



Discipline Policy

2008-2009



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Developing Capable Behavior: A Fundamental Part of the Portland Village School Experience

Behavioral development is part of holistic education.

Self Control as an integral part of Group Interaction

Effectively teaching and enhancing the abilities of self-control are essential in the kindergarten and lower grades. In order to learn in the classroom, it is vital that the children learn to live and work together respectfully and with reasonable sensitivity to others. The most significant lesson a child can learn in the initial school experience is how to work with others, adults as well as children.

Setting the Tone

It is important that teachers bring the children to personal and social harmony through means that are sensitive and effective. Adults take great care to present disciplinary measures in a relaxed physical state, emphasizing a calm and kind yet firm demeanor in order to keep the rapport and trust of the children; disciplinary methods are not intended nor to be presented in a way to cause a child fear or shame. The Portland Village School model depends upon a partnership between families and teachers in this endeavor.

Explaining the Boundaries

The disciplinary process at school begins at the start of the school year when, even before the first day of school families are asked to “sign on” to the basic premise that the school is a place in which respectful behavior from everyone in the school community is a basic expectation. At the beginning of the school year the teachers preface all activities with expectations and rules. Rules and expectations are explained in positive terms. For example; “You may raise your hands when you need my attention”.

Testing the Boundaries

It is natural and expected that children will explore the boundaries of behavior. Teachers have a number of options they may exercise in teaching working behavior at school. A few examples are:

Reminders - Children need reminders of expected behaviors. Learning new behavioral skills is no different than learning academic skills. Ultimately, we expect children to assimilate and internalize the rules so that constant reminders are not necessary.

Choices -“You may clean up now or you may clean up during recess time.” Offering choices that fit within the boundaries of everyday classroom experiences is often an effective way of enforcing classroom limitations. As choices are offered, the expectation is that a child will choose an appropriate path of compliance.

Meetings -Teachers might meet with children very briefly to discuss an interpersonal problem, or a teacher might call upon the entire class to have a group discussion to help problem solve certain situations. Teachers will work to find a healthy balance between working on interpersonal skills and other curriculum areas.

Indirect Methods - Stories, fables myths, and nature stories are intentionally used to help children form an inner picture of the ideal social behavior. Cooperative games are an important toll in fostering positive behavior and practice in social cooperation and inclusion. Physical activities, which help develop sensory/motor integration, go hand in hand with learning both academic and social skills.

School Rules and Behavior Expectations

Code of Conduct

Be Safe, Be Respectful, Be Responsible

We believe that discipline is a striving towards a goal. We consider discipline to be an aspect of moral guidance, to serve as instruction, and be a part of a creative learning process. Discipline is the vehicle by which we can foster the development of self-discipline in students. Part of this process is having students to take responsibility for their actions. Treating others with kindness and taking care of "our" school helps children, parents and teachers define appropriate behaviors; respect for self and all members of the community and the school itself. All members of the school -- students, teachers, staff, parents, and community members - are encouraged and expected to demonstrate strong communication skills and respect for each other.

All Portland Village School students are held to high standards of conduct in order to maintain a conducive learning environment for everyone. All members of the school community are responsible for upholding the Portland Village School Core values whenever in the school, on campus, or at school organized activities.

Each year, in September, after sharing the code of conduct with The Portland Village School students in a school assembly, teachers devote class time to helping their students to develop a meaningful working relationship to the code of conduct that is applicable to their choices of behavior throughout their daily school life.

Portland Village School Core Values

The following core values encompass our aspirations for The Portland Village School staff and faculty, students and families and community members:

1. We will act with integrity and treat others with respect.
2. The core of the school's mission is to apply the principles of Waldorf education.
3. Disciplinary issues will be viewed as an opportunity for individual problem-solving and growth.
4. We will nurture our students' abilities to develop healthy relationships and the capacities for resolving problems.
5. Students will be given opportunities to become contributing members of their communities and stewards of the planet, as well as to become self-aware, creative individuals.

