

Waldorf School of Princeton

Discipline Policy

Part I – Expected Student Behaviors

At the Waldorf School of Princeton, we wish to foster respect for our school and for all human beings, and to maintain an atmosphere of peaceful cooperation that promotes learning. It is to these ends that the following expectations have been defined. All policies apply whenever students are on school grounds, as well as during any school function or outing.

A. SAFETY

Underlying the broad educational goals of the school is the assumption that all children will be in an environment that is physically safe. This concern is absolutely foundational in its importance. The following rules address this area:

1. No student may strike or attempt to physically harm another student.
2. Inside the building: Students will refrain from throwing things, running, ball playing, pushing each other, or wrestling, (unless designated by the teacher as part of a lesson).
3. Students must always obtain permission from the teacher in charge to leave the teacher's sight.
4. Students must remain in approved areas of the school property at all times. The Golden House, barns, and woods are off limits except when accompanied by a teacher or other responsible adult.
5. Students must comply with playground rules (see attached).

B. RESPECT FOR PEOPLE AND FOR PROPERTY

It is clearly recognized that in order to best meet our academic and social goals, children need a well-ordered environment, where respectful consideration of people and their property prevails. We expect to see a growing ability in our students to function maturely in a classroom setting. We expect students to demonstrate an increasing respect for our language in its most noble form—we encourage an atmosphere where words are used with integrity and honesty. The following guidelines are meant to support these concerns:

1. Students will respect the right of all to an orderly and productive learning environment.
2. Students will raise their hands before speaking if that is the teacher's lesson protocol.
3. Students will demonstrate courtesy towards their teachers and will comply with requests and directions given by teachers.

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4. Students will refrain from using swear words or profanities, as well as language that is rude, hurtful, or demeaning. Racial, ethnic, gender, or religious comments and gestures will not be tolerated.
5. Students will be truthful and honest.
6. Students will refrain from teasing or picking on other students.
7. Students may not take the possessions of others, either temporarily or permanently, without express permission. The deliberate destruction of others' possessions will not be tolerated.
8. Students will use school equipment properly and will treat all areas of the school property with respect.

C. RESPONSIBILITY TO THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

At the Waldorf School of Princeton, we strive to create a learning environment where the highest standards of quality and beauty prevail. The personal appearance of each student and the quality of each student's work contributes to this overall environment, and we expect each one to take seriously their responsibility in this realm. Also, students are continually encouraged to make a genuine effort in all learning activities and are taught that punctuality is part of their training towards self-discipline and independence. The following expectations address these concerns:

1. Students will adhere to the guidelines of the dress code. (See Parent Handbook.)
2. Students will attend all classes punctually, unless special arrangements have been made.
3. Students will come to class with assignments completed and with the appropriate supplies.
4. Students will refrain from eating and drinking, except during meal/snack times. No chewing gum in class.
5. The use of cigarettes, e-cigarettes, vapes, alcohol, or drugs is strictly forbidden.
6. Students will leave at home items disruptive to or not necessary for the learning experience, e.g.: electronic devices, video games, magazines, matches, knives, any kind of weapon, or money beyond what is needed for school activities, etc.
7. Students are not to use cell phones during the school day, unless permission is given by a teacher.

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Playground Rules

1. All children must go out for recess unless they have a note from a parent or permission from a teacher.
2. Children may go to the bathroom before and after recess but not during, unless given permission by the supervising teacher.
3. Children will not be allowed to play outside the playground area unless accompanied by a teacher. The area designated as the “playground area” may change with the seasons, but students will always be made aware of these changes by their class teacher.
4. No unsupervised children may be on the playground.
5. No bare feet are allowed, outside or inside. Children will have a pair of outside and inside shoes and are expected to change when they come inside or go outside.
6. Because the risk of injury is considered too great, the following activities will not be permitted:
 - Tree climbing
 - Fence climbing
 - Skateboarding
 - Rollerblading
 - Any other activity determined by the teacher, depending upon individual facts and circumstances.

Bullying, Intimidation, and Harassment

Definition of Bullying (Repeated Social Exclusion)

Repeated social exclusion for the purpose of causing embarrassment, pain, or discomfort to another is considered bullying and is not tolerated. Whether organized or unintentional, social exclusion will not be ignored and will be addressed through our school’s process.

