

POLICY & PROCEDURAL STATEMENTS

Topic: Early Learning – Behaviour and Guidance

Policy: Avenue Neighbourhood House @ Eley Inc. (ANH@E) is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for the children in its care. ANH@E aims to provide each child in its care with guidance that helps to acquire a positive self-concept. The program, therefore, promotes a positive approach to behaviour management.

This policy seeks to address the issue of inappropriate behaviour in the Early Learning Centre. Inappropriate behaviour is behaviour which breaches the rights of other children to participate in activities in the Early Learning Centre.

ANH@E Early Learning staff will use appropriate strategies to guide children to recognise, manage, and reflect on their behaviours and express their emotions in positive, non-threatening and productive ways. All children will be supported to learn and develop in a secure and empowering environment.

Relevant legislation and Standards:

- *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010* (Vic): Sections 166, 167.
- Education and Care Services National Regulations: Regulations 73, 74, 155, 156, 157, 168(2)(j).
- National Quality Standard, Quality Area 5: Relationships with Children.

Definitions:

Adequate supervision: (in relation to this policy) is supervision that entails all children (individuals and groups) in all areas of the service, being in sight and/or hearing of an educator at all times, including during toileting, sleep, rest, and transition routines. Supervision contributes to protecting children from hazards that may emerge in play, including hazards created by the equipment used. Adequate supervision refers to constant, active, and diligent supervision of every child at the service. Adequate supervision requires that Early Learning staff are always in a position to observe each child, respond to individual needs and immediately intervene if necessary. Variables affecting supervision levels include:

- Number, age, and abilities of children.
- Number and positioning of staff.
- Current activity of each child.
- Areas in which the children are engaged in an activity (visibility and accessibility).
- Developmental profile of each child and of the group of children.
- Experience, knowledge, and skill of each staff member.
- Need for staff to move between areas (effective communication strategies).

Behaviour guidance: A means of assisting children to self-manage their behaviour. It differs from traditional 'behaviour management' or 'discipline' which generally implies that an adult is 'managing' children's behaviour or using punishment to control children. Behaviour guidance applies to all forms of behaviour, not just behaviours labelled as 'negative'.

Behaviour support plan: A plan that documents strategies to assist Early Learning staff in guiding a child with diagnosed behavioural difficulties to self-manage his/her behaviour. The plan is developed in consultation with the Director of Early Learning, staff, parents/guardians, and families, and other professional support agencies as applicable.

Challenging behaviour: *is behaviour that:*

- Disrupts others or causes disputes between children, but which is part of normal social development.
- Infringes on the rights of others.
- Causes harm or risk to the child, other children, adults, or living things.
- Is destructive to the environment and/or equipment.
- Inhibits the child's learning and relationship with others.
- Is inappropriate relative to the child's developmental age and background.

Code of Practice:

At ANH@E Early Learning Centre, the behaviour and guidance techniques used by staff are designed to show children the utmost respect, and to assist them to develop skills to resolve conflicts and differences of opinion appropriately and successfully.

ANH@E's guidance of children's behaviour will:

- Have due regard to appropriate age and stage expectations and individual temperaments, and will be positive and supportive.
- Not include subjection to psychological abuse.
- Not permit frightening methods of control and discipline to be used.
- Not be associated with food (never is a child or infant to be 'force fed', or refused food as a form of discipline), rest, toilet training, or isolation.
- Ensure that a proper tone of voice is used at all times. Voices must not be raised nor abusive at any time and at all times be managed with respect.
- Encourage children to express themselves and their opinions.
- Allow children to undertake experiences that develop self-reliance and self-esteem.
- Maintain the dignity and the rights of each child at all times.
- Offer positive guidance and encouragement towards acceptable behaviour.
- Have regard to the cultural and family values, age, and the physical and intellectual development and abilities of each child being educated and cared for.
- Be warm, responsive, and to develop trusting relationships with children that promote a sense of security, confidence and inclusion.
- Support each child to develop responsive relationships, and to work and learn in collaboration with others.
- Be positive and use respectful strategies to assist children to manage their own behaviour, and to respond appropriately to conflict and the behaviour of others.

ANH@E is responsible for:

- Ensuring staff and parents/guardians are provided with a copy of the Behaviour and Guidance policy and comply with its requirements.
- Ensuring all staff are aware of the service's expectations regarding positive, respectful, and appropriate behaviour, and acceptable responses and reactions when working with children and families.
- Ensuring children are adequately supervised, that staff-to-child ratios are maintained at all times and the environment is safe, secure, and free from hazards.
- Considering the size and composition of groups when planning program timetables to ensure all children are provided with the best opportunities for quality interactions and relationships with each other and with adults at the service.
- Ensuring educational programs are developed and implemented in accordance with an approved learning framework, that are based on the developmental needs, interests and experiences of each child, and take into account the individual differences of each child.
- Ensuring the educational program contributes to the development of children who have a strong sense of wellbeing and identity, and are connected, confident, involved and effective learners and communicators.
- Ensuring that educators provide education and care to children in a way that:
 - Encourages children to express themselves and their opinions.
 - Allows children to undertake experiences that develop self-reliance and self-esteem.
 - Maintains the dignity and the rights of each child at all times.
 - Offers positive guidance and encouragement towards acceptable behaviour.
 - Has regard to the cultural and family values, age, and the physical and intellectual development and abilities of each child being educated and cared for.
- Organising appropriate training for educators/staff to assist with the implementation of this policy.
- Ensuring educators and all staff members at the service who work with children are aware that it is an offence to subject a child to any form of corporal punishment, or any discipline that is unreasonable or excessive in the circumstances (National Law: Section 166).
- Ensuring that procedures are in place for effective daily communication with parents/guardians to share information about children's learning, development, interactions, behaviour, and relationships.
- Informing the Approved Provider of any notifiable complaints or serious incidents at the service.
- Ensuring staff use positive and respectful strategies to assist children to manage their own behaviour, and to respond appropriately to conflict and the behaviour of others.
- Ensuring that individual behaviour guidance plans are developed for children with diagnosed behavioural difficulties, in consultation with educators, parents/guardians and families, and other professionals and support agencies
- Co-operating with other services and/or professionals to support children and their families, where required.
- Maintaining confidentiality at all times.

