



## Behaviour Guidance Policy and Procedures

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<b>EYLF</b>	EYLF Principle 1: Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships EYLF Learning Outcome 1: Children have a strong sense of identity.

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## Policy Statement

**Respect and Dignity:** We aim to ensure each child is given the opportunity to play, discover and grow in an atmosphere of care and mutual respect where their dignity and rights are preserved at all times.

From birth, children begin to explore how the social world works, learning the complex process of learning to manage feelings, behaviours, rights and responsibilities. They face many challenges throughout their lives and being able to regulate their own behaviours in different social and emotional environments or when interacting with their peers or adults is fundamental to each child's 'belonging, being and becoming'.<sup>1</sup>

Heritage Early Childhood Centre (Heritage) recognises the important role educators play in supporting and guiding children to regulate their own behaviour. Heritage also recognises it has a duty of care and legal responsibility to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all enrolled children. The term 'behaviour guidance' is utilised at Heritage rather than 'discipline' which is associated with punishment and may lead to inappropriate and damaging methods of attempting to control/coerce children's behaviour. In addition, corporal punishment and unreasonable or inappropriate discipline methods are contrary to the Heritage Code of Conduct/Ethics, violate the health and wellbeing objectives of the National Quality Framework and are offences under the *Education and Care National Law*.

Heritage recognises that each child is unique and has their own temperament and is committed to using consistent, research-based, behaviour guidance strategies that preserve the dignity and rights of the child at all times. Heritage aims to work in partnership with families to guide children to acknowledge their feelings, manage and learn from their behaviours, express their emotions in positive, non-threatening ways, respond appropriately to the behaviour of others and communicate effectively to resolve conflicts peacefully. This approach is embedded in The Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF), Education and Care Services National Regulations, and the National Quality Standard and supports children to develop not only self-regulation, but also positive dispositions such as empathy, resilience and perseverance.

Developing warm, respectful and meaningful relationships with children is understood to be one of the most powerful tools that educators have in preventing inappropriate behaviour, encouraging positive behaviour and supporting the acquisition of skills for life and learning. In addition, positive, respectful daily interactions between educators and children support children to learn about interdependence and to become considerate global citizens.<sup>2</sup>

Heritage educators work with families and respect children's and families' cultural backgrounds and beliefs as far as practicable. Heritage recognises there are times when it may be necessary to balance these needs with the overarching duty of educators to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all enrolled children and to respect developmentally appropriate current best practice recommendations from recognised authorities.<sup>3</sup>

Heritage understands that guiding children's behaviour can be challenging for both educators and families. In particular, educators who are implementing individual Behaviour Guidance Management Plans for children who consistently display inappropriate behaviours (especially anti-social behaviours towards others) and need continued assistance can experience levels of stress or anxiety, which may lead to sickness or apathy in the workplace. Heritage aims to ensure that employees' mental and emotional wellbeing is supported, as well as the child's need for positive behaviour guidance strategies.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Refer to: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia

<sup>2</sup> Refer to: Heritage Philosophy; Interactions with Children Policy; Relationships with Children Factsheet

<sup>3</sup> Refer to: Creating Inclusion and Equity Policy

<sup>4</sup> Refer to: Work Health and Safety Policy; Be You Wellbeing Resources for Educators



## Definitions

For the purpose of this policy, the following definitions apply:

**ACECQA:** Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. Provides guidance, resources and a communication portal for early education and care services e.g. For reporting incidents. <https://public.nqaits.acecqa.gov.au/mydetails/pages/mydetails.aspx>

**Additional needs:** A general term that describes children or families who may require special considerations or adaptations to participate fully in early childhood services. It includes families and children experiencing disability, a medical condition, a developmental concern, challenging behaviours, an emotional need, family displacement, domestic violence, mental illness, family separation or divorce.

**Behaviour guidance:** The term 'behaviour guidance' is used to reflect current research on the positive and non-coercive ways to help children gain understanding of their emotions and learn skills that help them to manage their own behaviour, respond appropriately to the behaviour of others and communicate effectively to resolve conflicts.

**Behaviour Guidance Plan:** Individual Behaviour Guidance Plans may be utilised as a reasonable step to prevent harm and hazard for children who have additional needs or display consistently inappropriate behaviour. The plan includes consultation with families and, if appropriate, input and suggestions from other professionals and support agencies.

**CECA:** Children's Education and Care Assurance (CECA) is The ACT Regulatory Authority responsible for ensuring the compliance of early childhood education services with the National Quality Standard.

**Duty of care:** A common law concept. The responsibility of organisations to provide an adequate level of protection against harm and all reasonable, foreseeable risk of injury.

**Emotionally available:** Being aware of and understanding feelings and relationships, enabling the ability to be responsive to the needs of others and to demonstrate warmth, sensitivity, and empathy.

**Expanding on exceptions:** Encouraging children to look at several different solutions to the problem they are encountering.

