



Student Code of Conduct Policy

Saplings Nature School

August 2022

Rationale

Our Code of Conduct is a system of behaviour expectations that is based on four guidelines:

- Care and Respect for Myself
- Care and Respect for Others
- Care and Respect for Learning
- Care and Respect for our Environment

This code is reviewed with students in early September and revisited regularly throughout the school year. Parents are also encouraged to review the code with their students. Saplings' hope is that the application of this code will help us to ensure that the school is a happy, safe, and productive place for all.

Consequences for misbehaviour will be timely, logical, and suit the misbehaviour insofar as is possible. Minor infractions will be dealt with by the educator or educator-aide. Major infractions will involve the Head of School and may require the involvement of parents and perhaps other school personnel. All efforts will be made to support the student to encourage them to change their behaviour to an acceptable form.

Although it is necessary to deal with negative behaviour when it occurs, the staff is committed to the notion that the best way to influence students to act responsibly is to acknowledge and emphasise their positive behaviour. Our staff is very resourceful in using techniques for positive recognition.

Policy

1. The school will develop a Code of Conduct that defines expected behaviour.
2. The Code of Conduct will be reviewed yearly by representative members of the school community.
3. Students will follow all guidelines, rules, and procedures while in attendance at school, during all school sponsored activities, and extracurricular events
4. Wherever possible and appropriate, consequences for breaches of a code are restorative in nature rather than punitive. This may involve formal Restorative Justice or other forms of balanced restorative practice. Goals of any process will include school community safety, accountability to the victim and/or community, and competency development for the transgressor.
5. Discipline decisions made by the Head of School may be appealed to the Board.

Guiding Principles

- All students and staff have a right to learn and work in a safe, respectful environment that is focused on learning.
- Everyone can learn to make responsible decisions.
- Effective communication includes courtesy and respect.
- Diversity among students and staff is to be celebrated and protected.
- Commonly-accepted conduct is to be practised by all members of a learning community.
- Age, maturity, cognitive ability, and previous behaviour will be taken into consideration when defining unacceptable behaviour and the consequences that follow.

Acceptable and Unacceptable Behaviours

Students are expected to learn and mature as they move through successive grades, and as such the expectations progress towards increasing personal responsibility and self-discipline, as well as increasing consequences for inappropriate conduct/unacceptable behaviour. Unacceptable behaviour includes bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, intimidation, threatening or violent behaviour while at school, at a school-related activity or in other circumstances where engaging in the activity will have a negative impact on the school environment.

In addition to conduct laid out in this policy, students are expected to adhere to those laid out in the Harassment and Bullying Prevention and Management Policy as well as the Equity, Diversion and Inclusion Policy.

Practising academic honesty and sibilities include but are not limited to:

- Not attending school or school functions while in possession of or while under the influence of any intoxicating, banned or controlled substances;
- Showing respect and care for the property of others by refraining from littering, theft, vandalism, graffiti and other inappropriate behaviours related to property;
- Not smoking any substance, nor use vaporizers or e-cigarettes on school property.
- This ban extends to all school property 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, regardless of whether or not school is in session. The ban also includes vehicles, parking lots, sports fields, personal integrity by not participating in or encouraging plagiarism, cheating, theft of evaluation instruments, use of unauthorised aids, or false representation of identity; and
- Attending school in appropriate dress that is not obscene and does not promote alcohol or drugs, display offensive language or images, encourage discrimination or present a health or safety problem or cause a disruption.

High Intensity Emotions and Aggression

High energy emotions such as anger can be a difficult thing to experience and work through, especially for children. If a student displays aggressive behaviours towards other students or teachers, give that student physical space. One teacher can monitor the student while the rest of the group are moved away from the individual who is acting aggressively.

If a student hurts someone, focus on the hurt person with empathy and love before turning your attention to the student who did the behaviour; this will model how to act empathetically. Do not talk to the student about the unexpected behaviour when they are angry or upset. The student's emotions must be calmed before they can be receptive to you and before they can think rationally & empathetically for others. Sit with them at eye level, sympathise with their feelings first. Then begin talking with them through the incident and unexpected behaviour. Brainstorm with them to come up with a new strategy to use when they are angry, and how they can take responsibility for their actions. You may have this discussion with the other student present if you think it is safe to do so. *Do not force the student to apologise*, they can apologise if they want to but forcing an apology does not help empathy grow and is often counter-productive. This practice also takes their autonomy away while forcing them to say something that they may not feel yet.

