

BEHAVIOUR GUIDANCE

QUALITY AREA 5 – RELATIONSHIPS WITH CHILDREN



PURPOSE

This policy will provide guidelines to:

- promote inclusive practice as per the Inclusion and Equity Policy;
 - support the successful participation of children who may exhibit behaviours of concern at Sparkways education and care services;
 - ensure a respectful, consultative and collaborative approach when Sparkways is working with parents/guardians of children exhibiting behaviours of concern;
 - ensure the safety and wellbeing of all children and adults at Sparkways education and care services; and
 - ensure behaviour guidance at Sparkways occurs in accordance with legislative and regulatory requirements.
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POLICY STATEMENT

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Sparkways is committed to:

- acknowledging and respecting the rights of all children to be provided with and participate in a quality early childhood education and care program;
- creating an environment that supports, reflects and promotes equity and inclusivity;
- creating an environment of belonging, wellbeing and safety for all children, families and staff;
- maintaining a duty of care to all children and staff; and
- delivering best practice early education and care in accordance with the requirements of relevant legislation, regulations and quality standards.

SCOPE

This policy applies to the approved provider, persons with management or control, nominated supervisors, persons in day-to-day charge, early childhood teachers, educators, staff, students, volunteers, parents/guardians, children, and others attending the programs and activities of Sparkways, including during offsite excursions and activities.

 RESPONSIBILITIES	Approved provider and persons with management or control	Nominated supervisor and persons in day-to-day charge	Early childhood teacher, educators and all other staff	Parents/guardians	Contractors, volunteers and students
Ensuring all direct service staff, students, volunteers and contractors understand and know how to implement the Behaviour Guidance Policy	R	R	√		
Ensuring the Behaviour Guidance Policy is understood by parents/guardians and can be provided in an alternative/accessible format as required	R	R	√		
<p>Promoting and reinforcing positive behaviour as part of everyday practice. This includes but is not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishing routines, rules and limits in consultation with children so they know what is expected of them Providing appropriate space, environments and a variety of activities Intentional grouping of children based on their rhythms, interests and routines Offering a flexible, indoor/outdoor program Using visuals Modelling Using praise – lots of it 		√	√		√
<p>Supporting children to understand what behaviours are not appropriate, why they are not appropriate, and developing their use of alternative approaches as part of everyday practice.</p> <p>This includes developing children's:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> problem solving skills understanding of feelings/emotions understanding of their impact on others understanding of logical consequences to actions <p>Employing effective communication strategies, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listening empathetically Remaining calm, warm and responsive Using positive language, gestures, facial expressions and tone of voice Using specific language, appropriate to the child's stage of development, to ensure they understand Offering choices Using visuals Redirecting children to a different activity or environment Guiding children to remove themselves from situations where they are experiencing frustration, anger or fear 		√	√		√

Understanding that behaviours of concern are symptomatic of an underlying need, issue or cause and using practice approaches that are child and family-centred, strengths-based, trauma-informed, and aligned with related Sparkways policies.		√	√		√
Identifying where a formalised approach is required to support children with behaviours of concern, and instigating the Behaviour Guidance Procedure - <i>refer to Attachment 1</i>	√	√	√		√
Working collaboratively with parents/guardians to implement the Behaviour Guidance Procedure	√	√	√		√
Engaging and working collaboratively with Sparkways to implement the Behaviour Guidance Procedure (note: choosing not to do so may impact the child's enrolment whilst this remains the case)				√	



BEHAVIOUR GUIDANCE STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

Strategies and actions staff may implement to address behaviours of concern include, but are not limited to:

- Optimised environment – space, lighting, temperature, noise considerations (where practicable)
- Flexible program – multiple activity options; indoor/outdoor
- Intentional grouping for activities
- Minimising known triggers
- Positive reinforcement – acknowledge and praise
- Redirection / Diversion
- Calm down space and resources – quiet zone; calming blanket/toys; music/video
- Reduced hours – e.g. due to busy arrival/departure times or fatigue creating a trigger
- Early collection when overly escalated or if a significant incident has occurred
- Formal assessment – paediatrician; psychologist; NDIS
- Use of an Additional Educator (School Readiness Funding)
- Kindergarten Inclusion Support Funding Application – Additional Assistant
- Inclusion Support Program Funding (Early Learning & Care)



INCLUSIVE EDUCATION AND CARE

Sparkways is committed to inclusive education and care, which helps shape the self-esteem and aspirations of children. Inclusive education and care fosters respect and embraces the differences, diversity and inherent dignity of all people.

Sparkways commits to avoid the use of exclusionary practice (restrictions on participation and attendance) unless it is necessary as a **last resort to avert the risk of serious harm** to the child, other children or staff.



