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INTERACTIONS WITH CHILDREN POLICY

Mandatory – Quality Area 5

PURPOSE

This policy will provide guidelines to ensure:

- the development of positive and respectful relationships with each child at Bonbeach Pre-School
- each child at Bonbeach Pre-School is supported to learn and develop in a secure and empowering environment.

POLICY STATEMENT

1. VALUES

Bonbeach Pre-School is committed to:

- maintaining the dignity and rights of each child at the service
- encouraging children to express themselves and their opinions, and to undertake experiences that develop self-reliance and self-esteem
- considering the health, safety and wellbeing of each child, and providing a safe, secure and welcoming environment in which they can develop and learn
- maintaining a duty of care (refer to *Definitions*) towards all children at the service
- considering the diversity of individual children at the service, including family and cultural values, age, and the physical and intellectual development and abilities of each child
- building collaborative relationships with families to improve learning and development outcomes for children
- encouraging positive, respectful and warm relationships between children and educators/staff at the service.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, Certified Supervisors, educators, staff, students on placement, volunteers, parents/guardians, children and others attending the programs and activities of Bonbeach Pre-School.

3. BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATION

Background

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child is founded on respect for the dignity and worth of each individual, regardless of race, colour, gender, language, religion, opinions, wealth, birth status or ability. Developing responsive, warm, trusting and respectful relationships with children promotes their wellbeing, self-esteem and sense of security. Positive interactions between educators/adults and children can empower children to feel valued, competent and capable.

Actively engaging in children's learning and decision-making during play, daily routines and ongoing activities can stimulate children's thinking, enrich their learning and encourage them to explore and manage their feelings and behaviour.

"Having supportive relationships with the nominated supervisor, educators, co-ordinators and staff members enables children to develop confidence in their ability to express themselves, work through differences, learn new things and take calculated risks" (*Guide to the National Quality Standard* – refer to *Sources*).

Regulation 155 of the National Regulations requires an Approved Provider of children's services to take reasonable steps to ensure that the service provides education and care to children in a way that encourages them to express themselves, and develop self-reliance and self-esteem, maintains their dignity and rights, provides positive guidance and encouragement towards acceptable behaviour, and respects their cultural and family values.

Regulation 156 requires the Approved Provider to ensure that the service provides children with opportunities to interact and develop positive relationships with each other, and with the staff and volunteers at the service. To meet these requirements, the Approved Provider is expected to consider the size and composition of the groups in which the children are educated and cared for.

In developing an *Interactions with Children Policy*, early childhood education and care services must review and reflect on the philosophy, beliefs and values of the service, particularly with regard to the relationships with children. The development of this policy should also be informed by the service's *Code of Conduct Policy* (particularly Attachment 1 – Professional standards for staff).

Legislation and standards

Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

- *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* (Vic)
- *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* (Vic), as amended 2011
- *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* (Vic), as amended 2012
- *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Cth)
- *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010*: Sections 166, 167
- *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011*: Regulations 73, 74, 155, 156, 157, 168(2)(j)
- *Equal Opportunity Act 2010* (Vic)
- *National Quality Standard*, Quality Area 5: Relationships with Children
 - Standard 5.1: Respectful and equitable relationships are developed and maintained with each child
 - Standard 5.2: Each child is supported to build and maintain sensitive and responsive relationships with other children and adults

4. DEFINITIONS

The terms defined in this section relate specifically to this policy. For commonly used terms e.g. Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, Regulatory Authority etc. refer to the *General Definitions* section of this manual.

Adequate supervision: (In relation to this policy) **supervision** 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. Services are required to comply with the legislative requirements for educator-to-child ratios at all times. 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 educators 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 educators
- 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 educator
- need for educators 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 guidance plan: A plan that documents strategies to assist an educator in guiding a child with diagnosed behavioural difficulties to self-manage his/her behaviour. The plan is developed in consultation with the Nominated Supervisor, educators, parents/guardians and families, and other professional support agencies as applicable.

Challenging behaviour: 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.

Inclusion Support Facilitator (ISF): Employed by inclusion support agencies and funded by the Commonwealth Government to provide advice on inclusive practices in childcare services. ISFs also help services to access a range of practical support.

Notifiable complaint: A complaint that alleges a breach of the Act or Regulation, or alleges that the health, safety or wellbeing of a child at the service may have been compromised. Any complaint of this nature must be reported by the Approved Provider to the secretary of DEECD within 24 hours of the complaint being made (Section 174(2)(b), Regulation 176(2)(b)). If the Approved Provider is unsure whether the matter is a notifiable complaint, it is good practice to contact DEECD for confirmation.

Written reports to DEECD must include:

- details of the event or incident
- the name of the person who initially made the complaint
- if appropriate, the name of the child concerned and the condition of the child, including a medical or incident report (where relevant)
- contact details of a nominated member of the Grievances Subcommittee/investigator
- any other relevant information.

