

5.3 APPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR POLICY

INTRODUCTION

At Lindfield Montessori School, we behave, speak and treat one another in respectful ways.

At our school we understand that everyone is different, and we respect those differences. Lindfield Montessori School actively seeks to provide students with a stimulating learning environment that is safe and secure.

This policy outlines the responsibilities of all staff and students and how parents can assist, to ensure that our school is a safe learning environment for everyone.

WHAT IS INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR?

Inappropriate behaviour is made up of behaviours intended to deliberately hurt, threaten, frighten or exclude someone by physical and non-physical means over extended periods of time. An individual or group may direct these behaviours towards another individual or group.

Someone is behaving inappropriately when:

- They verbally abuse a person or group by calling them unpleasant names or by writing nasty notes, drawings and/or messages or by using unpleasant gestures.
- They physically harm a person or group or physically intimidate them by threatening physical harm or by destroying/taking their belongings without permission.
- They encourage their friends or people they know to verbally or physically threaten a person or group; or ask them to harass, embarrass, ignore or exclude that person or group from activities.

Inappropriate behaviour may take one, two or all of these forms. It is repeated inappropriate behaviour over an extended period of time by a person or group towards another person or group that constitutes bullying.

Misbehaviour is the result of a child's mistaken assumptions as to how to gain attention, gain status or assert his/her position. Children need and seek approval and attention. If they are unable to satisfy this need in a positive manner there might be a tendency to revert to negative behaviours.

PURPOSE

This policy aims to ensure that:

- Our school is a secure and safe environment free from threat, harassment, and intimidation;
- Teachers, students and parents are aware of and encouraged to implement positive strategies to prevent and address inappropriate behaviour;
- Teachers, parents and students are knowledgeable about the nature, causes and consequences of inappropriate behaviour and the procedures that have been set in place to address episodes of inappropriate behaviour in this school;
- Teachers, parents and students are committed to collaborate on maintaining a safe and friendly environment;
- Students are taught appropriate peer interaction skills, conflict resolution skills, and are encouraged to and positively reinforced for interacting with members of the school community in a positive manner; and
- Teachers are aware of their role in fostering the knowledge and attitudes that will be required to achieve the above aims.

GUIDELINES FOR ADDRESSING INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR

This school does not sanction under any circumstances the administering of corporal punishment by school persons or non-school persons (including parents) to enforce discipline at the school. "This does not include however, the application of force only to prevent personal injury to, or damage to or the destruction of property of any person (including the student)". [Education Reform Amendment Act (School Discipline), 1995].

This school will address all inappropriate acts in a serious manner. Those who carry out such acts will be given every opportunity to change their behaviour and reflect on the consequences of their actions on others and choose more acceptable ways of behaving. Everyone in our school will play a part in reducing and preventing inappropriate behaviours.

WHOLE-SCHOOL POLICY FOR NURTURING APPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR

This policy is designed to use a whole-school approach whereby teachers, parents and students are actively involved in implementing this policy by working together to address and prevent bullying.

PROCEDURAL FAIRNESS

Discipline will be handled in an unbiased manner and taking into account the principles of procedural fairness.

STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES

Staff of the school should endeavour to:

- Model positive relationships in their day-to-day dealings with members of the school and model pro-social ways of resolving disputes;
- Positively reinforce students for behaving in an appropriate pro social manner;
- Be knowledgeable about and educate students about the nature, causes and consequences of inappropriate behaviour and the procedures that have been set in place to address inappropriate behaviour in this school;
- Be familiar with the school's behaviour code and management system, including the contents of this policy;
- Respond immediately, decisively, and consistently to cases of inappropriate behaviour brought to their attention by students, parents and/or colleagues;
- Respond to early signs of distress in students. These early signs can include an unusual lack of concentration or inappropriate behaviours such as aggressive behaviour outbursts and poor class or school attendance;
- Seek advice and support from colleagues when unsure as to how to respond to and address specific incidents and
- Encourage students to report situations of inappropriate behaviour by listening carefully and acting in a non-judgemental manner when reports are made, whilst remaining calm and understanding of the student's/parent's/colleague's concern.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

