



Rockingham Montessori School Incorporated
ABN: 68 115 270 695

POLICY TITLE: APPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR POLICY FOR 6-12 YEAR OLD CHILDREN

BOARD APPROVAL DATE: 15 June 2010

SIGNED BY CHAIR:

BOARD REVIEW DATE:

"LET US REMEMBER THAT INNER DISCIPLINE IS SOMETHING TO COME AND NOT SOMETHING ALREADY PRESENT. OUR TASK IS TO SHOW THE WAY TO DISCIPLINE. DISCIPLINE IS BORN WHEN THE CHILD CONCENTRATES HIS ATTENTION ON SOME OBJECT THAT ATTRACTS HIM/HER NOT ONLY WITH A USEFUL EXERCISE BUT WITH A CONTROL OF ERROR"

MARIA MONTESSORI, THE ABSORBENT MIND

OVERVIEW

The traditional view of discipline is one of controlling the children. This type of discipline is based on coercion, rewards and punishment. It is an external discipline imposed on a child.

True discipline, Montessori believed, comes from within. Our aim is to show the child the way to discipline. The child who can obey his/her interior guide is a disciplined child. Montessori wrote,

"THE PEACEFUL ATMOSPHERE THAT PERVADED THE CLASSROOM AS THE CHILDREN PURSUED THEIR WORK WAS EXTREMELY TOUCHING. NO-ONE HAD PROVOKED IT, AND NO-ONE COULD HAVE OBTAINED IT BY EXTERNAL MEANS. "

This type of discipline is a developmental process. In a Montessori classroom there are children who have developed a degree of self control and those who have little. The Teacher must observe the child and endeavour to put her in contact with work which engages her concentration. For it is only through the work of the child that true discipline will come.

Children in a Montessori school are free - free to choose what work they will do and free to move about. They do not sit at fixed desks. This does not mean there is no organisation. In fact the opposite is true. The organisation in a Montessori classroom has to be extremely thorough in order for the child to be free.

The child guides herself in her work. The Teacher does not rely on rewards or punishments to motivate the child to work. The aim here is to "cultivate a friendly feeling" towards mistakes and errors, letting the child correct herself through the use of the materials and helping her to feel that we learn through making mistakes.

Note: In accordance with the Education Reform Amendment (Corporal Punishment) Act 1995 this school does not permit corporal punishment of students.

The following will serve as guidelines for supporting children in their road to self-discipline. As such, these strategies aim to clarify our approaches to common situations with children as they gain self-control. They are not directives, however, and it is essential to remember that each situation with each child will require its own responses to best support that child's growth.

Some Strategies and Situations

AIM

To inculcate in children an understanding of the limits to acceptable behaviour, and the reason for these limits. Discipline and expectations of behaviour vary greatly among different cultures, social groupings and child rearing practices. Combined with this an adult's feelings about discipline are affected by what he/she experienced as a child.

RATIONALE

We believe setting limits for behaviour is important for the safety and protection of children, others and the environment. We believe consistency to be important in order to help the child orient herself in the world. We believe that there is no occasion on which physical punishment should be used against a child.

An atmosphere of clarity and consistency also enhances the staffs' ability to help children to learn and to be safe and secure.

Ultimately, setting limits for behaviour aims to teach children self-discipline. We aim to help children to learn the consequences of their behaviour so that they understand how their actions affect those around them. The aim is to enable children to become self-disciplined and self-directed so that their needs and interests become clearer to themselves and those about them.

Children have an enormous capacity to absorb information, including social and cultural "cues", about themselves, others and the environment in which they live. Awareness of self, others and the environment is a vital quality for all children to develop in order to live harmoniously. Discipline is a means by which children are helped to develop that awareness.

By setting appropriate and consistent limits to behaviour we provide a secure environment in which children can explore their physical and social world. Discipline is instructive when:-

- it supports self-esteem and allows children to feel capable, competent and a pleasure to others;
- it takes into account a child's developmental level of understanding and ability. Needs and behaviour change as children grow;
- it acknowledges caring, cooperative, desirable behaviour;
- it is expressed positively. We speak of what we "do", not what we don't do;
- it guides, gives simple explanations, and offers alternatives so that a child can make choices. In time this will aid the making of appropriate choices;

- it is consistent;
- it is based on self discipline, and self-control - not coercion. It recognises that this is a gradual, developmental process.

Setting limits helps children to:

- feel secure and orient themselves in the world
- find appropriate expression for feelings that are hard to control, and thus satisfaction;
- start a process that is life-long in the learning.

UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES

1. We respect ourselves and other people

We show this respect by treating others as we like them to treat us. We all have a wide range of emotional reactions to situations. It is important to respect these reactions as valid. It is OK to be angry. However we do not translate this anger into inappropriate aggression against others. It is fine to punch cushions, bean bags or the like but not people, animals or plants. Destroying things is also inappropriate.

2. We are careful with our own and others' work and belongings.

3. We are respectful with insects, animals and plants. Like us they are living things.

4. We keep ourselves and our surroundings clean.

5. We are considerate to others when we move about our environment. We move calmly inside, and safely outside.

Remember, too, that when children are not yet sure of you, they may act inappropriately to get your attention.

STRATEGIES

“Children of this age continually report the behaviour of other children to adults. The persistence and frequency with which the children do this can be aggravating to adults. Reflection, however, reveals the relationship of this behaviour to the children’s developing moral sense and reasoning power. They are seeking clarification from the adult: ‘Is this a bad thing to do? Should I accept this? Why?’—or conversely, ‘Is this a good thing to do? Should I try to do this, too? Why?’ Eventually, children decide on their own code of morality.”

