BEHAVIOUR SUPPORT

QUALITY AREA 5 | V 1.2

PURPOSE

This policy provides guidelines for St Francis of Assisi OSHC to:

- encourage children to achieve success
- develop positive self-esteem
- reduce challenging behaviours and
- provide a safe and healthy work environment.

POLICY STATEMENT

The safety, health, wellbeing, rights and best interests of every child are the paramount consideration and must guide all decisions, actions and practices of educators within the education and care service.

VALUES

St Francis of Assisi OSHC is committed to:

- providing each child with positive guidance and encouragement toward developmentally appropriate behaviour
- encouraging children to express themselves and their opinions
- children undertaking experiences that develop self-reliance and self-esteem
- maintaining the dignity, agency and rights of each child at the service
- considering the diversity of children at the service, including family and cultural values, age, gender, and the physical and intellectual development and abilities of each child
- encouraging positive, respectful and warm relationships between children, families and educators/staff at the service
- the health, safety and wellbeing of each child and staff, and providing a safe, secure and welcoming environment.

SCOPE

This policy applies to the approved provider, persons with management or control, nominated supervisor, persons in day-to-day charge, educators, staff, students, volunteers, parents/guardians, children, and others attending the programs and activities of St Francis of Assisi OSHC, including during offsite excursions and activities.

RESPONSIBILITIES	Approved provider and persons with management or control	Nominated supervisor and persons in day-to-day charge	Educators and all other staff	Parents/guardians	Contractors, volunteers and students
R indicates legislation requirement, and should not be deleted					
Developing and implementing the *Behaviour Support Policy* in consultation with stakeholders, and ensuring that it reflects the philosophy, beliefs and values of the service	√	√	√		
Ensuring that all staff are aware of the service's expectations for positive, respectful, and appropriate behaviour, including acceptable responses and fostering warm, trusting, and reciprocal interactions when working with children and families *(refer to Code of Conduct and Interactions with Children Policy)*	√	√	√		√
Avoiding inappropriate conduct *(refer to Definitions)* and maintaining professional boundaries at all times, including through respectful and age-appropriate interactions with children. Personnel must act in accordance with the *Code of Conduct, Child Safe Environment and Wellbeing Policy, and Interaction with Children Policy,* and hold and maintain any required Working with Children Check Clearance or Victorian Institute of Teaching registration before undertaking child-related work. (*Child Safe Standard 2 -2.4, 6.2, 6.3, 6.4*	R	R	R		R
Ensuring children are adequately supervised *(refer to Definitions)* and that educator-to-child ratios are maintained at all times *(refer to Supervision of Children Policy) (Child Safe Standard 6.4, 9 - 9.3)*	R	R	√		√
Ensuring the environment at the service is safe, secure, free from any hazards *(National Law: Section 167) (refer to Child Safe Environment Policy, Occupational Health and Safety Policy and Supervision of Children Policy)* and promotes active participation of every child *(Child Safe Standard 9 - 9.3)*	R	√	√		√
Developing and implementing educational programs that are delivered in accordance with an approved learning framework *(refer to Definitions)*, are based on the developmental needs, interests and experiences of each child, and take into account the individual differences and strengths of each child *(refer to Program Planning and Inclusion and Equity Policy)*	R	R	√		√
Implementing planned and spontaneous discussions about emotions, feelings and issues of inclusion and exclusion, fair and unfair behaviour, bias and prejudice		√	√		√
Maintaining the dignity and rights of each child at all times*(Child Safe Standard 3 – 3.1)*	√	√	√		√

