

Maria Montessori Charter Academy

DISCIPLINE POLICY

Maria Montessori developed the concept of "normalization" to describe the process by which each child acquires certain personality characteristics that lead to success in the classroom and throughout life. A "normalized" child will love learning, be kind to others, develop concentration and good work habits, and become independent.

Our goal is to create and maintain an environment in which each child can successfully reach this level of normalization. Normalization of the classroom begins with the modeling of the appropriate behavior by the teacher combined with a high level of respect for each student. Many discipline problems can be avoided by the following proactive strategies practiced in every MMCA classroom. **The teacher will:**

1. Provide a structured Montessori environment in which a child feels secure and confident to choose his/her work;
2. Set behavioral expectations through classroom instruction, role modeling, and class meetings;
3. Post and discuss classroom rules and the Montessori Standards of Behavior;
4. Redirect a child and use conflict resolution techniques;
5. Work one-on-one with children who need additional guidance; and
6. Refer child to Student Success Team to discuss ways to help him/her succeed in the classroom

The behavioral expectations we have for the children are:

1. Respect yourself, others and our environment.
2. Demonstrate responsibility, respect, and self-restraint.
3. Treat all classroom materials with great respect and care.
4. Return all things to their proper place.
5. Keep the MMCA environment clean and orderly.
6. Keep bathrooms neat and clean at all times.
7. When in the classroom, be "engaged" in an activity/job at all times.
8. Work quietly in the classroom.

9. Use walking feet at all times except when on the playground.

10. Be quiet when walking on the decks and sidewalks around the classrooms and offices.

**If a student is not meeting the standards of behavior expected in the Montessori classroom, a Montessori Standards Report will be sent home to notify the parent/guardian. We hope this notification will open a positive channel of communication between home and school.

A child's behavior becomes a problem when his/her negative actions disrupt the school environment and affect the positive values and culture defined in the MMCA charter. For the safety and well being of all individuals in the MMCA environment, the following are **unacceptable behaviors**:

1. Talking back and arguing;
2. Intentionally disrupting the learning environment;
3. Misuse of MMCA materials or playground equipment;
4. Intentionally not following directions in the classroom, in the lunch area or on the playground;
5. Encouraging others to misbehave;
6. Disrupting or impeding the work of others;
7. Showing rudeness or disrespect to others; and
8. Littering

If a child exhibits unacceptable behavior, the following **disciplinary actions** will be taken, according to the severity of the misbehavior.

1. He/she will discuss the unacceptable behavior with the teacher and be given the Student Response Form to complete. The completed Student Response Form will be sent home for parent/guardian signature and returned to school the following day.
2. He/ she will be sent outside the immediate environment for a time out or be given a "community improvement" task to perform (litter pick-up, cleaning, etc.).
3. He/ she will be sent to the Director, who will discuss the behavior issue with the child and may opt to:
 - 1) Call the parent/guardian to discuss the issue with the child present, and/or
 - 2) Place the child in "in-school suspension" and he/she will not be allowed to return to class until the parent/guardian has spoken to the Director; and/or

3) A parent/guardian will be called to immediately remove the child from school for a specific length of time (Suspension) and conditions will be set for the child's re-admittance.

** At any stage of the disciplinary action plan, a teacher may contact the parent/guardian by phone to discuss the student's behavior and work out a home/school plan for improvement.

The teacher or parent/guardian may request a conference at any time to discuss behavior issues.

MMCA Suspension / Expulsion Policy

The MMCA Discipline Policy is in conjunction with and not intended to replace Twin Ridges School District Discipline-Suspension/Expulsion/Due Process guidelines (B. P. 5114). Teachers, staff and volunteers are required to document on an Incident Report any behavior requiring disciplinary action. All witnesses are encouraged to document their concerns and all views will be respected and treated as valid. A copy of the TRESA guidelines for suspension and expulsion are available for review in the MMCA office. Additionally, all staff, students, parents and volunteers must adhere to the State of California Education Code and federal guidelines concerning student behavior and discipline.

Each child will be treated individually and with respect. Disciplinary action for a student with an Individual Education Plan with stated behavioral objectives will be handled in an appropriate manner.

