

Achieving positive behaviour

BEHAVIOUR AND DISCIPLINE POLICY

Policy statement

The ground rules in Montessori Schools are there to build a climate of respect. They are worded in an age appropriate way and are as follows:

1. **We are gentle and kind**
2. **We respect other children's work**
3. **We play and work safely**
4. **We walk and speak quietly inside school**
5. **We wait our turn for toys and materials**

It's very important that adults can intervene and guide children. However, the Montessori philosophy is not to interfere. Rather, we aim to offer the children **a sense of freedom within clear boundaries**. The children learn how the way they behave affects others and they are taught to respect each other's needs in all aspects of living. **We discuss all the different ways people can hurt each other either verbally or physically as well as discussing what care and respect and kindness looks like.**

Montessori Córdoba believes that children flourish best when their **personal, social and emotional needs are met** and where there are **clear and developmentally appropriate expectations for their behaviour**.

Children need to **learn to consider the views and feelings, needs and rights, of others** and the impact that their behaviour has on people, places and objects. This is a **developmental task** that requires support, encouragement, teaching and the school to set the correct example.

Procedures

We have a policy in place for supporting the personal, social and emotional development of children in our care, including issues concerning behaviour.

The policy requires that we:

- keep ourselves up to date with legislation, research and thinking on promoting positive behaviour and on handling children's behaviour where it may require additional support.
 - access relevant sources of expertise on promoting positive behaviour within the programme for supporting personal, social and emotional development.
 - offer all staff training on promoting positive behaviour.
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- We recognise that codes for interacting with other people vary between cultures and require staff to be aware of - and respect - those used by members of the school.
 - We require all staff, volunteers and students to provide a positive model of behaviour by treating children, parents and one another with friendliness, care and courtesy. ***We do not raise our voices unless there is an immediate danger.*** We may use a serious tone and facial expression to communicate with children who are not following the school rules.
 - We familiarise new staff and volunteers with the school's behaviour policy and its guidelines for behaviour.
 - We expect all members of our school - children, parents, staff, volunteers and students - to keep to the guidelines, requiring these **to be applied consistently.**
 - We work in partnership with children's parents. Parents are regularly informed about their children's behaviour by their teacher. We work with parents to address recurring inconsiderate behaviour, using **our observation records** to help us to understand the cause and to decide jointly how to respond appropriately.

Strategies with children who engage in inconsiderate behaviour

Long term strategies

- We require all staff, volunteers and students to use **positive strategies** for handling any inconsiderate behaviour, by helping children find solutions in ways which are appropriate for the children's ages and stages of development. Such solutions might include, for example, acknowledgement of feelings, explanation as to what was not acceptable, and **supporting children to gain control of their feelings** so that they can learn a more appropriate response.
- We try to always follow inconsiderate behaviour by natural consequences if possible. However, we recognise that that is not always possible, and, in such instances, staff are expected to intervene in a consistent way as outlined in Appendix 1.
- We ensure that there are enough resources available so that children are meaningfully occupied without the need for unnecessary conflict over sharing and waiting for turns. We support each child in developing self-esteem, confidence and feelings of competence.
- We support each child in developing a sense of belonging in our group, so that they feel valued and welcome.
- We avoid creating situations in which children receive adult attention only in return for inconsiderate behaviour. We acknowledge considerate behaviour such as kindness and willingness to wait for turns. We consciously comment on positive interactions between children and highlight positive efforts made during conflict resolution.
- We recognise that children can find it difficult to regulate their own emotions, such as fear, anger or distress, and require sensitive adults to help them do this.
- We have a separate bullying policy to deal with situations where this behaviour is reoccurring.
- If hurtful behaviour is frequent, we try to find out the underlying cause - such as a change or upheaval at home, or frequent change of carers. Sometimes a child has not settled in well or may be experiencing frustration at communicating in a second language. We refer these cases to our SEN team for observation and support.
- We focus on ensuring a child's attachment figure in the school, usually one of their guides, is building a strong relationship to provide security to the child.

Immediate strategies

- Staff are calm and patient when dealing with a hurtful incident, offering comfort to intense emotions, helping children to manage their feelings and talk about them to help resolve issues and promote understanding.
- If necessary, we may remove a child from a situation if we feel their behaviour is inappropriate or we may remove other children and focus our attention on them rather than the child who is behaving inappropriately
- If a child does not listen to our warning, we move closer, come to their level, make eye contact and speak slowly and clearly. If a child's emotions are running too high for them to be able to listen, we may redirect them to a calmer activity.
- We never use physical punishment, such as smacking or shaking. Children are never threatened with these.
- We do not use techniques intended to single out and humiliate individual children.
- We do not keep children inside during playtime as a punishment for unsuitable behaviour.
- We use physical restraint, such as holding, only to prevent physical injury to children or adults. We will always inform parents if restraint has been used, and the incident will be logged on an incident form and kept in the child's records. The child's parent is informed on the same day
- In cases of serious misbehaviour, we make clear immediately the unacceptability of the behaviour and attitudes, we may separate a child from the group until they are calm enough to return.
- We explain the seriousness of the incident, but we use explanations rather than personal blame. If we are supervising other children, we may ask the child to discuss the incident with another adult who can better help at that time.
- We do not shout or raise our voices in a threatening way to respond to children's inconsiderate behaviour. We may shout to stop a dangerous incident if we are not sufficiently close to be heard.

