

Wee Wisdom Nursery School (WWNS) Behavior Guidance Policy

WWNS will follow the guidelines outlined in this Behavior Guidance Policy. The following policies are designed to help each child develop self-control and self-confidence so that he/she will have the ability to act appropriately in given situations.

Behavior guidance techniques used by staff at WWNS include:

- Acceptable alternatives for unacceptable Behavior (explanations and modeling of appropriate behavior and reasons why some behaviors are inappropriate focusing on the behavior not the child such as: “When you throw sand at Kyle, it hurts his eyes. Please keep the sand in the box.”)
- Positive reinforcement (recognizing/rewarding appropriate Behavior with praise such as: “I really liked how you took turns with Sally, great job!”)
- Positive directions (positive statement of expected behavior such as: “walk, please” instead of saying “don’t run inside.”)
- Real choices (child is given a choice of acceptable alternatives such as: “do you want to help clean up the Lego or the play dough?” instead “do you want to help clean up?”)
- Modeling by staff appropriate Behaviour (such as: saying ‘thank you and please.’)
- Developmentally appropriate limits (staff have developmentally appropriate expectations and set limits in a positive way and periodically remind children.)

WWNS recognizes that a well-planned program with interesting activities helps prevent most inappropriate behaviors. We structure our programs with a variety of developmentally appropriate and interesting activities that encourage children to participate with acceptable behaviors.

Under certain circumstances the staff may use physical contact to guide behavior in such instances as holding a child who is in danger of injuring self or others. When a child’s inappropriate behavior becomes a concern, staff and parent/guardian will meet to determine a consistent Behavior Management Plan for use at home and at the centre.

An important goal of quality child care environments is helping children learn self-discipline and self-control. For children, the road to developing self-discipline and self-control begins with the development of self-confidence, trust and independence. A well planned and developmentally appropriate program as well as a patient and tolerant teachers who understand children and their development are important in reaching this goal. By guiding children’s behavior, rather than punishing their inappropriate actions, we can facilitate the development of essential conflict resolution skills. When deciding upon behavior guidance strategies, we consider our expectations for children, our room environment, our programming ideas and our classroom schedule.

A) Our Expectations for Children

By nature, children differ from each other in activity level, personality and level of development. It is this difference which helps shape them into unique and interesting human beings and it is also this difference which at times makes it challenging for them to participate in group care. As teachers of young children, we must both respect and expect these differences and design our

curriculum around them. We recognize that growing and learning means making mistakes and those difficulties are a normal and expected part of children's development.

B) Environment and Materials

The way in which the environment is designed and utilized can encourage or discourage desired behavior in children. Our environment is divided into specifically designated areas or centers and consideration is given to types of play which will occur in the areas. Noisy and messy areas are available and kept away from the quieter areas. Plenty of space is allocated for all areas, especially ones which lend themselves to socialization and movement such as block area and house area. We consider the traffic flow in our classroom and design your environment to work with the flow to minimize accidents. We avoid placing items in the middle of the room and in front of doors where children can bump into others' creations. We ensure that toys and materials are in good supply, are in good repair and are age-appropriate. We maximize the number of materials which are open-ended and can be used in a variety of ways. These materials will not only support creativity and problem solving skills of the children in our programs, they will also minimize frustration and discipline issues.

C) Programming

Programming activities are planned ahead of time with the children's interests and levels of development in mind. We keep in mind that children need to be actively involved in the learning process; they need to exercise their bodies and their senses as well as their minds. Outside activity also allows children opportunities to channel energies constructively.

D) Schedules/Routines

WWNS has a well-planned and consistent schedule which provides children with the opportunities to develop trust, security and control. Although our schedule is flexible, we make sure we do not deviate from it consistently and if we do, we share that information with the children so they can re-organize their expectations. We ensure that our schedule reflects a good balance of active and quiet activities. Also, we are sensitive to the fact that children will react to staff changes. When there are staff changes, we try to minimize it, by maintaining consistency in as many other aspects of nursery school as possible.

Prevention Strategies

1. Establish clear, consistent and simple limits and provides explanations for limits.

Limits are statements of what behavior is expected of the children in the classroom. We ensure that limits are clearly stated within the child's ability to understand, that they are consistently enforced by all adults, including substitute staff, and tell the children why they should follow the limit. When children understand the reasons for limits, they are more likely to comply. Limits are related to the safety, protection and rights of self, others and the environment.

2. State limits in a positive way and periodically remind children.

We vocalize to children what to do, rather than what not to do. We also, remind them every once in a while, what is acceptable and what is not.

3. *Provide opportunities for children to make choices throughout the day.*

Children naturally require opportunities to exercise their decision-making skills. It is essential to provide times throughout the day for children to make choices. We let them decide what area to play in during free play, allow them opportunities to decide on some songs they can sing during circle time or where to put the eyes on the mask they are making. Decision making is not only a valuable skill to learn, it also reinforces child control and minimizes frustration.

4. *Focus on the behavior, not on the child.*

In a discipline situation, focusing on the child's character tends to produce feelings of guilt and shame for the child and ultimately lowers self-esteem. On the other hand, focusing on the behavior preserves the child's dignity as well as provides information for correcting the behavior. WWNS focuses on the behavior that is being demonstrated.