Ensuring that no child is subjected to any form of corporal punishment or discipline that is unreasonable in the circumstances *(National Law: Section 166). (Child Safe Standard 2 – 2.1, 2.2, 2.4; Child Safe Standard 5 – 5.1, 5.2, 5.3)*	R	R	R		R
Ensuring positive behaviour guidance strategies are used to support children's wellbeing, learning and inclusion, and that practices that may cause fear, distress, humiliation or harm, including punitive or isolating practices, are not used. *(Child Safe Standard 3 – 3.1, 3.2; 5.1, 5.2, 5.3)*	R	R	R		R
Ensuring the behaviour guidance is not associated with food *(Child Safe Standard 1 – 1.5, 2 – 2.4)*	R	R	R		R
Applying a trauma informed lens when supporting children to self-regulate and manage behaviours *(Child Safe Standard 2.1, 2.2, 2.4; 5.1, 5.2, 5.3)*		√	√		√
Providing each child with positive guidance and encouragement toward acceptable behaviour and encourage children to express themselves and their opinions *(Child Safe Standard 1 – 1.5, 3 – 3.1)*		√	√		√
Modelling respectful behaviour and providing supportive language *(Child Safe Standard 1 – 1.5, 3 – 3.1)*		√	√	√	√
Talking with children about the consequences of their actions		√	√		√
Planning and implementing strategies to support individual children's behaviour		√	√		√
Discussing with and supporting children to identify their feelings, and providing a safe place for them to explore and build strategies to calm the body and mind *(Child Safe Standard 1 – 1.5, 3 – 3.1)*		√	√		√
Listening empathetically to children when they express their emotions, acknowledging their feelings and reassuring children that it is normal to experience positive and negative emotions at times *(Child Safe Standard 1 – 1.5, 3 – 3.1)*		√	√		√
Supporting children to negotiate their rights in relation to the rights of others and intervening sensitively when children have trouble resolving a disagreement *(Child Safe Standard 1 – 1.5, 3 – 3.1, 3.2)*		√	√		√
Assisting children to understand that others may not always want to engage in play with them		√	√		√
Pre-empting potential conflicts or challenging behaviours by monitoring children's play and supporting interactions		√	√		√
Using knowledge of individual children's personalities and friendship preferences to support children to manage their emotions and behaviour, and develop an understanding of the feelings and needs of others *(Child Safe Standard 1 – 1.5, 3 – 3.1, 3.2, 5 - 5.1)*		√	√		√
Supporting children to negotiate and share ownership of responsible and respectful behaviours, and work with families and other professionals to appropriately support each child's emotional and social learning		√	√		√

Working with each child's family and, where applicable, other support services, to ensure an inclusive and consistent approach is used to support all children to regulate their behaviour and communicate effectively *(Child Safe Standard 4 – 4.1)*		√	√	√	√
Managing situations in which a child may benefit from more support in managing their behaviour *(refer to Attachment 1)*		√	√		√
Collaborating with other professionals or support agencies that work with children who have diagnosed behavioural or social difficulties *(Child Safe Standard 4 – 4.1)*		√	√	√	√
Documenting communication with families that shows their views, ideas and preferences have been considered when planning appropriate strategies to support their child's positive inclusion in the program *(Child Safe Standard 4 – 4.1)*		√	√		√
Ensuring that there is a behaviour guidance plan *(refer to Definitions and Attachment 1)* developed for a child if educators are concerned that the child's behaviour may put the child, other children, educators/staff and/or others at risk *(Child Safe Standard 4 – 4.1)*		√	√		√
Developing individual behaviour guidance plans *(refer to Definitions and Attachment 1)* for children, including evidence of consultation with their families and if appropriate, input and suggestions from other professionals and support agencies *(Child Safe Standard 5 – 5.1)*		√	√		√
Developing links with and referral pathways to services and to support children experiencing social, emotional and behavioural difficulties and their families	√	√	√		√
Ensuring that parents/guardians and program support groups *(refer to Definitions)* (as appropriate) are consulted if an individual behaviour guidance plan *(refer to Definitions)* has not resolved the challenging behaviour *(Child Safe Standard 4 – 4.1)*	√	√	√		
Setting clear timelines for review and evaluation of the behaviour guidance plan	√	√	√		
Providing information, ideas and practical strategies to families, educators and staff on a regular basis to promote and support health and wellbeing in the service and at home *(Child Safe Standard 4 – 4.1)*	√	√	√		
Consulting with, and seeking advice from, DE if a suitable and mutually agreeable behaviour guidance plan *(refer to Definitions)* cannot be developed	R	√	√		
Investigating the availability of extra assistance, such as ISP *(refer to Definition)* or training, specialist children's services officers from DE or other agencies working with the child	R	√	√		
Ensuring that additional resources are sourced, if required, to implement a behaviour guidance plan *(refer to Definitions)*	R	√			
Ensuring that educators/staff at the service are provided with appropriate training to guide the actions and their responses to a child/children with challenging behaviour	√	√			

