

POLICY FOR POSITIVE GUIDANCE OF CHILDREN'S BEHAVIOUR

Revised: October 2016 Version No 4 | Review: July 2018

AIM

To provide Educators with a framework to guide them in their interactions with children. The framework respects and incorporates the Centre's philosophy, Regulations and National Quality Standards, the Code of Ethics and recent research and literature.

This policy aims:

- to promote caring and respectful relationships between adults and children.
- to promote interactions that respects the rights of all stakeholders in the Centre.
- to develop in children, self-discipline, appropriate expression of feelings, cooperation with others and personal integrity.
- to emphasise the prevention of behavioural difficulties, through provision of a culturally, individually and developmentally appropriate curriculum and through reciprocal relationships with families and other professionals working with the child/family.
- to support children to develop a healthy self-esteem, one where children have a relatively balanced perception of their positive qualities and realistic expectations of themselves, leading to a high degree of overlap between how children think they are and how they want to be.
- to identify challenging behaviour and seek the necessary resources to support and manage both the child and the family.
- to provide referral to other agencies or professionals when identified as required.

IMPLEMENTATION

- It is important that Educators listen to families, respecting their rights to participate in decision-making regarding their child in the spirit of collaboration. Respect should be given in regard to the family and cultural values, age and physical and intellectual development and abilities of each child being educated and cared for by the Centre.
- Children are encouraged to express themselves and their opinions.
- It is essential to foster a sense of belonging. Our relationships with children involve acceptance, attention, appreciation, affirmation and affection.
- Educators will provide positive guidance and encouragement towards acceptable behaviour, maintaining at all times the dignity and rights of each child.
- Educators will involve children in collaborative problem solving when settling disputes.
- Educators will be clear about the limits and talk in a tone of voice which tells the child that they expect to be taken seriously.
- Independence is encouraged by providing opportunities to for children to exercise choices, initiative and autonomy.
- Educators will be consistent and yet flexible when needed. Flexibility means you can change your mind after taking into account new information.
- Educators work together as a team, asking for assistance when managing a child's behaviour when necessary.

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- If a dispute has already resulted in some physical aggression, then Educators will withdraw the involved child and soothe the victim, nurse any injuries, perhaps inviting the child who inflicted them to assist in this process.
- Similarly, with verbal aggression, Educators will address the recipient, not the perpetrator of aggressive behaviour. When speaking to the perpetrator, Educators will ensure that the discussion does not degenerate into a lecture or humiliate the perpetrator.
- Instructions will be given in a positive manner, outlining expectations rather than saying what the child should not do.
- When appropriate, children will be given the opportunity to experience natural consequences of inappropriate behaviour.
- When a child's behaviour tells the Educator that they are not coping with a situation, they may suggest that the child spend a period of time by themselves until they feel happier, and more able to cope. This is not intended to be a punishment. A time away area could be in a window seat, comfortable armchair with books, etc. Once a child has better control of their emotions, they may be more able to make the appropriate decisions.
- If educators identify the need to remove themselves and the other children for safety reasons they will ensure a staff member remains within view of the child having the melt down and able to communicate to the child whilst ensuring the safety of themselves and the child having the meltdown.
- When communicating with children about behaviour that is unacceptable staff will ensure that they communicate the behaviour that is unacceptable not the child.
- When assessing any situation all children will be given the opportunity to explain their perspective of the situation and what occurred or lead to the incident.
- Children experiencing continued behaviour concerns will be supported by the implementation of an individual behaviour support plan, in consultation with families and staff, and other professionals.

POLICY OVERVIEW

Unacceptable

- Educators that physically, emotionally or verbally threaten a child.
- Educators who display behaviour that places children, families or fellow Educators at risk.
- Educators who do not allow all parties the opportunity to express their view of the situation.
- Educators who have unrealistic expectations of children's abilities
- Expectation to negotiate or discuss an event/situation with a child during a meltdown.

