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# Bendigo Regional YMCA Children’s Services – Interactions With Children Policy

Mandatory – Quality Area 5

<b>Policy Number</b>	CS 5.1	<b>Version</b>	1
<b>Drafted by</b>	JB	<b>Approved by CEO on</b>	22.03.2017
<b>Responsible Person</b>	CSM	<b>Scheduled Review date</b>	22.03.2018

## 1. OBJECTIVES

The objective of this policy is to ensure:

- The development of positive and respectful relationships with each child at Bendigo Regional YMCA Children’s Services (BRYMCA)
- Each child at BRYMCA is supported to learn and develop in a secure and empowering environment

## 2. SCOPE

This policy applies to the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, Certified Supervisor, educators, staff, students on placement, volunteers, parents/guardians, children and others attending the programs and activities.

## 3. POLICY

BRYMCA is committed to:

- ensuring all personnel, including volunteers and students, understand and adhere to the Safeguarding Children Young People Policy, Code of Conduct Policy, and Responding to Child Abuse and Allegations Policy
- maintaining the dignity and rights of each child at the service
- encouraging children to express themselves and their opinions, and to undertake experiences that develop self-reliance and self-esteem
- considering the health, safety and wellbeing of each child, and providing a safe, secure and welcoming environment in which they can develop and learn
- maintaining a duty of care (refer to *Definitions*) towards all children at the service
- considering the diversity of individual children at the service, including family and cultural values, age, and the physical and intellectual development and abilities of each child
- building collaborative relationships with families to improve learning and development outcomes for children
- encouraging positive, respectful and warm relationships between children and educators/staff at the service.

**BRYMCA is responsible for:**

- developing and implementing the *Interactions with Children Policy* in consultation with the ELC Director, OSHC Supervisor, Nominated Supervisor, educators, staff and parents/guardians, and ensuring that it reflects the philosophy, beliefs and values of the service
- supporting educators to gain appropriate training, knowledge and skills for the implementation of this policy
- dealing with referring notifiable complaints (refer to *Definitions*), grievances (refer to *Definitions*) or other complaints in a timely manner.
- informing DET, in writing, within 24 hours of receiving a notifiable complaint (refer to *Definitions*) (Section 174(4), Regulation 176(2)(b))
- notifying DET, in writing, within 24 hours of a serious incident (refer to *Definitions*) occurring at the service (Section 174(4), Regulation 176)

**The Nominated Supervisor (ELC Director, OSHC Supervisors/Occasional Care Team Leader) is responsible for:**

- ensuring parents/guardians and all staff have access to a copy of the *Interactions with Children Policy* and comply with its requirements
- ensuring the environment at the service is safe, secure and free from hazards for children.
- ensuring children are adequately supervised (refer to *Definitions*) and that educator-to-child ratios are maintained at all times
- ensuring educators and staff use positive and respectful strategies to assist children to manage their own behaviour, and to respond appropriately to conflict and the behaviour of others
- ensuring that individual behaviour guidance plans (refer to Attachment 1 – Procedures recommended for the development of a behaviour guidance plan) are developed for children with diagnosed behavioural difficulties, or with repeated challenging behaviours, in consultation with the Nominated Supervisor, educators, parents/guardians and families, and other professionals and any appropriate support agencies
- developing links with other services and/or professionals to support children and their families, where required
- maintaining confidentiality at all times.
- ensuring all staff are aware of the service's expectations regarding positive, respectful and appropriate behaviour, and acceptable responses and reactions when working with children and families
- developing and implementing educational programs, in accordance with an approved learning framework, that are based on the developmental needs, interests and experiences of each child, and take into account the individual differences of each child
- ensuring the educational program contributes to the development of children who have a strong sense of wellbeing and identity, and are connected, confident, involved and effective learners and communicators.
- ensuring that educators provide education and care to children in a way that:
  - encourages children to express themselves and their opinions
  - allows children to undertake experiences that develop self-reliance and self-esteem
  - maintains the dignity and the rights of each child at all times
  - offers positive guidance and encouragement towards acceptable behaviour
  - has regard to the cultural and family values, age, and the physical and intellectual development and abilities of each child being educated and cared for
- ensuring clear and straightforward documentation of the assessment and evaluation of each child's:
  - developmental needs, interests, experiences and program participation
  - progress against the outcomes of the educational program (Regulation 74)
- ensuring educators and all staff members at the service who work with children are aware that it is an offence to subject a child to any form of corporal punishment, or any discipline that is unreasonable or excessive in the circumstances (National Law: Section 166)

