

## Behaviour Guidance Policy

### Statement

The ultimate goal of our work with children is to help them develop into adults who have the intellect, integrity, compassion, strength of character, skill, and creativity needed to seek common ground with others of various cultures and religions in order to pursue a peace that ensures human dignity and respect, justice, and the well-being of the planet. The work is accomplished by providing a synergistic sequence of programs and experiences that aid the development of the whole child at each of the developmental stages of a child's life.

As a Montessori school we recognise, value and celebrate the diversity among all people. Cameragal staff use strategies to guide children to recognise, manage and learn from their behaviours and express their emotions in positive and socially responsible ways. Rather than focusing on discipline from without, we seek to develop the child's inner discipline, so each child in our care becomes more able to regulate him or herself. We call this the Development of the Will. **Development of the Will, Freedom Within Limits, and Choice and Responsibility** are integral elements of Montessori practice that support the children's social, emotional, and intellectual development and that empower the children to self-develop and self-educate with love and joy. This is in contrast to traditional practices that seek to discourage the child from developing his or her own will, exercising freedom and choice, and taking on great responsibility.

When children need more than the usual level of classroom support, the Principal and teaching staff fall back on the school's Behaviour Guidance Policy. This process provides logically consistent rules and consequences so that both children and adults understand how a situation will be managed within the classroom context. Our aim continues to be to work together with parents and their children to support the development of self-disciplined students.

### Child Safety School statement

Cameragal Montessori School seeks to provide a child safe environment. Our school actively promotes the safety and wellbeing of our students, and our school staff are committed to protecting students from abuse or harm in accordance with their legal and ethical obligations. CMS 's child safe policies and procedures and our staff code of conduct form part of this commitment.

### The purpose of the school's Behaviour Guidance Policy is to:

- Encourage acceptable forms of behaviour by using strategies that build children's confidence and self-esteem;
- Provide children with support, guidance and opportunities to manage their own behaviour; and
- Promote collaborative approaches to behaviour guidance between the staff and/or external agencies.

The school recognises and understands that a child's behaviour may be affected by their:

- Age and developmental needs
- General health and well-being;
- Play and learning environments, which includes the physical indoor/outdoor setting, the weather, the time of year, the time of day;
- Relationships with other children and staff, such as students, volunteers and visitors;
- External factors, such as relationships within the family, home life, school or peer group experiences, or media coverage of traumatic events;

Our School does not permit corporal punishment of students. "This does include, however, the application of force only to prevent personal injury to, or damage to or the destruction of property of any person (including the student;". [Education Reform Amendment Act (School Discipline), 1995].

## School responsibilities

What do we do to ensure positive behaviour?

- Ensure educators, staff and parents/guardians are provided with a copy of the behaviour guidance policy and comply with its requirements;
- Ensure all staff are aware of the school's expectations regarding positive, respectful and appropriate behaviour, and acceptable responses and reactions when working with children and families;
- Ensure children are adequately supervised, that educator-to-child ratios are maintained at all times and environment is safe, secure and free from hazards;
- Consider the size and composition of groups when planning program timetables to ensure all children are provided with the best opportunities for quality interactions and relationships with each other and with the adults at the school;
- Ensure that the Montessori program is implemented in accordance with an approved learning framework that are based on the developmental needs, interests and experiences of each child and take into account the individual differences of each child;
- Implement the Montessori program to contribute to the development of children who have a strong sense of wellbeing and identify and are connected, confident, involved and effective learners and communicators;
- Ensure that teachers and staff provide education and care to children in a way that:
  - Encourage children to express themselves and their opinions
  - Allow children to undertake experiences that develop self-reliance and self-esteem
  - Maintain the dignity and the rights of each child at all times
  - Offer positive guidance and encouragement towards acceptable behaviour
  - Has regard to the cultural and family values, age, and the physical and intellectual development and abilities of each child being educated and cared for;
- Organise appropriate training for teachers and staff to assist with the implementation of this policy;
- Ensure teachers and staff at the school who work with children are aware that it is an offence to subject a child to any form of corporate punishment, or any discipline that is unreasonable or excessive in the circumstances (National Law: Section 166);
- Ensure that procedures are in place for effective daily communication with parents/guardians to share information about children's learning, development, interactions, behaviour and relationships;
- Inform the School Board of any notifiable complaints or serious incidents at the School;
- Ensure teachers and assistants use positive and respectful strategies to assist children to manage their own behaviour, and to respond appropriately to conflict and the behaviour of others;
- Ensure that individual behaviour guidance plans are developed for children with diagnosed behavioural difficulties, in consultation with educators, parents/guardians and families, and other professionals and support agencies;
- Co-operate with other services and/or professionals to support children and their families, where required; and
- Maintain confidentiality at all times.

