



## **Behavior Guidance & Discipline Policies**

At Wild Oak Preschool, caring for your children is my utmost priority. I understand that young children need caregivers to provide a safe and trusted environment, consistent and predictable rhythms throughout each day, and various activities and experiences to choose from. They need a positive role model from whom they can watch and learn, and someone they can talk to and feel safe with. They need to know they are accepted and cared for, and that their feelings, ideas, and needs are valid.

Children in the preschool age range experience a wide range of emotions and often times have little (yet ever-increasing) patience and impulse control. Children need help calming down at times and need to be offered acceptable choices in an environment that is set up for success, allowing for natural consequences with positive reinforcement, and intrinsic rewards.

### **Adult-Child Interaction**

At Wild Oak, I believe in actively engaging with children, focusing on and following their interests, and getting down to their eye-level to communicate with them. Using open-ended questions and scaffolding, helps them develop their understanding of the world and develop critical thinking skills.

I strive to teach children at this age self-control, respect for themselves and others, and responsibility for their actions by modeling this behavior. I strive to help develop each child's emotional intelligence by modeling empathy, listening, naming, describing, and acknowledging big feelings, working through them utilizing emotional self- and co-regulation techniques such as noticing and breathing, which over time help improve patience and communication. I model techniques rooted in conscious discipline including adopting an adult-first mindset that follows the philosophy that when an adult is regulated, they can then help the child regulate. I utilize positive reinforcement and employ gentle redirection in moments of conflict. Problem-solving techniques such as observing, validating, communicating, negotiating, and compromising are utilized when conflicts arise.

### **Hitting/Hurting Policy**

Just like adults, children sometimes experience frustration. When a child is struggling to find their words, oftentimes they may hit, punch, or kick someone or something. While we view this in most cases

as a natural phase of development and an opportunity to learn how to better communicate, we also are committed to ensuring that every child FEELS SAFE while at school. As such, while we can empathize with frustration or anger, we need to uphold a firm policy when it comes to any violent or aggressive act.

When a child hurts another, first we acknowledge and validate each child's emotions. We comfort the one hurt, ask if they are okay, if they need a cooling off period, and to tell us in their own words what happened. Then, we approach the one who hurt to hear their story. We encourage the one who was hurt to express their feelings: ex: *"You hurt my body when you hit me"*. The one who hurt can then speak, and we continue in this dialogue until a resolution is reached. We do not force the one who hurt to say *"I'm sorry"* because oftentimes this leads to insincere apologies and no real resolution. Instead, we encourage the one who hurt to ask, *"What can I do to make you feel better?"*, and at that time, the other person can choose to request a hug, an apology, or just to be left alone. This is called conflict resolution. The children get very good at this dialogue and over time, begin to resolve problems on their own. We strive to always use positive reinforcement whenever possible.

In most circumstances, these conflicts are minor and not frequent. If a child hurts someone in a significant way, both the child hurt and the one who hurt will have their parents informed of the incident, and staff will fill out an incident report. If we observe a child hurting others frequently, we will request a meeting with the parents of that child. The ultimate goal in mind is to ensure every child feels safe at school. The resolution of such a meeting may be that if the child becomes violent at school, they will either be separated from the other children for a period of time, or a call home will be made for immediate pick-up. Serious cases of frequent violence in which parents are either not willing to work with the school in finding a resolution, or behavior strategies put into place have failed may result in termination of enrollment.

## Language

Words can sometimes be as harmful as hitting. Children at this age are testing out different words to see what kind of reaction they get out of another. As teachers, we model positive language usage, encourage children to participate in group lessons on how to ask for a turn, how to ask someone to leave you alone, and so forth, and we demonstrate positive reinforcement on language. If a negative language choice is used by a student, we tell them why those words are not okay and offer other choices of words they can use to express their feelings. We may say something like, *"I understand that you feel angry. But it is never okay to call \_\_\_\_\_ a dummy. What can you say instead when you feel angry at \_\_\_\_\_?"* In this example, we acknowledge the child's right to feel angry, but that it is not okay to use hurtful language. Opportunity for resolution is always offered.

Program Outcome	Guidance Techniques
Environment provides for positive guidance, redirection, and the setting of clear boundaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The learning environment is set up to encourage positive behavior with consistent routines and materials that can be accessed and put away independently;</li> <li>• I explain consistent, clear rules and involve children in defining simple, clear classroom expectations;</li> <li>• I involve children in solving problems;</li> <li>• I focus on preventing behavior problems by supporting children in learning appropriate social skills and emotional responses.</li> </ul>
Program is designed for minimal frustration and successful transitions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I explain the daily rhythms and activities, in ways that children can understand while also developing their ability to learn new vocabulary and concepts.</li> <li>• Ample notice is given as the end of one activity nears.</li> <li>• Appropriate explanations are provided so children know what to expect next.</li> <li>• Appropriate time is allocated for the smooth transition from one activity to the next.</li> </ul>
Communication style is designed to help the child develop self-control, self-esteem, and respect for others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Using a calm and respectful tone of voice;</li> <li>• Respecting each child’s individual needs, desires, and feelings;</li> <li>• Validating children's feelings and showing tolerance for mistakes;</li> <li>• Being responsive to children's requests and questions;</li> <li>• Encouraging children to share experiences, ideas, and feelings;</li> <li>• Modeling and teaching social skills such as taking turns, cooperation, waiting, self-control, respect for the rights of others, treating others kindly, problem-solving, and conflict resolution.</li> </ul>
Guidance and discipline shall be fair, consistently applied, timely, and appropriate to the behavior and age of the child.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explaining to children the natural and logical consequence related to the child's behavior in a reasonable and developmentally appropriate manner;</li> <li>• Implementing child guidance techniques consistently and appropriately, based on each child’s individual needs and the specific situation;</li> <li>• Offering acceptable choices;</li> <li>• Distracting or helping a child change their focus.</li> </ul>
Positive statements or redirection of behaviors shall be used.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Using positive language to explain to children what they can do and give descriptive feedback;</li> <li>• Redirecting the child to another activity is the primary technique used when inappropriate behavior occurs.</li> </ul>



**I have read, understand, and agree to Wild Oak Preschool's Behavior Guidance & Discipline Policies.**

**Child's name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Child's name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_