

HERMOSA MONTESSORI CHARTER SCHOOL POLICY ON SEXUAL HARRASSMENT ADDENDUM

If there has been a report by a child of another child behaving inappropriately the following guidelines should be followed:

- Report Incident to Administration
- Incident will be investigated per the Sexual Harassment Policy, using definitions given.
- The Alleged Perpetrator and Victim need to be interviewed separately within 24 hours. If the teacher is not comfortable talking to the student, then another staff member will be present to assist.

The School is committed to investigating each complaint and/or inappropriate behavior and to taking the appropriate action on all confirmed violations of policy. During this investigation in order to protect potential victims, the alleged perpetrator's freedoms and privileges will be curtailed. The alleged perpetrator's teacher needs to report to administration the procedures they put in place to protect innocent students, including plans for playground, lunchtime and dismissal. The teacher must report back to the Head of School or Administrator the result of the interviews within 48 hours. If you have any questions, please bring them to the Head of School or an Administrator.

When talking to the alleged victim the teacher/staff member should use the following process:

Do:

1. **Believe the child.** Rarely do children lie about sexual abuse. You may be the only one the child thinks can give help.
2. **Try to remain calm.** This may be difficult but shock or anger may only cause the child to withdraw.
3. **Praise the child for telling.** Reassure the child that he or she has done the right thing and is safe with you.
4. **Reassure the child.** Make it clear that what happened is not his or her fault.
5. **Listen to the child.** Take the child to a private place and let the child tell you what happened in his or her own words. Give the child your full attention. Young children between 3 and 5 will have difficulty giving you precise information. Ask them questions like "Do you remember anything else?" "Did this happen after circle time?" "Did this happen on the playground or in the classroom?" Remember that young children will tell you what they think you want to hear. It is important that you do not lead them or put words in their mouths. Only ask for enough information to make a report. In depth questioning should only be done by a trained professional.
6. **Respect the child's privacy.** Be careful not to discuss the incidents in front of people who do not need to know what happened.
7. **Get help, be responsible.** Report the incident, arrange a medical check-up and seek counseling.

Don't:

Don't Panic or Over React when the child talks to you about the experience. The child needs help and support to make it through this difficult time. **Don't Blame** the child. **Sexual Abuse is never the child's fault!**

If you suspect a child is being abused you must take the utmost care in speaking to the child about this issue. **Only** trained head teachers should initiate this interview.

For very young children ages 3-5 directly asking questions is not going to get results. It is best to have the child draw a picture and then ask the child questions such as "Tell me about this; "who is this person?" Remember that young children will try and tell you what they think you want to hear, so it is very important not to lead the child. If the child does volunteer information about abuse refer to the process above. Only ask for minimal details. In depth questioning should only be done by a trained professional.

When talking to the alleged perpetrator the teacher/staff member should use the following process:

Label the Behaviors:

"I see you doing..."

"Susie tells me you did..."

React From A Personal Level:

"It makes me uncomfortable..."

"I think it makes Susie uncomfortable, too..."

For a student who has repeated behavior:

Confront:

"I am concerned because I see you doing...which we talked about before".

"I told you that made me uncomfortable"

Prohibit:

"You need to stop doing that."

Range of Sexual Behavior of Children

Normal:

- Genital or reproductive conversations with peers or similar age siblings
- Show me yours/I'll show you mine with peers

- Playing “doctor”
- Occasional masturbation without penetration
- Kissing, flirting
- Dirty words of jokes within peer group

Yellow Flags:

- Preoccupation with sexual themes (especially sexually aggressive)
- Pulling other’s skirt up or pants down
- Sexually explicit or precocious conversation with peers
- Sexual graffiti (especially chronic or impacting certain individuals)
- Sexual teasing/embarrassment of others
- Single occurrences of peeping/exposing/obscenities/pornographic interest/frottage
- Preoccupation with masturbation
- Mutual masturbation/group masturbation
- Simulating foreplay with dolls or peers with clothing on (i.e., petting, French kissing)

Red Flags:

- Sexually explicit conversations with significant age difference
- Touching genitals of others
- Degrading self or others with sexual themes
- Forcing exposure of others genitals
- Inducing fear/threatening of force
- Sexually explicit proposals/threats (verbal or written)
- Repeated or chronic peeping/obscenities/pornographic interests/frottage
- Compulsive masturbation/task interruption to masturbate
- Masturbation with penetration
- Simulating intercourse with dolls, peers, animals (i.e. humping)

NO QUESTIONS:

- Oral, vaginal, anal penetration of dolls, children animals
- Forced touching of genitals
- Simulating intercourse with peers with clothing off
- Any genital injury or bleeding that cannot be explained by accidental cause

Guidelines for Reporting Suspected Sexual Abuse

Never contact parents regarding a child’s sexual behavior without considering a social services report. Usually no report is warranted regarding Normal Range or first response to Yellow Flags. Consider a report regarding preoccupation with persistent Yellow Flags. Consider a report regarding Red Flags continuing after first response. Always report Red Flags with force or significant age difference. Always report Red Flags continuing after prohibition. Always report clusters of Red Flags. Always report behavior in the No Questions range.

Guidelines for Contacting Parents

After considering the need for a social services report, consider the following questions regarding contacting parents:

Has a social services report been made?

If **yes**, do not discuss with parents until you have been advised how the investigation will proceed and how you can be most helpful.

If **no**, is the behavior continuing and is it affecting the child's ability to succeed or interfering with social/emotional development.

Did social services decline to investigate?

If **yes**, is parental notification desirable or necessary to manage the behavior?

Are there children who have been victimized or exposed to confusing, upsetting or sexually explicit information?

If **yes**, is parental notification desirable or necessary to help the child (children) deal with or understand what has occurred, or to obtain counseling?

Adopted May 23, 2005

For the Governing Board