

GGG BEHAVIOR AND DISCIPLINE POLICY

Last updated: 24 March 2023

General Expectations

Gecko Garden School seeks to be "a community of happy, caring, creative, collaborative individuals who are impassioned and empowered to create a safe and wholesome community for our children." We believe that maintaining this positive and collaborative community is the responsibility of everyone connected with the school. Towards this goal, below are some foundational expectations for the key stakeholders of Gecko Garden.

Regarding all children, the following is expected:

- To respect the personal safety of other children and the teachers.
- To help keep the classroom and the school grounds clean and tidy.
- To treat all property with care.
- To remain within the school campus.
- To participate in class activities to the best of their ability.
- To leave personal items and food in their backpack until they have left the school grounds.

For teachers we add:

- To be a lifelong learner: to continuously learn and deepen their understanding of Steiner/Waldorf education and Anthroposophy.
- To be on time for school activities.
- To treat children with courtesy and respect, especially when discipline is needed.
- To treat colleagues and parents with courtesy and respect, especially in times of disagreement.
- To be supportive and encouraging to every child in your care, in words and actions equally and without favoritism.
- To strive to be consistent in your approach to discipline issues, individually and as a faculty.
- To provide all the children and parents with opportunities to express concerns and questions outside lesson time.
- To provide the parents with opportunities to learn more about the Waldorf philosophy.
- To notify parents in a timely manner when expectations for behavior have not been met.
- To familiarize yourself with laws and best practices regarding neglect and abuse, to be alert to signs and symptoms of such neglect or abuse and implement legal requirements accordingly.
- To do your very best to provide the children with an education which will support them on the path to be independent, creative, kind, and responsible individuals.

And for parents we add:

- To provide a home atmosphere conducive to the child's social, emotional and educational well-being.
- To collaborate with faculty in implementing discipline policies.
- To review, engage constructively, and support the schools discipline expectations with your child or children when problems arise.
- To ensure that your child or children are at school on time and that they are collected from school in a timely manner.
- To treat teachers and staff with courtesy and respect, especially in times of disagreement.
- To make use - when possible - of the opportunities given by the school to learn more about the philosophy of Waldorf education.
- To see that children get adequate rest.
- To see that children get adequate time to play
- To limit children's exposure to media and technology distractions

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Preschool and Kindergarten: Developmental Discipline Philosophy

In a Waldorf School, discipline is neither rigid in the traditional sense nor free in a permissive way. The objective of discipline is an easy, peaceful atmosphere in which all can breathe freely. This arises quite naturally when there is the right human understanding amongst children and between teacher and child: a mutual caring concern and regard. Correction, if required, is carefully considered regarding the nature of the behavior and the dignity of both the individual concerned and the fellow students in the class.

Gecko Garden School's teachers strive to understand the true nature of the young child. Because the child at this age is still learning to have an inner rhythm regarding appropriate behavior, we work strongly with creating a healthy outer rhythm for the child that allows an appropriate balance between "breathing in" and "breathing out" activities. In the Preschool as well as the Kindergarten, there are long periods each day of open-ended and free play both inside the classroom and out on the playground. As well, on any given day there are certain activities that are the same each day of the week. For instance, Thursday may be painting day. Therefore, the child knows that every Thursday, we will paint.

Young children often struggle with transition times throughout their day, resulting in acting out because they are feeling insecure about what may be happening next. The same daily rhythm in the classroom (and at home) helps reassure the child and helps eliminate some difficulties that can be found in early childhood settings.

Teachers strive to be worthy of the young child's imitative nature. Therefore, we work with modeling appropriate behavior for the child. When handling an incident, the teacher intervenes in a pedagogically appropriate way that promotes learning about desired behavior. The discipline relies on redirection and leading the child to "do" the desired behavior, since children at this age are highly imitative and learn by doing.