**Externalising the problem:** Encouraging children to gain a broader perspective of difficulties they face and not to take them personally. For example, educators may refer to the problem as "it" and "the".

**Harm:** Includes death, injury, illness (physical or psychological) or disease that may be suffered by a person as a consequence of exposure to a hazard.

**Hazard:** Something that can cause potential harm, or a situation that could lead to a degree of harm, to people or property and the potential harm.

**Inclusion:** Taking into account all children's social, cultural and linguistic diversity, including learning styles, abilities, disabilities, gender, family circumstance and geographic location, in curriculum decision-making processes.<sup>5</sup>

**Inclusion Support Programme (ISP):** A Government program that assists early childhood education services to include children with additional needs alongside their peers via Inclusion Agencies and access funded support and specialist equipment where required.

**Pattern interruption:** A conscious interruption to break a habit of undesirable behaviour. For example, a teacher clapping is a form of pattern interruption in the classroom.

**Re-direction:** Intervening to respectfully and calmly divert/distract a child away from their current behaviour. It may be necessary when children are causing or perceived to be about to cause harm to themselves or others, eg, kicking, spitting, biting, throwing furniture or toys, punching or hitting, being disruptive, climbing a fence or hiding in a potentially dangerous position. Safety is a priority and respectful physical restraint may be necessary to move the child away from a harmful situation (see: Restraint below). It may also be necessary to remove other children from the area while the child calms down.

**Reframing:** Encouraging children to look at a situation, person, or relationship from a slightly different perspective.

**Restraint:** The supportive holding of children. Children may only be restrained when there is an immediate threat of the child being harmed or harming others and other strategies have not worked. For example, when a child is:

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<sup>5</sup> Refer to: EYLF; Creating Inclusion and Equity Policy



- In a clearly unsafe situation such as 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.

**NOTE:** Children may only be held long enough to be removed from the situation, or if they cannot be removed, until the situation has been addressed or subsided.

**Self-regulation:** The ability to manage energy states, emotions, behaviour and attention in order to return to a balanced, calm and constant state of being. Self-regulation is a key factor for mental health, wellbeing and learning.<sup>6</sup>

**Self-regulation Time:** A short period of time when a child that is having a difficult moment is encouraged to find a space, with an educator, to calm down and regain self-control. The difference between self-regulation time and 'time-out' is that an adult stays with the child and reassures and supports them to regulate their emotions and reflect. It is viewed as a learning opportunity, not a punishment.

**Strategic Inclusion Plan (SIP):** A document required for early childhood services to access the Inclusion Support Program. It outlines the strategies/actions educators will implement to increase the capacity of the service to include all children.

**Tantrum:** An emotional out-of-control response. As young children begin to learn how to manage their emotions such as anger and frustration, they may resort to tantrums which are a sign that children feel out of control of their feelings. Tantrums may present as:

- Protesting tantrum: thrashing, screaming, crying, spitting.
- Whinging/sulking: passive version of protesting tantrum.
- Social tantrum: bossing others, aggression.
- Uncooperativeness.

## Rationale and Legislative Background

Heritage recognises it has a duty of care to take all reasonable, practicable steps to provide the Heritage community with a safe and healthy environment that supports their physical and emotional health and wellbeing (*Work Health and Safety Act, 2011*). In addition, the Behaviour Guidance Policy and Procedures have been developed to comply with the:

- *Education and Care Services National Law (ACT) Act, 2010.*
- *Education and Care Services National Regulations (ACT) 2011.*
- *National Quality Standard for Early Childhood Education and Care 2012.*
- ECA Code of Ethics
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Heritage Philosophy and Code of Conduct/Ethics and
- Creating Inclusion and Equity Policy

### The ECA Code of Ethics

- Heritage upholds the values and principles of the Early Childhood Australia (ECA) Code of Ethics - a set of statements about appropriate and expected behaviour of early childhood professionals.
- Based on the principles of the [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child \(1991\)](#), the Code reflects current pedagogical research and practice, providing a framework for reflection about the ethical responsibilities for educators.

### Education and Care National Law

#### Section 166

The approved provider, nominated supervisor and staff members and volunteers of an education and care service must ensure that 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.

