

## **Behaviour Management Policy**

### **Aims:**

- **To ensure that all children are treated with respect and in a consistent manner.**
- **To ensure that that the children are in an environment that is safe and conducive to learning.**
- **To ensure that behavioural guidance issues are handled in a manner that is relevant, respectful and supportive of all parties involved.**
- **To ensure that all complaints/concerns regarding challenging behaviour are dealt with in accordance with the 1996 Children's Services Regulations**

**This policy differentiates Behaviour Management into three headings:**

- 1. Developmentally appropriate behaviour**
- 2. Developmentally appropriate, but challenging behaviour**
- 3. Persistent challenging behaviour**

Developmentally appropriate behaviour is included here as a context in which to understand challenging behaviour.

Children need to feel safe and secure in their environment and it is important that they have an understanding of what is expected of them. Our program promotes a positive approach to behaviour management and guidance. The staff at Annie Dennis Children's Centre use positive, constructive guidance that is suited to the age of the children, their ability and level of understanding.

### **Procedures**

The children that attend the centre are separated into 5 age groups. The behaviour management strategies used by the staff are consistent throughout the centre, although the strategies are modified to suit the ages and development of each child.

When assessing and guiding behaviour in all children staff will consider:

- The physical and emotional well-being of the child
- Their knowledge of the child as an individual, their learning style and personality
- Their previous observations of the child's behaviour
- Their knowledge of the individual child's stage of development
- The relevant behavioural expectations of the child's stage of development
- Any influencing factors related to the child's behaviour
- The motivation behind the child's behaviour
- The effect of the child's behaviour on others eg children, staff, families
- Their own responses to the child's behaviour.

The staff seek to create an atmosphere that provides a caring and happy environment that enables children to fulfil their potential, any anti-social behaviours are unacceptable.

Such things include:

- Physical harm
- Verbal abuse eg name calling
- Rejection, intolerance
- Throw-away threats eg 'I'll hit you'
- Children taking over other children's play space

Not every incident where an action by one child causes distress to another child is an example of anti-social behaviour. Children learn how to play and interact with each other at their own rate of development. As children mature and development they will be more able to assume roles that are helpful in reducing anti-social behaviours.

## **Developmentally appropriate behaviour**

### *Definition*

Behaviour that is appropriate and relevant to the individual child's stage of development, their personality, their experience, their family background and their physical and emotional well-being.

### Infants –

Infants are dependent upon their caregivers for their basic needs. They cry because they are wet, hungry, cold and lonely or they cry for no apparent reason. Crying is their only way of letting their caregivers know that they need something and that they need one-to-one positive contact with a caregiver. Children under 6 months of age cannot misbehave, as they have no concept of cause and effect or of themselves as a separate individual.

Staff will:

- Provide an environment that is suited to the children's development and promotes positive interactions.
- Recognise and respond to the infants' signs of sadness, boredom, interest, curiosity, pleasure, wariness, frustration and other feelings.
- Attempt to understand and respond to infants' vocalisations, gestures and facial expressions.
- Recognise when an infant prefers a particular caregiver and respond to each infant's need to be close to a trusted adult.

### Toddlers –

Toddlers still express themselves by crying, jabbering and pointing. Their few words can mean many things. They can become easily frustrated and they are quite willing to hit or bite to get or keep a favourite toy. Learning how to do things in a socially acceptable way is a big step for a toddler.

Their caregivers understand that it is normal behaviour to:

- Refuse to share
- Hit or bite
- Say 'No' to assert themselves
- Cling to a dummy, favourite toy, their bag, or their blanket
- Throw things
- Touch everything.

Preschoolers –

Preschoolers are learning about the world around them. They ask lots of questions and enjoy imitating adults. They are learning to share but they don't always want to. Sometimes they want to play with others and sometimes they want to be alone. They are independent, they like to take risks and try new things. They like to make decisions for themselves and this makes them feel important. They have lots of energy and may get tired and irritable. They spend a lot of time learning how to get along with others. They like to experiment with words; this is a great source of fun. They are beginning to be able to understand reason and to manage their feelings.

