BEHAVIOUR GUIDANCE POLICY

The right of children to receive positive guidance and encouragement in a supportive and respectful environment is promoted within the Education and Care Services National Regulations. Children learn to face a variety of challenges throughout their lives and through this develop not only self-regulation, but positive dispositions such as resilience and perseverance. Learning the difference between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour assists children in regulating their behaviours in different social and emotional environments when interacting with peers and adults.

NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD (NQS)

QUALITY AREA 2: CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND SAFETY		
2.1.1	Wellbeing and comfort	Each child's wellbeing and comfort is provided for, including appropriate opportunities to meet each child's need for sleep, rest and relaxation.
2.2.1	Supervision	At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from harm and hazard.

QUALITY AREA 5: RELATIONSHIPS WITH CHILDREN		
5.1	Relationships between educators and children	Respectful and equitable relationships are maintained with each child.
5.1.1	Positive educator to child interactions	Responsive and meaningful interactions build trusting relationships which engage and support each child to feel secure, confident and included.
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.
5.2.2	Self-Regulation	Each child is supported to regulate their own behaviour, respond appropriately to the behaviour of others and communicate effectively to resolve conflicts.

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.

QUALITY AREA 7: GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP		
7.1	Governance	Governance supports the operation of a quality service that is child safe.
7.1.2	Management Systems	Systems are in place to manage risk and enable the effective management and operation of a quality service that is child safe.

EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL LAW AND NATIONAL REGULATIONS	
S. 2A	Paramount consideration—safety, rights and best interests of children (commencing 2026)
S. 162A	Child protection training
S.165	Offence to inadequately supervise children
S. 166	Offence to use inappropriate discipline
S.166A	Offences relating to inappropriate conduct [commencing 2026 Nationally]
S. 167	Offence relating to protection of children from harm and hazards
S. 174	Offence to fail to notify certain information to Regulatory Authority
12	Meaning of serious incident
84	Awareness of child protection law
147	Staff members [records]
155	Interactions with children
156	Relationships in groups
168	Education and care service must have policies and procedures
175	Prescribed information to be notified to Regulatory Authority

ADVENTIST IDENTITY EARLY CHILDHOOD STANDARDS		
2.3	Promote and support children to honour Jesus by taking care of their health, safety, and wellbeing.	Support children's faith development in a holistic, respectful, safe, and healthy environment.
		Teach children that they are created by God as unique and valued individuals and help them recognise and practice safe and healthy behaviours.
4.3	Convey Christian character and professionalism to enhance children's learning and development	Demonstrate a commitment to professional excellence and quality teaching practices.
		Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of how Adventist Christian Worldview is integrated and modelled into learning, development, and care.
5.3	Build strong and Trusting relationships with children in a Christlike manner	Recognise and affirm that each child is a unique and valued child of God.
		Support and be inclusive of children with additional developmental needs and disabilities.

RELATED POLICIES

Anti-Bias and Inclusion Policy	Medical Condition Policy
Behaviour Guidance Bullying Policy	Privacy and Confidentiality Policy
Child Protection Policy	Protected Disclosures (Whistleblower) Policy
Educational Program Policy	Record Keeping and Retention Policy
Family Communication Policy	Respect for Children Policy
Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy	Enrolment Policy
Interaction with Children, Family and Staff Policy	Supervision Policy

PURPOSE

We aim to create positive relationships with children by helping them to feel safe, secure, and supported within our Service. We will ensure children are treated fairly and equitably and with respect and consistency, as they are supported to develop the skills and knowledge required to behave in a socially and culturally acceptable manner.

Supporting children to develop socially acceptable behaviour and self-regulation is a primary goal for educators and families. This is embedded in fundamental documents including the Early Years Learning Framework, V2.0 (EYLF), Education and Care Services National Regulations, and the National Quality Standard (NQS). We believe that children's safety, rights, and best interests are the paramount consideration for all Service operations, decisions and functions. Our Service ensures that child safety, wellbeing and best interests take priority over all other considerations, including financial interests or other obligations of management, and are embedded in our daily practices, policies and procedures.

