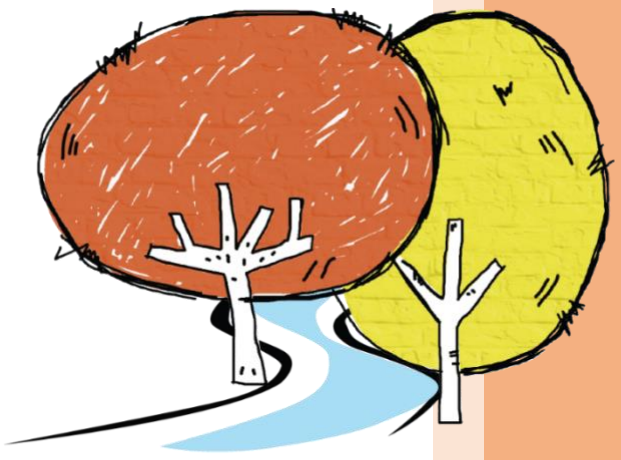

SOUTHSIDE

Montessori School

Discipline
Policy and Procedures

SOUTHSIDE
Montessori School

General Statement

At *Southside Montessori School*, we are committed to fostering the optimal educational development of every student by creating a supportive learning environment and positive social climate.

Our approach to student discipline is rooted in Montessori principles, emphasising mutual understanding between parents, staff, and students. Discipline management includes a structured framework of clear expectations and appropriate corrective actions to guide behaviour while maintaining fairness and respect for each child's individual development.

A core objective of Montessori education is the development of inner discipline. Self-discipline is nurtured through:

- A well-structured and orderly classroom environment, where children can independently choose and complete tasks without unnecessary interference.
- A multi-age setting, allowing younger students to learn from the mature behaviour of older peers.

Our disciplinary procedures ensure fairness and transparency by:

- Clearly defining and communicating expectations.
- Implementing targeted education programs to support behavioural growth.
- Recognising and reinforcing positive behaviour.
- Addressing inappropriate behaviour constructively.
- Maintaining detailed records to track student development and ensure accountability.

Through this approach, we strive to cultivate respect, responsibility, and self-discipline in every student, preparing them to thrive both academically and socially.

Our Beliefs

- All children and young people have a right to an education where children can access and fully participate in learning.
- Schools are calm and safe environments that support teaching and learning. Supporting positive behaviour is essential to creating an environment where quality learning, wellbeing and safety are nurtured for every child and staff member.
- All children and staff have the right to be treated fairly and with dignity, both online and offline, in an environment free from intimidation, violence, harassment, victimisation and discrimination, including that based on sex, race, religion, disability or sexual orientation.

Procedural Fairness

The school's child discipline policy is based on the principles of procedural fairness, in accordance with the Education Act. This is particularly important when a consequence is:

- Suspension: A temporary removal from the classroom or school to ensure safety and allow time for reflection and planning.
- Expulsion: permanently removing a child from *Southside Montessori School.* A decision to end a student's enrolment at Southside Montessori School after careful consideration, consultation with parents or carers, and when all available supports have been exhausted. This is only used in exceptional circumstances where the safety and wellbeing of the student or the broader school community are at risk.
- Exclusion: preventing a child's enrolment at another school, where an exclusion policy or agreement exists between schools.

Procedural fairness involves two key concepts:

1. The 'hearing rule' refers to the right of the The child and their family have the right to:
   - Be informed of the specific concerns or allegations being raised.
   - Understand how the matter will be considered.
   - Respond to the concerns
   - Request a review of the decision, where appropriate
2. The right to an unbiased decision: all matters will be handled with neutrality, respect, and thorough investigation. Decisions will be made by individuals not personally involved in the incident, to ensure fairness.

Prohibition of Corporal Punishment

At *Southside Montessori School* (SSM), we are committed to providing a safe, respectful, and nurturing learning environment. Corporal punishment is strictly prohibited as a disciplinary measure for all students attending our school.

