

Stonewood School North Discipline Philosophy

We believe that all domains of learning are supported during play and through strong, positive relationships with adults. Promoting healthy social and emotional development, including self-regulation, is one of the fundamental missions of our program. We believe that social and emotional development provides a foundation for other domains of learning, and that this type of development needs to be taught through modeling and direct instruction.

The early childhood period is a critical time for children to learn to control their thoughts, feelings, attention, impulses, and behavior. Children are learning how to respect others, and how to respect their environments. Children are not born with these skills, but instead develop these skills through play, observation, and experimentation at an early age. Teachers and caregivers must teach social and emotional skills and respect just as they teach washing hands or learning colors and shapes. We know that when children are given the opportunities and support to develop self-regulation and other social/emotional skills, it gives them the foundation needed for success.

Stonewood School North only uses positive supports, modeling, and redirection to avoid challenging behavior. Teachers must develop a curriculum that supports the teaching of social, emotional, and regulatory skills in order to change a behavior and/or promote acceptable behavior. If a child is exhibiting aggressive behaviors or having a tough time relaxing or calming their body, they shouldn't be told to take a time out or be removed from the group. Instead, children should be redirected to a different activity that may help them calm their body such as sensory play. Modeling, co-regulation, and calm-down tools are to be used in every classroom to assist children with difficult behavior. All classrooms shall have a calm down space accessible to children at all times that provides a safe haven from others and includes calm-down tools. This space shall be offered as a redirection but should never be mandatory or used as a "time out". If a child chooses to use the calm-down space as a tool to quiet their body, they shall be allowed to exit the space on their own and not be required to stay in the space for a teacher-determined time.

When any child in our program presents us with challenging behavior, teaching staff shall follow these standards. If a staff member is witnessed or reported to directly neglect these standards, disciplinary action up to and including termination may be necessary.

All staff at Stonewood School North shall be held accountable to all the following points:

- When a challenging behavior presents itself, staff shall observe the children, and then identify events, activities, interactions and other factors that predict and may contribute to challenging behavior. Staff shall use a functional behavior analysis (included in classroom handbook) to identify, track, and prevent challenging behavior.
- Rather than focus only on eliminating the behavior, teaching staff shall focus on teaching the child social, communication, and emotional regulation skills and use environmental modifications, activity modifications, adult or peer support/modeling, and other teaching strategies to support the child's appropriate behavior.
- Teaching staff shall respond to challenging behavior, including physical aggression, in a manner that provides for the safety of the child and the safety of others in the classroom. Our response will be calm, respectful, and provide the child with information on what is acceptable behavior and what is not. Staff shall never respond to challenging behavior with a harsh tone, aggression, threats, raised voice, anger, or frustration. The only time a teacher shall raise their voice to a child is if an immediate safety issue presents itself and the child is too far away for a staff member to get on their level and calmly talk about the situation.
- We will document all challenging behaviors and the intervention methods that were attempted in a behavior tracking log, daily journal, and/or functional behavior analysis.
- Teacher-parent discussions regarding a child's behavior shall be held in private and shall focus on working as a team to develop and implement an individualized plan that supports the child's inclusion and success.
- If necessary, intervention shall ensure each child has access to the referral networks available in Vermont, including Children's Integrated Services (CIS) and Essential Early Education (EEE/Special Ed).