



Student Discipline Policy

1. Purpose

Inner Sydney Montessori School (the School) recognises the unique value of each child and the importance of ensuring the healthy and emotional development of each child. The School works with parents/carers to ensure that students are appropriately supported to develop the self-management required to successfully participate in the Montessori curriculum offered by the School. The School does not permit corporal punishment. The School does not sanction corporal punishment by non-School persons, including parents to enforce discipline at School.

2. Who is Affected by this Policy?

- Nominated Supervisor (Principal)
- Staff (including casuals)
- Children and others attending the programs and activities of ISMS
- Parents/carers
- Students on teaching placements and observations
- Outside Tutors and External Providers
- Contractors, Consultants and Visitors
- Volunteers

3. What does this Policy mean?

Discipline is reinforced using positive initiatives and incentives with particular regard to the student/students concerned. This policy is consistent with the Education Reform Amendment (Corporal Punishment) Act 1995.

Underlying our practices are fundamental principles of human respect and dignity, and fair treatment. It is every person's right to expect to be treated according to these principles. We are also conscious of a need to attend to gender equity and anti-harassment. A right can only be enjoyed when everyone acts responsibly.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child is founded on respect for the dignity and worth of each individual, regardless of race, colour, gender, language, religion, opinions, wealth, sexual orientation, birth status or ability. Developing responsive, warm, trusting and respectful relationships with children promotes their wellbeing, self-esteem and sense of security. Positive interactions between staff/adults and children can empower children to feel valued, competent and capable. Actively engaging in children's learning and decision-making during play, daily routines and ongoing activities can stimulate children's thinking, enrich their learning and encourage them to explore and manage their feelings and behaviour.

Interactions with children revolve around supervision, and educators supporting children through the development of Behaviour Guidance Plans. We aim to foster a sense of belonging in children through interactions with warm, responsive and available educators. We involve families in all aspects of their

child's educational experience and reflect on pedagogical decisions which leads to empowering children.

We aim to teach students that mutual rights are essential if we are to cooperate with one another at School in such a way as to enable good learning in the classroom and to construct a social environment around the School. In order to guide responsible behaviour, we have 'Respectful Guidelines'. Student behaviour should reflect our School philosophy.

3.1 ISMS Respectful Guidelines

- We use our hands to help, not harm
- We walk indoors and use calm voices
- We take care of everything in our environment
- We use kind and thoughtful words and actions
- We listen to each other and give each other time and space
- We make a genuine effort to participate and learn

3.2 Inner Discipline:

The development of inner discipline in a child is the goal in Montessori education. Self-discipline is fostered in many ways. The classroom environment is organised in an orderly, logical manner. Children choose work, which they are capable of doing and are free to do it without interference from others. In addition, the mixed age group classes allow younger children to emulate the mature behaviour of older children.

Our guidance to support the behaviour of children will:

- (a) Ensure that a proper tone of voice is used at all times
- (b) Encourage children to respectfully express themselves and their opinions
- (c) Offer positive guidance and encouragement towards acceptable behaviour
- (d) Have regard to the cultural and family values, age, and the physical and intellectual development and abilities of each child being educated and cared for
- (e) Support each child to develop positive relationships, and to work and learn in collaboration with others
- (f) Support children to understand that there are consequences that flow from behaviours and there are acceptable and unacceptable behaviours

All disciplinary action that may result in any sanction against the student including suspension, expulsion or exclusion provides processes based on procedural fairness.

The School's approach to discipline and behaviour management is outlined in the Behaviour Management Policy (3.7.3)

3.3 **Procedural fairness** is a basic right of all when dealing with authorities. Procedural fairness refers to what is sometimes described as the 'hearing rule' and the 'right to an unbiased decision'.

3.3.1 The 'hearing rule' includes the right of the person against whom an allegation has been made to:

- (a) Know the allegations related to a specific matter and any other information which will be considered in the matter
- (b) Know the process by which the matter will be considered
- (c) Respond to the allegations
- (d) Know how to seek a review of the decision made in response to the allegations

- 3.3.2 The 'right to an unbiased decision' include the right to:
- (a) Impartiality in an investigation and decision making
 - (b) An absence of bias by a decision-maker
 - (c) The review mechanism adds to the fairness of the process
- 3.3.3 The School may take advice from The Association of Independent Schools (AISNSW), who hold the view that the right of review or appeal depends on the circumstances of each individual case and it is not a necessary component of providing procedural fairness.
We limit situations where suspension or expulsion could be the outcome or disciplinary proceeding.
- 3.3.4 Students are required to abide by the School 'Respectful Guidelines' and to follow the directions of staff and other people with authority delegated by the School. The School holds the view that positive behaviour is a developmental process and setting limits helps children to feel secure in their world. Positive behaviour is instructive when it:
- Supports self-esteem
 - Is friendly with error and creates opportunities for self-correction
 - Considers age, ability and understanding
 - Is caring and expressed positively
 - Guides, gives simple explanations and offers alternative, appropriate choices
 - Is consistent
 - Is based on self-discipline and self-control
- 3.3.5 The School has in place various programs that support the student to develop positive discipline. These include:
- Grace & Courtesy lessons are designed to answer the child's need for order and social structures in their environment. They give the child the vocabulary, actions and steps required for them to build awareness and responsiveness of those around them
 - Montessori Peace Educational Program, which contains the children's study of Peoples of the World through to learning about the Fundamental Needs of Humans. Emphasis is placed on the family of humankind and the interrelationship of all life. Montessori children begin to realize that they are not separate from the rest of the world but are an integral part of creating a harmonious world
 - Practical Life curriculum develops the children's care of the person and their immediate Environment.
- 3.3.6 General consequences for inappropriate behaviour, must be logical, impartial, compassionate, reflective and empowering. These may include:
- Redirection
 - Apology
 - Observing positive behaviour in others
 - Separation in class
 - Separation in another class or office
 - Referral to Principal
 - Loss of privileges
 - Contact with parents

3.3.7 Overarching Guidelines for Behaviour:

- Respect of self, others and the environment
- Freedom carries responsibilities
- There are consequences to behaviour
- Consequences consider the age and ability of the child.

