

GUIDING CHILDREN'S BEHAVIOUR

Aim:

To have guidelines for managing student behaviour which are firstly God-centred, encourage children to cooperate, be aware of and interact positively with others and enhance the child's self-esteem.

Educators recognise that each child is an individual and has the right to be cared for in a safe environment.

Our centre aims to ensure that all educators form positive relationships with children that make them feel safe and supported. Educators will encourage positive relationships between children and their peers as well as with all educators.

Explanation:

Behaviour guidance is intended to help children self regulate.

When a child is redirected or stopped, Educators should explain why. This will assist children to make judgements about what he/she can and cannot do.

The Centre aims to foster behaviour based on control of self and understanding and appreciation of other people's needs, rights and feelings. This can be linked to the Fruits of the Spirit (Gal 5:22-23)

Praise and encouragement should be used regularly to reinforce positive behaviours. Educators need to be conscious of the child's developmental level.

Self-discipline and self regulation can only be achieved if the children are aware of the expectations. Expectations need to be consistently reinforced and modelled by each Educator.

Implementation:

In order to maintain positive interactions and to encourage positive behavior with children our educators will maintain the following:

- We will provide a relaxed and happy atmosphere for the children.
- We will ensure mealtimes are relaxed and unhurried and educators take the time to sit and talk with children.
- Our educators will encourage children to initiate conversations about their experiences inside and outside the centre as well as what is happening around them, express their ideas and feelings, share humour with the nominated supervisor, educators, coordinators and educators and seek assistance as they take on new challenges and try to do things for themselves.
- Our educators will respond sensitively and appropriately to children's efforts to communicate and engage them in sustained conversations about their interests in a positive manner.
- Our educators will talk with children in a two-sided manner. That is, encourage children to have their own opinions, ideas and comments. Educators should support children with this and let them know that their ideas are valued.

- Our routines, as well as planned and spontaneous experiences will be organised to maximise opportunity for meaningful conversations between children and educators and the centre will ensure that all children have equal opportunity to engage in one to one and small group conversations with educators.
- Our educators will be knowledgeable in the communication strategies and non verbal cues and staffing arrangements will support the development of trusting relationships between educators and children to allow them to feel secure in the centre.
- Our statement of philosophy will be visible
- Our educators will participate in children's play using children's cues to guide their level and type of involvement while always maintaining a positive approach when responding to children and offering assistance.
- Our educators will model reasoning, prediction and reflection processes and language.
- Our educators will collaborate with children about routines and experiences.
- Our educators will use their interactions with children to support the maintenance of home languages and learning English as an additional language.
- Our educators and coordinators will use information from their observations of interactions with children to extend the children's thinking and learning.
- Our educators will also support children to build secure attachments with one and then many educators and use a favourite toy or comfort item to help them feel secure in the centre. We will ensure that there are many opportunities for babies and toddlers to experience relaxed physical contact and close interactions with familiar educators.
- Our nominated supervisor, educators and coordinators will learn more about the histories, cultures, languages, traditions, child rearing practices and lifestyle choices of families using the service.
- Our educators will frequently talk with families to get an idea of the non-verbal forms of communication used by their children in order to convey messages such as hunger, needing the toilet, tiredness and emotions.
- Our educators will allow time to talk to parents about their children. This allows educators to gain insight into their home life.
- Our centre will implement strategies to assist all children to develop a sense of belonging and confidence through positive interactions between the children and educators.
- Our centre will gather information from families in the enrolment form in order to be able to provide support for children during the settling in process.
- When children have special needs, our centre will consult with other professionals or support agencies that work with children to gather information that will guide our interactions with these children.

BEHAVIOUR GUIDANCE

Positive Behaviour

Educators, staff and volunteers will model positive behaviour and guide children's behaviour in ways that promote their self esteem by:

- encouraging children to be cooperative and helpful, to express their feelings and responses to others' behaviour confidently and constructively, and to respectfully guide the behaviour of other children when it is disrespectful or unfair
- supporting children to explore different identities and points of view, to negotiate their rights and the rights of others in a positive, respectful way and to communicate effectively when resolving disagreements
- discussing emotions and issues of inclusion and exclusion, fairness and bias
- encouraging children to listen to other children's ideas, consider alternate behaviour and co-operate to solve problems
- using positive language, gestures, facial expressions and tone of voice when redirecting or discussing children's behaviour with them, and remaining calm, gentle, patient and reassuring even when children strongly express distress, frustration or anger