<sup>6</sup> KidsMatter, Early Childhood, 2014



Section 167	<p>The approved provider and nominated supervisor must ensure that every reasonable precaution is taken to protect children being educated and cared for by the service from harm and from any hazard likely to cause injury.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ For example, if a child is enrolled with diagnosed autism spectrum disorder and is known to have aggressive outbursts, but the Director has not followed the policy and initiated a Behaviour Guidance Plan or support for staff to manage these behaviours, it may be considered not taking reasonable steps to prevent harm or hazard to that child or other children.</li> </ul>
Section 174	<p>An incident of inappropriate discipline must be reported to the Regulatory Authority by the service within the required timeframe. It is an offence to fail to notify the RA of serious incidents, complaints of serious incidents and circumstances posing risk to the health, safety or wellbeing of a child at an early education service.</p>
<b>Education and Care National Regulations</b>	
Regulation 168	<p><b>The service must have policies and procedures</b> in relation to the following (i) Staffing, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) A code of conduct for staff members; and</li> <li>(j) interactions with children, including matters set out in regulations 155 and 156.</li> </ul>
Regulation 73(2)	<p><b>Educational program.</b> The service must ensure it creates an educational program that contributes to the following outcomes for each child:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) The child will have a strong sense of identity.</li> <li>(c) The child will have a strong sense of wellbeing.</li> </ul>
Regulation 84	<p><b>Awareness of Child Protection Law.</b> The approved provider of the service must ensure that the nominated supervisor and staff members at the service who work with children are advised of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) the existence and application of the current child protection law; and</li> <li>(b) any obligations that they may have under that law.</li> </ul>
Regulation 155	<p><b>Interactions with children.</b> The service must take reasonable steps to ensure educators encourage children to express themselves and their opinions, allow them to undertake experiences that develop self-reliance and self-esteem, maintain their dignity and rights, give each child positive guidance and encouragement towards acceptable behaviour, and have regard to children's family and cultural values, age, physical and intellectual development, and abilities.</p>
Regulation 156	<p><b>Relationships in groups.</b> The service must take reasonable steps to ensure that their service provides children with opportunities to interact and develop respectful and positive relationships with each other, staff members and volunteers at the service. Examples of appropriate interactions might include providing children with an opportunity to express how they are feeling and then assisting them in regulating their own behaviour, supporting children with responding appropriately to the behaviour of others, and role modelling and assisting children in communicating effectively with each other to resolve conflicts.</p>
Regulation 157	<p><b>Access for parents.</b> A parent of a child being educated and cared for by the service must be able to enter the service premises at any time that the child is being educated and cared for by the service.</p>
Regulation 175	<p><b>Prescribed information to be notified to the Regulatory Authority.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(d) any incident where the approved provider reasonably believes that physical abuse or sexual abuse of a child or children has occurred or is occurring while being educated and cared for by the education and care service.</li> </ul>





National Quality Standard	
QA 2: Children's Health and Safety	<p>Standard 2.1: Each child's health and physical activity is supported and promoted.</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Element 2.1.1: Each child's wellbeing and comfort is provided for, including appropriate opportunities to meet each child's need for sleep, rest and relaxation.</p> <p>Standard 2.2: Safety: Each child is protected.</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Element 2.2.1: At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from harm and hazard.</p>
QA 4: Staffing Arrangements	<p>Standard 4.2: Management, educators and staff are collaborative, respectful and ethical.</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Element 4.2.2: Professional standards guide practice, interactions and relationships.</p>
QA 5: Relationships with children	<p>Standard 5.1: Respectful and equitable relationships are maintained with each child.</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Element 5.1.1: Responsive and meaningful interactions build trusting relationships which engage and support each child to feel secure, confident and included.</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Element 5.1.2: The dignity and rights of every child are maintained.</p> <p>Standard 5.2: Each child is supported to build and maintain sensitive and responsive relationships</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">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.</p>
QA 6: Collaborative Partnerships with Families, Communities	<p>Standard 6.1: Respectful partnerships with families and communities.</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Element 6.1.2: The expertise, culture, values and beliefs of families are respected, and families share in decision-making about their child's learning and wellbeing.</p>
QA 7: Governance and leadership	<p>Standard 7.1: Governance supports the operation of a quality service.</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Element 7.1.1: A statement of philosophy guides all aspects of the service's operations.</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Element 7.1.2: Systems are in place to manage risk and enable the effective management and operation of a quality service.</p>
Early Years Learning Framework	
Principle 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships.</li> </ul>
Learning Outcome 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children have a strong sense of identity: Children learn to interact in relation to others with care, empathy and respect.</li> <li>• Sub-Elements. Children:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Feel safe, secure, and supported.</li> <li>○ Develop their emerging autonomy, inter-dependence, resilience and sense of agency.</li> <li>○ Develop knowledgeable and confident self-identities.</li> <li>○ Learn to interact in relation to others with care, empathy and respect.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>



## Policy Aims

The purpose of the Behaviour Guidance Policy is to:

- Ensure educators implement consistent positive behaviour support and guidance strategies based on current best practices, and that these strategies are clearly defined and transparent.
- Ensure each child is given the opportunity to play, discover and grow in an atmosphere of care and mutual respect where their dignity and rights are preserved at all times.
- Understand why children behave in certain ways in specific circumstances and at specific stages of development.
- Emphasise that children have the same rights as adults while acknowledging their different needs as developing young people.
- Encourage a positive, strengths-based learning environment in which educators and children feel comfortable.
- Support children to develop socially acceptable behaviour including the ability to acknowledge their feelings, manage and learn from their behaviours and to express their emotions in positive, non-threatening and productive ways.
- Promote respectful, meaningful and responsive relationships with children to help them feel safe, secure, and supported.
- Promote realistic play and behaviour limits that guide children's safety and security rather than curb their play experiences, curiosity or creativity.
- Ensure educators are emotional available and acknowledge children's emotions such as happiness, anger, pleasure, fear, anxiety, frustration, sadness, and pride.
- Encourage considerate behaviour in children and build children's problem-solving skills, confidence, agency and self-esteem.
- Support children to develop positive dispositions such as empathy, resilience and perseverance.
- Promote a collaborative approach between children, families, educators and external agencies.
- Give educators and families an opportunity to share ideas and develop a shared understanding of expectations and how behaviour guidance is implemented at Heritage.
- Inform families and educators about the procedures involved in individual Behaviour Guidance Plans.<sup>7</sup>
- Explain Heritage's commitment to professional development, educator wellbeing and how the expertise of external agencies is utilised.

## Scope

The Heritage Behaviour Guidance Policy and Procedures applies to everyone in the Heritage community including all children, management, educators, families, and visitors.

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<sup>7</sup> Refer to: Definitions





## Summary of Responsibilities

Role	Responsible for ensuring:
<b>Management Committee</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The service has a Behaviour Guidance Policy in place that is up to date, easily accessible to the Heritage community, meets all relevant legislative requirements and is regularly reviewed to reflect current legislation and best practice recommendations.</li> <li>• The Behaviour Guidance Policy clearly sets out the roles and responsibilities of the Director, educators and Heritage community.</li> <li>• The Director is supported in responding to any complaints in relation to this policy and notifying the relevant authorities as required.<sup>8</sup></li> </ul>
<b>Director</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Every reasonable precaution is taken to protect enrolled children from harm and from any hazard likely to cause injury (National Law 167).</li> <li>• 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 (National Law 166).</li> <li>• Positive and respectful relationships with children are established and maintained (Regulation 155 and 156).</li> <li>• The dignity and rights of each child are maintained at all times (Regulation 155).</li> <li>• Information is gathered from families on enrolment about their children's individual and additional needs, including family and cultural values and recorded on the child's individual file.</li> <li>• Educators utilise knowledge of children's needs to engage children in experiences that support them to practice their social skills.</li> <li>• Positive, empathetic relationships are developed with children.</li> <li>• Positive and inclusive behaviour guidance strategies are implemented by educators including to re-direct<sup>9</sup> a child who is causing/perceived to be about to cause harm to themselves or others.</li> <li>• Children are empowered to use language and other forms of non-hurtful communication to communicate their emotions.</li> <li>• Information about behaviour guidance practices is provided to families including via the website, parent interviews and newsletters.</li> <li>• Behaviour guidance does not involve making judgements about children or their families.</li> <li>• A partnership is developed with professionals/support agencies to work with children with diagnosed behavioural/social difficulties.</li> <li>• Support to include children with additional needs is sought as required via the Inclusion Support Program, including the creation of a Strategic Inclusion Plan (SIP).<sup>10</sup></li> <li>• Families are notified of any behaviour-related incidents involving their child via the Incident Report form and these are addressed sensitively.</li> <li>• Should inappropriate behaviour continue, an individual Behaviour Guidance Plan may be developed in consultation with families and other health professionals as required.</li> <li>• Professional development is provided for educators to be informed, trained and supervised to implement behaviour guidance strategies and SIPs. Training is recorded for reflection on its effectiveness.</li> <li>• The relevant authorities are notified as required of complaints and serious incidents. Refer to: Reporting Obligations.</li> </ul>

<sup>8</sup> Refer to: Reporting Obligations; Complaints and Grievance Management Policy

