

True discipline comes more from within than without and is the result of steadily developing inner growth. Just as the very young child must first learn to stand before they can walk, they must develop an inward order through work before they are able to choose and carry out their own acts. Surprisingly enough, Montessori found that it was through the very liberty inherent in her classrooms that the children were given the means to reveal their inner or self-discipline. Independence did not diminish respect for authority but rather deepened it. One of the things that aroused her greatest interest was that order and discipline seemed to be so closely united that they resulted in freedom."

STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES FROM THE MONTESSORI PHILOSOPHY

The Montessori Approach stresses the importance of total development which includes care of the physical, emotional and moral, as well as the intellectual needs of all children. Activities and experiences are planned to help the child develop the ability to take responsibility for their own well-being and to care for others.

At all times the interest of the child is the central concern.

Discipline presupposes a certain degree of obedience. Before the age of three a child is truly unable to obey unless what is asked happens to correspond with one of their vital urges. At this stage, the personality hasn't formed to the level where the child is capable of making a choice to obey. It is this level which Montessori termed the first level of obedience. A toddler can obey, but not always. The second level of obedience is reached when the child is capable of understanding another person's wishes and can express them in their own behaviour. When this second level of obedience is reached, most parents and educators would think they had reached their goal. Most adults ask only that children obey. The goals of Montessori reach beyond this, however, to the third level which Montessori called "joyful obedience". At this stage the child has internalised obedience, or we might say, has developed self-discipline where the child sees clearly the value of what is being offered to them by authority and rushes to obey. This is not blind obedience at all, but is a fully informed choice by a personality which has grown in freedom and developed to its fullest potential. This is what we want for our children. With this level of obedience or self-discipline comes a degree of self-respect in which a child cannot help but respect the rights and needs of others alongside their own. He/she is then able to learn and grow freely in the security of a community of respectful individuals.

The Montessori approach is to assist the child to develop that self-control and discipline. Some of this is developed through the use of the materials and the inability of the child to enforce their will onto something else or the need to develop control over oneself in order to complete the work effectively.

Children are considered to be whole and good but their actions may not be in keeping with the expectations of the social community. Any discussion with the child is in the context of their actions and not on their character or being. Children who have difficulties with another are encouraged in the first instance to discuss their problem with the other child concerned. Children remain with each other until both have discussed the issue and reached an agreement that satisfies both parties. Lessons are given to children as a group and on an individual basis and situation on ways to discuss an issue with another person and ways to resolve the conflict.

Staff are aware that any verbal or visual observation may not give a true picture of the situation and that all parties involved in the conflict should also be involved in the resolution.

Children having difficulties with being involved in the discussion or seem to be having difficulties with being with or near other children that day are encouraged to take time away from the other children or to remain with the supervising adult until it is felt that they can manage themselves again.

If there is regular disruption or conflict with other children, consideration may be given to the work or play the child is involved in; personal difficulties e.g. illness, medication, out of school problems. Developmental difficulties or other considerations, discussion and support should be sought from the parents to assist the child. Assistance may also be sought from other staff or professionals as felt necessary to assist the child's social development. Staff will endeavour to make themselves aware of professional help available e.g. community health centres, speech therapists, optometrists, screening facilities etc. Regular communication is maintained for all children by providing opportunities to advise and discuss appropriate avenues for help and support with families as the need arises.

In the event that the safety of the child or the group is at risk, consideration may be required for alternative arrangements for the child. However, the Hills Montessori School policy is to provide as much support to the child and family assisting in his/her development as part of the community as is possible. It is our belief that children having

difficulties with social interaction have the best support in a Montessori environment. Exclusion from the school is only considered as a very last resort.

In keeping with the Montessori Philosophy and the Education Reform Amendment (Corporal Punishment) Act 1995, at no time is corporal punishment permitted by anyone on the premises. The Hills Montessori School does not explicitly or implicitly sanction the administering of corporal punishment by non-school persons, including parents, to enforce discipline.