## **Teaching staff and all other educators guidelines and responsibilities**

- Give consistent, clear and coordinated messages to the children about their behavioural expectations, so that the children are not confused by different staff approaches;
- Keep the child busy by redirecting to other experiences;
- Talk to the child about feelings and consequences of their behaviour;
- Focus on the inappropriate behaviour not child;

- Use positive language;
- Involve older children in setting their own limits;
- Present as good models of behaviour for the children and shall be encouraged to adopt the ECA code of ethics;
- Become familiar with stages of child development so you hold reasonable behavioural expectations some child behaviour may be displeasing for adults, but should be considered acceptable and age appropriate i.e. toddlers find it difficult to “share” or take into account other’s feelings;
- Delivering the Montessori program, in accordance with an approved learning framework, that are based on the developmental needs, interests and experienced of each child, and take into account the individual differences of each child;
- Delivering programs that develop a sense of wellbeing and identity, connection to community, and provide skills for lifelong learning in all children;
- Trust and respect the children in your care as unique and special and recognise that each child’s behaviour is an expression of feelings or an attempt to meet immediate or underlying needs;
- Be aware of different parent behaviour expectations, as child rearing practices vary greatly from culture to culture;
- Take into consideration each child’s whole life situation when dealing with their behaviour, consulting regularly with parents;
- Communicate and work collaboratively with parents/guardians and families in relation to their child’s learning, development, interactions, behaviour and relationships;
- Provide adequate supervision of children at all times.

**Parent/guardians are responsible to:**

- Model respectful, courteous and honest behaviour.
- Ensure their child attends school.
- Support the school in implementing behaviour support strategies, particularly in relation to their own child.
- Ensure that the physical and emotional condition of their child is at the optimum for effective learning.
- Ensure that their child is provided with the appropriate materials to make effective use of the learning environment.
- Support the school in providing a meaningful and adequate education for their children with the philosophy of Montessori to ensure what is happening at school is happening at home.
- Inform the school about bullying when appropriate.

**Freedom and responsibility for primary aged students**

- Class rules are determined annually by students, with adult guidance. For example: Walk in the classroom, be sensible and honest, speak nicely to your friends and don’t touch others.
- Student-led weekly community meeting to discuss and solve problems on the class agenda. Agenda is generated by the students and staff. Topics include: care of the classroom environment, relationships, grievance management, class room schedule, NAPLAN, consequence of damaging property, how to be courteous to others.
- Individual weekly conferences with teacher offer another forum for discussion of the individual child’s concerns and/or response to above issues.

### **Behaviour Support Plans:**

- If a child displays persistent unacceptable behaviour, the classroom staff will observe and record to gather information. This initial information may be communicated (by the teacher) to the parents in order to begin to understand the foundation or reason behind the unacceptable behaviour.
- The teacher and Principal will privately consult with the parents about the concerns. They will suggest that we work together to develop a positive and realistic plan suitable for home that can be followed through with the child at the School.
- Should the strategies be ineffective the classroom teacher, with the Principal, will develop a written behaviour guidance plan detailing specific strategies and time frames that staff will put into practice immediately. This behaviour guidance plan will be discussed with the child's parents/guardians.
- Should the behaviour guidance plan be ineffective based on the time frames decided by the teacher with the Principal, the parents will be required to seek outside professional support. The teacher will support the parent/s through this process.
- If all behaviour guidance strategies have been exhausted and the child is demonstrating aggressive behaviour or causing physical or emotional harm or distress to any child or staff member, the teacher and Principal will meet with the family to inform them that their child will be required to have some time away from the school while outside professional experts are consulted.
- Refer to Attachment 1: Procedural Fairness and Procedure for Behaviour Guidance Plan.