Their caregivers understand that it is normal behaviour to:

- Be assertive and want control
- Become overexcited
- Make up stories (they are beginning to learn what is true and what is make-believe)
- Swear or use toilet words.

### **Developmentally appropriate, but challenging behaviour**

#### *Definition*

Behaviour that disrupts others or causes disruption or conflict between children, which requires staff to use strategies that assist the development of relevant social behaviour. This behaviour and the relevant strategies play an important part in children learning positive social behaviour.

For all children, staff will:

- Ensure the physical environment is conducive to positive social interactions by providing multiples of equipment, sufficient space and time for children to reach their goals.
- Ensure that the physical and emotional safety of all individuals is not compromised.
- Make sure that children are not put in a position where they feel frightened, ashamed, embarrassed, insecure or isolated.
- Attempt to prevent challenging behaviour at its earliest phase. The signs vary with every child but by observing the children closely caregivers can identify the signs that indicate what a child may be feeling (angry, sad, irritable, insecure, frightened, worried, confused, panicky etc).
- Model the behaviour they expect.
- Be consistent in the guidance of all children.
- Acknowledge and encourage children's positive behaviour.
- Phrase language in a way that tells the child what they can do instead of what they can't do, eg 'Remember to walk inside.'
- State the positive first.
- Give the children a choice and set clear limits.
- Focus on the child's behaviour.

- Refrain from using words like 'Stop', 'No', 'Don't', except to keep a child safe in an emergency.
- Assist children to understand the consequences of the choices available eg 'If you want to run, you have to go outside.'
- Use clear and positive language to communicate limits and information to the children.
- Assist children to identify and acknowledge their feelings and encourage them to find a positive way to express themselves.
- Assist the children to understand the behaviour of others and to respect individual differences.
- When appropriate, assist children to assess and adapt their own interactions to respect and meet the needs of other individuals.
- Assist children to use their own problem-solving skills in developing solutions to conflict situations, intervening when necessary
- Work co-operatively with parents/families to develop a strategy to manage children's behaviour. A consistent approach to behaviour at home and at the centre will assist children to feel secure and valued.
- Respect the confidentiality of parents/families and the child when dealing with issues of behaviour guidance in individual children.
- Seek assistance, or support, whenever necessary.

### **Persistent challenging behaviour in children.**

#### *Definition*

Ongoing behaviour that has not responded to the strategies set out under developmentally appropriate challenging behaviour in this policy. Ongoing behaviour that is placing the individual concerned, other children, staff or adults at risk.

If a child continues to display persistent, challenging behaviour despite the consistent implementation of strategies set out above, the room leaders will:

#### *Consult with the Director to:*

- Discuss the observed behaviour, strategies implemented and continuing behaviour.
- Access resources/organisations and research further strategies related to the guidance of behaviour.
- Discuss and assess the strategies required for the consultation with the family of the child involved.
- Discuss and develop strategies to support the parents/families of the child.
- Develop methods of recording the appropriate documentation.

#### *With the support of the Director, consult with parents/guardians to:*

- Discuss the behaviour shown by the child and suggest possible strategies.
- Ensure that parents/families receive relevant information about children's development and clearly understand the need for further behaviour guidance strategies.

- Communicate the importance of a consistent, team approach to ongoing behaviour guidance.
- Assess any support required for the child, parent/families or staff, eg ISF (Inclusion Support Facilitator)
- Consult with other professionals if appropriate.
- Assess the need for resources
- Establish timelines.

*Develop a behaviour guidance plan that is:*

- Based on an agreement reached with the parent/family on the strategies to be used.
- Relevant to any advice sought from other professionals, when appropriate.
- Clear and easily followed by staff, parents/families and/or others working with the child.
- Discussed in detail with the staff that are directly involved with the care of the child.
- Responsive to the needs of other children within the group.
- Reflective of centre policies.

*Implement the behaviour guidance plan ensuring:*

- Strategies are assessed and adapted, if necessary, on an ongoing basis.
- The parents/family of all child involved receives appropriate support and feedback on the implementation and evaluation of the behaviour guidance plan.
- All staff have a consistent approach to the implementation of the behaviour guidance plan.
- Other professionals are consulted when necessary for the ongoing support of the child and/or family.
- The child's behaviour is regularly evaluated and the effectiveness of both the behaviour guidance plan and its impact on other children in the group are assessed.
- Further support, advice or assistance for staff, child or parent/family is sought when deemed necessary by the Director.

*The Director will inform the President/and or Executive Committee when:*

- The Staff (Primary caregivers) are concerned that the child's behaviour may put itself, other children, staff or others at risk and the implementation of the behavioural guidance plan has not resolved the problem to an acceptable level.
- Additional resources/staff are required
- A parent/family lodges a complaint/concern, where they believe another child's behaviour is threatening the safety and well-being of other children. Additional advice may also be sought from other relevant organisations at this juncture.

*Throughout the above process all members of staff, President/and or Executive Committee members will:*

- Not divulge confidential information provided by the parent/family without first obtaining their consent.
- Provide relevant information to other staff and Executive Committee only in order to assist with resolution of the issue.

*Involvement of the President/and or Executive Committee*

The President/and or Executive Committee or any one of its members will become involved in the resolution process when:

- Requested by the Director.
- A parent/family lodges a complaint/concern regarding another child's behaviour that they believe is threatening the safety and well-being of other children.
- There is an occupational health and safety issue involved for staff or others at the centre.

*Process for resolution when the President/and or Executive Committee becomes involved:*

*Consultation with the Director*

The President and/or Executive Committee will consult with the Director to:

- Discuss the observed behaviour, strategies implemented and continuing behavioural issues.
- Discuss relevant complaints/concerns or issues arising from the child's ongoing behaviour.
- Assess current behaviour guidance plan to ensure its effectiveness.
- Assess the need and process for consultation with parents/guardians involved in lodging and dealing with complaints.
- Establish a timeline and set review dates for further review of relevant issues and the behaviour management plan.

*Consultation with Parents/Families*

The Director and President will consult with the parents/families involved to:

- Clarify issues arising from the child's ongoing behaviour.
- Assess current behaviour guidance plan to ensure it is agreeable to all parties.
- Develop possible, mutually agreeable resolution strategies.
- Establish a timeline for further assessment of ongoing behaviour and review strategies.
- Assess and review strategies, timeline and relevant behaviour guidance plan.
- Inform parent/family if matter is to be referred to general committee.

In situations where a suitable and mutually agreeable, behaviour guidance plan has not been achieved, the Director and the President will seek appropriate, specialist advice.

In a situation where a child's behaviour may impact on the health and safety of themselves, other children, staff or others at the centre and where strategies have been consistently implemented without sufficient progress, the Director with the support of the Committee of management may consider adjusting the amount of time the child attends the centre as part of the ongoing behavioural guidance plan.

The Committee of Management is responsible for approving any changes and any additional expenditure or resources that impact on the centres finances.

The Director is responsible for ensuring that all parents/families and staff are aware of this policy and that it is implemented within the centre. The Director will consult with staff on their professional development needs in relation to the guidance of children's behaviour and the availability of the range of support services available to families.

The staff are responsible for the day-to-day implementation of this policy and where possible resolving any behavioural guidance issues directly with the parents/families and children concerned.

### **Evaluation**

The Committee will assess whether:

- A satisfactory resolution has been achieved in relation to behavioural issues raised.
- Seek and take into account feedback from the Director and staff regarding the policy.
- Monitor complaints/concerns and incidents regarding the behaviour of the children attending the centre.

### **Implementation**

- All parents/families of children enrolled at the centre have access to a copy of the policy.
- Review the need for staff professional development in relation to the behaviour guidance of children.
- Review the need for parent/family information night on behaviour guidance for children.

**Dated:** 5 August 2005

**Next review date:** March 2007

**Date:** Approved by COM 15 October 2008

**Next review date:** October 2010

### **Key Source Documents**

- Porter, L (Ed) 2003, *Young Children's Behaviour: Practical Approaches for Caregivers and Teachers* 2nd Edition