

Skokie Montessori School

Policy Prohibiting Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying

I. The Board of Directors at Skokie Montessori School prohibits acts of harassment, intimidation or bullying.

The Montessori Program nurtures self-discipline and self-control, which is the ultimate goal of discipline and which develops over a period of many years. The basis of discipline is respect for one's self, for others and for the environment. The Skokie Montessori School and children are in specially prepared environment that sets limits for behavior based on the group's needs for safety and mutual respect for the community. Any disruptive behaviors are evaluated according to age and include, but are not limited to:

Minor: teasing, hiding, pushing/shoving, improper manner, not following directions, disrespect
Moderate: teasing/taunting, fighting, misuse of playground, misuse of materials, insubordination, inappropriate language
Severe: inappropriate contact, hitting, kicking, or hiding, verbal abuse, bullying, harassments, threats, stealing, inappropriate language, defiance, throwing objects, possession of any dangerous objects or weapons.

Skokie Montessori School defines bullying, including "cyber-bullying" as any severe or pervasive physical or verbal act or conduct, including communications made in writing or electronically, directed toward a student or students that has or can be reasonably predicted to have the effect of one or more of the following: (1) Placing the student or students in reasonable fear of harm to the student's or students' person or property; (2) Causing a substantially detrimental effect on the student's or students' physical or mental health; (3) Substantially interfering with the student's or students' academic performance; or (4) Substantially interfering with the student's or students' ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by a school. Bullying may take various forms, including without limitation one or more of the following: harassment, threats, intimidation, stalking, physical violence, sexual harassment, sexual violence, theft, public humiliation, destruction of property, or retaliation for asserting or alleging an act of bullying. This list is meant to be illustrative and non-exhaustive.

*No outside/personal technology from our students ages 2-12 years old are not allowed in our community. With that said, SMS recognizes that "cyber-bullying" means bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, including without limitation any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data, or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic system, photo electronic system, or photo-optical system, including without limitation electronic mail, Internet communications, instant messages, or facsimile communications. "Cyber-bullying" includes the creation of a webpage or weblog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person or the knowing impersonation of another person as the author of posted content or messages if the creation or impersonation creates any of the effects enumerated in the definition of bullying in this Section.

"Cyber-bullying" also includes the distribution by electronic means of a communication to more

than one person or the 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 effects enumerated in the definition of bullying in this Section.

II. Skokie Montessori does not tolerate any behavior deemed bullying.

Bullying is contrary to State law and the policy of the non-sectarian nonpublic school and is consistent with subsection (a-5) of this Section [free exercise of religion]. Nothing in this Section is intended to infringe upon any right to exercise free expression or the free exercise of religion or religiously based views protected under the First Amendment to the United States Constitution or under Section 3 of Article 1 of the Illinois Constitution. Skokie Montessori School acknowledges individuals have their own beliefs and exercise free expression without being disrespectful to others. All discipline actions will be positive in nature. The method of discipline will vary with the age and action of the child. Individual teachers are given discretion in how to handle each situation as it arises.

III. When disruptive behaviors occurs at Skokie Montessori School, the following procedures are enforced:

1. Verbal Redirection.
2. Warning and Incident Report.
3. Phone call and Conference
4. Dismissal from Program

The Director may temporarily or permanently remove a child from a program if the behaviors of that child place their children, staff, or the school in immediate danger. Please direct all complaints to Mrs. Joji Escanilla, School Administrator or Mrs. Kit Florendo, School Director at 847-679-4614 and at staff@skokiemontessori.com

IV. Appropriate Response to Infractions

Consistent with federal and State laws and rules governing student privacy rights, includes procedures for promptly informing parents or guardians of all students involved in the alleged incident of bullying and discussing, as appropriate, the availability of social work services, counseling, school psychological services, other interventions, and restorative measures.

“Restorative measures” means a continuum of school-based alternatives to exclusionary discipline, such as suspensions and expulsions, that

- (i) are adapted to the particular needs of the school and community,
- (ii) contribute to maintaining school safety,
- (iii) protect the integrity of a positive and productive learning climate,
- (iv) teach students the personal and interpersonal skills they will need to be successful in school and society,

- (v) serve to build and restore relationships among students, families, schools, and communities, and
- (vi) reduce the likelihood of future disruption by balancing accountability with an understanding of students' behavioral health needs in order to keep students in school.
- (vii) increase student accountability if the incident of bullying is based on religion, race, ethnicity, or any other category that is identified in the Illinois Human Rights Act.

The staff of SMS will be notifying parents if there is unusual behavior exhibited by their child.

If these concerns or any issues have been happening consistently, this matter will be discussed by the School Board of Directors and actions will be handled immediately. If the behaviors endanger the safety or the moral tone of the other children, and display resistance to authority or does not respond to any efforts to modify his/her behavior, then parents will be contacted by the Board of Directors.

The board of directors will decide what is best for their child and ask parents to be involved to help their child in whatever issues that needs to be addressed to either

1. Arrange a conference between teacher and parent
2. Use a serve of an independent professional for early intervention that parents are responsible to handle all expenses or

The school may need to ask the parents to withdraw their child if issues or concerns are not resolved.

Contact Skokie Montessori School if issues or concerns have not been resolved.

V. Framework for discipline.

1. Separate the child from the behavior
2. Redirect the child's behavior
3. Give acceptable behavior
4. Use positive language
5. Refuse to argue on non-negotiable issues
6. Look for a deeper problem

Distractions are the first step in any age group. Second, teachers will explain to the child why the behavior is inappropriate and suggesting if the behavior happens again, he/she will have to sit quietly alone and regroup or calm down. The third step for children over the age of two is a brief separation from the group, one minute per age of the child. Usually, for children of any age, a quiet minute by themselves removed from the situation is all it takes for the child to calm down. If the unacceptable behavior continues, the director will be called in to observe and give guidance or resolution.