Informing educators/staff of concerns, events or incidents that may impact on their child's behaviour at the service (e.g. moving house, relationship issues, a new sibling) *(Child Safe Standard 4 – 4.1)*				√	
Building and maintaining a workplace environment and culture that is committed to being free from behaviour aggression *(refer to Definitions)*	R	√	√		√
Providing and promoting a safe work environment where staff members are not exposed to hazards and can work without risk of injury or harm including behaviour aggression *(refer to Definition)*	R	R			
Identifying, assessing, and controlling environmental risks in each workplace to reduce the potential for harm to staff members, including behaviour aggression *(refer to Definition)* *(refer to Occupational Violence and Aggression Policy)* *(Child Safe Standard 2 – 2.5)*	R	R			
Promoting a no tolerance approach to any form of harm, including behaviour aggression *(refer to Definition)* against staff members (*refer to Occupational Violence and Aggression Policy)*	R	√		√	
Providing training programs specific to the needs of staff, relative to the degree of risk faced within the working environment	R	√			
Supporting staff members to actively report all incidents and hazards related to behaviour aggression *(refer to Definition)*	R	√			
Ensuring all incidents and near misses of behaviour aggression are reported *(refer to Definitions)*	R	√	√		√
Taking appropriate action after any incidents of behaviour aggression, in terms of support, counselling and follow-up	R	√			
Maintaining confidentiality *(refer to Privacy and Confidentiality Policy)*	R	√	√	√	√
Ensuring all educators, staff, volunteers, students and contractors undertaking child-related work: • hold any required Working with Children Check Clearance or VIT registration • have their WWC Clearance verified prior to engagement • are connected to the service through Working with Children Connect where required • remain suitable for child-related work throughout their engagement • have records updated when employment or engagement arrangements commence, cease or change *(refer to Definitions)* *(refer to Sources).*	R	R	√		√
Monitoring completion of national Child Safety Training, Child Protection Training and any required refresher training and ensuring personnel do not undertake child-related duties unless required training obligations are met. *(refer to Sources).*	R	R	√		√

BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATION

BACKGROUND

From infancy, children embark on a journey to comprehend the workings of the social world, involving the intricate process of exploring and managing emotions, behaviour, rights, and responsibilities. Educators, through positive and respectful daily interactions, contribute significantly to supporting children in regulating their behaviour. These interactions serve as a foundation for instilling a sense of interdependence and nurturing considerate citizenship in children. As a result, children acquire the confidence and skills needed to autonomously manage their behaviour, make decisions, and foster positive and effective relationships with others.

Connection-seeking behaviours in children may stem from age-appropriate actions, attempts to meet needs, or expressions of unmet needs or desires. Environmental factors also influence behaviour, and supportive conditions contribute to children's wellbeing. Positive adult role models support children to develop social and emotional skills, build positive relationships, and engage respectfully with others.

To guide children in learning self-regulation, it is imperative for educators to recognise that these skills evolve gradually and exist on a continuum. The application of these developing skills in children can vary based on factors such as mood, health, family circumstances, and challenging situations they encounter.

> The approved provider has a duty under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004* to eliminate risks to health and safety of workers and other persons so far as is reasonably practicable. If it is not reasonably practicable to eliminate risks, they must be minimised so far as is reasonably practicable. This means approved providers must do all that they reasonably can to manage the risk of behaviour aggression *(refer to Definitions)* occurring at the workplace.

