



Code of Conduct

23-26 School Year

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At Sankofa Montessori, our mission is to foster independence and help every child learn to live a life of purpose—both in and out of the classroom. This Code of Conduct outlines the expectations for student behavior, the consequences for missteps, and how we partner with families to ensure every child thrives in a safe, respectful, and inclusive learning environment.

Discipline Philosophy and Equity Statement

Right to a High-Quality Education:

All students have the right to a high-quality education. Disciplinary measures should not be used to exclude students from learning unless it is absolutely necessary to protect the safety of students and staff.

General Principles:

The goal of discipline at Sankofa Montessori is to teach students to make positive choices that contribute to a safe, respectful, and productive school community. Effective discipline is guided by these key principles:

- Clear, engaging instruction and consistent routines create a foundation for positive behavior.
- Discipline is most effective when proactive strategies prevent issues before they arise.



- Positive relationships between staff, students, and families build trust and support a strong community.
- Staff members set high standards for behavior by teaching, modeling, and monitoring consistent expectations.
- Discipline that is combined with meaningful instruction and guidance helps students learn from mistakes, repair harm, and reintegrate into the learning community.
- Effective discipline prioritizes keeping students in the classroom and engaged in learning.

Reasonable Consequences:

The school will make every effort to teach students community-affirming behaviors and address infractions through school-based responses at the lowest appropriate level. Disciplinary actions will always be reasonable, timely, fair, age-appropriate, and aligned with the severity of the behavior.

Use of Out-of-School Suspensions and Expulsions:

Out-of-school suspensions and expulsions are reserved for serious infractions that cannot be resolved through other interventions. Expulsions will only be used in cases of state or federal mandates involving weapons, illegal substances, or behaviors that cause serious harm or pose a continued risk to the physical and emotional safety of others.

Limited Role of Law Enforcement:

Law enforcement involvement is limited to situations where there is an immediate threat to physical safety or where there is clear criminal behavior by someone other than a student. Police should not be called for situations that can be handled internally.

Students with Disabilities:

Students with disabilities have often faced unnecessary interruptions in their education due to inappropriate disciplinary actions. Staff are responsible for implementing this policy fairly and ensuring that any consequences comply with individualized education plans (IEPs), behavior intervention plans (BIPs), and 504 plans.

Non-Discrimination:



Staff must apply this policy equitably, without discrimination based on ethnicity, race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, gender, sexual orientation, age, or disability.

Due Process:

Sankofa Montessori ensures due process for all students facing long-term suspension or expulsion. For students with IEPs or 504 plans, manifestation determination meetings will be held as required.

Staff Training:

All Sankofa Montessori staff will receive training on our positive discipline approach and our Code of Conduct to ensure consistent, fair, and restorative practices.

Community Involvement:

We value meaningful involvement from parents, students, and the community in shaping and applying our school policies to create a positive and inclusive learning environment.

School Administrators are authorized to take disciplinary action for misconduct that occurs at a school activity or event, on a school computer or platform, at a non-school activity, function or event where the misconduct leads to a potential danger or disruption of the school. The school has authority to take disciplinary action for such misconduct at any time of the year provided that such conduct has a direct, or immediate impact on school discipline, the educational operation or function of the school, or the welfare of students or staff of the school. Such misconduct could include, but is not limited to, a felony, a delinquent act which would be considered to be a felony if committed by an adult, an assault upon another student, a violation of the laws prohibiting controlled substances, or sexual misconduct and which makes the student's continued presence at school a potential danger to persons or property at the school or which disrupts the educational process (OCGA 20-2-751.5).

Please note: if a parent/guardian or other affiliated adult is consistently unsafe or does not follow school expectations during school events, procedures or processes, the affiliated student is at risk of automatic withdrawal.



Our Core Values in Action

Our Code of Conduct is grounded in our five core values, which shape how students interact with each other and the community:

- **Love:** Treating others with kindness, empathy, and respect, and valuing every member of our community.
- **Joy:** Contributing to a positive, uplifting, and supportive learning environment where every child feels safe and celebrated.
- **Reflection:** Thinking about one's actions, learning from mistakes, and striving to grow personally and academically.
- **Purpose:** Acting with intention, taking responsibility for learning, and contributing positively to our community.
- **Ownership:** Taking responsibility for one's actions, words, and impact on others, and holding oneself accountable for growth.

