BEHAVIOUR GUIDANCE POLICY

The right for children to receive positive guidance and encouragement in a supportive and respectful environment is reflected in the National Quality Standard and approved learning framework. Children learn to face a variety of challenges throughout their lives and through this develop not only self-regulation, but positive dispositions such as resilience and perseverance. Learning the difference between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour assists children to regulate their own behaviours in different social and emotional environments when interacting with peers and adults.

NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD (NQS)

QUALITY AREA 2: CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND SAFETY		
2.1.1	Wellbeing and comfort	Each child's wellbeing and comfort is provided for, including appropriate opportunities to meet each child's need for sleep, rest and relaxation.
2.2.1	Supervision	At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from harm and hazard.
QUALITY AREA 5: RELATIONSHIPS WITH CHILDREN		
5.1	Relationships between educators and children	Respectful and equitable relationships are maintained with each child.
5.1.1	Positive educator to child interactions	Responsive and meaningful interactions build trusting relationships which engage and support each child to feel secure, confident and included.
5.1.2	Dignity and rights of the child	The dignity and rights of every child are maintained.
5.2	Relationships between children	Each child is supported to build and maintain sensitive and responsive relationships.
5.2.1	Collaborative learning	Children are supported to collaborate, learn from and help each other.
5.2.2	Self-Regulation	Each child is supported to regulate their own behaviour, respond appropriately to the behaviour of others and communicate effectively to resolve conflicts.
QUALITY AREA 6: PARTNERSHIPS WITH FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES		
6.1	Supportive relationships with families	Respectful relationships with families are developed and maintained and families are supported in their parenting role.
QUALITY AREA 7: GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP		
7.1	Governance	Governance supports the operation of a quality service that is child safe.
7.1.2	Management Systems	Systems are in place to manage risk and enable the effective management and operation of a quality service that is child safe.

EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL LAW AND NATIONAL REGULATIONS	
S. 2A	Paramount consideration—safety, rights and best interests of children
S. 3A	Paramount consideration
S.5AA	Meaning of inappropriate conduct
S. 162A	Child protection training
S.165	Offence to inadequately supervise children
S. 166	Offence to use inappropriate discipline
S.166A	Offence to subject child to inappropriate conduct Offences relating to inappropriate conduct
S. 167	Offence relating to protection of children from harm and hazards
S. 174	Offence to fail to notify certain information to Regulatory Authority
12	Meaning of serious incident
84	Awareness of child protection law
147	Staff members [records]
155	Interactions with children
156	Relationships in groups
168	Education and care service must have policies and procedures
170	Policies and procedures to be followed
171	Policies and procedures to be kept available
175	Prescribed information to be notified to Regulatory Authority
176	Time to notify certain information to Regulatory Authority
183	Storage of records and other documents

RELATED POLICIES

Anti-Bias and Inclusion Policy	Medical Condition Policy
Behaviour Guidance Bullying Policy	Privacy and Confidentiality Policy
Child Protection Policy	Protected Disclosures (Whistleblower) Policy
Educational Program Policy	Record Keeping and Retention Policy
Family Communication Policy	Respect for Children Policy
Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy	Enrolment Policy
Interaction with Children, Family and Staff Policy	Supervision Policy

PURPOSE

We aim to create positive relationships with children by helping them to feel safe, secure, and supported within our Service. We will ensure children are treated fairly and equitably and with respect and consistency. Children are supported to develop the skills and knowledge required to behave in a socially and culturally acceptable manner.

Supporting children to develop socially acceptable behaviour and self-regulation is a primary goal for educators and families. This is embedded in fundamental documents including the Early Years Learning Framework, V2.0 (EYLF), Education and Care Services National Regulations, and the National Quality Standard (NQS). We believe that children's safety, rights, and best interests are the paramount consideration for all Service operations, decisions and functions. Our Service ensures that child safety, wellbeing and best interests take priority over all other considerations, including financial interests or other obligations of management, and are embedded in our daily practices, policies and procedures.

SCOPE

This policy applies to children, families, educators, staff, approved provider, nominated supervisor, management, students, volunteers and visitors of the Service.

DEFINITIONS

For additional definitions and key terms used within this policy, refer to *Key Terms – Policies and Procedures*.

