

Behaviour support policy

This is a mandated policy under the operational policy framework. Any edits to this policy must follow the process outlined on the [creating, updating and deleting policy documents](#) page.

Overview

This document articulates the department's behaviour support policy for departmental education, early childhood and care settings. The policy outlines how departmental staff will support safe and positive behaviour for children and young people in these settings.

Scope

The policy applies to all behaviour strategies and responses used by all staff for children and young people in education, early childhood and care settings administered or delivered by or on behalf of the department.



Contents

Behaviour support policy	1
Overview	1
Scope.....	1
Detail.....	3
Policy principles	4
Policy requirements.....	4
Roles and responsibilities.....	5
Chief Executive	6
Department for Education Engagement and Wellbeing.....	6
Department for Education Student Support Services.....	6
Department for Education School and Preschool Operations, Learning and Behaviour Unit	7
Education Directors.....	7
School and Early Childhood Leaders (principals in schools and early childhood services directors)	7
Staff	8
Non-departmental staff providing a service on behalf of the department	8
Definitions	8
Supporting information.....	9
Related legislation.....	9
Related policy documents	9
Record history	10
Approvals.....	10
Revision record	10
Keywords.....	11

Detail

The purpose of the behaviour support policy is to:

- ensure effective, consistent and fair behaviour support for children and young people across education, early childhood and care services in the department
- assist children and young people to be safely included and participate in learning in a positive way that respects other students and staff
- develop the personal and social capability of children and young people to understand and exercise their rights and responsibilities so that they are able to fully contribute in their learning environments, and to their wider community.

Children and young people's behaviours span a continuum including:

- positive, inclusive and respectful behaviours
- low-level, developmentally-appropriate transgressions that test the boundaries of established rules, standards, and norms. These behaviours are usually simple to redirect and minimise through universal behaviour support strategies for all children and young people at a classroom and school level
- challenging behaviours which raise greater concern due to their severity, frequency or duration and require more persistent guidance and support to minimise. Behavioural responses include targeted interventions for the individual children and young people involved in addition to universal strategies
- complex and unsafe behaviours that are severe, of high frequency, extended duration, or are unsafe for a child/young person and those around them. Behaviours at this end of the continuum require intensive and individualised interventions in addition to targeted and universal strategies.

Challenging, complex and unsafe behaviours ("behaviours of concern") are an indicator that children and young people need support to be included in early childhood, care and education services.

Research indicates that most children are able to behave in safe, respectful and inclusive ways, while a small number engage in challenging behaviours. Complex and unsafe behaviours involve a very small proportion of children and young people in education settings. It is important to note that children and young people's engagement in behaviours of concern can change over time.

The relationship between a child/young person and a caring adult is the fundamental basis of all behaviour support. Children and young people are most likely to behave in a positive, inclusive and respectful manner when they are supported by a caring adult who models this behaviour, and who teaches, guides and supports the child/young person to do the same.

Inclusion in public education, early childhood and care services is a protective factor for children and young people. Transitions into and between services and settings are a crucial time for children and young people, and require support to ensure continuity and consistency across settings.

Policy principles

The department endorses a positive behaviour support approach to children's behaviour. All behaviours of concern by children and young people will receive a departmental response. The nature of the response will be equitable and reflect the child's needs and what is required to support positive and respectful behaviour in future. Exclusionary responses are used as a last resort.

Strategies and interventions to support children and young people's positive behaviour development reflect the department's goal of safe inclusion for all children, and the following principles:

- All behaviour has a purpose. Departmental behaviour interventions will build on a child/young person's strengths to support them to meet that purpose in a safe and respectful way.
- Behaviour arises within the context of a child/young person's development, their environment, their family experiences and social settings. Behaviour interventions will recognise and seek to influence the social, family and environmental factors around the child/young person.
- Behaviour is learnt over time. Children and young people will be supported to learn and practice new positive behaviours over time.
- Parents, caregivers, family members, community members, peers and professionals influence children's behavioural development. They are key partners in supporting positive behavioural change.

Policy requirements

Departmental behaviour support strategies must be purposeful and directed at achieving the 7 core functions of behaviour support (below). In supporting children and young people's behaviour, department staff will:

- promote, model and support productive and positive behaviour
- explicitly teach positive behaviour and expectations about behaviour
- intervene by using the least exclusionary methods to prevent, reduce or redirect behaviours of concern
- work with children, their families, professionals and other key adults to understand the environmental, social and family context of a child/young person's behaviours of concern, and to use the capacity of these parties to support positive behaviour change
- provide visible, fair and equitable behavioural responses that foster confidence and trust
- repair and restore relationships that have been harmed by behaviours of concern
- establish safety and wellbeing for people involved in behavioural incidents, and others.

The procedures to implement these policy functions are outlined in the behaviour support procedures and supporting documents.

All public schools will make available on the school website a copy of the department's behaviour support policy in full or in simplified form.