5. *Ignore minor incidents.*

At WWNS we have realistic expectations for what a nursery school environment will be like. We have a tolerance for a certain amount of noise, clutter and attention-seeking behavior. As long as children's behaviors are not compromising their safety, the safety and rights of others, and the safety of the environment, it may be best not to intervene.

6. *Prepare children for transitions.*

Moving from one activity to the next is difficult for children. We make sure we give them plenty of warning prior to the end of one activity and the start of another. Try to punctuate the end of an activity with concrete measures of time. "*When the bell rings, it will be time to tidy up*". We also help the children feel excited about the next activity by talking about it. "*After snack time, we will have circle time and we are going to sing and dance together*".

7. *Model and encourage appropriate behavior.*

Children learn a lot by watching what is going on around them if we want children to exhibit pro-social behavior, we must model it in the classroom. When children do exhibit behaviors which are appropriate, we encourage them by telling them how their positive behaviors affect others around them.

8. *Interact with children.*

Interacting with children during their day, especially during free play time, is a very effective proactive behavior guidance strategy. By being available through non-threatening play situations, we both model appropriate behavior as well as diffuse potentially difficult conflict situations.

Intervention Strategies

1. *Physical closeness and touch*

Adults can often help put children back on the track to appropriate behavior or help them regain self-control by physically getting closer to them, by gently touching them or by holding them on their lap. WWNS use these strategies if appropriate.

2. *Remind and redirect if necessary*

Reminding children of the classroom rules is an effective intervention strategy, especially when the rules being broken are not putting anyone in danger. When behavior is putting someone in danger, we may need to both remind and redirect. For example, if a child who is throwing sand at other children, he may need to be reminded that sand stays in the sand box, because throwing it will hurt other children and will be directed to doing other things with the sand. This

redirection may include choices as the child is encouraged to think of other ways to use the sand, or if the child is having difficulty coming up with alternatives, the teacher can provide several to choose from. Removal will be the last resort.

3. *Get child's attention*

When we have to intervene in a discipline situation, which is not causing immediate danger to anyone involved, we approach in a respectful way. We do not shout at the child from across the room. We walk over, get down to the child's level, establish eye contact and use a calm, controlled voice tone. A calm, controlled voice tone and non-threatening body language can assist in diffusing a discipline situation rather than escalating it.

4. *Acknowledge Feelings*

When dealing with a behavior guidance issue, we make sure that we acknowledge the feelings of the child and/or children involved in the situation prior to setting limits. When there are several children involved, we address all of them.

5. *Assist children in problem-solving the situation*

Once we have acknowledged feelings, we may begin the process of helping the children find solutions.

6. *Removal of a Privilege*

In extreme situations, when all other strategies have proven ineffective, it may be necessary to limit or remove materials or equipment or to remove the child from a particular situation. If we remove or limit materials or equipment, we make sure that it is after the children have been reminded and the consequences of removal were clearly identified.

Helpful Hints for Teachers

- Keep our own emotions under control
- Maintain calmness in our own voice tone and body language
- Don't be judgmental of children
- Get to know children's family and communicate behavior issues
- Don't demand that children apologize
- Avoid sounding moralistic
- Avoid using abstract, subjective terms like "play nicely". Be clear and describe behaviors
- Don't hold a grudge
- If we feel our own level of frustration rising, ask for a break or have a colleague take over

Specialized Individual Behavioral Interventions

If we have determined, through careful documented observations and consultations with parents and staff, that we have children in our program who are not responding to the behavior guidance strategies outlined in our center policy and implemented by our staff, we may be required to develop a specialized behavioral intervention program. Such an intervention program is not to be taken lightly and will be considered only after all other strategies have proven ineffective and we

have determined that there are no medical issues that require other treatment. In order to implement a specialized behavioral intervention program, we must have the following documentation:

- Signed consent form(s) from parent or legal guardian
- Evidence of involvement from a qualified, external consultant (i.e. registered psychologist, pediatrician, registered social worker, etc.)
- Clear, written guidelines for staff for handling crisis situations
- Daily staff recording for the purpose of evaluating and monitoring the effectiveness of the intervention program
- Review of the intervention program to assess its effectiveness and duration

Please note that strategies for a specialized behavioral intervention program are to be determined and utilized on an individual child basis. The identified strategies for one child are not to be automatically transferred to another child without appropriate consultation taking place.

- Staff/volunteers will not use corporal or physical punishment including striking a child directly or with any physical object. Shaking, shoving, spanking and other forms of aggressive physical conduct.
- Staff /volunteers will not use harsh, humiliating, belittling, or degrading responses of any form whether verbal, emotional or physical.
- Staff/volunteers will not confine or isolate a child.
- Staff/volunteers will not deprive a child of the basic needs including food (i.e. snacks), shelter, clothing, and bedding.
- Staff/volunteers do not offer food to reinforce positive behaviors
- Staff/volunteers do not withhold food as a consequence for inappropriate behaviors.
- Food is not used as a reward for completing a task or finishing a meal (e.g., dessert will not be withheld if the child does not finish the main meal).
- Staff/volunteers will not require or force a child to repeat physical movement.

All staff/volunteers will be trained in this behavior guidance policy before commencing employment and it will be reviewed each August before the school year starts.

Date:

Signature of volunteer/staff:
