

## POLICY NO 19: INTERACTIONS WITH CHILDREN & GUIDING CHILDREN’S BEHAVIOUR

**Key Policy Contact Person:** Manager, Our Village Family Childcare

**POLICY STATEMENT:**

Our Village Family Childcare (OVFC) will seek to ensure that children using the service are educated and cared for in a positive learning environment which will assist in the development of the skills to guide their own behavior and to build and maintain sensitive and responsive relationships with other children and adults. All interactions between children and the Educator are in accordance with the service philosophy and support the wellbeing, learning and development of each individual child.

We will ensure children are treated fairly and equitably and with respect and consistency, so they are supported when developing skills and knowledge around social and cultural behaviour.

We are committed to:

- Viewing the children as capable and confident learners
- Supporting agency
- Ensuring the rights and dignity of the child are always maintained.
- Work collaboratively with families to meet the needs of each child.
- Ensure the learning environment provides opportunity for the children to
  - Develop self-reliance and self-regulation.
  - Build on self-esteem.
  - Develop a sense of belonging.
  - Has consistent age-appropriate behaviour guidance strategies.

**CRITICAL INFORMATION:**

This policy and procedure outline the criteria and expectations of the Educators and the coordination unit staff when interacting and guiding children's behaviour within the service.

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**PURPOSE:**

OVFC believes that all adults involved with the children in the service are role models for the children. Children will be supported to develop language, confidence and social skills which will allow them to resolve conflicts and have their needs met through positive behavior guidance strategies with the aim of achieving positive outcomes.

**SCOPE/RESPONSIBILITIES:**

This document applies to all Educators, Families, Coordination Unit Staff, Volunteers and Students of OVFC.

**STATEMENT OF DIVERSITY**

Sunbury and Cobaw Community Health is committed to improving the health of our community and being accessible to all, including people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities, those from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background, people with a disability, Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Intersex and Queer (LGBTIQA+) people and other socially vulnerable groups and supporting their communities across the lifespan from birth to older age.

**DEFINITIONS:**

<p><b>Behaviour Guidance</b></p>	<p>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, aims to support each child to regulate their own behaviour, respond appropriately to the behaviour of others and communicate effectively to resolve conflicts.</p>
<p><b>Self-Regulation</b></p>	<p>Self-regulation is learning about your own feelings and emotions, understanding how and why they happen, recognising them (and those of others), and developing effective ways of managing them. <a href="#">(Self regulation BeYou)</a></p>
<p><b>Inclusion</b></p>	<p>involves taking into account all children’s social, cultural, and linguistic diversity (including learning styles, abilities, disabilities, gender, sexual identity, family circumstances and geographic location) in curriculum decision making processes. The intent is to ensure that all children’s experiences are recognised and valued. The intent is also to ensure that all children have equitable access to resources and participation, and opportunities to demonstrate their learning and to value difference. <a href="#">(EYLF V2.0)</a></p>

**PROCEDURES:**

**Educational program**

Within the Educational Program:

- Physical environments:
  - Include a balance of indoor and outdoor activities.
  - Support interactions between children and the Educator
  - Are carefully arranged to:
    - Encourage individual and small group interaction.
    - Minimise frustration and disruptive behaviours.
    - Encourage children’s exploration, creativity, and learning.
    - Support the diverse interests, preferences and learning styles of children.

## Interactions with Children

### ***Our Village Family Childcare will:***

- Provide opportunities for all Educators and staff for professional development and training in guiding children’s behaviour in positive ways to enhance their skills and day to day practice.
- Enable Educators and staff to be pro-active in the prevention of behavioural difficulties and promote a positive approach to behavioural guidance.
- Provide resources and information for parents and Educators to assist in positive behaviour guidance strategies being used consistently, both at home and whilst the child is in care.
- Advise parents of community parenting programs.

### ***Positive Relationships***

OVFC Educators and Staff will develop positive and trusting relationships by:

- Providing a safe, predictable, inclusive, and welcoming environment for children.
- Recognising that each child is an individual with their own unique:
  - Needs, interests, experiences, and strengths.
  - Family, culture, and community.
- Protecting children’s rights and dignity by respecting:
  - Children’s personal space and always talking about what they are doing e.g., when picking up a baby to change their nappy.
  - Children’s need for privacy e.g., when they have had a toileting accident.
  - A child’s ability to listen to their body e.g., at mealtimes.
- Spending meaningful time with children as individuals or within a group:
  - Responding sensitively, positively, and warmly to each child.
  - Holding, hugging, rocking, singing, and smiling with babies.
  - Engaging in play with children and using children’s cues to guide their level and type of involvement.
  - Engaging in meaningful conversations with children. Educators and Staff and staff seek children’s ideas and opinions using open ended questioning.
  - Interacting during routine times e.g., singing songs or discussing a child’s current activity when changing their nappy.