Our Philosophy

We believe every child has an innate goodness that thrives when guided by consistent expectations and clear boundaries. Discipline at Sankofa Montessori is about teaching, not punishment. Our goal is to help students develop self-discipline, responsibility, and courtesy as they grow. Discipline is grounded in love and guided by logical, natural consequences.

General Principles

Discipline teaches students to behave in ways that align with our core values and our mission of fostering independence and living a life of purpose. We prioritize:

- Effective, engaging instruction that bridges standards-based learning with Montessori practices.
- Clear routines and structures that support a positive, consistent learning environment.
- Positive relationships between staff, students, and families to build a strong, inclusive community.



Student Responsibilities

Students are expected to live out these core values and follow the Code of Conduct:

- On school grounds
- In vehicles used for school purposes
- At school-sponsored events or activities
- At any time their behavior affects the safety, health, and well-being of the school community

Maintaining a Safe Learning Environment

At Sankofa Montessori, we prioritize the safety and well-being of every student and staff member. When necessary to maintain a safe learning environment, suspensions may be used as a consequence for serious infractions. Suspensions are reserved for behaviors that pose a risk to the safety of others or significantly disrupt the educational process.

Parent Partnership

We see families as essential partners in reinforcing our core values at home and at school. We expect families to work with us to support positive behavior and respond promptly when concerns arise. Parent partnership is an expectation that helps us build a strong, respectful, and effective learning environment for every child.

Additional Guidance

When needed, consequences will be fair, timely, and age-appropriate, matching the seriousness of the behavior. We use restorative practices whenever possible to help students learn from mistakes and repair harm.

School administrators may take action if a student's behavior disrupts learning or threatens safety, including off-campus incidents that impact the school community (OCGA 20-2-751.5).

Note: If a parent, guardian, or adult affiliated with a student repeatedly engages in unsafe or disruptive behavior during school events or processes, the student may be at risk of automatic withdrawal from Sankofa Montessori.

Progressive Discipline

At Sankofa Montessori, our discipline policy aligns with our core values—Love, Joy, Reflection, Purpose, and Ownership—and supports our mission of fostering independence and helping



every child learn to live a life of purpose. When a student's choices conflict with these values and cannot be resolved within the classroom, we implement a progressive discipline process. This ensures consistency, fairness, and learning opportunities while maintaining a safe, positive, and respectful environment.

The 3 D's (Aligned with Our Core Values)

- **Dangerous:** Behaviors that threaten the physical or emotional safety of others or oneself (e.g., intentional physical aggression, throwing dangerous objects). These actions undermine Love and Joy, which create a safe and positive community.
- **Destructive:** Damaging or destroying school property or personal belongings. These behaviors conflict with Ownership and Purpose, which emphasize responsibility and care for shared spaces.
- **Demeaning:** Harassment, bullying, or repeated verbal threats that target individuals or groups; this includes behavior that invades the privacy of others or is verbally abusive. These actions contradict Love and Reflection, which guide us to build respect, empathy, and personal growth.

Examples of Serious Behaviors

- Intentional physical aggression toward another person
- Possession of weapons or dangerous objects
- Bullying or harassment (when repeated and targeted)
- Inappropriate or unwanted physical contact
- Invasion of privacy (e.g., taking photos/videos without permission)
- Serious threats of aggression or harm
- Repeated disruptions of the classroom or school-wide learning environment
- Running out of the school building without permission

Rationale for Repeated Disruptions

Repeated disruptions of the classroom or school-wide learning environment significantly interfere with the learning of others and undermine the safe, productive, and respectful environment we are committed to building. When such disruptions persist despite interventions, they are considered a serious breach of our core values—especially Ownership (responsibility for one's actions) and Purpose (acting with intention). These behaviors are



categorized as Level 3 offenses to emphasize the importance of maintaining a learning environment where every student can thrive.