3.3.8 Consequences are stepped:

1. Behaviour is dealt with by the Class Director, Assistant or other appropriate adult if outside of the classroom
2. Interventions are put in place and evaluated
3. Parents are notified of behaviour and work together with the School to address the current issues
4. Behaviour is referred to the Stage Coordinators and Deputy Principal
5. Depending on the behaviour a Risk Management Plan can be developed to support the student to overcome anti-social and unacceptable behaviour involving possible harm of others in School
6. Behaviour is referred to the Principal if behaviour does not improve

3.3.9 Where a student disregards rules, disobeys instructions or otherwise engages in conduct which causes or may cause harm, inconvenience or embarrassment to the School, staff members or other students, the student may be subject to behaviour management.

3.3.10 The disciplinary procedures undertaken by the School will vary according to the seriousness of the alleged offence. If an incident is considered serious by the School and is proven beyond reasonable doubt to have occurred, the determination may be suspension or expulsion. The student and parents will be informed of the incident and procedural steps to be followed throughout the investigation. In relation to all matters to be investigated, students will be informed of the nature of the incident and allegation and given an opportunity to respond.

3.3.11 The consequences imposed vary according to the behaviour and the prior record of the student. At the lower end of the scale, a one-on-one conversation (at a later time) with the child or applying a natural consequence may be appropriate. At the upper end of the scale, the behaviour could result in suspension or expulsion.

3.4 Suspension or Expulsion

The following will be used to assist in determining when and how to apply processes that might result in the suspension or expulsion of a student, and what review and appeal rights, if any, are afforded to students in such situations.

3.4.1 Where the offending behaviour is such that it may result in suspension or expulsion, the student will be:

- (a) Informed of the alleged investigation
- (b) Informed as to who will make the decision on the penalty
- (c) Informed of the procedures to be followed which will include an opportunity to have a parent or guardian present when responding to allegations
- (d) Afforded a right of review or appeal

3.4.2 A range of review options are in place to satisfy the legislative requirements. These include one of, or a variation of, the following:

Option 1 The Deputy Principal will reach a decision in relation to the allegation having consulted with the relevant parties and recommend the penalty to be imposed to the Principal. The parents will be informed of the finding and recommendation and may make representations to the Principal in respect of the finding and recommendation. The Principal then makes a final decision; or

Option 2 The Principal will reach a preliminary decision in relation to the allegation having consulted with the relevant parties and any proposed penalty and advise the student (and parent/s) of the view. The student (and parent/s) would be advised that if they wish this preliminary decision to be reviewed, they may make application for a review to the Principal and submit any information they want to be considered during the review process. The Principal will then either confirm the preliminary decision as the final decision or amend the preliminary decision based on the additional information provided.

4. Related Policies and Procedures

Policy to be read in conjunction with:

- 3.6.1 Child Protection
- 3.6.2.3 Unlawful Discrimination, Harassment & Bullying
- 3.6.2.11 Complaints
- 3.7.1 Anti-bullying
- 3.7.3 Behaviour Management Procedures

ACECQA policy requirements covered within this policy include:

- Interactions with children (155)
- Relationships with children (156)

5. Access to and Communication of Policy

6. Families have access to an electronic version of this policy through the ISMS Intranet. Staff have access to an electronic version through the ISMS Staff Intranet page. Hard copies are available at all campuses.

Families:

- If there are changes to the policy, the Deputy Principal and ICT Manager are responsible for ensuring parents are notified via the School Newsletter or email and the policy is updated on the ISMS Intranet.

Staff:

- If there are changes to the policy, the Deputy Principal and ICT Manager are responsible for ensuring staff are notified via email and the policy is updated on the Staff Intranet page. Additionally, significant changes are discussed and communicated verbally at Whole Staff Meetings.

The Deputy Principal is responsible for the upkeep of policies and procedures through Intranet sites and hard copies in central locations. This includes initiating the review process for all policies.

7. Review Process

Person Responsible for Initiating the Review: Deputy Principal

External Consultation: ACECQA, CELA, AISNSW, NSWDET

Approver: School Council

8. Consequences of Non-Compliance

PARENTS

We expect parents to support their children and work with the School including through meetings with Directors/Stage Coordinators/Principal. It is expected that all Parents/Carers will comply with the Policy and if not, consequences will be as per the Parent/Carer Code of Conduct.

STAFF

It is expected that all staff will comply with the Policy and if not, consequences will be as per the Staff Code of Conduct.

STUDENTS

It is expected that all students will comply with the Policy and if not, consequences will be as per the Behaviour Management Procedures.

9. Legislative Requirements

Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

ACECQA

Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010

Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 (ACECQA):

- Regulation 170 (1), (2) – Policies and procedures to be followed
- Regulation 171 (1), (2) – Policies and procedures to be kept available

Link to National Quality Standard, Quality Area 2: Children’s Health and Safety

Link to National Quality Standard, Quality Area 5: Relationships with Children

NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA)

Registered and Accredited Individual Non-Government Schools (NSW) Manual

- Section B8 – Safe and Supportive Environment
- Section B9 – Discipline

Other

Education Reform Amendment (Corporal Punishment) Act 1995

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

Association of Independent Schools NSW (AISNSW)

“The School’s policies which are made from time to time are made pursuant to the requirements set out in section 47 of the Education Act, the NSW Education Standards (NESA) for registration of the School and the Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA).”