

The Canopy Framework for Student Success

Cultivating the conditions in which every child can grow.

Our Belief

At Under the Canopy School, we believe that behavior is not something separate from learning — it is part of learning.

Every behavior communicates something about a child's developmental needs, relationships, environment, or skills. While children are responsible for learning increasingly appropriate ways to participate in the community, adults are responsible for creating the conditions in which that learning is most likely to occur.

Before asking, "What consequence does this behavior deserve?" we first ask:

"What does this child—and this learning community—need in order to be successful?"

Our response to behavior is progressive, restorative, and developmentally informed. As student needs increase, adult support also increases. The goal is never simply to stop behavior. The goal is to restore safety, strengthen relationships, and help every child grow in self-regulation, responsibility, and belonging.

Foundation: Cultivate

"Before we intervene, we cultivate."

Our first responsibility is to intentionally create classrooms where children are most likely to thrive.

We call this Cultivating the Conditions for Success.



Under the
Canopy
SCHOOL

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The Four Pillars of Cultivation

1. Rhythm

Children thrive in predictable rhythms.

A consistent daily rhythm provides security, reduces anxiety, and helps children anticipate what comes next.

We **intentionally** cultivate:

- predictable routines
- thoughtful transitions
- balance between activity and rest
- movement throughout the day
- seasonal and daily rhythms

Reflection Questions:

Have I created a rhythm that breathes?

Have I created a rhythm that will help children feel secure?

2. Relationship

Connection comes before correction.

Children learn best from adults with whom they feel safe, known, and respected.

We **intentionally** cultivate:

- warm greetings
- individual connection
- curiosity before judgment
- preserving dignity
- repairing relationships after conflict

Reflection Question:

Does this child know I am there for them, even while I'm holding a firm boundary?



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3. Environment

The environment shapes behavior.

Our classrooms are carefully prepared to invite calm, focus, beauty, independence, and meaningful work.

We **intentionally** cultivate:

- orderly spaces
- natural beauty
- prepared materials
- sensory awareness
- meaningful work
- spaces that invite belonging

Reflection Question:

Is my classroom facilitating the behavior I hope to see?

4. Readiness

Children cannot consistently meet expectations they have not yet learned.

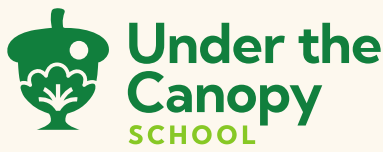
We **intentionally** cultivate:

- *explicitly taught expectations*
- *opportunities to practice*
- *developmentally appropriate expectations*
- *visual and verbal reminders*
- *scaffolds for success*

Reflection Questions:

Have I taught, retaught, and given them the opportunity to practice meeting this expectation and not just expected it of them?

Is it time to reteach and practice again?



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Before responding to behavior

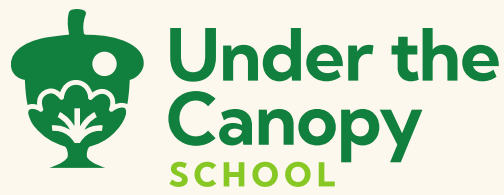
When a behavior occurs, adults must first pause and reflect:

Have I cultivated success?

- Is our rhythm supporting this moment?
- Have I connected before correcting?
- Is the environment helping or hindering?
- Has this expectation been clearly taught and practiced?

If the answer is **no**, we begin by strengthening the environment before responding directly to the behavior.

If the answer is **yes**, we move into our response framework.



The Canopy Response Framework

As behavior increases in severity, frequency, or impact on the learning community, adult support also increases.

The question is **not**

“How much trouble is this child in?”

Instead we ask:

“What level of adult response is needed now?”

Stage 1: Teach

The classroom remains safe and able to learn.

The teacher:

- redirects calmly
- reteaches expectations
- offers choices (where appropriate)
- guides regulation
- facilitates repair
- encourages the student to try again

The focus is learning - not punishment.

Teacher Reflection

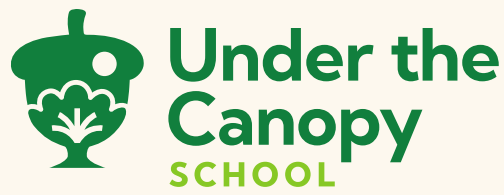
Cultivate: What condition(s) can we improve?

