

Family Charter

PURPOSE

- To share views and to stimulate debate on what may be considered to be acceptable
- To assist parents in discussing matters of concern to their sons, in confronting questions and fears, and in addressing misconceptions in a factual and non-judgemental way
- To maintain open and frank communication with young people about issues that affect their lives
- To re-affirm the shared responsibility of school and parents in the education process

GUIDING PRINCIPLE

- Parents have a right to say No; it's how you say it that counts

UNDERSTANDING TEENAGERS

- Avoid pampering
- Build relationships on mutual trust and respect
- Understand that independence and responsibility go together
- Stop attempting to control, rather guide and direct
- Develop realistic expectations and encourage teenagers to set standards for themselves
- Be aware of the fact that the driving goals of teenagers are often attention-seeking, power-related or revenge-orientated; they may display feelings of inadequacy, excitement or superiority, or the desire for peer acceptance
- Handle misbehaviour: Never give attention on demand; bow out of power struggles; avoid feeling hurt; stop criticizing
- Seek to create a relationship in which teenagers pursue the positive goals of co-operation, involvement, self-reliance and responsibility

DISCIPLINE

Discipline – the development of responsibility

The hardest thing for most parents is to know how and when to discipline.

- Discipline is a learning process
- Give the teenager appropriate limits
- Punishment stimulates resistance and rebellion
- Try to cultivate an awareness of the natural consequences of actions
- Be consistent; don't talk too much; don't operate with hidden motives; follow through on your actions' choose your words carefully; try to focus on the positive; negotiate consequences
- Teenagers tend to focus on self. Encourage consideration of others, especially family, friends and peers. Many teenagers claim to know their rights but overlook the fact that with rights come obligations.

Discipline – finding the right approach

- Encouragement is important, whatever approach is adopted
- To select the most appropriate approach; Identify the goal of the misbehaviour; determine who owns the problem; base your decision on what the situation requires
- Avoid arguing. Last care: Agree to disagree
- If a teenager is forgetful and it doesn't affect you, don't respond
- Keep criticism to a minimum and criticise the act, not the person
- Teenagers own most of the problems between themselves and others
- Lying is a signal that there is distrust in the parent-teenager relationship

- If the teenager is angry, try to identify the cause and purpose of the anger

SOME GUIDELINES FOR PARENTS

- SMOKING may not be illegal, but it is addictive and clearly injurious to health and should be therefore discouraged among children of school-going age
- The consumption of ALCOHOL may not be illegal but all too often has serious social and legal repercussions and should therefore be discouraged among children of school-going age
- The possession and use of BANNED SUBSTANCES is prohibited by law.
- Minors may be prosecuted for having in their possession, using or dealing in such substances. Do not allow banned substances onto your property.
- MOVIES and VIDEOS are classified for a reason. Observe the age limits imposed but also use your own discretion as the classification is not always an appropriate one
- If you are hosting a PARTY – or an individual for that matter

All of the above apply

Try to make it by invitation only

Ensure that there are at least two adults – not older children – on the property at all times

Without being intrusive, make your presence known and felt

Intervene to put a stop to explicit sexual behaviour

- Do not allow children to DRIVE without a licence. Do not allow them to drive with an unlicensed driver
- Make sure that you know where your children are going and when they will be back and discourage visits to clubs or parties during the week. It impacts on their school work
- It is fine for children to work to earn pocket money, but monitor the hours they are working. Weekends are for re-charging the batteries. Furthermore, Form 4 and 5 pupils need to spend time studying over the weekend

PARENTS' RIGHTS

Intra-family relationships are obviously dependent on the dynamics of the particular family. Good intra-family relationships will be facilitated by both the parents and the children being aware of each others' rights and obligations. Open and constructive communication between parents and children will assist in creating a greater understanding of each other's position. The following may prove helpful in this regard:

A PARENTS' BILL OF RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Parents have the right to be treated with respect but they must not abuse this right
- Parents have the right to say No and not feel guilty
- Parents have the right to know where their children are, who their friends are, and who they are with at any time
- Parents have the right to demonstrate that they care by verifying or spot-checking their children's whereabouts, for example by calling host parents of parties or overnight stays
- Parents have the right to set a curfew and to enforce it by means of restrictions and loss of privileges
- Parents have the right not to condone the use of alcohol or drugs and to say no to attendance at activities where such use may occur
- Parents have the right to make mistakes but they must accept responsibility for their mistakes
- Parents have the right to change their minds where the situation warrants it.
- Parents have the right to ask questions and to expect answers about things that may affect their children
- Parents have the right to know what is happening in their own homes, to set house rules, and to know the identity of guests who come into their homes
- Parents have the right to be authoritative when logical explanation and reason have not succeeded
- Parents have the right to have family rules and to enforce them with appropriate consequences