Unacceptable Behaviors

Under New Jersey Law, bullying is any gesture, any written, verbal, or physical act, or any electronic communication that is reasonably perceived as being motivated by either an actual or perceived characteristic, such as:

- Race
- Color
- Religion
- Ancestry
- Gender

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Unacceptable behaviors include:

1. Physical violence, such as hitting, pushing, or spitting at another student
2. Interfering with another student's property, by stealing, hiding, or damaging it
3. Using offensive names when addressing another student or teacher
4. Teasing or spreading rumors about another pupil or their family
5. Belittling another student's abilities and achievements
6. Writing offensive notes or graffiti about another student
7. Excluding another student from a group activity
8. Ridiculing another student's appearance, religion, nationality, gender, sexuality, identity or origin.

“Cyber-bullying” is bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, which includes telephones, cell phones, computers, and other devices, and specifically via the internet. It includes, but is not limited to, emails, instant messages, text messages, shared images, and postings on websites, in social media, and elsewhere.

Cyber-bullying shall also include:

- The creation of a web page or blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person.
- The knowing impersonation of another person as the author of posted content or messages, if the creation or impersonation creates any of the conditions enumerated in the definition of bullying.
- The distribution by electronic means of a communication to more than one person or posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons, if the distribution or posting creates any of the conditions enumerated in the definition of bullying.

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PART II – Consequences of Student Misbehavior

The following are the steps to be followed by the teacher when it is determined that a child is in violation of the school's behavior expectations. Please note that the distinction between a major and a minor infraction must necessarily remain a subjective one. It is suggested, however, that a major infraction be defined as one in which the offending behavior seriously jeopardizes the safety or well-being of another or of oneself, or is seriously injurious to property.

1. In the case of a minor infraction, it is left to the teacher to stop the infraction, mediate or counsel the students, and to administer an appropriate documented reprimand, such as verbal warning or sending the child from the room.
 - a. Incidents involving more than one student must be documented on an incident report form and emailed to the Leadership Team.
 - b. The Faculty will be notified at the next faculty meeting, so that all can be attentive to student behavior.

2. For severe or repeated infractions:
 - a. The teacher(s) present must stop the infraction.
 - b. The class teacher and the Leadership Team should be notified immediately.
 - c. The child's parents and the Business Operations Administrator will be notified as soon as possible by the class teacher. If the class teacher is unable to do this for any reason, it then becomes the responsibility of the teacher who witnessed the infraction.
 - d. An appropriate reprimand will be administered according to school guidelines, as outlined below.
 - e. The Faculty will be notified at the next faculty meeting, so that all can be attentive to student behavior.

SPECIFIC DISCIPLINARY GUIDELINES

There are many disciplinary actions that are done on a daily basis by teachers as part of classroom management. They are often not considered serious enough to warrant a call to parents unless they are repeated a number of times. These could include:

- A name on the blackboard
- A part of a recess or a whole recess taken away
- An extra job or task given as a way to redeem negative behavior
- A private conversation with the teacher
- A "time-out" in the hallway

These serve to underline a negative behavior, to make the student more conscious, and to help the student make amends to the class or teacher.

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In the case of disagreements or difficulties between students, a meeting of the students involved will be held with the guidance of a teacher, and possibly helpful students who were not directly involved but could be a support to the other students. We have used different methods over the years, such as Social Inclusion or Social Harmony. A teacher with these skills can help to bring about a resolution.

As the relationship between student and teacher can be the most informative and influential, on issues that are not serious in nature, discretion is given to the teacher on how to resolve these incidents. As teachers, we work to instill in children what kind of adults we hope they will become. However, when the Code of Conduct has been violated with a more serious incident, this is an infraction against the school, and other consequences follow.

Although methods such as **detention and suspension** are not considered to be a solution to behavior infractions, they are often an expedient deterrent, and therefore of occasional value. It is assumed, however, that in cases of repeated or serious misconduct, teachers and parents will work together to discover possible underlying causes. The goal, of course, is for everyone to work in cooperation towards a positive long-term solution.

A child who hits or otherwise injures another child is subject to a minimum one day suspension. A subsequent case or serious first occurrence requires a meeting between the teachers involved and the child's parents before the child can return to school. Additional incidents or an extreme first incident that seriously jeopardizes the safety of others may result in removal from the school.