Teach: What skill(s) does this child need to learn?

Can this child be successful with ordinary classroom teaching?

If yes...

Remain in Stage 1.



The Canopy Response Framework

Stage 2: Support

Learning is becoming disrupted despite teaching.

The teacher changes the strategy rather than repeating the same intervention.

Supports may include:

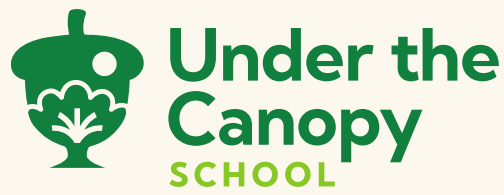
- movement breaks
- visual schedules
- sensory supports
- adjusted workload
- check-ins
- changed seating
- restorative conferences
- increased supervision
- family communication
- consultation with full teaching team

Administration is available to coach, observe, and partner.

The teacher is not expected to solve persistent challenges alone.

Teacher Reflection

What support can we add that we haven't already tried?



The Canopy Response Framework

Stage 3: Plan

The current supports are no longer sufficient.

At this point, responsibility expands beyond the classroom teacher.

The team may:

- meet with the family
- create a Student Support Plan
- involve MTSS
- consult SPED
- assign mentoring adults
- establish goals
- monitor progress

Ownership becomes shared

Teacher Reflection

Who else should join this child's team?

Stage 4: Protect

Safety or the learning community can no longer be maintained.

The priority becomes:

- physical safety
- emotional (mental) safety
- preserving the learning environment

Removal is **never** the goal.

Restoration is.

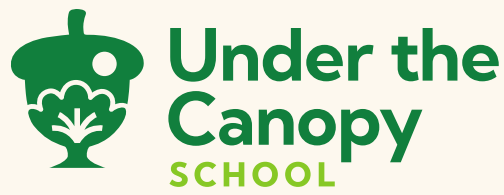
Teacher Reflection:

How do we restore safety and belonging?

Administration leads the response.

Possible actions include:

- immediate intervention
- temporary removal
- safety planning
- restorative re-entry
- suspension when legally required or necessary for safety



The Canopy Response Framework

Progressive Discipline

Progressive discipline does not mean increasing punishment.

It means increasing **support, structure, and accountability** as student needs become more significant.

Adult responses become more intensive when:

- safety decreases
- disruption to the learning community increases
- the same behavior continues despite teaching and support
- previous interventions have not been successful.

A behavior does not become “more wrong” simply because it happens again. Instead, repeated behavior tells us that the child needs a different level of adult response.

A Promise to Our Teachers

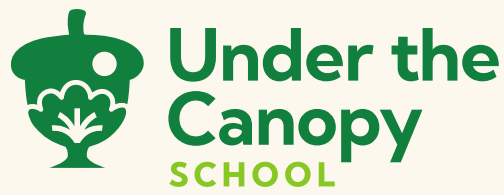
No teacher is expected to solve persistent behavioral challenges alone.

When student needs increase, school support also increases.

As behaviors move from **teach** to **support, plan** and **protect**, additional adults join the work.

Teachers should expect increasing partnership from student support staff, MTSS and/or SPED staff (as appropriate), administration, and families.

Supporting children is a shared responsibility.



The Canopy Response Framework

A Promise to Families

Families are our partners.

As concerns increase, communication becomes more frequent and more collaborative.

We will strive to:

- communicate early
- assume positive intent
- seek understanding before judgment
- involve families before concerns become crises whenever possible
- work together to help **every** child experience success



Behavior Response Guide

I. Purpose and posture

Under the Canopy School is a nature-based, Waldorf-inspired community. We understand that children are learning how to be human in real time: how to regulate, how to belong, how to repair harm, and how to rejoin the group when things go sideways.

UTCS responds to behavior with a **support-first, repair-centered** approach:

- Protect safety
- Teach skills
- Restore relationships
- Maintain learning
- Document clearly

Discipline at UTCS is about helping a child return to a regulated relationship with self, others, and community.

