

# **RAISIN CITY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

## **STUDENT/PARENT HANDBOOK**

### **2008 -2009 SCHOOL YEAR**

(The follow is the discipline section of the Handbook)

#### **DISCIPLINE**

Raisin City School prides itself on a discipline plan that is fair, restorative, and consistent. We feel that all students have a right to go to school in a safe environment. Each student also deserves the opportunity to learn in an atmosphere of respect, free from the influence of disruptive classmates. Each student and teacher has a responsibility to do their part in creating and maintaining a respectful, safe and stimulating learning environment. We realize that there will be times when students forget their responsibility or are temporarily unwilling to be cooperative. For this reason we have developed a plan of discipline that has as its goal restoring both a safe and stimulating environment and restoring those who are negatively impacted by the misbehavior.

When a student is involved in a conflict (with other students, teacher, or school rules) we view that as a situation that needs to be resolved and as a teachable moment. Therefore, teachers first invite a cooperative resolution, unless the student is uncooperative and/or an unsafe situation calls for immediate action. Following are the options that will be pursued to invite student cooperation.

One of the structures to encourage students to resolve student/student conflicts cooperatively is the Peer Mediation Program. In this program students are trained to lead other students through a mediation process to help them respectfully resolve their conflict. Agreements are written and follow-up meetings are scheduled.

Teacher/Student conflicts can also be handled using conflict resolution. All teachers have a number of informal constructive usual reminders to help off task or disruptive students get back on task. Many times this resolves the problem. If this does not resolve the problem, the teacher will refer to the respect agreement.

All teachers will start the year by developing a respect agreement with their class(es). Together they develop a written and posted agreement that identifies how students respect students, how students respect teachers, how teachers respect students, and how everyone respects the books, desks, and all facilities. This agreement does not replace the school rules. The Raisin City School community thinks that respect is fundamental to creating a safe and stimulating school and classroom environment. Within this basic framework of respect it is possible to resolve all conflicts in very constructive ways.

When students are disturbing learning and other classmates, and the teacher has already used constructive usual reminders, respect agreement reminder, I-message reminders and/or active listening, then the teacher may arrange placement in another classroom for a temporary time-out where the student will work on assignments, allowing the class to continue without the disruption. When the student returns to class, their teacher will again invite them into an option #4

student/teacher meeting. A cooperative student and his/her teacher can recognize the problem, repair the damage, and make agreements to prevent the problem in the future. If it is helpful, another teacher or conflict resolution specialist may be asked to act as a mediator to help resolve the teacher/student conflict. Agreements are written and follow-up meetings are scheduled.

If a student has not responded to any of these reminders and is not willing to constructively participate in a #4 student/teacher meeting, another option to invite cooperation is the Thinkery. It is a time/place away from the classroom that is designed to help students who are misbehaving or in conflict to “think” about what happened and to reconsider if they are willing to seek a cooperative and restorative resolution with their teacher. The Thinkery is intended to be an encouragement to a student to consider being more cooperative. The adult in the Thinkery will guide students through the “thinking” process. Students are guided to think about what happened, write a description or describe orally what they were doing that caused them to be sent, consider how the teacher and other students experienced the problem, and reconsider their options. If a rule has been violated, they discuss the rule, its purpose, and consider what the reasoning is behind the rule. They will also be asked if they would like to meet with someone to get the help needed to change their behavior to prevent the conflict from happening again. If they agree to cooperate, they will meet with their teacher to use a #4 or #3 cooperative process to discuss the problems and to create a written agreement that will help keep the problem(s) from happening again in the future.

If the student refuses to participate in a #4 or #3 cooperative process with their teacher, or if the problem is serious and one that requires an incident report (most often related to situations that are issues of student safety) a Family Conference will be convened. A Family Conference may bring together parents, student, and teacher or possibly extended family (as requested/approved by family) with additional school personnel to support and encourage their student to develop a written plan they all think is reasonable, respectful, and restorative and that will resolve the conflicts. The conference is led by a trained conflict resolution specialist. Follow-up meeting(s) are scheduled and continue until the problem is resolved.

If a student continues to be uncooperative (repeatedly violates his/her written agreements, or is unwilling to make agreements), is creating a safety concern, or is violating California Ed. Codes the school policies and procedures will be enforced as needed to create a safe environment. As long as the student is enrolled at Raisin City School, the student will continue to be invited to be cooperative and given the opportunity to do that as soon as school authorities deem it is safe.

The key to a safe and stimulating learning environment is the willingness of all people on the school campus to treat each other respectfully. In a respectful community, participants are willing to constructively resolve conflicts and misbehaviors. All agreements and decisions made in a respectful community are reasonable, restorative, constructive, and intended to re-integrate.

For safety reasons, any severe disruption will be dealt with immediately by the Superintendent/Principal.

The steps (see flow chart) of Discipline that Restores (DTR) as described above are:

#### **Informal Process – Usual Constructive Reminders**

The student is made aware of being off task or of their disruptive behavior by simple reminders:

- teacher gains student eye contact (not the evil eye)
- teacher moves closer to student
- teacher gently re-directs student activity to the lesson
- teacher pauses during mini-lecture to gain attention
- teacher asks a question

The student who modifies his/her behavior is encouraged and supported.

If the student does not modify his/her behavior, proceed to Formal Step 1.

