

## Teens Community Positive Behavior Policy

*From all this, the result will be not only self-discipline,  
but proof that self-discipline is an aspect of individual liberty  
and the chief factor of success in life.*

(Montessori, From Childhood to Adolescence)

Students are expected to live up to the letter and spirit of Teens Community Positive Behavior Policy, and to develop self-control and self-discipline during their time in the Community. Students who demonstrate growing self-discipline will experience correspondingly greater independence and freedom. School discipline is intended to reinforce Community standards and to help shape behavior towards self-discipline.

### Rules and Guidelines

*If different individuals are to live harmoniously in one society, with a common aim,  
there must be a set of rules which we call morality...  
Therefore morality and social life are very closely united.  
But in order that individual action should be free and useful at the same time,  
it must be restricted within certain limits and rules that give necessary guidance.*

(Montessori, Moral and Social Development)

The work of adolescence is to develop as an individual in society. In the Teens Community, rules and guidelines for behavior are designed to according to three principles: safety, order, and the support for this social development.

Rules for physical and psychological safety help protect adolescents from risk-taking and occasional lapses in judgment that are normal for the age. Guidelines in every area of activity support safety.

An orderly environment is also necessary for development, as external order helps build internal, psychological order. Also, an orderly environment is necessary for efficient functioning of the community. Schedules, standards of cleanliness, and established routines and procedures serve this purpose.

Rules and guidelines also support moral and social development, which Montessori saw as intertwined. Teens Community rules support harmonious living in society, and adaptation to life with others.

Montessori also observed that adolescents develop ‘a sense of justice and sense of personal dignity’ in preparation for social life. To support this development, community standards, rules, and guidelines are built on principles of fairness, integrity, responsibility, respect, and engagement. As a general rule, students are expected to behave according to these values.

Every year in the fall, students and staff take part in community discussions to create a written Code of Civility that reflects these principles in language that everyone contributes to and understands.

### Academic Expectations

Students are expected to maintain a healthy level of engagement in academic work. A student who is having difficulty with academic aspects of work can readily discuss and work out flexible options with teachers. Staff members are prepared and willing to find helpful ways to support a student who needs assistance.

It is not acceptable, however, for a student to simply not do or not hand in academic work. A student who continues to avoid academic work or repeatedly fails to finish or hand in work, despite staff accommodations and support, will be put on academic probation.

Students are expected to take responsibility for their own education and fulfill their academic requirements conscientiously. If a student is not meeting academic requirements, either by turning in inadequate work or none at all, the responsible teacher may place the student on academic notice. Students on academic notice must attend to overdue work during their open time throughout the day, until the responsible teacher accepts the work. The student’s relevant teacher will contact the parents if there are continued academic issues to resolve.

### Social interaction and communication

Social interaction and communication are of paramount importance to adolescents, and make up an important part of their development. Rules and guidelines support safe, healthy, and productive communication between all members of the community.

## Face-to-face interactions

Adolescents are in the process of learning and developing social skills and behaviors. For this reason, the Teens Community values face-to-face communication and social interactions. Students are expected to interact with community members and guests with civility and respect. Hurtful teasing, harassment, and bullying are violations of this expectation. When conflicts arise, students and staff are expected to resolve them peacefully, with assistance as necessary, and to make use of the Community Conflict Resolution Procedure.

## Threats and Violence

Violence and threats of violence are not tolerated, whether physical, verbal, electronic, or in gestures. Unsolicited and unwanted sexual overtures, whether physical or verbal, are considered sexual harassment and will be treated as a threat. Any threat to another member of the community should be reported immediately to a responsible adult. It is expected that all community members agree to take on the important work of creating an environment in which individuals feel safe and nurtured. Every community member is expected to help model respectful behavior and to help monitor and report inappropriate behavior.

## Conflicts and Conflict Resolution

Conflict is an inevitable element of community life and social development, and learning to manage conflict peacefully is part of the developmental work of adolescence. The Community Conflict Resolution Procedure found below can help students talk through emotionally difficult situations to reach a mutually agreed-upon solution.

## Community Conflict Resolution Procedure

- Each party makes an “I statement” that describes his or her perception of the situation:  
“This is my version of what happened:....”  
“This is what I am feeling: I feel that....”  
“This is my perception of what happened or is happening....”
- Each party acknowledges the other party’s perception or feelings:  
“I acknowledge that you saw the situation as....”  
“I hear you say that you perceived....”

“I understand that you feel....”

- Each person owns his or her part in the conflict:

“It’s true that I did....”

“I admit that I contributed by....”

“I agree that I probably....”

- All parties propose ways to resolve the conflict until everyone agrees on a strategy.
- Apologies may be offered voluntarily and should be stated sincerely.
- All parties shake hands

## Discipline

The first steps in responding to a violation of the rules is a conversation between students and staff, and, in more serious cases, parents. For minor violations, this may be a sufficient response. More serious consequences are determined collectively by the staff and approved by the Principal.

## Minor violations

Minor violations are incidental, accidental, or occasional issues which do not seriously compromise safety, order, or community functioning. As much as possible, responses to minor violations are shaped to the character of the issue. For example, a student who misses an assigned chore may be expected to assist in another area.

Minor issues will be reported to parents in a general assessment of the student’s level of work and engagement at parent-student conferences, in Progress Reports, and by telephone or in writing if issues are repeated or are creating concern among the staff.

Staff recognize that all behavior is a form of communication and will work with students to focus on solutions to create short term goals as both preventative and supportive measures.

If the student does not wish to engage in supportive strategies, they are choosing to opt out of certain or all aspects of the program.

## Damage to Possessions, Buildings, or Community Property

Students may be held responsible for damage to another student's possessions, or to buildings or community property. Students and parents may be held financially responsible for damages. Responsibility may be shared among students if individual responsibility cannot be determined.

### Serious violations

Serious violations are issues which significantly compromise physical or emotional safety of self or others, or seriously damage school materials or property. Repeated minor violations can add up to a serious violation. Theft and vandalism, use of drugs or alcohol, or sustained academic disengagement are considered serious violations as well.

Serious violations are documented in writing and reported to parents and to the Principal and a conference with parents can be scheduled if necessary. Appropriate consequences will be determined by the Principal in consultation with the Teens Community Staff, and may include the following

- restrictions placed on activities
- community service
- loss of privileges
- behavioral contract
- a period of probation
- suspension
- dismissal from the school

### Dismissal:

A student who repeatedly demonstrates serious misbehavior will be asked to leave the school. A student will be given specific charges, in writing, with notice to the parents. Parents and student may appeal in writing to the Board of Trustees. The student has the right to rebut adverse testimony.