Rather than forcing "I'm sorry":

- Teach students how to look for emotional cues in others
"Look at their face, they're crying. That really hurt them"
- Encourage them to check in with each other "are you okay?"
- Encourage them to take action by asking "what can I do to make it better?"
- Hold them accountable. For instance, if a student breaks another student's fairy house, they will help rebuild it. If a student hit another with a stick, get them to help with the ice pack and to sit with the injured student. Consequences should be relevant to the behaviour (natural consequences)
- As an educator, model saying sorry, owning up to your mistakes and acting empathetically toward others.

Conflict Resolution Policy

Should a conflict arise between a staff member and a parent, or between staff members or parents themselves, those involved will be spoken to individually. Should the need arise, a group discussion with all those involved as well as the Head of School and/or the Program Director will be facilitated to ensure a resolution.

Discipline Policy

If prevention and redirection fail, and a student displays aggressive behaviour towards other students or educators, the student will be taken to a quiet area. The student will sit on a chair and the educator will come down to the student's eye level and help sort through their emotions and seek some understanding of the behaviour. The student will return to play when they feel ready to do so and the parent will be informed at the end of class.

If a student causes physical or emotional harm to themselves or others, a staff member will verbally ask the student to move to another area. If the student does not move on their own, the staff member will attempt to redirect the student to the designated area. If there is a significant health and safety risk, the staff member will carry the student to the calming down area, or ask the other students to leave the room, in order to allow the student to calm down and talk to staff members about alternative, appropriate behaviours. If the staff member needs to physically carry the student, an incident report will be filled out, unless prior arrangements have been included in the student's IEP.

Saplings goal is to work together with parents to give students the most positive experience in all areas of their Saplings experience. Saplings staff will note incidents in the student file, including date, description of the incident, intervention, and follow up.

Dress Code Policy

We ask students and their parents to support a learning environment where attire is appropriate for each situation, and not distracting or offensive to others. Articles of clothing that are too revealing, have inappropriate language, topics or images are unacceptable. Students might be asked to change if the school's staff and/or administration deem the clothing worn is inappropriate.

We expect all staff and students to dress appropriately, particularly for the weather. Certain clothing is not acceptable, and this includes:

- clothing that is cut too high or too low and
- clothing with derogatory words or pictures, including sexist, racist, drug-related, or violent logos or commentary.
- clothing or footwear that will not protect or provide the necessary warmth for protection from outdoor elements

Guidance Policy

Positive guidance is based on realistic expectations of a student's needs and abilities.

Our educators will create a positive environment that reflects the level of development of the students, providing clear limits through consistent messages about expectations and safe, appropriate behaviour while modelling positive behaviour and demonstrating respect, understanding and caring for other people and things.

Students will be encouraged and supported in assessing their own activities and behaviours as well as the consequences of such. Through role modelling, we help provide students with the skills needed to solve problems on their own, to use their words to express their feelings and to find reasonable solutions to the problem. Educators constantly monitor behaviour and interactions between students; when a conflict or challenge arises, it is addressed immediately in a discreet and respectful manner.

Saplings Staff follow these steps in order to encourage positive guidance strategies with the students:

- Respect the students
- Model and teach respect for others
- Model and teach respect for property
- Encourage the students, be genuine
- Avoid criticism, be positive
- Listen to your tone of voice
- Promote independence and self-respect
- Be firm, fair, and consistent
- Talk with students, not to them or at them
- Enjoy students, have fun with them
- Avoid conflicts, redirect students before a problem occurs
- Be willing to admit mistakes, smile, and start again

Typically, it is perfectly normal for students to have conflicts from time to time. These provide an opportunity for the students to learn about boundaries, appropriate ways to handle situations and how to function successfully in a large group of peers. In the event that behaviour at Saplings is deemed dangerous, disrespectful or intolerant, it is the Educators responsibility to deal with this appropriately. In some cases, it may be necessary for a student to have 'time away' from an activity or to leave a session early. Any decision taken to remove a student should and will be carefully considered.

Student Phone Policy

Students do not have general access to school phones unless there is an urgent need. Students require approval from a staff member prior to the use of a telephone. Approval will not be given to arrange visits with friends. Cell phones may not be used during the 8:45am-3pm school day and may only be used by the owner.