COOSH

Coowarra Out Of School Hours Care Service Inc

Behaviour Guidance Policy

POLICY STATEMENT:

The right for children to receive positive guidance in a supportive and respectful environment is promoted within the *Education and Care Services National Regulations*. Children learn to face a variety of challenges throughout their lives. Learning the difference between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour assists children to regulate their own behaviours in different social and emotional environments as well as when interacting with peers and adults. Our Out of School Hours Service will liaise with the school to ensure consistency of behaviour guidance strategies such as Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL) values

We aim to create positive relationships with children making them feel safe, secure, and supported within our Service. We will ensure children are treated with respect, consistency, fairly and equitably 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 is a primary goal for educators and families. This is embedded in fundamental documents including the My Time Our Place, V2.0 (MTOP), Education and Care Services National Regulations, and the National Quality Standard (NQS).

DEFINITIONS

<u>Behaviour guidance</u>- 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]

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)

<u>Self-regulation-</u> 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).

<u>Inclusion</u>- taking into account all children and young people's social, cultural and linguistic diversity (including learning styles, capabilities, disabilities, gender, family circumstance and geographic location) in program decision-making processes. (MTOP V2.0).

IMPLEMENTATION

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

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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

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 discipline. Educators have undertaken current child protection legislation 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 NSW Office of Childrens guardian 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/MANAGEMENT/NOMINATED SUPERVISOR 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 (S.162A of the National Law)
- staff records include evidence of the approved training completed by staff members (Reg.147)
- connections are built between our service and school to support positive learning environments

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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 will use this information to engage children in experiences that support children to develop 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
- general information about behaviour guidance is provided to families such through parent interviews and newsletters
- 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 himself or herself, 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 him/herself 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
- 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

the child's school is contacted to gain information about behaviour guidance strategies implemented within the school context to ensure consistency between environments

- families, the child's primary school and professional agencies are consulted to ensure that a consistent approach is used to support the child with diagnosed behavioural or social difficulties
- 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 groups of children
- the SIP is reviewed on a periodic basis reflecting changes that have been applied through the implementation of the plan
- 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 child
- professional development is provided for educators to learn about Trauma Informed Practices to help educators understand challenging behaviours through a 'trauma lens'
- 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*.
- notification is made to the regulatory authority, via the NQAITS, 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:

- 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
- ensure children are provided 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

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at all times provide positive role-modelling in their dealings with children, other educators and families

- discuss guidelines, rules, limits, and what is fair with children, and use their contributions in setting limits and guidelines
- 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
- 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.

- 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
- 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

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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 their child's primary school and other professional agencies to assist with implementing a Strategic Inclusion Plan (SIP)
- 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 OSHC Service and at home

Consistent Unacceptable Behaviour

Step 1. Where a child demonstrates consistent unacceptable behaviour:

- Staff will ensure the child is aware of what is unacceptable behaviour.
- Staff will ensure the expectations are appropriate for the child's level of development and understanding.
- Review the consequences to ensure they are not inadvertently encouraging the behaviour.
- Look for and identify possible causes for the behaviour.

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The Nominated supervisor, coordinator or manager will discuss the child's behaviour with the parents, this can be a formal or informal meeting. This will provide an opportunity to discuss issues and possible solutions to rectifying the behaviour.

- Documented behaviour reflection forms will assist staff in highlighting the issues and strategies taken to rectify the challenging behaviour.
- Parents/guardians and children will be notified that if behaviour continues the child will be placed on a behaviour management plan, parents will be expected to attend a formal meeting to discuss the plan that will be put in place.

