

EARLY YEARS POLICY

Early Years Services School Aged Children Behaviour Guidance	Policy No:	QA 5.2
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Responsible Officer:	Coordinator Early Years	
Authorising Officer:	Manager Community Strengthening	

1. Purpose

To promote resilience in an inclusive, supportive and safe environment for all school aged children accessing Surf Coast Shire Council Early Years Services. The Behaviour guidance philosophy used within the program is restorative practices (see definitions) which are currently used in local primary schools.

“The philosophy of restorative practice is to promote resilience in both the one who is harmed and the one who causes the harm. It is about helping young people become aware of the impact of their behaviour on others through personal accountability and being open to learning from conflict situations”¹

2. Scope

All school aged children participating in Surf Coast Shire Council Early Years Services, Surf Coast Shire Council staff, educators, volunteers, contractors and students.

3. Application

This policy and procedure applies to all services that educate and care for out of school hours children. The policy relies on effective communication and development of a partnership between all; children, parent/guardians, staff/educators and management.

Restorative Practice aims to contribute to the building of positive relationships. An important component of restorative practices is the focus on restoring relationships and a sense of community after harm has occurred.

This policy and procedure is to be viewed in conjunction with the *Surf Coast Shire Council Early Years Services Behaviour Guidance and Interactions with Children Policy and Procedure*.

4. Definitions

Restorative Practices: defined above.

Behaviour Guidance²: is the practice of Staff members/educators guiding children’s behavior, interactions and communication.. Behaviour guidance consists of a variety of ways that adults help children learn to guide or ‘self-manage’ their behaviour.

Appropriate Behaviour: A set of agreed behaviours which prompts and requires respect and tolerance of one another.

Inappropriate Behaviour: When the behaviour repetitively and deliberately impacts, threatens or harms the children, staff/educators physically and or emotionally, (this includes deliberately damaging any belongings and property of other children and the service.

Bullying and Bullying Behaviour³

Bullying

Bullying is when someone or a group of people with more power repeatedly and intentionally causes hurt or harm to another person or group of people who feel helpless to respond. Bullying can continue over time, is often hidden from adults and will probably continue if no action is taken.

¹ Marist Youth Care Sydney, 2004

² DEECD, Behaviour Guidance Practice Note 6 | May 2010, Updated August 2013.

³ ‘Bullying Hurts’ The Alannah & Madeline Foundation - Keeping children safe from violence ,2011

Bullying is not:

- A single episode of social rejection or dislike
- A single episode acts of nastiness or spite
- Random acts of aggression or intimidation
- Mutual arguments, disagreements or fights.

Bullying Behaviour

The Department of Education and Training (DET) *Building Respectful and Safe Schools* (2010) identifies four types of bullying:

- **Physical bullying:** includes hitting, kicking, tripping, pinching and pushing or damaging property.
- **Verbal bullying:** includes name calling, insults, teasing, intimidation, homophobic or racist remarks, discriminatory comments about culture or religion and verbal abuse.
- **Covert bullying:** is often harder to recognise and can be carried out behind the bullied person's back. It is designed to harm someone's social reputation and/or cause humiliation. Covert bullying includes:
 - lying and spreading rumours
 - negative facial or physical gestures, menacing or contemptuous looks
 - playing nasty jokes to embarrass and humiliate
 - mimicking unkindly
 - encouraging others to socially exclude someone
 - damaging someone's social reputation or social acceptance.
- **Cyber-bullying:** is overt or covert bullying behaviours using digital technologies. Examples include harassment via a mobile phone, setting up a defamatory digital channel or deliberately excluding someone from social networking spaces. Cyber-bullying can happen at any time. It can be in public or in private; and sometimes only known to the target and the person bullying.

5. Policy

The Principles and Processes of Restorative Practices:

Staff/educators within the service primary role is to facilitate and foster:

- Awareness in the child/ren of how their actions may affect others
- Active involvement, facilitate reflection of actions and developing ideas for resolution
- Develop direct questioning towards problem solving on what needs to occur to 'make things right'.

Staff/educators have a series of effective questions that facilitate reflection and resolution of issues between peers within the service:

- What happened?
- What were you thinking at the time?
- Did you make the right choice or the wrong choice?
- What would you do differently next time?
- What do you need to do now?
- How can we make things right?

