



Waikerie Children's Centre  
16 Marks Tce  
Waikerie SA 5330  
Ph: 8541 2692      Fax: 8541 3126

## GUIDING CHILDREN'S BEHAVIOUR CODE

---

### Rationale

Waikerie Children's Centre aims to provide a physically and psychologically safe learning environment which nurtures the child and provides a sense of belonging and self-worth. The National Quality Standards Quality Area 5 addresses relationships with children and this behaviour code highlights children's need to feel safe and secure while learning to get along with others and learning to live in society.

We believe that children have a right to express their feelings and to be supported to develop positive behaviours. Effective communication and learning occurs when families' viewpoints are considered and valued and educators can work together with them to develop common goals for a child's wellbeing, learning and development.

We believe it is important that children develop an understanding of what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. This understanding will help children develop self-discipline, a respect for others, and for property. We understand that children feel angry, frustrated and upset at times and need help to express their feelings appropriately. We know that children learn from experiences and not just the words that adults may use to describe them. It is our role to help them link the two together and learn how to control their emotions.

Children need to develop awareness of how their actions and behaviours impact on others and on others feelings. When children exhibit inappropriate behaviours this should be viewed as an indicator that the child is experiencing distress and there are associated triggers that they need guidance with. In this context, the child's whole environment should be considered including program, routines and interactions as well as circumstances at home and in the centre.

### Implementation

- There should be open communication between parents and educators on a daily basis. With the help of the parents, educators will develop a broader understanding of the child's developmental level, the child's family, the parent's feelings, and any recent events which may be influencing the child's behaviour. In turn, educators should ensure that the parent is aware of the highs and lows of the child's day at the Centre.
- Educators will plan an environment that promotes a sense of belonging, being and becoming through a play-based curriculum providing for success, a sense of wellbeing, trust and security.
- Educators are encouraged to update their knowledge and skills regarding behaviour management techniques by reading widely, through group discussion, staff meetings, documenting behavioural concerns and through in-service training. Educators will follow the guidelines of the booklet "Protective Practices for staff in their interactions with children and young people", 2011.

- Exchange of information between educators and parents on the subject of behaviour management is encouraged both on an informal and more formal basis, such as parent interviews, communication books and through newsletters.
- Centre resources will be used to develop children's understanding of their own feelings and those of others. Keeping Children Safe material will be used to assist in this development as educators present the Child Protection Curriculum.
- Children are encouraged to be involved in developing behaviour expectations, goal setting, the development of group expectations and consequences.
- Use of visual cues to act as reminders and reinforcement of positive behaviours through specific verbal feedback.

### **Socialisation**

Educators will encourage children to follow a few simple rules regarding the limits of acceptable behaviour. These should be explained and consistently applied and are as follows:

Children are encouraged to:-

- greet others when they arrive and depart from the Centre
- share toys and games
- tidy up after an activity is finished
- say 'please' and 'thankyou'
- say 'I'm sorry' or to act in a way that indicates a sense of empathy, for example giving a cuddle, after behaving in an unacceptable manner to another person
- wait their turn.
- respect the opinions of others
- participate
- use appropriate group skills such as listening, eye contact(if appropriate),hands up to speak
- safe play

All of the above expectations will be applied at a developmentally appropriate level for the children involved.

Aggression and the deliberate destruction of property are actively discouraged.

Children are encouraged to socialise with all other children at the Centre regardless of race, ethnicity, culture, age, gender, ability or any other reason.

Children are asked to be aware of their feelings and those of others and to acknowledge how their behaviour may impact on the feelings of others and themselves. Educators are to support and help children recognise these feelings through emotional literacy techniques and through the Child Protection Curriculum.

### **Mealtime etiquette**

Children are encouraged to remain seated, to learn acceptable manners, such as politely asking for food to be passed to them, and cleaning up after themselves where age appropriate. Educators will sit with children during mealtimes and role-model this behaviour.

### **Behaviour Management**

Educators will encourage appropriate behaviour by providing children with a role model and through their own appropriate actions.

