

BEHAVIOUR GUIDANCE POLICY

PURPOSE

Village Early Education is committed to creating safe, respectful and inclusive environments where every child's dignity, rights, wellbeing and sense of belonging are upheld.

Children's behaviour is understood within the context of their age and development, relationships, experiences, communication, culture, environment and individual needs. Behaviour can communicate how a child is feeling, what they need or that they require support to participate successfully.

Educators will use positive, strengths-based and developmentally appropriate guidance to support children to build secure relationships, communicate their needs, understand and express emotions, resolve conflict and progressively develop self-regulation.

Our approach will:

- prioritise the safety, rights and best interests of children
- maintain the dignity and rights of every child
- build secure, respectful and responsive relationships
- support children through co-regulation and positive guidance
- focus on teaching skills rather than punishing behaviour
- recognise behaviour as a possible form of communication
- consider each child's age, development, abilities, culture, family circumstances, experiences and individual needs
- promote children's agency, independence and participation
- support children to express emotions and communicate their needs
- encourage empathy, problem solving and respectful relationships
- identify and respond to environmental, relational, sensory, developmental or communication factors that may contribute to behaviour
- involve families as partners in understanding and supporting their child
- seek additional professional or inclusion support where appropriate.

Children will not be subjected to corporal punishment, inappropriate or unreasonable discipline, inappropriate conduct, humiliation, intimidation, isolation as punishment or any practice that compromises their dignity, rights or wellbeing.

Educators will respond to behaviour without labelling or making judgements about the child or their family.

POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR GUIDANCE

Educators will provide positive guidance and encouragement and support children to increasingly regulate their own behaviour, respond to the behaviour of others and communicate effectively to resolve conflict.

Strategies may include:

- building trusting and responsive relationships
- acknowledging and naming children's emotions
- providing calm co-regulation and reassurance
- modelling respectful communication and interactions
- teaching children ways to express their needs, emotions and boundaries
- providing appropriate choices and opportunities for agency
- preparing children for transitions and changes
- using visual supports, prompts or other communication strategies
- redirecting children towards safe and appropriate alternatives
- adjusting routines, experiences, groupings, resources or the environment
- providing opportunities for movement or reduced stimulation
- supporting children to solve problems and repair relationships
- recognising children's effort, strengths and developing skills.

Children may be supported to move to a quieter or lower stimulation space when this assists them to regulate. An educator will remain available to support and reassure the child. This must not be used as punishment or isolation.

Behaviour guidance strategies will be responsive to the individual child and circumstances.

Consistency means educators use an agreed and predictable approach, not that every child or situation must be treated in exactly the same way.

DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE AND INDIVIDUALISED GUIDANCE

Expectations and guidance strategies will be appropriate to each child's age, development, communication, abilities and individual needs.

Behaviour that requires guidance may form part of typical development. Educators will seek to understand why behaviour may be occurring while continuing to maintain appropriate boundaries for safety and wellbeing.

Children will be supported to develop skills and alternative ways of communicating, participating and interacting rather than being punished for skills they have not yet developed.

Behaviours such as biting, hitting, pushing or difficulty sharing and waiting may occur as part of children's development and will be responded to according to the child's age, development, communication, individual needs and the circumstances of the behaviour.

Educators will consider whether behaviour may be influenced by factors such as:

- communication difficulties
- developmental stage
- sensory needs
- fatigue, hunger or discomfort
- relationships and social situations
- changes in routine or environment
- family circumstances or significant life events
- trauma or adversity
- educator expectations or interactions
- the physical or learning environment.

REPEATED HARMFUL OR BULLYING-TYPE BEHAVIOUR

Village Early Education is committed to protecting children from repeated harmful, intimidating, discriminatory or exclusionary behaviour.

Educators will respond promptly where a child experiences repeated behaviours such as:

- physical aggression
- intimidation
- hurtful or discriminatory language
- persistent targeting or teasing
- deliberate exclusion
- other behaviour affecting a child's safety, dignity or participation.

In early childhood, some behaviours may resemble or be precursors to bullying without meeting the characteristics of bullying. Educators will consider the age, development, intent and understanding of the children involved.

Children will not be labelled as a “bully” or “victim”. Behaviour will be described objectively and all children involved will be supported.

The immediate safety and wellbeing of the child experiencing harmful behaviour will be prioritised, while the child displaying the behaviour is supported to develop safer and more respectful ways of interacting.

Where repeated behaviour requires an individualised and consistent approach, a Behaviour Guidance Plan may be developed.

INAPPROPRIATE DISCIPLINE AND INAPPROPRIATE CONDUCT

Village Early Education does not permit corporal punishment, inappropriate or unreasonable discipline or inappropriate conduct towards children.