The goal of the Montessori classroom whether it is a prepared environment for infants and toddlers, pre-schoolers, elementary, or secondary students, is first and foremost the development of skills necessary for a productive and fulfilling life. The best of the academic curriculums is useless if the child does not develop inner discipline, integrity, and respect for others and oneself. The young person who faces the world of tomorrow armed with self-confidence and self-discipline is far more likely to achieve success and happiness. They will be prepared to meet any challenges that the “real world” may present and will hopefully bring to that world some of the peace and joy they experienced in the Montessori environment.

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.” M. Montessori

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 staff must observe the children and endeavour to put them in contact with work which engages their 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 themselves in work. The staff 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 themselves through the use of the materials and assisting to understand that we learn through making mistakes.

The following will serve as guidelines for supporting children on 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.

RATIONALE

Expectations of behaviour vary greatly and as part of the anti-bias program, the School aims to be sensitive to these differences and other people's feelings. 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 themselves in the world. We believe that there is no occasion on which physical punishment should be used against a child. 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. Self-regulation is a means by which children are helped to develop that awareness.

The right for children to receive positive guidance in a supportive and respectful environment is protected in National Regulations and Law and the National Quality Standards. Children learn to face a variety of challenges throughout

their lives. Learning the difference between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour assists children to regulate their own behaviours in different social and emotional environments as well as when interacting with peers and adults.

SCOPE

This policy applies to children, families, staff, board, students, volunteers and visitors of the School.

AIM

- To create positive relationships with children making them feel safe, secure and supported within our School. We will ensure children are treated with respect, consistency, fairly and equitably as they are supported to develop the skills and knowledge required to behave in a socially and culturally acceptable manner.
- To develop in children an understanding of the limits to acceptable behaviour and the reason for these limits.
- To help children learn the consequences of their behaviour so that they understand how their actions affect those around them.
- To enable children to become self-disciplined and self-directed so that their needs and interests become clearer to themselves and those about them.
- To be sensitive to differing cultures, social groupings and child rearing practices, along with other people's feelings when considering appropriate behaviour guidance and management for the children.

UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES

- 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. Destroying things is also inappropriate
- We are careful with our own and others' work and belongings.
- We are respectful with insects, animals and plants. Like us they are living things.
- We keep ourselves and our surroundings clean.
- We are considerate to others when we move about our environment calmly and safely.

IMPLEMENTATION

- The behaviour and guidance techniques used by staff at our School are designed to give children the opportunity to expand their experiences of life in a productive, safe environment that enables the child's right to safety, tolerance, self-expression, cultural identity, dignity and self worth.
- Staff understand that as children grow and develop, self-regulation becomes an important aspect of social and emotional development as they begin to understand how their actions affect others.
- We believe in providing boundaries as part of a loving and secure relationship with children and families to help them feel secure and self-confident. Children benefit from knowing that their environment is stable and that a competent adult is taking care of them.
- There are three aspects to promoting positive behaviour:
 - A learning environment that is positive and supportive
 - Strategies for building skills and strengthening positive behaviour
 - Strategies for decreasing undesired behaviours

INAPPROPRIATE DISCIPLINE

Any form of corporal punishment, or any discipline that is unreasonable or inappropriate is not permitted at any time when children are being educated and cared for by an education and care service. Staff are made aware of interactions and practices with children that are classified as unreasonable or inappropriate discipline.

HEAD OF SCHOOL/NOMINATED SUPERVISOR/RESPONSIBLE PERSON WILL ENSURE:

- Obligations under the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations are met
- All staff, students, volunteers and visitors have knowledge of and adhere to this policy and procedures

- Information is gathered from families about their children's social skills and relationship preferences, which will be recorded in the child's individual file. Our staff will use this information to engage children in experiences that support them to develop and practice their social and shared decision-making skills.
- A partnership is developed with local schools and other professionals or support agencies that work with children who have diagnosed behavioural or social difficulties to develop plans for the inclusion of these specific children. This information will be kept confidential and in the individual child's file.
- Children are given the opportunity to make choices and experience the consequences of these choices when there is no risk of physical or emotional harm to the child or anyone else.
- Children are being acknowledged when they make positive choices in managing their behaviour.
- Positive strategies are being implemented to enable staff to encourage positive behaviour in children in order to minimise adverse behaviour. In addition, we will implement strategies educating children about developing behaviour limits and the consequences of inappropriate behaviour.
- Excessive behaviour is managed and communicated with families.
- Support staff enhance their skills and knowledge in guiding children's behaviour