Rough and tumble play and fantasy aggression

Children often engage in play that has aggressive themes – such as superhero and weapon play; some children appear pre-occupied with these themes, but their behaviour is not necessarily a precursor to hurtful behaviour or bullying, although it may be inconsiderate at times and may need addressing using strategies as above.

- We recognise that playful teasing and rough and tumble play are normal for children and acceptable within limits. We regard these kinds of play as pro-social and not as problematic or aggressive.
- We will develop strategies to contain play that are agreed with the children, and understood by them, with acceptable behavioural boundaries to ensure children are not hurt.
- We recognise that fantasy play also contains many violently dramatic strategies, blowing up, shooting etc., and that themes often refer to ‘goodies and baddies’ and as such offer opportunities for us to explore concepts of right and wrong.
- We promote peace and non-violence; we consistently explain to younger children that we do not hurt other people and older children follow a set Peace Curriculum.
- We are able to tune in to the content of the play, perhaps to suggest alternative strategies for heroes, making the most of ‘teachable moments’ to encourage empathy and lateral thinking to explore alternative scenarios and strategies for conflict resolution.

Hurtful behaviour

We take hurtful behaviour very seriously. Most children in school will at some stage hurt or say something hurtful to another child, especially if their emotions are high at the time, but it is not helpful to always label this behaviour as ‘bullying’ if it is not sustained in time as the word can lose its significance and severity.

For young **children** hurtful behaviour is often momentary, spontaneous and often without cognisance of the feelings of the person whom they have hurt.

- We recognise that children behave in hurtful ways towards others because they have not yet developed the means to manage intense feelings that sometimes overwhelm them.
- We will help them manage these feelings as they may have neither the biological means nor the cognitive means to do this for themselves.

- We understand that self-management of intense emotions, especially of anger, happens when the brain has developed neurological systems to manage the physiological processes that take place when triggers activate responses of anger or fear.
- Therefore, we help this process by offering support, calming the child who is angry as well as the one who has been hurt by the behaviour. By helping the child to return to a normal state, we are helping the brain to develop the physiological response system that will help the child be able to manage his or her own feelings.
- We do not engage in punitive responses to a child's rage as that will have the opposite effect.
- Our way of responding to young children is to offer a cuddle to calm them down, but we offer them an explanation and discuss the incident with them to their level of understanding.
- We recognise that children require help in understanding the range of feelings they experience. We help children recognise their feelings by naming them and helping children to express them, making a connection verbally between the event and the feeling.
- We help children learn to empathise with others, understanding that they have feelings too and that their actions impact on others' feelings. "When you hit Susan, it hurt her, and she didn't like that, and it made her cry."
- We help children develop pro-social behaviour, such as resolving conflict over who has the ball. "I can see you are feeling better now, and Susan isn't crying any more. Let's see if we can be friends and find another ball, so you can both play with one."
- We are aware that **the same problem may happen over and over** before skills develop. In order for both the biological maturation and cognitive development to take place, children will need repeated experiences with problem solving, supported by patient adults and clear boundaries.
- We support social skills through modelling behaviour, through activities, role play and stories in our Grace and Courtesy lessons and through our Peace Curriculum. We build self-esteem and confidence in children, recognising their emotional needs through close and committed relationships with them.
- We help a child to understand the effect that their hurtful behaviour has had on another child; we do not force children to say sorry, but encourage this where it is clear that they are genuinely sorry and wish to show this to the person they have hurt.
 - When hurtful behaviour becomes problematic, we work with parents and with our SEN department, to identify the cause and find a solution together.

Appendix 1.

Behaviour in School - 3 Levels of Seriousness.

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ teasing ■ pushing in ■ interrupting teacher ■ attention seeking/clowning around ■ spoiling other pupils' work/games ■ telling tales ■ avoiding work/wasting time ■ being noisy ■ name calling ■ running inside building ■ hindering other children ■ cheekiness ■ using swear words ■ play-fighting ■ uncooperativeness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ arguing about everything ■ arguing back with adults ■ rudeness to staff ■ lying about incidents ■ hitting back ■ kicking ■ fighting/squabbles ■ refusal to follow instructions ■ insulting in a personal way 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ spitting at someone ■ vandalism ■ vicious kicking ■ repeated fighting ■ dangerous refusal to follow instructions ■ stealing ■ physical abuse ■ repeated verbal abuse ■ extortion ■ running out of school ■ bullying (see policy) ■ biting ■ graffiti ■ intentional damage to property ■ assaulting an adult

Type 1

Behaviours dealt with by a member of staff with minimal interaction aimed at refocusing the child back on task. If there are repeated instances, these will be logged on an Incident form or observation book and reported to the SLM/SD.

