



# ***Behaviour, interactions and guidance code***

## ***National Quality Standard Area 5 | Relationships with children***

### **PURPOSE**

This code provides documented guidelines regarding behaviour, interactions, and guidance for children to help ensure that children, families, and staff have a safe environment, consistency, and clarity around acceptable behaviour and the guidance measures that will be implemented.

At Thorndon Park Kindergarten, we are committed to fostering a safe, respectful, and nurturing environment that supports children's health, safety, and wellbeing. We model and promote positive behaviour guidance practices that encourage respectful interactions and support children's social and emotional development. We believe all children have the right to feel secure to learn and develop in a safe environment. Behaviour is an expression of feelings. We understand that all behaviours are forms of communication and our role is to help the children in our care to express their feelings in a manner that shows care and respect for others. Our approach is informed by the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) and the Department's guidance code, ensuring that we meet national standards and best practices.

At Thorndon Park Kindergarten, we understand that every behaviour reflects an unmet need. Our educators approach children with a trauma-aware mindset, responding rather than reacting, and positioning themselves as the supportive, grounded, bigger and wiser adults in all situations.

### **DETAIL**

#### **FOSTERING BELONGING AND SECURITY**

Thorndon Park is committed to fostering a strong sense of belonging, safety, and security for all children. We recognise that children learn to understand and regulate their behaviour over time through responsive and supportive relationships.

Educators will:

- Support children to understand how their actions impact themselves and others
- Guide behaviour through respectful mediation and problem-solving
- Promote secure, trusting relationships that enhance emotional wellbeing
- Act as a secure base for exploration and a safe haven for comfort and co-regulation
- Respond to children in ways that are consistently **strong, kind, and supportive**

Thorndon Park acknowledges that positive relationships with educators are critical to children's social, emotional, and behavioural development, and can buffer the effects of stress and adversity.

### **WARM, RESPONSIVE AND AVAILABLE EDUCATORS**

Educators recognise that children's ability to regulate behaviour develops gradually and may be influenced by individual circumstances.

Educators will:

- Interpret behaviour as communication of emotional and relational needs
- Maintain a positive view of each child, separating behaviour from identity
- Provide additional support during times of distress or challenging behaviour
- Prioritise children's safety, wellbeing, and connection over instruction in heightened moments
- Respond appropriately to trauma-related behaviours (fight, flight, freeze and fawn)
- Support skill development when children are calm and receptive
- Maintain their own emotional regulation to provide a calm and consistent presence

### **FAMILIES ARE INCLUDED**

Thorndon Park Kindergarten values collaborative partnerships with families in supporting children's behaviour and wellbeing.

Educators will:

- Communicate openly and respectfully with families about children's learning and behaviour
- Work collaboratively to ensure consistent approaches between home and the service
- Respond to families with empathy and without judgement
- Share the service's philosophy and strategies for behaviour guidance
- Seek support from colleagues and leadership when differences in perspectives arise
- Will seek additional support, including contacting relevant Inclusion Support Agencies, particularly when responding to concerns of harm, abuse and neglect.

### **REFLECTION ON PEDAGOGICAL DECISIONS IS ONGOING**

Educators engage in ongoing reflection to ensure practices support positive behaviour and relationships.

Educators will:

- Provide adequate space and engaging, meaningful experiences
- Use intentional grouping and consistent staffing where possible
- Implement flexible use of space and routines that are responsive to children's needs
- Minimise and thoughtfully plan transitions
- Provide culturally inclusive resources and learning experiences that foster belonging
- Maintain calm and supportive physical environments
- Ensure expectations match developmental stages
- Provide clear and consistent responses
- Use empathy to understand behaviour
- Monitor personal responses and emotional states

## INTENTIONAL STRATEGIES ARE PLANNED AND IMPLEMENTED

Educators will:

- Model positive behaviour by demonstrating empathy, respect, and cooperation
- Use varied communication strategies
  - Adapt communication to children's developmental levels /needs
  - Set clear boundaries with warmth and respect
  - Provide predictable, safe and secure environments
- Support agencies offer choices and encourage decision-making
- Promote genuine empathy and encourage understanding rather than forced apologies
- Avoid power struggles and focus on children's needs and emotional support
- Acknowledge positive behaviour, reinforce and encourage appropriate actions

