

# BEHAVIOUR GUIDANCE POLICY

“An important aspect of children’s belonging, being and becoming involves them learning how their behaviours and actions affect themselves and others and developing skills to regulate these independently.” (Early Years Learning Framework for Australia). Positive guidance and support towards acceptable behaviour enables children to learn over time how to manage their feelings and take responsibility for their own actions. The right for children to receive positive guidance and encouragement in a supportive and respectful environment is promoted within Education and Care Services National Regulations. Children learn to face a variety of challenges throughout their lives and through this develop not only self-regulation, but positive dispositions such as resilience and perseverance. Learning the difference between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour assists children to regulate their own behaviours in different social and emotional environments when interacting with peers and adults.

## Philosophy

We believe and value the development of secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships with children and families and commit to quality outcomes for children through access and participation for all. We view children's rights and interests as paramount to the education and care provided and commit to educator professionalism and responsible conduct.

## EARLY YEARS LEARNING FRAMEWORK

OUTCOME 1: CHILDREN HAVE A STRONG SENSE OF IDENTITY	
1.1	Children feel safe, secure, and supported.
1.2	Children develop their emerging autonomy, inter-dependence, resilience, and agency.
1.3	Children develop knowledgeable and confident self-identities and a positive sense of self-worth
1.4	Children learn to interact in relation to others with care, empathy, and respect.

## NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD (NQS)

QUALITY AREA 2: CHILDREN’S HEALTH AND SAFETY		
2.1.1	Wellbeing and comfort	Each child’s wellbeing and comfort is provided for, including appropriate opportunities to meet each child’s need for sleep, rest and relaxation.
2.2.1	Supervision	At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from harm and hazard.

QUALITY AREA 5: RELATIONSHIPS WITH CHILDREN		
5.1	Relationships between educators and children	Respectful and equitable relationships are maintained with each child.
5.1.1	Positive educator to child interactions	Responsive and meaningful interactions build trusting relationships which engage and support each child to feel secure, confident and included.
5.1.2	Dignity and rights of the child	The dignity and rights of every child are maintained.
5.2	Relationships between children	Each child is supported to build and maintain sensitive and responsive relationships.
5.2.1	Collaborative learning	Children are supported to collaborate, learn from and help each other.
5.2.2	Self-Regulation	Each child is supported to regulate their own behaviour, respond appropriately to the behaviour of others and communicate effectively to resolve conflicts.

QUALITY AREA 6: PARTNERSHIPS WITH FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES		
6.1	Supportive relationships with families	Respectful relationships with families are developed and maintained and families are supported in their parenting role.

QUALITY AREA 7: GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP		
7.1	Governance	Governance supports the operation of a quality service

7.1.2	Management Systems	Systems are in place to manage risk and enable the effective management and operation of a quality service
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EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL REGULATIONS	
84	Awareness of child protection law
155	Interactions with children
156	Relationships in groups
168	Education and care service must have policies and procedures
174	Time to notify certain circumstances to Regulatory Authority
175	Prescribed information to be notified to Regulatory Authority

## PURPOSE

We aim to create positive relationships with children by helping them to feel safe, secure, and supported within our Service. We will ensure children are treated fairly and equitably and with respect and consistency, as they are supported to develop the skills and knowledge required to behave in a socially and culturally acceptable manner. Supporting children to develop socially acceptable behaviour and self-regulation is a primary goal for educators and families. This is embedded in fundamental documents including the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF), Education and Care Services National Regulations, and the National Quality Standard (NQS).

## SCOPE

This policy applies to children, families, educators, team members, approved provider, nominated supervisor, management, and visitors of the Service.