A healthy social life is found only, when in the mirror of each soul, the whole community finds its reflection and when, in the whole community the virtue of each one is living. –Rudolf Steiner

With these core values as a foundation, The Portland Village School faculty and staff have developed the behavior guidelines that appear in the following pages.

Dress Code

PVS is an educational environment. Therefore, we ask that students' dress and appearance reflect neatness, cleanliness, and modesty appropriateness for school activities and that clothing be neither distracting nor provocative. It is important to stress that a typical day at PVS is full of many different kinds of physical activities and that clothing should always accommodate the active child and be appropriate for prevailing weather conditions. Since it is impossible to anticipate the ever-changing styles in clothing, the following suggestions are offered as guidelines:

- Outside play is a part of the daily school routine. Students must come to school properly attired for outdoor activities in all kinds of weather and in clothing that allows for freedom of movement.

- Footwear that allows for freedom of movement such as sneakers/athletic shoes is essential. Outdoor shoes should protect the feet and allow students to move freely during Physical Education and other outdoor activities. Flip-flops and wheelies are not allowed at school; all shoes should be close-toed.
- Warm and/or waterproof clothing should be worn on cold or rainy days as well as proper shoes for wet weather.
- Children should wear plain clothes free of logos, cartoons, violent or other distracting visual images.
- While sleeveless shirts may be worn to school, skimpy tops that expose midriffs, cleavage, and backs such as halter or cropped-tops are unacceptable. All underwear must be completely covered.
- Transparent/see-through clothing may not be worn to school.
- Skirts, shorts and skorts are acceptable as long as they allow freedom of movement without exposure. A good rule of thumb is that the hemline be no higher than the tips of the fingers (for skorts, skirts, and shorts) when the student is standing with arms down at their sides.
- Pants and shorts should be in good condition and should fully cover underwear. Baggy, saggy trousers that expose the top of one's undergarments are unacceptable.
- Moderate jewelry may be worn.
- Natural hair color is strongly encouraged as dyes can become an educational distraction.
- Hats, if brought to school may be worn on the playground or outside the school building only.

Consequences for Non-compliance with the Dress Code

Children who, upon arrival are determined to be in non-compliance with the Dress Code, will be asked to change into alternative clothing that are provided by families (each student should have a change of clothes at school). In some cases of repeated non-compliance, parents/guardians will be contacted and asked to bring a change of appropriate clothing to school for their student(s).

Cultural practices will be honored in dress and jewelry as approved by the teachers.

We ask that parents/guardians and students honor and respect the PVS Dress Code. The need for continuing and frequent reminders to students to comply with the Dress Code can have a negative and erosive effect on the student-teacher relationship that can ultimately undermine the educational process. Parents/guardians please discuss the Dress Code with your student(s) and check in with them before you leave your homes in the morning to be sure that their choices of attire are in line with the School's requirements.

Current trends and fads will be addressed as they arise. The teachers have discretion to determine whether their students are in compliance with the PVS Dress Code. As necessary, teachers may have additional requirements with regard to student attire. Parents/guardians will always be notified of any change or modification or changes to the Dress Code in advance of their implementation.

Discipline / Behavior Policy

When problems arise, the faculty and staff will remind students of the school's behavioral expectations, assist individuals in working out problems, and, when appropriate, address problems as a class. If a student is unable to benefit from this help and persists with inappropriate behavior, we will respond to the inappropriate behavior with natural or relevant logical consequences. (Natural consequences are the results of our behavior or actions when no one intervenes: If a student does not eat breakfast, then he or she might be hungry before snack time arrives. Logical consequences involve adult intervention: If a student makes a mess in the bathroom, he or she will be instructed to help clean up the mess). The following considerations will guide decisions about appropriate disciplinary actions:

1. The severity of the act
2. The context of the situation in which it occurred

3. The frequency of the behavior
4. The individual needs of the child

Procedures:

- Each individual involved in the conflict will have the opportunity to voice their part.
- An important part of disciplinary action is to help the student rejoin their class community. Restorative action will be put in place, as this helps children see themselves as part of a community whose members need their respect and kindness—and from whom they deserve respect and kindness in return.
- Families will be notified of level 4 or 5 disciplinary actions by the school Principal, when necessary, and will be engaged according to the rubrics described on page 7.