## EMPOWERING CHILDREN

Educators will:

- Encourage independence and responsibility
- Recognise individual needs and experiences
- Build trusting relationships
- Support emotional regulation strategies (e.g. breathing, quiet spaces)
- Provide inclusive and collaborative learning opportunities

## REQUIREMENTS OF APPROVED PROVIDERS, SERVICE LEADERS, EDUCATORS, STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

Thorndon Park will comply with the **Education and Care Services National Regulations**, including Regulation 155.

*All educators will follow the Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics*

**It is intended that this code will...**

- 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 to their learning environments, and to their wider community.
- Every behaviour is a communication of an unmet need, and children must be supported with compassion and curiosity to uncover what lies beneath the surface.

Each child has unique interests and strengths and the capacity to contribute to their communities.

- Children are citizens from birth with civil, cultural, linguistic, social and economic rights.
- Effective learning and teaching is characterised by professional decisions that draw on specialised knowledge and multiple perspectives.
- Partnerships with families and communities support shared responsibility for children's learning, development and wellbeing.
- Democratic, fair and inclusive practices promote equity and a strong sense of belonging.
- Respectful, responsive and reciprocal relationships are central to children's education and care.
- Play and leisure are essential for children's learning, development and wellbeing.
- Research, inquiry and practice-based evidence inform quality education and care.

## **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

- Ensure Thorndon Park complies with all legislation and regulations
- Provide resources and professional development
- Support educators in implementing this policy
- Ensure a child-safe environment is maintained

### **Educational Leader**

- Guide educators/volunteers in implementing best practice behaviour guidance
- Support reflective practice and continuous improvement
- Promote alignment with EYLF V.2 and NQS and Keeping Safe Curriculum

### **Educators and Staff**

- Implement positive behaviour guidance strategies
- Build respectful and secure relationships with children
- Engage in ongoing reflection and professional development
- Communicate effectively with families
- Maintain children's dignity and rights at all times

### **Families**

- Collaborate with educators to support consistent approaches
- Share relevant information about their child's needs
- Engage in respectful communication with the service

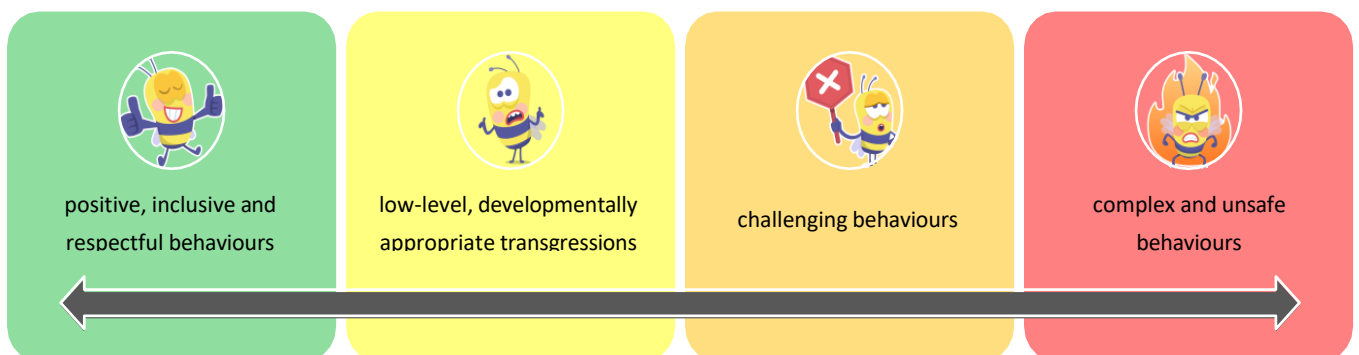
### **Children**

- Follow Kindy rules and values -eg Safe hands and Safe bodies
- Treat others with respect – take turns, use words and visuals to explain feelings
- Use kind words and kind actions
- Ask for help if/when needed
- Ask an educator for help.