II. Definitions

A. Support (what we do to help)

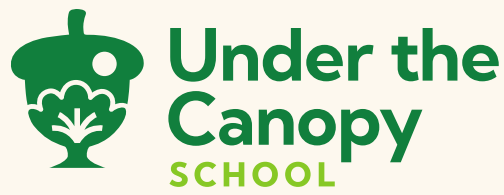
Strategies and interventions that build skills, reduce triggers, and teach replacement behaviors (co-regulation, sensory supports, reteaching expectations, restorative conferencing, behavior plans, mental health referrals, etc.).

B. Response (what happens when harm occurs)

A specific action taken after a behavior incident: restorative repair, loss of privilege, removal from activity, in-school reset, parent conference, suspension (rare), safety plan.

C. Removal from instruction vs. suspension

- **Removal from class/activity:** temporary, supervised, and paired with a plan to rejoin learning.
- **Out-of-school suspension (OSS):** used only when necessary for safety and serious incidents; always paired with re-entry plan.



Behavior Response Guide

- **“Sent home”:** Sending a student home is a **safety decision**, not a “gotcha.” It is documented and followed by a **re-entry plan**.

III. What gets documented (simple and consistent)

Documented incidents should include:

1. **What happened** (observable behavior; avoid labels like “defiant” unless quoting).
2. **Where/when** (context, triggers, antecedents).
3. **Who was affected** (impact).
4. **What adults did** (supports attempted).
5. **Student repair** (restorative action/practice).
6. **Next steps** (plan, family communication, escalation).

Discipline

The primary duty of the school is to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all children. The word *discipline* comes from the root *to learn*. At Under the Canopy School, discipline is not simply a response to behavior - it is an integral and intentional part of the child’s education.

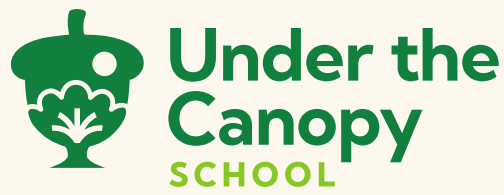
Children are learning, day by day, how to be in relationship with others, how to regulate their bodies and emotions, and how to act with care and responsibility. Our role as adults is to guide this learning with **clarity, consistency, and loving authority**.

UTCS Approach to Behavior

When challenges arise, UTCS responds with the following priorities:

- **Ensure safety**
- **Support regulation**
- **Teach appropriate behavior**
- **Repair harm**
- **Return the child to the learning community**

We seek always to hold children accountable **without shame**, and to guide them back into a regulated relationship with themselves and others.



Student Behavior Response Steps

Rather than a fixed ladder of punishment, UTCS uses a **progressive support model**, where repeated behaviors lead to deeper support, clearer structure, and increased family partnership.

1. Restorative Conversation (First Response)

A restorative conversation is a guided dialogue between student and teacher. The child is supported to:

- reflect on what happened
- understand how others were affected
- practice a more appropriate response
- take steps to repair the situation

This may include a “do-over,” helping action, or simple repair (verbal or practical).

2. Continued Support & Family Communication

If behaviors persist or escalate:

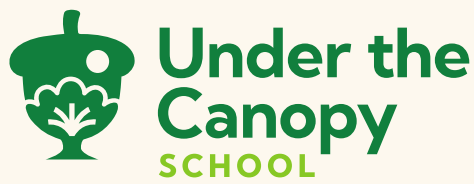
- additional restorative conversations may occur
- the teacher may implement classroom-based consequences such as:
 - loss of privileges (note: recess time may **not** be taken from any student as a consequence for behavior)
 - structured reset/break space within or near the classroom
 - reflective or repair-based activities
- families can be looped-in to ensure shared understanding and support.

Document all communication with families.

3. Increased Support (Pattern of Behavior)

If a pattern develops:

- meet with full teaching team and dean of students (include SPED, MTSS, etc. as appropriate)
 - are they seeing the same behaviors?
 - do they have any information/knowledge about the student’s home environment that could be causing the behaviors?
 - have they found any strategies or adjustments that help the student regulate?



Student Behavior Response Steps

6. Re-Entry After Suspension or Safety Removal

Following any removal from school, a **mandatory re-entry meeting must occur** with:

- dean of students **or** head of school
- teacher
- parent/guardian
- student

This meeting will:

- review what occurred
- establish clear supports and expectations
- create a plan for successful return to the classroom.

