



**Rawdah Montessori Primary School**  
**Positive Behaviour (Character), Praise and Reward Policy**

**Version:** 2.0

**Reviewed:** October 2025

**Next Review Due:** October 2026

## **1. Policy Statement**

At Rawdah Montessori, we believe that behaviour is an expression of the child's developing inner self. Our approach to behaviour, praise and reward is rooted in the Montessori philosophy of **respect for the child, intrinsic motivation** and the development of **character** as a natural outcome of a prepared environment. We do not rely on external rewards (stickers, charts, prizes, or punishments) to shape behaviour. Instead, we guide children towards self-discipline, responsibility and genuine consideration for others through:

- A carefully **prepared environment** that meets the developmental needs of each age group;
- **Grace and courtesy** lessons embedded in daily practice;
- **Modelling** by adults of respectful, kind and calm behaviour;
- **Descriptive praise** that acknowledges effort, process and character;
- **Logical and natural consequences** that help children learn from their choices;
- **Collaborative problem-solving** that respects the child's voice.

This policy applies to all children, staff, volunteers and parents interacting within the school community. It is designed to be read alongside our Safeguarding, Anti-Bullying and Behaviour Management policies (where specific risk-related behaviours are addressed).

## 2. Our Montessori Foundation

Maria Montessori observed that young children possess an **absorbent mind** and a natural drive towards order, co-operation and purposeful activity. When the environment is properly prepared, children develop **self-discipline** (what Montessori called "normalisation") without needing external rewards or punishments.

Key principles underpinning this policy:

Principle	Meaning at Rawdah Montessori
<b>Intrinsic motivation</b>	Children work and behave well because the activity itself is satisfying, not because they expect a sticker or a treat.
<b>Respect for the child</b>	We treat every child as a capable, worthy individual. We listen to their feelings and perspectives.
<b>Freedom within limits</b>	Children are free to move, choose work and interact, provided they do not harm themselves, others or the environment.
<b>Natural and logical consequences</b>	A child who spills water cleans it up (natural). A child who disturbs another's work is invited to choose a different activity (logical).
<b>Grace and courtesy</b>	Social skills are explicitly taught through small-group lessons and modelled consistently by adults.
<b>The prepared environment</b>	The classroom layout, materials, routines and expectations are designed to support peaceful, purposeful behaviour.

### 3. Positive Behaviour Guidance: Everyday Practice

#### 3.1 The Role of the Adult

All staff at Rawdah Montessori act as **calm, respectful role models**. They:

- Speak to children at eye level, using a quiet, kind voice.
- Use positive language: "Please walk indoors" rather than "Don't run."
- Acknowledge the child's feelings: "I see you are frustrated that the puzzle piece won't fit."
- Offer choices within limits: "You may join the snack table now or in five minutes."
- Avoid shouting, shaming, sarcasm or any form of humiliating a child.

#### 3.2 Grace and Courtesy Lessons

Grace and courtesy are integral to the Montessori curriculum. From the earliest ages, children receive **explicit, small-group lessons** on:

- How to interrupt politely ("Excuse me, may I speak with you?");
- How to greet someone and say goodbye;
- How to offer help to a friend who has dropped something;
- How to wait for a turn;
- How to apologise and accept an apology;
- How to walk around a mat rather than stepping over it;
- How to ask for permission to join another child's work.

These lessons are **modelled, practised and revisited** throughout the year, especially during transitions or when new children join the community.

### 3.3 Classroom Norms (Developed with Children)

In Lower and Upper Elementary classrooms, guides facilitate **community meetings** where children co-create classroom norms or a "social contract". Examples might include:

- "We use walking feet indoors."
- "We listen when someone is speaking."
- "We return materials to their place."
- "We use kind words, even when we disagree."

These norms are displayed, referred to and reviewed regularly. They give children ownership of their behaviour.

### 3.4 Redirecting Low-Level Disruption

When a child behaves in a way that disrupts the environment (e.g., running indoors, being loud, interfering with another's work), the adult:

1. **Observes** first – is the child tired, hungry, seeking attention or simply not yet knowing the expectation?
2. **Approaches calmly** and gets to the child's level.
3. **States the expectation positively** – "In our classroom, we use quiet voices."
4. **Offers a re-direction** – "Would you like to carry the water pitcher to the table, or shall we do it together?"
5. **If the behaviour continues**, the adult may invite the child to take a break or choose a different activity, explaining: "It seems difficult to use the blocks gently right now. Let's find another work. You may try the blocks again after lunch."

This approach preserves the child's dignity while maintaining order.

## 4. Praise: Descriptive, Not Evaluative

Authentic Montessori practice avoids **evaluative praise** ("Good job!", "You're so clever!") because it can undermine intrinsic motivation, create dependency on external approval and label the child rather than describing the action.

## 4.1 What We Do Instead

Staff use **descriptive praise** – simply and factually describing what the child has done or the effort they have shown. This helps the child internalise their own satisfaction.

Instead of saying ...	We say ...
"Good job!"	"You worked on that puzzle for a long time and finished it."
"You're so smart."	"I noticed you tried three different ways to solve that maths problem."
"Beautiful drawing!"	"I see you used blue and green circles. Tell me about your drawing."
"Well done for helping."	"You saw that Sofia dropped her tray, and you helped her pick everything up. That was kind."

## 4.2 Acknowledging Character and Effort

We specifically acknowledge **effort, perseverance, kindness and responsibility**:

- "You kept trying even when the tower fell over. That shows resilience."
- "You waited for your turn at the sink without being reminded. That was respectful."
- "You remembered to put the map back on the shelf. That shows care for our classroom."

## 4.3 Non-Verbal Acknowledgment

A smile, a nod, a gentle hand on the shoulder, or simply pausing to watch a child's work can be more powerful than words. These gestures communicate: "I see you. I appreciate your focus."

#### 4.4 Sharing Observations with Parents

At parent conferences or through learning journals, staff share **descriptive observations** of the child's character development:

- "Aisha has been showing great patience when waiting for the sandpaper letters."
- "Yusuf offered to help a younger child roll their mat three times this week."

### 5. Rewards and Incentives: What We Do Not Do

Rawdah Montessori does **not** use:

- **Sticker charts or token economies** – these external rewards shift motivation from internal satisfaction to earning a prize.
- **Whole-class rewards** (e.g., "If everyone is quiet, we get extra playtime") – these create peer pressure and do not support individual self-regulation.
- **Public shaming or "name on the board"** – this damages trust and the child's sense of belonging.
- **Material prizes for good behaviour** – sweets, toys or certificates for "student of the week".

#### 5.1 Why We Avoid External Rewards

Research and Montessori experience both show that external rewards:

- Undermine **intrinsic motivation** – the child works for the reward, not for the joy of learning or the satisfaction of self-discipline.

- Create **competition** rather than community.
- Are **ineffective in the long term** – children become accustomed to rewards and require ever-larger incentives.
- Do not teach **internal moral reasoning** – the child behaves well to get something, not because they understand why kindness matters.

## 5.2 What We Offer Instead

We offer:

- The **natural satisfaction** of completing a challenging work.
- **Recognition** of effort and character through descriptive praise.
- **Authentic celebrations** of community achievements (e.g., a class meal prepared together after a project).
- **Privileges** that are part of normal classroom life (e.g., being the line leader, caring for the class plant) – these are rotated fairly, not used as rewards.
- **Positive notes or verbal feedback to parents** describing the child's specific positive actions, without external prizes.

## 6. Logical and Natural Consequences

When a child makes a choice that harms someone, damages the environment or disrupts the community, we use **consequences that are logical, respectful and educational**.

Behaviour	Consequence
A child spills water while carrying a pitcher.	The child is shown how to wipe it up (with adult help if needed). No punishment – the consequence is natural.

A child deliberately knocks over another child's block tower.	The child is invited to help rebuild the tower or to offer an apology. The adult facilitates a conversation: "How do you think your friend felt? What can you do to make it right?"
A child runs indoors after being reminded to walk.	The adult calmly says: "I see you are finding it hard to walk indoors. Please go back to the door and try walking again." (A logical, immediate consequence that gives the child a fresh opportunity.)
A child refuses to join the group for a transition.	The adult gives a gentle warning, then a choice: "You may walk with me now, or I will help you walk with me. Which will it be?" (Not punitive – the consequence is that the adult assists the child to follow the expectation.)
A child repeatedly disturbs others during the work cycle.	The child is invited to sit quietly at a "calm down" space (not a naughty corner) with a sensory object or a book. After a few minutes, the adult asks: "Are you ready to return to your work?" If not, the adult may say: "You may choose a quiet work at this table near me."

**Important:** Consequences are **never**:

- Withholding food, playtime or outdoor time as punishment;
- Public humiliation or shouting;
- Physical punishment of any kind (illegal and contrary to our ethos).

## 7. Managing Persistent or Serious Behaviour Concerns

Most behaviour at Rawdah Montessori is managed through the everyday practices above. However, when a child displays **persistent challenging behaviour** (e.g., aggression, repeated defiance, verbal abuse) or **serious one-off incidents** (e.g., physical harm to another child), we follow a structured process.

## 7.1 Observation and Recording

The class guide or the Head Teacher observes the child to identify patterns, triggers and unmet needs. A simple ABC (Antecedent, Behaviour, Consequence) record may be kept.

## 7.2 Meeting with the Child

A private, calm conversation is held with the child (age-appropriate). The adult:

- Describes the observed behaviour factually.
- Asks the child's perspective: "What was happening for you?"
- Listens without judgement.
- Collaboratively agrees on a plan: "What can we do differently next time?"

## 7.3 Involving Parents

Parents are partners in supporting the child. The class guide or Head Teacher will arrange a meeting to:

- Share observations in a non-blaming way;
- Listen to the parent's insights (home context, health, sleep, recent changes);
- Agree on a consistent approach across home and school;
- Offer support (e.g., referral to an educational psychologist, play therapy, or a paediatrician if needed).

## 7.4 Individual Behaviour Plan

For a child who needs additional support, the school will create an **Individual Behaviour Plan (IBP)** , which includes:

- Clear, positive behaviour goals;
- Specific environmental adjustments (e.g., a quieter workspace, a visual timetable, movement breaks);
- A consistent adult response to target behaviours;
- A review date.

## 7.5 Zero-Tolerance Behaviours

Certain behaviours are never acceptable and will trigger immediate safeguarding or disciplinary procedures in line with our separate policies. These include:

- Physical violence causing injury;
- Sexualised behaviour or language;
- Racist, homophobic or discriminatory remarks;
- Bullying (repeated, intentional hurtful behaviour).

In such cases, the school will follow its Behaviour Management, Anti-Bullying and Safeguarding policies, which may involve suspension, exclusion or referral to external agencies. This policy on positive behaviour does not override the school's duty to protect children.

## 8. The Role of the Prepared Environment

Prevention is better than cure. The Montessori prepared environment is the **first and most powerful tool** for positive behaviour.

Element	How it Supports Positive Behaviour
<b>Order</b>	Materials are complete, clean and arranged logically. Children know where things belong, reducing frustration and conflict.

<b>Freedom of choice</b>	Children choose work that meets their inner needs, so they are engaged and purposeful. Boredom – a common cause of misbehaviour – is minimised.
<b>Child-sized furniture and tools</b>	Children can manage their environment independently, fostering confidence and responsibility.
<b>Uninterrupted work cycles</b>	Three-hour work cycles allow deep concentration. Distractions and rushed transitions are reduced.
<b>Mixed-age groupings</b>	Younger children learn from older models; older children develop leadership and empathy. Peer mentoring naturally encourages positive behaviour.
<b>Limited number of each material</b>	Only one of each material is available. Children learn to wait, negotiate and respect another's work.

Staff are trained to recognise when the environment needs adjustment – for example, if several children are restless, the guide may offer more outdoor time, simplify a shelf, or give new presentations on grace and courtesy.

## 9. Praise and Recognition Beyond the Classroom

While we avoid external rewards, we do celebrate **community achievements** and **character milestones** in age-appropriate ways.

### 9.1 Class Celebrations

At the end of a group project or after a particularly peaceful week, the class may share a special snack prepared together, have extra outdoor time, or read a story chosen by the group. These are **communal acknowledgments**, not rewards for individual compliance.

## 9.2 Circle Sharing

During morning or closing circle, the guide may say: "Today I noticed that everyone remembered to push in their chairs. Thank you for taking care of our classroom." This acknowledges collective effort without singling out individuals.

## 9.3 Written Notes Home

Staff may send a brief, descriptive note home (or email) to a parent:

*"Dear Mrs Khan, today Zayn helped a new child find the peg for their coat and showed him how to roll a mat. It was a lovely example of our school's value of kindness."*

This reinforces positive behaviour without a sticker or prize.

## 9.4 "Virtues" or Character Language

Our school may adopt a set of **character virtues** (e.g., respect, responsibility, kindness, patience, courage, honesty). Staff use this language descriptively:

- "You showed patience when you waited for your turn at the pouring activity."
- "That was a courageous thing to do – you tried the long division even though it looked hard."

No rewards or points are attached to virtues. They are simply part of our shared vocabulary for growth.

## 10. Partnership with Parents

Parents are essential partners in developing their child's character. The school will:

- Share this policy with all parents at enrolment and annually thereafter.
- Offer parent workshops or written guidance on using descriptive praise, logical consequences and Montessori-friendly strategies at home.
- Discuss behaviour and character development during parent–teacher conferences, using specific observations and collaborative goal-setting.
- Encourage parents to avoid external rewards (stickers, treats for good behaviour) at home where possible, but we respect that families may have different approaches. Our policy applies only to school hours and school-led activities.

Where a parent uses rewards or punishments at home that are inconsistent with our approach, we do not criticise. Instead, we explain our reasons and invite dialogue.

## **11. Staff Training and Consistency**

All staff receive induction and ongoing training on:

- The Montessori view of behaviour and discipline;
- How to give descriptive praise and avoid evaluative language;
- How to use logical consequences calmly and consistently;
- How to recognise and address persistent behaviour concerns;
- How to model grace and courtesy in all interactions.

We hold termly staff meetings to review behaviour incidents, share effective strategies and ensure consistency across all classrooms and age groups (Children's House, Lower Elementary, Upper Elementary).

## **12. Monitoring and Review**

- The Head Teacher, together with the class guides, monitors the implementation of this policy through classroom observations, incident records and feedback from parents and staff.
- Any pattern of behaviour incidents is analysed to identify environmental or training needs.
- This policy is reviewed **annually** by the Head Teacher, or sooner if a significant incident or change in legislation requires it.

The policy is made available to parents on the school's website and upon request.

### 13. Related Policies

This policy should be read alongside:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Behaviour Management Policy (for serious or persistent breaches)
- Health and Safety Policy
- Parent Partnership Policy

### 14. Appendix: Example Language for Staff (Quick Reference)

Situation	Instead of ...	Say ...
Child finishes a difficult puzzle	"You're so clever!"	"You kept trying until every piece fitted. That took concentration."
Child shares a snack	"Good sharing!"	"I saw you offer half your apple to Leila. That was thoughtful."
Child helps tidy up	"Good boy/girl!"	"You put the pink tower back in order. Now the shelf is ready for someone else."

Child is upset and hits	"No hitting! Go to time out."	"I see you are angry. I won't let you hit. Let's go to the calm corner together."
Child is running indoors	"Stop running!"	"Please walk indoors. Let's go back to the door and walk again."
Child refuses to do a task	"You have to do it now."	"You may choose to do it now, or after you have finished your other work. Which do you prefer?"

## Review of Policy Dates

REVIEW DATE	REVIEWED BY	SIGNED OFF (Name & Role)
<b>Oct 2025</b>	Governing Body	<b>Chair:</b> Sohaib Tanvir
<b>Next Review Due:</b>		
<b>Oct 2026</b>	Governing Body	<b>Chair:</b>
	Headteacher	<b>Headteacher:</b>