

## BEHAVIOUR GUIDANCE POLICY

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### Policy Statement

#### Values

The centre is committed to:

- Providing children with a safe and secure environment and the opportunity for positive and respectful interactions with adults and children.
- Recognising that children's behaviour reflects their level of development and is influenced by a range of factors, including family and culture.
- Providing a learning environment that supports the growth and development of each child's self-concept and self-esteem.
- Providing a physical and learning environment that aims to prevent behavioural difficulties.
- Helping children learn the consequences of their behaviour and thus develop an understanding of how their actions affect others.
- Working in partnership with parents/guardians and other professionals in issues relating to the guidance of a child's behaviour.
- Helping children to learn to interact effectively, and in doing so to learn to balance their own rights, needs, and feelings with those of others.
- Engaging only in practices which are respectful of, and provide security for, children and in no way degrade, endanger, exploit, intimidate, or harm them psychologically or physically.
- Complying with regulatory and legislative requirements.

#### Purpose

To achieve the above listed values by providing a developmentally appropriate behavioural guidance structure for all staff and any other persons involved in the care and education of the children.

#### Scope

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, parents/guardians, children, the committee and any other persons involved in the care and education of the child.

#### Legislation and Standards

Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

- *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010*
- *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011*
- *Health Records Act 2001(VIC)*
- *National Quality Standard, Quality Area 1: Educational Program and Practice.*
- *National Quality Standard, Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety*
- *National Quality Standard, Quality Area 5: Respectful relationships with children.*
- *National Quality Standard, Quality Area 6: Collaborative Partnerships with Families and Communities*
- *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (Vic)*
- *Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2017*
- *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 (Vic)*
- *Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)*
- *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 (Vic)*
- *Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2009(Vic)*
- WorkSafe Victoria Compliance Code

## Definitions

**Adequate supervision:** Every child at the centre is supervised constantly, actively and diligently.

**Challenging behaviour:** Behaviour that disrupts others or causes dispute between children, but which is part of normal social development.

**Considerate behaviour:** Behaviour that demonstrates self-discipline, appropriate expression of feelings, cooperation, integrity, empathy and thought about the effect of the behaviour on others.

**Difficult/unacceptable behaviour:** Behaviour that violates others' rights, hurts, frightens or harms others or the environment, or interrupts the group and prevents group members from functioning. It could be:

- Normal behaviour that occurs too often or when a child could be developmentally expected to have learned more appropriate behaviour.
- Combination of normal behaviours that present management problems.

**Supervision:** Observing and interacting with individual children and groups of children.

**DHS:** Department of Human Services

## The Approved Provider is responsible for:

- Providing staff with guidelines on the centre's expectations of their behaviour, responses and reactions when working with children and their families.
- Supporting staff to gain appropriate knowledge and develop appropriate skills for the implementation of this policy.
- Ensuring that all staff, parents/guardians, students, and volunteers are aware of this policy and that it is implemented within the centre.
- Approving any changes to the policy.
- Approving any additional expenditure or resources.

## Nominated Supervisor and Certified Supervisors are responsible for:

- The day-to-day implementation of this policy and where possible resolving behavioural guidance issues directly with the parents/guardians and children concerned.
- Working collaboratively with other staff in implementing this policy and informing staff of the implementation requirements of behavioural guidance plans.
- Using their professional knowledge and experience to develop, in consultation with the centre staff, attitudes and practices that are based on realistic expectations of children's needs and abilities.
- Ensuring procedures are in place for effective daily communication with parents/guardians to understand issues outside the centre that may impact on a child's behaviour (refer to the *Communication Policy*).
- Providing a program that is age appropriate and based on the individual needs and interests of each child.
- Providing a program that supports the use of positive techniques of guidance, redirection and reinforcement, as opposed to comparison, competition or criticism.
- Working cooperatively with parents/guardians on issues relating to the guidance of their child's behaviour, keeping them informed of the techniques and methods used.
- Providing a set of basic developmentally appropriate behavioural guidelines which:
  - o Emphasise positive actions
  - o Give children reasons for the limits
  - o Are implemented in a consistent manner
  - o Are reinforced regularly
  - o Are reviewed regularly for age and cultural appropriateness
- Interacting with children as outlined in *attachment 1*.

