

BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT POLICY

CHILDREN AND YOUTH PROGRAMS (NAMELY HAF and ELEV8 GC STARS)

Gladstone Connect will endeavour to create an atmosphere that encourages good and positive behaviour. Children flourish best when their personal, social and emotional needs are met and where there are clear and developmentally appropriate expectations and standards for their behaviour. These standards apply to all children and adults who may occasionally or regularly be part of children and youth programs both on and off site.

This policy will identify to staff development strategies to be used in response to challenging behaviour, and to involving parents and carers where needed. We expect all members of our setting to keep to the guidelines, requiring these to be applied consistently. New staff and volunteers are familiarised with our behaviour management policy and its guidelines. We also work in partnership with children's parents and carers who are regularly informed about their child's behaviour.

Guidelines

Children need to have set boundaries of behaviour for their own and others safety. Within the setting we aim to promote boundaries in a way that helps the child to develop a sense of the significance of their own behaviour, both in their own environment and those around them. Children need a structure where they can be free to choose and experiment. Unlimited freedom puts too much responsibility on children and they need easily understood boundaries. Our simple written ground rules help with boundaries and they are communicated also during circle time.

Good behaviour must always be acknowledged. This will usually be at a personal level or through peer recognition. Any behaviour which falls below the standards set will be discussed with the individual. It must be made clear what constitutes unacceptable behaviour. In dealing with any unacceptable behaviour it is essential for staff to ensure that children understand why their behaviour is unacceptable and their own responsibility in the matter. To do this it will be necessary to discuss the situation with the child either immediately or later. In extreme or repeated situations, other staff and parents may be brought into discussions. Where there is repeated or serious concern about a child's behaviour, parents must be informed and their support sought. **It is recognised that the reasons for certain inconsiderate behaviour are often complex and that high emotions can make immediate resolutions difficult. It may be appropriate in some circumstances to remove a child from the immediate situation. This must be done if it is in the child's own interest or for safety of the child or others. This should not be seen as a sanction. Sanctions should only be given if the reason for giving them is understood by the child.**

Our Policy

GC believes in role modelling and promoting a consistent and positive behaviour at all times. We aim to encourage self-discipline, consideration and respect for others, for self and the property within the setting. Staff will provide positive role models for the children through their interactions with

each other and the other children, and will maintain a happy, caring, structured ethos, conducive to appropriate behaviour. **We encourage child-centred problem solving and focus on using ‘teachable moments’ where possible.**

The Aim of this Policy

We aim to teach children to behave in socially acceptable ways and to understand the needs and rights of others. We wish to state clearly that without exception bullying is always unacceptable. Every child has the right to be happy and secure at school and to be supported when they feel vulnerable. The maintenance of good standards of behaviour is primarily the responsibility of GC staff although children and parents also have varying degrees of responsibility.

Staff aim to:

- Recognise the individuality of all our children
- Support each child in developing self-esteem, confidence and feeling of competence
- Provide a **key worker system** enabling staff to build a strong and positive relationship with children and their families.
- Assess the child’s knowledge about the effect of their behaviour: does the child know how to be socially acceptable?
- Observe children at all times so pre-empted action can be taken to avert clashes between children.
- Support the child to express feelings verbally where the situation that causes the emotion is beyond the child’s control.
- Work in partnership with parents and carers by communicating openly.
- Encourage a child’s self-discipline by consistent reminder of the ground rules.
- Treat each other with respect and present as a good role model.
- Provide stimulating activities to prevent boredom which may cause challenging behaviour.
- To convey that challenging behaviour is unacceptable not the child themselves.

Staff aim for children to learn to:

- Leave their parents/carers happily and with confidence.
- Ask for and be willing to receive help or advice from others.
- Follow suggestions appropriate to their individual stage of development.
- Develop skills of concentration when involved in both self-initiated and adult initiated activities.
- Show consideration and respect for equipment and belongings.

It is our policy to:

- Require all staff to keep themselves up to date with legislation, research and thinking on **promoting positive behaviour** and on handling children’s behaviour where it may require additional support
- Develop staff knowledge of effective behaviour management through staff meetings and attending relevant training, the designated member of staff for behaviour management will update their training and knowledge regularly

- Staff have to access relevant sources of expertise on promoting positive behaviour within the programme for supporting personal, social and emotional development
- Require all staff, volunteers and students, to provide a positive model of behaviour by treating children, parents and one another with friendliness, care and courtesy
- We familiarise new staff and volunteers with the setting's behaviour policy and its guidelines for behaviour
- We expect all members of our setting – children, parents, staff, volunteers and students – to keep to the guidelines, requiring these to be applied consistently
- We work in partnership with children's parents. Parents are regularly informed about their children's behaviour by their key person. We work with parents to address recurring inconsiderate behaviour, using our observation records to help us to understand the cause and to decide jointly how to respond appropriately.