For a small number of students, additional, individualised function-based assessment and targeted intervention may be required if the exhibit serious or sustained behavioural issues. For these students a Behaviour Support Plan is developed. A Behaviour Support Plan is necessary when problematic and challenging behaviours are persistent and occur in a range of contexts across the school day or when a student's behaviour impedes their learning or that of others. A Behaviour Support Plan is also necessary when a student's behaviour presents a risk to the safety, learning and wellbeing of themselves and others.

See Enrolling & Supporting Students with a Disability Policy for full details and Behaviour Support Plan document.

### **Identified behaviour and classroom consequences and strategies**

#### **Minor misbehaviours**

Minor misbehaviour is defined as general disruption that interferes with the orderly educational process within the classroom or school, including the playground, other work areas and during incursions/excursions, sporting grounds, school events or the library.

Examples: failure to follow reasonable adult directions, impolite behaviour towards students or staff, interfering with the work or concentration of others, inappropriate social interactions, bringing inappropriately aged books or materials, repeated impolite behaviour towards students or staff etc.

#### **Specific strategies /consequences**

1. Redirection by the staff. In the case of repeated misbehaviour see below procedures.
2. Student may be asked to work independently or sit near the teacher.
3. Through conferencing, the teacher and student will develop appropriate behaviour strategies.
4. Student may be assigned to a specific seat on a temporary basis.
5. Student to take responsibility for the repair of any damage to school property or classroom materials.
6. Teacher may send a short note or email to the family advising of minor incidents, depending on frequency. Teacher will discuss minor incidents and their consequences and outcomes with the parents during regularly scheduled conferences.
7. The minor misbehaviours, if persistent, will be recorded in the student's file and may also be noted in the school report.

### **Serious misbehaviour**

Serious misbehaviour is behaviour that results in property destruction, bullying, wilful defiance, physical or emotional injury to others, or any criminal behaviour. This could occur in the classroom or at sport/excursions/incursion.

Examples: refusal to work or follow reasonable adult direction after several requests; repeatedly hitting, kicking or spitting; repeated temper tantrums; throwing objects; using threatening language, wilful damage of any school property; aggressive playground behaviour or leaving the school without permission.

#### **Specific strategies**

1. Immediate intervention by the supervising staff member, then follow this procedure:
2. Staff member to complete Incident form or file note and place in student file. Teacher will notify parents in writing of the repetitive behaviours occurring at school.
3. Student to be removed from classroom for quiet time. This may be on the deck or garden space, depending on the circumstances. When deemed calm, student to discuss the misbehaviour with affected students and/or staff and then return to the classroom. An apology may be expected.
4. Depending on the severity of the matter, the Principal may call a parent to pick up the student from school for the rest of the day.
5. A meeting with the teacher, parents, Principal and all relevant parties involved in the specific incident is required within 7 days. During this meeting, all parties will have the opportunity to be heard and every effort will be made to reach an amicable agreement for further action/support.
6. All documentation to be kept in the student's file.
7. Repeated serious behaviour see below.

### **Repetitive misbehaviour**

Examples: all of the above behaviours listed under Serious Misbehaviour.

#### **Specific strategies**

After following the above strategies for Serious Misbehavior. If the behaviours persist, these actions will be taken:

1. Teaching staff will document the behaviours through classroom observation. This may include written and/or photographic documentation.
2. A meeting between Principal, teaching staff and parents will be called to discuss the repeated behaviours and recommend possible solutions. These may include getting immediate outside help for the child or making changes to family life that may benefit the child in relation to the repetitive behaviours. The type of specialist help recommended will depend on the nature of the misbehaviour.
3. Any damaged school property must be repaired or replaced at cost to the family.
4. A follow-up meeting will be scheduled within a fortnight to discuss progress.
5. In the case that outside help and/or change to family life do not support the child in developing appropriate behaviour, the Principal may request that parents find an alternative educational environment where the child may be more successful in learning to manage his or her own behaviour.