Roles and responsibilities

The Australian Student Wellbeing Framework identifies the importance of staff, students and families cultivating a shared understanding of positive behaviour and how this supports effective teaching and learning.

We each have a role to play in ensuring that our schools, preschools and care settings are safe, positive and inclusive environments. This involves addressing behaviours of concern when they occur, and supporting those involved and affected by these behaviours.

In addition to the responsibilities mandated by this policy outlined below, it is important to recognise that supporting positive behaviour requires a partnership between departmental staff, parents and families, and children and young people.

Department staff have a key role in creating and maintaining supportive and safe learning environments. It is essential that departmental staff:

- model and promote behaviour that values diversity, demonstrates respect for and inclusion of all children and young people, and promotes a positive school climate
- explicitly teach children and young people about safe and inclusive behaviours, and the core values of the school/preschool/care setting
- support the participation of all students, taking special measures to support the inclusion of children and young people who are at higher risk of exclusionary responses to their behaviours (including Aboriginal children, children in care, and children with disabilities)
- participate in professional learning to build skills, knowledge and confidence in developing positive classrooms and recognising, responding to and managing behaviour incidents.
- work with parents, caregivers, families, service providers and the community to support children affected by behaviours of concern. This may include recovery from harm, restorative practices and supporting children to develop positive social relationships
- report behaviours of a criminal nature to the South Australia Police
- provide timely intervention in response to behaviours of concern, including incidents that have occurred out of school hours or off school premises when this is connected to the care and control of the school and impacts on school relationships
- provide visible, consistent and planned responses to behaviours of concern to foster trust and confidence
- support children and young people to be physically and psychologically safe.

Parents and families are their children's first and ongoing teachers. Parents and families shape and support their children's positive behaviours when they:

- model and promote safe, respectful and inclusive relationships with their own children, other children and young people, other parents/caregivers, and school staff

- support their children to develop safe behaviours at home including monitoring and supervising their children’s social interactions (including online)
- talk to their children about behaviour including unsafe behaviours to help them to understand what it is, why it is harmful and how to respond
- work collaboratively with the school to resolve concerns about behaviour when incidents occur, including discussing issues as soon as possible (in accordance with the school’s procedures)
- consider recommendations and engage in specialist support through student support services and external organisations
- support their child’s best interests to continue to attend school while a behaviour issue is being resolved.

All children and young people are able to contribute to their learning and the learning of others when they:

- treat others in a way that demonstrates respect and inclusiveness
- ensure their verbal, physical and online interactions are safe, respectful and inclusive
- take a stand when they see behaviours of concern in person or online, by safely intervening or seeking help from adults to intervene
- support their friends to behave in safe, respectful and inclusive ways if their friends are engaging in behaviours of concern, including by seeking help from trusted adults.

Chief Executive

Ensuring the establishment, maintenance and promotion of effective child and student behaviour support in the department.

Engagement and Wellbeing directorate

The establishment, maintenance and promotion of an effective behaviour support policy, procedure, and practice guidelines in the department that reflect best practice.

Supporting leaders to plan, implement and evaluate behaviour approaches that engage the whole school community.

Ensuring that information about the Behaviour support policy requirements is accessible across the department and to members of the public.

Student support services unit

Providing specialist advice and services to support the promotion of positive behaviours for children and young people in departmental settings.

Providing specialist advice and services to support targeted and intensive behaviour interventions for children and young people who require support to be safely included in departmental education, early childhood and care services.

Modelling and coaching behavioural interventions and strategies within departmental settings and providing practical support to educators and support staff.

School and Preschool Operations, Learning and Behaviour Unit

Providing specialist advice and services to support the promotion of positive behaviours for children and young people in departmental settings.

Providing targeted and intensive behaviour interventions for children and young people who require support to be safely included in departmental education.

Education directors

Ensuring that each school and preschool in their portfolio is effectively applying the behaviour support policy to provide a positive learning environment for children and young people and those working with them.

Overseeing reports and analysis of behavioural management data for their schools.

School and early childhood leaders (principals in schools and early childhood services directors)

Ensuring the effective application of the behaviour support policy at their school/preschool/service to provide a positive learning environment for children and young people and those working with them.

Ensuring that information about behaviour support policy and how it is implemented locally is easily accessible by staff, children, families and members of the public.

Ensuring that appropriate records and documentation are kept of behavioural support responses by their site.

Ensuring regular reporting and analysis of behaviour management and bullying data, including via school annual reports.

Developing the capacity of educators to plan and implement curriculum and pedagogy that supports the positive behaviour of children and young people and maximises their wellbeing, engagement, intellectual challenge and achievement.

Leading the creation and maintenance of a safe, inclusive and positive learning environment for all children and young people, families, carers and the wider school community with reference to the Australian Professional Standard for Principals.

Providing professional development for all staff regarding safe and inclusive environments, developing positive classrooms and effective practices to respond to behaviour.

Ensuring regular, ethical and valid data collection and reporting on issues related to student safety and wellbeing, and use the data to inform interventions, strategies and actions.