Step2 If the child's unacceptable behaviour continues;

- The coordinator will develop a plan of action involving behaviour management in consultation with staff, the child, parents, school and other professionals as required.
- Each plan should be developed with the individual child's strengths, needs, interests, age and developmental level in consideration.
- The plan should have clear and explicit guidelines for rewards and consequences, as well as the responsibilities of the child,
- A meeting will be set up with parents, child, management (and any other relevant professionals) so that all roles, responsibilities, consequences and expectations for all parties involved are made clear and agreed on. The meeting should be minuted.
- It will be made clear to families that we are willing to work with any psychologists, doctors, the child's school or any other professionals they think will help throughout the process, we will offer help to families to establish support networks, if needed.
- Record the plan of action ensuring all are aware of how to develop and implement an evaluation system, ensuring there is a review date.
- The behaviour management plan will clearly outline the individual consequences that will be carried out if the behaviour does not improve. Management, parents and child/ren will know exactly what is expected. This can include exclusion from the service.
- It is important that the child be involved in the process and have a say in rewards and consequences, as they will be more likely to follow a plan that they have agreed upon, and it also gives the child a voice and a measure of control over the situation.
- Parents/guardians should be updated on their child's progress throughout the implementation process, so they are informed of the plans progress and success.

Step 3 if the child's unacceptable behaviour continues after plan is in place; exclusion from the service may need to occur;

- Parents/guardian will receive written notice of unacceptable behaviour from the coordinator or manager outlining the child's behaviour and the warning of a period of exclusion if the behaviour continues, this will be in line with the child's individual behaviour management plan.
- The letter will clearly outline what behaviour has led to the warning and what improvements need to be made.

Committee will be informed that we are at a warning stage for exclusion.

Step 4 Exclusion for unacceptable behaviour will be enforced if the child continues to display unacceptable behaviour.

- Parents/guardian will receive written notice from the Coordinator or Management of the exclusion period. Coordinator and management are to ensure that child's behaviour management plan has been followed and all steps have been followed. The exclusion period will be outlined with the dates of exclusion.
- Parents/guardians and child/ren will be expected to meet with a member of management to revise behaviour management plan, prior to returning to care. This way all parties involved are aware of expectations and consequences from the first day back in care. Consequences in the updated plan for not following service rules or improving behaviour will be that the child's place will be terminated.
- The plan should have clear and explicit guidelines for rewards and consequences, including the responsibilities of the child, staff and, etc.). The meeting should be minuted. Without an agreed revised behaviour management plan in place the child will not be permitted to return to the service, regardless of what the return date on the exclusion letter states, this will be outlined in the letter provided to parents/guardians.
- Committee will be informed of the exclusion and revised plan and given regular updates throughout the process. If we have to exclude a child from the service due to this process, families will be expected to pay fees to hold their child's place at the service.

Step 5 On return to the centre an acceptable level of behaviour is expected:

- As per condition of enrolment and this policy an acceptable level of behaviour will be expected and clear guidelines and expectations will be established for accepting the child back into the service (See step 4)
- The behaviour management plan will include a review date in which all parties involved will meet again to evaluate, reflect and discuss the level of success the plan has had on behaviour modification and if any changes need to be made.
- Behaviour reflection forms should still be completed and outline any concerning behaviour. Staff should also document any observations, in regards to improvements in the child's behaviour. These documents will assist when evaluating the success of the plan that has been implemented.
- Communication between the service and parents/guardians should be maintained, so parents/guardians are informed of the plans progress and success.
- As outlined in the revised behaviour management plan, if the unacceptable behaviour continues when the child returns to the service, they will be at risk of their place being terminated.

Step 6 Termination of a child's place due to unacceptable behaviour.

• Parents/guardian will receive a written notice from the manager or committee outlining the child's continued behaviour and that child's place has

been terminated, this will be in line with the agreed individual behaviour management plan.

- The letter will clearly outline what behaviour has led to the termination and what the service has done to attempt to correct the behaviour.
- The service will work with the parents/family throughout the entire process to ensure:

Early intervention of unacceptable behaviour should be followed up with the parent. Parents/guardians have been notified and given the opportunity to discuss their child's behaviour. Parents/guardians have been referred to other agencies, where necessary. Coordinator has given careful consideration to the issue, with consideration to the needs of both parties involved and the welfare of others at the service. Clear procedures have been established for accepting the child back not the service. If the child is physically violent (Deliberate hitting with intent to hurt) — where no serious injury has occurred (hitting with an object, like a bat/racquet etc., kicking, punching, biting etc., with the intent to hurt.) *****Physical Violence of any kind will not be tolerated and has an automatic consequence of being excluded from the service for 2 days. No behaviour/attitude or event justifies being violent with another individual. ******Children need to use their words, seek assistance and deal with		
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<u>Process to follow when dealing with physical violence (where there is no serious injury):</u> -

Remove all children from the situation.

frustrations in methods other than physical violence.

