

BEHAVIOUR GUIDANCE: BULLYING POLICY

Bullying can occur among children of any ages, sex or background. In most instances, children need adult assistance to deal with bullying. This includes adults taking responsibility to develop strategies for the prevention of bullying, and for dealing fairly and effectively with allegations of bullying.

Being, Belonging and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia identifies secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships with children as one of the principles that underpin practice. Within the early childhood community many different relationships are negotiated with and between children, educators and families. The way in which these relationships are established and maintained, and the way in which they remain visible impacts on how the community functions as a whole. Relationships directly affect how children form their own identity, whether or not they feel safe and supported, and ultimately, their sense of belonging.

NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD (NQS)

QUALITY AREA 5: RELATIONSHIPS WITH CHILDREN		
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.

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.

EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL REGULATIONS	
155	Interactions with children
156	Relationships in groups

RELATED POLICIES

Anti-Bias and Inclusion Policy	Privacy and Confidentiality Policy
Behaviour Guidance Policy	Termination of Enrolment Policy
Code of Conduct	Respect for Children Policy
Interactions with Children, Family and Staff Policy	

PURPOSE

To create a safe and healthy environment for children where bullying behaviours are not tolerated. As reflected in our Service philosophy and Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF), educators will encourage positive relationships between children and their peers.

SCOPE

This policy applies to educators, staff, and management of the Service.

IMPLEMENTATION

Our service does not tolerate bullying of any kind.

The priority of our Service is to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the child being bullied.

Although there may be underlying reasons causing a child to bully others, it is essential that the child being bullied receives the adult attention and support in the first instance. It is important that the needs of the child who bullies does not overshadow the needs of the child being bullied.

TYPES OF BULLYING IN EARLY CHILDHOOD

The most common types of bullying in the early childhood setting are physical and verbal. Some children may also bully others by social isolation/exclusion.

Physical includes:

hitting, punching, kicking, pinching- directed at the same child/ren over an extended period of time.

Verbal includes:

calling children names, taunting them, making sexist/racist statements, making cruel statement about personal attributes, clothing etc.

Social isolation:

Excluding individual children or groups of children from play or social situations

SIGNS OF BULLYING

In many cases, bullying occurs without adults being aware of it. Bullying can include physical violence (hitting, shoving), teasing or name-calling, social exclusion, or intimidation. It often occurs over a period of time. Possible signs a child is being bullied might include:

- unexplained cuts, bruises, scratches
- changes in behaviour, such as becoming moody, teary, depressed
- bedwetting
- complaints of physical ailments such as headaches or stomach-aches
- having few friends, or a breakdown in a previous friendship (if age appropriate)
- does not want to attend care
- does not want to attend parties, visit other children.

Children may also disclose to a trusted adult that they are being bullied.

EFFECTS OF BULLYING

Children who are bullied are more likely to be depressed, lonely, and anxious and have low self-esteem. They may frequently feel sick and avoid interactions with others.

PREVENTATIVE STRATEGIES

Bullying thrives where there is not enough supervision. If required, and where possible, our Service will increase our staff: child ratios above those set out in the National Regulations.

Our daily program is designed to meet the needs and interests of all children in attendance to prevent periods of boredom.

Educators model appropriate behaviours towards other staff and children, including refraining from teasing, humiliating, or talking 'behind another's back'. This also includes educators using appropriate language when dealing with behaviour management issues and assisting children to use the same.

Children are encouraged to verbalise their emotions and to develop empathy and compassion.

TALKING ABOUT BULLYING

Educators play an important role in helping children understand and guide their own behaviour as they learn about positive and healthy relationships with others.

Behaviours in early childhood may be *precursors* to bullying rather than true bullying. This could include making faces, refusing to play together, telling lies or stories about another child, grabbing objects, pushing, pinching or shoving another child. Without intervention, these behaviours could turn into a pattern of bullying.