### Appeal process

In the interest of procedural fairness Cameragal Montessori School employs an appeals process, involving an external body to make the final ruling.

1. If the student or parent would to appeal expulsion, they may apply in writing to the Principal and the School Chair within 7 days of expulsion.
2. The Principal and the School Chair of the Board will reply to the letter within 7 working days, with an appointment for an appeal hearing.
3. The School Chair will hear from all parties present and make a final ruling.

### Legislative Requirements & Sources

Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010: Sections 166,167

Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011: Regulation 73, 74, 155,156,157,168(2)(j)

National Quality Standard, Quality Area 5: Relationships with Children

Education Reform Amendment Act (School Discipline), 1995

Education Act 1990

### Sources:

- <http://www.anu.edu.au/childcare/heritage/aboutus/behaviourmgt.pdf>
- UNICEF (n.d.). Face sheet: A summary of the rights under the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Retrieved April 4, 2007, from [http://www.unicef.org/crc/files/Rights\\_overview.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/crc/files/Rights_overview.pdf)
- Work Health and Safety Act 2011
- <http://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/maintop/view/inforce/act+10+2011+cd+0+N>
- Belonging, Being and Becoming – The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia:
- Early Childhood Australia (ECA) Code of Ethics (2006):
- Guide to the National Quality Standard, ACECQA: [www.acecqa.gov.au](http://www.acecqa.gov.au)
- Guiding children's behaviour in child care – a NCAC Factsheet for Families:
- [https://ncac.acecqa.gov.au/family-resources/facesheets/guiding\\_children's\\_behaviour.pdf](https://ncac.acecqa.gov.au/family-resources/facesheets/guiding_children's_behaviour.pdf)
- Inclusion and Professional Support Program (IPSP), Department of Education, Employment and workplace
- Relations, Australian Government:
- Rothwell, Phillip (2008), 'Guiding Children's Behaviour', from Putting Children First, Newsletter of the National
- Childcare Accreditation Council, 25 March, p-16-18
- Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework:
- Victorian kindergarten policy, procedures and funding criteria, DEECD:
- One World for Children Pty Ltd
- [http://www.owfc.com.au/Childcarewindow.asp?\\_=\\_Behaviour%20and%20Guidance](http://www.owfc.com.au/Childcarewindow.asp?_=_Behaviour%20and%20Guidance)

*"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 Authority for registration of the school and the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA)."*

### Relevant documents

Student code of conduct policy

Staff code of conduct

Enrolling & Supporting Students with a Disability Policy

Procedural fairness, discipline and punishment students – Attachment 1: Procedures Recommended for the Development of a Behaviour Support Plan

### Procedural fairness, discipline and punishment students

#### Child Safety School statement

Cameragal Montessori School seeks to provide a child safe environment. Our school actively promotes the safety and wellbeing of our students, and our school staff are committed to protecting students from abuse or harm in accordance with their legal and ethical obligations. CMS 's child safe policies and procedures and our staff code of conduct form

### **Attachment 1: procedures recommended for the development of a behaviours guidance plan**

#### Procedural fairness

##### **(also see Complaints Policy)**

These principles underpin the basic rights of all individual when dealing with authorities or discipline issues. Relevant stakeholders have a legitimate expectation that a school will follow these principles when dealing with any matter that may lead to penalties particularly, but not exclusively in relation to suspension, expulsion and exclusion. Exclusion is the act of preventing a student's admission to a number of schools.

##### **Procedural fairness is:**

- The right to respond (the hearing rule)
- The right to an unbiased hearing (the bias rule)

In all situations, no matter how minor the above two elements must be followed.

This means that those investigating a matter within a school will act fairly, in good faith, without bias, and exercise discerning judgement. Each party should have an opportunity to state their case adequately; correcting or contradicting any relevant statement prejudicial to their case. A person accused must have notice of what has been alleged against him/her.