### ***When interacting with children the Coordination Unit staff and Educators will***

- Guide children’s behaviour with positive, consistent messages, realistic and age-appropriate limits and by modelling appropriate behaviour.
- Sit at the child’s level, where possible e.g., on the floor, at a table, in the sandpit.
- Use positive language that the child can understand.

- Use non-verbal communication (especially with young children) e.g., eye contact, facial expressions, and gestures.
- Use a calm, respectful and patient tone.
- Use communication aids such as visual boards or sign language where required.
- Provide comfort to children when they are distressed e.g., speaking in comforting tones and holding and rocking babies to soothe them.
- Learn about babies' and toddlers' non-verbal cues and communication strategies and responding appropriately e.g., when a baby rubs her eyes to indicate she is tired, or when a toddler points to a cup to signal he is thirsty.
- Support the maintenance of home languages e.g., learning basic words and phrases in a home language.
- Educators and Staff provide opportunities for children to develop:
  - Self-reliance e.g., pouring their own drink or serving their own lunch.
  - Self-esteem e.g., providing positive feedback and celebration after a child has mastered a new skill.
  - A sense of belonging e.g., by ensuring each child's culture is represented and celebrated in the educational program.
- Educators and Staff support children to develop positive relationships with other children by role modelling appropriate and positive ways to:
  - Enter and leave play.
  - Negotiate play spaces and materials.
  - Listen to other children's ideas and opinions. ■ Engage in cooperative play, problem solving and shared decision making.
- Negotiate their rights and the rights of others by challenging the behaviour of others when it is disrespectful or unfair e.g., when a child pushes in or snatches a toy from another child.
- Communicate effectively when resolving disagreements with others.
- As per the Child Protection Policies:
  - Educators and Staff discuss with children what it means to feel safe and be safe and help children to identify their feelings. This can be done using suitable picture story books and using role play.
  - Educators and Staff ensure that children know who they can talk to if they are worried or feeling unsafe.

## **Behaviour Guidance**

OVFC recognises and understands that a child's behaviour may be affected by:

- Age, development, temperament and general health and wellbeing
- Relationships with other children and stakeholders, such as students, volunteers, and visitors
- Educators' strategies and practices, which includes how those strategies are implemented.
- Play and learning environments, which includes the physical indoor/outdoor settings, the weather, the time of year, the time of day.
- Relationships with their family.
- External factors, such as family, home life or peer group experiences, or media coverage of traumatic events.
- Children are active participants in the development and implementation of behaviour guidance strategies and should be consistently communicated with during the process.
- Families and Educators display respect and empathy towards children when they label behaviour and not the individual child. This means that behaviours are managed, not children.

- Educators, other children, and families should refrain from labelling a child's inappropriate or negative behaviour as 'naughty' or 'bad.'
- The use of physical punishment by Educators as a behaviour guidance strategy is not acceptable under any circumstances.

Families collaborate with the Educator and/or service about their child's behaviour by informing them of:

- Events or incidents that may impact on their child's behaviour at the service (e.g., moving to a new house, relationship issues, a new sibling etc.). For example:
  - Any concerns regarding their child's behaviour or the impact of other children's behaviour.
- The Educator will communicate all incidents of inappropriate or unacceptable behaviour to the family and if these behaviours repeatedly occur, will work together (with the support of the service to develop strategies to support the child to learn appropriate and socially acceptable behaviours and achieve positive outcomes
- 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.
- As per the Code of Conduct no form of corporal punishment or discipline unreasonable in the circumstances (including but not limited to isolation, humiliation, intimidation, or negative labelling) is permitted at any time by Educators and Staff
- As per the Reportable Conduct Procedure all allegations of abuse involving an Educator, Staff Member, volunteer, or student are reported to the OVFC Manager, Child Safety Officer, Department of Education, DFFH (Child Protection), Victoria Police and CCYP.

