



Discipline and Guidance Policies

We believe that the best way to ensure an optimal learning environment is to provide structure and programming that allows learning to progress. Our goal at The Pillars Christian Learning Centers is to provide consistency through a well-planned day, a predictable schedule, clear expectations and age-appropriate activities and materials. Within the structure of the environment and program, we help children develop self-discipline and self-control in a way that will lead to increased responsibility and independence.

During a typical day at The Pillars, children are given opportunities to make choices, problem-solve, socialize, and build skills. We encourage them to respect themselves and others, as well as the environment. There are times for individual choices and free play, as well as times for group activities and procedures. These include a morning circle time, mealtimes, rest times, and outdoor play. The safety and protection of the children is a primary concern for us. At all times of the day, children are expected to display respect for others, use self-control, cooperate with the teachers, and observe procedures which protect their safety and the safety of others.

The Pillars has developed the following Discipline and Guidance Policies to assist both the children and teachers in navigating behavioral challenges that are inherent with any group of young children. The intent of all disciplinary activities is to help all the children develop respect for self, peers, teachers, and surroundings. Learning to follow rules and interact well with others will be critical skills as the children move up through our programs and eventually on to grade school.

I. Discipline

a. Discipline must be:

- i. Individualized and consistent for each child;
- ii. Appropriate to the child's level of understanding; and
- iii. Directed toward teaching the child acceptable behavior and self-control.
- iv. A caregiver may only use positive methods of discipline and guidance that encourage self-esteem, self-control, and self-direction, which include at least the following:
 1. Using praise and encouragement of good behavior instead of focusing only upon unacceptable behavior;
 2. Reminding a child of behavior expectations daily by using clear, positive statements;
 3. Redirecting behavior using positive statements; and
 4. Using brief supervised separation or time out from the group, when appropriate for the child's age and development, which is limited to no more than one minute per year of the child's age.

b. There must be no harsh, cruel, or unusual treatment of any child. The following types of discipline and guidance are prohibited:

- i. Corporal punishment or threats of corporal punishment;
- ii. Punishment associated with food, naps, or toilet training;
- iii. Pinching, shaking, or biting a child;

- iv. Hitting a child with a hand or instrument;
- v. Putting anything in or on a child's mouth;
- vi. Humiliating, ridiculing, rejecting, or yelling at a child;
- vii. Subjecting a child to harsh, abusive, or profane language;
- viii. Placing a child in a locked or dark room, bathroom, or closet with the door closed; and
- ix. Requiring a child to remain silent or inactive for inappropriately long periods of time for the child's age.

c. Director/Teacher/Parent Collaboration Regarding Challenging Behavior

- i. Teachers will always treat all students in an equitable manner. If challenging behavior is persistent the following steps will be initiated to be equitable and fair to all parties.
 1. The teacher will begin documenting student's behavior issues on a Guidance and Discipline Log.
 2. If behavior such as hitting, biting, yelling and destruction of property continues to be disruptive or unsafe for all students, a period of separation from the class may be needed for a brief period of time. This will give that student an opportunity to calm down and talk with the teacher or director about their behavior. At this point, the parent will be notified in writing through email or through a phone call.
 3. Continued behavioral issues resulting in separation from the classroom will require a conference with the parent(s) to discuss cooperative actions to facilitate a positive change and discuss next steps if behaviors continue.
- ii. If your child is experiencing changes in the home environment that may be resulting in adverse behaviors at the center, please notify us so we can take this into consideration when developing behavior improvement plans.

