**1.4**

**STAFF INTERACTIONS WITH CHILDREN**

All educators and staff members, as part of the Preschools’ orientation program agree to abide by the children’s services ‘*Code of Conduct’,* & Early Childhood Australia’s *‘Code of Ethics’*.

Interactions with Children and Positive Guidance of Children’s Behaviour Policy

Quality Area1 Educational Program and Practice

Quality Area 5 Relationships with Children

**Aim**

St Peter’s Preschool aims to ensure that all educators interact with the children in a positive way, which gives them a sense of belonging to the preschool. Educators will support children to interact with others in a positive and respectful way.

St Peter’s Preschool will provide a safe, secure, caring and stimulating environment which encourages a strong sense of well being amongst all children and educators. Where a child continues to behave in an unacceptable manner, families will be consulted and asked to work in partnership with the educators to ensure positive guidance techniques are consistent and clear.

**Legislative Requirements**

The preschool and all educators must ensure all operations are compliant to the following Acts/Regulations as required by the State of New South Wales. Failure to meet the below requirements is a criminal offence and may result in fines of up to $22,000.

Education and Care National Regulations 2011

**PART 4.5—RELATIONSHIPS WITH CHILDREN**

**155 Interactions with children**

An approved provider must take reasonable steps to ensure that the education and care service provides education and care to children in a way that—

(a) encourages the children to express themselves and their opinions; and

(b) allows the children to undertake experiences that develop self-reliance and self-esteem; and

(c) maintains at all times the dignity and rights of each child; and

(d) gives each child positive guidance and encouragement toward acceptable behaviour; and

(e) 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.

**Implementation**

**In order to provide an environment where children feel safe and supported:**

Educators will be professional and caring in their interactions with children. They will interact in a manner that is firm, gentle and consistent and in doing so will have realistic expectations of children’s behaviour that is appropriate to their age, or stage of development -

* Use positive reinforcement.
* Create & promote respect for the rights of others.
* Encourage children to assert themselves in a socially acceptable manner, using language rather than physical means to solve problems and conflicts.
* Assist children to be aware of the consequences of their own actions.
* Aim to develop relationships with all children that are warm and respectful.

Educators will:

* Frequently talk with families to get an idea of the non-verbal forms of communication used by their children, if necessary, in order to convey messages such as hunger, needing the toilet, tiredness and emotions.
* Work with a child when he/she has a tantrum. Tantrums can occur as a way of releasing frustration. When this happens educators will work with the child to calm him/her down and then reassure the child. The staff member will then if possible offer the child a solution to his/her problem.
* Reassure the child that he/she is safe in the preschool.
* Utilise the preschool’s routines in order to initiate meaningful interactions with children and encourage independent behaviour when safe to do so.
* Encourage children to have their own opinions, ideas and comments and let them know that their ideas are valued.
* Build a meaningful relationship with the children and their families. This can be achieved with the children by offering them information from your own life that they can relate to. For example, if a child tells you he got a new dog on the weekend, tell them a little about your own pet.
* Be approachable to families and allow time to talk to parents about their children. This allows educators to gain insight into their home life.
* Give the children something to look forward to. This enables the children to feel proud of their learning.
* Be attentive to children at all times. In an attempt to prevent attention seeking behaviour staff will at all times acknowledge each child to the best of their ability.
* **Use positive guidance**. When a child is doing the wrong thing, tell them what they are doing is wrong by telling them the right thing to do eg “We walk on the pavement” rather than “No running on the pavement.”

Consistency is important so that confusion can be avoided. In being clear about what behaviour is expected from the children and each other, we aim to provide a safe, happy, secure environment, the basis from which learning can occur.

Educators, by using a positive approach in guidance and discipline will recognise why a child behaves in a certain way and encourage more acceptable form of behaviour.