<sup>9</sup> Refer to: Definitions

<sup>10</sup> Refer to: Creating Inclusion and Equity Policy



<b>Educators</b>	<p>Responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At all times providing positive role-modelling when interacting with children, other educators and staff, and families.</li> <li>• Creating quality learning environments that promote each child's curiosity and agency by providing age appropriate, challenging, interesting activities and experiences for children.<sup>11</sup></li> <li>• Providing positive guidance to encourage children towards developing healthy ways to express their emotions, resolve conflict and empathetically understand the feelings of others. Utilising visual cues, prompting, using "say what you see, ask a question" positive verbal feedback, focusing on strengths, offering choices, redirecting, and intentional teaching.</li> <li>• At all times taking into consideration each child's stage of development, individual needs and experiences. Understanding their behaviour could be a result of changes in routine, the family or learning environment, or serious issues involving abuse or neglect.<sup>12</sup></li> <li>• Never resorting to cruel, harsh, humiliating, or demeaning discipline methods and understanding these may be deemed a criminal offence.</li> <li>• Supporting children to explore different identities and points of view and to communicate calmly and effectively when resolving disagreements with others.</li> <li>• Participating in planned and spontaneous age-appropriate conversations with children about emotions, feelings, inclusion, fairness, bias, the consequences of their actions and the reasons for expectations and limits.</li> <li>• Utilising children's contributions in setting limits and guidelines.</li> <li>• Providing children with the language and vocabulary needed to express their emotions and feelings and to verbalise their concerns.</li> <li>• Encouraging older children to listen to other people's ideas and to develop age-appropriate pro-social and altruistic behaviour including collaborating and negotiating to problem solve.</li> <li>• Talking calmly with children about the consequence of their actions and focusing on preserving and promoting children's self-esteem as they learn to self-regulate.</li> <li>• Listening empathetically to children when they communicate their emotions and providing encouragement and reassurance that it is normal to experience both positive and negative emotions.</li> <li>• Remaining calm, respectful, and tolerant while interacting with children who are strongly expressing distress, frustration or anger.</li> <li>• Using positive language, gestures, facial expressions, and tone of voice when redirecting or discussing children's behaviour with them.</li> <li>• Guiding children to remove themselves from situations where they are experiencing intense frustration, anger, or fear.</li> <li>• When all other strategies have been tried, implementing "self-regulation time"<sup>13</sup> with an educator and offering reassurance and support so the child can settle and regain self-control. Kneeling and talking to the child directly. Ensuring self-regulation time only occurs for a short time (1-5 minutes depending on age) and under the supervision of other educators.<sup>14</sup></li> </ul>
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<sup>11</sup> Refer to: Curriculum and Program Planning Policy

<sup>12</sup> Refer to: Child Protection Policy

<sup>13</sup> Refer to: Definitions

<sup>14</sup> Refer to: Child Protection Policy



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensuring physical re-direction<sup>15</sup> or restraint<sup>16</sup> is only used as a last resort when there is an immediate risk of harm to the child or others, or the child is severely distressed. Ensuring the child's family is informed and the event is recorded appropriately.<sup>17</sup></li> <li>• <b>Note:</b> Children may only be physically restrained long enough to be removed from a situation or until the situation has subsided. Any use of restraint must be reported to the Director.</li> <li>• Implementing individual Behaviour Guidance Plans in consultation with children, their family and support agencies as required for children with additional needs or on-going inappropriate behaviour.</li> <li>• Committing to professional development and keeping up to date with best practice information regarding behaviour guidance strategies.</li> <li>• Taking responsibility for their own wellbeing and utilising educator wellbeing resources provided by the service.</li> </ul>
<b>Families</b>	<p>Responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading the Family Handbook.</li> <li>• Becoming familiar with all Heritage policies and adhering to them at all times, including this policy, the Heritage Philosophy, Code of Conduct/Ethics and the Privacy and Confidentiality Policy.</li> <li>• Working collaboratively with the service and communicating regularly and respectfully with educators to ensure awareness of their child's individual needs, strengths and interests.</li> <li>• Sharing any recent events with educators that may be influencing their child's behaviour.</li> <li>• Creating consistency as far as practicable around behaviour guidance strategies used at the service and at home.</li> <li>• Being involved in, keeping fully informed about, and providing written consent for any individualised Behaviour Guidance Plan or support proposed/provided for their child.</li> <li>• On receipt of an Accident and Incident Report from Heritage when their child has hurt another child, discussing the circumstances with educators and future prevention strategies.</li> <li>• Providing consent as required for the service to consult with professional agencies such as the Inclusion Agency.</li> <li>• Assisting with any Strategic Inclusion Plan (SIP) related to their child.<sup>18</sup></li> <li>• Responding to requests from educators for written permission to arrange for an assessment or collect reports on their child.</li> <li>• Raising any relevant issues or concerns regarding their child's behaviour and social skills.</li> </ul>
<b>Students and Regular Volunteers</b>	<p>Responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being familiar with this policy and the service Philosophy, Code of Conduct/Ethics and expectations regarding positive, respectful and appropriate behaviour when working with children and families.</li> <li>• Reading the Relief Educator Handbook and becoming familiar with all service policies and procedures, including the Privacy and Confidentiality Policy.</li> <li>• Bringing relevant issues and concerns to the attention of both educators and the Director.</li> </ul>

<sup>15</sup> Refer to: Definitions

<sup>16</sup> Refer to: Definitions

<sup>17</sup> Refer to: Incident and Trauma Report Form

<sup>18</sup> Refer to: Creating Inclusion and Equity Policy



## Strategies and Practices

It is essential that, at all times, behaviour guidance at Heritage is a positive experience for all involved and:

- Is based on guidance not coercion.
- Does not damage self-esteem, rather allows children to feel capable and competent.
- Takes into account each child's needs, developmental stage and abilities - recognising that needs and behaviours change as children grow.
- Validates attempts and acknowledges caring, cooperative, desirable behaviour.
- Is expressed positively, i.e. "Walk inside" rather than "Don't run inside."
- Provides simple explanations and offers alternatives so that children can make judgments/choices for themselves and in time learn to make more appropriate choices.
- Is consistent.
- Leads to self-regulation, which is recognised as a long-term process.
- Is considered as a learning experience and therefore a normal part of a child's development.