These five levels may be used sequentially or bypassed depending on severity:

1. Children receive a reminder about a rule.
2. When a reminder is ineffective, the child is directed to take a break (the length of the break is determined by the needs of the child. It is time away from the activity, so the child can regain control and composure). Should these redirections become habitual or for extended periods of time, parents will be notified and a problem-solving conference will be required with the student.
3. Students will be excused to an alternate setting, with a note, when other preventive measures have not been successful and the student's behavior is interfering with the learning environment.
4. If the problem continues, the student will go to the office and meet with the Principal. Parents will be contacted, when necessary, if a student is sent to see the Principal as a result of a problem.
5. For more serious misbehavior and/or repeated misbehavior, a parent/teacher conference will be called. The Principal might be present at this meeting, and it might include developing a behavioral contract.

Parents will be asked to come and pick up any child who has been intentionally violent toward any other person in the school. This is documented as an out-of-school suspension.

Serious violation of the Core Values or repeated misbehavior may result in suspension from school to allow for recovery time at home. Please refer to the Portland Village School Disciplinary Rubric on page 5 for definitions of and consequences for certain behaviors.

In the event that a student does not comply with a supervising adult's request to leave a learning environment, another staff will attempt to remove the student. In some cases, the class will be relocated. If the student continues to resist, the Principal or designee will inform the family of the situation as soon as possible. The family may remove the student from the school setting, or the Principal or appropriately trained faculty member will physically assist the student to a safe, more appropriate environment.

In all cases, care will be taken to assure alignment with The Portland Village School Core Values.

Safety and Courtesy in the Common Areas

Be Safe, Be Respectful, Be Responsible

This is a code of conduct that is in effect at all times when traveling to and from school, on school grounds or attending school sponsored events.

Area	Be Safe	Be Respectful	Be Responsible
All Areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep hands, feet, and objects to self • Move safely • Walk • Use equipment and materials appropriately • Report unidentified visitors • Get adult help when needed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use school appropriate language • Use kind words and actions • Be polite and helpful • Respect others' space and property • Stay calm and use inside voices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow directions • Be prepared • Be on time • Keep your school clean • Use problem solving skills • Keep electronics and media related items at home • Report problems to an adult
Bathroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep water in the sinks • Wash hands with soap and water • Use garbage cans for trash 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give others privacy • Use whisper voices • Take turns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flush the toilet after use • Leave the bathroom clean and tidy • Return to class promptly • Report problems to an adult
Passing areas-hallways, doorways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walk • Watch where you are walking • Stay to the right • Open doors slowly • Walk in lines when traveling as a group • Stay with your group • Keep outside doors locked at all times 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use quiet feet and voices • Keep hands and feet to self • Hold the door open for others • Stay in personal space • Enjoy halls displays with eyes only 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walk directly to where you are going • Hushed voices • Report problems to an adult
Outside areas/Recess	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walk • Pay attention to playground activities • Use your eyes and ears to be safe • Play gently • Keep touch appropriate • Conduct all outside activities within sight and hearing of a teacher at all times 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use appropriate volume of voice • Walk around games • Use kind words and actions • Respect space and feelings of others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remain in line • Walk directly to where you are going • Stop all play when signaled and line up in the area designated by your teacher • Report problems to an adult

Unsafe and Inappropriate Behaviors in the Common Areas

In order to be consistent in our behavior expectations in the common areas, the following response document has been created. We agreed on the following list of behaviors as being inappropriate, however this list is not exhaustive. Our goal is for our entire faculty and staff to be able to respond to them consistently in the moment. We define “Common Areas” as being the outdoor areas: the playground and parks, the hallway, bathrooms, and church between the hours of 7:30 AM to 5:30 PM. The responses are listed in the assumed order of application, although all may be applied for any particular incident. Whenever possible, students will make the phone calls home to tell parents/guardians about the situation. Parents/guardians will be notified in the case of any suspension by the school Principal.