Behaviour aggression *(refer to Definitions)* can have significant short- and long- term impacts on a person's physical and psychological (mental) health. It's not just violent incidents like physical assault which can cause harm - being exposed to lower level but frequent forms of aggression, like yelling, name calling and challenging behaviours, can also have a lasting effect on a person's health.

All persons working or volunteering within education and care services are required to undertake Child Safety Training and Child Protection Training relevant to their role. This training supports a nationally consistent understanding of child safety, child abuse prevention, responding to safeguarding concerns and creating child-safe cultures. *(refer to Sources).*

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
- Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)
- National Quality Standard, Quality Area 5: Relationships with Children
- Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004
- Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2017
- Worker Screening Act 2020 (Vic)
- Worker Screening Regulations 2021 (Vic)
- Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic)

DEFINITIONS

The terms defined in this section relate specifically to this policy. For regularly used terms e.g. Approved provider, Nominated supervisor, Notifiable complaints, Serious incidents, Duty of care, etc. refer to the Definitions file of the PolicyWorks catalogue.

Behaviour Aggression: involves incidents in which a staff member is physical or verbally abused or assaulted by a child in their care. This definition covers a broad range of actions and behaviours that can create a risk to the health and safety of employees and other persons in the workplace.

Examples of behaviour aggression can include, but not limited to:

- biting, spitting, scratching, hitting, kicking, choking
- pushing, shoving, tripping, grabbing, slapping
- screaming, punching, swearing
- throwing objects.

Behaviour guidance: a means of assisting children in positive and effective ways to help children gain understanding and learn skills that will help them learn to manage their own behaviour.

Behaviour guidance plan: A plan that documents strategies to assist an educator in guiding a child with diagnosed behavioural difficulties or challenging behaviours to self-manage their behaviour. The plan is developed in consultation with the nominated supervisor, early childhood teachers, educators, parents/guardians and families, and other professional support agencies as applicable.

Challenging behaviour: behaviour that can be described as:

- infringing on the rights of others
- disrupting others or causing disputes between children
- causing harm or risk to the child, other children, adults or living things
- is destructive to the environment and/or equipment
- inhibits the child's learning and relationship with others
- a child presenting as shy, withdrawn or excessively passive in a way which is inhibiting their learning and/or development
- is inappropriate relative to the child's developmental age and background.

Frightening methods of control: Disciplinary or authoritative techniques that instil fear, intimidation, or distress in individuals as a means of regulating their behaviour or actions. These methods often rely on threats, aggression, coercion, or the imposition of negative consequences that evoke fear or anxiety in the individual being controlled. Examples may include yelling, physical punishment, verbal abuse, humiliation, or any other form of coercion that induces fear or distress in order to manipulate behaviour. Such methods are generally considered harmful and ineffective in fostering healthy relationships and promoting positive behaviour development.

Inappropriate conduct: Conduct that a reasonable person would consider inappropriate in an education and care service, taking into account any of the following circumstances:

- Whether the conduct aligns with generally accepted education and care practice
- The child's age and developmental stage
- Whether the conduct is likely to cause or result in harm (including emotional, psychological or physical harm) or injury to a child or children
- Whether the conduct is sexual, aggressive or violent.

In deciding if the conduct is inappropriate, it does not matter if:

- the child consented (agreed to the conduct, either by directly expressing their consent or implying consent through their actions)
- the person subjecting the child to the conduct believes the child has consented
- the person subjecting the child to the conduct is related to the child.

Subjecting a child to inappropriate conduct can occur in a number of ways including, but not limited to:

- in-person via words or behaviour, including both adult to child or between adults in the presence of a child/ren
- filming and capturing images or recordings

- as a single occasion or as part of a pattern over time
- either directly or indirectly (for example, exposure to inappropriate language or conversations, or leaving inappropriate material accessible to children)
- online
- as an omission (for example, deliberately excluding a child).

Program Support Groups (PSG): A program support group brings together key people to support the inclusion of children with disability or developmental delay, or complex medical needs, from the time of enrolment at kindergarten until they move to school. The group may include:

- the early childhood teacher
- the child's parent/guardian(s)
- early childhood intervention professionals
- a preschool field officer
- medical practitioners, therapists or other allied health professionals
- a support person – if the child's parent/guardian(s) chooses to use one.