SCOPE

This policy applies to children, families, educators, staff, approved provider, nominated supervisor, management, students, volunteers, and visitors of the Service.

DEFINITIONS For additional definitions and key terms used within this policy, refer to *Key Terms – Policies and Procedures*.

Behaviour guidance- This term is used to reflect current thinking about the most positive and effective ways to help children gain understanding and learn skills that will help them to manage their own behaviour. Using appropriate behaviour guidance, educators aim to support each child to regulate their own behaviour, respond appropriately to the behaviour of others, and communicate effectively to resolve conflicts.

Cool down- This is an example of appropriate discipline or behaviour guidance. A cool-down period is when a child is having a difficult moment, they are encouraged to find a space, near an educator, to 'cool down' and regain self-control. This strategy can be used as an opportunity for educators to support children in regulating their behaviour. [ACECQA, 2020]

Inappropriate conduct- any behaviour that a reasonable person would consider to be inappropriate in an education and care service, taking into account the child's age, development, safety, wellbeing and the context of the interaction.

Restraint- in situations where a child becomes a risk to themselves or others, they may need to be physically removed from the situation or physically restrained by an educator to prevent harm to themselves or others. For instance- attempting to scale a fence, running in front of a vehicle. ACECQA advises that children should only be restrained in emergency situations. (ACECQA, 2023, P.2)

Self-regulation- The ability to manage energy states, emotions, behaviour, and attention: the ability to return to a balanced, calm, and constant state of being. Self-regulation is a key factor for mental health, well-being, and learning. (KidsMatter, Early Childhood, 2014)

Inclusion- Considering all children's social, cultural, and linguistic diversity (including learning styles, abilities, disabilities, gender, family circumstances, and geographic location) in curriculum decision-making processes. (EYLF, V2.0)

IMPLEMENTATION

The behaviour and guidance strategies used by staff and educators at our Service are designed to provide children with the opportunity to expand their experiences of life in a productive, safe environment that enables the child's right to safety, tolerance, self-expression, cultural identity, dignity, and self-worth.

Educators understand that as children grow and develop, self-regulation becomes an important aspect of social and emotional development as they begin to understand how their actions affect others.

We believe in providing clear, consistent guidelines for children's behaviour as part of a caring and trusting relationship with children and families to help them feel secure and self-confident. Children benefit from knowing that their environment is stable and that a competent adult is taking care of them.

There are three key aspects to promoting positive behaviour:

1. Creating a quality learning environment that is positive and supportive and provides developmentally appropriate experiences and resources.
2. Implementing guidance strategies for building skills and strengthening positive behaviour based on age-appropriate behaviour expectations.
3. Employing strategies for guiding children's behaviour, resulting in decreasing undesired behaviours.

Positive behaviour guidance strategies

Guiding children's behaviour is an important aspect of caring for and educating children. Positive strategies need to be developed to assist children to learn appropriate ways of behaving. Corporal punishment and unreasonable discipline are not permitted at any time in children's services, not only because the child may be physically harmed, but also because it nearly always has detrimental effects on the child's self-esteem and feelings of security. All educators and staff at our Service will role model appropriate behaviour and language, encouraging children to socialise with other children, including children of different cultural backgrounds as well as from different age groups and different genders.

Behaviour guidance strategies implemented within our Service are appropriate to the child's age and developmental capacity. Children are encouraged to make decisions for themselves and are provided with opportunities for independence and self-regulation. Children are allowed to make choices and experience the consequences of these choices when there is no risk of physical or emotional harm to the child or anyone else. They are acknowledged when they make positive choices in managing their behaviour.