Behaviour guidance- this term is used to reflect current thinking about the most positive and effective ways to help children gain understanding and learn skills that will help them to manage their own behaviour. Using appropriate behaviour guidance, educators aim to support each child regulate their own behaviour, respond appropriately to the behaviour of others and communicate effectively to resolve conflicts.

Cool down- this is an example of appropriate discipline or behaviour guidance. A cool down period is when a child is having a difficult moment, they are encouraged to find a space, near an educator, to 'cool down' and regain self-control. This strategy can be used as an opportunity for educators to support children to regulate their own behaviour. [ACECQA, 2020]

Inappropriate conduct- any behaviour that a reasonable person would consider to be inappropriate in an education and care service, taking into account the child's age, development, safety, wellbeing and the context of the interaction.

Inclusion- taking into account all children's social, cultural and linguistic diversity (including learning styles, abilities, disabilities, gender, family circumstance and geographic location) in curriculum decision-making processes. (EYLF, V2.0, 2022)

Restraint- in situations where a child becomes a risk to themselves or others, they may need to be physically removed from the situation or physically restrained by an educator to prevent harm to themselves or others. For instance- attempting to scale a fence, running in front of a vehicle. ACECQA advises that children should only be restrained in emergency situations. (ACECQA, 2023, P.3)

Self-regulation- The ability to manage energy states, emotions, behaviour and attention: the ability to return to a balanced, calm and constant state of being. Self-regulation is a key factor for mental health, wellbeing and learning (KidsMatter, Early Childhood, 2014).

IMPLEMENTATION

The behaviour and guidance strategies used by staff and educators at our Service are designed to provide children with the opportunity to expand their experiences of life in a productive, safe environment that enables the child's right to safety, tolerance, self-expression, cultural identity, dignity and self-worth.

Educators understand that as children grow and develop, self-regulation becomes an important aspect of social and emotional development as they begin to understand how their actions affect others.

We believe in providing clear, consistent guidelines for children's behaviour as part of a caring and trusting relationship with children and families to help them feel secure and self-confident. Children benefit from knowing that their environment is stable and that a competent adult is taking care of them.

There are three key aspects to promoting positive behaviour:

1. Creating a quality learning environment that is positive and supportive and provides developmentally appropriate experiences and resources
2. Implementing guidance strategies for building skills and strengthening positive behaviour based on age-appropriate behaviour expectations
3. Employing strategies for guiding children's behaviour resulting in decreasing undesired behaviours.

POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR GUIDANCE STRATEGIES

Guiding children's behaviour is an important aspect of caring for and educating children. Positive strategies need to be developed to assist children to learn appropriate ways of behaving.

All educators and staff at our Service will role model appropriate behaviour and language, encouraging children to socialise with other children, including children of different cultural backgrounds as well as from different age groups and different genders.

Behaviour guidance strategies implemented within our Service are appropriate to the child's age and developmental capacity. Children are encouraged to make decisions for themselves and are provided with opportunities for independence and self-regulation. Children are given the opportunity to make choices and experience the consequences of these choices when there is no risk of physical or emotional harm to the child or anyone else. They are acknowledged when they make positive choices in managing their behaviour.

Strategies may include using visual cues, prompting, redirection, re-teaching strategies, developing logical consequences, providing a 'cooling down' period and conferences with children. In the instance of adverse behaviour being persistently observed, educators will evaluate their program, room set up, supervision etc. to identify triggers and sources of inappropriate or challenging behaviour. Physically restraining a child will only be used in emergency situations if a child is:

- in a clearly unsafe situation – e.g., attempting to scale a fence or run onto a road
- physically threating other children or adults
- behaving in ways that are destructive to themselves, other people or the environment. [ACECQA, 2020]

Regular routines and consistency in implementing behaviour guidance strategies are critical to support children's wellbeing and promote children's agency. All staff implement an active and positive approach to guiding children's behaviour within our Service.

INAPPROPRIATE DISCIPLINE/INAPPROPRIATE CONDUCT

All staff play an important role in embedding child safe practices within our Service. Any form of corporal punishment, or any discipline that is unreasonable or inappropriate is not permitted at any time when children are being educated and cared for by an education and care service. Staff are made aware of interactions and practices with children that are classified as unreasonable or inappropriate conduct or discipline, during induction and through ongoing staff training. All staff and educators have undertaken mandatory national child safety training including mandatory reporting requirements and obligations. Staff must report all alleged or witnessed instances of child abuse or child related misconduct by any staff member, volunteer or contractor immediately to the Police on 000.