### ***Behaviour Guidance Strategies***

OVFC Educators and Staff will

- Acknowledge children when they:
  - Make positive choices in managing their own behaviour.
  - Demonstrate kindness or empathy towards other children or Educators and Staff e.g., giving a distressed child their toy.
  - Negotiate their rights or the right of others.
  - Independently settle disputes with other children.
  - Follow the instruction of Educators and Staff e.g., during routine times.
- Intervene in positive and respectful ways with:
  - Children's disputes or unsafe play to maintain a harmonious and safe environment for all children.
  - Any teasing or bullying behaviours.
- Where possible, get down to a child's level to discuss their behaviour.
- Use positive and respectful language, gestures, facial expressions, and tone of voice when redirecting or discussing children's behaviour with them.
- Listen empathetically to children when they communicate their emotions and 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 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 positive feedback and focus on children’s strengths and achievements and build on their abilities.
- Talk about what the child can do e.g., “Remember to keep the sand in the sandpit for digging,” rather than, “Don’t throw sand.”
- Use reflective listening to understand and acknowledge children’s feelings e.g. “It sounds like you’re feeling angry and upset because Tom broke your train track.” (“It sounds like you’re feeling..... because....”)
- Ask children to rephrase or repeat what needs to happen e.g. “So, what can we do so that you can all play in the home corner?” or “What have we all decided about playing in the sandpit?”
- Remain calm, gentle, patient and reassuring, even when children strongly express 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.
- Ensure play and safety limits are age appropriate and consistent for all children; and conducted in a calm, firm manner, and followed through appropriately.
- Use redirection as a strategy to prevent undesirable and unsafe behaviour by:
  - Discussing alternative experiences, set challenges or assist children to set up new experiences.
  - Gently guiding children to a quiet place or activity, or outside by taking the child’s hand, or placing their hand gently on their back. If the child shows resistance to physical contact, or indicates they want to be left alone, Educators and Staff respect this and pull back.
  - Allowing the child time and space to ‘cool down’ before engaging them or encouraging them to re-enter play.
- Balance intervention with allowing children the freedom to attempt new experiences and play independently. Where there is no risk to the safety or wellbeing of children, allow time for children to:
  - settle their own disputes before intervening.
  - Attempt the skill or action themselves.
  - Teach children how to assess risk within the environment and discuss the consequences of unsafe play and how their actions can affect other children e.g. “What do you think will happen if you keep throwing the blocks?”
  - Indoor and outdoor environments are set up to encourage diverse levels of physical challenge and risk, with assistance provided when required.
  - Children are encouraged to ask for help when they need it e.g., to hold their hand while they balance on the beam.

### ***Unmanageable Behaviours***

- OVFC in collaboration with the Educators will take all reasonable steps to successfully guide and manage a child’s behaviour to achieve positive outcomes and support their inclusion.
- In consultation with the coordination unit a family behaviour management plan will be created for a child who displays behaviour that causes reasonable risk to the other children, Educator or

their families, any stakeholders, or the child themselves. If the child is unable to be guided by the educator using the strategies created within the Behaviour Management Plan – the parent/guardian of that child will be contacted immediately and asked to collect the child.

- The Educator will communicate all incidents of inappropriate, excessive, or challenging behaviours in a sensitive manner to the family so that they can work together to put strategies in place to effectively manage the behaviour and support the child.
- In an instance where a child or children's safety has been jeopardised, Educators are required to complete the Incident, injury Illness and Trauma form and the parents/family are required to sign it.
- If these inappropriate, excessive, or challenging behaviours continue to occur, a meeting with the child's family (and the child if appropriate), Educator and Coordinator will be arranged to discuss the behaviours of concern.
- Parents/guardians will be informed by the Co-ordination Unit that the continuation of the behaviour could result in the child being withdrawn from the service as the Educator feels that they are unable to provide a safe environment for the other children in care.
- A Behaviour Guidance Plan will be developed in consultation with the family and other health professionals as required e.g., Inclusion Support (with the family's consent)
- If the above-mentioned steps are taken, the Educator, service and family will meet on a regular basis to review and amend the plan.

### ***Withdrawal of a Child from the Service***

Withdrawal of a child from the service will only be considered when all other reasonable steps/actions have been taken to remedy the inappropriate behaviours. If.

- The child's behaviour continues to be disruptive and harmful, and the safety of other children and adults is compromised, and
- The service determines that all reasonable steps/actions have been exhausted, we reserve the right to ask you to withdraw your child from the Service.

### **REFERENCES:**

- [Education and Care Services National Regulations, \(current version July 1, 2023\) – Regulation 155, 156, 168](#)
- [Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework – for all children from Birth to Eight years \(State of Victoria Department of Education and Early Childhood Development 2016\)](#)
- [ACECQA – Relationships with Children](#)
- [ACECQA - Inappropriate discipline. July 2023](#)
- [ACECQA– Supporting children to regulate their own behaviour](#)
- [Belonging Being and Becoming – The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia](#)
- [ECA – Code of Ethics](#)

### **RELATED POLICIES & PROCEDURES/ WORK INSTRUCTIONS:**

- Child Safe Environment and Child Protection – 7
- Fit and Proper Assessment of FDC Educators, Assistants and Persons Residing at the FDC Residence – 32
- Health & Safety – Nutrition, Food Beverages, Dietary Requirements and Food Handling - 20
- Children's Learning, Development & Active Play – 43
- Monitoring, Support and Supervision of FDC Educators – 21

- Social Media - 42
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- Aboriginal Perspectives – 54
- Code of Conduct - 40
- Monitoring, Support and Supervision of FDC Educators Work Instruction
- Our Village Family Childcare Playgroups Work Instruction.
- SCCH Client Empowerment Policy and Procedure
- SCCH Code of Conduct

**VERSION CONTROL AND LEGISLATION:**

For office use only (to be completed by the Quality, Safety & Compliance unit)			
<b>Document Owner:</b>	Chief Operating Officer	<b>Version Number:</b>	2.0
<b>Date Approved:</b>	3 July 2024	<b>Review Date:</b>	4 July 2027
<b>Document Type:</b>	Team	<b>Approved By:</b>	Chief Operating Officer
<b>Legislation:</b>	Education and Care Services National Regulations		