##### **Procedural fairness is not:**

- About only hearing one side of a case or
- About being a judge in one's own cause

#### **Essential elements of procedural fairness**

Procedural Fairness is generally recognized as having two essential elements:

- The right to be heard which includes:
  - The right to know why the action is happening (\*)
  - The right to know the way in which the issues will be determined
  - The right to know the allegations in the matter and any other information that will be taken into account.
  - The right of the person against who the allegations have been made to respond to the allegations and
  - The right to an appeal.

- The right to an impartial decision which includes:
  - The right to impartiality in the investigation and the decision-making phases
  - The right to an absence of bias in the decision maker.

(\* ) This right does not necessarily imply a right to access personal information about complainants and witnesses. In some circumstances it may be necessary to maintain an anonymity of complainants and witnesses.

Cameragal will assist families who wish to transfer Cameragal students to another school and is committed to supporting families where there are issues impacting on the Cameragal student's performance and attitude at school.

Suspension from school occurs in only exceptional circumstances and only following procedural fairness.

Expulsion only occurs following procedural fairness, repeated warnings, consultation and communication between the Principal and the Board Chair.

In matters of suspension, expulsion (and exclusion), the parents of the affected student(s) can appeal the decision in writing to the Board Chair, within seven days of the announced decision.

A support person is permitted during any stage of the process and, if required, a translator is provided by the school to assist in the process.

### **Student leadership**

Leadership training of students is integral to every Montessori classroom and is intensively practiced in every classroom. Vertical age groupings allow for in-class leadership development for children as they move through the three in-class grades.

Responsibility for one another is an essential measure in Montessori schools, which assists in maintaining positive supportive relationships, and reducing the need for externally imposed sanctions, external discipline and punishing are thus very rare features of Cameragal Montessori School.

The School has no formal separation of children into leadership roles. There are no captains, prefects, etc as this is unnecessary in the Montessori school context. Grace and courtesy, conflict resolution techniques and mutual respect are integral to the classroom and are reported on in bi-annual student reports. Further, to these expectations of the students is similar culture amongst the staff and between students and staff members.

Classroom teachers meeting monthly and regularly review the culture of classrooms including the developing leadership qualities of the students.

### **Discipline and Punishment**

It is expected that at Cameragal most 'discipline' issues will be resolved by negotiation and discussion. It is the very exceptional situation where some form of external intervention is required. If negotiation within the classroom fails to settle an issue, the child should be taken to the Principal for a discussion. It is possible that at this stage the parents would be consulted.

Corporal punishment is prohibited. It is unusual for sanctions such as withdrawal of liberties for instance time at lunch break, to be imposed. In general punishments are not a feature of Cameragal.



### Review

The policy will be reviewed annually. Review will be conducted by management staff and any other interested stakeholders.

### **Attachment 1: Procedures Recommended for the Development of a Behaviours Guidance Plan**

**These procedures recommend steps that services can follow to develop a behavior guidance plan for a child exhibiting challenging behavior.**

A caring relationship with an adult, who can provide the learning and emotional support required, is pivotal to dealing with a child's challenging behavior. Challenging behavior is best managed through a collaborative strategy developed between the school staff and the parents/guardians.

Excluding a child from the school should only be as a last resort. This decision should be made as part of the collaborative management of a child's behaviour and based on a joint decision by the parents/guardians and family, the School, Principal, teachers/educators and other professionals involved in the education and care of the child.

### Procedures

#### **Observe**

- Observe children exhibiting challenging behaviour, including in the broader context of their environment, the culture of the school, and the interactions of the whole group and other teaching staff/educators working with the child.
- Identify, based on observations, whether there is a need to develop an individual behaviour guidance plan for the child.

