

Behaviour support policy

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

Overview

This policy outlines how department staff support safe and positive behaviour for children and young people in education, early childhood and care 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.

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
- help 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 can fully contribute in their learning environments, and to their wider community.

Children and young people's behaviours span a continuum (refer to [definitions](#)) 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 that 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 or extended duration, or are unsafe for a child or 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.

Supporting children and young people

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's important to note that children and young people's engagement in behaviours of concern can change over time.

The relationship between a child or 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're supported by a caring adult who models this behaviour, and who teaches, guides and supports the child or 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 department response. The nature of the response will be equitable and reflect the child's needs and what's 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. They also reflect the following principles:

- All behaviour has a purpose. Department behaviour interventions will build on a child or 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 or 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 or 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

Department behaviour support strategies must be purposeful and directed at achieving the 7 core functions of behaviour support listed 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 or 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 a copy of the department's behaviour support policy available on the school website, either 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 making sure 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 mandatory responsibilities of this policy outlined below, it's important to recognise that supporting positive behaviour requires a partnership between department staff, parents and families, and children and young people.

Department staff have a key role in creating and maintaining supportive and safe learning environments. Departmental staff must:

- 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

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

Engagement and Wellbeing directorate

Establish, maintain and promote an effective behaviour support policy, procedure, and practice guidelines in the department that reflect best practice.

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

Make sure information about the behaviour support policy requirements is accessible across the department and to members of the public.

Student support services unit

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

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

Model and coach behavioural interventions and strategies within department settings and provide practical support to educators and support staff.

School and Preschool Operations, Learning and Behaviour unit

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

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

Education directors

Make sure 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.

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

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

Make sure the behaviour support policy is effectively applied at their school, preschool or service to provide a positive learning environment for children and young people and those working with them.

Make sure information about the behaviour support policy and how it's implemented locally is easily accessible by staff, children, families and members of the public.

Make sure appropriate records and documents are kept of behavioural support responses by their site.

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

Develop 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.

Lead 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.

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

Ensure 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.

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

Staff

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

Make sure appropriate records and documents are kept of behavioural management responses.

Use 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-department staff providing a service on behalf of the department

Ensure compliance with this policy.

Definitions

behaviours of concern

Challenging, complex or unsafe behaviours that 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 relatively simple to direct and minimise through universal behaviour support strategies.

bullying

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

child or 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 and young people receive the same response. Behavioural responses are tailored to the specific needs of the child or young person.

continuum

A series on a scale where the 2 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, for example suspension, take home or being excluded from camps or other activities. Part-time programs are considered exclusionary when applied to children or 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 or young person.

Exclusionary responses can include restrictive practices that seek to remove control over a child or young person, for example, 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
- can further traumatise children and young people with developmental trauma.

equitable or fair

Treating children and 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 and 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 and Children's Services Act 2019](#)

[Education and Children's Services Regulations 2020](#)

[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](#)

[Disability Standards for Education 2005](#)

Related policies

[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](#)

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