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1. Summary

- 1.1 This policy sets out the obligations for Catholic Education Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn (CECG) Early Learning Centres (ELC) and School Age Care (SAC) services for ensuring staff and children feel safe and secure while in attendance. That they are not subject to unreasonable discipline and have positive interactions. The policy is to be read as an extension of the broader CE Safe Schools Policy.

2. ELC & SAC Behaviour Support and Interactions Policy

- 2.1 CECG has a responsibility to ensure staff and children are safe and secure when attending our ELC and SAC services. The National Law requires that an approved provider, nominated supervisor or educator must ensure that no child being educated and cared for by the service is subject to any form of unreasonable discipline.
- 2.2 The Education and Care Services National Regulations (the Regulations) set out requirements in relation to interactions with children ([r155](#)) and relationships in groups ([r156](#))

3. Staff Interaction with Children

- 3.1 The Education and Care Services National Regulations (the Regulations) set out requirements in relation to interactions with children ([r155-156](#)).
- 3.2 All ELC and SAC staff must interact with children in a manner that:
- Encourages the children to express themselves and their opinions and
 - Allows the children to undertake experiences that develop self-reliance and self-esteem and
 - Maintains at all times the dignity and rights of each child and
 - Gives each child positive guidance and encouragement toward acceptable behaviour and
 - Has regard to the family and cultural values, age, and physical and intellectual development and abilities of each child being educated and cared for by the service.
- 3.3 All ELC and SAC staff must take reasonable steps to ensure that the service provides children being educated and cared for by the service with opportunities to interact and develop respectful and positive relationships with:
- Each other
 - Staff members
 - Volunteers
 - Visitors and members of the community
 - Families.

4. Behaviour Support

- 4.1 CECG fosters an education and care environment with purposeful learning where all members are entitled to a safe environment. To support these objectives, this policy provides behavioural support approaches that reflects Gospel values, respects the dignity of children, and meets the requirements of the National Law.

- 4.2 ELC staffs' duty of care authorises and requires them to respond to children's challenging and complex behaviour to ensure all children and staff are safe.
- 4.3 If a student exhibits challenging and complex behaviours that impact the safety and dignity of students and staff, behavioural support may be required. More serious or continuing disruptive behaviour may require increased support and restorative measures.
- 4.4 Relationships are important. ELCs and SACs will work collaboratively and respectfully to achieve an outcome that is in the best interests of the child/ren and their participation in the service. It is expected that this collaboration would be reciprocated by families.
- 4.5 Under no circumstance can corporal punishment be used in CECG ELCs and SACs. Nominated Supervisors and Educators must ensure children being educated and cared for by the service are not subject to any form of corporal punishment or any discipline that is unreasonable in the circumstances (S166 of the National Law).
- 4.6 The National Quality Standard (NQS) applied by the National Law requires standards in relation to relationships be met.

5. National Quality Standard

- 5.1 The importance of developing relationships with children is reflected under Quality Area 5 of the National Quality Standard (NQS), in particular:
 - Standard 5.1: Respectful and equitable relationships are maintained with each child.
 - Element 5.1.1: Responsive and meaningful interactions build trusting relationships which engage and support each child to feel secure, confident and included.
 - Standard 5.2: Each child is supported to build and maintain sensitive and responsive relationships.
 - Element 5.2.2: Each child is supported to regulate their own behaviour, respond appropriately to the behaviour of others and communicate effectively to resolve conflicts.
 - Early Childhood Australia's Code of Ethics and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child also guide relationships with children.

6. Supporting Children's Behaviour

- 6.1 Support for children's behaviour should attempt to understand the reasons behind the student's behaviour and support children with intentional strategies including:
 - being aware of children's abilities, challenges and unique needs,
 - creating physical environments, programs and routines that allow children the time and resources needed to support positive interactions with their peers,
 - supporting children to explore reciprocal rights and active community participation, as well as fostering resilience and sense of purpose through activities that recognise children as capable and competent learners,
 - considering the pace and flow of the program that allows a balance of play experiences such as individual and group, quiet and noisy, active and passive experiences,
 - being intentional in planning and support to scaffold learning,
 - promoting a range of social skills such as group entry skills and negotiation as a way of considering expectations, diversity and democracy,

- implementing flexible arrangements centred around children’s unique interests, routines and offering extended periods of uninterrupted play,
- encouraging children to take on different roles within groups,
- understanding diversity among the children in the group and considering how this can influence behaviour,
- inviting children to collaborate with educators and each other,
- Work with therapists, allied health professionals, etc to ensure our practices are informed, inclusive and individualized to the child’s needs.

