POSITIVE DISCIPLINE!

Alternatives to Corporal Punishment

Creating a GOOD SCHOOL!

1. REFLECTION

For minor day-to-day problems, ask students to reflect on their misbehaviour. Children learn from their mistakes when they understand why what they did was wrong, and when they are given an opportunity to think about the consequences of their behaviour.

The types of discipline measures in this category include:

a. Verbal warning. Talk to the student and tell her or him what they did wrong.

b. Imposing timeout. Ask a child to either leave the class for 10 minutes, or sit in a quiet place and think about their behaviour. To be able to return to class, the student must be able to say what they did wrong and how they will avoid repeating the mistake. This should be done firmly without humiliating the child.

c. Letter writing. Ask the student to write a letter or an essay on why they behaved in a certain way and what they will do to avoid repeating the mistake. If appropriate it should include an apology.

d. Oral apology. This involves apologising to the wronged person and asking
for forgiveness.

e. Name slip. This involves writing the child's name and offence down on a slip of paper. If the child does not stop the behaviour, at the end of the class, the paper will be given to the peer committee to take further disciplinary measures.

f. Discipline box. Write the name of the child on a piece of paper and place it in a box in the classroom. The box is checked on a weekly basis and if a child's name appears in the box more than a given number of times, a certain penalty will be imposed.

2. PENALTY

For offences that are persistent and detrimental for all concerned, children may need to experience a penalty to understand that there are consequences to their actions. However you must help the child to reflect on these consequences once the penalty has been imposed.

The types of disciplinary measures in this category include:

a. Withdrawal of privileges. This involves taking away an activity that the student enjoys. However, students should not receive a penalty that will be detrimental to their health or safety.

b. Light work that improves the school environment.This involves such things as slashing an appropriate sized area of grass, cleaning a small part of the school compound, mopping the floors, etc. Care must be taken that the penalty is appropriate and related to the offence and that it is not excessive or humiliating to the child.

c. Detention. The student must remain for extra time after school to reflect on what they did wrong.

d. Signing of discipline or behaviour contract. This involves writing a one-page contract between the student and teacher that spells out the misconduct and the steps that must be taken to correct it.

e. Disciplinary talk with the learner. This involves setting a time to meet with the student to discuss their behaviour and to set a course for correcting it.

f. Demerit. This involves marking the students file or the disciplinary book, to record the child's offence in an official manner.

g. Community service. This involves having the student do light work that benefits the community in some way. Any community ervice work requires counselling to explain the purpose of the work.

3. REPARATION

For offences that cause damage to a third party, the student must undertake public reparation. This involves acknowledging the misbehaviour in front of others and taking responsibility for his or her actions.

The types of discipline measures in this category include:

a. Public apology. The student must apologise for the misbehaviour in the assembly to the entire school or to the group of people s/he offended.

b. Replace or repair. If the offence is accidental, the student must contribute toward replacing or repairing the damage s/he has caused, such as erecting a new fence, chopping wood, or repainting a wall.

c. Financial restitution. If the offence was intentional, the student must replace or repair the damage and must also pay for the materials needed to fix it. If financial restitution is impossible, the school may require the student to do meaningful labor within the school to compensate for the damage.

d. Official reprimand. The student must accept a written notice to their disciplinary record and must sign a letter committing to reform. The letter spells out repercussions for failing to reform.

e. Involving parents. The school will involve parents to contribute towards replacing, repairing or apologising for the damage caused by the student.

4. LAST RESORT

For persistent and serious offences, sometimes severe action must be taken as a last resort.

