

Children's House Montessori Anti-Bullying Policy

Introduction:

Bullying involves an imbalance of power which makes it hard for those being bullied to defend themselves. This may be seen or felt physically, emotionally or psychologically and includes social isolation or intimidation as well as any threat of violence. It is defined as follows:

- It is deliberately hurtful behavior; and
- It is repeated over time.

We, at Children's House Montessori, believe that creating a safe environment and dealing with bullying is everyone's responsibility. A bullying incident should be addressed as a child protection concern where there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, is likely to suffer, significant harm.

Bullying may take various forms, including but not limited to:

- Cyber – The use of electronic communications including email, mobile phones, text/multi-media messaging, photographs, videos, online profiling, websites, social networks and instant messaging; all with the intention to frighten, embarrass or harass.
- Disability – because of, or focusing on, the issue of disability.
- Emotional – being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting.
- Homophobic or transphobic – because of, or focusing on, the issues of sexuality and/or gender identity.
- Physical – pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence inflicted on another individual.
- Racist/cultural/religious - racial, cultural or religious taunts, comments or gestures.
- Sexual – sexual abusive taunts, comments, or gestures.
- Verbal – name calling, spreading rumors.

Any bullying incidents that occur on or off school premises are subject to this policy. If the matter involves criminal activity, the police will always be informed.

Bullying is something we take seriously as it can result in long-term psychological damage, and in extreme cases, suicide.

Objectives:

In order to safeguard against bullying, Children's House Montessori:

- aims to create a culture of empathy.
- aims to have everyone feel safe and confident.
- aims to model grace, courtesy, and respect.
- aims to celebrate differences.

Our objectives are to:

- Enable students to understand clearly what constitutes bullying and to understand that bullying, whatever its form, will not be tolerated by the school community.
- Make it easy for students to report bullying so they feel assured that they will be listened to and incidents acted upon.
- Enable parents to feel confident that bullying incidents will be firmly dealt with by the school.

Prevention:

- We are aware that schools which excel at tackling bullying have created an ethos of good behavior where students treat one another and the school staff with respect because they know this is the right way to behavior, values of respect for staff and other students and an understanding of the value of being in the classroom.

Monitoring:

- We recognize that it is not enough to have to the teachers' observations. We need a safe mechanism for students to be able to report adverse events. We will need to enable our students to clearly understand what constitutes bullying and to understand that bullying, whatever its form, will be tolerated by the school community.

Intervention:

We support a range of positive strategies to deal with bullying and actively challenge the use of humiliation, fear, ridicule and other similar approaches in an effort to reduce bullying. Montessori principles will guide our intervention structure.

We involve both parents and students so they understand our approach towards bullying and they are clear in the part they have to play, including when they find themselves as bystanders.

Steps that will be taken when bullying has occurred:

1. When a student reports an adverse event, we do want to know the name of the student causing harm because researchers have shown that most likely the student needs help and support too. We also want to know the name of the student being harmed so we can provide extra care and support and notify parents/caregivers to closely observe the child with the knowledge of the incident.
2. If it is the first time the behavior has occurred, the staff will model the appropriate interaction and will provide a reminder of what is expected to participate in our community.
3. The first priority is to identify it quickly and stop the bullying. As soon as an incidence is identified, the student will be counseled by the Director. The main goal is to uncover the motivation of the bullying. The meeting will also be an opportunity for the student engaged with the behavior to understand the other child's point of view and make amends. *We believe that bullying is a behavior and that most students do not intend to inflict significant harm and may even be unaware of the severity of the harm they are causing.

4. The second course of action is to invite parents to a meeting to discuss the problem. If necessary, other resources including but not limited to counseling services may be recommended. All attempts will be made to help the student change his or her behavior.
5. In the most serious or persistent cases, we will ask that the child be removed from our environment to protect the integrity of our community.
6. If the bullying behavior is illegal, we are obligated to report it to local authorities.

Evaluation:

- All incidents reported will be recorded including the course of action taken.
- If parents have concerns about the school's anti-bullying process, they are free to take the concerns to the School Board who will explore if the policy needs to be changed.
- The Director will be in charge of evaluating the implementation and impact of the policy on a year by year basis.