## All staff and volunteers are responsible for:

- Working collaboratively with other staff in implementing this policy and behavioural guidance plans.

- Discussing behaviours that cause concern with other staff.
- Providing a physical environment with adequate equipment, variety and challenges for the children.
- Respecting the confidentiality of both the parents/guardians and child when dealing with issues of behaviour guidance concerning an individual child.
- Ensuring that children are not put in a position where they feel frightened, ashamed, embarrassed, insecure, or isolated.
- Recognising that from time to time they will need assistance, advice and/or support and seeking that whenever necessary.
- When communicating with parents/guardians about challenging behaviours, conversations will be conducted in a culturally respectful, safe manner, without judgment or bias.
- Interacting with children as outlined in *Attachment 1*.

**The parents/guardians are responsible for:**

- Engaging in communication with staff about their child. (Refer to the *Communication Policy*)
- Informing staff of any events in the child's life outside the centre which may impact on their behaviour (for example, moving house, relationship issues, new sibling).
- Informing staff of any concerns they have regarding the behaviour of their child or the impact of other children's behaviour on their child.
- Working collaboratively with staff and/or the complaints/grievance committee to develop a behaviour guidance plan if required. Including following through on any referrals made by staff for the family/child in relation to gaining further assistance, developmental assessments as may be necessary to ensure the child receives the help required to regulate their behaviour/emotions.
- Staff understand that parents/guardians need time to process information about their child's challenging behaviour. Where repeated concerns have been raised, and repeated referrals have been recommended, parents/guardians are responsible for following through on the referral process.

**Please refer to *Schedule 2* for the process for resolution where a sub-committee becomes involved.**

- Related documents
- A list of the contact numbers of individuals, agencies and organisations providing support and/or advice in relation to the behavioural guidance of children, for example the Preschool Field Officer, Children's Services Adviser and ELAA. (No list of contacts in this policy, these numbers would change though, are we best to just. List the services and staff use the internet to find current ph numbers, emails?)
- DHS *Children's Services Guide*, [www.dhs.vic.gov.au/earlychildhood](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/earlychildhood)

**Centre policies**

- Communication
- Complaints
- Inclusion of Children with Additional Needs
- Privacy

## **Attachments**

**Attachment 1** - Staff practices

**Attachment 2** - Process for resolution where a subcommittee becomes involved

**Attachment 3** - Procedures recommended for the development of a behaviour guidance plan

- **Authorisation**

This policy was adopted by the South Morang Preschool Association on

- **Review Date**

This policy will be reviewed annually, or varied earlier if necessary, and the committee will within 28 days of making any change, notify the parents/guardians of the children attending, of that change.

Date of next review is 2022 or as required.

- **Evaluation**

In order to assess whether the policy has achieved the values and purposes the committee/board will:

- Use a quality assessment tool, such as the Preschool Quality Assessment Checklist.
- Assess whether a satisfactory resolution has been achieved in relation to behavioural issues raised.
- If appropriate, conduct a survey in relation to this policy or incorporate relevant questions within the general parents/guardians survey.
- Take into account feedback from staff regarding the policy.
- Monitor complaints and incidents regarding the behaviour of the children attending the centre.

