

Children's Circle Montessori School

Anti-Bias Behaviour Policy

Children's Circle Montessori School encourages and supports an anti-bias environment, free from prejudice and stereotyping. This environment will enable the development of confidence and self-esteem. Self-esteem includes pride in one's own culture. Self-esteem and confidence will empower children to not only value themselves, but also to learn about and respect others.

A biased incident is a behavior that demonstrates prejudice or discrimination against people because of race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, handicap or economic status. Incidents may be manifested in banter, jokes, name-calling, discourteous treatment, graffiti, threats, insults, exclusion or physical violence. An anti-bias approach challenges prejudice, bias and stereotyping.

Responding to and Resolving Bias Incident

When responding to a biased incident, the actions of staff, children, parents and others may vary according to who is involved, each incident will be different. Children's Circle Montessori School has outlined the steps that will be involved in reaching a resolution. These steps may be followed completely or terminated at any point depending on the incident and the individuals involved. The intent is to bring about a positive resolution, while ensuring that biased behavior is eliminated.

Once an incident occurs it needs to be reported to the designated Supervisor. The designated Supervisor has the primary responsibility for ensuring that the incident is investigated with care, sensitivity, time, patience, a clear purpose and a firm resolve. Depending on the severity of the incident, Peel Children's Aid or the police may also need to be involved in the investigation.

Whether or not a bias incident is resolved, the parties involved may have the right to make a Human Rights complaint, according to the Ontario Human Rights Code.

Four Goals in Resolving Bias Incidents

1. To eliminate inappropriate attitudes and behavior based on race, ancestry, place or origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, handicap or economic status.
2. To provide the opportunity for Children's Circle Montessori School community members to learn about anti-bias behaviours and the strategies used to combat biased attitudes.
3. To ensure Children's Circle Montessori School is anti-biased, by eliminating biased practices. To create policies and programs that are appropriate, non-discriminatory, and that promote service equity.
4. To provide the opportunity to support individuals targeted by bias, particularly children who have been discriminated against, ensuring them immediate comfort and support, to reduce the negative impact on their self-esteem.

Action Taken in Resolving a Bias Incident between Children

1. If two children are involved in a situation with bias behaviour, the staff member will investigate the circumstances of the incident and try to resolve the matter by talking to the children. The staff member will explain why the behavior is inappropriate and suggest some positive ways of handling a similar situation in the future.
2. When responding to the child who has experienced biased treatment, the staff member should provide emotional support and reassurance of their self-image. Projecting empathy and understanding may elicit the same from the other children.
 - Ask for and really listen to the child's version of what happened
 - Explain that the biased behavior was not their fault and is not allowed
 - Compliment the child for not responding in-kind
 - Tell the child that steps will be taken to ensure the biased treatment does not happen again
 - Responding by saying "it's ok, don't worry about it" or some equivalent, trivializes the incident as well as the hurt the child may be feeling. This type of comment is neither supportive, nor empathetic and shirks staff's responsibilities of ensuring an anti-bias environment
3. When responding to the child that has displayed biased behavior, the focus should be on correcting the inappropriate behavior and ensuring that it does not happen again. The child needs to understand that aggressive behavior is not allowed and needs to be shown acceptable ways of expressing feelings of anger, hurt, jealousy, etc.
 - Remove the child from the group. Being corrected in front of his/her peers is embarrassing.
 - Ask for and really listen to the child's version of what happened
 - Show the child a more appropriate way to handling their anger, (e.g. tell a teacher, walk away, etc.)
 - It is not useful to respond to this child merely by saying "don't do that, it's not nice", the child probably already knows this. They also learn that there are no consequences for their behavior. This response also does not address alternative ways of dealing with similar situations and fails to recognize the hurt done to the target child. It negates the seriousness of the child's aggression.
4. If other children witnessed the incident, the staff member will use the incident as a learning opportunity to resolve similar situations. Witnesses to biased incidents should not merely be considered passive onlookers. They are an important aspect of responding to the incident, as they have seen and/or heard the offending behavior. They are emotionally involved and can be hurt or upset as the child directly involved. Witnesses can also play a role in verifying the fact of an incident when there are conflicting accounts of what took place.
 - Talk to the witnesses of a group and allow them to say what they saw or heard in their own words
 - Allow them to express their own feelings and opinions about what happened. Do not pressure anyone to give information or take one side or the other.
 - Different versions do not mean someone is not telling the truth, they simply reflect how people experience and recall events differently

- Explain to the group what was inappropriate about the aggressive behavior (it hurts, it's unfair, it's not true) and why it is not allowed (it disrupts the class, divides the group, makes someone feel left out). Give reasons appropriate for the age group and try to get their agreement on the importance of values such as including everyone in activities, treating everyone with respect, etc.
 - Talk about your expectations of the group (playing fair, no hitting, and no name-calling)
 - Encourage empathetic feelings for the target person
 - Explain or problem-solve how children involved could have behaved more appropriately. Show them that there is more than one way of expressing anger, frustration or jealousy.
5. Document the incident on the Bias Incident Report.
 6. Discuss the incident and its resolution with each of the child's parents/guardians. Use this discussion as an opportunity to orient the parents/guardians to the anti-bias policy and Children's Circle Montessori School expectations.
 7. Staff will annually review the frequency of the incidents, both within age groups and with specific children. This information can be used in long range plans.
 8. If a number of recurrences are noticed that involved the same child as the instigator, the designated Supervisor will meet with the parents to review the school's Anti-Bias Behaviour Policy and discuss possible reasons for the continued inappropriate behavior. The intent of this meeting is to correct the behavior with the support and assistance of the family.
 9. If a number of recurrences are noticed within a particular age group, the designated Supervisor will meet with the staff to review the school's Anti-Bias Behaviour Policy and discuss possible reasons for the continued inappropriate behavior. An action plan will be created to help resolve the issues.

Action Taken in Resolving a Bias Incident between a Staff Member, Student or Volunteer and a Child

1. If a staff member, student or volunteer is alleged to have treated a child in a discriminatory and/or biased manner the designated Supervisor will investigate the circumstances of the incident.
2. In any incident involving inappropriate staff, student or volunteer behavior towards children, it is critical that the child/children be reassured that they are not at fault.
3. The staff member, student or volunteer alleged to be engaged in behavior prohibited by the school's Anti-Bias Behaviour Policy would be treated in a similar fashion to other allegations of inappropriate behavior as outlined in the Behavior Management Policy.

Actions to be Taken In Resolving a Bias Incident Between Adults (Staff to Parents/Parents to Parents, etc...)

1. If two adults are involved in a situation with bias behaviour, the designated Supervisor should try to resolve the matter by informing them of the school's Anti-Bias Behaviour Policy.

2. If any children witness an incident, the staff will explain to the children why the behavior they witness was inappropriate. This may involve group discussions, activities, and problem solving and/or curriculum development.

Children's Circle Montessori School
Bias Behaviour Incident Report

Name of the child who received the bias treatment: _____
 Name of the child who acted in a bias manner: _____
 Date of Incident: _____

Incident Details:

Indicate Who Was Informed:

Action Details (to be completed by the designated Supervisor):

Initial Incident? Yes or No Reoccurrence? Yes or No

Report Completed by: _____
 Designated Supervisor: _____
 Date Reviewed: _____