Type 2

These will be logged on an Incident form and reported to the SLM/SD who will consider the need to discuss the issue with parents and decide upon appropriate action.

Type 3

Parents will be informed, and an individual home/school behaviour policy may be established to monitor future behaviour. The SLM/SD will keep a log of serious or repeated incidents. In the case of bullying, action will be taken in line with the school's separate Bullying Policy.

Appendix 2.

SANCTIONS: -

1. For all incidents at Level 3 and any repeated incident at Level 1 or 2 notes should be made for the child's observation records. The SLM/SD checks progress regularly with staff. Parents are informed as appropriate. The SLM/SD sees all repeated incident forms/observation notes.

Specific sanctions may include withdrawal of privileges in consequence with actions (i.e. freedom to leave the classroom alone). When a pupil repeats an incident after the withdrawal of privileges the school would speak to the parents who are told, and the incident recorded (1). If the pupil continues to offend, a letter home or a meeting with SLM/SD would follow, a plan of action will be established and agreed by all parties (2) and finally after further repeated offending the pupil may be excluded (3).

Appendix 3.

INVOLVEMENT OF PARENTS: -

When the school deems it appropriate to discuss incidents of unacceptable behaviour with parents, the following good practice is adopted:

- the incident/s is fully investigated before hand
- all Type 3 behaviours must be reported to the child's family on the same day of the incident, when there is no time to take action regarding the incident, i.e. when it happens at the end of the day or when information cannot be gathered from all parties for some other reason; then families will be informed that an incident has taken place, that details can't be shared at this moment, and a time given for a meeting between the family and the school at a time when investigations will have concluded, preferably the following day.
- parents are invited to meet either class teacher, SLM, SD, or various members of staff, as appropriate.
- parents are asked for their views and cooperation in working with the school on strategies to improve their child's behaviour
- a follow up meeting or telephone conversation is always agreed between parents and staff with dates and times noted
- a record is kept of the conversation.
- where necessary, we will ask for advice and support from our SEN coordinator or School Psychologist.

Appendix 4

USE OF REASONABLE FORCE POLICY

To maintain the safety and welfare of our pupils, it may sometimes be necessary to use reasonable force on a pupil, as permitted by law. This is only to be used when all possible options for giving the child time/space to regain self-control have been exhausted.

Definitions

Force means either passive physical contact, such as standing between pupils or blocking a pupil's path, or active physical contact such as leading a pupil by the arm out of a classroom. Restraint means to hold back physically or to bring a pupil under control. It is typically used in more extreme circumstances, for example when two pupils are fighting and refuse to separate without physical intervention.

Who can use reasonable force?

All members of school staff have power to use reasonable force. This power applies to any member of staff at the school.

Schools can use reasonable force to:

- remove disruptive/violent children from the classroom where they have refused to follow an instruction to do so.
- to prevent a pupil behaving in a way that seriously disrupts a school event or a school trip or visit.
- prevent a pupil leaving the classroom where allowing the pupil to leave would risk their safety or lead to behaviour that disrupts the behaviour of others.
- prevent a pupil from attacking a member of staff or another child, or to stop a fight in the playground.
- restrain a pupil at risk of harming themselves through physical outbursts.

Schools cannot use force as a punishment - it is always wrong to use force as a punishment.

Communicating the school's approach to the use of force

Our Behaviour Policy is known to staff, parents and pupils. In the Behaviour Policy, the circumstances in which force might be used are outlined.

Appendix 5

EXCLUSIONS

As a school we seek to avoid exclusions. It would only take place in the event of repeated behaviours or a very serious incident and when other strategies, that have been tried and tested, have failed over time. In most cases, exclusion will be the last resort after a range of strategies have been tried to improve a child's behaviour. The school director and staff will identify pupils whose behaviour places them at risk of exclusion and seek additional provision to meet their individual needs; this may include:

- An individual behaviour plan
- Support from the SEN department
- The employment of a "shadow" one-to-one support figure to ensure the child's or other's safety.

Any costs of support from external agencies must be covered by the child's family.

In the event of an exclusion the School Director will:

1. Inform the pupil's parents of the period of any exclusion or a permanent exclusion.
2. Give the reason for the exclusion.
3. Advise the parents that they may make representations about the exclusion to a Pupil Discipline Committee of three members of the school board and staff (the School Director is not to be a member).
4. Advise the parents how representation can be made.
5. Notify the School Board of the details and reasons for the exclusion.

If the School Board decide that a pupil should be reinstated, they will give the appropriate direction to the School Director and inform the parent of their decision.

If they decide that a pupil should not be reinstated, they will inform the parents and School Director of their decision. In the case of a permanent exclusion, they will notify the parent in writing of their decision and the reasons for it.

Parents can be assured that the appeal will be treated seriously and confidentially. All correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential except in so far as is required of the School.