Prohibited practices include, but are not limited to:

- hitting, pushing, pinching, biting or otherwise physically punishing a child
- yelling at, threatening or intimidating a child
- humiliating, shaming, ridiculing, belittling or degrading a child
- using hostile, discriminatory or demeaning language
- force-feeding a child
- withholding food, drink, comfort, toileting or other basic needs as a consequence
- isolating or excluding a child as punishment
- removing a child from experiences or activities as punishment
- physically dragging a child
- unreasonable restraint
- deliberately frightening a child
- using emotional withdrawal, rejection or threats to control behaviour
- any other conduct that a reasonable person would consider inappropriate in an education and care service.

Any concern, allegation or witnessed instance of inappropriate discipline, inappropriate conduct, abuse, neglect or child-related misconduct must be responded to in accordance with Village Early Education’s child protection, child safety, complaints and incident reporting requirements.

RESPONDING WHEN SAFETY IS AT RISK

Where behaviour creates an immediate risk of harm, educators will prioritise the safety, dignity and rights of all children involved.

The least restrictive response necessary will be used.

Physical intervention must not be used as punishment, for staff convenience or as a routine behaviour guidance strategy. It may only occur in an emergency where there is an immediate danger of a child being hurt or hurting another person and less restrictive strategies are not effective or reasonably practicable.

Any physical intervention must be:

- necessary and proportionate to the immediate risk
- the minimum intervention required
- used for the shortest possible time
- ceased as soon as the immediate danger has passed
- consistent with the child's dignity and wellbeing.

Any physical intervention, significant safety incident or reportable event must be documented and managed in accordance with the Behaviour Guidance Procedure and relevant incident and notification requirements.

BEHAVIOUR GUIDANCE PLANS

A Behaviour Guidance Plan may be developed whenever a child would benefit from a consistent and individualised approach to support their behaviour, emotional regulation, communication, participation or social development. A plan does not need to wait until behaviour becomes serious or unsafe.

Behaviour Guidance Plans will be strengths-based and consider:

- the child's strengths, interests and relationships
- observable behaviour or areas requiring support
- when and where difficulties are most likely to occur
- what the child may be communicating or needing
- realistic and positive goals
- proactive and responsive support strategies
- any identified safety risks

- family knowledge and input
- the child's perspective where appropriate
- advice from relevant professionals or support services.

Plans will be implemented consistently by relevant educators and reviewed in response to the child's progress, changing needs or new information.

PARTNERSHIPS WITH FAMILIES AND PROFESSIONALS

Families are important partners in understanding and supporting their child.

Communication about behaviour will be respectful, objective and focused on the child's strengths, needs, participation and wellbeing.

Families will be consulted where:

- patterns of behaviour or emerging concerns are identified
- an individual Behaviour Guidance Plan is developed or reviewed
- significant safety concerns arise
- additional professional or inclusion support may assist the child.

Where appropriate, and with relevant consent, Village Early Education may work with Inclusion Support, Preschool Field Officers, allied health professionals, early childhood intervention services or other relevant professionals.

Information will be shared and stored in accordance with privacy, confidentiality and information sharing requirements.

CONTINUED SAFETY OR PARTICIPATION CONCERNS

Where a child continues to experience significant difficulty participating safely despite planned support, the service will work with the family and relevant professionals to review the child's needs, strategies and available supports.

This may include reviewing:

- the Behaviour Guidance Plan
- identified triggers or contributing factors
- environmental and program adjustments
- supervision arrangements
- communication supports

- educator practices and consistency
- inclusion or professional supports.

Requesting that a child be collected because of behaviour must not be used as punishment or as a routine behaviour management strategy.

Early collection may only be considered where there is an immediate and continuing safety risk that cannot reasonably be managed at the service after appropriate support strategies have been implemented.

Any such event will result in review of the child's support strategies and ongoing participation.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

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

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
170	Policies and procedures to be followed
171	Policies and procedures to be kept available
175	Prescribed information to be notified to Regulatory Authority
176	Time to notify certain information to Regulatory Authority
183	Storage of records and other documents

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. (2026). [*CHILD SAFETY Inappropriate conduct*](#)

Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2026). [*QUALITY AREA 5 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*](#)

Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics. (2016).

[*Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010*](#)

[*Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011*](#)

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	Kelsey Pearce		
POLICY REVIEWED	AUGUST 2026	NEXT REVIEW DATE	MAY 2027
VERSION NUMBER	V15.08.26		
MODIFICATIONS	• policy streamlined to remove duplicated procedural content • updated terminology to recognise behaviour as communication and support co-regulation and self-regulation • expectations strengthened regarding dignity, rights, inclusion and individualised guidance • guidance regarding physical intervention clarified to reflect least restrictive, emergency-only responses		