

## **Eastford School Readiness Addressing Challenging Behaviors Policy**

The teacher and children work together to develop a set of classroom rules to ensure safety inside and outside the school. These rules will be visibly posted in spaces that are used by the children. Such guidelines provide children with the reminder to make good choices and behave appropriately.

Preschool children are young in their learning of expectations and rules in the classroom, at home, and in the community. Children benefit from redirection, eye-level conversations, and positive reinforcement (“great job!” “thank you for \_\_\_\_\_”). Often children require reminders to participate in or complete an activity or specific task. These reminders are given at the child’s level by staff in a gentle, friendly voice.

We continue to use Second Step as a way to teach core social-emotional skills such as empathy, emotion management, and problem solving.

Class-wide behavior interventions include positive reinforcement through smiles, verbal praise, thumbs up, and high fives. Strategies, such as hand stamps and stickers, are utilized throughout the day for children following classroom rules and behaving appropriately. In addition, children who have demonstrated “super star” behavior (e.g., volunteering to help clean, assisting a friend in need, etc.) may also earn specific recognition.

When a child displays difficulty in following a rule, the teacher will discuss the issue with the child to gain an understanding of the child’s feelings and perspective and to explain that what the child does and says are important and affects others. They will work together to develop problem solving techniques to be used in future situations.

For children with persistent, serious or challenging behavior, a referral to the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) team will be made and the parents/guardians notified. The teacher should identify on the referral: events, activities, interactions, and other contextual factors that precede or predict challenging behavior. The MTSS team, made up of the teacher and other professionals, will review and analyze data relating to the student’s behavior. In conjunction with the family, the team will develop and implement an individualized plan that supports the child’s inclusion and success in the classroom.

Please note: Teaching staff shall never use physical punishment and shall not engage in psychological abuse or coercion (see below for examples). Teaching staff will never use threats or derogatory remarks. They shall not withhold nor threaten to withhold food as a form of discipline. For further information

regarding the school discipline policy, please refer to the Eastford School Student handbook.

Examples of physical punishment: shaking, hitting, spanking, slapping, jerking, squeezing, kicking, biting, pinching, excessive tickling, and pulling of arms, hair or ears; requiring a child to remain inactive for a long period of time.

Examples of psychological abuse: shaming, name calling, ridiculing, humiliation, sarcasm, cursing out, making threats, or frightening a child; ostracism, withholding affection, seclusion.

Examples of coercion: rough handling (shoving, pulling, pushing, grasping any body part); physical restraint (forcing a child to sit down, lie down, or stay down) except when restraint is necessary to protect the child or others from harm; physically forcing a child to perform an action (such as eating or cleaning up).

NOTE: The use of a physical escort as defined below and properly used when necessary to protect the child or others from harm is NOT coercion.

Mechanical restraint: “the use of devices as means of restricting a student’s freedom of movement: (H.R. 7124, 2018)

Physical escort: “the temporary touching or holding of the hand, wrist, arm, shoulder, or back for the purpose of inducing a student who is acting out to walk to a safe location.” (H.R. 7124, 2018)

Physical restraint: “a personal restriction that immobilizes or reduces the ability of an individual to move the individual’s arms, legs, torso, or head freely, except that such term does not include a physical escort, mechanical restraint, or chemical restraint.” (H.R. 7124, 2018)

Seclusion: “the involuntary confinement of a student alone in a room or area from which the student is physically prevented from leaving, except that such term does not include a time out.” (H.R. 7124, 2018)

When a student causes harm to themselves or others, the student and class may be separated to keep everyone safe. Once the student is visibly calm, every effort is made to reunite the student with the class. Staff are trained in Physical and Psychological Management Training (PMT) and appropriate use of restraint for safety reasons is permissible.

The goal of this policy is to limit or eliminate the use of suspension, expulsion, and other exclusionary measures. Exclusionary measures (see Board of Education Policy #5144.1 regarding Restraints and Seclusions) will only be taken after all possible interventions have been exhausted and there is agreement that it is in the best interest of the child. Family members will be part of the decision-making team. If exclusionary measures must be taken, assistance will be offered to families in accessing services and alternative placement.

As a public school, we comply with all federal and state civil rights laws and work with families to provide each child with services and programs they require.

This policy shall be shared with families upon the child's entrance to school, is shared annually in the Preschool Handbook, and can be found on the school's website. This policy is shared with staff at staff orientation and is shared annually in the Preschool Handbook, and can be found on the school's website.