Victorian Inclusion Support Program (ISP): assists children with additional needs to participate in early childhood education and care (ECEC). It does this through tailored support and funding to ECEC services.

ISP supports services to:

- address barriers to inclusion
- build capacity and capability to include children with additional needs
- implement quality, inclusive and equitable practices.

The program aims to:

- provide children with additional needs the opportunity to learn and develop next to their typically developing peers
- ensure all children have genuine opportunities to access, participate and achieve positive learning outcomes. For more information visit: Inclusion Support Program - Department of Education, Australian Government

Working with Children Connect (WWC Connect): The Social Services Regulator's online system that enables organisations to verify and connect workers undertaking child-related work, maintain workforce records and receive notifications if a person's Working with Children Check Clearance status changes.

SOURCES AND RELATED POLICIES

SOURCES

- ACECQA Child Safety Training
- Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority - Planning and Strategies to Promote Positive Behaviour (Babies - 5 years): www.acecqa.gov.au
- Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority: Supporting children to regulate their own behaviour: www.acecqa.gov.au

- Belonging, Being & Becoming – The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia: www.acecqa.gov.au
- Child Safe Standards: Victorian Social Services Regulator
- Department of Education - Supporting children's behaviour in early childhood services: www.vic.gov.au
- Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics: www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au
- Emerging Minds - Supporting children in families with complex needs: Nine tips for practitioners who feel out of their depth: www.emergingminds.com.au
- Guide to the National Quality Framework, ACECQA: www.acecqa.gov.au
- Inclusion Support Program: education.gov.au
- Mandatory Child Safety Training: Working with Children Check Clearance holders
- Social Services Regulator: Changes to the Working with Children Check
- Social Services Regulator: Working with Children (WWC) Connect
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child: www.unicef.org
- Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework: www.acecqa.gov.au
- Victorian Inclusion Agency (VIAC): ww.viac.com.au

RELATED POLICIES

- Child Safe Environment and Wellbeing
- Code of Conduct
- Compliments and Complaints
- Planning and Programming
- Inclusion and Equity
- Interactions with Children
- Occupational Health and Safety
- Occupational Violence and Aggression
- Privacy and Confidentiality
- Staff Grievances and Dispute Resolutions
- Supervision of Children

EVALUATION

In order to assess whether the values and purposes of the policy have been achieved, the approved provider will:

- regularly seek feedback from everyone affected by the policy regarding its effectiveness
- monitor the implementation, compliance, complaints and incidents in relation to this policy
- keep the policy up to date with current legislation, research, policy and best practice
- revise the policy and procedures as part of the service's policy review cycle, or as required
- notifying all stakeholders affected by this policy at least 14 days before making any significant changes to this policy or its procedures, unless a lesser period is necessary due to risk *(Regulation 172 (2))*.

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1: Behaviour Support Plan Template
- Attachment 2: Behaviour Information Gathering

ATTACHMENT 1. BEHAVIOUR SUPPORT PLAN TEMPLATE

Behaviour Support Plan			
Name of Child			
Date of Birth			
Age			
Start date of plan		End date of plan/ongoing	
Responsibility for implementing plan			
Names			Date and Sign
Staff:			
Family:			
Support service staff:			
Child's Background			
Child's strengths			
Child's current interests			
Behaviour of concern			
Known warning signs/triggers of impending behaviour			

Alternative behaviours – short term goals
Long Term goals
Preventative strategies and techniques
Response and management during challenging behaviour
Review Date
Notes and progress

ATTACHMENT 1: BEHAVIOUR INFORMATION GATHERING

Behaviour Information Gathering	
Name of Child:	
Date of Birth:	
Days of Attendance:	
Date:	
Educators name completing the form:	

Observation of the behaviour
Situation leading to the behaviour being displayed/triggers
Strategies that worked
Reflection