The approved provider will notify the regulatory authority of any incident where there is a reasonable belief that physical and/or sexual abuse of a child has occurred or is occurring at the Service, or any allegation that sexual or physical abuse of a child has occurred or is occurring at the Service within 24 hours.

THE APPROVED PROVIDER/NOMINATED SUPERVISOR/ MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES:

Governance and compliance

- meet obligations under the Education and Care Services National Law and Education and Care Services National Regulations
- require educators, staff, students, visitors and volunteers understand and adhere to this policy and procedure
- provide all new employees, students and volunteers are provided with a copy of this policy as part of their induction process
- ensure families are aware of this *Behaviour Guidance Policy* and are advised on how and where the policy can be accessed
- prohibit any form of corporal punishment or any discipline that is unreasonable in the circumstances
- must ensure no child is subjected to any form of inappropriate conduct including conduct that is threatening, intimidating, humiliating, degrading, hostile or otherwise inappropriate in the circumstances (See *Management of Inappropriate Conduct Procedure)*
- take every reasonable precaution to protect children from harm and from any hazard likely to cause injury
- require each nominated supervisor and person in day-to-day charge of the Service complete child protection training within the timeframes prescribed in the National Regulations
- require the approved provider, nominated supervisor, each staff member, educator, regular volunteers and students on placement complete national child safety training
- ensure all educators and staff are aware of the procedure of reporting allegations of abuse, neglect, harm or ill-treatment
- promote a culture where inappropriate conduct is not tolerated and where educators and staff feel safe to report concerns under the *Protected Disclosures (Whistleblower) Policy*
- require all educators, staff and volunteers to meet their obligations as mandatory reporters and recognise, prevent and respond to inappropriate conduct
- maintain staff records including evidence of the approved training completed by staff members.

Relationships, inclusion and respectful practice

- behaviour guidance does not involve making judgements about children or their families

- information is gathered from families about their children's social skills, relationship preferences, family and cultural values which will be recorded in the child's individual file
- general information about behaviour guidance is provided to families through parent interviews and newsletters
- educators use this information to engage children in experiences that support children to develop and practice their social and decision-making skills
- positive and respectful relationships with children are established and maintained
- children are empowered to use language and other forms of non-hurtful communication to communicate their emotions
- positive, empathetic relationships between children are promoted
- the dignity and rights of each child are maintained at all times
- positive and inclusive strategies are implemented to enable educators to encourage positive behaviour in children in order to minimise adverse behaviour

Behaviour guidance strategies and support

- connections are built between the Service and local primary schools to support positive learning environments during transition to school
- strategies are implemented to re-direct a child who may be causing or about to cause harm to themselves or others
- safety is prioritised, including the use of physical re-direction where required, and removing other children from the area if necessary
- excessive or challenging behaviour is managed and communicated with families
- incidents are addressed sensitively and families are notified with *Behaviour Incident Reports* signed where required
- ongoing behaviours are observed and documented, including context and strategies implemented
- meetings with families may be arranged to discuss concerns and develop a *Behaviour Guidance Plan* where required
- *Behaviour Guidance Plans* are developed and reviewed in consultation with families and other health professionals
- families and professional agencies are consulted to ensure that a consistent approach is used to support children with diagnosed behavioural or social difficulties

Inclusion and additional support

- partnerships are developed with professionals and support agencies to support inclusion for children with additional needs

- applications for additional support are made through the Inclusion Support Program
- a Strategic Inclusion Plan (SIP) is developed and guided with local support agencies for rooms or groups of children as required
- the SIP is reviewed regularly to reflect changes in practice
- Individual Support Plans are developed for children as required

Professional learning and reflective practice

- professional development is provided to support educators implement the SIP created, ensuring that information is composed and recorded for reflection on its effectiveness for the individual room or group of children
- professional development is provided on trauma informed practices support understanding of challenging behaviours through a 'trauma lens'

