

Appendix: Level System

Caribbean Mountain Academy's goal is not to force a child to conform or comply with certain behaviors, but rather to help them see the value of making good choices.

We begin by making sure youth understand the expectations we have of them. Next, we encourage good choices by “catching them doing something right” instead of just pointing out their mistakes. When a child makes a good choice, we're not only praising them, but they are also earning privileges or rewards as they progress through our “level” system—the higher the level, the greater the privileges earned.

With that said, it is also necessary to teach and correct poor choices that are made. We do this through the natural consequences of lost privileges. Privilege loss and reinstatement will be handled as follows:

1. Following an incident with a student that could potentially lead to the loss of privilege, the staff involved will discuss the situation with the student.
2. The consequence of their actions will then be communicated to the student and campus staff.
3. Students will be given the opportunity to lessen the length or severity of the consequences by acknowledging what they did wrong, explaining what thoughts led to that choice, and how they would more appropriately handle it next time.
4. Once the student has demonstrated that they have learned from the situation, privileges will be restored.

Should a student continue to display negative behaviors, they will continue to lose privileges. Subsequently, once the restriction of privileges is lifted, the student will be on the same level and will regain all privileges of that level. It is possible for a student to lose all privileges of their current level, up to and including moving back a level. Once a student has moved back a level, they will need to demonstrate mastery of that level again before being promoted to the next level.

Note: All levels of the Caribbean Mountain Academy program are counseling driven. Level moves are discussed at weekly meetings. A level move will be discussed with parents prior to being implemented. If a student goes two months without making the next level, the therapeutic team will develop a plan specific to that student as a guideline to help them move forward to the next level.

The following is a guide to our Level System that includes what our focus is during each level, what will be expected of you as a parent, what will be expected of your child, what responses you can anticipate from your child at each level, the privileges your child will have at each level and the desired results of each level.

Caribbean Mountain Academy admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin.

Level 1: Orientation and Adjustment

<p>Student Expectations</p>	<p>Staff and therapists will work with your child to complete the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Read the student manual and pass an exam 2. Students and parents develop a list of identified problems and communication issues 3. Understanding and application of policies and procedures regarding: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate dress • Maintaining good personal hygiene • Non-use of profane language • Authorized vs. unauthorized internet use • Approved music • Household chores • Participation in house and program activities • Participation in counseling and group counseling sessions • Participation in academics 4. Understanding and application regarding respect: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate respect for authority • Demonstrate respect towards self and others • Respect Caribbean Mountain Academy property • Respect other people’s property • Respect house boundaries and expectations 5. Enrollment in school along with assignment to the appropriate classes. 6. Developing a specialized treatment plan that will address the specific needs of students and family. 7. Must sit with their house staff in chapel. 8. Must demonstrate respectful behavior in chapel and devotions. 9. Appropriate contact / communication with parents
<p>Privileges</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One late night for the month after the first week. A late night is simply staying up with staff permission past normal bedtime • May watch 2 approved movies per week • May purchase food from the campus Colmado • May sit in the first row in the chapel
<p>Expected Child Response</p>	<p>Your child will go through a big transition as he or she comes to the DR. The weather is different, their schedule is different, their experiences are different, school is different ... everything will be different.</p> <p>During this time of transition, it is common for a child to become very angry at the parent. For example, you might hear things like, “How could you send me here?”, “I hate you”, or “Please come get me, I hate it here!” This type of response is very normal and expected.</p>
<p>Parents Role</p>	<p>You play a key role in your child’s progress through the level system. You will have a therapist assigned to you and your family that is there to help and encourage you. Some of the things you’ll address together at this stage include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coping with a variety of emotions you will experience after leaving your child in the DR • How to deal with angry comments from your child • Participating in an assessment of your family’s specific needs • Preparing a customized treatment plan for you and your family • Understanding CMA’s program and level system • Reviewing your child’s progress
<p>Results</p>	<p>Upon completion of level 1, you will begin to notice progress, such as your child showing respect for themselves and others, assisting in household chores, beginning to build relationships with staff and peers, participating in counseling, and participating in school.</p>

