

Pacific Montessori Society

DISCIPLINE POLICY

Effective Date: April 20, 2009

POLICY STATEMENT

The Pacific Montessori Society expects all students, staff and other members of the Pacific Montessori Society to be treated with respect and courtesy, in accordance with the *Code of Conduct*.

Expectations of the level of behaviour vary according to the age and development of a student.

When parents/caregivers choose to enroll their child at Selkirk Montessori School, they are committing themselves to its philosophy of discipline. It is expected that parents/caregivers and teachers will work together to guide and support the behaviour of the students.

POLICY RATIONALE

At Selkirk Montessori School discipline is approached in a positive and cooperative manner consistent with the Montessori philosophy, illustrating Maria Montessori's emphasis on "Grace and Courtesy."

The intent of discipline in education is to support the development within the students of respect and courtesy for themselves, their teachers and their fellow students, as well as for the environment in the classroom and beyond.

At Selkirk Montessori School we value respect for each other. This allows students, staff and society members to feel safe, to develop a sense of belonging, to forge friendships with peers and maintain respectful relationships. With this sense of community, teaching and learning thrive.

SCOPE

The school takes responsibility for the students only within school hours, and during authorized school functions, while the students are under its care. Before school and after dismissal are the responsibility of the parents/caregivers.

POLICY AND PROCEDURES

I. Purpose

Our policy encourages a constructive approach to discipline that creates opportunities for students to address problems and misunderstandings, and develop better self-control and motivation to become engaged, constructive members of society.

II. Awareness

Through programs, staff shall help raise awareness of the *Code of Conduct* and how students can incorporate it in their daily behaviours.

III. Prevention

Our staff are leaders who nurture and model a school climate that fosters community and civil behaviour.

- Each class will follow the principles of related programs such as the Second Step Program.
- Staff shall make students aware that they can safely (and confidentially) communicate complaints about problems with other students (and any other matter) to staff.

IV. Intervention

Staff may exercise their judgment to choose, depending on circumstances, whether to start intervention at Stage 1, or go directly to Stage 2 or Stage 3. Descriptions of special situations follow below the descriptions of three stages of intervention.

Stage 1

In this stage, the issue is **addressed by the parties and the first member of staff that is aware of a problem.**

1. Staff shall, where appropriate, encourage students to work out issues among themselves.
2. If this does not help to resolve an issue, the staff shall give guidance. Depending on the situation, this may include one or more of: redirection, confiscation, isolation from others, discussing/clarifying seriousness and consequences, and writing a Second Step plan.
3. Staff may inform parents/caregivers of student(s) involved. Staff may send home a Second Step plan and ask parents/caregivers to sign it. Staff may meet with parents/caregivers.
4. Staff shall maintain confidentiality.
5. If the staff's guidance does not resolve the difficulty, the staff shall report the matter to the Academic Head (go to Stage 2).

Stage 2

In this stage, the issue is **addressed with the involvement of the Academic Head.**

1. The Academic Head shall investigate every staff report about a discipline problem. The Academic Head shall interview participants and witnesses, and review evidence, as necessary.
2. The Academic Head shall assess if the harm is harassment, bullying or child abuse. See the *Harassment and Bullying Prevention and Management Policy* and the *Child Protection Policy*.
3. The Academic Head shall consider informing parents/caregivers of student(s) involved, and involve them early in the discussion.
4. The Academic Head shall involve the student(s) in a process that may include the following activities:

- Describe the issue or problematic behaviour to the student(s) in a specific and concrete way and explain the impact(s).
 - State the school's policy on discipline, and possible action or consequences.
 - Discuss expectations in a specific and concrete way.
 - Explain options and encourage student(s) to suggest remedies.
 - Indicate when the Academic Head will check back with the student(s), staff and parents/caregivers to see if the issue has been resolved.
5. The Academic Head shall document a summary of these events, including names, times and methods of communication, and retain a copy in administrative files.