A clear understanding of appropriate behaviour by students contributes in a major way to making the school a safe place. For this reason, Lindfield Montessori School expects all students to:

- Contribute to a safe learning environment by being respectful of others;
- Positively interact with members of the school community in their day-to-day dealings and resolve disputes in pro social ways;
- Be knowledgeable about the nature, causes and consequences of inappropriate behaviour, strategies for preventing and addressing such behaviour and the procedures that have been set in place to address these episodes in this school.

PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Appropriate behaviour requires a community approach based on the Montessori philosophy of the school. This is why our school encourages parents to:

- Be knowledgeable about the nature, causes and consequences of inappropriate behaviour and the procedures that have been set in place to address such episodes in this school;
- Encourage children to interact positively and with respect with other people in their day-to-day dealings and when resolving disputes;
- Positively reinforce children for behaving in an appropriate pro social manner;
- Inform their children about effective strategies for dealing with inappropriate behaviour (e.g., the need to inform a teacher and seek assistance if they are experiencing antisocial behaviour at school, the importance of not responding aggressively to such behaviour as this can serve to intensify aggression);
- Watch for signs of atypical behaviour (e.g., repeatedly losing possessions; reluctance to go to school or talk about school; altered sleep patterns; mood swings; changes in personality; few if any friends; lack of interest in life or unexplained health problems) or unexplained physical injuries,
- Contact the Principal as early as possible if they are concerned.
- Allow the school to investigate and manage the situation and be aware of the importance of working as a community in a cohesive manner.

PROCEDURES FOR MANAGING INCIDENTS OF INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR

When an inappropriate behaviour has been identified, the parents and/or Principal are to arrange an interview. A written report of this meeting is made which includes clarification of the behaviour and some short-term achievable goals. A review date is arranged.

If more than one child is involved the parents/guardian of those children are also asked to attend an individual interview. The Principal identifies short-term goals and makes a written report.

On the specified review date, the issues are revisited and progress is reported. Should the behaviour no longer be inappropriate, no further meetings are arranged, however reference to the issue will be made at parent/teacher interviews to ensure that there is no reoccurrence.

Should the issue still be occurring, a meeting with the Principal and parents/guardians is arranged. It is at this meeting that further strategies and goals are identified and these might include the involvement of a trained specialist. Written documentation is kept in the child's file of any meeting having been signed by the Principal and parents.

Should any other parties be involved, they are informed at the review meeting of the strategies and progress with regards to modifying the behaviour.

The following steps will be taken to manage inappropriate behaviour:

- Inappropriate behaviour at the school is addressed according to the seriousness and nature of the behaviour.
- Students being required to reflect on their behaviour with the guidance of the Principal
- Students being required to reflect on their behaviour and the Principal notifying parents to seek their support to address the issue
- Students being required to reflect on their behaviour and a meeting arranged with the Principal and parents to discuss how they can assist in addressing the issue
- Meeting with parents, and the Principal to discuss how the student can be most effectively assisted in addressing the issue
- Meeting with parents to discuss the need to refer the matter to a specialist or other professionals for assessment and intervention, and
- Exclusion from school if the behaviour shows no modification despite strategies and reasonable goals being set.

Relevant Legislation	Children (Education and Care Services National Law Application) Act 2010 Sec 166-167 Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011. Reg 84, 168
Link to NQS	2.2, 5.1, 5.2
Related Policies	Student Discipline Child Protection Family Participation and Communication Interactions with Children Code of Ethics Ethical Conduct Behaviour Management
Sources & Further Reading	Montessori Australia Foundation

POLICY REVIEWED	MODIFICATIONS	NEXT REVIEW DATE
February 2022	Checked regulations, updated copy	2024