Level 2: Identifying the Need for Change

<p>Student Expectations</p>	<p>Level 2 is the beginning of identifying the issues. For the student this includes attitudes, behaviors, and thinking that need to change. For the family this includes rules, roles, and communication issues. We will also begin to teach the value of authority (and what authority is and isn't), learning skills, and coping skills. Specifically, our staff and therapists will work with your child to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify appropriate vs. destructive behaviors • Begin to develop emotional and physical safety • Learn how thoughts, feelings, and behaviors are connected • Understand how to build trust, appropriate relationships that are focused on a concern for others, instead of only a concern for self • Process and accept the fact that you are in this program • Understand why things need to change in your life • Continued participation in academics
<p>Privileges</p>	<p>All previous level privileges, plus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May play video games on Saturday and Sunday with staff permission in house for a maximum of 2 hours • May have 2 late nights per month with staff permission • May sit in the first two rows in the chapel
<p>Expected Child Response</p>	<p>For the first time your child may begin to acknowledge that he or she had a part to play in the breakdown of your family. They will likely begin to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify some of the emotional and behavior changes that need to take place • Recognize how they use manipulation as a coping skill • Understand what it means to respect others • Follow the program rules more consistently • Build trusting relationships with staff and peers • Accept the fact that they are in the program and choose to begin to work on issues
<p>Parents Role</p>	<p>As your child begins to delve into their emotional scars, it is easy as a parent to either become defensive, overreact or to down-play its significance and role. It is very important that parents are supportive of the process at CMA. Sometimes what comes out can make you angry, but it is still important that these things are verbalized by your child.</p> <p>We will teach you the stages of change which you will use in understanding the process your child is going through. It is imperative that you encourage your child through this entire process. Now is not the time to focus on what they did to you. That will come when they are ready. For now, our therapist will teach you "emotional sidestepping" for when those painful words come. You will also be trained in understanding manipulation so that you will be prepared to refocus your child when necessary.</p>
<p>Results</p>	<p>Upon completing level 2 you will begin to see that your child is using good hygiene, improving their social skills, building trusting relationships with peers and staff, demonstrating less selfishness and more empathy, learning how to function effectively in the home, working through emotional issues, making good progress in counseling, and developing good study skills in school.</p>

Level 3: Working on Identified Issues

<p>Student Expectations</p>	<p>Level 3 is achieved when we see your child begin to make measurable and recognizable progress toward his/her individual goals. Staff and therapists will be working with your child to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand past poor choices and the implications of continuing that behavior • How to set appropriate boundaries • Recognize the value in allowing staff to give input in your life • Connect choices and consequences • Self-regulate emotions and behavior • Continue to edit and add to your list of identifiable problems and issues • Identify origins of negative rules, roles and communication issues • Take personal responsibility for behavior • Demonstrate self-direction in academics
<p>Privileges</p>	<p>All previous level privileges plus...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May sit in the first three rows in the chapel • May have one cup of coffee each morning • May have OFF campus time with staff and other eligible student(s) every other week • May shop in town and purchase personal food items and keep in the house pantry • Girls may wear light makeup and jewelry • Guys may wear jewelry such as bracelets or rings; No earrings • May have access to student lounge • May have 3 late nights per month with staff permission
<p>Expected Child Response</p>	<p>Youth typically begin to recognize their weaknesses and what tools they need to fight those weaknesses. They also begin to handle stress more effectively as a result of new stress management techniques. As their relationships with staff and peers deepen, youth develop empathy and become more open to accountability.</p>
<p>Parents Role</p>	<p>As a parent, you will need to focus on the big picture: understanding your child as they change. You may begin to see the light at the end of the tunnel, but remember this is only the beginning. There is a lot more room to grow. At this time, we encourage parents to commit to completing the program.</p> <p>In addition, parents are asked to take an honest look at what they are contributing to the relationship with their child. Significant time will be spent with your therapist at this level to understand and develop a family structure, including a system for rewarding progress and reinforcing change.</p> <p>You will also work together to prepare for your child's outbursts. For example, how to handle it when he or she becomes angry and/or swears at you. Your therapist will work with you on how to emotionally sidestep such interactions. You will see your child in a whole new way.</p>
<p>Results</p>	<p>As youth complete Level 3, they will be making positive, healthy choices as a result of the skills they have learned. There will be a willingness to admit when they are wrong and a concern for their peers who are making poor choices. They will also demonstrate good progress in counseling and success at school in their attitude, behavior, and performance.</p>

Level 4: Developing New Attitudes and Behavioral Patterns

Student Expectations	<p>The beginning of Level 4 designates your child is half-way to graduation and home! This level focuses on personal change in thought and actions, success in implementing healthy coping skills, and becoming more focused on a healthy sense of self, personal goals and developing positive communication with the family. Specifically, our staff and therapists will be working with your child on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding the value of a positive attitude • Beginning to resolve problems and conflicts on your own • Reinforcing that wise choices are driven by wise thinking • Resolving family issues • Resolving personal issues • Establishing personal and social values • Developing leadership within the house • Establishing peer accountability • Check other students chores • Lead discussions in problem solving house sessions as disagreements between students arise
Privileges	<p>All previous level privileges plus...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May sit in the first four rows in the chapel • Check other students' chores • Lead discussions in problem-solving house discussions as disagreements between students arise, only with permission from staff members • May stay up until 10pm with staff permission • May be alone in the student lounge at staff discretion • May have 2 cups of coffee per day • May play video games in the student lounge or in the house at staff discretion during the week, for a maximum of 1 hour per week • May watch up to 3-4 approved movies per week
Expected Child Response	<p>At this stage, we typically start to see youth become more self-motivated instead of incentive-motivated. You'll see them start to think before reacting. Youth will also begin to see the value in themselves and others as they gain confidence. It is during this time that we start to see youth begin to take real ownership in their treatment and progress.</p>
Parents Role	<p>The most important thing you can do during Level 4 is to stay the course and allow your child to finish the program. As some of the pressure is removed and you begin to see progress, it can be easy to think that things are now "fixed." It is important to realize that there is still significant work to be done—especially if you want the changes you're seeing to last.</p> <p>Also during this time, your therapist will be working with you and your family to identify the problem areas and conflict issues within the family. We'll also equip you with tools to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop conflict-resolution skills • Understand adolescent development • Explore family values • Recognize your son or daughter's strengths • Encourage positive self-esteem in your child
Results	<p>As your child concludes Level 4, they will acknowledge and take responsibility for their mistakes. As they look forward, they will demonstrate an ability to set goals and plans, as well as the steps necessary to achieve their goals. We also expect to see healthier communications between the parent and child as family issues are addressed and the youth begins valuing relationships and others.</p>