Strategies may include using visual cues, prompting, redirection, re-teaching strategies, developing logical consequences, providing a 'cooling down' period, and conferences with children. In the instance of adverse behaviour being persistently observed, educators will evaluate their program, room set up, supervision, etc., to identify triggers and sources of inappropriate or challenging behaviour. Physically restraining a child will only be used in emergencies if a child is:

- in an unsafe situation – e.g., attempting to scale a fence or run onto a road
- physically threatening other children or adults
- behaving in ways that are destructive to themselves, other people, or the environment. [ACECQA, 2020]

Regular routines and consistency in implementing behaviour guidance strategies are critical to support children's wellbeing and promote children's agency. All staff implement an active and positive approach to guiding children's behaviour within our Service.

INAPPROPRIATE DISCIPLINE INAPPROPRIATE CONDUCT

All staff play an important role in embedding child safe practices within our Service. Any form of corporal punishment, or any discipline that is unreasonable or inappropriate is not permitted at any time when children are being educated and cared for by an education and care service. Staff are made aware of interactions and practices with children that are classified as unreasonable or inappropriate conduct or discipline, during induction and through ongoing staff training. All staff and educators have undertaken mandatory child safety training (effective February 2026) and child protection training, including mandatory reporting requirements and obligations. Staff must report all alleged or witnessed instances of child abuse or child related misconduct by any staff member, volunteer or contractor immediately to the [insert state/territory relevant reporting authority] or Police on 000.

The approved provider will notify the regulatory authority of any incident where there is a reasonable belief that physical and/or sexual abuse of a child has occurred or is occurring at the Service, or any allegation that sexual or physical abuse of a child has occurred or is occurring at the Service within 24 hours.

The Approved Provider/Nominated Supervisor/Management will ensure:

- obligations under the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations are met
- educators, staff, students, visitors, and volunteers know of and adhere to this policy and procedure
- all new employees, students, and volunteers are provided with a copy of this policy as part of their induction process
- families are aware of this Behaviour Guidance Policy
- no child being educated and cared for by the service is subjected to any form of corporal punishment or any discipline that is unreasonable in the circumstances (S.166 National Law)
- every reasonable precaution is taken to protect children from harm and from any hazard likely to cause injury
- each nominated supervisor and person in day-to-day charge of the service has completed child protection training (Section 162A of the National Law)

- each staff member, educator and volunteer have completed child protection training (commencing in 2026)
- each staff member, educator and volunteer have completed child safety training (commencing in 2026)
- ensure all educators and staff are aware of the procedure of reporting allegations of abuse, neglect, harm or ill-treatment
- ensure that no child is subjected to any form of inappropriate conduct including conduct that is threatening, intimidating, humiliating, degrading, hostile or otherwise inappropriate in the circumstances (See *Management of Inappropriate Conduct Procedure)*
- promote a culture where inappropriate conduct is not tolerated and where educators and staff feel safe to report concerns under the *Protected Disclosures (Whistleblower) Policy*
- ensure all educators, staff and volunteers understand their obligations as mandatory reporters and are trained to recognise, prevent and respond to inappropriate conduct
- staff records include evidence of the approved training completed by staff members (Reg.147)
- connections are built between our service and local primary schools to support positive learning environments during the transition to school
- behaviour guidance does not involve making judgements about children or their families
- information is gathered from families about their children's social skills, relationship preferences, family, and cultural values, which will be recorded in the child's file
- educators will use this information to engage children in experiences that support children to develop and practice their social and decision-making skills
- positive and respectful relationships with children are established and maintained
- children are empowered to use language and other forms of non-hurtful communication to communicate their emotions
- positive, empathetic relationships are promoted between children, assisting them to develop respectful relationships
- the dignity and rights of each child are always maintained
- positive and inclusive strategies are implemented to enable educators to encourage positive behaviour in children to minimise adverse behaviour
- general information about behaviour guidance is provided to families through parent interviews and correspondence
- a partnership is developed with other professionals or support agencies that work with children who have been diagnosed with behavioural or social difficulties to develop plans for the inclusion of these specific children. This information will be kept confidential and in the individual child's file
- excessive or challenging behaviour is managed and communicated with families
- strategies are implemented to redirect a child who may be causing or about to cause harm to himself or herself, another child, or an adult. Incidents may include a child who is kicking, spitting, biting, throwing furniture or toys, punching, or hitting, or being disruptive. Redirection may also include an incident where a child places him/herself in a dangerous situation, for example, climbing a fence or hiding in a

potentially dangerous position. Safety is a priority, and this may mean using physical redirection in which an educator will remove the child from the harmful situation if required. It may be necessary to remove other children from the area while the child calms down