Incident Response and Notifications

- notification is made to parents/guardians as soon as practicable, but within 24 hours, if their child is involved in a serious incident/situation at the Service. Details of the incident/situation are to be recorded on the *Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Record*
- any allegation, concern or suspicion that a child has been subjected to inappropriate conduct is responded to immediately and reported to the regulatory authority, within 24 hours, with mandatory notifications made to other relevant authorities as required iand internal incident management procedures
- notification is made to the regulatory authority, via NQA ITS, within the legislated time frames of any circumstance that poses a risk to the health, safety and wellbeing of a child or children, or of any complaint alleging that a serious incident has occurred at the Service
- notification is made to the regulatory authority and to the children's commissioner, child protection agencies or the police of any incident of inappropriate discipline
- a review of practices is conducted following a serious incident, including an assessment of areas for improvement (ensure any review or investigation does not interfere with outside agency investigations).

EDUCATORS WILL:

Professional conduct and child safety

- ensure their interactions with children are always respectful, safe, supportive and appropriate to each child's developmental needs, culture, identify and circumstances

- refrain from any behaviour that may be considered inappropriate conduct, including behaviour that is threatening, intimidating, humiliating, degrading, hostile or otherwise inappropriate
- remain aware of the power imbalance inherent in child-adult relationships and avoid behaviour that could misuse or exploit that power
- immediately report any behaviour by another person that may constitute inappropriate conduct towards a child to the nominated supervisor/approved provider and regulatory authority
- understand their mandatory reporting requirements and respond to any incident, disclosure or suspicion of child abuse, harm, neglect or ill-treatment they witness or suspect immediately by notifying the approved provider and NSW Department of Communities and Justice (Child Protection Helpline) (insert state/territory agency for reporting)

Positive relationships and role modelling

- build and maintain positive, respectful relationships with children
- provide positive role modelling in interactions with children, educators, staff and families
- promote children's initiative and agency

Guidance, teaching and behaviour support

- teach behavioural expectations
- provide positive guidance and encouragement toward acceptable behaviour
- guide children's behaviour to support consideration of others and understanding of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour
- talk calmly with children about the consequence of their actions, and the reason for rules
- use corrective strategies including prompting, redirecting, re-teaching, provide choice, logical consequences and conferencing with the child
- provide positive feedback and focus on children's strengths and achievements and build on their abilities
- guide behaviour with a focus on preserving and promoting children's self-esteem as they learn to self-regulate their behaviour

Communication and emotional development

- support children to express their emotions using appropriate language and communication strategies
- participate in planned and spontaneous conversations with children about emotions, feelings and issues of inclusion and fairness, bias and prejudice, and the consequences of their actions, as well as the appropriate rules and the reasons for the rules

- listen empathetically to children when they communicate their emotions, provide encouragement as they reassure the child it is normal to experience positive and negative emotions
- support children to negotiate, resolve conflict and respond to the behaviour of others
- encourage children to listen to other people's ideas, consider pro-social and altruistic behaviour and collaborate and negotiate in problem solving situations

Individualised and inclusive practice

- take into consideration the child's past experiences as their behaviour could be a result of past trauma such as changes in routine, changes or losses within the family, placement in care, or more serious circumstances involving abuse, neglect, or family violence
- design and implement behaviour guidance strategies to support positive outcomes for the child
- support children to explore different identities and points of view and to communicate effectively when resolving disagreements with others
- learn about children's relationships with others and their relationship preferences they have and use this knowledge to support behaviour and empathy development

Environment and proactive strategies

- provide age appropriate, engaging and challenging experiences and resources
- ensure sufficient materials and equipment are available for individual, small and large group activities
- set up the environment (indoor and outdoor) for children to engage in activities and experiences in accordance with their abilities and interests
- use positive language, gestures, facial expressions, and tone of voice when redirecting or discussing children's behaviour with them

Supporting children during distress

- remain calm, respectful and tolerant as they encourage children who are strongly expressing distress, frustration or anger
- guide children to remove themselves from situations where they are experiencing frustration, anger, or fear
- encourage and support each child's social and emotional development, striving to develop children's self-regulation and an understanding of the feelings of others
- implement '*time with*' *or 'cool down time'* when appropriate ensuring supervision and support from other educators is always provided.

Collaboration and planning

- discuss guidelines, rules, limits, and what is fair with children, and use their contributions in setting limits and guidelines
- actively support children to promote and role-model positive ways to interact with others
- actively support children to construct and convey ways of expressing needs, resolving conflict, and responding to the behaviour of others
- contribute to and ensure Individual Support Plans are followed in consultation with the Services' Strategic Inclusion Plan (SIP)

Professional learning

- participate in professional development and remain up to date with behaviour guidance strategies and practices.