Educators will ensure that their interactions reflect qualities of consistency, fairness, warmth and sensitivity.

Educators are not to show favouritism and work to ensure children are not discriminated against on the basis of gender, age, ability, economic status, family structure, lifestyle, ethnicity, religion, language, or culture.

Children are given positive guidance. This means that encouragement and appreciation are given as recognition of appropriate behaviour. Educators will use voice intonations, facial expressions and explanations to encourage desired behaviour. Positive behaviours will be encouraged by building on each child's strengths and achievements.

Educators will consider a child's level of development and match their expectations so that a positive approach to behaviour management is achieved..

Educators should solve problems with a child by establishing eye-contact in a non-threatening way and speaking firmly but not in a threatening way. Educators should support children to problem solve to help them reach a compromise.

Children will not be subject to, or threatened with, any form of corporal punishment or any humiliating or frightening techniques. Physical, verbal and emotional punishment is regarded as unacceptable and will not be permitted or justified as a behaviour management technique.

Children are provided with opportunities to practice positive behaviours through social play. Intentional teaching of appropriate behaviours, entering play, conflict discussions and play skills will be considered when necessary.

Children are supported to remove themselves from a situation that they can't manage positively or safely.

**Behaviour that is not acceptable**

Physical aggressive behaviour

Bullying

Swearing

Damaging Property or activities

Verbal abuse

Biting

Scaring others

Spitting

Endangering self or others

Non compliance to staff

Excluding others

## **Babies**

Educators should be sensitive to baby's limitations, changing the situations according to their needs.

Should a babies' behaviour be inappropriate, educators should be ready to distract, guide, re-direct attention and interest and remove temptation. Their response should always be framed in a positive manner.

Educators should give lots of attention when babies are happy, talkative, playful, as well as when they are crying.

The environment should be structured in such a way so that educators minimise their use of the word 'no'.

## **Toddlers and Pre-schoolers**

Educators should encourage children to be aware of the behavioural consequences of their actions. For example, they should be gently guided by comments such as 'if you do ... then.... will occur'. This should not be used in a negative connotation.

Staff should provide choices to help the child be a part of the decision-making process.

Educators should help children to solve any problems verbally. This verbal skill will empower the child and help them cope with difficult situations which require negotiation and problem-solving.

The child should never be accused of being unacceptable. Rather the behaviour of the child is deemed acceptable or unacceptable. That is, educators should distinguish the action from the child - the child is always respected.

Educators should acknowledge and accept a child's feelings of anger, frustration or jealousy. The feelings should be distinguished from what the child does about the feelings. Educators should talk about feelings and encourage the child to talk about them too. Educators should encourage children to understand that there is nothing wrong with feeling angry - it is the reaction to the anger, such as hitting, that is not acceptable. Educators need to be aware that some children are not able to listen if they are in a heightened emotional state and will need to use strategies to help them deal with their emotions first, before discussing their behaviour.

Children should be encouraged to become aware of their own physiological signs that tell them about their feelings, as an indicator of what may be the right action to take in various situations, for example, conflict situations.

Educators should comfort the child who hurt as well as the child who has been hurt.

Use of verbal directions is always preferred to physical intervention. It is not appropriate to make physical contact with a child or young person (eg pushing, grabbing, poking, pulling, blocking) in order to ensure they comply with directions. Staff working with preschool-age children must not hold a child against their will (eg on their laps, between their legs on the floor) to ensure attention at group time. Under no circumstances should staff engage in any form of conduct which might cause physical or emotional harm to children and young people.

Non physical intervention is the recognised means of managing the behaviour of children and young people. Where a problem with behaviour becomes apparent, non-physical interventions include:

- directing other children to move away from the situation
- talking with the individual child or young person ( asking the child to stop the behaviour, and telling them what will happen if they don't stop). This may be followed up with talking with the child on their own and reflecting on the behaviour that has occurred. The conversations need to be age appropriate and guided by the educator.
- Directing the child to a safe place
- Sending for assistance from other educators, or in extreme cases, the police.