- families are notified, and the incident/behaviour is addressed sensitively. In an instance where a child or children's safety has been jeopardised, parents are required to sign the *Behaviour Incident Report*
- should the behaviour continue, the child's behaviour is observed and carefully documented. Additional information is collated related to the context and behaviour guidance strategies implemented
- a meeting with the child's parents/carers and educator may be arranged to discuss any behaviours or concerns that have been observed. A *Behaviour Guidance Plan* may be developed in consultation with families and other health professionals as required
- families and professional agencies are consulted to ensure that a consistent approach is used to support children with diagnosed behavioural or social difficulties
- *Behaviour Guidance Plans* are to be reviewed periodically, reflecting changes that have been applied through the implementation of the plan in consultation with the child's family
- application for additional support for educators to build their capacity and capabilities to include children with additional needs will be made through the Inclusion Support Program
- a Strategic Inclusion Plan (SIP) is developed and guided by local support agencies as required for individual rooms or groups of children
- the SIP is reviewed periodically, reflecting changes that have been applied through the implementation of the plan
- Individual Support Plans are developed for individual children as required
- professional development is provided for educators to be informed, trained, and supervised to implement the SIP created, ensuring that information is composed and recorded for reflection on its effectiveness for the individual room or group of children
- professional development is provided for educators to learn about trauma-informed practices to help educators understand challenging behaviours through a 'trauma lens'
- notification is made to parents/guardians as soon as practicable, but within 24 hours, if their child is involved in a serious incident/situation at the Service. Details of the incident/situation are to be recorded on the *Incident, Injury, Trauma Record, or Illness Record.*
- notification is made to the regulatory authority, via **NQA ITS**, within the legislated time frames of any circumstance that poses a risk to the health, safety, and well-being of a child or children, or of any complaint alleging that a serious incident has occurred at the Service
- notification is made to the regulatory authority, the children's commissioner, child protection agencies, or the police of any incident of inappropriate discipline
- a review of practices is conducted following a serious incident, including an assessment of areas for improvement (ensure any review or investigation does not interfere with outside agency investigations).

Educators will:

- ensure their interactions with children are always respectful, safe, supportive and appropriate to each child's developmental needs, culture, identify and circumstances
- refrain from any behaviour that may be considered inappropriate conduct, including behaviour that is threatening, intimidating, humiliating, degrading, hostile or otherwise inappropriate
- remain aware of the power imbalance inherent in child-adult relationships and avoid behaviour that could misuse or exploit that power
- immediately report any behaviour by another person that may constitute inappropriate conduct towards a child to the nominated supervisor/approved provider and regulatory authority
- understand their mandatory reporting requirements and respond to any incident, disclosure or suspicion of child abuse, harm, neglect or ill-treatment they witness or suspect immediately by notifying the approved provider and NSW Department of Communities and Justice (Child Protection Helpline) (insert state/territory agency for reporting)
- encourage and support each child's social and emotional development, striving to develop children's self-regulation and an understanding of the feelings of others
- actively work with younger children to promote and role-model positive ways to interact with others
- teach behavioural expectations
- support appropriate behaviour- visual cues, prompting, positive verbal feedback, and quality learning environments
- provide children with positive guidance and encouragement toward acceptable behaviour
- promote children's initiative and agency
- actively work with all children to support them in constructing and conveying ways of expressing needs, resolving conflict, and responding to the behaviour of others
- at all times provide positive role-modelling in their dealings with children, other educators and staff, and families
- discuss guidelines, rules, limits, and what is fair with children, and use their contributions in setting limits and guidelines
- guide children's behaviour, teaching them how to be considerate of others – to think about the effects of their actions on others. Children must understand what acceptable and unacceptable behaviour is and how to manage their emotions
- talk calmly with children about the consequences of their actions and the reasons for the rules
- use corrective consequences- prompt, redirect, re-teach, provide choice, logical consequence, conference with child and educator
- provide positive feedback and focus on children's strengths and achievements, and build on their abilities
- take into consideration the child's past experiences as their behaviour could be a result of past trauma, such as changes in routine, changes or losses within the family, placement in care, or more serious circumstances involving abuse, neglect, or family violence