- using their knowledge of children's personalities and friendships to help them manage their own behaviour and develop empathy
- using information from families about their children's social skills and relationship preferences to engage children in experiences that support their social development
- speaking in comforting tones and holding babies to soothe them when they are distressed, and responding positively to babies' and toddlers' exploratory behaviour
- intervening sensitively when children have difficulty resolving a disagreement, and helping them remove themselves from situations where they are experiencing frustration, anger or fear
- interacting with children and teaching them how to play in different ways: movement play, object play (understanding and solving problems), imaginative play (emotional resilience, creativity and empathy), social play (friendship and belonging, rough and tumble play, celebrations and ritual play), storytelling (my world, myself and where I fit in), creative play (new behaviours and thoughts) role play
- promoting children's agency by allowing them to be as independent as possible, to try things they see for themselves and experience the consequences of their choices while considering the risk and benefit to others. This may include teaching children how to use things
- ensuring curriculum is mainly based on children's ideas and interests rather than being led by educators
- setting up rooms and environments to foster positive behaviour eg room is interesting but not cluttered, defined and obstacle free walkways, resources are attractively displayed. The environment may include mirrors to help children focus and provide interest, contains photos of where resources belong
- ensuring activities are of interest to children eg are visual, smelly, have patterns,
- supporting children with strategies to deal with their raw emotions eg anger, fear, panic and being patient when children revert to old behaviour if they are stressed, tired, hungry etc. This includes listening empathetically to children when they express their emotions and reassuring them that it is normal to experience positive and negative emotions
- ensuring children's basic needs are met eg they aren't hungry or tired
- supporting children who appear to be insecurely attached by sensitively building relationships with the child and family
- allowing children to have uninterrupted play where they can continue their engagement in learning as they explore and improvise (one of the ideas behind progressive morning teas), and not interrupting a child who is actively engaged in an activity, or forcing a child to share when they are engaged with a resource. Simple strategies may be reducing unnecessary transitions or introducing progressive morning snack or mealtimes.
- providing explicit instruction for routines and learning
- understanding that children's comprehension of vocabulary concepts or instructions may require support such as visuals, key word signing, two step instructions or allowing time for a child to process the instruction or information. This may be as simple as waiting three seconds after speaking to the child so they can process what has been said
- understanding that children may not be able to interpret or understand some words. For example 'sharing' may not be understood as taking turns.

Inappropriate Behaviour

Educators and staff understand that inappropriate behaviour is a child's way of saying they need support. Educators will reflect on the reasons for the child's behaviour and develop strategies or a plan with the Nominated Supervisor which can be implemented by all educators to ensure consistent responses to the child's behaviour at the Preschool.

Children's behaviour may be inappropriate for a variety of reasons. Some of these include:

- insecure attachment to educators or families
- emotional immaturity
- insufficient language skills to express their needs and wishes
- used to gaining attention from negative behaviour
- condition or number of toys, resources and equipment
- a diagnosed or undiagnosed spectrum disorder.

Depending on the reason for the behaviour, some strategies for dealing with inappropriate behaviour may include:

- ignoring the negative behaviour and praising the positive behaviour (while ensuring the safety of all children), and ensuring all body language is consistent with actions and words
- using key words with signing and objects or visuals to help children with communication difficulties
- using minimal steps in directions then allowing time for a child to understand eg 3-5 seconds
- using terminology that children understand such as 'my turn' 'your turn' rather than assuming children understand eg children may not understand what it means to "share" or that saying "sorry" does not mean they can repeat the behaviour
- allowing children to develop their reasoning and emotional knowledge by helping them to reflect on their actions eg "Tommy, what are you doing?" "I saw you ..." "What were you about to do with ...?"
- not telling a child to do something but asking the child a question eg "What do we have to do so we can have lunch, " rather than "pack up"
- talking with children about the consequences of their actions, our rules and why we have them, and involving children in the setting of room rules and expectations.
- providing sufficient opportunities for exercise including running which can calm anxious or agitated children through the production of certain brain chemicals
- intentionally teaching behaviours like walking inside, never assuming children know how to do things or behave, and reaffirming those and other positive behaviours
- using empathy and putting themselves in the child's position to try and understand where the behaviour came from (rather than yelling at the end result of the behaviour)

Educators will not isolate, intimidate or subject children to corporal punishment to guide behaviour.

Parents will:

- work in partnership with educators where concerns are raised about the behaviour of their child
- agree to work with educators to minimise risk where the child's behaviour is a danger to children and educators. This may include seeking professional support from, for example a paediatrician, speech pathologist or family support services, or reducing the hours of care until the child's behaviour is supported and risk to others is minimized (see temporary separation policy).

BITING

All individuals involved in the care of a child need to recognise that at times, some children, for a variety of reasons, attempt to bite other children.

Some reasons a child may bite are:

- Infants – Experimental, Sensory Pleasure, Teething
- Toddlers – Frustration, fatigue, attention seeking, confined spaces.
- Older Children – Aggression, deliberate.

In the event of a biting incident, educators will abide by the following procedure:

- Check for broken skin.
- Clean all bites, regardless of whether the skin is broken or not.
- Apply a cold compress to the bitten area
- Our educators will contact the families of the child who has bitten and the child that has been bitten.
- Should the behaviour continue, our educators will work in conjunction with families and, if necessary, external agencies, to develop a Behaviour Guidance plan for the child who is biting.
- Our educators will complete an incident report for any occasion where a child bites and submit to the Nominated Supervisor.
- Monitor the behaviour of the child who has bitten and use distraction techniques to prevent the child reaching the point where the child feels the need to bite.

When a child's behaviour starts to adversely affect the early learning environment, the matter should be discussed with the Director taking into account why, when and how the incident occurred. A plan of action, involving behaviour modification techniques, should be developed and implemented with educators and families. The seeking of outside professional help or assessment may be recommended at times.

If a child's behaviour affects other children the following steps are to be followed:

- a) The concern must be documented as part of the child's individual observations. Records should include the incident, the offender and the victim, date and time of occurrence.
- b) Appropriate behaviour management techniques must be implemented.
- c) Parents are to be notified of their child's involvement in any behaviour incident when the children are collected, preferably by the Room Leader or the Nominated Supervisor. The incident report should be signed if required. Follow up with a phone call if the parent didn't collect the child.
- d) Strategies of behaviour management should be discussed with educators to ensure consistency.

If no solution can be found then the following steps should be taken:

When behaviour is shown by a number of observations, to be consistent, then it may be recommended that a referral be made. It is the parent's responsibility as to how they act upon the centre/staff recommendations. However, since it is the centre's responsibility to provide a safe environment the safety needs of other children and educators must be considered. The 'Temporary Separation Policy' will be referred to.