### **Formal Process - DTR Steps**

#### Step 1: Reminder of the Respect Agreement

- The student is made aware of their disruptive behavior.
- The student is invited to remember their respect agreement and asked if they plan to keep the agreement.
- The student who modifies his/her behavior is encouraged and supported.
- If the student does not modify his/her behavior, the teacher will use an I-message reminder and/or active listening to again invite the student to cooperate.
- If the student continues to refuse to cooperate proceed to Step 2.

#### Step 2: Teacher/Student Meeting

- The student is made aware of their disruptive behavior.
- The student is shown the “Four Options Model” and asked if they would be willing to try to resolve the problem cooperatively (using Conflict Resolution Option #4).
- If the problem is a student/student conflict, a referral is made to the Peer Mediation Program (Conflict Resolution Option #3).
- The student and teacher each describe the problem, they listen and summarize each other, and they make a written agreement to repair the damage and prevent the problem in the future.
- The teacher and student have follow-up meetings to be sure the agreements are being kept. Trust grows when agreements are made and kept.
- The student is encouraged and supported when the agreements are working.

If the agreements are not being kept, repeat Step 2 or proceed to Step 3.

### Step 3: Time-Out or Thinkery

The student who just needs a time out is sent to a space or another classroom where they can work on their assignments without disturbing the class. When they return, they will be invited to resolve the conflict/misbehavior using Conflict Resolution Option #4 (or #3 if they prefer including a mediator).

The student who refuses to resolve the problem cooperatively (using Conflict Resolution Option #4 or #3) is sent to the Thinkery.

The student is asked to think about what happened by writing or talking about what happened. The adult in the thinkery listens to and summarizes the student's concerns. If a rule has been violated, the rule is identified and its purpose is explained. The student is invited to summarize.

The student is invited to reconsider working cooperatively with the teacher. If the student is cooperative, they return to class and inform their teacher that they are willing to participate in a #4 or #3 meeting. The student may write a plan to present to the teacher in a Step 2 meeting.

If the student is uncooperative, proceed to Step 4.

### Step 4: Family Conference

If the misbehavior is a serious concern but not an immediate safety concern or if the student refuses to resolve the problem cooperatively, parents are contacted. Parents are also contacted if a student has been involved in something that is a serious safety concern outside of the classroom. Parents are invited to help their child consider resolving the problem cooperatively with them present. The meeting is led by the teacher or if they prefer, a Conflict Resolution Specialist using a mediation process.

The group writes and signs the agreements made to resolve the problem.

Follow-up meetings are held to assess if the agreements are working.

If agreements are not being kept or if the problem is a more serious one, another Family Conference is convened and may include parents, possibly extended family and additional school personnel (usually Superintendent/Principal).

The group reviews the behavior, the respect violation, and the rule violation.

The reason behind the rule is explained. The group seeks to arrive at a cooperative written agreement to remedy the situation. If an agreement is developed, follow-up meeting(s) are scheduled and convened until the problem is resolved.

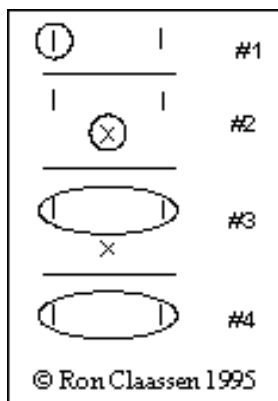
If a cooperative agreement is not developed, proceed to Step 5.

## Step 5: School Authority Structure

If a cooperative agreement has not been developed and/or signed, or if the Calif. Ed Code requires a specific action, the administration informs what consequences must be imposed. The imposed consequences are reasonable, respectful, and intended to be restorative. If the consequences to be imposed are a suspension, the student will serve their suspension and before they return to school and class they will be invited into a teacher/student meeting or a family conference to arrive at a cooperative agreement that will assure the safety of the whole school community.

### Four Options for Handling Conflict

This model provides a visual to help understand our Discipline that Restores structure at Raisin City School. The model describes the four basic response options to conflict/misbehavior. Our structure, as written above, describes how in most conflict/misbehavior situations we want to use options #4 and #3 as much as possible with options #2 and #1 as back-up options. Options #2 and #1 become the primary options when safety is the main concern with a return to options #4 and #3 as soon as the safety concerns are satisfied.



#### Option #1

This option shows that one party has the power to force the other to go along even if s/he would prefer not to. An example would be a child running into the street with their parent going after them, picking them up, and returning them to safety.

#### Option #2

This option shows a person, a rule, or other resources outside the conflict being consulted and making a decision for the parties in the conflict. An example would be a teacher making a decision for two students who are having a conflict. The teacher listens to both students, then the teacher decides what the students should do.

#### Option #3 and #4

These options show that the parties who are in conflict come to their own agreement about how to solve their conflict. In Option #3 they come to their own agreement with the help of a trained third party who leads them through a process that enables them to talk and come to their own decision. An example would be two children disrupting the class with their teacher inviting them into a meeting to help them figure out what needs to be done to resolve their problem. In Option #4 they follow the same problem solving process on their own without the involvement of a mediator. In both #3 and #4 there is no agreement unless the disputants agree on a resolution.

Each option is appropriate depending on the circumstances and the people surrounding each conflict situation. Options #3 and #4 encourage cooperation and that is what we want to encourage within our Raisin City School community.

Roxanne Claassen is our conflict resolution specialist. She welcomes discussion. Please call the school to schedule a time to talk if you are interested in doing that.