- be responsive to these former experiences, designing and implementing behaviour plans with the individual child that include strategies which will assist alternative and positive behaviour
- provide age-appropriate, challenging, and interesting activities, experiences, and equipment for children to use and become engaged with
- ensure there are sufficient materials and equipment for individual, small, and large group activities
- set up the environment (indoor and outdoor) for children to engage in activities and experiences following their abilities and interests
- adapt a positive approach, excluding cruel, harsh, humiliating, or demeaning actions or words
- commit to professional development and keep up to date with industry information regarding behaviour guidance strategies
- support children to explore different identities and points of view and to communicate effectively when resolving disagreements with others
- participate in planned and spontaneous conversations with children about emotions, feelings, and issues of inclusion and fairness, bias and prejudice, and the consequences of their actions, as well as the appropriate rules and the reasons for the rules
- provide children with the language and vocabulary needed to express their emotions and feelings and verbalise their concerns
- encourage children to listen to other people's ideas, consider pro-social and altruistic behaviour, and collaborate and negotiate in problem-solving situations
- listen empathetically to children when they communicate their emotions, encourage them as they reassure the child that it is normal to experience positive and negative emotions
- guide children to remove themselves from situations where they are experiencing frustration, anger, or fear
- support children to negotiate their rights and the rights of others, and mediate perceptively when children experience difficulty in resolving dissimilarity
- learn about children's relationships with others and their relationship preferences they have, and use this knowledge to encourage children to manage their behaviour and expand on their empathy skills
- use positive language, gestures, facial expressions, and tone of voice when redirecting or discussing children's behaviour with them
- remain calm, respectful, and tolerant as they encourage children who are strongly expressing distress, frustration, or anger
- guide children's behaviour with a focus on preserving and promoting children's self-esteem as they learn to self-regulate their behaviour
- implement '*time with*' or *'cool down time'* for an educator, which will be used when all other strategies (above) have been exhausted. '*Time with*' or '*cool down time'* allows educators to offer reassurance and support so the child can settle and regain self-control, develop some self-calming behaviours, and gain composure. Once calm, educators can assist the child to identify what happened, reflect on their actions,

and consider how they may have done something differently. '*Time with*' or '*cool down*' will always occur under the supervision of other educators

- contribute to and ensure Individual Support Plans are followed in consultation with the Services' SIP.

Families will:

- provide consent for the service to consult with professional agencies to assist with implementing a Strategic Inclusion Plan (SIP) for the room or group of children
- work collaboratively with educators and professional agencies when required to develop a broader understanding of the child's developmental level and share any recent events that may be influencing the child's behaviour
- consult with educators and provide consent when the Service is applying for Inclusion Support Funding
- work in partnership with educators and health professionals in the development of a behaviour guidance plan or Individual Support Plan to assist with the identification of challenging behaviour, the development of supportive strategies, and the review of strategies implemented within a behaviour guidance plan where required
- create consistency in behaviour guidance strategies used at the service and home.

MANAGING BITING BEHAVIOUR

Biting is often a temporary issue that concerns parents and educators. Biting is painful and frightening for the child who has been bitten and can also be frightening for the child who is biting too. It is important to understand that while biting is a typical behaviour for young children between the ages of fourteen months to three years. Educators play an important role in minimising the likelihood and opportunity for biting to happen and appropriately managing the incidents that do occur.