### **When we observe unsafe / unacceptable / aggressive behaviour occurring we will:**

1. Remind the child of the right for people to be safe all the time at the centre
2. Give a warning
3. Offer the option of staying at the activity or play situation
4. Redirect the play or the child
5. Where inappropriate behaviour is persistent the educator may need to talk with the child on their own and help the child reflect on their behaviour. This will involve educators encouraging and modelling appropriate behaviour for the child to rehearse, that enable the child to participate more effectively in the group or play situation and be recognised for their success. The strategies may be called "time in" or "reflection time" away from the activity. This action should reflect the child's age in minutes with educator. Eg Child is aged 4, time with educator is 4 mins.

### **Inappropriate language**

Babies and toddlers experiment with words and language; in cases of inappropriate language use, their language is redirected to other things around them.

For older children, who understand that they should not do it, swearing is the same as any other kind of misbehaviour. It is something children do because they are upset or unhappy, because they haven't realised that it is a word they should not use, or because they feel that they need to do it to impress their friends or peer group. Sometimes children swear and don't realise it is not OK unless someone explains to them why they should not do it. If a child swears, assess the situation first as there is usually a reason why the child is swearing.

Encourage children to talk through what has happened and develop solutions to work through the problem.

Children are taught to use appropriate language to express how they feel.

Educators are encouraged to model appropriate language behaviour.

If swearing becomes an ongoing problem, educators will talk with the parents in order to devise methods of dealing with swearing that are consistent between home and the Centre.

### **When Unacceptable Behaviours Continue**

1. Staff Team develops a behaviour management strategy based on written observations and in consultation with the parents. The following guidelines will be used:
  - Staff will record instances/occurrences of unacceptable behaviours clearly indicating date, time, what happened, action taken and signature.

- Staff will meet to examine records of behaviours against developmental checklists and plan appropriate responses/strategies to ensure consistent relevant management.
- Reviews will be conducted regularly to assess behaviour modification and progress and reassess strategies.
- 2. If the unacceptable behaviour continues, the staff consult with the Centre Director, who will review the strategies, observations and any other relevant information and implement a revised behaviour management strategy if appropriate.
- 3. When unacceptable behaviours are persistently repeated that threaten the health and welfare of themselves, other children or staff, we will develop a behaviour modification plan for that child in consultation with the parents.
- 4. Referrals to appropriate support agencies may be required/recommended at the instigation of either the parents or the staff, this may include assessment by health or educational personnel and the development of a Negotiated Education Plan.
- 5. The Centre Director ensures the educators consistently implement the agreed strategies.
- 6. If all of the above have been enacted, there has been a genuine attempt to implement the agreed strategies, there is still no significant improvements, and there are safety considerations involved, then alternative arrangements for care may be considered by the Director.
- 7. The Governing Council will be informed with a comprehensive report of the processes implemented, should a child be excluded for unacceptable behaviour.

### **How can Parents can help support the Site Behaviour Code?**

- Parents will be provided with clear guidelines about acceptable behaviours, involvement in determining appropriate strategies for dealing with poor behaviour, avenues of support for parenting skills as well as non-judgmental communication from educators.
- Parents/adults/visitors/volunteers will refer all behaviour issues to educators.
- Agencies (external governmental, departmental, community) that can support educators, parents and the child will be consulted as required.
- Parents will be notified by educators if there are any concerns.
- We support the right of any parents who believe our behaviour code is not being implemented appropriately and this can be managed through the grievance process.

### **Policy on weapons:**

Toys are generally chosen by staff, which are of interest to the children, are not single use toys, have educational value, and are non-bias. Toy guns, swords and other threatening toys are not permitted at the Centre. Staff actively discourage the making of guns and other weapons such as swords, within the centre.

#### **SOURCED FROM:**

Child and Youth Health [www.cyh.com](http://www.cyh.com)  
 Early Childhood Australia (ECA) Code of Ethics 2016  
 Bullying and harassment at school brochure (DECD)  
 National Quality Standards Regulations 155, 156  
 Early Years Learning Framework

Updated August 2020  
 Review due August 2022