#### **Discuss**

Invite parents/guardians to a meeting to discuss:

- The ongoing behaviour displayed by the child, including highlighting improvements and celebrating successes.
- Their aspirations, as well as the school's aspirations, for the child.
- The child's individual characteristics, including interests, temperament, age and cultural background.
- Recommended strategies to support the child's development, and how these strategies will be reviewed and evaluated.
- Resources or changes to the environment/program that may be required for a behaviour guidance plan to be implemented e.g. changes to routines and transitions.
- The support already accessed by the family to assist with the managing child's behaviour.
- Other support available, such as Early Childhood Intervention program with Cerebral Palsy Alliance, referral for specialist assessment and additional support (written consent is required from parents/guardians before any intervention/assessment is undertaken).
- Any other matter that will assist with the development of behaviour guidance plan.

#### **Consult**

- If appropriate, and with the permission of parents/guardians, consult with other support agencies or service providers who are already working with the child, to assist with the development of the behaviour guidance plan.

### **Develop**

Develop an individual behavior support plan, based on consultation with the child's parents/guardians and other support agencies, that is:

- Appropriate to the needs of the child and accepted/agreed to by the parents/guardians and other professionals involved in the education and care of that child.
- Clear and easy to follow for all teachers, educators, staff, parents/guardians and/or volunteers/students working with the child.

### **Monitor and Review**

- Continually review, reflect, evaluate and revise the strategies that have been implemented.
- Communicate with the parents/guardians regarding the child's progress and involve them in evaluating and revising the strategies.

### **Roles and responsibilities**

The following are the roles and responsibilities of the various individuals working with the child at the School.

#### **The School/Approved Provider is responsible for:**

- Ensuring that there is a behaviour guidance plan developed for a child if teachers/educators are concerned that the child's behaviour may put the child themselves, other children, educators/staff and or/others at risk.
- Ensuring that the parents/guardians and other professionals (as appropriate) are consulted if an individual behaviour guidance plan has not resolved the challenging behaviour.
- Consulting with, and seeking advice from, DEECD if suitable and mutually agreeable behaviour guidance plan cannot be developed.
- Ensuring that they are notified if a complaint is received about a child's interactions or behaviour e.g. when the safety of other children is in question.
- Ensuring that, if a complaint is received, every attempt is made to resolve the issue by consultation and investigation as soon as possible.
- Ensuring that additional resources are sourced, if required, to implement a behaviour guidance plan.
- Ensuring that educators/staff at the school are provided with appropriate training to guide the actions and responses of a child/children with challenging behaviour.

#### **The classroom teacher is responsible for:**

- Developing the behaviour guidance plan in consultation with the Principal, educators and parents/guardians of the child, and other professionals and services as appropriate.
- Consulting the Complaints Policy to ensure compliance with school procedures, and regulatory and legislative requirements.
- Consulting educators for their professional evaluation of the situation and drawing on their expertise in relation to developing strategies and identifying resources required.
- Meeting with the parents/guardians of the child concerned to develop and implement a behaviour guidance plan.
- Supporting educators by assessing skills and identifying additional training needs in the area of behaviour guidance.
- Investigating the availability of extra assistance, financial support of training, by contact the Principal or other agencies working with the child.
- Setting clear timelines for review and evaluation of the behaviour guidance plan.

**Other educators/staff are responsible for:**

- Observing children's challenging behaviour and identifying the need to develop a behaviour guidance plan to support a child in self-managing their own behaviour.
- Assisting the classroom teacher to develop the behaviour guidance plan in consultation with parents/guardian and other professionals as appropriate.
- Implementing a behaviour guidance plan and incorporating identified strategies and resources into the school/service program.
- Undertaking relevant training that will enable them to guide children who exhibit challenging behaviour.
- Maintaining ongoing communication and consultation with parents/guardians.
- Providing regular progress reports to the Principal on the implementation and effectiveness of the agreed strategies contained in an individual behaviour guidance plan.
- Maintaining confidentiality of information provided by parents/guardians unless written consent is provided to disclose information to relevant parties.
- Providing their observations, professional evaluation and expertise in reviewing individual behaviour guidance plans.

**Relevant documents**

- Complaints Policy
- Whistleblower Policy
- Student code of conduct
- Staff code of conduct
- Enrolment and Support of Students with a Disability Policy
- Pastoral Care Statement