When a situation occurs which requires disciplinary action, the first step is to "right the wrong." For instance, if someone has been hurt, the child responsible for the action will be asked to tend to the hurt child and give aid. Perhaps he or she will need to say, "My hands are used for good work and play," or "I will use kind and gentle words." At other times the teacher may have the child work with one of the teachers doing a meaningful task, such as setting the table or sweeping until the teacher feels the child is ready to re-join their classmates. Additionally, the teacher may have the child who is struggling sit beside her and come to stillness, or the teacher may speak with the child one on one.

However, when a teacher perceives that a child has reached his or her limit and is no longer able to engage constructively at school, the parent will be called by a member of the Administrative staff to come and pick up their child. The teacher will contact the parent to discuss the matter later that same day.

If challenges are ongoing, the teacher will request a conference with the parents. The adults in the child's life can assess the situation and work together to find ways to help the child express him or herself in a healthy way, both physically and socially, and to gain impulse control. As well, parents can assist the work that the teacher does in the classroom by sharing with the teacher any changes in the child's home life that could result in unusual behavior. The teacher may request a Home Visit, in which

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the teacher will visit the child and family in their home. The intent of this visit is to better understand how to meet the child at school, and how the family and school can work together to support the child.

Our teachers consider home to be the safest, most healing place for a child of six or fewer years old, as well as the most conducive to learning. School is a second choice for children of this age, and the school does its best to mimic the feelings, behaviors and rhythms of a home. Therefore, home and family are considered the most immediate and best source of support for children who exhibit behaviors that are extremely agitated or aggressive. The teachers may recommend a few days at home or a reduced program for a child showing extremely agitated or aggressive behaviors, as an opportunity for the child to reconnect to their family and receive love and support prior to returning to school.

As the teachers are the most familiar with child development and behavior patterns, in addition to the individual children and their behavior; decisions for any corrective action is taken by consensus of the child's teacher(s) and the College of Teachers, with support from the school administration.

Per our Child Protection Policy, the names of other children will not be used by the teachers when discussing incidents with parents.

If the teachers feel that during an incident other children have been exposed to behavior that is potentially traumatic or results in negative imitation, the teachers may decide to notify the parents of these children that an incident has occurred and provide suggestions on how to support their child. Per our Child Protection Policy, the child's name and identifying details of the incident will not be provided to the parents of other children.

Behavior and Discipline Policy

There are certain serious behaviors that compromise the health and safety of all the children in the class. These include:

- Intentional harming of another child or teacher
- Aggressive behavior that may result in injury of a child and/or
- Running away
- Repeated biting of other children or teachers
- Repeated bullying (defined on page 5) or teasing
- Repeated refusal of teacher's guidance
- Uncontrollable disruptive behavior
- Aggressiveness and/or repeated misuse of toys and/or classroom materials

Any of these behaviors may result in a child being sent home from school. Again, the parent will be called by a member of the Administrative staff to come and pick up their child. The teacher will contact the parent to discuss the matter later that same day.

Teachers will use discretion and respond appropriately to the age and temperament of the child. If a child is experiencing ongoing struggles the teacher and faculty may require some steps to support the child, family, and class as a whole.

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Here are some possible solutions and plans that the teacher may require for an ongoing situation:

- The teacher may require a conference and/or home visit with the parent before the child is permitted to return to school.
- The teachers may meet about the child and try to come up with safe and appropriate solutions to the challenges of this particular child and develop a "Behavior Support Plan". This plan will outline the steps which will be taken at home and at school to address the child's behavior and help him or her to move in a more positive direction. The Behavior Support Plan may contain measures such as having the child work beside the teacher during free play, restricted contact with other children, early dismissal, a shortened school week, or other possibilities. A meeting will be arranged with the parents, teacher, and at least one other faculty representative to discuss the Behavior Support Plan. The school will continue to work with the situation as long as the teachers and parents follow the agreements outlined in the Behavior Support Plan, which may be modified over time, and work, in good faith, to resolve the difficulties.
- The teacher may request that the parents seek some kind of outside help. This could be a play therapist, occupational therapist or another kind of expert that is deemed appropriate for the needs of the child.
- If the challenges are not shifting or improving and the child is unsafe either with himself/herself or with others, the teacher may require a break at home. In the case of asking a child to remain at home for a few days, the School Director will also be consulted and notified.
- If the behavior is sufficiently disruptive or endangers other children's safety it may be necessary for the child to be withdrawn from school. In such serious cases The College of Teachers has the right to exclude any child from the school if the following occurs: The teacher has been consistently unable to contain the child in the school and the child has become a danger to themselves and others and/or there is a difference in opinion between the parents and the teachers in how to proceed in regards to the child and Behavior Support Plan.