7. Behaviour Support Planning

Observation and Assessment

- 7.1 For students who require ongoing behavioural support or have identified complex needs, a formal [Behaviours Observation and Assessment Tool](#) may be appropriate or required. If risk is identified on the Observation and Assessment Tool the [Student Risk Assessment and Safety Analysis](#) needs to be completed. The CECG ELC Team must be informed.

Support Planning

- 7.2 The Nominated Supervisor has discretion to begin the Support Plan process, in consultation with the CECG Senior Officer: Disability, Wellbeing & Inclusion, the child’s parents/carers, and educators.
- 7.3 The educator will develop a [Behaviour Support Plan](#), working closely with the Nominated Supervisor. The Behaviour Support Plan can be used for any level of concern. This plan is recommended however if the educator and Nominated supervisor feel another template/plan is more appropriate then they may use it.
- 7.4 The Nominated Supervisor is responsible for ensuring staff understand behavior as communication and expression of unmet need. Staff need to be appropriately trained and understand Behaviour Support Plans and how to implement them.

8. Responding to Challenging and Complex Behaviour

- 8.1 Despite proactive support, not all challenging/complex behaviour can be anticipated or prevented. The educator’s duty of care authorises and requires them to respond to challenging/complex behaviour of children attending the service. All children and staff are entitled to attend CECG ELCs and SACs without a fear of injury or harassment.
- 8.2 If a child’s behaviour becomes disruptive/unsettling to the wellbeing and safety of other children and staff and their participation in the service, de-escalation strategies should be used including:
- Redirecting the child’s behaviour by actively shifting the child’s focus.
 - If the behaviour continues the educator may ask the child to move away from the activity/situation for a reasonable period as a diversion rather than disciplinary strategy. The educator is accountable to the decisions made about the reasonableness of the period of time. The educator will talk to the child/ren involved to explain how the behaviour was disruptive and the effects this has had and discuss strategies to prevent this disruption in the future and once the child is calm.
 - If a child is displaying violent physical behaviour or extreme lack of self-control (e.g. hitting others or throwing objects) educators will act to ensure the child is in no physical

danger, by removing hazards e.g. chairs, tables etc. Educators will try not to physically restrain a child unless injury to others is occurring. If educators are unable to calm the child who is displaying the violent behaviour, staff will remove the other children from the immediate area, where possible. Alternatively at times it may be necessary to first remove the child displaying the above behaviour due to the location of the incident. The parent or guardian will be called to collect their child and an educator will stay with the upset child until the parent arrives. It may be necessary for the educator to maintain adequate distance from the child at times during this time to protect themselves and others and not trigger further behaviours.

- 8.3 Underpinning this approach is the desire to achieve what is in the best interests of the child, other children at the service and educators. More serious or continuing disruptive behaviour may require increased support, restorative measures, or corrective responses.
- 8.4 Restrictive practices may be appropriate in limited circumstances to support children and ensure educator and child safety. They are not disciplinary measures and must only be applied in line with the CECG Restrictive Practices Policy.

9. Definitions

- 9.1 **Challenging behaviour:** May include but is not limited to physical violence, damage to property, inappropriate language and occupational violence.
- 9.2 **Complex behaviour:** May include but is not limited to sexualised behaviours, behaviours arising from an associated disorders such as autism and ADHD.
- 9.3 **Restrictive Practices:** A practice or intervention that has the effect of restricting the rights or freedom of movement of a person, with the primary purpose of protecting the person or others from harm. Restrictive practices must not be used to gain compliance in students and must never be used on their own, but should instead be employed within the context of an overall positive behaviour support plan.
- 9.4 **Corporal Punishment:** The use of physical force towards a child for the purpose of control and/or correction. For example:
- hitting or slapping
 - force feeding
 - physically dragging a child
 - depriving a child of food or drink.
- 9.5 **Unreasonable Discipline:** is action to stop or change children's behaviour that would not be considered acceptable to a reasonable person in that situation:
- negative labelling
 - yelling at or belittling
 - humiliating a child
 - criticising
 - discouraging
 - blaming or shaming
 - making fun of or laughing at
 - using sarcastic or cruel humour

- excessive use of negative language, such as, “no” “stop that!” “don’t...” “you never...”.

10. Related Documents and Legislation

10.1 Related CECG Documents:

- [Behaviours Observation and Assessment Tool](#)
- [Student Risk Assessment and Safety Analysis](#)
- [ELC & SAC Staffing Policy](#)
- [Restrictive Practices Policy](#)
- [ELC & SAC Behaviour Support Plan - Zones](#)

10.2 Related legislation or Standards

- [Education and Care Services National Law 2011](#)
- [Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011](#)
- [National Quality Standard](#) (schedule to the Education and Care Services National Regulations)
- [ACECQA Inappropriate Discipline Information Sheet](#)

11. Contact

- 11.1 For support or further questions relating to this policy, contact the CECG General Manager Early Learning Service Area.