FAMILIES WILL:

- provide consent for the Service to consult with professional agencies to assist with implementing a Strategic Inclusion Plan (SIP) for the room or group of children
- work collaboratively with educators and professional agencies when required in order to develop a broader understanding of the child's developmental level and share any recent events which may be influencing the child's behaviour
- consult with educators and provide consent when the Service is applying for Inclusion Support Funding
- work in partnership with educators and health professionals in the development of a behaviour guidance plan or Individual Support Plan to assist with the identification of challenging behaviour, the development of supportive strategies and the review of strategies implemented within a behaviour guidance plan where required
- create consistency in behaviour guidance strategies used at the Service and at home.

BITING BEHAVIOUR

Biting is recognised as a developmentally typical behaviour for some young children, particularly in the toddler years. While this behaviour can be distressing for children and families, educators respond in a calm, consistent and supportive manner prioritising the safety, wellbeing and dignity of all children.

Proactive strategies will be implemented to minimise the likelihood of biting and respond promptly and appropriately to incidents. Responses focus on supporting children's emotional development,

communication skills and self-regulation, while maintaining a safe and respectful environment.

Educators work in partnership with families to understand and respond to behaviours of concern. Where biting persists, observations are used to identify patterns and inform appropriate behaviour guidance strategies, including the development of individual plans and consultation with relevant support services where required.
(see *Behaviour Guidance-Biting Procedure* for further guidance).

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

The *Behaviour Guidance Policy* will be evaluated and reviewed on an annual basis or earlier if there are changes to legislation, ACECQA guidance or incidents related to our policy. Feedback will be requested from children, families, staff, educators and management and notification of
any change to policies will be made to families within 14 days.

RELATED RESOURCES

Behaviour Guidance Biting Procedure	Behaviour Guidance Review Form
Behaviour Guidance Procedure	Behaviour Guidance Plan A
Behaviour Guidance Guide	Behaviour Guidance Plan B
Behaviour Guidance Incident Report	Management of Inappropriate Conduct
Behaviour Guidance Observation Record	Procedure

SOURCES

Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2026). *Guide to the National Quality Framework*
Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2025). *Supporting children to regulate their own behaviour.*
Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. *When children bite! A resource for early childhood educators.*
Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2026). *CHILD SAFETY Inappropriate conduct*
Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2026). *QUALITY AREA 5 Inappropriate discipline*
Australian Government Department of Education. (2022). *Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia. V2.0.*
Australian Government Department of Education. Inclusion Support Program
Children (Education and Care Services) National Law (NSW) (NSW services only)
Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics. (2016).
Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010
Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
Education and Care Services National Regulations (NSW) (2025) (For NSW services only)
Emerging Minds. (2022). Interpersonal trauma learning pathways.
NAPCAN: www.napcan.org.au
Raising Children Network. (2019) *What is self-regulation?*

Victorian Government. *Strategies supporting children's behaviour in early childhood services.*
Western Australian Legislation Education and Care Services National Law (WA) Act 2012 (WA Services only)
Western Australian Legislation Education and Care Services National Regulations (WA) 2012 (WA Services only)

REVIEW

POLICY REVIEWED BY	[NAME] Amy Flockhart	[POSITION]admin	[DATE] 09/07/2026
POLICY REVIEWED	JANUARY/ MAY 2026	NEXT REVIEW DATE	MAY 2027
VERSION NUMBER	V15.05.26		
MODIFICATIONS	MAY • major review of structure of policy • subheadings introduced within responsibilities sections to improve clarity, reduce duplication and support consistent understanding and implementation of policy • Biting Behaviour section edited and procedural guidance added to Behaviour Guidance- Biting Procedure • updated sources as required JANUARY • updated policy to include amendments to Children (Education and Care Services) National Law (NSW) • included additional points to strengthen child safe practices including inappropriate conduct		
PREVIOUS MODIFICATIONS			
MAY 2025	• annual policy maintenance • additional information added regarding reporting any allegations of child abuse or child related misconduct by any staff member to relevant authorities • added information re: trauma informed practices • sources checked for currency and repaired as required		