AT St Peter’s Preschool, WE ENCOURAGE POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR THROUGH:

* Establishing trust, respect and confidence between adults and children.
* Considering the stage of development of each child.
* Considering the interests, concerns and abilities of the individual child.
* Showing sensitivity to the child’s background and current home situations.
* Examining the reason behind the behaviour.
* Getting down to the child’s level to establish and maintain eye contact.
* Using language that is positive, clear and developmentally appropriate for the child in question.
* Being consistent with behaviour expectations.
* Setting limits and reminding children of such limits regularly or whenever necessary.
* Involving the children in the setting of limits and explaining why a certain type of behaviour is unacceptable eg other children and educator’s safety.
* Encouraging the children to show sympathy for children experiencing difficulties.
* Guidance and discipline to encourage individuality and confidence of children so as to enhance their self-esteem.
* Offering the children clear alternatives to help them develop their ability to make decisions and direct themselves.
* Positive modelling by adults.
* Discussing with families the behaviour management policy and seek their assistance for solutions should the need arise.
* Educators will not promote competition, comparison or criticism

Inappropriate staff behaviours:

The Nominated Supervisor and all educators must ensure that each child at the Preschool is given positive guidance towards socially acceptable behaviour, and is not subjected to any form of corporal punishment, immobilisation or force feeding, or any treatment that frightens or humiliates the child.

It is inappropriate and unacceptable for an educator to talk about children while they are present, or to humiliate or frighten a child. Use of these inappropriate strategies will result in disciplinary action being taken.

If the need arises to restrain a child, the educator will do so at their own discretion so as not to put themselves, the child or other children at risk of harm. Suggested method for restraining a child is to sit on a chair or the floor with the child held firmly in front of them (the child’s back towards the staff member). Speak calmly and quietly to attempt to diffuse the situation quickly. Restraining a child should be used only as a last resort.

When it's all over - it is *essential* to restore a positive relationship between you and the child, before either of you go home.

Keep the Nominated Supervisor aware of on-going situations; keep a written record of continuing incidents.

ANTI-SOCIAL: PHYSICAL BEHAVIOURS

Educators should explain to children that biting, hitting, pushing and kicking are not acceptable. If a child wants to hit or punch for example they can use the play dough or if available, a punching bag to take out aggression. If the child wants to kick they can kick a ball.

With older children, encourage them to use problem-solving skills and to verbalise feelings instead.

If a child becomes aggressive remove them from the experience (suitable distance so as not to hurt other children); stay with them until they quieten down. Comfort when rage subsides. Some good experiences if a child is aggressive are play dough, clay, hammering, bowling etc.

Always look for reasons behind belligerent behaviours and address the issues as a part of further planning (e.g. biting could be a result of teething or not having the communication skills to tell a peer that they are taking their toy. Kicking could be a part of power play etc.) Make sure you focus attention on the child who has been hurt. Children who have hurt another child can often be encouraged to help comfort or assist the hurt child (get a tissue, hold the ice pack etc.)

**WHEN MANAGEMENT IS NOT WORKING:**

* Discuss problems with educators - where appropriate (confidentiality is observed).
* Written methods are implemented.
* Difficulties are discussed with families, to discuss appropriate strategies.
* Early Intervention professionals are consulted with parental permission.
* Educators are to implement program directives from Early Intervention.
* Other professionals and support groups to be consulted where necessary.

GUIDELINES FOR NOMINATED SUPERVISOR’S INTERVENTION

If a child’s behaviour is continually anti-social or aggressive and is putting other children’s or educator’s health at risk, then the following procedures will be followed:

* The child’s family will be continually informed of the incidents.
* A time will be made where it is appropriate for the child’s teacher/Nominated Supervisor and parent/s to discuss the issues.
* A behaviour management program will be implemented and carried out by educators and parents. External help may be sought if necessary.
* This program will be continually evaluated by educators, the Nominated Supervisor and parents.
* If the behaviour does not appear to be improving the Nominated Supervisor may refer the parents to a support network (e.g. Inclusion Support Unit etc.)
* It may be necessary for the parent/s to collect their child early if other children or staff members are put at risk of harm.
* If after a reasonable period of time the child’s behaviour is not improving, the Nominated Supervisor and educators will consult with parents in supporting them to find a more appropriate service.

**To assist children to interact positively with each other, educators will encourage children to:**

* Verbalise their feelings and ideas.
* Listen to and respect each other.
* Develop strong social skills.
* Be accepting of other children’s race, religion, values and culture.
* Co-operate with educators and other children.
* Have good relationships.
* Share their experiences.
* Accept routine.
* Seek help from other children or educators when they’re frustrated.
* Be relaxed and happy.
* Contribute to group activities.
* Respond to positive discipline.
* Have self confidence.
* Respect other children’s space and privacy.