## Theoretical Overview

Heritage recognises that many instances of inappropriate behaviour can be prevented by understanding child development and being responsive to each child's individual needs.

**PREVENTION IS FAR MORE POWERFUL THAN INTERVENTION**

### Building Social Competence

- Research shows that respectful and meaningful relationships early in life help children to connect with others, build positive friendships and support children to self-regulate their emotions.
- Building positive relationships:
  - Helps children feel secure, freeing them to explore, play and learn.
  - Offers opportunities for children to learn how to interact with others, respect others' rights, and be appropriately assertive and caring.
- To build positive relationships with others, children need to develop 'social competence' which allows children to understand and self-regulate their emotions, negotiate with others and interact with others with care, empathy and respect.
- For relationships to be meaningful, interactions need to be warm, caring and responsive.<sup>19</sup>

### The Circle of Security

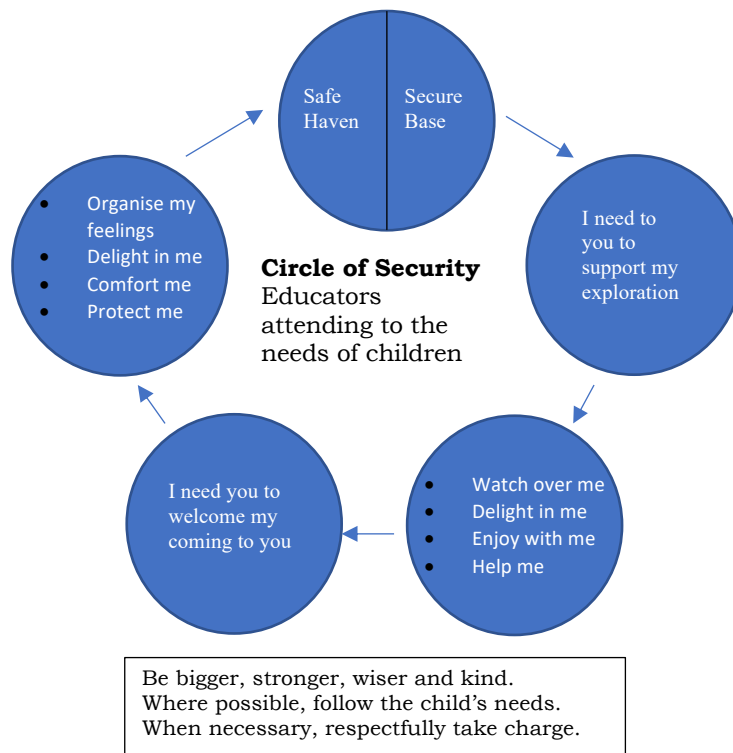
- The Circle of Security is an intervention initiative based on Attachment Theory<sup>20</sup> that shows secure children exhibit increased empathy, greater self-esteem, better relationships with parents and peers, a smoother transition to school, and an increased capacity to handle emotions more effectively compared with children who are insecure.
- The model highlights the importance of adults being at each child's level and available to support, and to provide a secure base for children as needed.

<sup>19</sup> Refer to: Interactions with Children Policy

<sup>20</sup> Bowlby J (1988). A Secure Base: Parent-Child Attachment and Healthy Human Development.



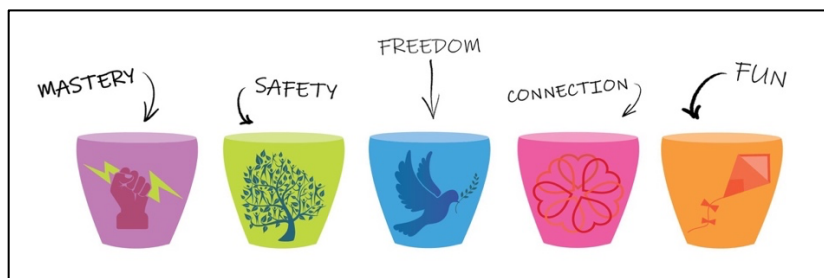
**Figure 1: The Circle of Security**



Source: Adapted from Circle of Security: Cooper, Hoffman, Marvin and Powell (1998)

**The Phoenix Cups Framework**

- The Phoenix Cups Framework<sup>21</sup> helps educators think about each individual child’s unique profile of needs according to their temperament, and how behaviour is influenced if their individual needs are not fulfilled.
- All human beings, adults and children, have needs (Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs).
- When individual needs are not met, a person’s behaviour changes, their mood is affected, and there is a feeling of being unfulfilled.