- ensuring that procedures are in place for effective daily communication with parents/guardians to share information about children’s learning, development, interactions, behaviour and relationships
- informing the Community Services Manager of any notifiable complaints (refer to *Definitions*) or serious incidents (refer to *Definitions*) at the service
- ensuring that where the service has been notified of a court order prohibiting an adult from contacting an enrolled child, such contact does not occur while the child is on the service premises
- ensuring educators and staff use positive and respectful strategies to assist children to manage their own behaviour, and to respond appropriately to conflict and the behaviour of others

**All educators are responsible for:**

- complying with the requirements of the *Interactions with Children Policy*
- being aware of service expectations regarding positive, respectful and appropriate behaviour, and acceptable responses and reactions when working with children and families
- providing adequate supervision of children at all times
- communicating and working collaboratively with parents/guardians and families in relation to their child’s learning, development, interactions, behaviour and relationships
- delivering educational programs, in accordance with an approved learning framework, that are based on the developmental needs, interests and experiences of each child, and take into account the individual differences of each child
- delivering programs that develop a sense of wellbeing and identity, connection to community, and provide skills for lifelong learning in all children
- providing education and care to children in a way that:
  - encourages children to express themselves and their opinions
  - allows children to undertake experiences that develop self-reliance and self-esteem
  - maintains the dignity and the rights of each child at all times
  - offers positive guidance and encouragement towards acceptable behaviour
  - has regard to the cultural and family values, age, and the physical and intellectual development and abilities of each child being educated and cared for
- developing warm, responsive and trusting relationships with children that promote a sense of security, confidence and inclusion
- supporting each child to develop responsive relationships, and to work and learn in collaboration with others
- using positive and respectful strategies to assist children to manage their own behaviour, and to respond appropriately to conflict and the behaviour of others
- developing individual behaviour guidance plans (refer to Attachment 1 – Procedures recommended for the development of a behaviour guidance plan) for children with behavioural difficulties, in consultation with parents/guardians and families, and other professionals and support agencies
- documenting assessments and evaluations for each child to inform the educational program (Regulation 74)
- being aware that it is an offence to subject a child to any form of corporal punishment, or any discipline that is unreasonable or excessive in the circumstances
- maintaining confidentiality at all times.

**Parents/guardians are responsible for:**

- reading and complying with the *Interactions with Children Policy*
- engaging in open communication with educators about their child
- informing educators/staff of events or incidents that may impact on their child’s behaviour at the service (e.g. moving house, relationship issues, a new sibling)
- informing educators/staff of any concerns regarding their child’s behaviour or the impact of other children’s behaviour

- working collaboratively with educators/staff and other professionals/support agencies to develop or review an individual behaviour guidance plan for their child, where appropriate.

**Volunteers and students, while at the service, are responsible for following this policy and its procedures.**

#### **4. DEFINITIONS**

The terms defined in this section relate specifically to this policy.

**Adequate supervision:** (In relation to this policy) **supervision** entails all children (individuals and groups) in all areas of the service, being in sight and/or hearing of an educator at all times including during toileting, sleep, rest and transition routines. Services are required to comply with the legislative requirements for educator-to-child ratios at all times. Supervision contributes to protecting children from hazards that may emerge in play, including hazards created by the equipment used.

Adequate supervision refers to constant, active and diligent supervision of every child at the service. Adequate supervision requires that educators are always in a position to observe each child, respond to individual needs and immediately intervene if necessary.