Level 5: Consistency in Attitude and Behavior

<p>Student Expectations</p>	<p>During Level 5, we're working to assure that your child's attitudes, behaviors, and desires to succeed in life go beyond what is required at Caribbean Mountain Academy. Specifically we'll focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Celebrating good judgment in decision-making • Providing leadership opportunities / responsibilities • Teaching how to handle success without arrogance • Helping understand that weaknesses are important to discover and protect • Helping begin to understand what going home might look like • Preparing to transition your attitude and belief system to home • Working to set goals, expectations, consequences, and address potential problems as you head home • Developing a contract with your family for reunification • Supervisor over all lower level students in and out of the house – anytime, anywhere with staff supervision
<p>Privileges</p>	<p>All previous level privileges plus.....</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May visit another house for up to 2 hours per week • May email contacts on approved list with staff's direct supervision twice a week at approved times • May go out of town with staff for weekend getaways to the beach or elsewhere with Director/Therapeutic team approval and with your agreement and approval to pay • May have special, independent "alone time" on campus • May opt out of campus dinner to order-out as much as you desire at student expense and eat this meal at any staff-approved location on campus • May stay up until 10:30 pm or negotiate a later time on weekends with staff • May leave school early with teacher approval • May lead Bible studies under staff's supervision • May sit anywhere on the appropriate side in the chapel • May negotiate for anything additional
<p>Expected Child Response</p>	<p>Youth will likely begin to talk about going home more frequently at this stage. They will also be discussing the details of their family contract for reunification with you. Your relationship with your child will continue to improve as they approach the end of the program.</p>
<p>Parents Role</p>	<p>There will be a lot of communication between you and your child as you work out the details of his or her return. Your therapist will help you navigate this process, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What will the rules be? • What will the privileges be? • What are the expectations? <p>Our team will work together with both you and your child to develop a reunification plan, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A plan for the transition • A "family stress" plan • Reunification timeline <p>Given the issues that need to be addressed, family sessions will be more frequent at this time. We will prepare you to reinforce the positive changes you are seeing in your child and a significant amount of time will be spent focused on your personal relationship with your child, which is key at this point.</p>
<p>Results</p>	<p>Youth will begin completing the intensive work on their personal issues and will have the tools to cope with those difficulties in the future as they arise. They will be consistently making appropriate choices and demonstrating both leadership and maturity in the house.</p>

Level 6: Dismissal and Reunification

<p>Student Expectations</p>	<p>Level 6 is the final step in completing our program and usually takes about one month. Our goal will be to work out the logistics of your child returning home, while ensuring they are not “checking out” on the progress they have made. Some of the things we’ll be addressing during this time include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparing transcript and/or diploma • Transitioning daily authority from Caribbean Mountain Academy staff to parents • Allowing access to special “Level 6-only” privileges • Preparing you for the stress of transitioning home • Setting up follow-up family counseling services • Graduate and give personal testimony (graduation speech) during a Sunday morning church service
<p>Privileges</p>	<p>All previous level privileges plus.....</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May Facebook, email, chat, or surf the web up to 3 nights per week with staff supervision and parent permission • May attend camps and events at other local ministries (Young Life, Dulous, etc.) • May go off campus locally, daily with administration’s permission • May attend all privileges with all houses with staff’s permission, but must continue to fill out privilege forms • May leave the house early each morning to have quiet time (personal prayer, Bible study, or join accountability/Bible study group) on or off-campus before breakfast with staff approval • May sit anywhere on the appropriate side in the chapel
<p>Expected Child Response</p>	<p>Your child, like you as a parent, will experience a range of emotions as they prepare to come home such as apprehension, excitement, fear, pride, etc. Our counselors will be working with them to manage this range of emotion and prepare for a successful transition.</p>
<p>Parents Role</p>	<p>Parents can expect to be excited and scared all at the same time about their child coming home. This is normal and your therapist will work with you on that anxiety. Your family’s Reunification Plan will already be in place allowing you time to work with your therapist as you prepare to implement the plan. You will also be meeting with your Family Support Services staff, as applicable.</p> <p>Another responsibility you will have at this time is to finish a “Stress Plan” that the family has agreed on.</p> <p>Your therapist will also guide you in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing family, community, and faith supports • Contacting the school system to enroll your child for the next semester • Finalizing your travel plans • Determining program graduation dates
<p>Results</p>	<p>Successful conclusion of this level results in your child completing the CMA program and transitioning back into your home with follow-up family counseling services.</p>