

# Behavior & Discipline Policy

3 R's = Rights, Responsibility, and Respect

Platinum Rule – “Treat others the way they want to be treated.”

Mulberry School stresses the growth of the whole, individual child. We cherish our differences and our uniqueness as individuals, but we are also a community. In that community every child has **rights**. They have the right to work without disruption, express oneself without interruption, work cooperatively within a group, play and live safely, be different and/or unique without fear or humiliation of censure, and have one's work and property respected. In order to protect these rights, we feel all members of our community must be **responsible** and **respectful**. We will achieve this by modeling these three beliefs and by using positive reinforcement, redirection, natural consequences, and consistency.

When children disagree or an unacceptable behavior occurs we believe in modeling and teaching the child how to problem solve to handle the situation. Children are expected to use their words to discuss and solve problems (dependent on age – this can be teacher driven).

If a situation arises in which a child is prohibiting other children from their school rights, then a teacher will follow the three steps below. All situations are handled appropriate to the behavior and teachers will talk with the student so that the student will learn from the situation.

1. Verbal Warning
2. Designated Calming Space: “A Place to Pause”
3. Take a Break Outside of the Classroom: The teacher will give the child a yellow Mulberry School card and send the child to the academic director/front desk. If extra help is needed the teacher will call the front desk from her cell phone. The student will have time to cool down and then will discuss the situation using our “What Happened/Next Time I will....” form. This form will be sent home with the child so the parents are aware of the situation.

If an unacceptable behavior is repeated, then the teacher will inform the parent to work together to identify why the behavior is reoccurring and the best plan of action to correct the behavior. At any point, the teacher may take the assistance of the Academic Director.

In the event the behavior does not improve, the teacher will involve the Academic Director. At their discretion, they will continue to work with the child and parents to find a constructive plan to correct inappropriate behaviors. The Academic Director will provide a notice of the behavior issues to the Board of Directors, in an Executive Session, with appropriate background information and action plan details.

An update will be given to the Board of Directors pertaining to the behavior issues and recommendations for further actions at a time determined by the Academic Director to be suitable for behavior to have improved. The Academic Director will also make the recommendations known to the parents of the student. Further actions may include: a reduction in the student's hours, increased supervision through the hiring of an assistant specifically for the student (at their parents' expense), or dismissal in extreme circumstances. The Board of Directors will consider the option(s) recommended by the Academic Director

and input from the student's parents in their decision. Appropriate tuition refunds will be made in the case of hour changes or dismissal per the student contract.

The intent of this policy is to avoid the need for dismissal, but it is recognized that there are extreme cases where a student is so disruptive or aggressive that other students feel unsafe. Even in these cases, every reasonable effort will be made before dismissal is considered, as long as the safety of other children is not jeopardized. The Board of Directors and Staff will attempt to assist the student/family in finding a more appropriate educational opportunity going forward if dismissed.

## **Bullying**

Mulberry School has zero tolerance for bullying. Bullying is defined as **unwanted** repetitive verbal and physical aggressive behavior. In an early childhood setting it can look like name calling, taunting, excluding someone on purpose, telling other children not to be friends with someone else, spreading rumors, hitting/kicking/pinching, spitting, and tripping/pushing.

### Prevention of Bullying

- Discuss and model positive behavior and other ways young children can make friends and interact with their peers.
- Set clear and consistent rules for behavior
- Be vigilant in monitoring for aggression and bullying
- Value kindness
- Use age-appropriate consequences for aggressive behavior
- Model alternate behaviors for aggression
- Teach them to report to an adult
- Distinguish between friendly teasing and bullying

Parents are encouraged to report incidents of bullying to teachers or the Academic Director as soon as possible, both for assistance and for investigation purposes.

Incidents of bullying will be evaluated by the teaching staff and Academic Director and brought to the Board of Directors as needed. Actions similar to those outlined in the previous section will apply to bullying.

### **Policy Updated:**

March 2017