From Montessori Today, P.P. Lillard

Playground Conflict

- a. Assessment of the situation by the supervising adult(s).
- b. Consequences - If a child is behaving inappropriately we will firstly give them a warning – a reminder of how they should be behaving. If the child continues or repeats the behaviour they will be removed from the playground area and directed to sit on the bench in front of the Pelican (playgroup) room. This will allow the child some time out to rethink their behaviour.
 - i. First instance 5 minutes.
 - ii. Second instance 10 minutes.
 - iii. Third instance child sent to TIC.
- c. An incident report will be written regarding the incident / behaviour in the following cases:
 - i. When first aid is administered.
 - ii. At Teacher discretion.
- d. Playground Observations will be recorded by staff supervising at lunchtimes into a record book. Observations to be recorded include - all time outs, injuries and as well as good behaviour.
- e. Classes will hold regular discussions regarding positive playground behaviour in their class meetings.
- f. *Individual Behaviour Plans* may be created for some children regarding their playground behaviour. These plans are put in place to allow the child a greater chance of achieving self discipline.

“Education depends on a belief in the power of the child and on a certainty that the child has within himself the capacity to develop into a being that is far superior to us. He will not only be capable of a better way of living but will be the only person who can show us this.”

from The Child, Society and the World

Inappropriate Classroom Behaviour

1. Aggressive/ Disruptive behaviour in the classroom.
 - a. Immediately, the Teacher will take action(s) such as re-directing child, moving them away from others they are distracting/being distracted by and/or finding them a quiet space to work in.
 - b. If the child is to be re-seated due to disruptive behaviour they are to be asked to complete a *Think Sheet*. This gives them a chance to reflect on their behaviour and document what rule they broke.

- c. The teacher will observe the child for a period of time to assess the child's needs regarding limits and direction.
- d. An *Individual Behaviour Plan* (Appendix 1) will be created for the child by the teacher. The child and parents will meet with the Teacher to discuss the plan. This is to ensure all understand the expectations/consequences of the child and plan before it is implemented.

2. Unprovoked Malicious Acts,

These include unsafe behaviour, illegal acts, wilful damage of property, and acts of aggression.

If a child is purposely malicious in any way the following will occur;

- i. Child sent to TIC.
- ii. TIC to contact child's parents to ask them to collect their child.
- iii. If parents are not available to collect their child, the child will stay isolated from their peers for the remainder of the day.
- iv. If the TIC is off-site then the parent will still be contacted and whilst waiting the child will be sent to the parallel class and seated in a neutral space.

3. Swearing at school.

Swearing is not to be tolerated in the classroom or playground in the 6-12 age group.

At all times teachers are to model appropriate language.

- a. If a child is swearing in either the playground or classroom they will be reminded once of appropriate language.
- b. Assess the situation - remember there is usually a reason why the child is swearing.
- c. Deal with the issue/problem which has led to the child swearing. Encourage children to talk about what has happened and develop solutions to work through the problem.
- d. Teach children to use appropriate language to express how they feel. Help them with appropriate words to use.
- e. If swearing is an ongoing problem with a particular child talk to the child about how it makes you and the other children feel when he or she uses those words, talk about why he or she uses those words and talk about words the child can use instead of swearing.
- f. Repeat occurrences and/or highly offensive language mean the child is sent to TIC for discussion and parent contact. TIC will determine if the child is to be sent home, work in isolation or be allowed to return to class.
- g. Encourage children to review appropriate language at class meetings.

4. Tantrums

It is important to recognise that most children reach a stage in their development where they are becoming independent yet need to feel secure. The world is exciting and invites exploration, yet can be frustrating. It is at this stage of development that temper tantrums are beginning. Tantrum behaviour includes stamping feet, throwing self on the ground, and screaming.

a. Assess the situation

Why has the tantrum occurred? Usually the child will have a tantrum because he or she has been denied something he or she wants to have or something the child wants to do.

Is the child likely to hurt him or herself or another child? If so it may be necessary to clear a space free from objects and "onlookers".

b. Reason with the child after she/ he has calmed down.

It is important to talk about what has happened. Children are beginning to learn ways of expressing how they feel and often can be shocked by the force of their own emotions (especially if it is the first time they have had a tantrum). They need to know you still like them as a person but didn't like what they just did. By talking and reasoning with children we believe it teaches them that it is OK to feel angry, frustrated or upset while helping them learn how to express these emotions in an appropriate way.

For a young child this may simply be a cuddle, followed by offering the child something else to do.

For an older child it is important to verbalise what has happened, talk about other ways of dealing with the situation, explaining why they couldn't do what they wanted to do (e.g. it's dangerous). By doing this you are showing the child that you still like them and are restoring a positive relationship with the child.

c. It is important at all times that staff keep the child safe & IN SIGHT.

5. Values and Positive Behaviour

- a. Our school uses the Values Education Program. The children discuss a specific value in their class meetings and then share with the remainder of the school each fortnight.
- b. Encourage children to recognise how they feel when they are angry/sad/stressed through open discussion.
- c. Use of appropriate literacy to support class rules and development of sense of morality.

"It is at six years that one may note the beginning of an orientation toward moral questions toward the judgement of acts. This preoccupation belongs to an interior sensitivity, the conscience...It is at this age...that the concept of justice is born, simultaneously with the understanding of the relationship between one's acts and the needs of others."

Montessori quoted by P.P. Lillard.

APPENDICES

1. Individual Behaviour Plan