The goal is **always restoration and reintegration**, not exclusion.

Important Considerations by Age

PreK - Kindergarten

Young children are still developing foundational self-regulation skills. Behavior at this stage is generally a form of communication rather than intentional misconduct.

At these grade levels:

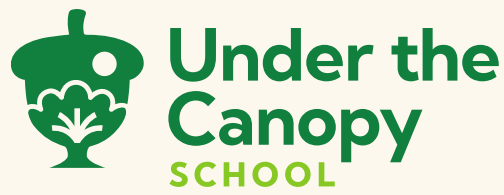
- emphasis is placed on co-regulation, rhythm, and sensory support
- restorative practices are simple, concrete, and immediate
- behavior patterns may result in structured support plans

Grades 1 - 5

Children begin to develop stronger awareness of social expectations and responsibility.

At these grade levels:

- restorative conversations become more reflective
- students practice repair and accountability more independently
- behavior patterns may result in structured support plans



Student Behavior Response Steps

Progressive Discipline Philosophy

UTCS uses a progressive model; however, progression is based on **need for support, not simply punishment.**

Repeated behaviors do not automatically result in harsher consequences. Instead, they signal the need for:

- increased adult support
- clearer structure and expectations
- deeper partnership with the full teaching team (and families when appropriate)

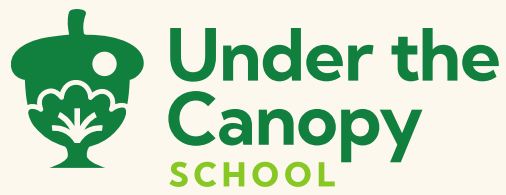
Suspension and Dismissal

Under the Canopy School follows Oklahoma State statutes related to student discipline.

Behaviors that **may** result in suspension include:

- physical aggression (hitting kicking, biting, etc.)
- elopement (leaving the school campus / adult supervision)
- harassment, bullying*, or intimidation
- sexually inappropriate behavior
- destruction of property
- theft or possession of dangerous items

When health or safety is at a risk, **swift and decisive action** will be taken.



Student Behavior Response Steps

Progressive Discipline Philosophy

Student Behavior Response Steps

- a parent/guardian conference may be held
 - are there issues within the student's home environment of which we should be aware?
 - are there any strategies or adjustments the parents have employed to help the student regulate?
- a **Student Support Plan** may be created to address:
 - regulation strategies
 - behavioral goals
 - consistent supports across school and home

Student Support Plans are created in collaboration with the classroom teacher, the dean of students, appropriate support staff as needed, and the parents/guardians. When developmentally appropriate, the student may be part of the collaborative effort.

This step reflects a shift from isolated incidents to **intentional intervention**.

4. Temporary Removal from School (Safety-Based)

In rare cases where a student:

- poses a safety risk to themselves or others, or
- is unable to regain regulation despite support

the student may be sent home for the remainder of the day.

This is considered a **safety response** and is documented as such. When applicable, it may be recorded as a half-day suspension in accordance with policy.

5. Out-of-School Suspension

Out-of-school suspension may occur when:

- there is serious harm or threat of harm
- behaviors persist despite significant intervention
- safety cannot be maintained within the school environment

Suspensions are documented in the student's record in accordance with Oklahoma law.

Behavior Response Guide

Behavior Patterns & Elopement

When is it a pattern?

- 3 times in one day
- 4 - 5 times in one week
- Continues over time

Response Menu:

- Get curious about causes
- Adjust the environment
- Increase support to help the student access the learning environment
- Consult with full teaching team / admin
- Reach out to parents / guardians
- Create support plan

Elopement

Storming (overwhelm)

- ✓ Stay calm
- ✓ Stay nearby
- ✓ Teach: how to ask for support or a break

Avoidance (task escape)

- ✓ Stay calm
- ✓ Stay nearby
- ✓ Teach: how to ask for support or a break

Hiding (control/testing)

- ✓ No chasing
- ✓ Clear expectation
- ✓ Increase supervision

Unsafe (leaving supervision)

- ✓ Call for support
- ✓ Admin involved
- ✓ Safety plan required

*All elopement is addressed.
Unsafe elopement is escalated.*