STAFF WILL:

- Encourage the individual social development in each child, striving to develop children's self-regulation and understanding the feelings of others
- Guide children's behaviour, teaching them how to be considerate of others – to think about the effects of their actions on others. It is important that children understand what acceptable and unacceptable behaviour is and how to manage their emotions.
- Use positive guidance through redirection. In the instance of adverse behaviour being persistently observed, Staff will evaluate their program, room set up, supervision etc. to reflect on inappropriate behaviour, triggers and sources.
- Role model appropriate behaviour and language, encouraging children to socialise with other children, including children of different cultural backgrounds as well as from different age groups and different genders.
- Implement "Time with" an adult, which will be used when all other strategies (above) have been exhausted. "Time with," allows children time to reflect on their actions, assisting in fostering self-discipline and to acknowledge that there are consequences to actions. "Time with" will occur under the supervision of other staff.
- Hills Montessori School does not have a "time out" but we do recognise that children may need independent time to gather their emotions and physical control before interacting with other children.
- Take into consideration the child's past experiences as their behaviour could be a result from past trauma such as changes in routine, changes or losses within the family, placement in care, or more serious circumstances involving abuse, neglect, or family violence.
- Be responsive to these former experiences, designing and implementing behaviour plans with the individual child that include strategies which will assist alternative and positive behaviour.
- Ensure all strategies being implemented are appropriate to the child's age and developmental capacity.
- Adapt a positive approach, excluding cruel, harsh, humiliating or demeaning actions or words.
- Consult with industry professionals to support the child within the School and implement techniques within the program to benefit all.
- Commit to professional development and keep up to date with industry information regarding behaviour management.
- Re-direct a child who may be causing or about to cause harm to himself or herself, another child or adult. Incidents may include a child who is kicking, spitting, biting, throwing furniture or toys, punching or hitting, or being disruptive. Redirection may also include an incident where a child places itself in a dangerous situation, for example, climbing a fence or hiding under furniture. Safety is a priority and this may mean using physical re-direction in which staff will actually remove the child from the harmful situation
- Complete an Incident/Injury Report for each incident that occurs. Families are to be notified where they will be required to read and sign in an instance where a child or children's safety has been jeopardised.
- Continue observing the child, where a similar incidence occurs three times the child's parents and teachers will meet to discuss the issue and create a behaviour management plan of action to support the child in the environment.

- Exchange information with families on the subject of behaviour management which is encouraged both on an informal and more formal basis, such as parent interviews and through newsletters.
- Be sufficiently informed, trained and supervised to implement the behaviour management plan created, ensuring that information is composed and recorded for reflection on its effectiveness for the individual child.
- Support children to explore different identities and points of view and to communicate effectively when resolving disagreements with others.
- Discuss emotions, feelings and issues of inclusion and fairness, bias and prejudice and the consequences of their actions and the reasons for this as well as the appropriate rules.
- Encourage children to listen to other people's ideas, consider pro-social behaviour and collaborate in problem solving situations.
- Listen empathetically to children when they communicate their emotions, provide encouragement as they reassure the child it is normal to experience positive and negative emotions.
- Guide children to remove themselves from situations where they are experiencing frustration, anger or fear.
- Support children to negotiate their rights and the rights of others and mediate perceptively when children experience complexity in resolving dissimilarity.
- Learn about children's relationships with others and their relationship preferences they have and use this knowledge to encourage children to manage their own behaviour and expand on their empathy skills.
- Work with individual families and professional agencies to ensure that a consistent approach is used to support children with diagnosed behavioural or social difficulties.
- Use positive language, gestures, facial expressions and tone of voice when redirecting or discussing children's behaviour with them.
- Remain calm, tender and tolerant as they encourage children who are strongly expressing distress, frustration or anger to manage their feelings.
- Guide children's behaviour with a focus on preserving and promoting children's self-esteem as they learn to control their behaviour.
- Recognise the use of Practical Life exercise as a strong strategy and tool for assisting child with developing self-regulation.
- Use Grace & Courtesy lessons to provide role modelling experiences outside or and in anticipation of situations the child may be involved in.

