BEHAVIOUR GUIDANCE POLICY

The right for children to receive positive guidance and encouragement in a supportive and respectful environment is promoted within *Education and Care Services National Regulations*. 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. 162A	Child protection training
S - 165	Offence to inadequately supervise children
S. 166	Offence to use inappropriate discipline
S 166A	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
175	Prescribed information to be notified to Regulatory Authority

RELATED POLICIES

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

PURPOSE

The Langwarrin Community Centre aims 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, as they 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

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.2)

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).

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)

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.
(Children's agency – empowering children to make choices, express their ideas and influence decisions that affect them)

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 child safety training and child protection 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 Commission for Children and Young People or 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.

THE APPROVED PROVIDER/NOMINATED SUPERVISOR/ MANAGEMENT WILL ENSURE:

- obligations under the *Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations* are met

- educators, staff, students, visitors and volunteers have knowledge of and adhere to this policy and procedure
- all new employees, students and volunteers are provided with a copy of this policy as part of their induction process
- families are aware of this *Behaviour Guidance Policy*
- no child being educated and cared for by the Service is subjected to any form of corporal punishment or any discipline that is unreasonable in the circumstances (S.166 National Law)
- every reasonable precaution is taken to protect children from harm and from any hazard likely to cause injury
- each nominated supervisor and person in day-to-day charge of the Service has completed child protection training (Section 162A of the National Law)
- each staff member, educator and volunteer have completed child protection training
- each staff member, educator and volunteer have completed child safety training
- ensure all educators and staff are aware of the procedure of reporting allegations of abuse, neglect, harm or ill-treatment
- ensure that 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
- promote a culture where inappropriate conduct is not tolerated and where educators and staff feel safe to report concerns
- ensure all educators, staff and volunteers understand their obligations as mandatory reporters and are trained to recognise, prevent and respond to inappropriate conduct
- staff records include evidence of the approved training completed by staff members (Reg.147)
- 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
- 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 are promoted between children assisting them to develop respectful relationships
- 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
- a partnership is developed with other professionals or support agencies that work with children who have diagnosed behavioural or social difficulties to develop plans for the inclusion of these specific children. This information will be kept confidential and in the individual child's file
- excessive or challenging behaviour is managed and communicated with families
- strategies are implemented to re-direct a child who may be causing or about to cause harm to their self, another child, or adult. Incidents may include a child who is kicking, spitting, biting, throwing furniture or toys, punching or hitting, or being disruptive. Redirection may also include an incident where a child places themselves in a dangerous situation, for example, climbing a fence or hiding in a potentially dangerous position. Safety is a priority, and this may mean using physical re-direction in which an educator will actually remove the child from the harmful situation if required. It may be necessary to remove other children from the area while the child calms down
- families are notified and the incident/behaviour is addressed sensitively. In an instance where a child or children's safety has been jeopardised, parents are required to sign the *Behaviour Incident Report*
- should the behaviour continue, the child's behaviour is observed and carefully documented. Additional information is collated related to the context and behaviour guidance strategies implemented
- a meeting with the child's parents/carers and educator may be arranged to discuss any behaviours or concerns that have been observed. A *Behaviour Guidance Plan* may be developed in consultation with families and other health professionals as required
- families and professional agencies are consulted to ensure that a consistent approach is used to support children with diagnosed behavioural or social difficulties
- *Behaviour Guidance Plans* are to be reviewed on a periodic basis reflecting changes that have been applied through the implementation of the plan in consultation with the child's family
- application for additional support for educators to build their capacity and capabilities to include children with additional needs will be made through the Inclusion Support Program
- a Strategic Inclusion Plan (SIP) is developed and guided by local support agencies as required for individual rooms or groups of children
- the SIP is reviewed on a periodic basis reflecting changes that have been applied through the implementation of the plan
- Individual Support Plans are developed for individual children as required
- professional development is provided for educators to be informed, trained and supervised to implement the SIP created, ensuring that information is composed and recorded for reflection on its effectiveness for the individual room or group of children

- 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.*
- ensure that 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 including Office of the Children's Guardian-Reportable Conduct Scheme and Police
- notification is made to the regulatory authority, 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:

- 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, child protection and police as appropriate.
- 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
- actively work with younger children to promote and role-model positive ways to interact with others
- teach behavioural expectations
- support appropriate behaviour- visual cues, prompting, positive verbal feedback and quality learning environments
- provide children with positive guidance and encouragement toward acceptable behaviour
- promote children's initiative and agency

