



Student Support Handbook

*The healthy social life is found
When in the mirror of each human soul
The whole community finds its reflection,
And when in the community
The virtue of each one is living.*

-Rudolf Steiner

Whistler Waldorf School is committed to grow healthy and successful students through the development of healthy social relationships among students, teachers and all members of the school community. This value is reflected throughout the curriculum and implicit in the working of the school. Our school has adopted a student support process based on the work brought to us by Kim John Payne, who is respected worldwide for his work in helping children navigate challenge as well as conflict through a no blame approach.

In conjunction with work presented to WWS by Kim John Payne, the Student Support Executive Group (SSEG) has been created.

Care Group (CG)

The Care Group exists to observe, understand and support the needs of students, particularly those experiencing challenges to emotional development. As possible, the Care Group will assist and support teachers in interactions with parents and offer suggestions for therapeutic support for students. The CG takes up studies to deepen and broaden the group understanding of these issues, including growth and development and child observation.

Student Learning Support Team

The Student Support Team exists to help students achieve academic success. The team works with teachers to assess student needs within their classroom, and help to create support activities to further support the success of a student within their classroom or individual subject, as in the high school classes. The Support Team collaborates to develop study techniques to adapt to different learning styles and accommodate learning disorders within the school population.

Discipline and Guidance (DG)

Students are directed to DG when faculty members and administrators observe students "acting out." When disorientated students push the school's behavioral boundaries, teachers and administrators provide clear and firm guidance to help students find their footing at school. We consider "acting out" to be any behaviors that repeatedly disrupt learning in the classroom or are hurtful toward others or themselves.

Social Inclusion Group (SIG)

Students are directed to the SIG when they are having difficulties in the social realm. These difficulties may include (but are not limited to) excluding/being excluded, bullying/being bullied, teasing/being teased, etc.

Student Support Executive Group (SSEG)

This group is made up of three faculty members who chair the following groups: the Social Inclusion Group (SIG), Care Group (CG) and Discipline and Guidance (DG) as well as the Student Support Coordinator, Grade School Chair and High School chair. When a student is exhibiting challenges in the classroom or in campus social settings and steps taken by the three streams have not been successful, they are referred to the SSEG who will decide how best to further support the students. The process of the three streams also supported at the weekly meeting of the SSEG.

"Wherever there is a human being, there is an opportunity for a kindness."

Lucius Annaeus Seneca

Behaviour of concern observed by an adult or student should be reported to the Student Support Coordinator.
If immediate action is required teachers may also approach the social inclusion or discipline chair directly. If student or adult safety is involved the Pedagogical Administrator must be informed.

Student Support Coordinator reviews request and if applicable discusses with teachers the use of implicit and explicit tools.

Student Support Coordinator refers to either Care Stream, Social Inclusion Stream or Discipline and Guidance Stream.

Care Chair sets up meeting with class teacher and if necessary with parents

Social Inclusion Chair facilitates Social Inclusion Process.
Chair sets up meeting with class teacher.

Discipline and Guidance Chair investigates severe incidents or meets with class teacher to create a support plan.

Parents are informed as soon as students enters a stream and processes are or will be set up. Student Support Executive is apprised of all processes and consulted as necessary.

RESOLUTION

If there is no resolution the process is referred to the SSEG for further steps.

The Student Support Process:

When a student is observed as having difficulties in the classroom or in social settings (educational, developmental, behavioral) that are not easily resolved or are ongoing, the student may be referred to the Student Support Coordinator (SSC). The following process is used to bring resolution to the difficulty (as shown in the previous chart). This process is meant to clearly describe the processes in place for questions and conflict resolution at the Whistler Waldorf School. *Not all disagreements will be solved to the mutual satisfaction of all parties, but we strive to be clear and transparent in our process and to address concerns and questions promptly as they arise.*

The student support work found here is used to find solutions for those who need support to be successful in the classroom or in a social setting.

- The SSC will meet with the Class and/or Subject Teacher to determine which implicit and explicit tools have been, are being or may be used.
- If this avenue has been exhausted and further support is needed, the SSC will refer to appropriate support group. In the case of discipline and social inclusion, the chairs may need to act immediately.
- A Support Circle Meeting may be called prior to referral. Regardless, notification to parents will occur when students enter into one of the three streams. They are: the Social Inclusion Group, Discipline and Guidance or Care Group.
 - Care Group: Care Chair sets up meeting with Class Teacher and if necessary with parents to create a support plan. A determination will be made if the matter will sit with the Care Group or be referred to the Student Support Team, (which may involve an IEP or learning plan).
 - Social Inclusion: unless immediate action is necessary, chair or team member meets with Class Teacher to develop social inclusion plan.
 - Discipline and Guidance: unless immediate action is necessary, chair or team member meets with Class Teacher to develop behavior management plan.
- Once actions and plans have been created, a Support Circle Meeting will be arranged for the teacher(s), the parents and a member of a supporting group to discuss how to support and strengthen the child.
- The plans and support measures will include timelines for check in and expected resolution.
- The student is now on the path to resolution. If no resolution is found, then the plan is extended and the SSEG is consulted until a satisfactory resolution occurs or other steps are deemed necessary.

Implicit to Explicit Approach

When conflict or student difficulty occurs as part of our school life, the teachers use a system of implicit and explicit tools to resolve the issue. The Implicit/Explicit chart illustrates the Student Support work created by Kim John Payne to support healthy resolution for our children. Each stream of the Student Support work has a chart comprised of tools to be used throughout the Student Support process.