Progressive Discipline Levels

Behavior at Sankofa is classified into three levels:

- **Level 1 (Minor Offenses):**
Minor misbehaviors, such as a lapse in Reflection or Ownership, like off-task behavior or minor classroom disruptions. These are generally addressed with teacher intervention, redirection, and opportunities to reflect and repair.
- **Level 2 (Moderate Offenses):**
More serious acts that challenge Joy, Love, and Ownership, such as repeated defiance, moderate disruption, or disrespectful language that disrupts learning. Consequences may include a referral to the Culture Team for restorative interventions and/or an in school or out of school suspension.
- **Level 3 (Serious Offenses):**
Dangerous, destructive, or demeaning acts that compromise Love, Joy, Reflection, Purpose, and Ownership by creating a hostile or unsafe environment. These behaviors include intentional physical aggression, possession of weapons, repeated bullying or harassment, repeated disruptions of the classroom or school-wide learning environment, invasion of privacy, inappropriate or unwanted touch, or other acts that seriously endanger the safety or emotional well-being of others. Consequences may include in- or out-of-school suspension, referral to the Culture Team, and/or a disciplinary hearing.

Referral to the Culture Team

At Sankofa Montessori, the Culture Team is comprised of the Manager of Student Culture, the Director of Student Support and Culture, and the school's leadership team. When a student demonstrates repeated tier 2 or a tier 3 behavior, a referral to the Culture Team is made to partner with families, apply restorative practices, and provide guidance that aligns with our core values. The Culture Team ensures that students are supported and that the learning environment remains safe, inclusive, and productive.



Important Note

- **Suicidal threats or ideation:** Any expression of self-harm is treated as a mental health concern, not a discipline matter. Immediate safety protocols and support services are activated.
- **Title IX Violations:** Behaviors implicating Title IX regulations are managed according to our Title IX policy.

At Sankofa Montessori, discipline is about teaching—not punishment. Our goal is to help every child grow in independence, responsibility, and respect for others while upholding our core values and maintaining a safe and positive learning environment.

Behavior Level Consequences

Level	Breaches of Code of Conduct
Minor Incidents 1	Behaviors that conflict with Reflection and Ownership typically momentary lapses in judgment that can often be resolved through teacher redirection and restorative conversations. ● Verbal assault (name-calling, rude remarks) ● Use of profanity or obscene language ● Possession of nuisance devices or objects that cause distractions during learning (e.g., toys, radios, phones) ● Falsification of records ● Academic dishonesty (plagiarism or cheating) ● Repetitive acts of defiance or insubordination toward staff members
Moderate Incidents 2	Behaviors that challenge Love, Joy, and Reflection actions that disrupt the learning community and require administrative intervention and referral to the Culture Team. ● Physical or verbal threats (including reporting or staging false dangerous/hazardous situations) ● Minor acts causing harm to another person (peers or adults) even if accidental or due to poor judgment (pushing, shoving,



	grabbing etc). • Inappropriate or disrespectful language toward teachers or staff • Defacement/damage of property or theft/possession of stolen property • Possession of look-alike weapons • Elopement from the classroom or assigned areas • False allegations against staff, students, or volunteers • Disruption of the learning environment (repeatedly interfering with the ability of others to learn)
Serious Incidents 3	Behaviors that severely violate Love, Joy, Purpose, and Ownership—these actions pose a risk to the safety and well-being of others or significantly disrupt the learning environment, warranting immediate administrative response. • Extreme acts of defiance or threats toward teachers, staff, or students • Elopement from the school building • Fighting, physical assault, or battery on another person • Intentionally hitting, kicking, biting, or spitting causing harm to another student or staff member • Terroristic threats • Verbal threats involving mortal harm, weapons, or extreme violence • Inappropriate touch (including private areas) or gesturing of inappropriate touch toward another student • Possession of fireworks, explosives, or chemical substances • Criminal sexual conduct • Sexual assault, battery, abuse, and/or harassment • Invasion of privacy in the bathroom • Indecent exposure (exposing genital areas) • Possession of dangerous weapons • Arson • Bullying (including cyberbullying) and harassment • Sharing or dissemination of profane, obscene, lewd, or pornographic images, URL links, or websites • Inappropriate, abusive, threatening, or demeaning actions



	based on race, color, creed, religion, sex, disability, national origin, or sexual orientation • Chronic disciplinary problems that disrupt the learning environment and show a disregard for school rules
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Due Process Procedures

At Sankofa Montessori, we are committed to fostering a safe, respectful, and positive learning environment. We use logical consequences whenever possible and limit suspensions and expulsions except when necessary to protect the safety of students and staff.