Biting is like any other aggressive behaviour that hurts or injures a child, requiring preventive measures and early intervention. Some common triggers for biting include:

- a child teething will often increase their desire to bite, as applying pressure to the gums can provide comfort
- oral exploration
- limited self-regulation or self-control
- excitement and overstimulation
- frustration
- children imitating other children
- a child feeling unwell
- a child being unable to communicate what they want, need, or feel bored.

Theorists suggest that a good understanding of early childhood development is an essential tool for responding to biting and other harmful behaviour. For example, educators must understand that young children are not yet able to share or take turns, so educators must consider this when planning the routine and activities. Additionally, babies and toddlers are often not developmentally able to feel compassion or empathy for others. While this development can be rushed, educators can support children to develop empathy and

pro-social behaviour by being a good role model, and providing simple information, such as "biting hurts, we don't bite our friends."

It is important to observe the child to attempt to understand why they are biting. Through observations, you may be able to identify patterns, such as what happened before the child bites, is there a certain time of day the biting is occurring, does it happen around certain dynamics of groups of children on certain days, etc. An effective method for documentation is by using an event sample record, or a Behaviour Observation/anecdote (see template below- *Behaviour Guidance Observation Record)*

If biting endures, it is important to continue observing and trying to minimise the biting as much as possible. If the above strategies have been unsuccessful and biting continues, further help will be sought from inclusion and support agencies. Educators may meet with families to discuss the child's behaviour and develop a *Behaviour Guidance Plan* if required.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

The *Behaviour Guidance Policy* will be evaluated and reviewed on an annual basis or earlier if there are changes to legislation, ACECQA guidance or incidents related to our policy. Feedback will be requested from children, families, staff, educators and management and notification of any change to policies will be made to families within **14 days.**

RELATED RESOURCES

Behaviour Guidance Biting Procedure	Behaviour Guidance Plans
Behaviour Guidance Procedure	Recurring Behaviour Support Plan
Behaviour Guidance Guide	Understanding Individual Children Form
Behaviour Guidance Incident Report	Management of Inappropriate Conduct Procedure

SOURCE

Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2026). *Guide to the National Quality Framework*
Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2025). Supporting children to regulate their own behaviour.
Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. When children bite! A resource for early childhood educators.
Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2023). *Inappropriate discipline*
Australian Government Department of Education. (2022). *Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia. V2.0.*
Australian Government Department of Education. Inclusion Support Program
Children (Education and Care Services) National Law (NSW)
Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics. (2016).
Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010.
Education and Care Services National Regulations. (Amended 2025)
Emerging Minds. (2022). Interpersonal trauma learning pathways.
NAPCAN: www.napcan.org.au
Raising Children Network. (2019) *What is self-regulation?*
Victorian Government. *Strategies supporting children's behaviour in early childhood services.*

REVIEW

POLICY REVIEWED BY	KAREN PETRIE	POSITION	PROJECT OFFICER EARLY CHILDHOOD
POLICY REVIEWED	MAY 2025/ JANUARY 2026	NEXT REVIEW DATE	MAY 2026
VERSION	V14.01.26		
MODIFICATIONS	JANUARY • updated policy to include amendments to Children (Education and Care Services) National Law (NSW) • included additional points to strengthen child safe practices including inappropriate conduct MAY • annual policy maintenance • additional information added regarding reporting any allegations of child abuse or child related misconduct by any staff member to relevant authorities • added information re: trauma informed practices • sources checked for currency and repaired as required		
POLICY REVIEWED	PREVIOUS MODIFICATIONS		NEXT REVIEW DATE
MAY 2024	• annual policy maintenance • additional information added following merger of Behaviour Guidance Biting Guide to this policy • additional section added 'inappropriate discipline' • sources checked for currency and repaired as required		MAY 2025