Why Have School Policies?

Simple written, unambiguous and widely disseminated policy statements can:

1. codify the school's values and beliefs;	What warrants "policy" status and the scope of that policy, as well as the content, reflect what the school is all about and signal the culture of the school
2. expedite decision making;	Policy provides a basis for decisions; you don't have to re-invent/reconstruct the school's position on every issue that arises.
3. articulate the board's expectations regarding fulfillment of the school's mission;	Clear expectations provide the Director and his staff direction and establish the basis for accountability
4. promote stability and consistency;	While policies should be reviewed and if necessary, revised, generally they should stand the test of time and serve as the benchmarks for school operations..., especially important given the high turnover of board members and HoSs at international schools
5. provide employees, students and parents the security of knowing how issues are dealt with;	An accessible Policy Manual (put it on the website!) communicates how issues are handled, but beyond that, merely having a comprehensive and comprehensible Policy Manual tells the community that we are a professional organization.
6. illustrate the demarcation between the authority of the board and that of the administration;	Policies set the general expectations of the board, as explicitly as the board feels necessary given the issue and context. The Director has the authority to implement that policy as he/she sees fit, as long as the expectations are met (within any "reasonable interpretation)
7. fulfill legal requirements and best practice guidelines; and	Some policies are required by law, accreditation standards, or insurance protocols, and others simply make good sense as protection against litigation or grievance.
8. make a board member's life much easier!	a. A lean Policy Manual is practical and useful; long, complicated tomes are more difficult to use. b. Well-written policies guide the board towards strategic thinking, their vital governance role.

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