

### Rationale

Children come to preschool from a variety of social and cultural backgrounds and with differing knowledge, emotional maturity and behaviours. Young children need time, opportunity and space to learn with and from other children, how to play, share, take turns and care for others as well as their environment. Children's behaviour is shaped by their stage of development (physical, emotional and cultural), adult expectations (too much or too little) and any additional needs they may have. The early years provide the best window of opportunity for helping children to learn to recognise their needs, self-regulate and make appropriate behaviour choices.

At Mawson Lakes Preschool we believe all children have the right to feel safe and have opportunities to learn in a psychologically and physically supportive environment. Our *Interactions with children: positive behaviour policy* is aligned to the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) and the practices and principles of the EYLF are implemented into everyday interactions with children and families.

### As educators we recognise

- each family as the first educator of their child with their own understandings and beliefs around parenting and behaviour
- The most effective learning occurs when families and educators work together to develop and implement goals collaboratively for a child's wellbeing, learning and development
- All behaviour is a form of communication and should be acknowledged as such
- children's individual needs, learning styles and context are crucial to successful learning and development of positive behaviour patterns
- Children learn best when they experience success and have positive self-esteem
- Behaviour changes more effectively when it is handled in a positive manner

We also acknowledge that children feel big emotions and get angry, frustrated and upset at times and may need help to express feelings appropriately. As a staff team we:

- Value and respect children as individuals
- Support children in being responsible for managing their behaviour
- Use intentional teaching and modelling of appropriate behaviours and play skills
- Provide opportunities for children to take risks and experience success
- Encourage children to take responsibility
- Provide opportunities and time for discussion and problem solving
- Help children to recognise and express their feelings in an appropriate manner
- Make learning relevant and manageable for children
- Provide clear and consistent expectations when supporting children in their behaviour choices.
- Create safe and secure environments for all children

Helping children manage their interactions and reactions to others teaches responsibility for their actions. We believe educators and families need to share responsibility for developing positive behaviour patterns by being consistent, creating safe and secure environments for all, and by modelling appropriate behaviours.

### Positive Behaviour Outcomes

Children need to practice making choices and managing the consequences of their choices, both positive and negative. Our aim/goal is for all children to develop as socially competent individuals who can

- Experiment and take risks
- use their initiative
- choose positive behaviours
- share and communicate with others
- express their feelings confidently and respectfully
- handle conflict in an appropriate manner
- be responsible for their actions
- respect and care for themselves, their peers and the environment

### Ways we maximise positive behaviour

- explicitly teaching and modelling acceptable behaviours
- having consistent routines, rules and expectations
- focusing on the behaviour and not the child.
- helping children to understand the consequences of their behaviour – both positive and negative
- using visual strategies to support children's understanding of routines, expectations and choices
- teaching appropriate strategies which may include:

- Restorative Practices, which we have adapted for Preschool and uses 3 questions:
  1. what happened?
  2. who has been hurt or what went wrong?
  3. what do we need to do to make things better?
- Reminding children to **STOP** what they are doing, **THINK** about what needs to be done and then **DO** it.

**Consequences:** Children need to be aware of the consequences of their behaviour. Our aim is for all children to be responsible for their own behaviour. We support children to think about their actions and the effect on others. Educators understand each situation is different and while we will use the most relevant approach, the specific way this occurs may vary depending on our knowledge of the child, their age and developmental level.

### Ways we respond to challenging behaviours

- Involving children in goal setting and developing group norms
- modelling appropriate behaviour
- discussing consequences of unsafe behaviour
- providing clear and consistent guidelines
- explicitly teaching 'feelings' vocabulary to enable children to articulate their needs and feelings appropriately
- supporting children to manage potential conflicts through negotiation and problem solving
- providing areas within the preschool environment for children to safely withdraw to – giving the child time and space needed to calm down and re-enter play successfully and supporting the development of self-regulation skills
- regularly reflecting on our planned curriculum and how our learning environment supports positive interactions between children
- Providing a safe area for 'thinking time'. Thinking time is carefully managed by educators and includes a staff member 'debriefing' with the child about what has occurred. Alternative solutions are discussed and the child is then supported to re-enter play.
- Withdrawing children when they are at risk of hurting themselves or others, ensuring an adult is with them all the time

At preschool we acknowledge children as individuals and understand that each child will have different levels of understanding and will have experienced different rules and expectations.