**Behaviour guidance:** A means of assisting children to self-manage their behaviour. It differs from traditional 'behaviour management' or 'discipline' which generally implies that an adult is 'managing' children's behaviour or using punishment to control children. Behaviour guidance applies to all forms of behaviour, not just behaviours labelled as 'negative'.

**Behaviour guidance plan:** A plan that documents strategies to assist an educator in guiding a child with diagnosed behavioural difficulties to self-manage his/her behaviour. The plan is developed in consultation with the Nominated Supervisor, educators, parents/guardians and families, and other professional support agencies as applicable.

**Challenging behaviour:** Behaviour that:

- disrupts others or causes disputes between children, but which is part of normal social development
- infringes on the rights of others
- causes harm or risk to the child, other children, adults or living things
- is destructive to the environment and/or equipment
- inhibits the child's learning and relationship with others
- is inappropriate relative to the child's developmental age and background.

**Inclusion Support Facilitator (ISF):** Employed by inclusion support agencies and funded by the Commonwealth Government to provide advice on inclusive practices in childcare services. ISFs also help services to access a range of practical support.

**Notifiable complaint:** A complaint that alleges a breach of the Act or Regulation, or alleges that the health, safety or wellbeing of a child at the service may have been compromised

**Preschool Field Officer (PSFO) Program:** Early intervention outreach services that are universally available within state-funded preschools for any child with developmental concerns. The primary role of the PSFO Program is to support the access and participation of children with additional needs in preschool.

**Serious incident:** An incident resulting in the death of a child, or an injury, trauma or illness for which a reasonable person would consider required urgent medical attention from registered medical practitioner or emergency services or for which the child attended or ought reasonably to have attended a hospital. E.g. whooping cough, broken limb, anaphylaxis reaction. This also includes an incident in which a child appears to be missing, cannot be accounted for, is removed from the service in contravention of the regulations or is mistakenly locked in/out of the service premises.

## 5. LEGISLATION & STANDARDS

Education and Care Services National Law Act (2010) National Law

Education and Care Services National Regulations (2011) National Regulations

Early Years Learning Framework

Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework

My Time, Our Place

National Quality Standard

Child Safe Standards

BRYMCA Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy

BRYMCA Code of Conduct Policy

BRYMCA Responding to Child Abuse Reports and Allegations Policy

## 6. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Role/ Decision/ Action	Responsibility
Educators, Supervisors, Directors and Coordinators	<p>BRYMCA Nominated Supervisor and/or Service Management will oversee the implementation and service adherence to this policy (ie policy compliance).</p> <p>Nominated Supervisor and/or Person with Management and Control will seek individual community feedback and facilitate an active consultation process with service users as appropriate.</p> <p>All Educators are responsible for the daily implementation of the policy when directly supervising children.</p>
Community Services Manager	<p>Is responsible for ensuring suitable resources and support systems to enable compliance with this policy.</p> <p>Drive the consultation process and provide leadership and advice on the continuous improvement of the policy.</p>
CEO	Policy Approval

## **ATTACHMENT 1**

### **Procedures recommended for the development of a behaviour guidance plan**

**These procedures recommend steps that services can follow to develop a behaviour guidance plan for a child exhibiting challenging behaviour. These procedures should be adapted to suit individual services.**

A caring relationship with an adult, who can provide the learning and emotional support required, is pivotal to dealing with a child's challenging behaviour (refer to *Definitions*). Challenging behaviour is best managed through a collaborative strategy developed between service staff and parents/guardians.

Excluding a child from the service should only be as a last resort. This decision should be made as part of the collaborative management of a child's behaviour, and based on a joint decision by the parents/guardians and family, and the YMCA, Nominated Supervisor, educators and other professionals involved in the education and care of the child.

#### **Procedures**

##### **Step 1 – Observe**

- Observe children exhibiting challenging behaviour, including in the broader context of their environment, the culture of the service, and the interactions of the whole group and other educators working with the child.
- Identify, based on observations, whether there is a need to develop an individual behaviour guidance plan for the child.