FAMILIES WILL:

- Be informed of behaviour management concerns we may have with their child, this includes: the positive and negative aspects of the day.
- Collaborate with staff and professional agencies when required in order to develop a broader understanding of the child's developmental level, the child's family, the parent's approach, and any recent events, which may be influencing the child's behaviour.

CHILDREN WILL BE ENCOURAGED TO:

- Learn to respect the rights and needs of others by anticipating the result and consequences of their behaviour.
- Be given positive guidance towards acceptable behaviour so they learn what acceptable and unacceptable behaviour is.
- Learn to be responsive of their actions and how their behaviour impacts on others.
- Be encouraged to use their words rather than actions to resolve conflicts
- Build on strengthening their communication through intentional teaching moments which can include:
 - Greeting others when they arrive and depart from School
 - Developing sharing experiences
 - Assisting when it is time to pack away the indoor and outdoor environment - Develop skills in courteous interactions
- Learn to wait for their turn for an appropriate period of time. This will depend on age and development

- Learn about the feelings of others throughout the program in order to assist children to understand the consequences of their actions.
- Engage in cooperative and pro-social behaviour and express their feelings and responses to others' behaviour confidently and constructively, including challenging the behaviour of other children when it is disrespectful or unfair.

POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR STRATEGIES:

Guiding children's behaviour is an important aspect of caring for and educating children. Positive strategies need to be developed to assist children to learn appropriate ways of behaving. Corporal punishment and unreasonable discipline are not permitted in children's services, not only because the child may be physically harmed, but also because it nearly always has detrimental effects on the child's self-esteem and feelings of security.

- Establish positive relationships with children. Get to know the children - they are more likely to respond to your expectations if they sense you know and like them;
- Empower children to use language and other forms of non-hurtful communication to communicate their emotions
- Promote positive, empathetic relationships between children assisting them to develop respectful relationship
- Encourage and assist children to make decisions for themselves and provide opportunities for independence and self-regulation
- Provide clear and reasonable limits so that children know what is expected of them and follow through to help them abide by the limits
- Model appropriate behaviours
- Provide positive feedback and focus on children's strengths and achievements and build on their abilities
- Be understanding and supportive – acknowledge children's emotions
- Help children develop a sense of social responsibility, so that they become aware of the impact of their actions on others
- Promote children's initiative and agency
- Discuss guidelines, rules, limits and what is fair with children, and use their contributions in setting limits and guidelines.
- Provide age appropriate and interesting activities, experiences and equipment for children to use and become engaged in as they challenge their development
- Providing opportunities for children to explore both in the indoor and outdoor environment
- Set up the environment (indoor and outdoor) for children to engage in activities and experiences in accordance with their abilities and interests
- Ensure there is sufficient materials and equipment
- Implementing a regular routine in order to support children's positive behaviour. Routines help to provide a sense of security so that children feel settled.

COMMON SITUATIONS

Managing Biting Behaviour

- Attend first to the victim to comfort the child and assess the situation. Apply first aid.
- While attending to the victim (or immediately after) draw in the child who bites. Explain the situation and the consequences of their action in language understandable to the child who bites. Encourage the child who bites to help with first aid where appropriate.
- For an older child: Ask what happened and listen to the children's response. Talk about how the problem arose and encourage the child who bites to verbalise their feelings. "I know you are frustrated and angry because you wanted a turn but instead of biting what could you say to (name)".
- Write an accident report. Parents of the victim do not need to know who bit their child.
- Document the incident, briefly, in each child's observation records. Record how the biting situation arose and why the child bit. A pattern can be established, and situations compared from observations. This information will possibly help to prevent another such event.
- If biting is an ongoing concern with a particular child, their parents should be informed and strategies developed that are consistent between home and the School.

Points to remember:

- Correct the behaviour not the child. Afterwards involve the child who bites in a positive experience to show that you still like them as a person.
- Prevention is the key issue; be aware of children likely to bite when this occurs and why.
- Recognise why children bite - remember developmental stages.
- Remember, children may need you to verbalise what they cannot. When the adult talks out what happened it can help the children to reach appropriate solutions. This one-to-one communication between carer and the child who bites needs to occur immediately after the bite has occurred.