- Evaluate the need for medical attention
- Ensure the safety of others.
- Record the incident on the accident report form, indicating date, time, victim, injury, offender and staff who attended. Shift supervisor, coordinator and/or management to call parents/guardians at earliest time possible and inform them of the incident and that we will be investigating. Inform families that we require the child/ren to be picked up from the service immediately and they will be excluded from the service for the rest of the day's session and the next 2 day's their child is booked in. Physical Violence results in an immediate exclusion from the service for 2 days.
- Inform families that a meeting, in which parent/guardians and the coordinator/management meet to discuss what had occurred, and what were the events that lead to the incident happening. It will also outline expectations and goals that are required for child/ren to attend the service again. This will be an opportunity to discuss what happened and how we can resolve the issue.

We will then work through the behaviour management steps as outlined

- Depending on the circumstances of the incident and the events leading up to it, the service management reserve the right to start at any step in the process. Each case will be dealt with on an individual basis, all reports, meeting minutes and reasons for decisions made will be documented and discussed with parents/guardians
- Inform committee of incident and steps taken to modify behaviour.
- Report of the incident to regulatory authority, and any other appropriate government and legal authorities must occur within 24 hours of the incident having taken place in line with ACI Reporting to the Regulatory Authority and ACI Child Protection Policy.
- Full fees will be required to keep their child's place at the service for any type of exclusion. Should the fees not be paid your child's place will no longer be available to you and you will be asked to seek alternative care.
- If at any point throughout this process the child's family refuses to work with the service to rectify consistent inappropriate behaviour the ACI committee and management have the right to terminate the child's place without having to work through any of the outlined steps in this policy. We will work with and support families, but cannot address matters of behaviour on our own, without the cooperation and partnership of families.

Exclusion for Unacceptable Behaviour

- Should unacceptable behaviour continue and the above strategies are not working educators will inform the management committee.
- The management in consultation with educators will discuss the issue.
- Where, in the interest of the child and other children at the centre, exclusion is seen as the only step to be taken this will be decided by the management. It will be considered only after:
- Adequate support has been provided by management and Educators.
- Parents have been notified and given the opportunity to discuss their child's behaviour.
- Parents have been referred to other agencies, where necessary.
- Careful consideration has been given to the problem by Educators and management.
- Clear procedures have been established for accepting the child back into the centre.

Exclusion from excursions for unacceptable behaviour

The co-ordinator, after having consulted both the child and the parent, has the authority to exclude a child from attendance at any excursion due to unacceptable behaviour during before and after school care or vacation care.

This is for the safety of all children on excursions.

COOSH COOWART

Coowarra Out Of School Hours Care Service Inc

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.			
QUALI	TY AREA 5: RELATIONS	HIPS 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.			
QUALI	TY AREA 6: PARTNERSH	IPS 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			
7.1.2	Management Systems	Systems are in place to manage risk and enable the effective management and operation of a quality service			

EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL LAW AND NATIONAL REGULATIONS				
S. 162A	Child protection training			
S. 166	Offence to use inappropriate discipline			
S. 167	Offence relating to protection of children from harm and hazards			
S. 174	Offence to fail to notify certain information to Regulatory Authority			

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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 and Inclusion Policy	Medical Condition Policy
Child Protection Policy	Confidentiality Policy
Communication Policy	Record Keeping Policy
Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy	Enrolment Policy
Interaction with Children, Family and Staff Policy	Supervision Policy

UPDATED AND ENDORSED: September 2025

DATE FOR REVIEW AND EVALUATION: September 2028