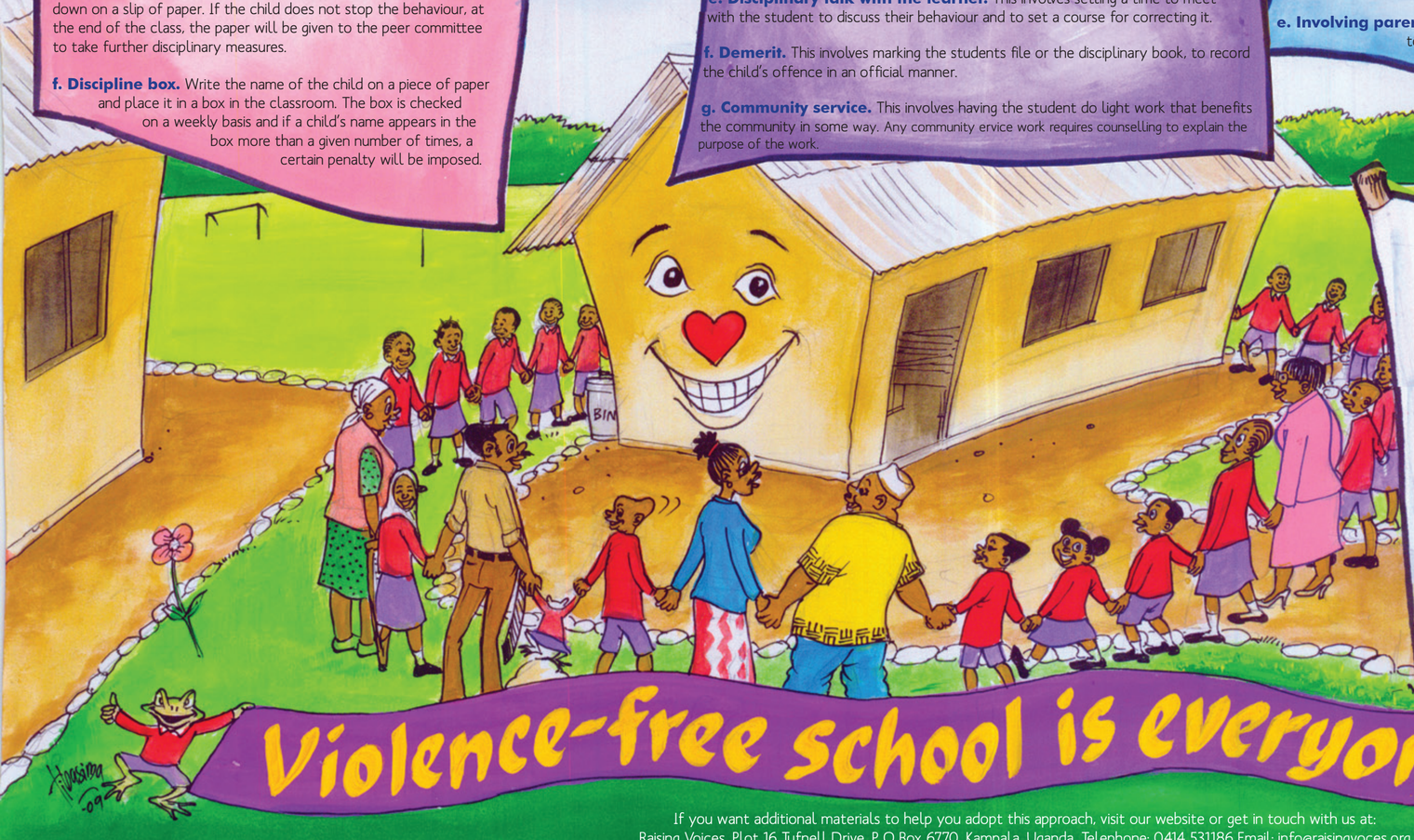
The types of discipline measures in this category include:

a. Parent meeting. Summoning and discussing with parents the possible next steps as a warning to the child and the parents.

b. Referral. This involves referring the student to a professional who can assist her/him.

c. Suspension. A time-limited suspension (e.g. one week) with a written warning and a referral to a counsellor or probation officer.

d. Expulsion. As a very last resort, expulsion from school with the involvement of the probation officer and recommendation of an action plan for next steps to help the child.



LAYERS OF RESPONSE

Teacher
The first person to handle any disciplinary case is the teacher. However, if the students continue to misbehave, the case can be referred to the next layer.

Peer Discipline Committee
Each class can elect students to serve as a Peer Discipline Committee. The responsibility of this committee is to meet on a regular basis and to handle all cases of indiscipline referred to them by the teacher.

School Discipline Committee
If the student continues the misbehaviour after the case is referred to and handled by the Peer Discipline Committee, the case can be referred to the School Discipline Committee which may take actions deemed appropriate according to the Code of Conduct.

Head Teacher
If the offending student continues with her/his misbehaviour, the case can be referred to the head teacher who may take actions deemed appropriate according to the Code of Conduct.

Parents
If the student still continues with the misbehaviour, the head teacher may call upon the parents to become involved and a joint decision can be reached as to the appropriate disciplinary action to take.

Outside Referral
Further still, if the student's misbehaviour becomes uncontrollable or dangerous to others, an outside referral may be made to counsellors, police or another relevant agency.

Violence-free school is everyone's right!

If you want additional materials to help you adopt this approach, visit our website or get in touch with us at:
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www.raisingvoices.org

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