Written notification of complaints must be submitted using the appropriate forms, which can be found on the ACECQA website: www.acecqa.gov.au

Preschool Field Officer (PSFO) Program: Early intervention outreach services that are universally available within state-funded preschools for any child with developmental concerns. The primary role of the PSFO Program is to support the access and participation of children with additional needs in preschool.

Serious incident: An incident resulting in the death of a child, or an injury, trauma or illness for which the attention of a registered medical practitioner, emergency services or hospital is sought or should have been sought. This also includes an incident in which a child appears to be missing, cannot be accounted for, is removed from the service in contravention of the Regulations or is mistakenly locked in/out of the service premises (Regulation 12). A serious incident should be documented in an *Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Record* (sample form available on the ACECQA website) as soon as possible and within 24 hours of the incident. The Regulatory Authority (DEECD) must be notified within 24 hours of a serious incident occurring at the service (Regulation 176(2)(a)). Records are required to be retained for the periods specified in Regulation 183.

Supervision: see **adequate supervision** in *Definitions* above.

5. SOURCES AND RELATED POLICIES

Sources

- *Belonging, Being & Becoming – The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia:* www.deewr.gov.au/EarlyChildhood/Policy_Agenda/Quality/Pages/EarlyYearsLearningFramework.aspx#key_documents
- Early Childhood Australia (ECA) *Code of Ethics* (2006): www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/code_of_ethics/early_childhood_australias_code_of_ethics.html
- *Guide to the National Quality Standard*, ACECQA: www.acecqa.gov.au and <http://acecqa.gov.au/links-and-resources/national-quality-framework-resources/>
- Guiding children's behaviour in child care – a NCAC Factsheet for Families: http://ncac.acecqa.gov.au/family-resources/factsheets/guiding_children's_behaviour.pdf
- Inclusion and Professional Support Program (IPSP), Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, Australian Government: www.deewr.gov.au/earlychildhood/programs/childcareforservices/supportfamilyccs/pages/inclusion-support-program.aspx
- Rothwell, Philip (2008), 'Guiding Children's Behaviour', from *Putting Children First*, Newsletter of the National Childcare Accreditation Council, 25 March, p16–18
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child: www.unicef.org/crc
- Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework: www.education.vic.gov.au/earlylearning/eyldf/default.htm
- *Victorian kindergarten policy, procedures and funding criteria*, DEECD: www.education.vic.gov.au/ecsmanagement/careankinder/funding/default.htm

Service policies

- *Child Safe Environment Policy*
- *Code of Conduct Policy*
- *Complaints and Grievances Policy*
- *Curriculum Development Policy*
- *Inclusion and Equity Policy*
- *Occupational Health and Safety Policy*
- *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy*
- *Supervision of Children Policy*

PROCEDURES

The Approved Provider is responsible for:

- developing and implementing the *Interactions with Children Policy* in consultation with the Nominated Supervisor, Certified Supervisor, educators, staff and parents/guardians, and ensuring that it reflects the philosophy, beliefs and values of the service
- ensuring parents/guardians, the Nominated Supervisor and all staff are provided with a copy of the *Interactions with Children Policy* and comply with its requirements
- ensuring the Nominated Supervisor, educators and all staff are aware of the service's expectations regarding positive, respectful and appropriate behaviour, and acceptable responses and interactions when working with children and families (refer to *Code of Conduct Policy*)
- ensuring children are adequately supervised (refer to *Definitions*) and that educator-to-child ratios are maintained at all times (refer to *Supervision of Children Policy*)
- ensuring the size and composition of groups is considered to ensure all children are provided with the best opportunities for quality interactions and relationships with each other and with adults at the service (Regulation 156(2)). Smaller group sizes are considered optimal
- ensuring educational programs are delivered in accordance with an approved learning framework, are based on the developmental needs, interests and experiences of each child, and take into account the individual differences of each child (refer to *Inclusion and Equity Policy*)
- 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 (Regulation 73) (refer to *Curriculum Development Policy*)
- ensuring that the service provides 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 (Regulation 155)
- ensuring clear documentation of the assessment and evaluation of each child's:
 - developmental needs, interests, experiences and program participation
 - progress against the outcomes of the educational program (Regulation 74) (refer to *Curriculum Development Policy*)
- supporting educators/staff to gain appropriate training, knowledge and skills for the implementation of this policy
- ensuring the environment at the service is safe, secure and free from hazards for children (refer to *Child Safe Environment Policy*, *Occupational Health and Safety Policy* and *Supervision of Children Policy*)
- ensuring that the Nominated Supervisor, 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)
- promoting collaborative relationships between children/families and educators, staff and other professionals, to improve the quality of children's education and care experiences
- referring notifiable complaints (refer to *Definitions*), grievances (refer to *Definitions*) or complaints that are unable to be resolved appropriately and in a timely manner to the Grievances Subcommittee/investigator (refer to *Complaints and Grievances Policy*)
- informing DEECD, in writing, within 24 hours of receiving a notifiable complaint (refer to *Definitions*) (Section 174(4), Regulation 176(2)(b))
- notifying DEECD, in writing, within 24 hours of a serious incident (refer to *Definitions*) occurring at the service (Section 174(4), Regulation 176)

