

Anti Bullying and Behavioural Policy

Statement of Intent

As a Steiner Waldorf Early Childhood Centre, we have always been committed to understanding and providing, without exception, a secure and safe environment, which will enable our children to grow, naturally, at the predetermined stages, essential to their growth, both as an individual and in the wider context of social integration and assimilation at all levels.

We take our responsibilities as guardians of our children's' intellectual, physical, spiritual and social development seriously and ensure that at all times any difficulties that may arise both individually and within their social environment, such as a behavior which can termed 'bullying', are dealt with immediately and with the utmost care.

We want our children to grow naturally, feel secure, and approach themselves and each other confidently and without fear. We feel that we are laying the foundations for individuals to build upon. Individuals capable of fulfilling their destinies; taking part in and upholding a social structure. Each child's' development is closely monitored, reviewed and researched within the context specific to that child and is considered deeply, with care and a desire to help the child overcome any difficulties he or she may have without fear and with freedom for growth.

Definition of 'Bullying'

We acknowledge that 'bullying' as a behaviour exists and as we understand it, can be defined 'as one or more individuals being exposed, repeatedly, and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other persons. Within a Waldorf environment we view this as consistent negative behaviour. The sections 'Procedures', 'Outcomes' and 'Prevention' detail ways that these behaviours can be managed and changed.

Taking into account that the age range is from 0 – 7 years, bullying can be detailed as follows:-

Emotional: being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting, threatening gestures

Physical: pushing, kicking, pinching, hitting, scratching, punching, biting, pulling

Racist: racial taunts, gestures

Sexual: unwanted physical contact, sexually abusive comments

Verbal: name-calling, teasing, exclusion, intimidating

Importance of Response to Bullying

We are committed to ensuring that every child is free to develop naturally. It is absolutely essential to respond appropriately and effectively in order to ensure a secure and safe environment for both victim and perpetrator, to enable this development. Parents tend to send their children to Steiner schools because this natural development is encouraged and not impeded.

The individual who is being victimised as well as the parent/s or guardians involved need to be acknowledged; reassured that they are safe and can feel secure. That this is not behaviour that should be imitated, and that the school does not tolerate this type of behaviour. Help will be given both within the educational setting and at home where possible. The perpetrator as well as their parents will be made aware that their behaviour is upsetting and should be changed. They need to be helped to learn different ways of behaving both within the educational setting and if necessary within their own homes.

Objectives of this Policy

To ensure that all Trustees, Members, Teaching, Non-Teaching Staff and Parents, as well as those interested in the school are made aware of the schools definition of bullying and what it is within an anthroposophical context.

To ensure that all Trustees, Members, Teaching, Non-Teaching Staff and Parents as well as those interested in the school understand the schools policy and procedures in relation to 'bullying'.

To assure individuals and parents that they will be supported in any claims relating to 'bullying' or similar behaviours, and know that the school does not tolerate this behaviour.

Possible Signs & Symptoms*

A child may indicate through signs and behaviour that he or she is being 'bullied'. Parents, Teachers and Guardians should be aware of the following possible indications or signs and should investigate / respond as recommended within the policy:

- changes their usual routine
- is unwilling to go to playgroup/kindergarten (school phobic)
- becomes withdrawn, anxious, lacking in confidence
- starts stammering
- cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- feels ill in the morning
- begins to do poorly in given tasks/projects

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- comes home with clothes torn
- has possessions go 'missing'
- has unexplained cuts, bruises, scratches
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- is bullying other children or siblings
- considers imaginary revenge plans/retribution
- stops eating
- is frightened to say what's wrong
- wets bed / pants
- gives improbable excuses for any of the above

It is important to note that these signs and behaviour could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.

Procedures

Within the school community, good relations are always fostered between the parents and the teachers. Indeed, given the nature and size of the school, we actively encourage parents or individuals who have issues to present these issues to their child's' teacher, class representative or the school administrator. The issue is then assessed and appropriate action taken.

- The incident would be reported to a member of the staff.
- The incident/s would be recorded by staff.
- Appropriate action would be considered, agreed and actioned (see below) through consultations with parents, teachers, assistant teachers, school administrator/senco.
- A time or length of time which would be appropriate for the situation to be resolved, would also be agreed.
- At any time within this plan, and if necessary, a home visit would be arranged for further discussions

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With regards to the child experiencing consistent negative behaviour (also known as the victim), we would:-

- ensure the child feels safe and secure in school
- give physical and emotional support
- encourage the child to relay feelings/reactions
- carefully monitor and assess the child
- maintain frequent communications with the parent/s/guardian

With regards to the child who has problems with consistent negative behaviour, also known as the perpetrator, we would:-

- ensure the child feels safe and secure in school;
- give physical and emotional support
- ensure child is given reinforcement of desired behaviour through imitation of loving gesture and repetition
- ensure child is kept close to member of staff if appropriate
- carefully monitor and assess the child
- maintain frequent communications with the parent/s/guardian

In addition to the above we would also look at the following ways of helping the children resolve the situation:

- In the cases of impulse reactions involving say for example pinching, hitting we would advise the child be made subtly aware of limb engagement
- We would emphasise the importance of reducing unnecessary nerve/sense stimulation (eg: tv.media etc).
- We might suggest dietary inclusions or exclusions.
- We would actively encourage the parent/guardian that their anxiety was not shown or revealed unnecessarily to the child. We feel that the child's future is profoundly influenced by the people about him and as such reactionary impulses on the part of the guardian will find reflection within the child's psyche and imitative actions. It is therefore of paramount importance that the child be surrounded by activities and responses worthy of imitation. Intense emotional responses are inappropriate for the young child.
- We would give pedagogical stories to enhance understanding

Outcomes

The parents involved are kept informed of any decisions or changes both with regards to the behaviour in question, improvements or consequences necessary.

In all cases, except where special needs are determined and this is not possible in a normal sense, children will be reconciled and parents will be reconciled.

Subsequent to the incident/s having been investigated and dealt with, in each case, monitoring will ensure the consistent negative behaviour is not repeated.

In exceptional circumstances exclusion would be considered either temporarily or permanent

Prevention

The child's' world within the Waldorf educational setting is one of love, peace and nurturing. The quiet calm love held and created by the teachers nourishes the child and encourages a non-violent culture. 'The teacher is also on a path of self-education and inward striving, and stands there as a help to the child in overcoming the hindrances we all encounter in our self development.