This policy means that:

- No staff member, volunteer, or contractor is permitted to physically punish a child under any circumstances.
- The school does not condone or endorse the use of corporal punishment by parents or any non-school persons to discipline SSM students, whether on or off school premises.

This policy applies to all employees, volunteers, and contractors of *Southside Montessori School.* All members of our school community are expected to comply with this policy and its related implementation guidelines.

Significant breaches of this policy may result in serious consequences, which could include a review of the child's ongoing enrolment at the school.

Through this commitment, we uphold Montessori principles of respect, self-discipline, and positive guidance to support the holistic development of every child.

Defining Inappropriate Behaviour and Consequences

At *Southside Montessori School*, we are committed to fostering a respectful and supportive learning environment. Behavioural expectations are clearly defined, and consequences are implemented in a **fair and constructive manner** to guide students toward positive social and emotional development.

Repeated inappropriate behaviour over an extended period, directed towards an individual or group, constitutes **bullying** and is addressed under the **school's anti-bullying policy**.

Minor Discourtesy

Definition:
Behaviour that disrupts the classroom environment or interferes with learning, such as:

- Silliness or excessive noise
- Minor physical interactions (e.g., light hitting)
- Taking another student's work
- Repetitive disruptive behaviour (e.g., copying, making a fuss)

Response:
Educators will **redirect the child with gentle guidance**. If the behaviour continues, parents will be informed so we can work together to support the child's development.

Serious Discourtesy

Definition:
Behaviour that results in **property damage, wilful defiance, or endangering others**. This includes both **non-contact** and **contact** misconduct.

Serious Discourtesy (Non-Contact)

Examples:

- Refusal to complete work
- Repeated verbal disruption of others
- Use of inappropriate language
- Threatening, frightening, or excluding another student
- Encouraging others to misbehave

Response:

1. The child is reminded that the behaviour is not aligned with our community expectations and is gently encouraged to reflect.
2. If repeated, the child is guided to a calm space for reflection in a designated area to reflect on their actions.
3. If the behaviour persists, the teacher will take further action, and parents will be informed.
4. Parents will be invited to meet with the educator to collaborate on strategies to address the issue.
5. If the behaviour continues, a **second consultation** will take place, with the child present for part of the meeting to support their understanding and encourage ownership of their actions.
6. Depending on the severity of the behaviour, parents may be contacted to collect their child if they are unable to regulate their emotions or behaviour safely.
7. If necessary, the child may be withdrawn from school for a **"cooling off" period** to reflect on their actions.
8. If concerns persist, external support may be considered in consultation with parents.

This process will be **monitored**, and additional actions may be required based on the child's progress. If continued behavioural challenges arise, the child's '**fit' within the Montessori system** will be reassessed.

Serious Discourtesy (Contact)

Definition:
Physical behaviour that endangers others or causes significant disruption, such as:

- Hitting, kicking, or throwing objects
- Temper tantrums resulting in harm
- Deliberate damage to school property or students' work

Response:

1. The child is calmly guided away from the situation to ensure safety and support reflection.
2. Parents are **notified** and required to attend a meeting with the educator.
3. Educators and parents will establish a **plan for behavioural improvement**, with **regular follow-ups**.
4. If the behaviour continues, a **second consultation** will be held, with the child attending the first portion of the meeting.
5. The child may be supported to take time at home to reflect, with home learning provided and a re-entry plan created collaboratively.
6. If the behaviour persists, external support options will be explored in consultation with parents.

7. Ongoing incidents may significantly impact the learning community. In such cases, the Leadership Team will review further supports and consider the child's ongoing needs within the Montessori environment.

Additional Considerations:

- **Damage to school property**: Families may be asked to support the repair or replacement of damaged items.
- **Documentation**: All behavioural incidents will be **recorded by educators**, and details will be available to parents upon request.

This approach ensures **fairness, consistency, and alignment with Montessori principles**, promoting **self-discipline, respect, and responsibility** among students.

Reporting of offending behaviour

Concerning behaviour or Challenging incidents should be reported to the educators in the first instance.