- actively work with all children to support them in constructing and conveying ways of expressing needs, resolving conflict, and responding to the behaviour of others
- at all times provide positive role-modelling in their dealings with children, other educators and staff, and families
- discuss guidelines, rules, limits, and what is fair with children, and use their contributions in setting limits and guidelines
- guide children's behaviour, teaching them how to be considerate of others – to think about the effects of their actions on others. It is important that children understand what acceptable and unacceptable behaviour is and how to manage their emotions.
- talk calmly with children about the consequence of their actions, and the reason for rules
- use corrective consequences- prompt, redirect, re-teach, provide choice, logical consequence, conference with child and educator
- provide positive feedback and focus on children's strengths and achievements and build on their abilities
- 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
- be responsive to these former experiences, designing and implementing behaviour plans with the individual child that include strategies which will assist alternative and positive behaviour
- provide age appropriate, challenging, and interesting activities, experiences, and equipment for children to use and become engaged with
- ensure there are sufficient materials and equipment 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
- adapt a positive approach, excluding cruel, harsh, humiliating or demeaning actions or words
- commit to professional development and keep up to date with industry information regarding behaviour guidance strategies
- support children to explore different identities and points of view and to communicate effectively when resolving disagreements with others
- 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
- provide children with the language and vocabulary needed to express their emotions and feelings and verbalise their concerns

- encourage children to listen to other people's ideas, consider pro-social and altruistic behaviour and collaborate and negotiate in problem solving situations
- 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
- guide children to remove themselves from situations where they are experiencing frustration, anger, or fear
- support children to negotiate their rights and rights of others and mediate perceptively when children experience difficulty in resolving dissimilarity
- learn about children's relationships with others and their relationship preferences they have and use this knowledge to encourage children to manage their own behaviour and expand on their empathy skills
- use positive language, gestures, facial expressions, and tone of voice when redirecting or discussing children's behaviour with them
- remain calm, respectful and tolerant as they encourage children who are strongly expressing distress, frustration or anger
- guide children's behaviour with a focus on preserving and promoting children's self-esteem as they learn to self-regulate their behaviour
- implement '*time with*' *or 'cool down time'* with an educator, which will be used when all other strategies (above) have been exhausted. '*Time with' or 'cool down time'* allows educators to offer reassurance and support so the child can settle and regain self-control, develop some self-calming behaviours and gain composure. Once calm, educators can assist the child to identify what happened, reflect on their actions and consider how they may have done something differently. '*Time with' or 'cool down time'* will always occur under the supervision of other educators.
- contribute to and ensure Individual Support Plans are followed in consultation with the Services' SIP.

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.

MANAGING BITING BEHAVIOUR

Biting is often a temporary issue, which concerns parents and educators. Biting is painful and frightening for the child who has been bitten and can also be frightening for the child who is biting too. It is important to understand that while biting is a typical behaviour for young children between the ages of fourteen months to three years. Educators play an important role in minimising the likelihood and opportunity for biting to happen and appropriately managing the incidents that do occur.

Biting is like any other aggressive behaviour that hurts or injures a child, requiring preventive measures and early intervention. Some common triggers for biting include:

- a child teething will often increase their desire to bite, as applying pressure to the gums can provide comfort
- oral exploration
- limited self-regulation or self-control
- excitement and overstimulation
- frustration
- children imitating other children
- a child feeling unwell
- a child being unable to communicate what they want, need or feel boredom

Theorists suggest that a good understanding of early childhood development is an essential tool for responding to biting and other harmful behaviour. For example, educators must understand that young children are not yet able to share or take turns so educators must take this into consideration when planning the routine and activities. Additionally, babies and toddlers are often not developmentally able to feel compassion or empathy for others. While this development is unable to be rushed, educators can support children to develop empathy and pro-social behaviour, by being a good role-model, and providing simple information, such as “biting hurts, we don’t’ bite our friends.”

It is important to observe the child to attempt to understand why they are biting. Through observations, you may be able to identify patterns, such as what happened before the child bites, is there a certain time of day the biting is occurring, does it happen around certain dynamics of groups of children on certain days, etc. An effective method to documentation is by using an event sample record, or a Behaviour Observation/anecdote.

If biting endures, it is important to continue observing, and trying to minimise the biting as much as possible.

If the above strategies have been unsuccessful and biting continues, further help will be sought from inclusion

and support agencies. Educators may meet with families to discuss the child's behaviour and develop a *Behaviour Guidance Plan* if required.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

The *Behaviour Guidance Policy* will be evaluated and reviewed on an biennial 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.

CHILDCARE CENTRE DESKTOP - RELATED RESOURCES

Behaviour Guidance Biting Procedure	Behaviour Guidance Observation Record
Behaviour Guidance Procedure	Behaviour Guidance Review Form
Behaviour Guidance Guide	Behaviour Guidance Plan A
Behaviour Guidance Incident Report	Behaviour Guidance Plan B

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. (2023). *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)
Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics. (2016).
Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010.
Education and Care Services National Regulations. (Amended 2025)
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.*

REVIEW

POLICY REVIEWED BY:	Carol Hopkins	CSO	Apr 2026
POLICY REVIEWED	Apr 2026	NEXT REVIEW DATE	Apr 2028
VERSION NUMBER	• V2 04.26		
MODIFICATIONS	• 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		
APPROVED BY	• Claire Tyrrell		

POLICY REVIEWED BY:	Carol Hopkins	CSO	Aug 2025
POLICY REVIEWED	Aug 2025	NEXT REVIEW DATE	Aug 2027
VERSION NUMBER	•		
MODIFICATIONS	• New Policy		