Sometimes, the teacher and parent may come to the conclusion that the child is either not ready for school yet or that it is simply not a good fit all around. If this is the case, the teacher may reassess the situation the following semester. A lot can happen in the young child's life and within themselves in six months. Our primary goal as early childhood educators is to help the child to reach his or her highest potential. We strive in every way to meet the individual needs of each child and the needs of the class as a whole. Most important is the emphasis on open and direct communication between all of the adults in the child's life, for this is essential for the child's success in these formative years.

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Primary School: Standards of Student Conduct

This policy is intended to set the standards of student conduct that are necessary to enable all students to take full advantage of the educational opportunity presented at GGS. By being enrolled in this school, students and their parents acknowledge these standards and agree to abide by them and to cooperate in their application. These are guidelines, and are not meant to be exhaustive in every detail. GGS and the faculty reserve the right to apply these standards with the authority and judgment inherent within its jurisdiction, as indicated in the enrollment agreement.

Students at GGS are expected to meet the following standards of conduct:

1. Students should demonstrate self-respect by ensuring their conduct enables them to take full advantage of school. This is accomplished by keeping up with class assignments, by following instruction and by being on time for class. Examples of conduct that is not tolerated include: the possession or use of drugs, tobacco products or alcohol on campus or at any school function; disruptions in class; or the unauthorized use of electronic devices which includes cell phones.
2. Students should demonstrate respect for teachers, staff and other adults. Speech and action should be appropriate. Foul or abusive language is not tolerated. Students should not leave class or school grounds without permission.
3. Students should demonstrate respect for other students. Aggressive or threatening physical behavior, including hitting, punching, pushing or kicking, is not acceptable, nor is foul or abusive language. Bullying in any form (see definition below*) is not permitted. Weapons are not allowed on campus. Sexual behavior is not permitted, whether it is sexual harassment or sexual activity between students.
4. Students should demonstrate respect for property—the school's, other students', and their own. Destroying, harming, defacing or misusing school property or property belonging to others is not tolerated. Stealing is unacceptable. Students are responsible to help maintain the campus and facilities.

* GGS defines "bullying" according to the California Department of Education guidelines as follows:

- Bullying is exposing a person to abusive actions repeatedly over time. Being aware of children's teasing and acknowledging injured feelings are always important. Bullying becomes a concern when hurtful or aggressive behavior toward an individual or group appears to be unprovoked, intentional, and (usually) repeated.
- Bullying is a form of violence. It involves a real or perceived imbalance of power, with the more powerful child or group attacking those who are less powerful. Bullying may be physical (hitting, kicking, spitting, pushing), verbal (taunting, malicious teasing, name calling, threatening), or emotional (spreading rumors, manipulating social relationships, extorting, or intimidating). Bullying can occur face-to-face or in the online world.
- Bullying is also one or more acts by a pupil or group of pupils directed against another pupil that constitutes sexual harassment, hate violence, or severe or pervasive intentional harassment, threats, or intimidation that is disruptive, causes disorder, and invades the rights of others by creating an intimidating or hostile educational environment, and includes acts that are committed personally or by means of an electronic act, as defined.
- An "electronic act" is defined as transmission of a communication, including, but not limited to, a message, text, sound, or image by means of an electronic device, including but not limited to, a telephone, wireless telephone or other wireless communication device, computer, or pager.