We will communicate the child's behavior to the parents in order to work together on a plan with the teachers and/or the director. Any report of bullying will undergo a thorough investigation within 10 school days after the date of report and information regarding the event will be taken into consideration. A parent, teacher and director conference may be called so all involved are using the same methods of encouragement or discipline. If needed, other staff persons with knowledge, experience, and training on bullying prevention will be involved in the investigation process. Consistency between all groups usually will help the child receive more support to have better understanding of the behavior. If the child's behavior becomes more threatening to the other children, to the staff, or when previous strategies have failed to produce the desired results, the SMS may recommend the parents seek the help of a behavioral therapist. If parents refuse to seek additional outside help to work with the staff to develop a behavior plan, the last option is for the director to remove the child from the school.

Biting Policy

Although it is not uncommon for very young children to bite, it is a behavior that is taken very seriously, and is strongly discouraged. Whenever a child is bitten, the teacher's first task is to comfort and reassure the bitten child. Next, the wound will be washed with antibacterial soap. If the bite has broken the skin, first aid will be administered (cold pack application and/or band aid). Both sets of parents will be advised of the incident at dismissal, or sooner if the bite is severe.

When a child at the age of two years old bites, it is generally due to lack of language skills, out of curiosity, teething, ownership or even affection. In the instance of these youngest children, the teachers will try to determine which type of biting scenario has taken place. Teachers will closely monitor the situation, hoping to intercept the next bite to correct the situation.

When children are older than 2 years old, biting is less common. Language is developing and friends learn to use words and make better choices. It becomes easier to redirect the playmates involved. When the older child bites, the SMS policy is the child who bites will be separated from the group while the teacher comforts the child who has been bitten, and attends to cleaning the bite. Then, the teacher will speak with the offending child about what has happened. The child is reminded that teeth are for eating, not for biting. Both parents will be told. The child who continuously cannot be tolerated. If biting continues to be a problem, the teacher and the school director will meet to determine the next step, including possible time at home to work on redirection and to break the biting habit. If it continues, the school may recommend behavioral therapies or removal from the program for the remainder of the school year.

VI. Interventions at Skokie Montessori School

1. Verbal Redirection: When a child first violates the policy, it is assumed that s/he did not know or remember the proper way to behave. The teacher will demonstrate to the child how to behave and what to say in a particular situation.

2. Warning and Incident Report: The second incident will result in a conversation with the child to discuss expected behavior. An incident report will be sent home to the guardian/parent. Otherwise, we will notify the parents by calling them immediately.
3. Phone call and conference. A third incident will result in a phone call to the parent/guardian and the scheduling a conference between student, parent/guardian, and director.
4. Dismissal from the program. When all efforts have failed to help the child change his/her behavior, and the integrity of the safety of Skokie Montessori School is compromised by such behaviors, parents will be asked to find an alternative learning environment for their child.

VII. Prohibition of Reprisal or Retaliation

Skokie Montessori School prohibits reprisal or retaliation against any person who reports an act of harassment, intimidation or bullying. The consequences and appropriate remedial action for a person who engages in reprisal or retaliation shall be determined by the school administrator after consideration of the nature and circumstances of the act, in accordance with case law, federal and state statutes and regulations and district policies and procedures.

VIII. Consequences for False Allegations

A false accusation, results in consequences and remedial actions for that person(s). A meeting will be called with the student(s), parents/guardians, and school administrators.

IX. Who is included intervention

Interventions to address bullying include but are not limited to conferences between student, parent/guardian, and the school administrators. Intervention is based on the engagement of a range of school stakeholders, including students and parents or guardians.

X. Annual Dissemination

The Skokie Montessori School Policy for Bullying Prevention Addendum is listed in the school policy for the early childhood programs as well as the Elementary Program Policy Handbook for students and parents as well as teachers/staff. This document is provided to parents upon enrollment and signed by parents and students, prior to the beginning of the school year. The policy shall be disseminated annually to all school staff, students and parents, along with a statement explaining that it applies to all acts of harassment, intimidation and bullying that occur on school property, at school-sponsored functions or on a school bus. The school administrator shall develop an annual process for discussing the school district policy on harassment, intimidation and bullying with students. Date of approval: August 1, 2021

XI. Assessment of outcomes and effectiveness of policy

As part of the process of reviewing and re-evaluating the policy under subsection (d) of this Section, contains a policy evaluation process to assess the outcomes and effectiveness of the policy that includes, but is not limited to, factors such as the frequency of victimization; student, staff, and family observations of safety at a school; identification of areas of a school where bullying occurs; the types of bullying utilized; and bystander intervention or participation. The

non-sectarian nonpublic school may use relevant data and information it already collects for other purposes in the policy evaluation. The information developed as a result of the policy evaluation must be made available on the Internet website of the school. If an Internet website is not available, the information must be provided to school administrators, school board members, school personnel, parents, guardians, and students.

Staff have or will participate in training Abuse prevention Policy for bullying prevention. Yearly end of the year and beginning of the year meetings discuss behavior policy of the students as well as the staff.

XII. Consistency with policies of school board

Skokie Montessori School will not tolerate the bullying of another child or a peer group. SMS bullying policy is consistent with other school policies. In addition, Children's Bill of Rights of the American Montessori Society defines the Montessori Missions as "protecting the right of each child to have a freedom and opportunity to develop his or her full potential." The Montessori approach cultivates a classroom order and the child's responsibility within that order as opposed to overall restrictive or suppressive forms of discipline. As such, there is no place for corporal punishment, nor is it permitted anywhere in the Montessori environment.