Inappropriate Behavior

Faculty and Staff Response and/or Consequences

Running in the halls	Warn the student that the behavior is unsafe and request that they return to the spot they started and walk from there.
Yelling and loud talking in the halls or bathrooms (during school hours)	Inform the student(s) that this behavior is disrespectful. Ask that they continue to quietly walk from where you stopped them.
Inappropriate displays of affection	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Verbal Warning and call parent/guardian 2. Conference with student
Throwing inappropriate objects on the playground	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Verbal Warning 2. Break 3. Loss of Recess for the day-with the rationale that they are displaying unsafe behavior
Sloppy behavior in restrooms, hallway or church, such as inappropriate disposal of trash and garbage or playing with the soap and water	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Warning and clean up mess 2. Conference with student 3. Call home
Violating physical playground boundaries	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Warning 2. Break 3. Loss of one or more Recesses 4. Conference with the student and parent/guardian
Hat wearing inside of school	Teacher discretion
Disrespect for the school environment or destruction of school or personal property (i.e. trash throwing, graffiti, destruction of plants, etc.)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Warning and immediate correction of the issue 2. Conference with student 3. Call to parent/guardian
Repeated Tardiness, Cutting School	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Call parents to devise a plan of action
False Fire Alarm	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Suspension 2. Expulsion
Weapons-possession	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Suspension 2. Expulsion
Intentional harm to any individual or violence	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Suspension 2. Expulsion
Disruptive conduct, profanity, open defiance, bullying	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Warning and immediate correction of the issue 2. Conference with student 3. Call to parent/guardian 4. Suspension 5. Expulsion

Suspension Procedures:

- Suspension means that a student cannot attend school or school activities at the Portland Village School for up to ten school days. This includes when a student is asked to be picked up during the school day for disciplinary reasons.
- An informal hearing (meeting) will be held between an appropriate school person (Principal or other administrator) and the student before the student is suspended unless an emergency suspension is necessary.
- When needed, interpretation services must be provided for students and/or parents/guardians.
- Parents/guardians are notified when students are suspended.
- A parent/guardian conference is expected before a student is readmitted to school.
- During any suspension, students are expected to complete homework and may request missed assignments.
- A suspended student may not be on the Portland Village School property or at any school-sponsored activities.
- A student or parent/guardian wanting to appeal a suspension should contact the Principal to arrange a conference.

Expulsion Procedures:

- Expulsion means a student cannot attend school or school activities The Portland Village School for up to a full calendar year.
- Weapon and gun violations require expulsions for a full calendar year.
- A hearing is held with parents/guardians, the student, and the Principal. The Principal decides if a student will be expelled, and if so, for how long.
- When needed, interpretation services must be provided for students and/or parents/guardians.
- An expelled student must not be on The Portland Village School property nor at any school-sponsored activities.
- A student or parent/guardian may ask for a review of the decision to expel if
 - there is new evidence or
 - the expulsion hearing procedures were not followed

Discipline of Students in Special Education:

- All students are subject to disciplinary procedures to promote positive changes in their behavior and to protect others.
- For students with an IEP, a formal Section 504 plan or who have been identified for a special education referral, additional procedures may need to be followed to determine whether the student may be removed for disciplinary reasons.
- Special procedures are in place for students with an IEP, a formal Section 504 plan or who have been identified for a special education referral who are suspended for more than ten (10) days in any school year.
- In cases where the disciplinary action includes a suspension or expulsion, the Principal must notify parents/guardians/surrogates in the same manner as non-disabled students. The Special Education Department will notify the parents/guardians/surrogates of any special education meetings.