Early Learning staff guidelines and responsibilities

Early Learning staff will:

- Give consistent, clear, and coordinated messages to the children about their behavioural expectations, so that the children are not confused by different staff approaches.
- Keep the child busy by re-directing to other experiences.
- Talk to the child about feelings and consequences of their behaviour.
- Focus on the inappropriate behaviour not the child.
- Use positive language.
- Involve older children in setting their own limits.
- Present as good models of behaviour for the children and shall be encouraged to adopt the code of ethics at ANH@E.
- Encourage the children to express themselves and their opinions.
- Become familiar with stages of child development so they hold reasonable behavioural expectations. Some child behaviour may be displeasing for adults, but should be considered acceptable and age appropriate (i.e. toddlers find it difficult to “share” or consider others’ feelings).
- Deliver educational programs, in accordance with an approved learning framework, that are based on the developmental needs, interests and experiences of each child, and consider the individual differences of each child.
- Deliver programs that develop a sense of wellbeing and identity, connection to community, and provide skills for lifelong learning in all children.
- Trust and respect the children in their care as unique and special, and recognise that each child’s behaviour is an expression of feelings or an attempt to meet immediate or underlying needs.
- Be aware of different parent behaviour expectations, as child rearing practices vary greatly from culture to culture.
- Take into consideration each child’s whole life situation when dealing with their behaviour, consulting regularly with parents.
- Communicate and work collaboratively with parents/guardians and families in relation to their child’s learning, development, interactions, behaviour, and relationships.
- Provide adequate supervision of children at all times.

Parents/guardians are responsible for:

- Reading and complying with this Behaviour and Guidance policy.
- Engaging in open communication with Early Learning staff about their child.
- Informing educators/staff of events or incidents that may impact on their child’s behaviour at the service (e.g. moving house, relationship issues, a new sibling).
- Informing Early Learning staff of any concerns regarding their child’s behaviour or the impact of other children’s behaviour.
- Working collaboratively with Early Learning staff and other professionals/support agencies to develop or review an individual behaviour guidance plan for their child, where appropriate.

Inappropriate discipline techniques

It is an offence to subject a child to any form of corporal punishment, or any discipline that is unreasonable or excessive in the circumstances (National Law: Section 166). Forms of abuse consistent with those stated below will lead to a staff disciplinary action:

- Inappropriate use of 'time out'.
- Placing a child in a confined space, or in a location in which eye contact with the staff member cannot be maintained.
- Shaking, smacking, biting, pinching, or restraining a child.
- Injurious lifting (e.g. by one arm).
- Shouting, abusive words or tone, 'labelling' inappropriately
- Ignoring a child's request.

Inappropriate Behaviour Support Procedures

1. When a child displays continuous unacceptable behaviour the Early Learning staff will observe, monitor, and record the child's behaviour while respectfully and sensitively gathering information from the parents, hopefully revealing some facts as to why the child is behaving in an unacceptable way.
2. The Director of Early Learning will privately consult with the parents/guardians about the concerns and suggest to work together for a positive, behavioural technique, and develop a plan that is suitable for home and that can be followed through while the child is attending the Centre.
3. Should the strategies be ineffective the Director of Early Learning in consultation with parents/guardians will develop a written behaviour support plan detailing specific strategies and time frames that staff will put into practice.
4. Should the behaviour support plan be ineffective based on the time frames decided by the Director of Early Learning and parents/guardians, the parent is required to seek outside professional support. The Director of Early Learning and/or House Manager will support the parent(s) through this process.
5. If all behaviour support strategies have been exhausted and the child is demonstrating aggressive behaviour, causing physical or emotional harm or distress to any child or staff member, the Director of Early Learning will meet with the family to inform them that their child will be required to have some time away from the Centre while outside professional experts are consulted.
6. In extreme cases, when consultation and outside professional support has failed to resolve the situation, the Director of Early Learning, in consultation with the House Manager reserves the right to exclude the child from the centre.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every two (2) years unless there are any regulatory or legislative requirements and/or any feedback from staff, parents, and the community.

This policy was previously Early Learning Behaviour Management and renamed in August 2017 to Early Learning Behaviour and Guidance.

Status	Current
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