

## Guidance and Discipline Policy

The foundation of the guidance and discipline policy at Whole Earth Nature School is to encourage positive behavior in the individual which will support a positive experience for everyone.

Our underlying assumptions:

- All people want to feel a sense of belonging; they want to feel important and included.
- Youth desire positive attention from the adults and peers around them; however, when they do not gain positive attention, they will seek negative attention.
- All behavior is a form of communication. Youth are trying to meet their needs (to gain attention, to obtain something, to avoid something). It is our job as teachers to understand what they need, and to teach them more appropriate ways of getting their need met.

We put our greatest effort in preventing inappropriate behavior. Whole Earth Nature School provides a supportive and nurturing environment where communication from each student is valued and encouraged. We create an environment where positive behavior is reinforced and where inappropriate behavior is not necessary. We remind students to use words to express what they want, what they need, and how they feel. We guide them to treat themselves and others with respect, and we facilitate verbal problem solving when students are in conflict.

On the first day of most of our programs we will co-create the program rules and guidelines with the students. In addition to whatever rules are defined at that time, our basic program rules are as follows:

### **The Three Rs**

- **Respect Yourself**
- **Respect Others**
- **Respect the Environment**

Even when all preventative measures have been put in place to encourage positive behavior, students will sometimes test the limits. Our response to inappropriate or negative behavior may include: redirecting the student's activity, ignoring attention seeking behavior, discussing the situation with the student, and/or using firm, clear and concise language to instruct the student as to a more positive way to express her/himself. In situations when a student is having difficulty changing her/his behavior, and the above techniques have been unsuccessful, the staff will use a logical consequence. This may include removing her/him from the situation for a brief period of time. The teacher would then explain to the child what is expected in order to rejoin the activity.

In the event that the problem behavior persists we will issue a formal warning to the student, seek out a resolution to the issue, and let them know that if the problem continues we will speak with them and their parent/guardian at the end of the day to gain more support in finding a solution to the issue.

If the issue does continue, you will need to allow time at the end of the day to work through the resolution with their parent/guardian. As well, you will need to let the student know this will occur, and work again to have the issue resolve, letting them know that this is their final warning and if the issue continues you will immediately call their parent/guardian and have them come immediately to remove the student from the rest of the day's program.

If this occurs, you will need to let the parent and student know that if the problem behaviors continue during the following day's program, you will contact the parents to remove the student immediately and the student will not be invited to return to that program.

The instructors will keep in close communication with the student's family whenever inappropriate behavior persists beyond initial reminders to respect the rules of a program. We will contact parents to explain what we have observed, action we've taken, and to ask for assistance on how we can support their child in behaving in a way that facilitates a great experience for everyone in the program. Removing a student from a program, whether for a day or for the rest of a program, is always our last option and is only exercised when all previous methods have not been successful.

*Clear Appropriate Consequences Thus Initiated:* Cacti are beautiful and serve as reminders of clear boundaries. As leaders, a policy of CACTI helps us in two ways. First and most importantly, it prevents us from making exaggerated warnings of behavioral consequences which we have no intention of following through on. The onus is on the instructor to make sure they explain consequences which they feel are entirely appropriate and helpful to the student and to the program. (Should they feel the need for consequences and need assistance in creating appropriate ones, they are invited to contact the program Director or one of the Executive Directors.) Secondly, this helps to build trust with students, helping them to know that we will create supportive boundaries and that we will keep to our word. This also lets students know that they should take our words seriously and that the onus is on them to alter their behaviors to come in line with the program expectations outlined or that they will have earned the aforementioned consequences.