Purpose:
The aim of this policy is to:

• Work in partnership with families
• Communicate with the child's family to gain an understanding of strategies used at home
• Promote current education and information regarding behaviour guidance practices.

Rationale:
Gembrook Primary School OSHC programs are committed to providing an educational program that provides an inclusive environment for all children in the middle childhood years.

Scope:
Guiding children's behaviour is viewed as an opportunity to encourage new learning that will assist children in the development of a lifelong social skill base. Children are seen as active participants in this process and will be supported in a positive, respectful and nurturing manner. Strategies to guide behaviour will be self-esteem enhancing and empower the children to act in a pro social manner. Consistent developmentally appropriate limits will be developed to assist children to make choices, and consequences will be implemented to reinforce positive behaviour. A positive guidance environment will be facilitated which will encourage collaboration and partnerships with families where confidentiality is practised. The safety of all is paramount and behaviour management plans will be developed for habitual challenging behaviour.

Protocol/Procedure:

Gembrook Primary School OSHC shall:
• Promote current education and information regarding behaviour guidance practices.
• Support and work in consultation with families/guardians accessing or seeking to access specialist services.
• Promote the use of positive and respectful language when communicating with children.
• Acknowledge the diversity that exists within our children, families, staff, community and their different parenting styles and cultural practices.

Families shall:
• Have access to the Behaviour Guidance Policy.
• Participate in the development of behaviour management plans
  • Actively participate when a referral to specialist services are made.

Gembrook Primary School OSHC staff shall:
• Recognise that children's individual development, the environment, the time of day, actions of staff and other children, family experiences and the family's cultural background may affect a child's behaviour.

• Model desirable behaviours in their own everyday interaction with their peers, other adults and children.

• Use an informed and reflective approach and respond to children's behaviour challenges in an objective and/or supportive manner.

• Provide set learning environments that have a variety of spaces and activities.

• Anticipate potentially anti-social behaviours and modify situations and physical arrangements that may encourage inappropriate behaviour.

• Encourage children to negotiate and cooperate to resolve potential conflicts for themselves, but assist and/or intervene when necessary.

• Collaborate with children where developmentally appropriate to formulate group expectations and limits.

• Validate children's feelings and communicate with children.

• Use positive language and promote the child's self esteem.

• Ensure children understand that acceptance does not depend upon behaviour.

• Use consistent limits and behavioural consequences.

• Exclude any form of physical punishment, isolation, withdrawal of affection and punitive actions which belittle, humiliate or coerce children.

• Consult with families about any changes that may lead to a child's behaviour.

• Work with families to ensure, whenever possible, that behaviour guidance strategies remain consistent between home and the centre.

Bullying and Aggressive Behaviour

Gembrook Primary school OSHC understands that bullying and aggressive behaviour can have serious consequences for children who are repeatedly bullied and for those who persist in bullying others. Those not directly involved can also be affected.

• Children who experience bullying behaviour can suffer effects such as:
  
  o Loss of self esteem
  o Increasing isolation
  o Depression

• At all times, staff work towards the protection of all children in their care. Victims of bullying and aggressive behaviour may require:
  
  o Protection from the aggressor
Comfort after having been victimised
Support to attempt learned strategies
Understanding that there is always help nearby

- **Children who act out at others in a bullying or aggressive manner may require:**
  - Positive reinforcement for their attempts at positive social interactions
  - Support to find new strategies to cope with negative emotions
  - Counselling to help them understand traumatic experiences in their lives
  - Support in understanding empathy, an understanding of how other children feel

- **Whenever possible and/or age appropriate, staff shall educate children to provide them with the skills to prevent bullying, such as:**
  - Acting assertively when necessary
  - Reacting nonchalantly when it is appropriate to do so
  - Making friends who will give support
  - Cooperating effectively with others
  - Seeking help from others