Behaviors that require immediate suspension or possible expulsion hearings are as follows:

1. Swearing or using abusive sarcasm, directed at another student, staff member, or parent;
2. Intentional abuse and/or vandalism to school property;
3. Bringing on campus any pornography, or explicit photography or written material;
4. Physical harm to another person with the intent to do bodily injury, exhibited by, but not limited to, hitting, stabbing, poking, pushing, slapping, kicking;
5. Bringing on campus any illegal substances or prescription medications for unauthorized use, sale or intent to disburse;
6. Stealing;
7. Touching another person's private body parts or intentionally exposing one's self for the sole purpose of self-gratification or harming (emotionally or physically) another individual; and
8. Bringing guns, knives or any type of weapon used to intimidate or threaten another person

PARENT/GUARDIAN'S ROLE IN SUPPORTING POSITIVE BEHAVIOR

Modeling

A parent is the most important teacher in a child's life. Children observe and imitate the behavioral responses that are used by the significant adults in their environment. Parents who are respectful and kind to others, especially their own children, are likely to see that same behavior develop in their children. Demonstrating a variety of healthy responses to frustration and set-backs, as well as modeling effective problem-solving techniques and non-judgmental communication are especially valuable to young children who are still learning to establish their own self control.

Discussion

While children absorb a great deal by observation, discussing ways to show respect, build trust, show empathy, manage anger, and practice forgiveness can help a child build successful relationships.

Reinforcement

Montessori philosophy does not advocate external rewards for desired behavior, as this tends to reduce intrinsic motivation. However, acknowledging and praising positive behavior is always important and will help shape a child's behavior far better than criticism.

Teaching Values

MMCA is built on the concept of COMMUNITY. A community shares common values. Its members seek to give as much as they are able for the good of the whole, and take only what they really need. The community seeks to raise the level of the lowest members while keeping the entire community progressing forward toward a shared vision. At MMCA, we value:

1. Respect for ourselves, others and the environment;
2. Honesty;
3. Courtesy and exceptional manners;
4. Empathy for others and respect for differences among people and cultures;
5. Accepting responsibility for personal decisions and actions;
6. Working cooperatively with others, which includes listening, sharing opinions, negotiating, compromising, helping the group reach consensus, and taking a stand;
7. Seeking one's share of the work load;
8. Creating a balance between the needs of individual students and families and the needs of the school population as a whole; and

9. Pride in our school

Home/School Communication

Changes in a child's home life may affect his/her behavior and performance at school. Please notify the office and your child's teacher if any significant changes occur, such as:

1. Extended vacations or business trips by a family member;
2. Child staying somewhere other than home (relative/friend's house) for more than a day or two;
3. Loss of family member, including pets;
4. Moving; and
5. Change in family environment (separation, divorce, new partner, new baby);

** This information will be strictly confidential.*

Parent Education

Acquiring the knowledge, skills, and patience to raise healthy, happy and well-adjusted children is an on-going process that requires a tremendous amount of effort, time, and diligence. Several resources are available and parents are expected to take proactive responsibility in this area.

1. The school has a small library of helpful books and videos that can be checked out by parents. MMCA can provide a recommended reading list that covers Montessori and other topics of education.
2. Parents are encouraged to participate in parent education classes offered by local schools, community agencies, and local hospitals (Kaiser, Sutter, UC Davis).
3. MMCA, in collaboration with the Charter Council and Parent Teacher Association, is developing a series of educational evenings that are designed to assist parents in building positive parenting practices, as well as increase the awareness of Montessori philosophy.
4. Parent/Teacher discussions may be scheduled at any time with your child's teacher to exchange ideas and strategies for specific behavioral issues that may be impacting the student or family. The director is also available at to discuss educational and behavioral issues.

MMCA is a SCHOOL OF CHOICE. Students who are unable to progress or become responsible, independent, and productive members of the Montessori Community have the option to return to the school offered by their local public school district. Traditionally, public schools offer a more structured group approach to instruction and classroom set-up and this approach may more suitable for some children.

Parent understanding and support of the expectations established by MMCA is vital to each child's behavior and successful performance. As mentioned in much of our literature, this is a COMMUNITY EFFORT. While children should not be denied to access to educational opportunities based on their parent's unwillingness to follow the strategies outlined for success, these same children cannot be permitted to interrupt the learning environment and process for others.

----- **Tear along dotted line** -----

If you understand and agree to adhere to the MMCA-Twin Ridges discipline policy, please sign where designated and return this section to school.

Student's Name _____

Parent/Guardian's Printed Name _____

Parent/Guardian's Signature _____

Student's Signature _____

Date _____