

6 POLICY: POSITIVE GUIDANCE

Aim

To ensure Montessori Children's House Wanaka supports children to develop trusting relationships with adults and their peers through consistent behavioural guidelines and to ensure the safety of children and staff.

6.1 Background / Context

The Ministry of Education Regulations governs the positive guidance procedures at Montessori Children's House Wanaka

6.1.1 Early Childhood Regulation 33

Management practice for child behaviour

The licensee of a licensed centre must formulate and apply a written policy on management practices for child behaviour that ensures that:

- *Every child is given respect and dignity; and*
- *Every child is given positive guidance promoting appropriate behaviour, having regard to the child's stage of development; and*
- *Every child is given positive guidance, using praise and encouragement, and avoiding blame, harsh language, and belittling or degrading responses; and*
- *Children are given guidance and control; but no child receiving guidance and control is subjected to any form of physical ill-treatment, solitary confinement, immobilisation, or deprivation of food, drink, warmth, shelter, or protection.*

6.1.3 Early Childhood Regulation 34

Ill treatment of children

The licensee of a licensed centre who becomes aware that there are reasonable grounds for believing that a member of the centre's staff, or any other person,

- *Has physically ill-treated a child; or*
- *In guiding or controlling a child, has subjected the child to solitary confinement, immobilisation, or deprivation of food, drink, warmth, shelter, or protection,*
- *must ensure that the person is excluded from coming into contact with the children; and, if satisfied that it is necessary to do so to ensure no child is ill-treated, ensure that the person is excluded from the centre.*
- *The Secretary (Minister of Education) may immediately suspend the centre's license under regulation 11(1) if satisfied on reasonable grounds that the licensee of a licensed centre:*
 - *Has physically ill-treated a child; or*
 - *In guiding or controlling a child, has subjected the child to solitary confinement, immobilisation, or deprivation of food, drink, warmth, shelter, or protection, or*
 - *Has failed to comply with sub clause (1) in relation to the centre.*

6.2 Prevention Strategies

- 6.2.1 The Montessori environment is specifically designed for children to self-choose from a wide range of activities. The children are often fully absorbed by the activities they choose to undertake

which leads to a calmer and more productive environment. This atmosphere means that children are less likely to demonstrate disruptive or inappropriate behaviour.

- 6.2.2 Information is continually gathered and documented on each child through teacher observation. This helps staff to develop an understanding and an appreciation of individual characteristics and personalities.
- 6.2.3 Children are encouraged to take responsibility for their own actions and those of others. When possible, they are taught to communicate with words when they do not like something another child is doing which affects them.
- 6.2.4 Teachers encourage children to respect the rights of others and to develop a perception of fairness.
- 6.2.5 Children are provided with the opportunity to learn the limits and boundaries of acceptable behaviour through group decision making.
- 6.2.6 By being clear and consistent about expected behaviour in the classroom and outside, children develop an understanding of the rules of the Montessori environment and the reasons for them.
- 6.2.7 When children behave appropriately the teachers positively reinforce their actions.
- 6.2.8 Staff are aware of unacceptable behaviour:
 - 6.4.8.1 A child may not hurt another person or themselves.
 - 6.4.8.3 A child may not damage or misuse property, equipment or the environment

6.3 Procedures for Handling Unacceptable Behaviour

- 6.3.1 **Step 1** – A teacher intervenes to stop behaviour
(The procedures used below reflect the individual stage of the child's development)
- 6.3.2 For infants, teachers will:
 - State the child's name and gain eye contact
 - Use an appropriate tone of voice to convey meaning (firm but not harsh).
 - Promptly reinforce words with an action that redirects the child to an alternative behaviour or activity.
 - State and demonstrate a preferred behaviour.
 - Describe the preferred behaviour using simple words and convey encouragement.
- 6.3.3 For young children, teachers will:
 - State the child's name and gain eye contact.
 - Avoid focusing on the undesirable behaviour and clearly state a preferred action.
 - Provide encouragement when the child responds.
 - If appropriate when the child is calm, explain briefly why they intervened.
 - Try to establish why the behaviour occurred and look for a solution with the child.
 - Give choices and provide consequences i.e. if you choose to do this then you can't do another activity.
- 6.3.4 Using the above guidelines, strategies such as modeling, redirection, facilitating discussions, empathy with the child's feelings and positive reinforcement, may be employed. In the case of the behaviour causing harm to another child or adult or otherwise, at the discretion of the Managing Teacher the following further steps will be followed:

6.3.5 **Step 2** – Informing Parents.

The Managing Teacher, or in their absence teachers from the classroom of the child will discuss the parents of their child's behavior at the end of the session. The teacher dealing with the incident will make a note of the circumstances and this information will be made available to the parents (if another child was involved their identity should be kept confidential). If the behaviour caused harm to another child or person (or for other disruptive behaviour at the Managing Teacher's discretion) then a further meeting will be arranged between the parent and Managing Teacher or class teacher as soon as possible to discuss any factors that may be contributing to the behaviour and ways that the behaviour can be managed with the aim of providing consistency between the child's home and school environment. The Managing Teacher or key teacher will take notes and the parents will be provided with a copy. This information will be confidential to the parents and those staff who need to be aware.

If another child has been harmed by the behaviour then that child's parents will also be informed at the end of the session. The identity of the child who has caused the harm should remain confidential.

6.3.6 **Step 3** - Monitoring

Under the direction of the Managing Teacher, the child's behaviour will be monitored. During the monitoring period a management plan will be developed and implemented by the teachers, in consultation with the Managing Teacher and child's parents. During this period, notes will be made each time the child attends. *Parents will be advised accordingly, and these notes will be available to the Managing Teacher and parents on request. Teachers and/or parents may request a meeting with each other at any stage of the monitoring process to discuss any concerns. Such meetings will also be attended by the Managing Teacher.*

If the behaviour is aimed specifically at another child then that child's behaviour will also be monitored and that child's parents will be informed every day their child attends. (the offending child will not be identified)

To protect privacy neither parents will have access to notes or information regarding the other child being monitored.

6.3.7 **Step 4** - Seeking Specialist Assistance.

If at any stage during the monitoring process the Managing Teacher considers that the child's behaviour is severe and/or consistent then she will liaise with the parents to arrange for specialist assistance. Where possible the Managing Teacher and class teachers involved will work with the specialist agency and parents to help the child to stop the behaviour.

6.3.8 Step 5 – Exclusion

If at any time during the above steps the Managing Teacher considers that other children are at serious risk of harm then, she may exclude the child from the school until assurances have been given by the specialist agency that the child is no longer exhibiting the behaviour.

6.3.9 Note 1 - The privacy of the children and parents will be protected at all times. All conversations relating to a child's behaviour should be held in private and not openly in the classroom. Meetings may either be held at the school or at the home of the parents but not in a public place.

6.3.10 Note 2 - Following an incident free monitoring period, if the same child subsequently shows the same or a similar disruptive behaviour then steps 1-5 will be followed again as required.

Education Regulations 2008, Reg 43, Licensing Criteria 10