## Attachment 1

### Staff practices

- Understand the needs of individual children and those in the group and acknowledge that most children's behaviour is influenced by their developmental stage, the environment, the time of day, actions (modelling) of staff and other children, family experiences and the family cultural background.
- Recognise that some causes of inappropriate behaviour include, anger, frustration, boredom, desire for attention, imitation, tiredness, excitement, jealousy, social clumsiness, high activity levels and too much choice or lack of choice.
- Support children to learn to think for themselves and to be considerate. Help them to think about the effects of their behaviour on other children and look for solutions together. This could involve speaking with the child about the effect of their behaviour on others and then ask the child "What do you think we could do to make sure it doesn't happen again?"
- Teach children to recognise when their behaviour is successful. For example, instead of saying "Good boy for packing up the toys" we can say "Thank you, I appreciate that you packed up the toys".
- Instead of using phrases such as that's wonderful, good boy/girl; you're great, acknowledge the child and use descriptive words that the child will understand, for example, "You've done very well indeed, I hope you're pleased with yourself".
- Foster a positive self-esteem through acknowledging children, for example, "Wow, look at you, did you know you could do that", "I appreciate you doing that". Instead of saying "What a beautiful painting", you could say "What do you think of that?". This encourages children to notice their behaviour.
- Giving children information about the things they have achieved that you appreciate and respect and impress you rather than an evaluation or a judgement of them as a person or their work.
- Assist and encourage children to talk about and manage their feelings; encourage children to think about how others might feel (empathy).
- Anticipate potentially unacceptable behaviours and eliminate situations and physical arrangements that may encourage inappropriate behaviour.
- Encourage children to resolve potential conflicts for themselves, but step in with strategies and suggestions when needed.
- Acknowledge a child's good intentions, (even if they were carried out inappropriately).
- Acknowledge that it is the behaviour that is inappropriate and not the child.
- Acknowledge and accept the child's feelings of anger, frustration or jealousy, even if the reaction seems out of proportion to the cause. Distinguish feelings from the response the child has to those feelings. Encourage the child to talk about their feelings. For example, make it clear that the feelings are not bad, only the response (action) to those feelings is unacceptable.
- Use language that does not label the child but labels the behaviour.
- Role model considerate and respectful behaviour in all interactions with peers, children and other adults.
- Allow appropriate choices in decision-making and be prepared to accept the child's decision.
- Give attention to all children involved in a situation. Comfort a child who may be hurt or upset and talk to the aggressor. Empower the child who has been hurt/upset to express to the other child how they feel.
- Always respond to a situation in a calm manner

## Attachment 2

### Process for resolution where a subcommittee becomes involved

#### Step 1: Consultation and investigation phase

The subcommittee is responsible for:

- If a complaint has been received, in addition to the procedures outlined below following the procedures outlined in the *Complaints Policy* to ensure compliance with centre policy and regulatory and legislative requirements.

- Asking staff for their professional evaluation of the situation and what they believe needs to be done in relation to strategies to be implemented and resources needed.
- Meeting with the parents/guardians of the child displaying the behaviour.
- Meeting with any support agencies involved with the child, if appropriate.
- Assessment of staff skills in the area of guidance.
- Identifying additional training needs for staff in the area of guidance.
- Investigating the availability of extra assistance, financial support, or training, by contacting the regional Preschool Field Officer or Specialist Children's Services Officers at the Department of Human Services, or agencies involved with the child.

### **Step 2: Resolution Phase**

The subcommittee, following consultation and investigation, will seek to put in place a behavioural guidance plan that has been developed by all parties and is mutually acceptable to all parties and implemented by the staff.

This behaviour guidance plan could include:

- Behavioural assessment of the child and utilising behaviour intervention programs or specialists (if not already undertaken).
- Incorporation of the identified strategies into the qualified staff member's program at the centre.
- Consultation with other staff responsible for the care and education of the child in regard to the implementation of the behaviour guidance plan.
- Maintaining ongoing consultation with parents/guardians. This may be a joint responsibility of the qualified staff member and the subcommittee.
- Reducing the amount of time the child attends the centre, or requesting the parent/guardian to remain with the child.
- Additional staff for the room (depending on the availability of funds).
- A behavioural and/or developmental assessment of the child (if not already undertaken).
- A behavioural intervention program or obtaining specialist advice (for example, from a Preschool Field Officer).
- A referral to a parent support program to obtain assistance or other support services for the family.
- Reporting process to the committee/board.
- Maintaining confidentiality in relation to information gained about the child and their family.
- Clear timeframes for review and evaluation.

