



Whakatipu Wild School Charitable Trust

Positive Behaviour Guidance Policy

Purpose: This policy provides the framework for Whakatipu Wild School's positive guidance practice. Our underpinning philosophy outlined in this document enables decisions to be well supported and consistent, so that participants can continually develop in wonder and wellness.

Rationale: At all times tamariki and rangatahi have the right to be treated with respect and dignity, and be supported in appropriate behaviour development. WWS believes that all interactions should be consistent, positive, timely, and nurturing, while taking the individual needs of each child into account.

Values: We believe that when we develop the following core values, we can live continually growing in wonder and wellness. WWS values are: Being Curious. Demonstrating Courage. Living with Care.

Goals:

- To provide a respectful environment, enabling children to feel safe and happy
- To provide an environment where children develop increasing self control and emotional well-being (which are indicators for success in later life, as researched by the Dunedin Study).
- To provide an environment where children are stimulated, engaged and challenged in level-appropriate ways. We operate with a challenge-by-choice philosophy.
- To provide children with clear boundaries, expectations, routines.
- To reinforce positive appropriate behaviours through recognition and praise
- To encourage children to live with care for themselves, others and the environment
- To support each child to develop courage to share their needs, feelings, skills, ideas
- To support each child to develop understanding of cause and effect, so that they may develop skills to create and maintain positive relationships throughout their lives.

Procedures - Prevention:

1 WWS staff will be positive role models of appropriate behaviour. WWS staff will nurture authentic connections with each child, supporting a sense of belonging, and promoting discussions around well-being. Staff will actively listen, communicate with, involve, and show empathy with each child.

Clear expectations and routines will be communicated to the children. Children will be involved in risk assessment and safety discussions.

2 Positive and proactive reminders will reinforce boundaries, group rules and expectations.

3 Thoughtfulness about the learning environment and set ups will be at the forefront of staff planning, in order to provide a challenging, stimulating, rich, meaningful environment that caters to a variety of interests and skill levels.

4 Staff will be mindful of the additional needs of individual children, and provide proactive cues to maintain appropriate behaviour.

5 Experiences and activities will encourage teamwork and the recognition of the strengths of

self/others. Open discussion about strengths will intend to build positive self esteem. All conversation around areas of growth will be done privately to ensure their dignity is protected.

6 Children will be supported and coached in using verbal and non-verbal communication to express their needs and feelings. Collectively and individually they will be supported to develop social competence to respond to the behaviours of others. We encourage phrases like “Stop. I don’t like it when ...” for children to move away, to take deep breaths, and to ask a trusted adult for help.

7 Verbal praise will be used to reinforce prosocial interactions, and positive behaviour. Part of developing positive mental health is to model positive internal dialogue.

8 Our philosophy is inclusive. Where practical, staff will consider the needs of individual children and put interventions in place prior to children engaging in an experience. This may include pairing with a more experienced buddy, shadowing, providing verbal coaching, allowing others to go first to model desired behaviour, coaching problem-solving, self-regulation skills, and extra discussions around safety.

Procedures - Response to Inappropriate Behaviour:

1 WWS staff will treat all children with respect. Inappropriate behaviour will be highlighted in a way that maintains the child’s dignity and self-worth. At no time will children experience physical ill treatment, solitary confinement or deprivation of the essentials like food or water.

Staff will be aware that behaviour is a form of communication. Sometimes inappropriate behaviour may be caused by physical discomfort (such as hunger, thirst, tiredness, illness, temperature, the need for space), or emotional unease (such as detachment from their guardians, boredom, anxiety). Supporting the child to recognise these triggers at an age-appropriate level often happens in a follow up conversation.