There are two types of suspension. Both are intended to modify reckless, inappropriate behavior of children in school and provide a safer, healthier school environment for all of the students:

1. At Home Detention (AHD): Primarily used as a teaching tool, this lets students know the behavior went significantly beyond that which is acceptable at our school. Reckless behavior, such as fighting, theft, vandalism, or verbal abuse would be subject to this type of suspension. Rudeness or direct insubordination to a teacher could yield an AHD. This type of suspension will be combined with student/teacher meetings in which the student's actions are discussed and agreements made which indicate that the student is willing to recognize the error and invest in changing future behavior. Guidelines for the student's AHD will be discussed at this meeting. In this meeting, it is not only important to point out the negative behavior, but also to explain to the student what values of the school need to be upheld.

All parents of involved students will be notified as soon as possible of the incident and their child's "At Home Detention," as well as the guidelines for the detention. If a student repeats the behavior, the child may be suspended (see below).

2. Suspension: A suspension is issued when:
 - a) In the above described meeting, a student shows no remorse for the reckless behavior or exhibits no interest in altering behavior in future situations.

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- b) A child repeats the behavior that resulted in an “At Home Detention.”
- c) A student demonstrates extreme disrespect for a teacher, such as cursing at a teacher.
- d) When the student’s reckless behavior or conversation/communications are deemed excessively malicious.

Before a suspended student may return to class, the student and their parents must meet with the teacher and at least one member of the Leadership Team.

Suspensions of this type will be reported if a private school application requests knowledge of any suspensions.

In the case of a suspension, or a second suspension, a meeting to examine the situation will be held with the Leadership Team, the teacher, and the student’s parents. The Business Operations Administrator will be consulted. If so determined after such a meeting, the Leadership Team may request the College to ratify the decision to ask the parents to withdraw the student from the school.

Younger children may also be subject to the above guidelines, but more latitude is given to the class teacher because some children are pre-verbal in the nursery. In these cases, it must still be documented and an appropriate action taken, such as a time-out or to be sent home.

In cases of **mischief to property, vandalism, or theft**, the child(ren) will be required to replace or repair the damage. Repeated or extreme cases of vandalism are subject to suspension or expulsion.

A child who lies to, ignores, refuses to obey, or responds rudely to a teacher is subject to detention during recess and/or after school. A subsequent case is subject to one day suspension and/or a meeting with the child’s parents. These procedures would also be used when a child uses language inappropriately or maliciously.

Other violations of expected student behaviors are subject to detention and/or a meeting with the child’s parents.

In all cases, the child’s teachers may also choose additional tasks of a pedagogical nature, such as essay, project, work tasks, community service) as a means for the student to restore themselves with more positive actions.

CONSEQUENCES OF BULLYING

The Leadership Chair will receive complaints and create accurate documentation:

- a) Name of Complainant
- b) Status of Complainant (i.e. student, staff, third party)
- c) Name of alleged Perpetrator
- d) Date complaint was received
- e) How complaint was received (i.e. written, oral)

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- f) Nature of complaint (i.e. facts of the complaint)
- g) Names of Witnesses

Investigation: An investigation of the complaint will take place, and includes informing the Business Operations Administrator and Chair of the Board of Trustees. After investigation, a decision will be made as to what action, if any, is necessary to be taken. The outcome may take different forms:

- a) Service Project with a meaning connected to the actions of the Perpetrator
- b) Mediated conversation between Complainant and Perpetrator, which could include supportive students, parents, or teachers. The makeup of this group is dependent on the seriousness of the offense, the ability of the students involved to process, and the needs of both Complainant and Perpetrator for support in the mediation process.
- c) Suspension: The length of time to be determined by the Leadership Team and Business Operations Administrator.

After a suspension, the Perpetrator must meet with the Leadership Team before being allowed to rejoin the class, to assess if there is understanding and remorse about the actions.

As stated above, in the case of a second suspension: A meeting will be held with the Leadership Team, the teacher, and the parents of the student to examine the situation. The Business Operations Administrator will be consulted. If so determined after such a meeting, the Leadership Team may request the College to ratify the decision to ask the parents to withdraw the student from the school.