Early childhood educators assist children recognise bullying behaviour and assist children in developing strategies to develop positive relationships and prevent bullying. Skills to develop to assist in preventing bullying include:

- empathy- understanding and responding to the what others feel
- problem solving- how to resolve problems constructively without using aggression
- language- understanding what to say when the child is feeling targeted by another child- ‘stop it!’

Educators will teach social skills through role-plays, stories, puppets and games.

Educators will guide children to practice how to interact with others positively and respectfully when talking about bullying.

PROCEDURE WHEN A CHILD DISCLOSES ALLEGED BULLYING

Educators will:

- refer to the *Behaviour Guidance- Bullying Response Procedure* for steps to undertake when approaching a bullying situation
- listen when a child attempts to talk about behaviours that might indicate bullying
- respond to incidents in a constructive, supportive and timely manner
- learn as much as possible about the children involved and the tactics used
- summarise the problem they are discussing
- ensure the child knows that the educators at the service are there to help them
- provide support and empathy
- empathise with the child and reassure them that it is not their fault
- ask the child what they think could be done to help, what will make them feel safe
- tell the child what action you are planning to take, including that you will need to talk to the alleged bully
- encourage and support the child who is being bullied to develop other friendships
- notify the Nominated Supervisor of the allegation

- try to talk with the alleged bully and any witnesses without allowing them the opportunity to discuss what they may say (bullies often do not act alone, and the responses of the bully and friends may therefore differ from the victim)
- remember that bullies can be ‘nice’ children from ‘good’ families
- notify all parents involved of the allegation of bullying (*refer to Confidentiality Policy and Code of Conduct Policy*)
- discuss the situation with the child’s parents and work out a plan to manage the situation
- once the investigation is complete, advise the children, parents and Management of the outcome

PROCEDURE WHEN STAFF SUSPECT POSSIBLY BULLYING

Educators will:

- pay closer attention to the suspected victim and their interactions with other children
- tell the child that you are concerned about them and consider asking some questions such as “Do you have any special friends here?”, “Are there any kids here who you really don’t like?”
- consider talking with the parents of the child to determine if they have similar concerns

STRATEGIES FOR DEALING WITH BULLYING

Discussing the behaviour with the child who is bullying others

- make it clear to the child that this type of behaviour is not acceptable
- don’t force a meeting between the bully and the victim. Forced apologies are not constructive.
- ask the child who is bullying for possible reasons for the bullying. Address any issues raised as appropriate.
- discuss with the child who is bullying and their parents what the possible sanctions may be if the bullying continues

SANCTIONS

Possible sanctions will be dependent on each individual case, but may include:

- a warning
- temporary exclusion from the Service
- permanent exclusion from the Service (Termination of Enrolment Policy)

RESOURCES

Bullying- NO WAY! www.bullyingnoway.gov.au

[Eyes on Bullying in Early Childhood](#)

Kids Help line <https://kidshelpline.com.au/kids> (for children/parents)

Raising Children <https://raisingchildren.net.au/preschoolers/behaviour/bullying/bullying-signs>

Starting Blocks [Managing children's challenging behaviour in child care- bullying](#)

SOURCE

Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2014).

Australian Government Department of Education, Skills and Employment. (2009) *Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia*.

Early Childhood Australia- Dealing with bullying together: prevention and resolution. (2009).

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

NSW Department of Education *Anti-bullying- Parents and carers tips- Fact Sheet* (2020).

Starting Blocks *Managing children's challenging behaviour in child care- bullying*

US Education Development Centre- Preventing Bullying in Early Childhood

<http://preventingbullying.promoteprevent.org/preventing-bullying-in-early-childhood>

REVIEW

POLICY REVIEWED	May 2021	NEXT REVIEW DATE	DECEMBER 2021
MODIFICATIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • additional sections added to policy- types of bullying in EC; talking about bullying • resource section added for staff and families • sources checked and modified 		
POLICY REVIEWED	PREVIOUS MODIFICATIONS		NEXT REVIEW DATE
DECEMBER 2019	Related Policies added Minor edits to formatting for consistency Sources checked for currency		DECEMBER 2020
DECEMBER 2018	NEW policy drafted		DECEMBER 2019