ALIGNMENT WITH CHILD SAFE STANDARDS

Implementation of the Behaviour Guidance Policy occurs alongside the Child Safe Standards. Intersections include:

Child Safe Standard	Application relevant to Behaviour Guidance Policy
Empower children about their rights, including to participate in decisions affecting them (CSS 3)	Flexible program gives children agency to choose what situations make them feel comfortable, allowing children to help minimise triggers
Staff are attuned to signs of harm (CSS 3.4)	Triggers listed in Behaviour Management Plans helps staff be attuned harmful situations which may trigger behaviours of concern
Families participate in decisions affecting their child (CSS 4.1)	Meetings, consultation and collaboration in the implementation of the Behaviour Guidance Procedure
Communication with families supports the full diversity of families to participate (CSS 4.1)	Meetings, consultation and collaboration is inclusive and flexible
Staff understand a child's diverse circumstances (CSS 5.1)	Plans and consultations help staff understand diverse circumstances. Staff collaborate and help each other to support the child.
The organisation, and staff, respect the diverse needs of all children (CSS 5.1)	Strategies to manage behaviours of concern are implemented with respect. Inclusive practice is preferred.
The organisation supports equity by making reasonable changes to support participation by all children (5.1, 5.3, 5.4)	Flexible program and other strategies listed in this policy. Inclusive practice is preferred. Exclusionary practice permitted only when necessary to respond to serious risk of harm



PROCEDURES

- Behaviour Guidance Procedure – *refer to Attachment 1*



BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATION

BACKGROUND

The National Quality Framework (NQF) recognises all children’s capacity and right to succeed and Early Childhood Education and Care Services must implement responsive, equitable, individualised opportunities and additional support whenever barriers are identified.

Under the Child Safe Standards, services are expected to provide environments and activities that encourage the participation of all children. The standards are underpinned by three overarching principles which require services to take into consideration the increased vulnerability of Aboriginal children, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and children with disabilities.

The Victorian Government requires funded organisations to ensure that their policies and procedures promote equality of opportunity for all children to enable their full participation in kindergarten. Developing professional knowledge and skills and using family-centred practice (*refer to Definitions*) to work in partnership with children, families, communities, and other services and agencies, assists services to identify, include and support children with additional needs and their families.

Further to the above, the NQF and the Child Safe Standards require that Early Childhood Education and Care Services provide environments that ensure the physical and psychological safety of all children who attend.

The Victorian Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Act (2004) requires the protection of the health, safety and wellbeing of employees and other people (e.g. visitors, volunteers, contractors) in the workplace.

LEGISLATION AND STANDARDS

Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

- Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic)
- Charter for Children in Out-of-home Care (Vic)
- Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)
- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)
- Child Safe Standards (Vic)
- Dardee Boorai: the Victorian Charter of Safety and Wellbeing for Aboriginal Children and Young People (Vic)
- Disability Act 2006 (Vic)
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)
- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
- Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)
- Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth)
- National Quality Standards Quality Areas 1-7
- Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004

The most current amendments to listed legislation can be found at:

Victorian Legislation – Victorian Law Today: www.legislation.vic.gov.au
Commonwealth Legislation – Federal Register of Legislation: www.legislation.gov.au



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 Sparkways policy catalogue.

Additional needs: A broad term relating to challenges experienced across a number of areas including physical health, mental health, disability, developmental concern, or emotional need (resulting from trauma, abuse or grief), family displacement (due to war or refugee status), domestic violence, mental illness, family separation or divorce, which affects a person's ability to participate or learn.

Behaviours of concern: Behaviours of concern are escalated behaviours that can impact the wellbeing or physical safety of the child or people around them (including other children and staff). This behaviour can disrupt day-to-day life and activities. The behaviour may involve emotional outbursts, shouting or screaming, violent reactions, running away or loss of control.

Culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD): Refers to individuals and groups who are from diverse racial, religious, linguistic and/or ethnic backgrounds.

Disability: In relation to a person, refers to

- a sensory, physical or neurological impairment or acquired brain injury, or any combination thereof, that:
 - i. is, or is likely to be, permanent, and
 - ii. causes a substantially reduced capacity in at least one of the areas of self-care, self-management, mobility or communication, and
 - iii. requires significant ongoing or long-term episodic support
- is not related to ageing, or
- an intellectual disability, or
- a developmental delay (*Disability Act 2006* (Vic)).

Diversity: Refers to all characteristics that make individuals different from one another, including race, religion, language, ethnicity, beliefs, age, gender, sexual orientation, level of ability, additional needs, socioeconomic status, educational attainment, personality, marital and/or parental status, family structure, lifestyle and general life/work experience.

Equity: (In the context of human rights) is the behaviour of acting in a fair and just manner towards others.