II. Unacceptable Behavior/Separation Policy

We strive to redirect unacceptable behavior whenever possible; however, sometimes we need the help of the parents. The purpose of this policy is to protect the rights of the teachers and staff of our center and those rights of other children who sometimes become victims of an aggressive child. If a child deliberately inflicts physical harm to another child or to a staff member, or disrupts the learning environment, all actions will be documented on a Guidance and Discipline Log and the following steps will be taken:

- a. **1st Offense:** Parents notified in writing of the specific incident at the end of the day.
- b. **2nd Offense:** Parents called and notified in writing of the specific incident at the end of the day.
- c. **3rd Offense:** Parents called and child must be removed from the facility as soon as possible. The child will have a one-day suspension. Third party guidance is strongly recommended at this point.
- d. **4th Offense:** Parents called and child must be removed from facility as soon as possible. The child will have a two-day suspension. Parents, child and involved staff will have a meeting before the child returns. We reserve the right to ask that alternate arrangements be made for the care of your child without refund of up to two weeks tuition.

III: Biting Policy

Biting is, unfortunately, not unexpected when toddlers are in group care. It is always upsetting when children are bitten while in our care and we recognize how upsetting it is for parents. Biting is a natural, age-appropriate developmental stage that many children go through. It is usually a temporary condition that is most common between 18 months and 2 ½ years of age. The safety of the children, while in our care, is our primary concern.

Toddlers bite for a variety of reasons and most are not related to behavior problems. Therefore, the focus is not on punishment for biting, but on effective techniques that address the reason for the biting. A child may be teething or overly tired and frustrated. He or she might be experimenting, trying to get the teachers' attention or the attention of his peers. Toddlers also have poor verbal skills and are impulsive without a lot of self-control. The children will be encouraged to "use their words" if they become angry or frustrated. Sometimes biting occurs for no apparent reason.

a. In order to minimize biting in children who have exhibited the behavior, we do the following:

- i. Shadow the biter so that he or she is always near a provider or within arm's reach.
- ii. Provide lots of language such as "biting hurts" and "we use our teeth for food".
- iii. Provide frozen teething rings for those who need something to chew on.
- iv. Provide supportive information to parents who are worried about their child biting and offer suggestions on how to stop the biting habit.

b. The following steps will be taken if biting occurs:

- i. The biting will be interrupted with a firm "Not nice... you don't bite friends!"
- ii. The biter will be removed from the situation.
- iii. The caregiver will work with the child who bit to teach other behavior.
- iv. The child who was bitten will be comforted.
- v. The wound will be washed with soap and water and ice applied.
- vi. The parents of both children will be notified of the biting incident and a written record will be kept (incident report).
- vii. The names of the children involved will be kept confidential.

c. Consequences of Biting

- i. If a child bites two times (as long as the skin on the other person is not broken) during the same day, the child will be sent home for the remainder of the day.
- ii. At any time if the skin is broken due to a bite, the child that inflicted the bite will be sent home. Once suspension of care is initiated, a meeting will be conducted between the director, teacher, and parent to determine best practices and next steps.
- iii. If the biting continues and is severe, and all other efforts have been exhausted, it may become necessary to terminate the childcare arrangement.

IV. Disenrollment Policy

The Pillars is committed to providing exceptional childcare for all of our families. We seek to provide programs designed to foster opportunities for the development of social and emotional skills, gross and fine motor skills, and perceptual and cognitive readiness. We acknowledge each child as an individual who possesses a unique learning style and a way of responding to the world around them. Given the diversity of the families and communities that we serve, it is a priority that we recognize and appreciate the characteristics and behaviors that each child and family bring to our center.

The decision to disenroll a child from The Pillars is a difficult one for both the center and the family. In all cases, The Pillars' goal is to act thoughtfully and thoroughly to communicate, address and resolve concerns relating to the children in our care. Center staff will attempt to work with a family to take constructive steps to finding a solution that resolves the problem(s) before a disenrollment occurs.

When appropriate, we may suggest an evaluation by a professional consultant to come in and observe the child in the environment. In some cases, it may be appropriate for the child to be assessed by the local school district child study team.

Unfortunately, if behavior continues to be problematic and significantly impairs the learning experience for the other students, we reserve the right to ask that alternate arrangements be made for the care of your child without refund of up to two weeks tuition.

I acknowledge that I have read The Pillars Christian Learning Centers Discipline and Guidance Policies and agree to the terms and conditions outlined above.

Child's Name:

Parent/Guardian Signature:

Date: