

# CODE OF ETHICS



## What is Ethics?

Adapted and quoted from writings of Basil Varkey, The Medical College of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, WI

Ethics is a broad term that covers the study of the nature of morals and the specific moral choices to be made. Normative ethics attempts to answer the question, “Which general moral norms for the guidance and evaluation of conduct should we accept, and why?” Some moral norms for right conduct are common to human kind as they transcend cultures, regions, religions, and other group identities and constitute *common morality* (e.g., not to kill, or harm, or cause suffering to others, not to steal, not to punish the innocent, to be truthful, to obey the law, to nurture the young and dependent, to help the suffering, and rescue those in danger). *Particular morality* refers to norms that bind groups because of their culture, religion, profession and include responsibilities, ideals, professional standards, and so on.

## The Four Fundamental Principles of Ethics

**All decisions shall first follow these four fundamental principles before the additional principles of informed consent, truth-telling, and confidentiality.**

- **Beneficence:** To act for the benefit of others and support a number of moral rules to protect and defend the right of others, prevent harm, remove conditions that will cause harm, help persons with disabilities, and rescue persons in danger.
- **Nonmaleficence:** Nonmaleficence is the obligation to do no harm. This simply stated principle supports several moral rules – do not kill, do not cause pain or suffering, do not incapacitate, do not cause offense, and do not deprive others of the goods of life.
- **Autonomy:** The philosophical underpinning for autonomy, as interpreted by philosophers Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) and John Stuart Mill (1806–1873), and accepted as an ethical principle, is that all persons have intrinsic and unconditional worth, and therefore, should have the power to make rational decisions and moral choices, and each should be allowed to exercise their capacity for self-determination.
- **Justice:** Justice is generally interpreted as fair, equitable, and appropriate treatment of persons. Of the several categories of justice, the one that is most pertinent to ethics is *distributive justice*. Distributive justice refers to the fair, equitable, and appropriate distribution of resources determined by justified norms that structure the terms of social cooperation. There are different valid principles of distributive justice. These are distributed to each person an equal share, according to need, according to effort, according to contribution, according to merit, and according to free-market exchanges. Each principle is not exclusive, and can be, and are often combined in application.

## Three Additional Ethical Principles that Guide Decision-Making

- **Informed Consent:** The principle that one must be competent to understand and decide, receives a full disclosure, comprehends the disclosure, acts voluntarily, and consents to the proposed action.
- **Truth-Telling:** An autonomous individual has not only the right to know (disclosure), but the right to also share authentically. In the context of a nonprofit organization, there is fiduciary transparency, clarity of policies, communications, and operations by the organization and its volunteers, as well as transparency by participants.
- **Confidentiality:** Individuals must exercise discipline in not discussing participant specifics in social gatherings and social media.

# Executive Volunteer Staff and Board of Directors Code of Ethics

## ANYSCHOOLERS MISSION

AnySchoolers gives secular, inclusive support for homeschooling families who need physical, emotional and relational safety, no matter where and how they school, through direct education, caregiver peer collaboration, resources, networking with other agencies, and social connections.

## VISION

To change the face of homeschooling like a match to a beautiful flame.

## ETHICAL PRINCIPLES TO GUIDE DECISIONS

All conduct and decision-making of members of the Board of Directors will follow the principles of beneficence, nonmaleficence, autonomy, justice, informed consent, truth-telling, and confidentiality.

## PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY

### Core Principle

As directors and officers, we are responsible for adding value to AnySchoolers and contributing to its success. We accept responsibility for our individual decisions and actions that forward the mission of AnySchoolers. We are advocates for AnySchoolers by engaging in activities that enhance its credibility and value.

### AnySchoolers Values

- We value **secular** (non-religious), **academic**, evidence-based approaches to **education** that foster critical thinking. We embrace a multi-faceted view of human history, society, literature, mathematics, the arts and sciences.
- We value **structured** enrichment activities and **direct** programming for humans of all ages that illuminate imaginations, bring fire to hearts, and light up faces.
- We believe that **resources** - materials, curriculum, merchandise, financial assistance - are the key to allowing families to educate their members. We value tangible, meaningful tools that caregivers can hold with their hands. Nothing holds a candle to gifting firewood to a neighbor, so they can cook their own meal. We value stewardship of the donations, time, assets, people and good will of our organization.

### Intent

- To build respect, credibility, and strategic importance of home-based education within our organizations, the business community, and the communities in which we work
- To assist AnySchoolers we serve in achieving its objectives and goals
- To inform and educate current and future professionals, the organizations we serve, and the general public about principles and practices of home education
- To positively influence volunteer workspaces and recruitment practices
- To encourage professional decision-making and responsibility
- To encourage social responsibility

### Guidelines

- Adhere to the highest standards of ethical and professional behavior
- Measure the effectiveness of our programs in contributing to or achieving organizational goals
- Comply with the local, state and federal law
- Work consistent with the Values of AnySchoolers
- Strive to achieve the highest levels of service, performance, and social responsibility

- Advocate for the appropriate use and appreciation of human beings as volunteers and employees
- Advocate openly and within the established forums for debate in order to influence decision-making and results

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

### Core Principle

As directors and officers, we must strive to meet the highest standards of competence and commit to strengthen our competencies on a continuous basis. Adults are students, just like children and adolescents, and we engage in learning throughout the lifespan as leaders governing an educational organization.

### AnySchoolers Values

- We believe **learning happens everywhere**. Whether you have a classroom in your home, school in an RV, travel the world, meet in a virtual or in-person setting, read at bedtime, or learn in the forest or on the beach, we can be a community and learn together
- We believe **people learn in many ways, all the time, at all ages**. We believe the function of the brain is to adapt and absorb new input across the lifespan, from birth to death. We accept all different types of learners, welcome new perspectives, and look for ways to experience the world through others' eyes in addition to our own. We honor the specific developmental needs of infants and preschool children, elementary kids, tweens, teens and adults. We believe mistakes are opportunities to learn, and gentle feedback is a chance for self-awareness

### Intent

- To expand our knowledge of home education to further our understanding of how our organization functions
- To advance our understanding of how nonprofit organizations work ("the business of the nonprofit")

### Guidelines

- Pursue academic opportunities
- Commit to continuous learning, skills development and application of new knowledge related to both human resource management and homeschooling
- Contribute to the body of knowledge, the evolution of home education and the growth of individuals through teaching, research and dissemination of knowledge

## ETHICAL LEADERSHIP

### Core Principle

AnySchoolers directors and officers are expected to exhibit individual leadership as a role model for maintaining the highest standards for ethical conduct. As board members, we make decisions based on the seven principles of ethics.

### AnySchoolers Value

- We value a culture of **collaboration** and equality between group members. We believe caregivers need security in adult peer relationships in order to nurture and teach their children. We believe that a spirit of comradery, transparency, accountability, and teamwork among adults lights the way for children, who learn the same culture of deep respect. We are passing the torch to the next generation by modeling healthy adult collegial work.

### Intent

- To set the standard and be an example for others.
- To earn individual respect and increase our credibility with those we serve.

### Guidelines

- Act ethically in every professional and board member/volunteer director interaction
- Follow codes of ethics of other professional associations we are involved in outside of AnySchoolers

- Question pending individual and group actions when necessary to ensure that decisions are ethical and are implemented in an ethical manner
- Seek expert guidance if ever in doubt about the ethical propriety of a situation
- Through teaching and mentoring, champion the development of others as ethical leaders in the homeschool world

## FAIRNESS AND JUSTICE

### Core Principle

As AnySchoolers directors, officers, and professionals, we are ethically responsible for promoting and fostering fairness and justice for all volunteers and students and their families.

### AnySchoolers Values

- We value **inclusivity** for homeschooling families. We welcome members of all walks of life, socioeconomic levels, belief systems, ethnicities, races, sexualities, gender identities, mental and physical abilities. We make space for differences to be celebrated as part of the brightly burning human experience.
- We value **physical safety**. Our procedures and policies are designed to keep children safe from harm by other children and by adults. We believe that adherence to administrative rules and behavioral boundaries create predictability and educational safety for the group. When hurt happens, we address it immediately with grace. We believe that even correction should happen with connection and warmth.
- We value **emotional safety**. We believe that compassion for our own and others' fears and insecurities kindles understanding. In everything we do, we build an ethos of empathy. We believe the best about humans. Security and emotional peace foster educational creativity, sparkling curiosity, and hilarious play.
- We value **relational safety**. We believe in taking away aloneness. We believe that attachment relationships between family members should be secure and strong. In our community, we prevent insecurity and bullying by being transparent and authentic about emotion, wants, needs and behavior. We believe direct and clear is kind. Our organization is a campfire, a hearth, for people to gather around for epic stories and memory-making.

### Intent

- To create and sustain an environment that encourages all individuals and AnySchoolers to reach their fullest potential in a positive and productive manner.

### Guidelines

- Respect the uniqueness and intrinsic worth of every individual
- Treat people with dignity, respect and compassion to foster a trusting work environment free of harassment, overt or covert bullying, intimidation, and unlawful discrimination
- Ensure that everyone has the opportunity to develop their skills and new competencies
- Assure an environment of inclusiveness and a commitment to diversity in AnySchoolers
- Develop, administer and advocate policies and procedures that foster fair, consistent, equitable treatment for all
- Regardless of personal interests, support decisions made by AnySchoolers operational volunteers/staff and the majority of the Board of Directors that are both ethical and legal
- Act in a responsible manner and practice sound management in the country(ies) in which AnySchoolers operates

## CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

### Core Principle

As AnySchoolers directors and officers, we must maintain a high level of trust with our supporters and participants, and high standards for the conduct of its charitable activities is essential. We must protect the interests of our supporters and participants as well as our professional integrity and should not engage in activities that create actual, apparent, or potential conflicts of interest.

### AnySchoolers Value

- We value **networking with other agencies, educators and professionals**, in order to efficiently meet needs and optimize services that are already in place for homeschooling families through an eclectic, robust referral system. We embrace local businesses that value home educators, children, teens, families, and the joy of curiosity.

#### Intent

- To avoid activities that are in conflict or may appear to be in conflict with any of the provisions of this Code of Ethical and Professional Standards or with one's responsibilities and duties as a member of the nonprofit consulting profession and/or as a volunteer or employee of any organization.

#### Guidelines

- Adhere to and advocate the use of published policies on conflicts of interest within the AnySchoolers Bylaws Article IX
- AnySchoolers representatives are to fully disclose financial and non-financial relationships, including their employment, ownership interests, memberships, arrangements, investments and holdings, including those held by family members, as required by the AnySchoolers Board Member Candidate Questionnaire
- Refrain from using your position for personal, material, or financial gain or the appearance of such
- Refrain from giving or seeking preferential treatment in the human resources processes
- Prioritize your obligations to identify conflicts of interest or the appearance thereof; when conflicts arise, disclose them to the Board of Directors and follow the protocol outlined in the Bylaws, Article IX "Conflicts of Interest and Compensation"

## USE OF INFORMATION

#### Core Principle

AnySchoolers directors and officers consider and protect the rights of individuals, especially in the acquisition and dissemination of information while ensuring truthful communications and facilitating informed decision-making.

#### AnySchoolers Value

- We value **socialization** across the lifespan for our children. Social learning happens in the context of the environment and all other humans. We value vicarious learning. We want to address misrepresentations and stereotypes about home educated families, bringing a new understanding about the deep worth of learning in the home. We want our glowing embers to represent a long-lasting, meaningful source of warmth for any homeschoolers and those who know us.

#### Intent

- To build trust among all organization constituents by maximizing the open exchange of information, while eliminating anxieties about inappropriate and/or inaccurate acquisition and sharing of information

#### Guidelines

- Acquire and disseminate information through ethical and responsible means
- Ensure only appropriate information is used in decisions affecting the employment or volunteer relationship
- Investigate the accuracy and source of information before allowing it to be used in employment or volunteer related decisions
- Maintain current and accurate HR and volunteer information
- Safeguard restricted and confidential information
- Obey publication and copyright law
- Take appropriate steps to ensure the accuracy and completeness of all communicated information about HR policies, practices, and training

# Participant Code of Ethics and Conduct

## Expectations for Students, Parents, Volunteers/Teachers

The Executive Leadership may choose to amend these policies quarterly for the well-being of the AnySchoolers community. Members will be informed of any policy revisions via our forums. This Code of Ethics and Conduct is different from the AnySchoolers' Bylaws, which outline the governance of the organization and its Board of Directors.

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## VISION

To change the face of homeschooling like a match to a beautiful flame.

## ETHICAL PRINCIPLES TO GUIDE CONDUCT AND DECISIONS

All conduct and decision-making of participants of the AnySchoolers community will follow the principles of beneficence, nonmaleficence, autonomy, justice, informed consent, truth-telling, and confidentiality.

## ANYSCHOOLERS VALUES IN ACTION

**Conduct ourselves with respect and kindness.** We show kindness and respect to both ourselves and each other. We work together to ensure it is a welcoming and safe space for everyone. With that in mind, all community members agree to treat ourselves, others, and our spaces considerately and in keeping with the guidelines below.

### AnySchoolers Values:

Our community functions best when we foster emotional, relational and physical safety. Here are three of our Values:

- We value **physical safety**. Our procedures and policies are designed to keep children safe from harm by other children and by adults. We believe that adherence to administrative rules and behavioral boundaries create predictability and educational safety for the group. When hurt happens, we address it immediately with grace. We believe that even correction should happen with connection and warmth.
- We value **emotional safety**. We believe that compassion for our own and others' fears and insecurities kindles understanding. In everything we do, we build an ethos of empathy. We believe the best about humans. Security and emotional peace foster educational creativity, sparkling curiosity, and hilarious play.
- We value **relational safety**. We believe in taking away aloneness. We believe that attachment relationships between family members should be secure and strong. In our community, we prevent insecurity and bullying by being transparent and authentic about emotion, wants, needs and behavior. We believe direct and clear is kind. Our organization is a campfire, a hearth, for people to gather around for epic stories and memory-making.

### Guidelines:

While interacting in the AnySchoolers community, we agree to refrain from:

- Name-calling, jokes, or slurs that put down or threaten individuals or groups of people, including lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people, people of color, people of particular genders, people of particular faiths or ethnic backgrounds, and people with disabilities
- Profanity/swearing around little ones or others who express sensitivity
- R-rated, NSFW-type conversations about sex or violence
- Forcing unwanted physical contact on others, touching others without consent, or pressuring others for touch of any kind
- Harassing or unkind comments about others' bodies, appearances, or abilities
- Behaviors that physically endanger or threaten to endanger anyone
- Damaging spaces – **Clean up after yourself and leave spaces the same or better.** AnySchoolers is its own janitor. We leave spaces as clean or cleaner than we found them and put furniture back in place. We pick up trash, even when it is not our own. We work together to keep indoor and outdoor environments beautiful.
- Displays of affection more suited to a private place than a shared space
- We also agree not to harass or bully other people on social media, in online chat forums, or through direct messages or emails.
  - Please do not post to the forums if you have a conflict with or concern about an AnySchoolers student, instructor, volunteer, or parent or guardian that you are unable to resolve between yourselves. Use the [Incident Report or Concerns Form](#) on the website (even if you're not the Onsite Volunteer) or email our Volunteers directly at [AnySchoolers@gmail.com](mailto:AnySchoolers@gmail.com).

Some classes involve talking about violence, racism, sexism, religious intolerance, and other emotionally charged topics. Students and instructors agree to be sensitive and thoughtful when discussing these topics. In a learning space, we welcome differences of opinion and difficult emotions (including anger, shame, guilt, sadness/grief, hurt, fear) as part of the experience of growth. Our relevant AnySchoolers Values:

- We value **secular** (non-religious), **academic**, evidence-based approaches to **education** that foster critical thinking. We embrace a multi-faceted view of human history, society, literature, mathematics, the arts and sciences.
- We believe **people learn in many ways, all the time, at all ages.** We believe the function of the brain is to adapt and absorb new input across the lifespan, from birth to death. We accept all different types of learners, welcome new perspectives, and look for ways to experience the world through others' eyes in addition to our own. We honor the specific developmental needs of infants and preschool children, elementary kids, tweens, teens and adults. We believe mistakes are opportunities to learn, and gentle feedback is a chance for self-awareness.
- We value **inclusivity** for homeschooling families. We welcome members of all walks of life, socioeconomic levels, belief systems, ethnicities, races, sexualities, gender identities, mental and physical abilities. We make space for differences to be celebrated as part of the brightly burning human experience.
- We value **socialization** across the lifespan for our children. Social learning happens in the context of the environment and all other humans. We value vicarious learning. We want to address misrepresentations and stereotypes about home educated families, bringing a new understanding about the deep worth of learning in the home. We want our glowing embers to represent a long-lasting, meaningful source of warmth for any homeschoolers and those who know us.

### No Proselytizing

People of all walks of life and belief systems are welcome in AnySchoolers. Our organization does not allow any teaching how-to's, recruitment, evangelizing, or otherwise sharing of belief systems. This includes, but is not limited to major world religions, astrology, agnosticism, atheism, pantheism, polytheism, mysticism, mythology, unitarianism, antireligion, and any other assertions about faith or spirituality that encourage a following or unfollowing. We do make space for learning *about belief systems and practices around the world and in our backyards*, but we do not invite or teach religious practice at all. If a discussion of spirituality is to occur between two participant *adults*, this conversation must be by consent of both parties (For example, "Would you like to discuss this from a spiritual perspective with me?"), so that a

gentle “no” is invited and welcomed. At no time shall an adult from a different family teach/discuss religious practice with a minor from another family.

### **Remain Inclusive**

Respect the uniqueness and intrinsic worth of every individual. Treat people with dignity, respect and compassion to foster a trusting academic, social environment free of harassment, overt or covert bullying, intimidation, and unlawful discrimination. Look for ways to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to develop their skills and new competencies. Assure an environment of inclusiveness and a commitment to diversity in AnySchoolers. Please do not have fun or tease at others' expense, as you never know when a joke can go too far. Verbal aggression, sarcasm, passive comments are not emotionally safe ways to communicate valid negative emotion. Please help children develop clear, gentle ways of expressing their anger, sadness, hurt, fear and other hard emotions with words that are mirrored back to them.

### **AnySchoolers Values:**

- We believe **learning happens everywhere**. Whether you have a classroom in your home, school in an RV, travel the world, meet in a virtual or in-person setting, read at bedtime, or learn in the forest or on the beach, we can be a community and learn together.

### **Pitch in. Ask for help.**

Pitch in and help set up! At the end of each class, please clean up spills, pick up trash, help rearrange tables and chairs as needed, and otherwise ensure the classroom is in good condition for the next humans. In-person students should not leave activities until the facilities are clean. Families should check in with the Onsite Volunteers to see what still needs to be done. On particularly messy days, please help with the cleanup of classrooms and shared spaces. Let Volunteers know if you need help with anything while you're with AnySchoolers.

### **AnySchoolers Values:**

- We value a culture of **collaboration** and equality between group members. We believe caregivers need security in adult peer relationships in order to nurture and teach their children. We believe that a spirit of comradery, transparency, accountability, and teamwork among adults lights the way for children, who learn the same culture of deep respect. We are passing the torch to the next generation by modeling healthy adult collegial work.
- We value **networking with other agencies, educators and professionals**, in order to efficiently meet needs and optimize services that are already in place for homeschooling families through an eclectic, robust referral system. We embrace local businesses that value home educators, children, teens, families, and the joy of curiosity.

### **Be informed.**

Please familiarize yourself with participant policies at by reviewing information on our website, including but not limited to:

1. **Community Expectations**
2. **COVID-19 Policies**
3. **Volunteer Commitment Overview**
4. **Fees**
5. **Refund Policy**
6. **Allergies and Sensitivities Policy**
7. **Inclement Weather Policy**
8. **About AnySchoolers**
9. **FAQ**

All members are also encouraged to:

- Attend a **Community Information Meeting** each semester to hear about the movement of the organization.



- Keep up with communications. Communications are primarily posted to our online forums and are sent via email from **anyschoolers@gmail.com**. Adult and child/teen students and instructors should ensure their email provider recognizes that address as a legitimate sender. This can often be accomplished by adding the email address to your safe sender list, address book, and/or contacts but may require additional measures. Additionally, some emails will be sent from the personal email addresses of individual volunteers. Students and instructors are also encouraged to follow our Facebook Page and local Groups.

AnySchooler Values:

- We value **structured** enrichment activities and **direct** programming for humans of all ages that illuminate imaginations, bring fire to hearts, and light up faces.
- We believe that **resources** - materials, curriculum, merchandise, financial assistance - are the key to allowing families to educate their members. We value tangible, meaningful tools that caregivers can hold with their hands. Nothing holds a candle to gifting firewood to a neighbor, so they can cook their own meal. We value stewardship of the donations, time, assets, people and good will of our organization.

## For Students

Please speak up if something bothers you or makes you feel unsafe or uncomfortable.

Examples:

- “Your music is too loud for me. Can you please turn it down or use headphones?”
- “I understand that you meant it as a joke, but it hurt my feelings. Would you please not tell jokes like that around me?”

If talking to the person doesn't resolve the issue, or if you don't feel safe addressing a problem directly, ask for help from an AnySchoolers adult (an Onsite Volunteer, an instructor, or any parent or guardian who is present).

If a community member speaks to you about modifying your behavior, do your best to respond courteously to the request, change your behavior as needed, or ask for help or clarification if you're not sure what you're being asked to do or why your behavior is seen as a problem.

## For Onsite Volunteers

Student behavioral issues are rare at AnySchoolers, and most volunteering goes smoothly and uneventfully.

Respond to problems and requests for help by:

1. Using short, simple statements about how a student's behavior is affecting others and what change you are requesting. Examples:
  - “Your conversation is loud enough to be heard in the classroom across the hall. Please lower the volume or take your conversation outside.”
  - “Jokes based on stereotypes make people feel unsafe and unwelcome. Please don't tell them here.”
2. Asking everyone involved in a conflict these questions:
  - “What happened? or, “What's happening?”
  - “What were you thinking about while this was happening?”
  - “What does everyone in this situation need right now?”
  - “What needs to happen so everyone's needs and boundaries are respected?”

Onsite Volunteers should do their best to approach students with compassion, generosity, and kindness and with the understanding that students may not be able to answer these questions when they are stressed or upset and may need time and support to understand what's being asked of them.

If need be, Onsite Volunteers may call students' parents or guardians for help and guidance in addressing a situation. Contact information can be found in our Supporter Directory, a printed copy of which is kept at the Onsite Volunteer File Box.

You may also seek help from the other AnySchoolers adults present.

Please document any conflicts or behavior problems during your volunteer shift on the Incident Report and Concern Form, so that Lead Volunteers can be aware of what happened and keep watch for patterns that need addressing. Lead Volunteers may follow up with Onsite Volunteers to see if further steps are needed.

## For Parents and Guardians

Families are central to helping students prevent conflict and navigate conflict resolution.

Families should:

- Keep in mind that all AnySchoolers volunteers are other parents/guardians and supportive adults volunteering in this community to the best of their ability
- Understand that no one at AnySchoolers has the role of a principal or school counselor, and Lead Volunteers at AnySchoolers have limited power to solve problems that are best worked out by the people most directly involved
- Be willing to contact other AnySchoolers participants directly and to participate in conversations with compassion, generosity, and respect
- Remind your students that they are empowered to speak up in a respectful way and to set healthy boundaries
- Remind students they are always welcome to ask the Onsite Volunteers and instructors for help
- Ensure your students know the expectations for behavior, including treating other students, instructors, volunteers, and others respectfully
- Ensure your students understand that they are responsible for setup, cleanup, and transitions for shared spaces
- Ensure your students are aware that they should listen to and work with other students, instructors, Onsite Volunteers, and other adults
- Coach your students with strategies for coping with challenges they might face at AnySchoolers and make sure they understand what's expected of them in a group learning environment
- Consider whether your students can resolve particular issues on their own or if they need help from you
- If your student is facing challenges (such as sensory issues, impulse control issues, anxiety, auditory processing, or difficulties reading social cues), contact your student's instructors before the first day of class to let them know the best ways of working with your student while at AnySchoolers events
  - It is also helpful to let Lead Volunteers know what your student needs. At the same time, please keep in mind that AnySchoolers is a nonprofit organization, not a school and that there is no paid professional support staff.
- Commit to following through on the conflict resolution process with your student, pulling in others when necessary, until resolution is achieved
- Remain at AnySchoolers events with your student while a conflict is being resolved or if the Lead Volunteers or instructors request it

## For Instructors

Individual instructors may set additional policies regarding classroom behavior and for the removal of students from their classes for cause.

## Conflict Resolution Steps

1. Person-to-person conversation between the people directly involved.
2. If needed, request assistance from an instructor or volunteer.
3. If needed, have a follow-up conversation among the people involved, including the students' parents or guardians.
4. If needed, contact the Executive Director(s) to request a restorative conversation (see below) with a trained volunteer; participants agree to abide by the resolution reached through the restorative conversation process.

Our community's goal is to maintain physical, emotional and relational safety. We want participants to resolve disagreements and offer each other a chance to learn from mistakes. Parents who openly own mistakes and repair ruptures with others (even including their children) are modeling acceptance of humanity and learning opportunities, unconditional positive regard (giving the benefit of the doubt), and opportunities to connect through grace and repair. In rare instances, the healthiest course of action may be for a student or family member to take a break for a little while to get some perspective and distance.

When in an event setting where a teacher is leading a class, the community members involved may decide that a parent or guardian should stay present with a student during classes and/or other activities.

While we want to help promote emotional, relational and physical safety for all families, AnySchoolers is not responsible for all repairs when there are ruptures in relationships, and the organization is not a mental health counseling practice, nor is it a mediation provider. When a conflict arises at an AnySchoolers class or event, we expect parents to work out differences and model conflict resolution skills within families. When this becomes complex or difficult, our role is to support. Conflict or disagreements within pods are the responsibility of pod members. AnySchoolers provides the initial connection and technological communication platform for social pod groups, but once connected to other peers and families, adults/guardians of pod members are responsible for the safety, supervision and behavior of themselves and of pod members.

If there is a physical or verbal harm incident, we ask that participants fill out our Concern/Incident Form, so there is documentation. Our volunteers will confidentially address the legal and ethical obligations of protecting minors and vulnerable populations. Any incident involving physical, including sexual harm, shall be reported immediately and directly to the Executive Director(s) and a Concern/Incident Form completed with all of the known details. The Executive Director(s) are mandated reporters and will report to appropriate agencies. Information about harm is not to be withheld from the Executive Director(s) for any reason, as the safety of both the minor children we serve and the integrity of the organization are our utmost priority.

## **Restorative Conversation Process**

When additional help is needed to find ways to address a problem in a mutually acceptable manner, directly involved families and instructors may be invited to participate in a restorative conversation meeting, facilitated by a trained volunteer. Families may ask to invite a small number of other community members to the meeting to provide other perspectives and share fresh ideas for coming to a mutually acceptable resolution.

This process is designed to bring healing and understanding, empowering everyone involved to develop a mutually acceptable strategy to address the particular situation and any underlying problems that may have led to the conflict. In reaching these goals, the conversation process builds on the values of respect, honesty, listening, truth, and sharing. Everyone present who would like to be heard should have a voice in the process.

As part of our value of relational safety, we want to teach the healthy process of rupture and repair. It doesn't matter which person initiates the resolution. Children need supervision through these steps. Sometimes it can be helpful for two adults to have a silent witness to be quietly supportive.

### **Here are some suggested steps to follow:**

(1) Identify the core negative experience you are having, so that you can speak it rather than fight/flight/freeze/fawn. Consider that the core experience *might, but not always*, be something that you've experienced before this interaction in

other relationships from the past or other areas of your own life, so it's particularly tender, raw or painful. The core experience might be something like:

- "I'm alone/left out."
- "My children are alone."
- "I'm not valued."
- "I'm bad."
- "I'm failing or inadequate."
- Any other negative experience or messaging that comes up for you as you're thinking about the conflict.

(2) Identify the core negative experience that you think the other party might be having (it's a guess, a conjecture) based on their words, actions and the situation/context, so that you can empathize with how another has experienced you, even if you didn't intend to be hurtful. Consider that the other party's core experience *might, but not always*, be something that they have experienced before this interaction in other relationships from the past or other areas of their own life, so it's particularly tender, raw or painful and not about you. You may have triggered an experience that is "old" - but you're still responsible for your behavior in the present. Look for ways to give the other person a new experience of humans in general, if you can. But also remember that you're not responsible for the other person's past - that's their journey.

(3) The hardest thing about conflict resolution is *listening first*. Start by asking about the other person's experience: "I think that maybe when I did X (or X happened), you might have felt Y. Is that correct? Am I close?" When we communicate, we not only use the *content* of our words, but also our TVCP (tone, volume, cadence, posture). In fact, most of what is communicated by humans is non-verbal. Emotional attunement and "seeing people" comes from listening to the verbal *and* non-verbal cues, asking about them gently and establishing congruency between *what is being said* and *how it's being said*. When we have verbal/non-verbal congruence from another person, we generally feel safe because it feels authentic.

(4) Allow space for the other person to correct you about their experience ("No it wasn't really Y that I felt; it was Z"), to share their hurt, then validate the experience, even if it is different than your recollection of the event. Sometimes when others share their hurt, anger is a protective shell for other more vulnerable feelings. Try to keep in mind that the expression of hurt may sound like blame or anger, but it masks other things that are deeper and human.

(5) Repeat back what is painful until they feel understood.

(6) Ask for grace and the benefit of the doubt that you didn't intend to cause hurt. Then apologize specifically if needed. A specific apology sounds like, "I apologize for my words that made you feel left out," as opposed to "I'm sorry your felt that way."

(7) If you have hurts as well and the other person has *not* done steps (1) and (2) themselves, ask for permission to share your own experience ("Hey this was a little hard for me too - can I tell you what it brought up for me?"). Respect if they say no. Some people need time.

(8) If they say yes, share your pain about *yourself* and your core emotional experience *only*. ("I felt afraid of isolation.") If the emotion word ends in "-ed," choose a different word that is about the self. For example, "rejected" requires a *rejector*, so this adjective may feel like blame and make it difficult for your core experience to be heard and understood without defensiveness. Use "alone" instead.

If you have been told that your own experience isn't something the other party wants to hear, talk to another person about the needs you have. Don't gossip, but express your hurt to someone you trust can hold your experience and help you feel "seen". Everyone is on their own journey, and some are more ready to make repairs than others. You can only control what you do with yourself. You did the best you could, and you can rest assured that you handled yourself with grace.

When there are repeated hurts, it changes the hurt party's confidence that the repair will be effective in stopping the painful events moving forward. Refusal to discuss repair may be the other party's way of protecting themselves from

trusting and then being let down or hurt again. Use that as an opportunity to grow and make changes that demonstrate your reflection through actions, rather than discussion.

What do you wish for versus what can you tolerate?

Disclosure metaprocessing: That is when we process about what it feels like to talk about something to another person. For example:

- “So and So, it makes me very anxious and a little resentful to talk about this with you, because in the past when I have tried to resolve this it feels like it keeps happening.”
- “I feel really fearful about having this conversation because I don’t want it to be awkward at the next events we have to attend together.”
- “I am feeling like I want to pace around the room or leave because this situation is so upsetting for me. I’m trying hard to keep myself calm. It feels really nerve-wracking to be vulnerable because I usually avoid conflict at all costs. This is new for me.”