## KEY TERMS

<b>Behaviour guidance</b>	This term is used to reflect current thinking about the most positive and effective ways to help children gain understanding and learn skills that will help them to manage their own behaviour. Using appropriate behaviour guidance, educators aim to support each child in co-regulating their own behaviour, respond appropriately to the behaviour of others and communicate effectively to resolve conflicts.
<b>Self-regulation</b>	The ability to manage energy states, emotions, behaviour and attention: the ability to return to a balanced, calm and constant state of being. Self-regulation is a key factor for mental health, wellbeing and learning (KidsMatter, Early Childhood, 2014)
<b>Inclusion</b>	taking into account all children’s social, cultural and linguistic diversity (including learning styles, abilities, disabilities, gender, family circumstance and geographic location) in curriculum decision-making processes. (EYLF)

## IMPLEMENTATION

The behaviour and guidance strategies used by staff and educators at our Service are designed to provide children with the opportunity to expand their experiences of life in a productive, safe environment that allows individuals the right to safety, tolerance, self-expression, cultural identity, dignity and the worth of the individual. Educators understand that as children grow and develop, self-regulation becomes an important aspect of social and emotional development as they begin to understand how their actions affect others.

To help children and families feel safe and confident, we believe in setting boundaries as a crucial component of a caring and trustworthy relationship. Children benefit from knowing that their environment is stable and that a competent adult is taking care of them.

There are three key aspects to promoting positive behaviour:

1. Creating a quality learning environment that is positive and supportive and provides developmentally appropriate experiences and resources
2. Implementing guidance strategies for building skills and strengthening positive behaviour based on age-appropriate behaviour expectations

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3. Employing strategies for guiding children’s behaviour resulting in decreasing undesired behaviours.

### Considerations to our environments

Educators create environments with sufficient space that are likely to encourage positive social interactions. Children initiating their own experience using equipment and resources that they can access independently. Educators plan experiences in which children practice social skills such as cooperating, sharing and helping, and point out the advantages of behaving this way. How children move from one experience to another is planned to allow smooth transitions and limit interruptions for other children. Adequate resources are provided to reduce conflict, but still provide opportunities for children to share.

### Positive behaviour guidance strategies

Guiding children’s behaviour is an important aspect of caring for and educating children. Positive strategies need to be developed to assist children to learn appropriate ways of behaving. Corporal punishment and unreasonable discipline are not permitted at any time in children’s services, not only because the child may be physically harmed, but also because it nearly always has detrimental effects on the child’s self-esteem and feelings of security. All educators and staff at our Service will role model appropriate behaviour and language, encouraging children to socialise with other children, including children of different cultural backgrounds as well as from different age groups and different genders.

Behaviour guidance strategies implemented within our service are appropriate to the child's age and developmental capacity. Children are encouraged to make decisions for themselves and are provided with opportunities for independence and self-regulation. Children are given the opportunity to make choices and experience the consequences of these choices when there is no risk of physical or emotional harm to the child or anyone else. Positive behaviours are encouraged by diverting children to more appropriate experiences, showing appreciation for positive behaviour and building on each child’s strengths and achievements. Children are acknowledged when they make positive choices in managing their behaviour.

Educators build relationships with children that are safe, secure, and convey respect. Educators/staff show their respect by using normal tone and volume when speaking with children; allowing older children greater freedom and responsibility in recognition of their developmental stage; and working co-operatively with children to solve problems. Shouting at children is not acceptable.

Strategies may include using visual cues, prompting, redirection, re-teaching strategies, developing logical consequences and conferences with children. In the instance of adverse behaviour being persistently observed, educators will evaluate their program, room set up, supervision etc. to identify triggers and sources of inappropriate or challenging behaviour. Educators will label the negative behaviour and not the individual child, so that it is always the behaviour that is being managed and not the child.

Regular routines and consistency in implementing behaviour guidance strategies are critical to support children’s wellbeing and promote children’s agency. All staff implement an active and positive approach to guiding children’s behaviour within our service.

### Biting and hitting

Biting and hitting are normal behaviours in the development of most children, usually influenced by stage of verbal communication skills. If a child bites or hits another the following procedures will apply:

- Educators will attend first to the child who has been hurt to comfort the child and assess their injuries.
- First aid will be applied in accordance with the centre’s Accident, Emergency and first aid Policy.

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- While attending to the hurt child (or immediately afterwards) the educator will talk about the incident with the biter/hitter where age appropriate, in words they will understand and in an appropriate tone of voice. The educator will support the child who did the biting or hitting through role modelling appropriate play, discussing gentle hands.
- An Accident/Illness/Trauma Report Form will be completed. Due to confidentiality parents of victims do not need to know who bit their child.
- A record of what happened will be made including how the situation arose and why the child bit or hit. This information will help educators to reflect upon possible triggers and minimise repeat incident in the future.
- If biting or hitting is an on going concern with a particular child his/her parents will be informed and strategies developed that are consistent between home and the service.