Strategies with children who engage in inconsiderate behaviour

- We require all staff, volunteers and students to use positive strategies for handling any inconsiderate behaviour, **by helping children find solutions** in ways which are appropriate for the children's ages and stages of development. Such solutions might include, for example, **acknowledgement of feelings, explanation as to what was not acceptable, and supporting children to gain control of their feelings so that they can learn a more appropriate response**
- We ensure that there are enough resources and sufficient activities available so that children are meaningfully occupied without the need for unnecessary conflict over sharing and waiting for turns
- We **acknowledge considerate behaviour such as kindness and willingness to share** • We support each child in developing self-esteem, confidence and feelings of competence
- We **support each child in developing a sense of belonging** in our group, so that they feel valued and welcome
- We avoid creating situations in which children receive adult attention only in return for inconsiderate behaviour
- When children behave in inconsiderate ways, we help them to understand the outcomes of their action and support them in learning how to cope more appropriately
- We never send children out of the room by themselves
- We never use physical punishment, such as smacking or shaking. Children are never threatened with these.
- We never deprive children of food or drink.
- We do not use techniques intended to single out and humiliate individual children.
- We use physical restraint, such as holding, only to prevent physical injury to children or adults and /or serious damage to property. Details of such an event (what happened, what action was taken and by whom, and the names of witnesses) are brought to the attention of our Manager and DSL and are recorded in the child's personal file. The child's parent is informed on the same day.
- In cases of serious misbehaviour, such as racial or other abuse, we make clear immediately the unacceptability of the behaviour and attitudes, by means of explanations rather than personal blame

- We do not shout or raise our voices in a threatening way to respond to children's inconsiderate behaviour.

Confidential records of negative behaviour should be kept, parents will be asked to read and sign any entries concerning their child.

Rough and tumble play, hurtful behaviour and bullying

- Young children often engage in play that has aggressive themes – such as superhero and weapon play; some children appear pre-occupied with these themes, but their behaviour is not necessarily a precursor to hurtful behaviour or bullying, although it may be inconsiderate at times and may need addressing using strategies as above.

- We recognise that teasing and rough and tumble play are normal for young children and acceptable within limits. We regard these kinds of play as pro-social and not as problematic or 'aggressive'
- We will develop strategies to contain play that are agreed with the children, and understood by them, with acceptable behavioural boundaries to ensure children are not hurt
- We recognise that fantasy play also contains many violently dramatic strategies – blowing up, shooting etc., and that themes often refer to 'goodies and baddies' and as such offer opportunities for us to explore concepts of right and wrong.
- We are able to tune in to the content of the play, perhaps to suggest alternative strategies for heroes and heroines, making the most of '**teachable moments**' to encourage empathy and lateral thinking to explore alternative scenarios and strategies for conflict resolution.

Hurtful behaviour

- We recognise that young children can behave in hurtful ways towards others because they have not yet developed the means to manage intense feelings that sometimes overwhelm them and we take this behaviour seriously.
- We understand that self-management of intense emotions, especially of anger, happens when the brain has developed neurological systems to manage.
- Therefore, we help this process by offering support, calming the child who is angry as well as the one who has been hurt by the behaviour. By helping the child to return to a normal state, we are helping the brain to develop the physiological response system that will help the child to be able to manage his or her own feelings.
- We **do not engage in punitive responses** to a young child's rage, as that will have the opposite effect.
- We recognise that young children require help in understanding the range of feelings experienced. We help children recognise their feelings by naming them and helping children to express them, making a connection verbally between the event and the feeling. 'Adam took your car, didn't he, and you were enjoying playing with it. You didn't like it when he took it, did you? It made you feel angry, didn't it?' We help young children learn to empathise with others, understanding that they have feelings too and that their actions impact on others' feelings –e.g. 'When you hit Adam, it hurt him and he didn't like that and it made him cry'.

- We help young children develop pro-social behaviour, such as resolving conflict over who has the toy e.g. 'I can see you are feeling better now and Adam isn't crying any more. Let's see if we can be friends and find another car, so you can both play with one.'
- We are aware that the same problem may happen over and over before skills such as sharing and turn-taking develop. In order for both the biological maturation and cognitive development to take place, children will need repeated experiences with problem solving, supported by patient adults and clear boundaries.
- We support social skills through modelling behaviour, through activities, drama and stories. We build self-esteem and confidence in children, recognising their emotional needs through close and committed relationships with them.
- We help a child to understand the effect that their hurtful behaviour has had on another child; **we do not force children to say sorry, but encourage this where it is clear that they are genuinely sorry and wish to show this to the person they have hurt.**
- When hurtful behaviour becomes problematic, we work with parents to identify the cause and find a solution together. The main reasons for very young children to engage in excessive hurtful behaviour are that: - they do not feel securely attached to someone who can interpret and meet their needs - this may be in the home and it may also be in the setting; - their parent, or carer in the setting, does not have skills in responding appropriately, and consequently negative patterns are developing where hurtful behaviour is the only response the child has to express feelings of anger; - the child is exposed to levels of aggressive behaviour at home and may be at risk emotionally, or may be experiencing child abuse; and - the child has a developmental condition that affects how they behave.

Where this does not work, we inform parents/carers and make the appropriate referrals to a Behaviour Support Team/Early Intervention team where necessary.

Parents & Carers

- At all times the teaching staff will endeavour to work with parents and/or carers in partnership to aid the child's development.
- Parents and carers are expected to set a good example of behavioural interaction with staff, other parents and all the children at all times.
- Aggressive behaviour (in either action or speech) is not tolerated as our staff has the right to be respected and to work in a safe environment. Parents and carers can expect the same level of courtesy in the interaction they receive from staff.

One of the great benefits of our approach is that children have the opportunity to learn how to behave in a social situation from other children slightly older than themselves. Staff also maintain an ethos of positive guidance at all times. Here are some techniques that we use when dealing with challenging behaviour:

1. Positive intervention and distraction
2. Time-out to calm down
3. Modelling good behaviour
4. Talking things through
5. Practising social skills through drama and role play
6. Time-out observing other children with adult