Source: [www.phoenix-support.com.au](http://www.phoenix-support.com.au)

<sup>21</sup> Refer to: References

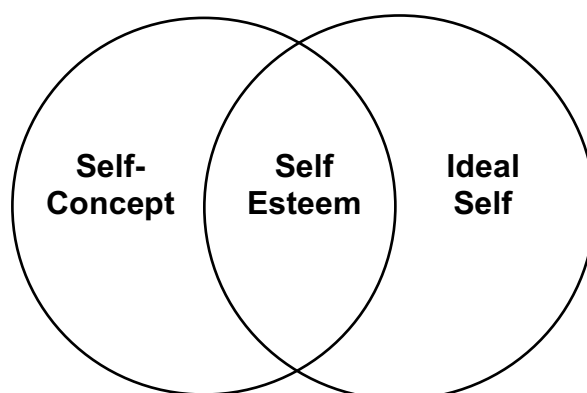


### Preserving Children's Self Esteem

According to Porter (2006), keeping children's self-esteem intact is the most powerful way to prevent emotional or behavioural problems in early childhood and adolescence.

- When individuals have been accepted and successful in the past, in turn they will expect to be so again in the future. A positive expectation makes them more successful – and so a 'virtuous cycle' is born.
- From the earliest years of their lives, children gain impressions about the type of people they are and how you want them to be.
- By comparing themselves to their values, they learn to feel good or disappointed in themselves. In short, self-esteem has three parts:
  - **The Self-Concept:** This is our picture or description of ourselves. At young ages, children tend to describe themselves according to how they look, what they wear, their state of health and their possessions. As they get older, children begin to describe their relationships within/outside the family, abilities and talents at sport or academics, temperament, religious ideas, and ability to manage their own lives.
  - **The Ideal Self:** This is our belief about how we should be. Feedback from others allows us to rank which qualities are most valued and which are less important.
  - **Our Self-Esteem:** Individuals judge how many of their ideals they satisfy. This is their self-esteem: a comparison between the self-concept and the ideal self – as shown in Figure 2. (Burns 1982).

**Figure 2. Components of Self Esteem**



#### Self Esteem

*"Self-esteem is not a trivial pursuit that can be built by peppering children up with empty praises, extra pats, and cheers of support. Such efforts are temporary at best and deceptive at worst. Our children need coaches, not cheerleaders."*

*Curry and Johnson (1990:153)*

#### Routes to Low-Self Esteem

Individuals can develop low self-esteem in a range of ways:

- They **might not have the skills** that they value. These children do not need adults to placate them with messages like "There, there, it doesn't matter" that they cannot do worthwhile tasks, but instead adults need to help scaffold them to achieve their goals so that they can feel proud of themselves.
- They may possess many of their ideal qualities, but **they do not realise it**. They do not appreciate their skills, their self-concept is impoverished. These children need more **positive information about their attributes**.
- Some children have **standards that are just too high**, such as gifted children. Adults do not want to teach them to lower their standards as their perfectionism is the engine that drives them to achieve, however they need adults to give them confidence that they can reach their ideals. This may involve teaching them to distinguish between those things worth doing well and those which do not matter so much.





### Developing a Healthy Self-Esteem

**Three routes are suggested to improve how children feel about themselves:**

1. Helping children become competent at skills which they value.
2. Developing their self-concept.
3. Ensuring that their ideals are reasonable.

- It is important for their self-esteem that children acquire skills such as being able to separate from their parents and performing self-care tasks at an appropriate age.
- At Heritage, we encourage children to attempt tasks for themselves, even if they make mistakes, so that they develop faith in their ability to learn and are willing to take risks.
- Success at tasks involves not only being able to perform the skill, but also being able to organise oneself to do it proficiently.
- At Heritage, we teach children how to concentrate, be considerate of others, plan each step of a task, check their approach is working, persist and change approaches as needed. Being able to control their own behaviour gives children a skill to feel proud of.

### Developing Children's Self-Concept

- It is important for children to have a realistic picture of themselves.
- To do this they need their families and educators to give them information about themselves so they can develop a comprehensive description of their skills and qualities.
- Acknowledging and celebrating a child's successes (not praising) is a powerful way to help children develop a healthy self-esteem.

### **Empowering Children**

- Adults often decide what children need and the way to deliver whatever the adults have decided they need.
- According to research by Dr Sue Packer, outcomes can be far better for vulnerable children and infants if adults reflect with them on their practices and pay close attention to the consequences of adult actions - both intended and unintended.
- By reflecting with children, adults allow them to have input into what happens to them, empowering them with a sense of autonomy and agency.

### **The Behaviour Guidance Approach**

- Heritage follows a "behaviour guidance" approach, incorporating child development theories and the research of Dr Louise Porter. The guidance approach aims to develop in children an understanding of how to be considerate of others and to think about the effects of their own actions on others (Porter, 2006). **Adults must teach children, not punish them** for not knowing how to act considerately.
- This contrasts with the "behaviourist or controlling approach" that uses rewards (such as praise, treats, stars, pocket money, preferred activities) and punishments (such as reprimands, time-out, corporal punishment) to induce children's compliance.
- Heritage educators understand that challenging behaviour is a normal part of each child's development and that children who require support do so to meet their **needs**. They *need* to be exuberant and to explore their social and physical world. Sometimes they will need support because they lack skills such as negotiating to solve problems.
- Considerable research has shown that this style of guidance produces children who are more cooperative, self-controlled, self-confident, independent and social.