This section outlines the due process procedures governing student suspensions and expulsions. For students receiving services under an IEP or 504 Plan, please refer to the Manifestation Hearing section.

Immediate Safety Concerns

If a student's presence at school poses an immediate danger to others, the school administration may immediately suspend the student and provide due process as soon as possible thereafter.

Suspension of Ten (10) School Days or Less

Before suspending a student for up to ten (10) days, the school administration will:

- Inform the student of the charges.
- If the student denies the charges, explain the evidence.
- Give the student an opportunity to share their side of the story.

If suspension is necessary, the school administration will inform the parent (by phone or in person) of the suspension, the reasons, and any conditions.

- Suspensions of ten (10) or fewer days are final and cannot be appealed.
- In compliance with O.C.G.A. § 20-2-742, students in Pre-K through 3rd grade cannot be suspended for more than five (5) days in a school year unless the student:
 - Brought a weapon or dangerous instrument,
 - Possessed illegal drugs, or
 - Engaged in behavior endangering the physical safety of others.

Suspension for Eleven (11) or More Days and Expulsion



- The school administration may recommend a suspension longer than ten (10) days or expulsion by referring the case to a hearing officer appointed by the Board of Directors.
- The hearing officer must meet all Georgia training requirements.

Hearing Notice:

- The school will notify the student and parent in writing (via registered mail) of:
 - The alleged violation
 - The proposed disciplinary action
 - The student's and parent's right to a due process hearing

Hearing Rights:

- The hearing will be held in closed session, and a written record will be kept.
- The student and parent may have an advocate present (at their own expense) and can review the evidence, present their own evidence, and provide testimony.
- Within 24 hours of the hearing, the hearing officer will issue a written decision and inform the student and parent of their right to appeal.

Appeal:

- Appeals must be submitted in writing within five (5) days of receiving the hearing decision, outlining the reasons for the appeal.
- Appeals will be presented to the Board of Directors at the next regular meeting.
- The Board of Directors will review the decision and notify the family in writing of its decision within five (5) business days.
- The Board's decision is final.

Additional Provisions

- **Educational Needs:** During long-term suspension or expulsion, the parent/guardian is responsible for arranging for the student's educational needs.
- **Voluntary Agreements:** The Executive Director may enter into a written agreement with the student and parent to settle disciplinary charges or address restitution.
- **Trespassing:** Suspended or expelled students who come onto school property or attend school events without permission will be considered trespassing.



- **Maintaining Class Progress:** When possible, students may continue to make progress during suspension.

Definitions

- **Behavior Referral Report:** A written record of the student's misconduct.
- **Behavior Contract:** Outlines expected behavior and consequences.
- **In-School Suspension:** Removal from the classroom but continuation of coursework under supervision.
- **Out-of-School Suspension:** Temporary removal from school.
- **Long-Term Suspension:** More than ten days, but less than a semester.
- **Expulsion:** Removal for a period longer than a semester.
- **Permanent Expulsion:** Permanent removal from the school.
- **Parent Shadow Days:** Alternative to suspension where a parent must attend school with the student.

Notes

- The school leadership may address other acts of misconduct not specifically listed here if they interfere with school operations, the educational process, or the safety of students and staff.
- The decision to suspend a student in-school vs. out-of-school will depend on the severity and frequency of the behavior, at the discretion of the school leadership team.

Recommendation for Expulsion

Expulsion is defined as the permanent exclusion from the school. Expulsion is only an appropriate consequence when a student engages in an alarming disregard to the safety of others, and/or where it is necessary to safeguard the well-being of other students.

O.C.G.A 20-2-751.1 requires that Sankofa Montessori expel students that are in possession of a firearm or dangerous weapon at school for no less than one calendar year.

Consequence Matrix

Disciplinary incidents that result in out-of-school suspensions will be logged into the school's School Information System (SIS) and become a part of your student's permanent record.