Stage 3

In this stage, the issue is **addressed with a formal plan and may involve authorities outside the school**. The Academic Head shall take the following action:

1. Notify student(s) and parents/caregivers involved and the Board of Directors of the Pacific Montessori Society that action will be taken.
2. Assess the need to refer to the appropriate authorities.
3. Ensure that a formal plan is prepared to address the cause of the discipline problem. The plan shall include specific accountabilities for monitoring and follow-up, and may include serious disciplinary action.
4. Ensure that all steps in the plan are implemented in a timely manner.
5. Document a summary of these events, including names, times and methods of communication, and retain a copy in the administrative files.

The following issues require a Stage 3 response:

Probation

The Academic Head may set a limited probationary period of one to four weeks to try to work out the problems if there is a serious question about whether the student can function in a healthy way in the school.

Counseling

The Academic Head may ask the family to seek appropriate counseling or other assistance, to best meet the needs of the student and to maintain a quality program for all students.

Student Suspensions

When misbehaviour creates a serious infraction of the *Code of Conduct*, a student may be required to leave the classroom for an in-school suspension, or may be required to leave the school for a school suspension. These may occur at the discretion of the Academic Head.

When a suspension is invoked, the parents/caregivers will be called to pick up the student immediately. The student will only be released to an authorized person. The suspension is terminated by a meeting with the Academic Head, the student and the parents/caregivers. Conditions for reinstatement will be agreed upon by all parties.

Meetings with Parents/Caregivers

Parents/caregivers of the student(s) involved may be called in for an emergency meeting with the Academic Head to discuss the problem, as well as to exchange ideas about suitable solutions and possible further consequences.

Violent Behaviour

If a student acts violently towards another student or staff, the circumstances will be immediately reviewed by the Academic Head and the student may be suspended from the school for one or more days, without a warning. For behaviour or threats of a serious nature, the suspension shall be for five or more days, without a warning, and the student may be expelled.

Weapons

A weapon is anything that is commonly used or designed to hurt someone or to cause someone to be fearful. This policy concurs with the definition of a weapon in the *Criminal Code of Canada*, Sec. 82. "Weapon means a) anything used or intended for the purpose of threatening or intimidating any person, and without restricting the generality of the foregoing, includes any firearm as defined in Section 82".

Weapons of any kind are prohibited on school premises. If a student is found in possession of a weapon such as a knife or other dangerous object, the circumstances will be immediately reviewed by the Academic Head and the student may be suspended from the school for one day, without a warning. For weapons threats of a serious nature, the suspension shall be for five or more days, without a warning, and the student may be expelled.

Drugs

If a student is found in possession of non-prescription drugs, the circumstances will be immediately reviewed by the Academic Head and the student shall be suspended from the school for one or more days, without a warning, and the student may be expelled.

V. Process and Timelines

To enable timely responses to discipline issues as they arise, the Academic Head may delegate his/her authority under this policy to the Administrative Head or another teacher for periods when the Academic Head is unavailable.

Time is of the essence in dealing with some discipline issues, since the related hazard or damage may continue while the interventions and planning are under way.

Stages 1 and 2:

Proceed in a timely manner at discretion of staff and Academic Head.

Stage 3:

Once the Academic Head determines the matter requires a Stage 3 response, a plan shall be completed in 5-10 working days. If a suspension is deemed necessary, this may be implemented immediately by the Academic Head.

VI. Appeals

Parties involved may consult the *Complaints and Appeals Policy*.

DEFINITIONS

The following definitions are intended to enhance understanding of this policy. They are descriptive only and not intended to be used for any legal actions.

Abuse

As defined in the *Child Protection Policy*.

Bullying

As defined in the *Harassment and Bullying Prevention and Management Policy*.

Harassment

As defined in the *Harassment and Bullying Prevention and Management Policy*.

Staff

Any individual who is employed by the Pacific Montessori Society, including an independent contractor who has entered into an agreement with the Society.

REFERENCES

Criminal Code of Canada

Independent School Act

Child Protection Policy

Code of Conduct

Complaints and Appeals Policy

Harassment and Bullying Prevention and Management Policy