## DETAIL

### A child's behaviour may 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 preschool 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



## EVIDENCE BASED FOR SUPPORTING CHILDREN

Challenging, complex and unsafe behaviours (behaviours of concern) are an indicator that children need support to be included. 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 in education settings. It is important to note that a child's engagement in behaviours of concern can change over time.

The relationship between a child and a caring adult is the fundamental basis of all behaviour support. Children 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 to do the same.

It is important that educators, children, and families cultivate 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 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. Additionally, it is important to recognise that supporting positive behaviour requires a partnership between educators, parents and families, and children.

### As a team we believe

- All children have the right to feel protected and develop in a psychological and physically safe environment
- Children have the right to express their feelings and emotions, and be supported to manage these

feelings, emotions, and behaviours that underpin the development of positive relationships with peers and adults

- Effective communication and learning occur when families and educators work together to develop common goals for children's wellbeing, learning, and development
- Consideration of children's individual and contextual needs are crucial to successful
- Learning and the development of positive behaviours
- Family partnerships are essential, and their individual perspectives are valued and respected
- Children have a right to be supported by educators who model appropriate behaviours and ensure consistent guidance measures are implemented
- No person has a right to make any child feel rejected, insecure, embarrassed, or ashamed

### **How we support children**

Our educators have a key role in creating and maintaining supportive and safe learning environments and will...

- Model and promote behaviour that values diversity, demonstrates respect for and inclusion of all children, and promotes a positive learning environment
- Explicitly teach children people about safe and inclusive behaviours, and the core values of our service
- Support the participation of all children, taking special measures to support the inclusion of children 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 learning environments 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
- Provide timely intervention in response to behaviours of concern
- Provide visible, consistent, and planned responses to behaviours of concern to foster trust and confidence
- Support children to be physically and psychologically safe

Parents and families are their child/ren's first and ongoing teachers. Parents and families shape and support their child/ren's positive behaviours when they...

- Model and promote safe, respectful, and inclusive relationships with your child/ren, other children and young people, other parents/caregivers, and educators
- Support your child/ren to develop safe behaviours at home, including monitoring and supervising social interactions (including online)
- Talk to your child/ren about behaviour including unsafe behaviours to help them understand what it is, why it is harmful, and how to respond
- Work collaboratively with educators to resolve concerns about behaviour when incidents occur, including discussing issues as soon as possible
- Consider recommendations and engage in specialist support through internal service

providers and external organisations

- support your child/ren's best interests to continue to attend our service while a behaviour issue is being resolved

**Educators must be the supportive, grounded adults who respond calmly, rather than react, in moments of challenge.**

- Effective communication and learning occur when families and educators work together to develop common goals for children's wellbeing, learning, and development.
- Consideration of children's individual histories, contexts, and needs are crucial to successful learning and the development of positive behaviours.
- Family partnerships are essential, and their perspectives are valued and respected.
- Our ongoing relationships with internal and external support services help us provide consistent guidance and ensure children's needs are addressed holistically.
- Children have a right to be supported by educators who model appropriate behaviours and ensure consistent trauma-informed guidance measures are implemented.
- No person has the right to make any child feel rejected, insecure, embarrassed, or ashamed.

### **Supporting children**

Challenging, complex, and unsafe behaviours (behaviours of concern) are signals that children need support to be included. Research indicates that most children can behave in safe, respectful and inclusive ways, while a small number engage in challenging behaviours.

At Thorndon Park Kindergarten, we view behaviours of concern through a trauma-informed lens:

- They are not "problems to fix" but communications of unmet needs.
- A child's engagement in these behaviours may change over time, and with the right support, healing and growth are possible.

The relationship between a child and a caring, grounded adult is the foundation of all behaviour support. Children are most likely to behave in positive, inclusive, and respectful ways when they are supported by an adult who models this behaviour, responds calmly, and works with families and services to identify and meet underlying needs.

### **How we support children**

Our educators play a key role in creating and maintaining trauma-informed, supportive, and safe learning environments. We will...