Kindergarten

Number of Incidents	Level 1 (Minor)	Level 2 (Moderate)	Level 3 (Serious)
1	Verbal Redirection -> Reminder of Expectations	Parent Contact	Teacher Parent Contact -> In-School Reset (half day)
2	Teacher Parent Contact	Parent Contact -> In-School Reset (full day)	In - School Reset (full day)
3	Referral to student culture team -> Family Meeting ->MTSS Intervention implemented	Referral to student culture team -> Family Meeting ->MTSS Intervention implemented	1 day of out of school suspension
4	1 day of in school reset	2 days of in school reset	1 day of out of school suspension -> Family Meeting
5	2 days of in school reset	1 day of out of school suspension ->Family Meeting	2 day out of school suspension -> Parent Shadow Day
6	1 day of out of school suspension ->Family Meeting	2 days of out of school suspension ->Parent Shadow Day	3 days of out of school suspension -> Risk of Expulsion Meeting
7	2 days of out of school suspension ->Parent Shadow Day	Family Meeting ->2 days of out of school suspension -> Behavior Contract	4 days out of school referral -> Expulsion Referral
8	2 days of out of school suspension ->	Risk of Expulsion Family Meeting ->3	5 days of out of school referral - >



	Risk of Expulsion Family Meeting -> Behavior Contract	days of out of school suspension	Expulsion Referral
9	3 days of out of school suspension -> Expulsion Hearing Referral	4 days of out of school suspension -> Expulsion Hearing Referral	Out of school suspension pending results of expulsion hearing
10	Out of school suspension pending results of expulsion hearing		

Lower & Upper Elementary (1st - 6th grade)

Number of Incidents	Level 1 (Minor)	Level 2 (Moderate)	Level 3 (Serious)
1	Teacher Verbal Warning	Parent Contact	Parent Contact -> 2 days of in school reset
2	Teacher Parent Contact	Parent Contact -> 1 day of in school reset	1 day of out of school suspension ->Family Meeting
3	Referral to student culture team -> Family Meeting ->MTSS Intervention implemented	Referral to student culture team -> Family Meeting ->MTSS Intervention implemented	2 days of out of school suspension ->Parent Shadow Day
4	1 day of in school reset	2 days of in school suspension	3 days out of school suspension -> Family Meeting -> Behavior Contract
5	2 days of in school reset	1 day of out of school suspension ->Family	Risk of Expulsion Family Meeting ->4



		Meeting	days of out of school suspension
6	1 day of out of school suspension ->Family Meeting	2 days of out of school suspension ->Parent Shadow Day	4 days of out of school suspension -> Expulsion Hearing Referral
7	2 days of out of school suspension ->Parent Shadow Day	Family Meeting ->2 days of out of school suspension -> Behavior Contract	Out of School Suspension pending hearing results
8	2 days of out of school suspension -> Risk of Expulsion Family Meeting -> Behavior Contract	Risk of Expulsion Family Meeting ->3 days of out of school suspension	
9	3 days of out of school suspension -> Expulsion Hearing Referral	4 days of out of school suspension -> Expulsion Hearing Referral	
10	Out of School Suspension pending hearing results		

A student violating any of the acts of misconduct listed in the Student Code of Conduct shall be held accountable in a manner that is logical and developmentally appropriate.

Administration at Sankofa Montessori has the right to issue consequences not aligned to this consequence matrix. Additionally, a student who engages in an act of misconduct that violates the law may be referred to law enforcement.

Reporting Incidents

Any staff member who becomes aware of a misconduct incident, including theft, damaging property, or other actions that break trust, should immediately report it to the designated leadership team member.

The reporting staff member should provide relevant details, including the date, time, location, and any available evidence or witnesses related to the incident.



Investigation

The designated leadership team member will initiate a thorough investigation into the reported misconduct incident promptly and with confidentiality.

The investigation may involve interviewing involved parties, reviewing any available evidence, such as surveillance footage or witness statements, and consulting with other relevant staff members as necessary. Parents will only be made aware of their individual student's involvement in an incident.

Restoration Process

If the investigation establishes that a student has engaged in misconduct, including theft, damaging property, or actions that break trust or cause harm, the student will be subject to the restoration process.

The purpose of restoration is to hold the student accountable for their actions, facilitate their understanding of the impact of their misconduct, and support their personal growth and responsibility.

