

## FROM RULES TO DISCIPLINARY MEASURES

The rules are constructed so that the children are able to regulate their own possible misdemeanours. If we accept that the act of making mistakes is a part of forming a personality, it is important to remember that it can only be a constructive process if they are made within well-defined boundaries with clear limits.

The first role of a disciplinary measure is to make the limits known by reminding the child of the Golden Rule. The chosen disciplinary measure will have no educational objective other than educating the pupil to take responsibility for their actions. The chosen measure must encourage reflection, taking into account that every action has a consequence. The disciplinary measure may not only make amends, but may also have a preventative role.

Finally, it is important to make the distinction between disciplinary measures taken in the case of a child breaking the school rules, and simple behaviour management strategies used to prevent a child from disturbing the class through their behaviour (for example, when distracted, chatting, or agitated).

In order that the measures taken meet the criteria, it is important that:

- They are clearly defined, known by everyone and therefore foreseeable, and written in a code of conduct.
- They must be proportional and relevant to the rule that has been broken.
- The facts, and the person/s involved, must be clearly defined in the time allocated in class council meetings.
- That all misdemeanours and any failure to obey the school rules receive swift and appropriate treatment.
- The measures taken must respect the dignity of the pupil (any humiliating or degrading self reflection is to be avoided at all costs.)
- That all teachers and assistants have authority in this for all the children in the school.
- That the entire pedagogical team collaborate to inform the necessary parties, using the class council book (written evidence).
- The teacher takes it upon themselves to inform the team if a child has reached the stage of 'losing their independence'.

At La Découverte, children are enabled to participate in the furthering and modifying of the code of behaviour, just as they would vote for, or against, certain points during the class or school council. It is, therefore, a logical step, in keeping with our pedagogy, to allow the children to comment on the established disciplinary measures, to evaluate their value and to propose eventual

modifications. All this is, of course, discussed solely in the officially designated time in class and school council.

In the case of the Golden Rule being broken, the following disciplinary action is taken in the time allocated in class council. "Controlling social behaviour in 4 steps":

- Discussion
- Warning
- Self reflection sheet
- Loss of independence

### **Preventative measures**

- Warning
- Provisional confiscation of the dangerous or provocative item
- Definitive confiscation of the item if it is a repeated occurrence
- Immediate and momentary exclusion from the class group or given space (playground, gym hall etc.) notably when the Golden Rule is not respected (see the rules) or the behaviour puts one or more pupils in emotional or physical danger.

### **Measures to put things right**

- A written or verbal apology, notably in the time given in class council meeting.
- Replacement or reimbursement of the damaged or lost item.
- Tasks, useful to the school community (notably when there has been damage to school property or areas of the school or objects belonging to others).
- Tasks with an educational impetus (repeatedly forgetting to complete tasks requested by the teacher, for example). These given tasks could feasibly be completed outside of school hours in order that the child can follow the class work in school time.
- If the homework is not completed on a regular basis, the teacher can insist, with the support of the leadership team, that the child attends homework club for a given period.

### **Measures which prioritise self-reflection.**

- The self-reflection sheet can be given to accompany a preventative or reactive disciplinary measure. The aim of the sheet is to allow the pupil to have a cooling down time, understand the meaning and significance of their action and to encourage them to explain themselves through writing or drawing. It can also be used as a basis for discussion with the teacher or parents. It gives a formal structure to apologies and future commitments. Finally, it provides written evidence. Parents are asked to

sign the sheet and, depending on the seriousness of the case, can be called in for a parent/pupil/teacher meeting.

### **Summons to a class council**

- During the class council, the pupil who has been summoned listens to the facts for which they are being reproached. They explain themselves to the group in question. They might justify their actions or decide to remedy the situation. The group of pupils may be brought to propose, and to vote for, a disciplinary measure to put things right. The teacher must take responsibility for the meeting and the appropriateness of the given measure.

### **Suspension of the role of a delegate**

- If a child continues repeatedly to not obey certain rules of the school, despite having received warnings, they could find themselves losing, or being suspended from, their position as delegate, as they are no longer credible as a representative of the class.

### **Monitoring social behaviour**

- If a child fails to obey the Golden Rule " I respect myself and others, I do not do anything to hurt anyone, emotionally or physically", the follow-up of this behaviour is done through the document "Monitoring social behaviour" during the class council.

\* \* \* \* \*