- ensuring that where the service has been notified of a court order prohibiting an adult from contacting an enrolled child, such contact does not occur while the child is on the service premises
- ensuring educators and 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 (refer to Attachment 1 – Procedures recommended for the development of a behaviour guidance plan) are developed for children with diagnosed behavioural difficulties, in consultation with the Nominated Supervisor, educators, parents/guardians and families, and other professionals and support agencies (refer to *Sources*)
- developing links with other services and/or professionals to support children and their families, where required
- maintaining confidentiality at all times (refer to *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy*).

The Nominated Supervisor is responsible for:

- implementing the *Interactions with Children Policy* at the service
- ensuring educators, staff and parents/guardians are provided with a copy of the *Interactions with Children 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 (refer to *Code of Conduct Policy*)
- ensuring children are adequately supervised (refer to *Definitions*), that educator-to-child ratios are maintained at all times (refer to *Supervision of Children Policy*) and the environment is safe, secure and free from hazards (refer to *Child Safe Environment Policy*, *Supervision of Children Policy* and *Occupational Health and Safety Policy*)
- 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. Smaller group sizes are considered optimal
- developing and implementing educational programs, 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 (refer to *Inclusion and Equity Policy*)
- 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 (refer to *Curriculum Development Policy*)
- 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
- ensuring clear and straightforward documentation of the assessment and evaluation of each child's:
 - developmental needs, interests, experiences and program participation
 - progress against the outcomes of the educational program (Regulation 74) (refer to *Curriculum Development Policy*)
- 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 (refer to *Definitions*) or serious incidents (refer to *Definitions*) at the service
- ensuring that where the service has been notified of a court order prohibiting an adult from contacting an enrolled child, such contact does not occur while the child is on the service premises
- ensuring educators and 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 (refer to Attachment 1 – Procedures recommended for the development of a behaviour guidance plan) are developed for children with diagnosed behavioural difficulties, in consultation with educators, parents/guardians and families, and other professionals and support agencies (refer to *Sources*)
- co-operating with other services and/or professionals to support children and their families, where required
- maintaining confidentiality at all times (refer to *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy*).

Certified Supervisors and other educators are responsible for:

- assisting with the development and implementation of the *Interactions with Children Policy*, in consultation with the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, parents/guardians and families
- providing copies of the *Interactions with Children Policy* to parents/guardians and families
- complying with the requirements of the *Interactions with Children Policy*
- being aware of service expectations regarding positive, respectful and appropriate behaviour, and acceptable responses and reactions when working with children and families (refer to *Code of Conduct Policy*)
- providing adequate supervision of children at all times (refer to *Definitions* and *Supervision of Children Policy*)
- communicating and working collaboratively with parents/guardians and families in relation to their child's learning, development, interactions, behaviour and relationships
- delivering educational programs, 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 (refer to *Inclusion and Equity Policy*)
- delivering programs that develop a sense of wellbeing and identity, connection to community, and provide skills for lifelong learning in all children (refer to *Curriculum Development Policy*)
- providing 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
- developing warm, responsive and trusting relationships with children that promote a sense of security, confidence and inclusion
- supporting each child to develop responsive relationships, and to work and learn in collaboration with others
- using positive and respectful strategies to assist children to manage their own behaviour, and to respond appropriately to conflict and the behaviour of others
- developing individual behaviour guidance plans (refer to Attachment 1 – Procedures recommended for the development of a behaviour guidance plan) for children with diagnosed behavioural difficulties, in consultation with parents/guardians and families, and other professionals and support agencies (refer to *Sources*)
- documenting assessments and evaluations for each child to inform the educational program (Regulation 74)

- being 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
- maintaining confidentiality at all times (refer to *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy*).

Parents/guardians are responsible for:

- reading and complying with the *Interactions with Children Policy*
- engaging in open communication with educators 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 educators/staff of any concerns regarding their child's behaviour or the impact of other children's behaviour
- working collaboratively with educators/staff and other professionals/support agencies to develop or review an individual behaviour guidance plan for their child, where appropriate.

EVALUATION

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

- regularly seek feedback from everyone 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
- notify parents/guardians at least 14 days before making any changes to this policy or its procedures.

