

Discipline Policy Form

The term “discipline” comes from the word 'disciple' and means, literally, 'to teach'. The Montessori approach to discipline is to help children learn they are responsible for what they do and that their actions and choices have consequences. When a child is disruptive, a teacher will offer support and understanding, including an attempt to help the child understand his or her own behavior and to find alternative approaches to solving the problem. If a child is experiencing difficulty, he or she is given time and peace to think about the situation, to express his or her honest feelings, and to come to an increased understanding about it. As the situation becomes resolved, the child is invited to join the teacher in constructive activity as a means of re-integrating into the classroom. The adults take care to relate to the children according to their age, developmental level and temperament.

No physical punishment is used at the school. Discipline is not associated with food, nap- time, or toileting. The teachers will work with the children to help them learn to use words to express themselves rather than acting out or becoming passive when they are disturbed. If unacceptable behavior persists, the teacher will consult with the child’s parents. The belief is that through parent-teacher cooperation and consistency, improved behavior will result. We present 3 basic ground rules to the children in the class to guide them along the way:

We take care of ourselves.

We take care of each other.

We take care of the materials in the classroom and on the playground.

Each of these rules is explained the first day of school and reviewed and practiced in the group lessons throughout the year and individually as appropriate. Whether a problem involves only two people or the whole class, we try to help the children learn how to solve problems on their own. We encourage children to come to a mutual resolution through talking about the problem, listening to each side and understanding the differing points of view. There is no physical punishment or disciplinary action administered to the child. There is no verbal abuse. No belittling remarks are used with the child.

Discipline Procedure

1. The child is **asked** to correct his or her behavior by a positive restatement of the rule.
2. The child is **told** to correct the behavior.
3. The child is **removed** from the group until s/he feels ready to rejoin the group.
4. If a problem persists beyond three consecutive days parents are contacted to discuss strategies/ ideas to help the child and to support the desired behavior change with the teacher. At this point procedures regarding serious and recurring misbehavior will be enacted.
5. If the above steps fail, help from a professional may be suggested.
6. The Teacher records serious or recurrent misbehaviors as they occur as documentation for possible further disciplinary action

Parents are asked to sign a statement of our disciplinary procedure, to ensure their understanding of our stated policy. A copy of the signed form will be placed in the child’s file.

Serious & Recurring Misbehavior

Serious misbehavior is defined as being damaging, disturbing, or dangerous to self, others, or the property of the school. Recurring misbehavior is defined as inappropriate behavior persisting after four weeks of focused strategies towards misconduct. Examples include but are not limited to: verbal or physical abuse of peers, teachers, or staff members; malicious name calling; refusal to do work; out of control hitting and kicking; temper tantrums; throwing objects; damaging materials; hitting, biting, scratching, kicking or pinching others.

Biting cannot and will not be tolerated. Regardless of the reason for the child’s choice to bite (e.g., aggression, frustration, etc.), a discussion between the children involved and a staff member will take place. In most cases, the biter will be removed from the environment immediately. The staff member will write up an incident report

notifying the parents of both children. The parents of the child who bit another child should be talked to in person, if possible when given the incident report. If the biter attempts repeated behavior in a given day or bites hard enough to break the skin, the staff member shall use his/her discretion about calling the parents and sending the child home immediately.

Whenever there appears to be consistent discipline problems, every effort will be made by the teachers, assistants and the Director to work with the child, parents and any professional involved. Of course, it is of vital importance that regular communication between parents and teachers be maintained during this time period. If after three weeks of focused strategies towards a change in behavior the child is still exhibiting serious and recurring misguided behavior, the parents are again contacted and the following procedure is explained. If, after all avenues have been followed, the child is not responding positively, dismissal may be warranted.

Procedure for Consideration of Dismissal

1. Any time after the beginning of the 4th week of focused strategies the teacher will raise the possibility of the child's dismissal with the Director.
2. If/when the child continues their misguided behavior after the first incident, the teacher will request a verbal conference with the parents, as well as present to the parents a written report of the child's actions/ experience in the classroom. At that time, the teacher will discuss the child's situation and the possibility of his/her suitability of a Montessori classroom for this particular child. It may be advisable to explain to the parents that any more similar incidents will result in removal from school for the remainder of the day, and subsequent days if the behavior continues. Parents will be notified to pick up their child.
3. Upon returning to school, if the child again disrespects social rules, removal from school for the remainder of the day plus an additional one day suspension will result.
4. The full Board will hold a special session, whereupon the Director, with advisement from the child's teacher, will present a recommendation for or against the child's dismissal. The Board will make the final decision. Once all avenues are employed, such as intentional efforts with the child, discussions with the parents, and work with professionals/experts in the matter of concern, the teacher and the Director will discuss the advisability of asking the parents to withdraw the child from the school. Such a request should only occur if all efforts fail and/or the parents do not cooperate with the efforts of the school or the school truly cannot meet the educational, physical or emotional needs of the child.

Required Withdrawal

When students enter Woods Creek Montessori it is understood that both they and their parents agree to support all the rules of the school as outlined in the Parent Handbook and other communications to the families while the child is enrolled in the school. In situations involving repeated violations of school rules or continued disruptive behavior, or if at any time the child's influence is considered harmful to the other children, the environment or the staff, the school reserves the right to require the child's withdrawal.

If it becomes clear that WCM is unable to meet a child's academic, emotional and social needs, the school reserves the right to require a change of environment to ensure the child's success and well-being.

I/We have read the above Discipline Policy. I/We understand and formally agree to support and adhere to the policies stated therein.

Parent's Signature _____ Date _____

Parent's Signature _____ Date _____

Director's Signature _____ Date _____