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Primary School: Discipline Policies and Procedures

The philosophy on discipline emphasizes a positive approach, in which the student is gradually led towards an experience of self-discipline. We expect that students behave in a respectful way toward their teachers, adults, and classmates and toward the property of others. Each teacher is fully responsible for the discipline in his or her classroom. Students will be approached in a dignified manner and asked to comply with the standards of behavior. If unacceptable behavior continues, parents will be informed and a plan of action will be created. In cases of continuous problem behavior, a student might be put on detention, probation, suspension, and in severe cases, expulsion. Each case will be approached individually and worked out with the ideas of the child's development and environmental influences as references.

The goal in applying any form of discipline is to bring about correction of a behavior that does not meet the standards set forth above. GGS reserves the right to apply discipline that, in the judgment of the faculty, is most appropriate to accomplish that goal. Each case will be approached individually and worked out with the ideas of the child's development and environmental influences as references. It is understood that the types of discipline will not be applied sequentially in every case. For example, although a probationary period may in some instances precede a suspension, a student may be suspended without probation if the faculty determines that circumstances warrant that action.

The types of discipline that GGS may apply include, but are not limited to:

- Student is approached and reminded of the standards of behavior.
- Conflict resolution conversation/peer mediation with all concerned takes place.
- Notification of parents occurs and a plan of action is formulated, with the possibility of assigning detention for higher grades or other appropriate support around the school for students of any age.
- Probation is assigned, with the teacher communicating with the parents and the child to define the duration of the probationary period and the teachers' expectations during that period. If those expectations are not met, suspension or expulsion may follow.
- Suspension is a period in which the student is not allowed to come to school. A teacher may immediately suspend a student by sending that student home or by giving a suspension up to one day in length. Suspension for a period longer than one day must be approved by the College of Teachers.
- Expulsion is the decision to dismiss a student from the school. This decision is made by the College of Teachers with review by the Board of Trustees.

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Attachment 1: Behavior Support Plan

Plan for: **NAME**

Prepared by: **TEACHERS AND PARENTS**

Date: **DATE**

Purpose of this Plan

This plan is intended to lay a clear foundation and set expectations for how to support **CHILD's** healing and behavior change. Gecko Garden School fully believes in **CHILD** and the collaborative ability of her parents and teachers to support her in participating successfully in school activities. To this end, we have created a plan that clearly describes our collective approach to understanding and addressing her exhibited behaviors, as well as our planned interventions, and the intervention we expect from her family to support this work.

Description of Behavior

Describe behaviors.

Specific Areas of Support and Change

Describe areas where support and change is required.

Interventions

Target behaviors the group is seeking to support	Specific measurable goals	Interventions	Method of evaluation	Person(s) responsible

Additional Recommendations

- List any additional recommendations**

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Next Steps

- Parents provide feedback and input into this Plan.
- Teachers and Parents sign the plan and move ahead as collaborators in support of the child.
- Teachers will continue to observe the child’s behavior in class
- Parents and Teachers will meet **monthly** to review progress and discuss next steps.
- The school considers the intervention successful as long as the Head Teacher of the class considers that overall improvement is being seen, and communication and collaboration between teachers and parents remains consistent and collaborative.
- The school considers the intervention unsuccessful if behaviors do not show any improvement; if behaviors worsen; if parents and teachers are unable to collaborate in support of the child. Consequences of unsuccessful interventions will be decided by the Head Teacher in collaboration with the College of Teachers.

Record of progress milestones and findings

Date	Observation	Recorded by

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Agreement

This Behavior Support Plan outlines the steps which will be taken at school and at home to support and address the child's behavior and help him or her to move in a more positive direction. The school will continue to work with the situation as long as the individuals and parents follow the agreements outlined in this plan. This plan may be modified over time, and work, in good faith, to resolve the difficulties and support the child in their development and continued participation in Gecko Garden School's program.

Parent(s)

Teacher(s)

School Administrator