Restoration may include one or more of the following actions, depending on the severity of the incident and the student's age:

1. Apology
2. Restitution of damaged property
3. Educational intervention
4. Parental involvement
5. Community service
6. Restorative circles

Documentation

The leadership team at Sankofa Montessori will maintain a confidential record of the incident, investigation process, and restorative measures undertaken. Documentation will include relevant details, actions taken, any agreed-upon plans for monitoring the student's progress, and efforts made to prevent future incidents.

Incident Review Process

After a major incident is reported, the Culture team will complete the following steps to confirm a consequence and communicate with the families of all involved students.



1. **Gather information:** Talk to all involved parties and try to get a clear understanding of what happened. Do a pulse check on how the involved parties are processing what happened and what support they may need to restore and rebuild a relationship, property or privilege. The goal will be to get all the facts before deciding on a consequence.
2. **Reinforce expectations:** Remind all involved parties of expectations for behavior and explain the impact of the decisions made. Based on the severity of the decision, there may be a loss of privilege immediately or a warning about consequences for not following expectations.
3. **Determine a consequence:** The consequence will be developmentally appropriate and consistent with the Code of Conduct. Depending on the severity of the behavior and the school's policies, a consequence could include a warning, a loss of privilege, a phone call or note home to the parent, or a plan. For more severe incidents, suspension or expulsion may be the consequence. Families are notified of all incident referrals.
4. **Follow up:** Check in with involved parties again later to see how they all are feeling and whether the behavior has improved. Reinforce positive behavior and continue to provide guidance and support as needed.

Pursuant to OCGA Section 20-2-735, discipline will be in proportion to the severity of the behavior leading to the discipline. The prior disciplinary history of the student during the current school year and other relevant factors will be taken into account and due process procedures required by federal and state law will be followed. However, it is important for all students and parents to note that the circumstances of particular violations may warrant more severe consequences even on the first violation. The School reserves the right, in school administration's sole and exclusive discretion, to take any and all actions necessary to protect its students, provide a safe and secure learning environment, and to ensure the orderly operation of the educational process including providing more severe consequences for certain violations.

Determination of the severity of an infraction is at the discretion of the Sankofa Administration. In cases of severe infractions, local, state, or federal legal authorities may be contacted.

Anti-Bullying Policy

The school prohibits acts of harassment, intimidation or bullying (including cyber-bullying and sexual harassment) of any student on school property or at a school sponsored event. Bullying is defined as any willful attempt or threat to inflict injury on another person, when



accompanied by an apparent present ability to do so or any intentional display of force such as would give the victim reason to fear or expect immediate bodily harm. It can be non-verbal, verbal, emotional or physical.

Our definition of bullying is any repeated or intentional act or behavior, whether verbal, physical, or written, that targets an individual or group with the intent to harm, threaten, or cause fear. Examples of bullying include but are not limited to name-calling, physical aggression, social exclusion, cyberbullying, and intimidation.

Cyberbullying/Electronic Bullying: Bullying can occur on school property or through school technology resources but can also occur through the use of electronic communications. Whether or not that communication originated on school property with school technology resources, if the electronic communication is directed specifically at students or school personnel, maliciously intended for the purpose threatening the safety of those specified or substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school, creates a reasonable fear of harm to the students' or school personnel's person or property or has a high likelihood of succeeding in that purpose it is considered a form of cyberbullying.

We have put in place the following procedures to prevent and address bullying in our school:

1. **Reporting:** Students, staff, volunteers and parents are encouraged to report bullying behavior to the school administration immediately. The school will take all reports of bullying seriously, and we will investigate each incident thoroughly. No person who reports bullying will be retaliated against by any Sankofa Montessori employee.
2. **Investigation and response:** Once a report of bullying is received, the school administration will conduct a prompt and thorough investigation. This will include speaking with the victim, the alleged bully, and any witnesses. If the investigation reveals that bullying has occurred, the school will take appropriate disciplinary action in accordance with our school's code of conduct.
3. **Consequences:** Consequences for bullying may include, but are not limited to, counseling, suspension, expulsion, or involvement of law enforcement. The severity and frequency of the bullying, the age of the students involved, and any other relevant factors will be considered when determining appropriate consequences.
4. **Support for targeted students:** We are committed to providing support for students who have been targeted by bullying. This may include check ins, referrals for outside counseling, academic support, and other interventions to promote their well-being.
5. **Prevention and education:** We believe that prevention and education are key to promoting a culture of respect and preventing bullying. We will provide ongoing education and training to



students, staff, and parents on bullying prevention, positive communication, and conflict resolution.

