

CHILD DISCIPLINE POLICY

For a child in any level of a Montessori school (toddler, preschool, elementary, or adolescent) to achieve an optimal educational experience, he or she must show respect for self, others, and the environment. Similar expectations for adults support the viewpoint that parents and other family members are role models for children.

If a child's or adult's observed behavior is not consistent with the above, action will be taken to institute appropriate consequences, as stated in the discipline policy that follows.

All children are accepted on a trial basis, and the first thirty days of attendance are considered a probationary period. If difficulties arise, parents will be contacted and a program of constructive action developed. If significant improvement is not achieved within a reasonable period of time, a request for withdrawal may be made by an administrator or the parents.

DISCIPLINE POLICY PRINCIPLES

The positive model of discipline within a Montessori setting is self-discipline, where concentration, focus, and independent learning happen without contention or interruption. Children and adults are respected. Misbehavior is handled with the following assumptions:

Discipline means "guidance," not punishment. Our aim is to help children grow into responsible, self-directed people, respectful of themselves, others, and property.

Discipline is the responsibility of all. All children are the responsibility of all teachers and staff. All adults in the school, including parents and other volunteers, serve as role models for the children, and should be examples of appropriate behavior.

Discipline is based on classroom and school groundrules. It should be firm, fair, consistent, and caring. The actions of a child are criticized, not the personality. Correction needs to be prompt, personal, and understood by the child. Attempts should be made to have the child express feelings so he or she may define them.

All children have the right to Due Process, i.e. the right to hear accusations against them, the right to hear evidence and submit evidence of their own, and the right to respond and defend themselves.

The discipline standards set forth by Michigan Department of Human Services Child Care Licensing Rule R400.8140 are binding by law on the toddler, preschool/kindergarten, and latchkey portions of the program. They are considered binding by administrative directive on elementary and middle school.

R400.8140 (Rule 140)

1. *Positive methods of discipline that encourage self-control, self-direction, self-esteem, and cooperation shall be used.*
2. *All of the following means of punishment shall be prohibited:*
 - a. *Hitting, spanking, shaking, biting, pinching, or inflicting other forms of corporal punishment.*
 - b. *Restricting a child's movement by binding or tying him or her.*
 - c. *Inflicting mental or emotional punishment, such as humiliating, shaming, or threatening a child.*
 - d. *Depriving a child of meals, snacks, rest, or necessary toilet use.*
 - e. *Excluding a child from outdoor play or other gross motor activities.*
 - f. *Excluding a child from daily learning experiences.*
 - g. *Confining a child in an enclosed area, such as a closet, locked room, box, or similar cubicle.*
3. *Non-severe and developmentally appropriate discipline or restraint may be used when reasonably necessary, based on a child's development, to prevent a child from harming himself or herself or to prevent a child from harming other persons or property, excluding those forms of punishment prohibited by subrule (2) of this rule.*
4. *A policy shall be developed and implemented regarding the discipline of children. The policy shall be all of the following:*
 - a. *In written form.*
 - b. *Age appropriate.*
 - c. *Provided to staff and parents.*

DEFINITIONS

Behavior difficulties fall into two general categories:

1. Misbehavior or general disruption that interferes with the orderly process of education in the classroom or other areas. This may include, but is not limited to, failure to complete work, and any difficulties during class, day care, latchkey, curriculum support (specials) classes, lunch, or field trips.
2. Extreme misbehavior with immediate consequences. This may include, but is not limited to, destructive behavior of a verbal, physical, or technological nature, possession or use of an illegal substance, possession or plan for use of a weapon. Parents will be contacted immediately.

CONSEQUENCES for behavior difficulties, may include, but are not limited to:

1. words or letter of apology
2. repair of damage/restitution
3. homework
4. denial of privilege
5. removal of activity from child
6. removal of child from activity
7. removal from class
8. suspension from school
9. expulsion from school

DISCIPLINE SEQUENCE

I. TEACHER-CHILD INTERACTION

- A. Establishment of groundrules
- B. Discussion of appropriate responses
- C. Redirection, verbal or physical
- D. Verbal correction
- E. Consequences appropriate to the circumstances

II. MEASURES INVOLVING THE PARENTS

- A. INCIDENT REPORT MAY BE GENERATED (signed by staff, administrator, and parents)
- B. TEACHER-PARENT CONTACT (INFORMAL)
 1. Purpose is to exchange information about the child.
 2. Contact may be in person, by telephone, or by note.
 3. Conference report may be sent home to be signed and returned.
 4. Consequences may be applied.
 5. Follow up: Are there satisfactory changes in behavior?
- C. TEACHER-PARENT CONFERENCE (MORE FORMAL)
 1. Administrator is notified that formal conference is to take place.
 2. Review the situation with parents.
 3. Enlist parent cooperation. Establish a plan of action involving home and school environments, with mutually accepted dates of review.
 4. Follow up to determine status:
 - a. Has a plan of action been implemented at home and school?
 - b. Are there satisfactory changes in behavior?

D. FORMAL CONFERENCE WITH ADMINISTRATOR(S), TEACHER(S), AND PARENT(S)

1. Review the previously established plan.
2. Form a final plan that may include an outside referral.
3. Follow up to determine status:
 - a. Are there satisfactory changes in behavior within the established time frame?
 - b. Did parents and teachers follow through on their part of the final plan?
 - c. Did parents follow through on referral(s) and is information available to the school within a reasonable time?
 - d. Did parents provide written specialist/professional evaluation reports to the school?
 - e. Did parents give permission for open communication between outside specialists/professionals and the school?

E. EXPULSION FROM SCHOOL

1. Conference involving administrator(s), teacher(s) and parent(s).
2. Considerations that determine expulsion:
 - a. Cooperation of family in following through on behavior plan and/or referral, and sharing with the school staff information gained from any outside professional evaluation.
 - b. Noticeable positive changes in behavior.
 - c. Degree to which the child requires one-on-one monitoring/attention of staff.
 - d. Degree to which the child affects the psychological well-being and physical safety of group members.
 - e. Degree to which the child affects the psychological well-being and physical safety of staff.

Note: When the child involved is older, he or she may be included from "B" onward in a portion of the discussions.

ADULT CONDUCT POLICY

Dearborn Heights Montessori Center, along with satellites Livonia Montessori School and Plymouth-Canton Montessori School, is responsible for protecting the children in our care, and for providing a safe workplace for staff members. Therefore, it is imperative that parents and other family members conduct themselves in a professional, civil, and rational manner on school property, at school functions, or while communicating with school staff.

We reserve the right to dismiss a child or children from school and immediately terminate the contract of a parent/family member who behaves inappropriately. Behaviors that are grounds for dismissal include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Acts of violence, including assault and battery
- Verbal abuse, harassment of, or threats against the staff, other parents/families, or children
- Possession of illegal substances, firearms, or other weapons
- Verbal or physical abuse of any child
- Profanity
- Indecent exposure