

Dear Parents/Guardians:

Our School has undertaken a new discipline process this year. After reviewing the program with Fr. Johnson and Jody Kreikemeier, we have found the responsible thinking process (RTP) to be a most effective way for reducing student disruptions while enhancing their ability to resolve their problems by teaching them how to self-manage responsibility. This program will also bring consistency among the teaching staff and different grade levels.

Our Discipline Philosophy

We believe that all students are responsible for their own actions and must be taught to respect the rights of others. This means they have to learn how to think of ways to get what they want while, at the time, respecting the rights of others in the school. Teachers have a right to teach and students have a right to learn in a safe environment. None of the students have the right to disrupt at school, regardless of where they are especially if they are preventing other students from learning or are threatening the safety and the rights of others.

This philosophy fits hand and hand with the Discipline Policy as stated in the Student Handbook.

1. We at St. John the Apostle School are committed to providing a “Christ-centered” learning environment. We encourage our students to see Christ in each person in our school. We believe all students in our school are to be respected, valued, and kept safe.
2. Students are expected to use appropriate behavior at all times. Students are responsible for the choices they make regarding their behavior. When a student uses inappropriate behavior, teacher or staff help will be provided to help maintain safety and order in the school. The teacher or staff member will encourage the student to 1. identify the problem and, 2. to develop a plan to learn more appropriate behaviors for school. The goal of discipline is to help a student become more self-disciplined and make better choices regarding their behaviors.
3. Students may be referred to the office when the safety or order of the school is compromised. This will include infractions of school rules and violence.

Classroom Rules

No student is allowed to disrupt in class or anywhere else in school, including the school bus and the school grounds. When they do, they are asked to think about what they are doing and compare their action to the rules or standards of wherever they are. If they persist in breaking the rules, they have lost their right to be where they are and are then assigned to the responsibility thinking classroom (RTC), where they stay until they indicate to the teacher that they are willing to follow the rules from wherever they came. They are then taught by the RCT teacher how to work out a plan which they will use to negotiate their return with the person who was in charge of wherever they were disrupting. Students are permitted to go to all other classes and other areas where they've been responsible, such as the library, cafeteria, and recess.

In schools where this process has been successfully adopted, which means the staff has been properly trained and has read and viewed the assigned material, it has been found that 65% of the students never use the RTC; 25% use it one to three times, make a successful plan, and are rarely seen again; of the 10% left; 6 to 8% use it many times and 2 to 5% are what we call frequent flyers. For this 10% of the chronically disruptive students, the intervention process is used. It is made up of a team of educators who've spent time with the student, and who try to determine what is so important to the student that chronic disruption is part of how they try to resolve their problems. Parents are an important part of this process, and are asked to join the staff to determine a way to help their child succeed.

This process is working in other schools with very positive results. We've seen how students learned to self-manage in a highly responsible way. Because of the reduced number of classroom disruptions and the efficient way the disruptions that do occur are handled, there is a marked increase in classroom learning time. This process is based on two books by Ed Ford, Discipline for Home and School, Books One and Two, which grew out of his work in several urban schools in Phoenix, Arizona. These books are available from our school library. There are also instructional videos available from our school library. There are also instructional videos available. If you are on the internet, you may want to visit the RTP web site. It is www.responsiblethinking.com. If you have any questions, please feel free to call us here at school.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dennis Martin". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the typed name and title.

Dennis Martin
Principal

PS: We are taking this Friday, September 19th (No School) as an in-service day for all of our staff members to go through the training process. Please be patient with us as we work through this discipline program.