When children swear (usually 2- to 5-year-olds)

- As children get older, they learn the effects of using swear words.
- Assess the situation - remember there is usually a reason why the child is swearing. Deal with the issue or problem which has led to the child swearing. Encourage children to talk about what has happened and develop solutions to work through the problem.
- Teach children to use appropriate language to express how they feel. Help them with appropriate words to use.
- Model appropriate language.
- If swearing is an ongoing problem with a particular child talk to the child about how it makes others feel when they use those words, talk about why they use those words and talk about words the child can use instead of swearing.
- Talk to parents of the child if swearing is an ongoing problem. Devise methods of responding to swearing that are consistent between home and School.

Dealing with temper 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.
- 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 themselves or another child? If so, it may be necessary to clear a space free from objects and "onlookers".
- Reason with the child after they have 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 that 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.

"Let us remember that inner discipline is something to come to and not something already present. Our Task is to show the way to discipline. Discipline is born when the child concentrates his/her attention on some object that attracts him/her not only with the useful exercise but with the control of error."

MARIA MONTESSORI

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT/REFLECTION

Our *Behaviour Guidance Policy* will be reviewed on an annual basis in consultation with children, families, staff and Board.

LEGISLATIVE LINKS	
<p>Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations</p> <p>S.162A Child protection training – each nominated supervisor and each person in date to day charge and each family day care coordinator to have completed the child protection training required or under law for the jurisdiction S.166 Offence to use inappropriate discipline S.167 Offence relating to protection of children from harm and hazards S.174 Offence to fail to notify certain information to Regulatory Authority 12 Meaning of serious incident 84 Awareness of child protection law 147 Staff members records 155 Interactions with children 156 Relationships in groups 168 Education and care service must have policies and procedures 170 Policies and procedures are to be followed 175 Prescribed information to be notified to Regulatory Authority</p> <p>National Quality Standards</p> <p>2.1.1 Wellbeing and comfort 2.2.1 Supervision 5.1 Relationships between educators and children 5.1.1.1 Positive educator to child interactions 5.1.2 Dignity & Rights of the child 5.2 Relationships between children 5.2.1 Collaborative learning 5.2.2 Self-regulation 6.1 Supportive relationships with families 7.1 Governance</p> <p>Registered and Accredited Individual Non-Government Schools (NSW) Manual</p> <p>3.6 Safe & Supportive Environment 3.7 Discipline – principles of fairness</p> <p>Work Health and Safety Regulation 2017</p> <p>42 First aid kits and training</p>	
LINKS TO OTHER POLICES	LINKS TO OTHER DOCUMENTS
Anti-bias and Inclusion, Development and Education, Communication, Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness, Interactions with children, Medical conditions, Privacy, Confidentiality and Storage of Records, Enrolment	
OTHER RESOURCES	
<p>Child Care Centre Desktop</p> <p>Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2014). Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services ECA Code of Ethics.</p> <p>http://raisingchildren.net.au</p> <p>www.napcan.org.au</p> <p>www.cyh.com</p> <p>www.acwa.asn.au</p> <p>www.community.nsw.gov.au</p> <p>www.kidsmatter.edu.au</p> <p>Louise Porter: Developing Responsible Behaviour</p>	
REVIEW DATES	
<p>Created: 22 June 2021</p> <p>Review: 12 July 2021, 27 January 2022, 27 January 2023, 19 February 2024, 17 February 2025</p> <p>Updated: 17 February 2019, 19 May 2022, 2 March 2023, 20 February 2024, 18 February 2025</p> <p>Ratified: 14 February 2022, 11 March 2024, 10 March 2025</p> <p>Next review no later than February 2026</p>	

POLICY REVIEWED	PREVIOUS MODIFICATIONS	NEXT REVIEW DATE
February 2025	Annual policy maintenance Hyperlinks and sources checked and repaired as required Additional section added – inappropriate discipline	February 2026
February 2024	Hyperlinks and sources checked and repaired as required Wording - Biter changed to the child who bites	February 2025
27 January 2023	Sources checked for currency Hyperlinks checked and repaired as required	January 2024