**Management/Nominated Supervisor/Responsible Person will ensure:**

- no child being educated and cared for by the service is subjected to any form of corporal punishment or any discipline that is unreasonable in the circumstances
- every reasonable precaution is taken to protect children from harm and from any hazard likely to cause injury
- connections are built between our service and local primary schools and kindergartens to support positive learning environments.
- behaviour guidance does not involve making judgements about children or their families
- information is gathered from families about their children’s interests and strengths, family and cultural values
- educators will use this information to engage children in experiences that support children to develop and practice their social and decision-making skills
- positive and respectful relationships with children are established and maintained
- children are empowered to use language and other forms of non-hurtful communication to communicate their emotions
- positive, empathetic relationships are promoted between children assisting them to develop respectful relationships
- the dignity and rights of each child are maintained at all times
- positive and inclusive strategies are implemented to enable educators to encourage positive behaviour in children in order to minimise adverse behaviour
- general information about behaviour guidance is provided to families newsletters, parent handbook and daily contact with child educator.
- a partnership is developed with other professionals or support agencies that work with children who have diagnosed behavioural or social difficulties to develop plans for the inclusion of these specific children. This information will be kept confidential and in the individual child’s file in the office.
- excessive or challenging behaviour is managed and communicated with families
- strategies are implemented to re-direct a child who may be causing or about to cause harm to himself or herself, another child, or adult. Incidents may include a child who is kicking, spitting, biting, throwing furniture or toys, punching or hitting, or being disruptive. Redirection may also include an incident where a child places him/herself in a dangerous situation, for example, climbing a fence or hiding in a potentially dangerous position. Safety is a priority, and this may mean using physical re-direction in which an Educator will actually remove the child from the harmful situation if required. It may be necessary to remove other children from the area while the child calms down.
- families are notified by the Team Leader and the incident/behaviour is addressed sensitively, and respect is given. The Team Leader will need to notify the Director.
- Educators will label the negative behaviour and not the individual child, so that it is always the behaviour that is being managed and not the child.

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- should the behaviour continue, the child’s behaviour is observed and carefully documented. Additional information is collated related to the context and behaviour guidance strategies implemented.
- families and professional agencies are consulted to ensure that a consistent approach is used to support the child with diagnosed behavioural or social difficulties
- A display of ongoing behaviours will require a meeting with the family to discuss challenging behaviours being observed at the service. Educators consult and collaborate with families to develop a *Behaviour Guidance Plan*.

### Inclusion Support Program

- a Strategic Inclusion Plan (SIP) is developed and guided by local support agencies as required for individual children
- application for additional support for educators to build their capacity and capabilities to include children with additional needs will be made through the Inclusion Support Program.
- the SIP is reviewed on a periodic basis reflecting changes that have been applied through the implementation of the plan
- individual support plans are developed for individual children as required
- professional development is provided for educators to be informed, trained and supervised to implement the SIP created, ensuring that information is composed and recorded for reflection on its effectiveness for the individual child, or group of children
- notification is made to the regulatory authority within the legislated time frames of any circumstance that poses a risk to the health, safety and wellbeing of a child or children, or of any complaint alleging that a serious incident has occurred at the service.

### Educators will:

- encourage and support each child’s social and emotional development, striving to develop children’s self-regulation and an understanding of the feelings of others
- actively work with younger children to promote and role-model positive ways to interact with others
- teach behavioural expectations
- support appropriate behaviour- visual cues, prompting, positive verbal feedback and quality learning environments
- children are provided with positive guidance and encouragement toward acceptable behaviour
- promote children’s initiative and agency
- actively work with all children to support them in constructing and conveying ways of expressing needs, resolving conflict, and responding to the behaviour of others
- at all times provide positive role-modelling in their dealings with children, other educators and staff, and families
- if an educator feels they are unable to control their frustration in a particular situation, they will ask for assistance from another educator while they remove themselves from the incident to cool down.
- discuss guidelines, rules, limits, and what is fair with children, and use their contributions in setting limits and guidelines
- guide children’s behaviour, teaching them how to be considerate of others – to think about the effects of their actions on others. It is important that children understand what acceptable and unacceptable behaviour is and how to manage their emotions.
- talk calmly with children about the consequence of their actions, and the reason for rules
- use corrective consequences - prompt, redirect, re-teach, provide choice, logical consequence, conference with child and educator
- provide positive feedback and focus on children’s strengths and achievements and build on their abilities

