done and asking them not to do it again
- joking about the mistake whilst making it clear that they shouldn't repeat it
- showing that they have upset or disappointed you
- asking them if they know what they have done wrong
- accepting their apology if they offer it first
- taking them to one side to calmly talk the whole thing through
- telling them off
- telling them off publicly

This list is not exhaustive by any means. Not all staff will use all of these and some will develop their own techniques. In most cases this will be all that is needed to correct the pupil.

In all cases we must remember that we are trying to build into the pupils a different attitude and way of thinking, not merely an ability to stay out of trouble. We need to avoid legalism as this invokes a negative response from the pupils. Rules are there for a reason and not just for the sake of having rules. Some rules are very important and pupils need to know this and the consequences of breaking them. Yet there are many standards and codes of conduct which are not so much important in themselves but which indicate the heart attitudes of the pupils. For instance, we expect the pupils to stand, take off their caps, take their hands out of their pockets and greet staff when they pass. Failure to do so may be due to ignorance, laziness or a lack of respect on behalf of the pupil. In disciplining them we need to know why they haven't done what we expect and make it clear to them why these things are important to us. In this way we are more likely to deal with the real problems and achieve lasting success. Turning a blind eye is of no benefit and communicates that we accept and condone their wrong attitude. Conversely, a militarily rigid approach to discipline may produce pupils who think we are only interested in the minutiae of rules and that we dislike them as individuals, rather than simply disapproving of their behaviour. It also results in the blind issuing of rebukes and punishments which may change the outward appearance and the way pupils act but is unlikely to achieve our ultimate aim of moulding their character and changing their hearts.

## **APPENDIX 1**

### **Procedure To Be Followed For Permanent Exclusion**

- a) The Headteacher collects statements and evidence. Statements will normally be written by all students and staff involved with the incident. These will be submitted to the Disciplinary Committee.
- b) The Headteacher suspends the student who will be sent home until the Disciplinary Committee meets to discuss the case. A letter is written to the parents by the Headteacher outlining the reason for suspending their child pending a decision by the Disciplinary Committee about permanent exclusion.
- c) The Director as Chairperson convenes the Disciplinary Committee. The meeting is attended by the Headteacher, relevant staff, and at least two other Board members (excluding the Chairman of the Board). The Committee makes a decision on behalf of the Board whether the student will be allowed to return to School or be permanently excluded. If the committee feel they do not have sufficient information to make a final decision they may conduct a follow up interview with parents, pupils or staff to investigate the case before making a decision. Minutes will be circulated to all Board members.
- d) The Disciplinary Committee may decide to reinstate the student and may require certain assurances to be given or conditions met. The Director will inform the parents in writing of this decision.
- e) If a decision to permanently exclude the student is reached the Director will inform the parents in writing. They will also be given the option to withdraw the pupil from the School. If this option is not taken up the Director will write a further letter to the parents confirming the Committee's decision to exclude their child and advising on the Appeal procedure.
- f) Following the Committee's decision to exclude, parents who feel that the decision was unfair, too harsh or did not take account of all circumstances, have the right to appeal in writing to the Chairman of the Board.
- g) Upon receipt of such an appeal, the Chairman of the Board will convene an Appeals Committee. He chairs the meeting which is attended by at least 3 other members of the Board who were not part of the Disciplinary Committee that originally heard the case. Before reaching their decision the Appeals Committee must ensure that they have taken the views of the Disciplinary Committee into account, as well as the issues raised in the appeal. They should have the minutes from the Disciplinary Committee and copies of all of the evidence and correspondence surrounding the case. They may consult with members of the school staff and management before reaching a decision.
- h) The decision of the Appeals Committee is final. The Chairman will circulate a report to other Board members and the relevant members of the School Management. He will also inform the parents of the decision.