SINGAPORE AMERICAN SCHOOL
A TRADITION OF INNOVATION

This Social Emotional Learning (SEL) article is designed to build understanding about our approach to discipline in the Elementary Division. We are committed to working together with families to create a strong home-school connection that models our core values. While we respect that every family has their own beliefs and practices when it comes to discipline, it is important to understand how we, teachers, administrators and support staff, approach this with your children when they are with us at school.

What is Discipline?

The word discipline comes from the Latin word *disciplina* (teaching, learning or instruction), and *discipulus* (student, pupil). Therefore we are teaching the student. This is far different from punishment which is designed to impose a penalty as a form of retribution for committing an offense. Punishment can also sometimes result in feelings of fear, anger or resentment. Research shows that discipline and punishment impact the brain differently. Discipline invokes the thinking brain, while punishment impacts the emotional brain.

Discipline and Punishment- What's the Difference

How Does the Elementary Division Approach Discipline?

At Singapore American School, when students operate outside of the limits or expectations, we teach and when necessary provide logical consequences. This teaching is centered on our three school rules: **Be Safe, Be Kind, Be Responsible**.

Positive Discipline- logical consequences

We want students to engage in problem solving conversations where they rely on their thinking brain rather than their emotional brain. If they only fear punishment or hope for reward, they may become obedient in the short term, but this has little impact on their long term learning and future application. So as supportive adults, we ask them reflective questions such as:
Was the choice you made safe, kind or responsible?*(connecting their thinking to the rules in a real context)*
What could you do differently? *(giving them a chance to visualize a 'do-over' of the scenario where they make the right choice)*

What did you learn? *(helping them to deepen their understanding of the impact of their behaviour)*
How can you fix this? *(helping them take responsibility for their own actions)*
What do you think is the logical consequence for this? *(involving the child in the 'next steps' by guiding them to a natural learning opportunity rather than an unrelated punishment)*

Should your child be involved in a discipline issue at school, you may receive a call or email from the Dean of Students or Deputy Principal. Our hope is that you will extend this same model of conversation at home to reinforce the learning and demonstrate consistency in the experience for your child.

How Can Parents Integrate This Approach to Discipline At Home

- Develop your must-obey rules (age-appropriate and aligns with family values)
- Hold a family meeting to discuss these expectations
- Agree on the logical consequences that you know you can follow through with
- Use logical consequences consistently to replace punishment
- Model expected behavior