These questions assist the children to actively speak about their actions, consider the effect on others and help decide the best way of repairing the harm between friendship/peer group conflicts.

For the child/ren affected by the behaviour, staff/educators can ask a series of questions such as:

- What did you think when you realised what had happened?
- What impact has this incident had on you and others?
- What has been the hardest thing for you?
- What do you think needs to happen to make things right?

Appropriate Behaviours

Agreed Appropriate Behaviour within the program is established. These agreed behaviours can be added to throughout individual programs:

- Respect others opinions and points of view
- Respect one another's feeling
- Respect our environment
- Respect our educators

When these agreed behaviours are not respected, the child or children have an opportunity to have quiet/chill out time to reflect on current behaviour. Staff/educators will suggest alternative activities and environment (if practicable) to assist the child.

Response to Significant Inappropriate Behaviour within the Early Years Service

Step 1

Staff/educators will document significant inappropriate behaviour, incidents and complete relevant forms.

Step 2

Families will be notified via a phone call or in person of the situation by the program Team Leader. Families are encouraged to speak to their children about the behaviour and the programs agreed behaviours (as listed above).

Step 3

If the **behaviour listed below** continues, the program reserves the right to ask for the child to be collected:

- Threatens the physical and or emotional health of any child, staff/educator or themselves
- Repeatedly or deliberately does not follow the instructions given by staff/educators
- Attempts to abscond from venue
- Deliberately damages property or belongings of individuals or programs.

Note: The program reserves the right to refuse care to a child who is known to abscond from program and excursion locations.

Step 4

Parent/Guardian Meeting

If a parent is asked to collect a child from a program, the families will be asked to attend a meeting to discuss and develop a Behaviour Guidance Strategy Plan. This plan will outline strategies that staff/educators and families can use in partnership to resolve issues. If families are not willing to attend a behaviour guidance meeting, the child will not be able to enroll into the program until an attempt is made to resolve the behaviour which is occurring.

Step 5

Monitoring of Behaviour

Behaviour Guidance Strategy Plans will be discussed at staff/educators meetings so all staff are aware of the strategies for the child. Staff/educators will continue to monitor behaviour providing feedback to the family. Staff/educators will provide feedback to the family regularly and when necessary will arrange follow up meetings to review and renew the Behaviour Guidance Strategy Plan.

Step 6

Inappropriate Behaviour continues

Depending on the severity of the behaviour the service may implement the following steps:

- The service will write to the parents/guardians asking that they attend to their child's challenging behaviour. The service will support the family to access further professional assistance. The child will be given reasonable time to respond positively to new strategies and the family will be supported in this as far as possible.
- If there is insufficient improvement in the child's behaviour the service will write to the parents/guardians to advise them of this, and to explain that the child's attendance at the service is suspended for a reasonable time in order to give the child time to modify his/her behaviour away from the service. After this time the child may return to the service and will be given reasonable time to display positive changes in behaviour.
- If the child does not demonstrate a positive change in behaviour on their return to the service, the service will write to the parents/guardians to explain that the child's attendance at the service will be suspended until such a time as the behaviour is corrected.

In the case of severe behaviour which threatens significant harm or distress to the child themselves, staff/educators or other children, the parent/guardian will be informed that the child will be suspended or dismissed immediately.

6. Records

Records shall be retained for at least the period shown below.

Record	Retention/Disposal Responsibility	Retention Period	Location
Not applicable			

7. Attachments

Not applicable

8. References

Related Surf Coast Shire Council and Early Years Services Policies

D15/42638 Interactions with Children and Behaviour Guidance Policy

Related Surf Coast Shire Council and Early Years Services Work Instructions and Forms

D14/28563 Sexualised Play/Behaviours Work Instructions

D15/90884 Early Years Child Inappropriate Behaviour Flow Chart

Other References

Bullying and Victimisation in Schools: A Restorative Justice Approach, Brenda Morrison, 2002, Australian Institute of Criminology. Retrieved 2014.

Bullying Hurts, The Alannah and Madeleine Foundation, Keeping Children Safe From Violence, 2011.

Education and Care Services National Law 2010

Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011

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