Family-centred practice:

Practice which:

- i. uses families' understanding of their children to support shared decision-making about each child's learning and development
- ii. creates a welcoming and culturally-inclusive environment, where all families are encouraged to participate in and contribute to children's learning and development
- iii. actively engages families and children in planning children's learning and development
- iv. provides feedback to families on each child's learning, and provide information about how families can further advance children's learning and development at home and in the community.

Inclusion: The engagement and involvement of children and families to ensure that all individuals have an equal opportunity to participate and achieve their maximum potential.

Kindergarten Inclusion Support Packages: A package of support for children with a disability and high support needs and/or with complex medical needs.

Mental health: in early childhood can be understood as a young child’s ability to experience, regulate and express emotions; form close and secure interpersonal relationships; and explore the environment and learn – all in the context of family, community and cultural expectations for young children. Infant mental health is synonymous with healthy social and emotional development (from Be You – refer to Sources).

Out-of-Home Care: Is the term used in Victoria when a child or young person is placed in care away from their parents. It includes placement in kinship care, home-based care such as foster care and residential care. For these children, the State of Victoria is their legal parent, and with this comes the responsibilities of a parent to care for and protect them, and to ensure that they have access to all the services they need for their immediate and longer-term benefit (Early Childhood Agreement on Out-of-Home Care – refer to Sources).



SOURCES AND RELATED POLICIES

SOURCES

- Be You: www.beyou.edu.au
- Commission for Children and Young People, Child Safe Standards: www.cryp.vic.gov.au
- Early Childhood Australia (ECA) and Early Childhood Intervention Australia’s (ECIA) Position Statement on the Inclusion of Children with a Disability in Early Childhood Education and Care – available at: Search ‘statement on inclusion of children with disability’ at: <https://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/our-work/inclusion-resources/>
- Guide to the National Quality Framework: www.acecqa.gov.au
- Guide to the National Quality Standard: www.acecqa.gov.au
- Moores Law Firm
- Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability – Volume 7, Inclusive education, employment and housing
- Schools Vic: <https://www.schools.vic.gov.au/>
- The Kindergarten Funding Guide (DET): www.education.vic.gov.au
- Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework Principal Practice Guide: Equity and Diversity: www.education.vic.gov.au

RELATED POLICIES

- Child Safe Environment and Wellbeing
- Code of Conduct
- Compliments and Complaints
- Curriculum Development
- Enrolment and Orientation
- Excursions and Service Events
- Inclusion and Equity
- Interactions with Children
- Occupational Health and Safety
- Privacy and Confidentiality
- Staffing



EVALUATION

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

- seek feedback from people 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



ATTACHMENTS AND LINKS

- Attachment 1: Behaviour Guidance Procedure
- Attachment 2: Behaviour Observation Chart
- Attachment 3: Behaviour Guidance Plan Template
- Attachment 4: Behaviour Risk Management Plan Template



AUTHORISATION

This policy was confirmed by Sparkways on 12/12/2023

REVIEW DUE: December 2024

ATTACHMENT 1

BEHAVIOUR GUIDANCE PROCEDURE



Stage	1 Identify and document →	2 Consult and collaborate →	3 Develop and implement →	4 Evaluate and review →
Relevant document(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behaviour Observation Chart • Incident records • Records of correspondence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behaviour Observation Chart (continuing documenting behaviours of concern) • Incident records • Notes from meetings • Reports from professionals • Records of correspondence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behaviour Observation Chart (continuing documenting behaviours of concern) • Incident records • Behaviour Guidance Plan • Behaviour Risk Management Plan • Records of correspondence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behaviour Observation Chart (continuing documenting behaviours of concern) • Behaviour Guidance Plan (review) • Behaviour Risk Management Plan (review) • Risk Assessment • Notes from meetings with parents and consultation with DET • Records of correspondence

1. Identify & Document

- Identification by ECT or Room Leader of behaviour at a level that warrants concern, i.e., behaviours of concern are impacting the wellbeing or physical safety of the child or people around them.
- Documentation of behaviours of concern by ECT or Room Leader using the **Behaviour Observation Chart**. The purpose of documentation is to help establish the presentation, frequency, patterns and triggers of the relevant behaviours of concern.
- Respond immediately by continuing to implement behaviour guidance strategies and actions as per the Behaviour Guidance Policy.

Note:

- Incident reporting requirements remain, including notifications to parents/guardians and child safety reporting obligations.

2. Consult & Collaborate

- NS and the ECT/Room Leader to meet with the parents/guardians to:
 - discuss the behaviours of concern;
 - discuss current and other potential strategies to help address the behaviours of concern;
 - obtain consent for professional consultation: e.g., preschool field officer; allied health (use Consent to Share Information and Refer form on Staff Hub); and
 - explain possible actions if the behaviours of concern continue to create significant risk for the child, other children and staff at the service four weeks after implementation of the Behaviour Guidance Plan.