Students on Section 504 Plans and Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) qualify for the protections of a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). If a student with a disability is targeted by bullying, Sankofa Montessori will take immediate and appropriate action to investigate or otherwise determine what occurred. If the school's investigation reveals that bullying based on disability created a hostile environment, Sankofa will take prompt and effective steps reasonably calculated to end the bullying, eliminate the hostile environment, prevent it from recurring, and, as appropriate, remedy its effects.

If the student is caught in another bullying incident, then he/she will be suspended. In order for the student to return to school the parent must meet with the leadership of Sankofa Montessori to develop a plan for the bullying to stop.

Students, parents/guardians and other stakeholders should report incidents of bullying to an administrator or teacher using Sankofa's procedures or by calling the Georgia Department of Education's 1-877 SAY-STOP (1-877-729-7867) School Safety Hotline. Please note: Any form of electronic bullying (cyberbullying) using school equipment, school networks, e-mail systems or committed at school is strictly prohibited.

Disciplinary Hearings

Student Questioning by Officials

School Administrators have the responsibility and authority to question students for the purpose of maintaining a safe and orderly school environment. Though it is important to inform parents about issues of concern, parental consent or presence is not required prior to the questioning of students.

- **Department of Family and Child Services (DFCS):** DFCS officials investigating suspected child abuse are permitted to conduct reasonable interviews and inspections of children. Notice to parents is neither required nor desirable when the object of that investigation may be the parents. If the investigation involves suspected child abuse by individuals other than those residing in the child's household, parents will be informed that such interviews are being requested, if prior notification is possible.
- **Guardian Ad Litem:** The Guardian Ad Litem is a trained professional appointed by the court to represent the best interests of minor children in court cases. Any request to interview a student or to inspect the student's school record should be submitted, in



writing, along with court documentation establishing the Guardian Ad Litem relationship with the child.

Disciplinary Process for Students with Disabilities

Students who are served under IDEA (Special Education) or under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 are entitled to certain additional rights in the area of discipline based upon their qualification for services under these federal laws.

Students for whom an IEP includes specific disciplinary guidelines will be disciplined in accordance with those guidelines. If the disciplinary guidelines appear not to be effective or if there is a concern for the health or safety of the student or others, the matter will be immediately referred to the Special Education Team.

Students for whom an IEP does not include specific disciplinary guidelines may be disciplined in accordance with standard school policy relating to each infraction if it is determined by the IEP Team that the behavior is not a manifestation of his or her IEP.

Parents/ guardians may request a hearing to challenge the manifestation determination and the child shall remain in his or her current educational placement while the hearing is pending.

A student suspected of having a disability shall be referred to the IEP Team for evaluation.

Uniforms and Dress Code

Our policy is intentionally written to minimize the risk of students missing instructional time as a result of dress code. It is also written to minimize the time spent by teachers in addressing dress code.

Dress Code Philosophy and Equity Statement

At Sankofa Montessori, we believe that every child should be able to dress comfortably and confidently for school, without fear of unnecessary discipline or body shaming. Our approach bridges traditional expectations with Montessori values, focusing on respect, safety, and equity.



Why We Have a Uniform Policy:

- To reduce social pressures about clothing brands and styles.
- To provide predictable, accessible daily clothing choices.
- To maintain a safe learning environment in areas like PE, art, and science.
- To allow students to choose from a variety of uniform options and express their gender identity.
- To respect religious attire.
- To prohibit clothing or accessories with offensive, violent, hateful, or illegal imagery or language.

Equity and Inclusion:

We ensure that all students are treated equitably, regardless of race, sex, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion, cultural observance, household income, or body type/size.