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1: **Procedures recommended for the development of a behaviour guidance plan**

AUTHORISATION

This policy was adopted by the Approved Provider of Bonbeach Pre-School on 18/06/2014.

Ken Jones, Principal

REVIEW DATE: 18/06/2016

ATTACHMENT 1 - INSTRUCTIONS FOR EDUCATORS

This plan has been developed in line with the Bonbeach Pre-School Interactions with Children Policy.

A behaviour guidance plan is to be developed for a child if educators are concerned that the child's behaviour may put the child themselves, other children, educators/staff and/or others at risk. A plan must be developed for children with diagnosed behavioural difficulties.

The plan documents strategies to assist an educator in guiding a child to self-manage his/her behavior. It is developed in consultation with the Nominated Supervisor, educators, parents/guardians and families, and other professional support agencies as applicable.

The following instructions are written to help Educators complete a Behaviour Guidance Plan. This should be read in consultation with the Interactions with Children Policy and the Attachment -Procedures recommended for the development of a behaviour guidance plan.

Pertinent background information

Keep information in this section to a minimum.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only list information that educators need to know to assist with implementing the plan. • For some children this section may be blank, or include only a diagnosis, or significant life event that is impacting on the student. • Do not list all background information, or information of a sensitive or confidential nature. • Be mindful that whilst parents know that their child has some difficulties it can be distressing to see this in print and parents must receive a copy of and sign this BGP.
Strengths and dislikes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify as appropriate

Behaviours in need of support

Target behaviours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify those behaviours that will be the target, or focus, for this BGP. One to three is best, and no more than five. • Write the behaviour you would like to see, where possible. For example, 'Keep hands and feet to self' rather than 'No hitting or kicking'. • Ensure each party has the same understanding of the behaviours. Write a description if necessary • Physical violence, risk of violence, bullying and discrimination should be the top priority, followed by inappropriate behaviours that occur frequently, through to support behaviours for students with wellbeing needs. It can be helpful to develop a baseline of the frequency of each behaviour to establish whether it is an actual or a perceived issue. This is achieved through record keeping or observation of the child for set periods of times.
Identify the triggers for behaviours	<p>Routines and rituals – explore the routines and rituals used at home they may help the child settle at kinder sessions. Additionally,</p>

	<p>talk to parents about helping to introduce necessary kinder routines at home to help them be more comfortable at kinder.</p> <p>Transitions - Identifying when the child might not understand it's time to move on from one activity to another.</p> <p>Sensory sensitivities – Children may like feeling or touching particular surfaces or objects, or get upset when they are not allowed to.</p> <p>Sensory overload – Times when there is too much is happening, or a particular noise is overwhelming, or the light is too bright.</p> <p>Unrealistic expectations - Like all children, a child with ASD can get frustrated if he's expected to do something he doesn't have the skills for, such as getting dressed by himself.</p> <p>Tiredness – Identify tiredness triggers, at certain times or after certain activities.</p> <p>Discomfort - This could include things like the feeling of clothes against skin, a prickly label, wet pants, a bump or pain.</p>
Proactive strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tailor strategies to suit the child's individual needs. Focus on reducing the cause of the problem. Both short term and long term solutions should be included. Consider the role a parent or guardian might provide. • Allow down time or calming options. • Ensure allowances are made for appropriate supervision

ATTACHMENT 2 – BEHAVIOUR GUIDANCE PLAN TEMPLATE



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BEHAVIOUR GUIDANCE PLAN

Child's name	
Group	
Date	

This plan has been developed in line with the Bonbeach Pre-School Interactions with Children Policy. The plan is developed in consultation with the Nominated Supervisor, educators, parents/guardians and families, and other professional support agencies as applicable.

1. Pertinent background information

List related documents (provided by other services, other plans, professional diagnosis etc.):

- 1.
- 2.

Strengths / motivators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does the student do really well • What do they respond to • What do they like •
Dislikes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are some of the challenges they face i.e. loud noise • What do they not like •

2. Behaviours requiring support:

a. Target behaviours	b. Triggers	c. Proactive strategies
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What happens prior to the behaviour occurring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • list all strategies that are being used to support appropriate behaviour and desired outcomes.

Proactive strategies should be identified for both Educators and Families/Guardians, consider strategies for:

- In the classroom
- In the playground
- During snack time
- During quiet time
- During pack up times
- Debriefing
- At home before coming to kinder
- Other

3. Review

a. Communication plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The signed plan will be kept on the child's personnel file • All Educators for the session will read and note the plan • How will replacement staff be made aware of the plan?
b. How is it monitored?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review meetings with the parents/guardians will be held xxx (end of each term, monthly etc.)
c. Review date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan to be reviewed xxx (once a term / as required etc.)

4. Endorsement

	Principal	Nominated Supervisor	Parent/guardian
Name:			
Date:			
Signature:			