Consequences for Non-Compliance

Educators, who do not demonstrate positive guidance of children's behaviour in accordance with current law and regulations, Centre Philosophy and policies will be managed and disciplined in line with the SCCC staff Disciplinary Policy and or allegations policy.

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MANAGING BITING

Objective

Salamander Child Care Centre is very aware that there may be risks that Educators, Children, families and community members accessing the Centre may be exposed to a bite from a child. Educators need to recognize that at times some children, for a variety of reasons, attempt to bite. Reasons for biting need to be identified, for example:

Infants - Experimental, expressing emotion, sensory pleasure, teething

Toddlers - Frustration, fatigue, attention seeking, confined spaces

Older Children - Aggression, defending, deliberate

Aim

- To acknowledge that biting may occur in group settings with young children.
- Have procedures and strategies in place ready to use if biting does occur.
- Reduce and prevent the incidence of biting as soon as possible once this occurs.
- For all staff and families to understand that biting can be part of child development.

Implementation

As the possibility of biting incidents may arise in the setting, SCCC needs to accept the responsibility for managing biting. The following will be implemented to ensure that if biting becomes an issue it will be addressed immediately.

When biting occurs:

- Adults should show strong disapproval through words and actions when biting occurs. The focus of attention should be to care for the child who has been bitten, including First Aid if needed. The biter should be removed from the situation immediately.
- Staff can later work with the child who has bitten, depending on their language ability, to help resolve the conflict or frustration in an appropriate way.
- Staff will examine the context in which the biting occurred to find a possible reason eg, was the area crowded at the time? Was sharing a particular toy an issue? Too few toys? Is the child biting showing any signs of stress? Etc.
- Staff will change the environment, routine, attention to the child who is biting, or activities if necessary.
- If continuous biting is occurring an additional staff member can be allocated to the room to “**shadow**” the child/children who have a tendency to bite.
- Staff will closely observe a child who is biting to establish if a pattern occurs.
- Staff will inform both the parent of the biter and the child bitten at the end of the day, explain strategies being used to prevent further bites, and reassure them that the Centre is taking the situation seriously and doing everything possible to prevent further bites. The name of the biting child is not released. A written Incident Report is required which will be signed by the responsible person on duty.

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When Biting Continues

If the occurrence of biting continues, the following additional strategies will be implemented.

- Daily reporting of the situation to other members of the team and the Director.
- Allocation of an additional staff member to the room to shadow the child. This person will wear a lanyard so all staff are aware this person's eyes will remain on the child to allow them to intervene to prevent any biting and to guide the child in positive interactions within the learning environment. Staff are to share this role throughout the day to protect their wellbeing and health.
- Staff will document occurrences of biting using the 'Biting Incident Chart' located on the 'Centre' drive, under the 'Templates' folder.
- Staff will evaluate staff responses to each biting incident for appropriate intervention.
- Staff will ensure that the injured child is comforted and treated and the biter receives disapproval for the biting.
- Staff will analyse the Biting Incident Chart to identify behaviour patterns and environmental context to develop a "Plan to Reduce Biting Incidents".
- Staff will implement the Plan in collaboration with families and all Educators.
- Educators will also analyse the Biting Incident Chart to identify their favourite play areas, interests etc. to use this information for further program planning.
- Staff will consider the following factors changes to room environment, routines, grouping of children, staff changes and/or the age appropriateness of equipment.

Further assistance may be needed from a psychologist or professional with expertise in children's behaviour. If further intervention is identified as being required staff will arrange a meeting with families to discuss their concerns.

Communicating with Parents

- Ongoing communication with parents of children effected by biting will be maintained and reassurance given to all.
- If several children in the group are affected, the Centre will send a letter to all parents explaining the situation and the strategies established to prevent further incidents.
- It may be necessary to work in partnership with the families to keep informed about the strategies being implemented. In some circumstances a child may have bitten friends or relations at home and having a consistent approach will benefit everyone.
- If families are not happy with any situation related to biting, they may choose to follow the Centre's Policy for handling complaints.

REFERENCES

Kinnell, G. No Biting: Policy and Practice for toddler Programs. 2003