Key Principles:

- Certain body parts must be covered at all times.
- Clothes must fully cover undergarments, buttocks, upper thighs, and chests with opaque fabric.
- Dress code enforcement should never create barriers to learning or participation.
- Staff will always use student- and body-positive language when discussing dress code expectations.
- Teachers should be able to focus on teaching—not policing attire.

Uniform Vendor:

- All uniforms must be purchased from our exclusive vendor due to contractual obligations.
- Families are not permitted to create or purchase additional items with the Sankofa Montessori logo.
- The school cannot license or lend our logo for unofficial use.

At Sankofa Montessori, all students are required to wear the school uniform every day to promote a focused, equitable, and safe learning environment.

Uniform Requirements:



- **Tops:** Approved Sankofa-branded shirts or dresses purchased through our authorized uniform vendor. Long or loose shirts must be tucked in.
- **Bottoms:** Solid-colored navy or khaki ONLY pants, shorts, or skirts (knee-length, no logos or patterns). No sweatpants, jeans, athletic gear, leggings, or jeggings. Jeans may only be worn on days approved by the school and announced in advance.
 - Leggings or tights are permitted in navy or khaki only and can only be worn under skirts or shorts
 - No markings, logos, patterns, or distressed garments.
 - No sweatpants, athletic gear, jeggings, or jeans.
 - Jeans can be worn on specified days when communicated by the school's leadership team only
 - Pants must be worn at the waist; sagging is not permitted.
- **Outerwear:** Only Sankofa-branded sweaters, fleeces, or sweatshirts purchased through our authorized uniform vendor may be worn inside the classroom.
 - All other outerwear must be removed indoors.
 - Coats and jackets may be worn outdoors but must be taken off when inside.
- **Footwear:** Closed-toe shoes only, appropriate for movement and safe play.
 - Slides, Crocs, open-toed sandals, flip-flops, heels, and heeled shoes are not allowed.
- **Change of Clothes:** Kindergarteners must keep an emergency change of clothes at school.
 - Change of clothes should be labeled with the student's name and placed in a Ziploc bag. The bag should be kept in the student's backpack.
- **Field Lessons:** Uniforms must be worn on all field lessons for safety and easy identification unless otherwise communicated.

Students Cannot Wear:

- Violent language or images
- Images or language depicting drugs, alcohol, or illegal items/activities
- Hate speech, profanity, or pornography
- Images or language that create a hostile or intimidating environment
- Clothing that reveals undergarments
- Swimsuits (except as required in class or practice)
- Accessories that could be considered dangerous or weapon-like
- Hats, scarves, Ties, Bowties, or accessories that are not core to the outfit and could easily be lost



Students who wear items that do not meet these requirements will be asked to remove or adjust them.

Dress Code Enforcement

At Sankofa Montessori, we are committed to ensuring all students follow the uniform policy so they can focus on learning in a safe, welcoming, and equitable environment. To ensure consistent implementation of the dress code policy, the Manager of Student Culture and Discipline will be responsible for completing an informal uniform check as a part of Morning Arrival.

Steps for Addressing Uniform Infractions:

- **First Incident:** The student will receive an Out of Uniform Notice that details the specific uniform infraction and serves as a reminder of the expectations.
- **Second Incident:** A parent phone call will be made to inform the family of the specific uniform infraction.
- **Third Incident:** A referral to the Student Support Services Team will be made to discuss and address the issue collaboratively.
- **Fourth Incident:** The parent/guardian will be required to attend an in-person conference to address the uniform concerns.
- **Fifth Incident:** The student will receive an in-school suspension for repeated uniform non-compliance.

Additional Information:

If a student repeatedly comes to school out of uniform, the school will hold a conference with the family to identify and resolve any barriers to consistent uniform use. When necessary, parents/guardians may be called during the school day to bring alternative clothing for their child.

Equity Commitment:

No student will face different or stricter dress code enforcement because of their race, sex assigned at birth, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, ethnicity, cultural or religious identity, household income, body size/type, or body maturity.

Dress code enforcement will be implemented with respect and sensitivity. Students will never be asked to display their body in front of others. This means:



- No kneeling or bending over to check fit
- No measuring straps or skirt length
- No asking students to explain or defend their attire in front of others
- No calling out students in hallways or classrooms about dress code in front of others
- No confronting students about visible waistbands or bra straps, since these are permitted