2 When a child displays inappropriate behaviour, the following principles will be applied:

- WWS staff will move to the child’s level and in a calm tone address the issue
- WWS staff will endeavour to establish a timeline of the circumstances surrounding the behaviour/feelings by talking to the children concerned. If children need time to process some emotions before discussing the events, time and space will be given for this.
- Each side will have the opportunity to share their story of what happened, and how they feel/felt.
- WWS staff will explore options of different behaviour and outcomes with those concerned, so that the situation becomes a learning scenario.
- WWS staff will ensure that consequences are appropriate, and restorative where needed (replacing something taken, fixing up something broken etc).
- Restoration of the environment and of the relationships between children/teacher/group community is important, and will be fostered by supporting the child to successfully engage in positive tasks that make things right, before resuming their play.

3 If this process isn’t working with the initial teacher, another teacher may step in to continue to support the child and teacher.

4 Where equipment has been wilfully broken, the Programme Leader may facilitate the child explaining the breakage to their parents and consult with parents regarding appropriate consequences, such as replacing the resource.

Context for Response to Severe or Repeated Negative Behaviours:

The context of Wild School sessions are quite different to typical school settings. WWS operates in wild spaces, which are constantly dynamic with weather, changes in nature, and where we experience seasonal change. WWS also doesn't have a massive pool of staff within earshot, like a school has, to draw upon.

Wild School sessions operate in an environment where there are real and perceived risks. These risks include water (drowning, hyperthermia, fear of rivers/lakes/waves), tools (whittling blades, pocket knives for carving and dissecting), ropes (for lashing, building shelters and practicing knot tying), fire (survival skills, cooking), children moving at great speeds, children venturing to the edge of their comfort-zone with heights (tree climbing, standing next to rivers or banks), and the emotional risks that each person takes as they try new experiences.

WWS staff are skilled, trained, experienced and have the ability to competently manage the above risks. Staff also have the constant responsibility to discern how much risk is manageable risk, given the dynamics of the day (weather, location, group personalities, effectiveness of the parent helper, activities of the day, and expectations of the group). In circumstances where an unpredictable hazard is thrown into the mix, such as a child who displays inappropriate or dangerous behaviour, staff effectively need to put a halt to any other activity that has inherent risk.

Parents of a child who is displaying severe or repetitive behaviour can expect WWS staff to make a firm but fair action plan so that the session can resume peacefully and constructively.

Procedures

1 In the instance where severe inappropriate behaviour threatens the safety of the child, the other children in the group, WWS staff, or members of the public, a teacher may be required to restrain a child. At all times, staff will abide by the principles outlined for registered schools, in the Education and Training Act 2020, Section 99. *Physical restraint is necessary to prevent imminent harm to the student or another person; the person using restraint reasonably believes that there is no other option available in the circumstances to prevent harm. The physical restraint is reasonable and proportionate in the circumstances.*

2 If a child is cued three times within a single session for the same inappropriate behaviour, a discussion with parents will occur. Likewise, severe behaviour (including biting, bullying, hitting, swearing, absconding) will be recorded and discussed with parents with a view to supporting the child and family towards more appropriate behaviour.

3 If inappropriate or severe behaviour is repeated across 3 consecutive sessions, WWS staff will meet with parents and the child/children to create a plan for moving forward. Due to the high risk nature of our programmes, WWS Trust cannot tolerate additional exposure to potential risk for staff or children.

In circumstances where a child's behaviour puts others at risk (physical or emotional), WWS staff and Trust may require immediate additional support to continue the session, and the enrolment of that child. WWS may phone the child's parents to collect the child from the session.

Additional support may include requiring an additional trusted adult to accompany the child to Wild School sessions, the child to attend shortened sessions, or both. These measures are in no way punitive, but are aimed to allow the child to feel a measure of success, with the view to building upon that.

4 Communication around expectations at Wild School sessions will be clear and concise. Parents will be updated regularly, should additional support be put in place. The best time for updates is at pickup

time. However if a conversation is delicate, a phone call may be more suitable.

5 Parents observing any inappropriate behaviour of a child other than their own, need to approach a teacher, rather than a child or the child's family to address or discuss this.