If a child reports to their parents that they have been hurt by another child during school time, parents are requested to contact the educator. The educator is in the best position to document and deal with such occurrences.

We ask that families avoid contacting other parents directly, as this can make resolution more difficult for the children involved. Instead, please trust the educators to manage the situation with care and neutrality.

Assessing Behaviour during the enrolment period

All new students enrolling are placed on a mutually agreed two day trial period. This period enables **both the** parents and the school to explore the alignment between the child's needs and the school's environment.

The educator may request an extension of the trial period if required.

Staff responsibilities

Staff at Southside Montessori School should endeavour to:

- Model positive relationships in their day-to-day dealings with members of the school and model positive ways of resolving disputes.
- Positively reinforce children for behaving in an appropriate positive manner.
- Be knowledgeable about and educate children about the nature, causes and consequences of inappropriate behaviour and the processes that have been set in place to address inappropriate behaviour at this school.
- Be familiar with our school's behaviour code and management system, including the contents of this policy.
- Respond in a timely, calm and consistent way to cases of inappropriate behaviours brought to their

attention by child, parents and/or colleagues.

- Respond to early signs of distress in children. These early signs can include *changes in focus, increased emotional expression, or disengagement* such as aggressive behaviour outbursts and poor class or school attendance.
- Seek advice and support from colleagues when unsure as to how to respond to and address specific incidents.
- Encourage children to report situations of inappropriate behaviour by listening carefully and avoiding giving judgments when reports are made and remaining calm and understanding of the child's/parent's/ colleague's concern.

Child Responsibilities

A clear understanding of appropriate behaviour by children contributes in a major way to making the school a safe place. For this reason, our school expects all children to:

- Contribute to a safe learning environment by being respectful of others.
- Positively interact with members of the school community in their day-to-day dealing and resolve disputes in positive ways.
- Be knowledgeable about the different types of inappropriate behaviour and their causes and consequences. Children are given strategies for preventing and addressing inappropriate behaviour and are made aware of the processes that have been set in place to address these incidents at school.
- express how they feel, to be listened to with respect, and to participate in decisions that affect them in age-appropriate ways.

Parent Responsibilities

Appropriate behaviour requires a community approach based on the Montessori philosophy of the school. This is why our school encourages parents to:

- Be positive role models in their interactions with other people.
- Be knowledgeable about the nature, causes and consequences of inappropriate behaviour and the processes that have been set in place to address these incidents at school.
- Encourage children to interact positively with other people in their day-to-day dealings and enact positive ways of resolving disputes.
- Positively reinforce children for behaving in an appropriate positive manner.
- Inform their children about effective strategies for dealing with inappropriate behaviour (e.g. the need to inform an educator and seek assistance if they are experiencing antisocial behaviour at school, and the importance of not responding aggressively to such behaviour as this can serve to intensify aggression).
- Contact the child's class guide as early as possible if they are concerned.
- Allow the school to investigate and manage the situation and be aware of the importance of working as a community in a cohesive manner.

Disciplinary Procedures

In determining whether a child's challenging behaviour is serious enough to warrant suspension or expulsion, the leadership team will consider the safety, care and welfare of the child, staff and other children in the class. This will be discussed with the School Board Chairperson. The Leadership Team will then advise the parents/carers of the final decision.

All meetings are held respectfully, with an emphasis on open and calm communication. If emotions run high, the meeting may be paused and rescheduled to ensure a productive conversation.

It is important to note that some serious incidents of inappropriate behaviour (e.g. physical violence, use of or threatening to use a weapon) continued unsafe behaviour or significant incidents involving physical harm or legal concerns, will result in immediate expulsion from the school either on a temporary or permanent basis. Also, the matter is to be reported to the NSW Police immediately 131444 (a Police investigation of a child's alleged behaviour does not remove the Leadership Team's discretion to deal with the behaviour as a school disciplinary matter).

Review

Effective date	Modifications	Review date
December 2024	General review and editing	Dec 2025
March 2025	Contextualised to Montessori	March 2026