Ensuring that information about effective interventions used for a child/young person's problematic behaviour is shared with the school that the child/young person has transferred to for stability/consistency.

Staff

Ensuring that behavioural responses to children and young people at their site are consistent with the policy, procedures and guidelines.

Ensuring that appropriate records and documentation are kept of behavioural management responses.

Using the relevant curriculum (Early Years Learning Framework, Australian Curriculum, SACE, Keeping Safe: Child Protection Curriculum) to design and teach learning programs that support the positive behaviour of children and young people and maximises their wellbeing, engagement, intellectual challenge and achievement.

Create and maintain inclusive, supportive and safe learning environments for all children and young people with reference to the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers.

Non-departmental staff providing a service on behalf of the department

Ensuring compliance with this policy.

Definitions

Behaviors of concern – Challenging, complex or unsafe behaviours which are of greater severity, frequency or duration and require more persistent or intensive intervention to address.

Does not include low level, developmentally appropriate transgressions that test the boundaries of established rules, standards and norms but are relative simple to direct and minimise through universal behaviour support strategies.

Bullying - An ongoing and deliberate misuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical and/or social behaviour that intends to cause physical, social and/or psychological harm. It can involve an individual or a group misusing their power, or perceived power, over one or more persons who feel unable to stop it from happening.

Child/young person - A person under the age of 18.

Where a school provides a service to students aged 18 years and older, the term "child and young person" in this policy also applies to these students.

Consistent - Done in the same way over time. Consistent responses to behaviours of concern, does not mean that all children/young people receive the same response. Behavioural responses are tailored to the specific needs of the child/young person.

Continuum - A series on a scale where the two opposite ends are distinctly different from one another.

Exclusionary response - Responses that exclude children and young people from participation in the school setting or school activities eg suspension, take home or being excluded from camps or other activities. Part-time programs are considered exclusionary when applied to children/young people who are able to be safely included in the school setting full-time and where full-time attendance is in the best interests of the child/young person.

Exclusionary responses can include restrictive practices that seek to remove control over a child/young person eg physical, environmental, psycho-social or seclusion. The overuse or unauthorised use of restrictive practices is an infringement of human and civil rights; can cause long term harm; and can further traumatise children/young people with developmental trauma.

Equitable/fair - Treating children/young people without favouritism or discrimination in a way that reflects their learning and behavioural needs. Equity and fairness are not about treating all children/young people the same.

Positive behaviour support (PBS) - PBS is an approach to children's behaviour that is built on the principles that positive behaviour can be learnt and that environments can be changed to support effective teaching and learning for every child. PBS involves a range of systems and practice elements at universal, targeted and intensive levels.

Protective - Factors that strengthen an individual's capacity to increase the likelihood of positive outcomes.

Safe inclusion - The inclusion of all children and young people, including those who engage in behaviours of concern, in learning in the school setting to the fullest extent possible, while maintaining the physical and psychological safety of children, young people, staff and the broader school community.

Supporting information

Related legislation

[Education Act 1972](#)

[Education Regulations 2012](#)

[Education and Early Childhood Services \(Registration and Standards\) Act 2011](#)

[Education and Early Childhood Services National Regulations \(2011\) and amendments \(2012\)](#)

[Equal Opportunity Act 1984](#)

[Disability Discrimination Act 1992](#)

Related policy documents

[Assault - site responsibilities procedure](#)

[Australian Curriculum](#)

[Australian Professional Standards for Teachers](#)

[Charter of Rights for Children and Young People in Care](#)

[Duty of Care Policy](#)

[External School Review Framework](#)

[Incident co-ordination: managing incidents of extreme severity procedure](#)

[Keeping Safe: Child Protection Curriculum](#)

[National Quality Framework and Standard](#)

[On the Same Basis: Disability Standards for Education](#)

[Protective practices for staff in their interactions with children and young people](#)

[Public Education in South Australia Statement](#)

[Reporting critical incidents and injuries procedure](#)

[Responding to problem sexual behaviour in children and young people – Guidelines for staff in education and care settings](#)

[South Australian Certificate of Education](#)

[Teaching for Effective Learning](#)

[The Australian Student Wellbeing Framework](#)

[The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia](#)

[United Convention of the Rights of the Child](#)

[Wellbeing for Learning and Life Framework](#)

Record history

Published date: June 2019

Approvals

File number: DECD18/07751-1

Status: approved

Version: 1.0

Policy officer: senior policy officer, engagement and wellbeing

Policy sponsor: director, engagement and wellbeing

Responsible executive director: executive director, early years and child development

Approved by: chief operating officer

Approval date: 26 June 2019

Review Date: 1 December 2021

Revision record

Version: DECD18/07751-1 v1.0

Approved by: chief operating officer

Approved date: 26 June 2019

Review date: 1 December 2021

Amendment(s): new document – replaces the school discipline policy

Keywords

Behaviour support, problematic, complex, challenging, behaviours of concern, discipline, behaviour management, wellbeing, bullying, harassment