- Model and promote behaviour that values diversity, demonstrates respect for and inclusion of all children, and promotes a positive learning environment.
- Explicitly teach children about safe and inclusive behaviours, and the core values of our service.
- Respond rather than react to behaviours of concern, always holding the role of the supportive, grounded adult.
- Support the participation of all children, taking special measures to include children who are at higher risk of exclusionary responses (including Aboriginal children, children in care, and children with disabilities).

- Participate in professional learning to strengthen trauma-informed practice, build skills, and confidently support children's behaviour and wellbeing.
- Work in partnership with parents, caregivers, families, and support services to understand what lies beneath behaviours, and to co-develop strategies that address underlying needs.
- Provide timely and consistent trauma-informed intervention in response to behaviours of concern.
- Use restorative and relationship-based practices to support children to repair harm and restore trust.
- Always ensure that children feel physically and psychologically safe.

### **How families can support children**

Parents and families are their child/ren's first and ongoing teachers. At Thorndon Park Kindergarten, we view families as essential partners in supporting children's wellbeing and behaviour. Families support their child/ren's positive behaviours when they...

- Model and promote safe, respectful, and inclusive relationships.
- Support safe behaviours at home, including supervision of social and online interactions.
- Talk with their child/ren about behaviours, including unsafe behaviours, helping them understand why they are harmful and how to respond.
- Work openly and collaboratively with educators to understand what may be driving behaviour beneath the surface.
- Engage with recommendations and specialist support services as needed.
- Support their child/ren to continue attending during behaviour support processes, recognising that consistency and connection are vital for healing and growth.

### **Our response to behaviours that pose challenges or safety risks**

When behaviours of concern arise, our response will always be guided by trauma-informed principles:

- Reminding children of expectations and guidance measures, and the reasons for these.
- Responding calmly and modelling regulation to help children problem solve, negotiate, and manage feelings and behaviours appropriately.
- Using restorative practices that support children to empathise with others and restore relationships.
- Working with families and support services as soon as possible to provide consistent and connected support.
- Reflecting critically on our program and environment to identify what may be contributing to dysregulation.
- Developing and reviewing individual behaviour support plans in partnership with families and services.
- Ensuring that when children need to be accompanied to an alternative area, they are supported by a grounded, caring adult until they feel safe and regulated again.

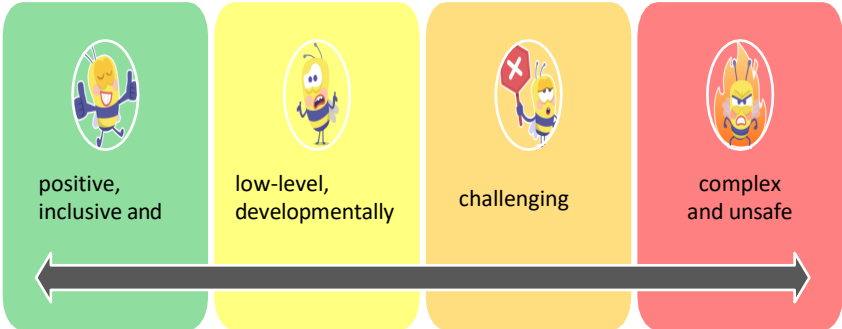
### **Staff reflection**

As a staff team, we regularly reflect on our practices. When we notice increased dysregulation, we intentionally review our approaches, environment, and relationships with children to ensure we are responding to underlying

needs. **Procedure creation and revision record**

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|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
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| Approved by              | Governing Council Committee |
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| Amendments(s):           | <p>The procedure has been updated and renamed from <i>“Behaviour, Interactions and Support Procedure”</i> to <i>“Behaviour, Interactions, and Guidance Code.”</i></p> <p>The revised document provides greater detail and clarity regarding expectations for guiding behaviour and interactions. It strengthens alignment with safe practice principles and key frameworks, including the Early Years Learning Framework (Version 2.0), the National Quality Standard (NQS), and the Keeping Safe curriculum, while also recognising and supporting child voice and family voice.</p> <p>VISUAL ADDED</p>  |