When does behavior “cross the line” and lead students to the SSEG for Social Inclusion and/or Discipline and Guidance support?

Below is what is considered situations that move from fun, healthy behavior into the realm of bullying, disruptive or exclusionary behavior or has gone too far.

Actions that contain a power imbalance, are persistent, prolonged, and deliberate and may include:

- exclusion, intentionally leaving someone out or ignoring
- physical abuse: poking, pushing, hitting, kicking, biting, pinching, tripping, punching, hair-pulling, spitting, or throwing objects at a person
- verbal abuse: put-downs, name-calling, insults, teasing, derogatory language, or threats
- malicious or hurtful rumors, lying and gossiping, humiliating, blackmailing
- disrespect of property or stealing
- ganging up
- intolerance of differences
- incitement or getting someone else to do any of the actions named here
- cyber-bullying which includes doing any of the above through electronic means, such as email, instant messaging, texting or social networking sites.

All forms of teasing become bullying when they are repetitive and involve a power imbalance. To help us know when teasing has gone too far, we can say that, ***“Teasing crosses the line and becomes bullying when...”***

- someone asks for it to stop and it doesn’t
- the person being teased reacts badly
- it is meant to hurt, put someone down, or is mean-spirited
- it becomes a habit or it happens frequently
- bystanders don’t help because they think they will get teased as well
- the person being teased or the bystanders do not think it is funny
- people go along with the teasing even when they are uncomfortable
- the person being teased feels they cannot tell anyone someone is being excluded

Three main types of bullying are:

- **Physical:** hitting, kicking, taking belongings, pushing, biting, pinching, throwing objects at a person, spitting.
- **Verbal:** put downs, gossiping, name-calling, teasing, insulting, derogatory language, and threats.
- **Indirect:** emotional, spreading nasty stories, excluding from groups, ignoring.

*"I have come to the frightening conclusion that I am the decisive element.
It is my personal approach that creates the climate.
It is my daily mood that makes the weather.
I possess tremendous power to make life miserable or joyous.
I can be a tool of torture or an instrument of inspiration;
I can humiliate or humor, hurt or heal.
In all situations, it is my response that decides
Whether a crisis is escalated or de-escalated,
And a person is humanized or de-humanized.
If we treat people as they are, we make them worse.
If we treat people as they ought to be, we help them become
What they are capable of becoming."
- Johann Wolfgang von Goethe*

Student Support Vocabulary

Social Inclusion generates a common language throughout the school. These are some of the terms that are used.

- **Alternate Desks** - The student is allocated a “quiet desk” where he/she can work if disruption is beginning. It is important that this is arranged beforehand.
- **Alternative School Day** - A temporary alternative environment is sought using both parents' and school's contacts. This is not done out of a punitive sense but rather that the demands of the school environment go beyond what the student can cope with.
- **Circle of Friends** - When a student is having social difficulties, the class teacher will choose two or three students from the class, and one or two students from the SSAC will be selected to greet the student each day, meet together once a week with the student, help the student problem solve, and be available for support.
- **DADD** - This is an immediate tool used sometimes by teachers in response to inappropriate behavior by a student. It stands for Disapprove, Affirm, Discover, Do over.
- **Explicit Approach** – When “implicit” approaches are not successful, teachers may use more explicit or obvious tools to support and solve challenges and conflicts with the students. These tools can include meaningful work, individual change plans, check in and stay and meetings with parents.
- **Goals & Achievements Agreement** - A student and teacher create a plan for change and then chart his/her own progress for meeting these goals on a written form.
- **Implicit Approach** – Through the Waldorf pedagogy, teachers often use “implicit” tools in the classroom. These tools can include storytelling, song, art and movement and are subtle approaches to solving.
- **No Blame Meeting** - This is a group meeting of the students involved in a social difficulty. They will attend the meeting with their SAC helpers, an adult facilitator (either the SI Coordinator or teacher) and sometimes the class teacher, to brainstorm solutions and build agreements.
- **Pedagogical Classroom Approach** - Teachers use developmentally appropriate stories or lessons within the curriculum to address social issues in an implicit way.
- **Politeness and Courtesy** - Actively practicing politeness and courtesy is an example to all members of our school community. Students, teachers, and staff take the opportunity to practice politeness and courtesy so that they occur as a matter of course.
- **Redirecting** - A disoriented student is redirected to productive, purposeful work within or often outside the classroom. Purposeful work is anticipated and scheduled by SSEG and faculty.

- **The Put Down Diet** - This practice invites the members of the school community to be aware of their own speech, body language, and attitudes that criticize or demean others with or without intention. Students, teachers, and staff agree to name, discover why, and do over negative verbal and body language.
- **Social Inclusion Approach** - This is a “justice without blame” approach that the school uses to support a socially healthy school environment. Social Inclusion gives us a common language, structure and tools with which to deal with social conflict between students.
- **Social Inclusion Change Plan** This is a form that a student completes with the assistance of the SI Coordinator that outlines the student’s plan to change behavior.
- **Student Support Executive Group (SSEG)** – This group is made up of faculty members who chair the three support groups operating under this student support umbrella. They are the Care Group, Social Inclusion Group and Discipline and Guidance.
- **Support Circle Meeting** - This is a facilitated meeting with the parents and class teacher of a student having social difficulties, to discover how to strengthen and support the child.

Acknowledgements

We gratefully acknowledge Kim John Payne for his many visits with the group, as well as his many written resources. For more information on his work, please visit the website <http://www.socialsustain.com/kimjohnpayne.html>