If parents/guardians choose not to attend meetings or be involved in consultation and collaboration regarding their child's behaviours of concern, including development and implementation of a Behaviour Guidance Plan, Area Manager to explain that this may result in an unacceptable level of risk to their child, other children, and adults at the service, and consequently may impact their child's enrolment status whilst this remains the case.

- Once consent has been obtained, NS and ECT/Room Leader to seek professional observation and consultation.
- NS and ECT/Room Leader to meet with parents/guardians to discuss recommendations following professional observation and consultation –attended by the professionals where possible.

3. Develop & Implement

- In consultation with parents/guardians, NS and ECT/Room Leader to develop and implement a **Behaviour Guidance Plan**, incorporating existing and new strategies, actions, professional recommendations and parent voice.
- Area Manager and NS to also develop and implement a **Behaviour Risk Minimisation Plan** to support the safety of the child, staff, other children and people at the service.

Note: Implementation of the Behaviour Guidance Plan and Behaviour Risk Minimisation Plan includes communication to and where necessary, training of involved staff.

4. Evaluate & Review

- After two weeks, NS and ECT/Room Leader to meet with Parents/Guardians to evaluate, review and update the **Behaviour Guidance Plan** – Area Manager to attend as required.
- Area Manager and Nominated Supervisor to also also review and if required, update the **Behaviour Risk Minimisation Plan**
- After four weeks, if the behaviours of concern are continuing to create significant risk for the child, other children and staff at the service (according to **Behaviour Observation Chart** and **Behaviour Risk Minimisation Plan**), Sparkways may conduct a **risk assessment** in relation to its duty of care for all at the service and, with the approval of the Executive Operations Manager and in consultation with the Department of Education, consequently require the child to:
 - Have a break of up to two weeks from the service to 'reset' and then recommence the Plan;
 - Transfer to another Sparkways service; or
 - Transfer to an external service.

ATTACHMENT 2

BEHAVIOUR OBSERVATION CHART (image only – access from the Staff Hub)



Behaviour Observation Chart

Child's Name:	Date of Birth:	Group/Room:				
Date / Time / Location	What was the child's general emotional presentation?	A – Antecedent What was the situation just prior to the behaviour?	B – Behaviour What specific behaviour occurred?	C – Consequence What happened immediately after the behaviour?	What was the Outcome?	Educator Name

Behaviour Observation Chart Template – December 2023

ATTACHMENT 3

BEHAVIOUR GUIDANCE PLAN TEMPLATE

(image only – access from the Staff Hub)



Behaviour Guidance Plan

Behaviour Guidance Plan					
Child's Name:		Date of Birth:		Plan Commencement Date:	

History	
Diagnosis (if applicable)	
Background Information	
Strengths, Likes and Interests	
Involved Professionals	

Behaviour Management Plan Template – December 2023

General Behavioural Guidance Information	
Factors / Situations that may result in Behaviours of Concern	
Indicators / Signs of Distress in Child's Presentation	
Behaviours that may be Observed	
Mitigation / Intervention Strategies	
Response (validation) if mitigation/ intervention successful	
Further Actions if mitigation/ intervention not successful	
Follow-Up Actions and Support	

Specific Goals		
Goal (specific and measurable)	Strategies and Actions to Support Goal Achievement (and by who)	Indicators of Progress

Parent/Guardian Additional Input/Information and Acknowledgment	
I/we confirm this behaviour management plan has been developed in consultation and I/we support the behaviour guidance strategies to be put in place.	
Additional Input/Information:	
Parent/Guardian Name/s:	
Parent/Guardian Signature/s:	

Service Confirmation	
Nominated Supervisor Name:	
Nominated Supervisor Signature:	
Area Manager Name:	
Area Manager Signature:	

Plan Review Record	
Plan Review Number:	
Parent/Carer Comments:	
Parent/Carer Name/s:	
Parent/Carer Signature/s:	Date:
Service Comments:	
Nominated Supervisor Name:	
Nominated Supervisor Signature:	Date:
Area Manager Name:	
Area Manager Signature:	Date:

ATTACHMENT 4

BEHAVIOUR RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN TEMPLATE

(image only – access from the Staff Hub)



Behaviour Risk Minimisation Plan

This plan is to be used to assess and reduce safety and wellbeing risks to the child displaying behaviours of concern, other children, staff and people at the service.

It should be developed in accordance with the Behaviour Guidance Policy and associated Procedure, and be implemented in conjunction with the Behaviour Guidance Plan.

Child's Name:				Date of Birth:		Plan Commencement/ Review Date:	
Service:			Nominated Supervisor:				
Risks to Self		Risk Rating (L/M/H)	Prevention and Response Strategies				

Behaviour Risk Minimisation Plan Template – December 2023

Risks to Other Children		Risk Rating (L/M/H)	Prevention and Response Strategies				
Risks to Staff / Other People		Risk Rating (L/M/H)	Prevention and Response Strategies				