- **Whenever possible and/or age appropriate, staff shall educate children to provide them with the skills to help other children, such as:**
  - Standing up for children who are being victimised
  - Show an understanding of how other children are feeling
  - Offer support by being a good listener

- **Whenever possible and/or age appropriate, staff shall educate children to provide them with the skills to avoid bullying others, such as:**
  - Being able to cope with feelings of anger when they arise
  - Finding alternatives to coping with anger
  - Thinking before they act
  - Getting what they need from others by using cooperative means rather than resorting to force and/or threats

**Strategies to consider in the instance of bullying and aggressive behaviour:**
• Is the instance of bullying/aggressive behaviour a one off occurrence or is the child beginning to develop a pattern?

  Shadow the child, without being intrusive to their play, and observe the child to identify triggers. For example, do they act out more often when they are feeling:

  o Tired
  o Hungry
  o Crowded
  o Bored
  o Seeking attention
  o Frustrated

• If the child is beginning to develop a pattern of aggressive behaviour, incident report will be written and Supervisor should report this to their Coordinator to assist the Staff to implement a behaviour guidance plan.

• Communicate with the child's family to gain an understanding of strategies used at home for inappropriate behaviour.

• Whenever possible, coordinate strategies with the child's family so that the child is receiving consistent responses to inappropriate behaviour.

• Communicate with the Coordinator, Supervisor and staff team on strategies that are being used with the child to ensure consistent care.

• Remember that children who are showing signs of bullying/aggressive behaviour need to be supported and provided with strategies to help them.

• Use positive reinforcement when the child shows positive communication and interaction, let the child know that you appreciate their efforts.

• When there is an incident resulting from bullying/aggressive behaviour, both children involved require attention.

  o The victim must be comforted by a staff member and first aid administered as necessary. Once the child is calm talk to them about what happened, they may have triggered the response and so will require strategies in the future, depending on their level of understanding.

  o The child who has acted aggressively must be removed from the situation and spoken to in a manner that they will understand. If appropriate, ask them why they hurt or frightened the other child, otherwise keep phrases simple, "please ask me for help if you are feeling frustrated."

• If attempted strategies are n’t succeeding and both staff and the child's families are beginning to express concern for the child, please refer to the below section 'ongoing child behaviour issues'.

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**On going child behaviour issues**
• When repeated incidents occur with a particular child, staff will consult with the Coordinator to discuss further action

• Current strategies will be evaluated

• The child's behaviour will be observed, tracked and recorded

• In consultation with the family a behaviour management plan will be developed

• The behaviour management plan must be based on the consensus reached between parents and staff. Strategies used must be clear and followed by all staff and parents, and reviewed on a regular basis

• The Coordinator will assist staff to identify and seek appropriate internal and external resources and specialist professional support organisations as needed

• Family referral to specialist services will be actioned where appropriate

• When the target behaviour impacts on a group of children, a communication strategy will be developed to provide educational information to all parents regarding management of the specific behaviour

• When the target behaviour impacts significantly on another individual child, the parents of that child will be informed and provided with information and support

Gembrook Primary School Legal Duty of Care & Occupational Health and Safety Responsibilities

Action by Gembrook Primary School OSHC:

• The Coordinator will promptly respond to situation in the context of the Legal Duty of Care to ALL children and the Occupation Health and Safety responsibilities to ALL staff and others within the Outside School Hours Care.

  o Where after the child has been given every chance and support to respond positively, and the child's unacceptable behaviour continues to threaten its own or others safety and well being, the Outside School Hours Care staff will review the care arrangements of the child with the parents.

  o Where parents fail to consult and cooperate with staff, (in accordance with this policy), to address a child's unacceptable behaviour, Outside School Hours Care staff will review the care arrangements of the child with the parents

Related Policy

References/Legislation


• Dr Louise Porter, Children are people too (2006)
• Nolan, Kilderry & O'Grady (2006) Young children as active learners ECA AUST
• www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au (cited 19/05/06)

Australian Government Attorney-General's Department

Policy History:

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