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- take into consideration the child’s past experiences as their behaviour could be a result of past trauma such as changes in routine, changes or losses within the family, placement in care, or more serious circumstances involving abuse, neglect, or family violence
- be responsive to these former experiences, designing and implementing behaviour plans with the individual child that include strategies which will assist alternative and positive behaviour
- provide age appropriate, challenging, and interesting activities, experiences, and equipment for children to use and become engaged with
- ensure there are sufficient materials and equipment for individual, small and large group activities
- set up the environment (indoor and outdoor) for children to engage in activities and experiences in accordance with their abilities and interests
- adapt a positive approach, excluding cruel, harsh, humiliating or demeaning actions
- commit to professional development and keep up to date with sector information regarding behaviour guidance strategies
- support children to explore different identities and points of view and to communicate effectively when resolving disagreements with others
- participate in planned and spontaneous conversations with children about emotions, feelings and issues of inclusion and fairness, bias and prejudice, and the consequences of their actions, as well as the appropriate rules and the reasons for the rules
- provide children with the language and vocabulary needed to express their emotions and feelings and verbalise their concerns
- encourage children to listen to other people’s ideas, consider pro-social and altruistic behaviour and collaborate and negotiate in problem solving situations
- listen empathetically to children when they communicate their emotions, provide encouragement as they reassure the child it is normal to experience positive and negative emotions
- guide children to remove themselves from situations where they are experiencing frustration, anger, or fear
- support children to negotiate their rights and rights of others and mediate perceptively when children experience difficulty in resolving dissimilarity
- learn about children’s relationships with others and their relationship preferences they have and use this knowledge to encourage children to manage their own behaviour and expand on their empathy skills
- use positive language, gestures, facial expressions, and tone of voice when redirecting or discussing children’s behaviour with them
- remain calm, respectful and tolerant as they encourage children who are strongly expressing distress, frustration or anger
- guide children’s behaviour with a focus on preserving and promoting children’s self-esteem as they learn to self-regulate their behaviour
- be aware of, and follow the service SIP and individual support plans for children are followed and implemented

**Families will:**

- provide consent for the service to consult with professional agencies to assist with implementing an Strategic Inclusion Plan (ISP) for the room or group of children
- work collaboratively with educators and professional agencies when required in order to develop a broader understanding of the child’s developmental level and share any recent events which may be influencing the child's behaviour
- work in partnership with educators and health professionals in the development of an individual support plan to assist with the identification of challenging behaviour and the development of supportive strategies
- create consistency in behaviour guidance strategies used at the service and at home

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### Children will:

- know they are valued, respected and that their opinions are heard by a supportive adult
- be supported by providing acceptable alternative strategies when challenging behaviour occurs
- learn to respect the rights and needs of others by anticipating the result and consequences of their behaviour appropriate to their age and to their developmental stage.
- be given positive guidance towards understanding the difference between acceptable behaviour and unacceptable behaviour looks, feels and sounds like in the early learning setting
- gradually develop an understanding of their actions and how their behaviour impacts on others
- be encouraged to use their words rather than actions to resolve conflicts
- learn about the feelings of others throughout the program in order to assist children to understand the consequences of their actions.
- be encouraged to engage in cooperative and pro-social behaviour and express their feelings and responses to others' behaviour confidently and constructively, including challenging the behaviour of other children when it is disrespectful or unfair.

### Links to other policies

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diversity and Inclusion Policy</li> <li>• Educational Program Policy</li> <li>• Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy</li> <li>• Interaction with Children Policy</li> <li>• Behaviour guidance guide</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medical Condition Policy</li> <li>• Privacy and Confidentiality Policy</li> <li>• Code of conduct</li> <li>• Enrolment Policy</li> <li>• Supervision Policy</li> </ul>
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