

# **Behavior Guidance Methods and Policies**

*For Children's Programs at Common Ground*

## **Behavior Management Philosophy**

Our goal is for children to be successful in programs at Common Ground. We believe that no child arrives at Common Ground looking to have a "bad day" or to get in trouble. We seek to accommodate individual needs, adapt programs as possible, and problem solve with children, their parents, and other teaching professionals in order to help children have an amazing experience at Common Ground!

Children's physical and emotional safety is a priority in all programs. We understand that children may still be developing impulse control and learning about social relationships, and no child is expected to have "perfect" behavior every day. Running, being loud, being messy, physical play with others, and other similar behaviors are welcomed as long as they do not disrupt the experience of others or endanger the child or others.

## **Behavior Management Strategies**

Common Ground staff will help prevent conflict by making sure that all children understand rules and expectations, and by making it clear that staff are always willing and available to help sort out a problem, and by actively monitoring and interacting with children. When conflict or inappropriate behavior does arise, we will use the following strategies (as appropriate to the situation):

### **Redirection**

Offering an alternative behavior or choice. For example, "You cannot throw acorns here because you might hit a friend with one, but you can throw acorns over there, away from the group."

### **Reminder of Expectations**

A teacher may remind a child of program expectations – this reminder may also serve as a warning before further consequences are applied. For example, "I see that you are running after the chickens. Our program rule is that we walk calmly so that we do not scare the chickens. I expect you to walk."

### **Verbal Intervention and Problem Solving**

A teacher may verbally intervene to stop inappropriate or hurtful behavior. For example, "It sounds like you two are arguing over this fort. Do you need help solving a problem?"

### **Logical Consequences**

A teacher may remove or restrict an object, activity, etc. to help a child understand the consequence of their behavior. This is not restriction from all activity, it is a temporary restriction from the area of conflict. For example, "I asked you to stop running in the chicken yard but I still see you running. I need you to leave this area and choose another activity. You can come back and try again in 15 minutes."

### **Taking Space**

A teacher may ask a child to step away from the group and take some space. We strive to use other behavioral interventions first, but removal may be the first step if the behavior is dangerous to self or others or significantly disruptive to the experience of others.

The purpose of taking space is to allow the child to relax and calm down in a safe space, away from peers. Children who are taking space are supervised and have the opportunity to talk to staff when they are ready to problem solve together. The child may return to the activity as soon as the child and staff person agree that he or she is ready.

An additional removal from activities within the same day may result in the child being brought to the Program Director to take space and talk together. If removal from an activity occurs two or more times in the same day, a parent may be notified at pick up time.

## **Persistent Inappropriate Behavior and Removal from Program**

Persistent Inappropriate Behavior is any behavior that is regularly repeated after the behavioral guidance and intervention strategies above have been used. A parent will be contacted in the case of persistent inappropriate behavior, and the parent and Program Director will agree on a plan and timeline for addressing the behavior at Common Ground.

If the behavior continues after the behavioral intervention plan has been implemented, parents may be asked to pick up their child immediately and/or keep the child home for one or two program days.

If the behavior continues after being kept at home for one or two program days, parents may be asked to withdraw their child.

## **Immediate Program Withdrawal**

Certain behaviors may result in parents being asked to withdraw their child immediately, even if none of the steps above have been applied. Those behaviors may include anything that presents a significant danger to the child or others, substantial and willful property damage, or intentionally running away or trying to run away from our campus.

## **Refund Policy**

Tuition refunds are not available for days that a parent is asked to keep a child home. If Common Ground requests that a child be withdrawn, tuition is not refundable for the remainder of the week in which the child is withdrawn. Tuition for any future weeks will be refunded in full. Children who are requested to withdraw from the program are welcome to enroll again in a future season if the parent feels the child has learned new skills to manage the behavior. We believe that children learn and grow, and children who had a tough season are always welcomed back for a fresh start.

## **Prohibited Methods of Discipline**

Our program prohibits the use of the following:

- Physical punishment, including threats to use such methods
- Any consequence intended to embarrass or humiliate
- Restriction from food, water, bathroom, shade, warmth, or other basic needs
- Punishment for toileting accidents
- Physical restraint, except as absolutely necessary to protect a child or others from harm