Where the subcommittee is able to resolve the situation, it would inform the committee/board at their next meeting of the successful resolution of the issue.

### **Step 3: Referral to the Committee**

The matter will be referred to the committee/board in the event that:

- Additional financial resources are required that need committee/board approval
- The subcommittee is not able to establish a suitable and mutually agreeable behavioural guidance plan.

In situations where a suitable and mutually agreeable behavioural guidance plan has not been achieved, the committee/board will seek appropriate advice, for example, from DHS, ELAA.

**END OF DOCUMENT**

## Attachment 3

### Procedures recommended for the development of a behaviour guidance plan

**These procedures recommend steps that services can follow to develop a behaviour guidance plan for a child exhibiting challenging behaviour. These procedures should be adapted to suit individual services.**

A caring relationship with an adult, who can provide the learning and emotional support required, is pivotal to dealing with a child's challenging behaviour (refer to *Definitions*). Challenging behaviour is best managed through a collaborative strategy developed between service staff and parents/guardians.

Excluding a child from the service should only be as a last resort. This decision should be made as part of the collaborative management of a child's behaviour, and based on a joint decision by the parents/guardians and family, and the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, educators and other professionals involved in the education and care of the child (refer to *Inclusion and Equity Policy*).

### Procedures

### Step 1 – Observe

- Observe children exhibiting challenging behaviour, including in the broader context of their environment, the culture of the service, and the interactions of the whole group and other educators working with the child.
- Identify, based on observations, whether there is a need to develop an individual behaviour guidance plan for the child.

### Step 2 – Discuss

Invite parents/guardians to a meeting to discuss:

- the ongoing behaviour displayed by the child, including highlighting improvements and celebrating successes
- their aspirations, as well as the service’s aspirations, for the child
- the child’s individual characteristics, including interests, temperament, age and cultural background
- recommended strategies to support the child’s development, and how these strategies will be reviewed and evaluated
- resources or changes to the environment/program that may be required for a behaviour guidance plan to be implemented e.g. changes to routines and transitions
- the support already accessed by the family to assist with managing the child’s behaviour
- other support available, such as a Preschool Field Officer (refer to *Definitions*), referral for specialist assessment and additional adult support (written consent is required from parents/guardians before any intervention/assessment is undertaken)
- any other matter that will assist with the development of a behaviour guidance plan.

### Step 3 – Consult

- If appropriate, and with the permission of parents/guardians, consult with other support agencies or service providers who are already working with the child, to assist with the development of a behaviour guidance plan.

### Step 4 – Develop

Develop an individual behaviour guidance plan, based on consultation with the child’s parents/guardians and other support agencies, that is:

- appropriate to the needs of the child and accepted/agreed to by parents/guardians and other professionals involved in the education and care of that child
- clear and easy to follow for all educators, staff, parents/guardians and/or volunteers/students working with the child.

### Step 5 – Monitor and review

- Continually review, reflect, evaluate and revise the strategies that have been implemented.
- Communicate with the parents/guardians regarding the child’s progress and involve them in evaluating and revising the strategies.

Attachments – further helpful links:

- <https://raisingchildren.net.au/preschoolers/behaviour/behaviour-management-tips-tools/behaviour-management>
- [https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-01/QA5\\_Supporting\\_children\\_to\\_regulate\\_their\\_own\\_behaviour.pdf](https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-01/QA5_Supporting_children_to_regulate_their_own_behaviour.pdf)
- <https://www.bcci.edu.au/images/pdf/Behaviour-Management-Plan.pdf>
- <https://www.vic.gov.au/supporting-childrens-behaviour-early-childhood-services>