##### **Step 2 – Discuss**

Invite parents/guardians to a meeting to discuss:

- the ongoing behaviour displayed by the child, including highlighting improvements and celebrating successes
- their aspirations, as well as the service's aspirations, for the child
- the child's individual characteristics, including interests, temperament, age and cultural background
- recommended strategies to support the child's development, and how these strategies will be reviewed and evaluated
- resources or changes to the environment/program that may be required for a behaviour guidance plan to be implemented e.g. changes to routines and transitions
- the support already accessed by the family to assist with managing the child's behaviour
- other support available, such as a Preschool Field Officer, referral for specialist assessment and additional adult support (written consent is required from parents/guardians before any intervention/assessment is undertaken)
- any other matter that will assist with the development of a behaviour guidance plan.

##### **Step 3 – Consult**

- If appropriate, and with the permission of parents/guardians, consult with other support agencies or service providers who are already working with the child, to assist with the development of a behaviour guidance plan.

##### **Step 4 – Develop**

Develop an individual behaviour guidance plan, based on consultation with the child's parents/guardians and other support agencies, that is:

- appropriate to the needs of the child and accepted/agreed to by parents/guardians and other professionals involved in the education and care of that child
- clear and easy to follow for all educators, staff, parents/guardians and/or volunteers/students working with the child.

##### **Step 5 – Monitor and review**

- Continually review, reflect, evaluate and revise the strategies that have been implemented.
- Communicate with the parents/guardians regarding the child's progress and involve them in evaluating and revising the strategies.

#### **Roles and responsibilities**

The following are the roles and responsibilities of the various individuals working with the child at the service.

**The BRYMCA (Community Services Manager/ELC Director/OSHC Coordinator) is responsible for:**

- consulting with, and seeking advice from DET if a suitable and mutually agreeable behaviour guidance plan cannot be developed
- ensuring that they are notified if a complaint is received about a child's interactions or behaviour e.g. when the safety of other children is in question
- ensuring that, if a complaint is received, every attempt is made to resolve the issue by consultation and investigation as soon as possible
- ensuring that additional resources are sourced, if required, to implement a behaviour guidance plan
- ensuring that educators/staff at the service are provided with appropriate training to guide the actions and responses of a child/children with challenging behaviour.

**The Nominated Supervisor is responsible for:**

- developing the behaviour guidance plan in consultation with the educators and the parents/guardian of the child, and other professionals and services as appropriate and ensuring that parents/guardians and other professionals (as appropriate) are consulted if an individual behaviour guidance plan has not resolved the challenging behaviour
- consulting the *Complaints and Grievances Policy* to ensure compliance with service procedures, and regulatory and legislative requirements
- consulting educators for their professional evaluation of the situation, and drawing on their expertise in relation to developing strategies and identifying resources required
- meeting with the parents/guardians of the child concerned to develop and implement a behaviour guidance plan
- supporting educators by assessing skills and identifying additional training needs in the area of behaviour guidance
- investigating the availability of extra assistance, financial support or training, by contacting the specialist children's services officers from DET or other agencies working with the child
- setting clear timelines for review and evaluation of the behaviour guidance plan.

**Certified Supervisors and other educators/staff are responsible for:**

- observing children's challenging behaviour and identifying the need to develop a behaviour guidance plan to support a child in self-managing their own behaviour
- assisting the Nominated Supervisor to develop a behaviour guidance plan in consultation with parents/guardian and other professionals as appropriate
- implementing a behaviour guidance plan and incorporating identified strategies and resources into the service program
- undertaking relevant training that will enable them to guide children who exhibit challenging behaviour
- maintaining ongoing communication and consultation with parents/guardians
- providing regular progress reports to the YMCA and Nominated Supervisor on the implementation and effectiveness of the agreed strategies contained in an individual behaviour guidance plan
- maintaining the confidentiality of information provided by parents/guardians unless written consent is provided to disclose information to relevant parties
- providing their observations, professional evaluation and expertise in reviewing individual behaviour guidance plans
- providing other information, as relevant, to the YMCA and Nominated Supervisor to assist with the resolution of any issues.