If children are at risk of hurting themselves or others it may be necessary to restrain them by physically holding the child with care. If this should occur, the family will be informed. As a Department for Education site we do not use any forms of physical punishment with children at preschool. Children with special rights may have greater difficulty in self-regulation and understanding group norms. Educators will initiate discussions with families at the earliest opportunity when children are demonstrating unsafe or escalating behaviours to work together and develop strategies to support the child's learning and wellbeing.

At preschool children are learning to be social, how to be part of a group and know the accepted ways of playing, working and being with others. As they develop, children are learning to share, take turns, how to resolve conflicts, to listen, to play together, and to communicate and share their ideas. They don't always get it right, and some children need more support than others.

### Involving Children

Children need to be actively involved in setting boundaries and negotiating our agreed group norms. Educators will involve children in:

- Discussions about safe and unsafe play
- Documenting agreed consequences for unsafe/inappropriate behaviours
- Encouraging and supporting children to model appropriate behaviours for their peers.

### Partnerships with families

We believe the most effective outcomes for children occur when educators and families work together to support and guide children's behaviour. We support family involvement by

- giving this policy to all families on enrolment as part of their enrolment package
- being available to talk with families about this policy at any time
- communicating with, and involving families at the earliest opportunity to work together to assist each child's wellbeing and learning
- working collaboratively with families to share and agree on consistent strategies for the child
- planning, implementing, monitoring and reviewing individual behaviour plans or other supports in partnership with families and support services
- working with families to understand cultural or external factors that may be affecting a child's behaviour

Children may exhibit challenging behaviours for a variety of reasons and it is very important you keep us informed of any changes in family circumstances e.g. separation anxiety, a new baby, moving house, allergies, death of a family member, illness. Some events or

needs will affect children in different ways and may result in challenging behaviours.

We are experienced observers of young children and will talk with you if we are concerned about your child's behaviour. We will work in partnership with you to develop consistent strategies, which may include modifying routines or curriculum to accommodate your child. Further advice and support may also be sought from the allied health team at the children's centre, the Department for Education Support Services team or other professionals who may be able to offer advice and support to the child, family and educators.

### Educators will support this policy by

- Contributing to discussions about maximising positive behaviour
- contributing to the development of individual learning plans and ensuring strategies to support children are implemented
- modelling and using intentional teaching strategies for appropriate behaviour
- being consistent in their approach to behaviour
- Maintaining confidentiality about individual children and their needs
- Furthering their own knowledge through professional development opportunities
- Being aware of our personal limitations and seeking assistance when needed
- Contributing to the review of this policy

### Supporting our Positive Behaviour Policy

Educators and parents/caregivers need to share responsibility by being consistent at all times and modelling appropriate behaviours. Families can help the staff team by:

- Talking to educators about any changes in your child's environment that may cause distress or changes in behaviour
- Informing educators when they see inappropriate behaviours between children
- Working with educators to increase positive behaviour
- Reading our Policy and signing and returning the tear off slip as acknowledgement and support
- Adhering to the principles in our Site Behaviour Code while on site

### The site leader will support staff by

- including this policy in the staff induction book
- provide access for all educators to current information and research regarding behaviour guidance, either through written information or access to professional development opportunities
- providing new educators to the team, including relievers a copy of this policy and providing information about any children with behavioural needs

### References

DECS - Supporting and Managing Children's Behaviour: An Early Childhood Resource (2004)

National Quality Standard 5.1(2011)

<https://www.acecqa.gov.au/nqf/national-quality-standard/quality-area-5-relationships-with-children>

National Quality Standard 5.2

<https://www.acecqa.gov.au/nqf/national-quality-standard/quality-area-5-relationships-with-children>

Education and Care Services National Regulations – National Regulation155

<https://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/#/view/regulation/2011/653/chap4/part4.5/reg155>

Education and Care Services National Regulations - National Regulation 156

<https://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/#/view/regulation/2011/653/chap4/part4.5/reg156>

Playgroup SA – Playgroup Guide for Coordinators (2018) – Section 6 Exchanging ideas and sharing parent info

Protective practices for staff in their interactions with children and young people (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition)

<https://www.education.sa.gov.au/doc/protective-practices-staff-their-interactions-children-and-young-people>

Site behaviour, interactions and guidance code exemplar (DfE intranet)

<https://edi.sa.edu.au/supporting-children/behaviour-and-attendance/behaviour-support/preschools-and-children#title0>