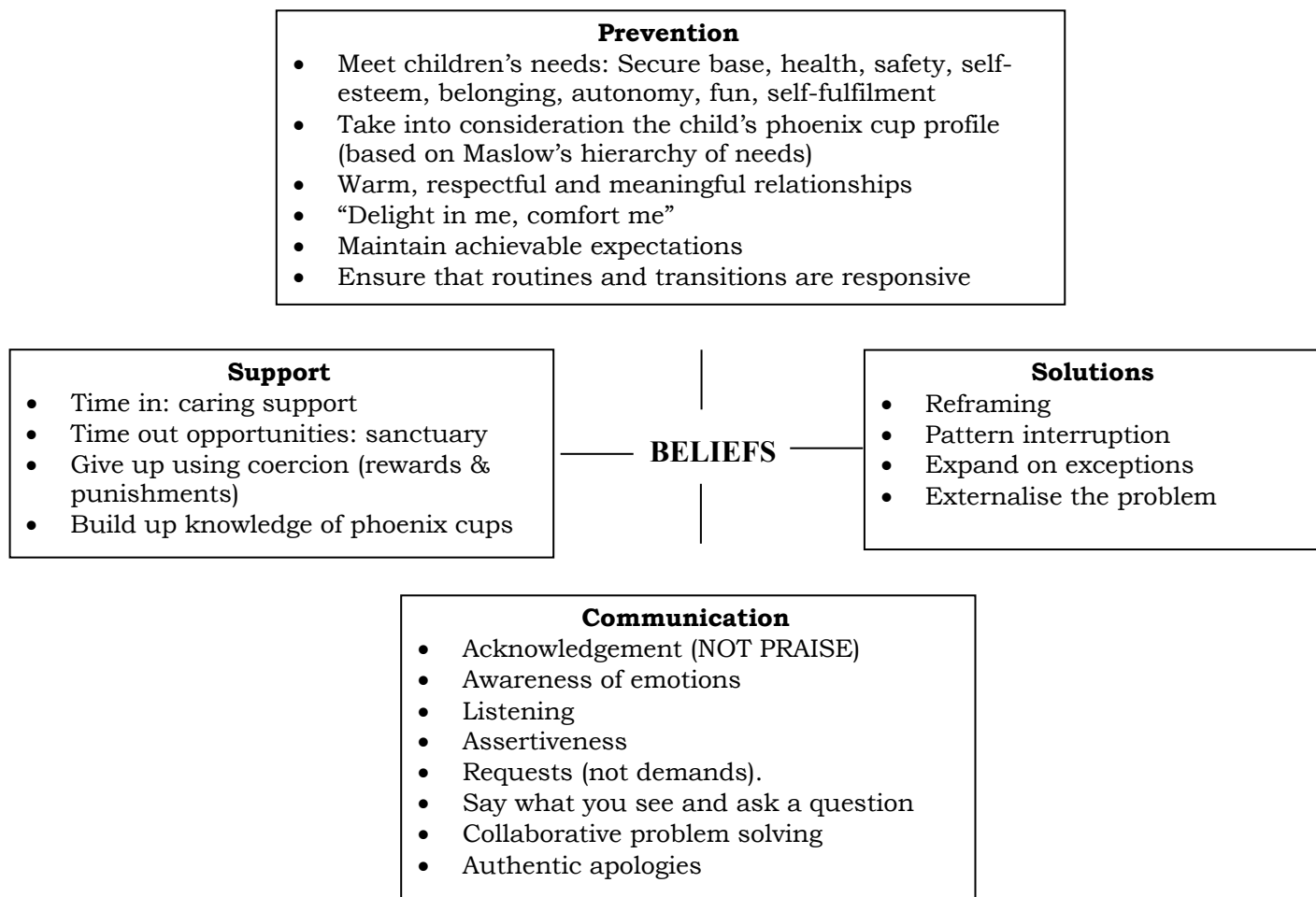
Specifically, the Behaviour Guidance approach comprises:

- Developing in children a **sense of helpful and unhelpful behaviour** so that, even without supervision, they act considerately, not because they might be punished for doing otherwise, but because it is the right thing to do.
- Teaching children **empathy, self-awareness** and to understand their own feelings/needs and identify the feelings/needs of others.
- Helping children to recognise that they **deserve respect, have choices and are supported** by adults when they need it the most.



- Giving children a sense of **potency** – that is, a sense that they can make a difference to themselves and their world and can act on their values.

### Elements of a Guidance Approach



Source: Adapted from L. Porter (2006)

#### Advantages of a Guidance Approach

- There are no unintended negative side effects such as increased fear of adults, feelings of intimidation or being defined by others as naughty.
- There are no damaging effects on the relationships between the child and adult.
- Help children to work with others rather than motivate them through rewards.

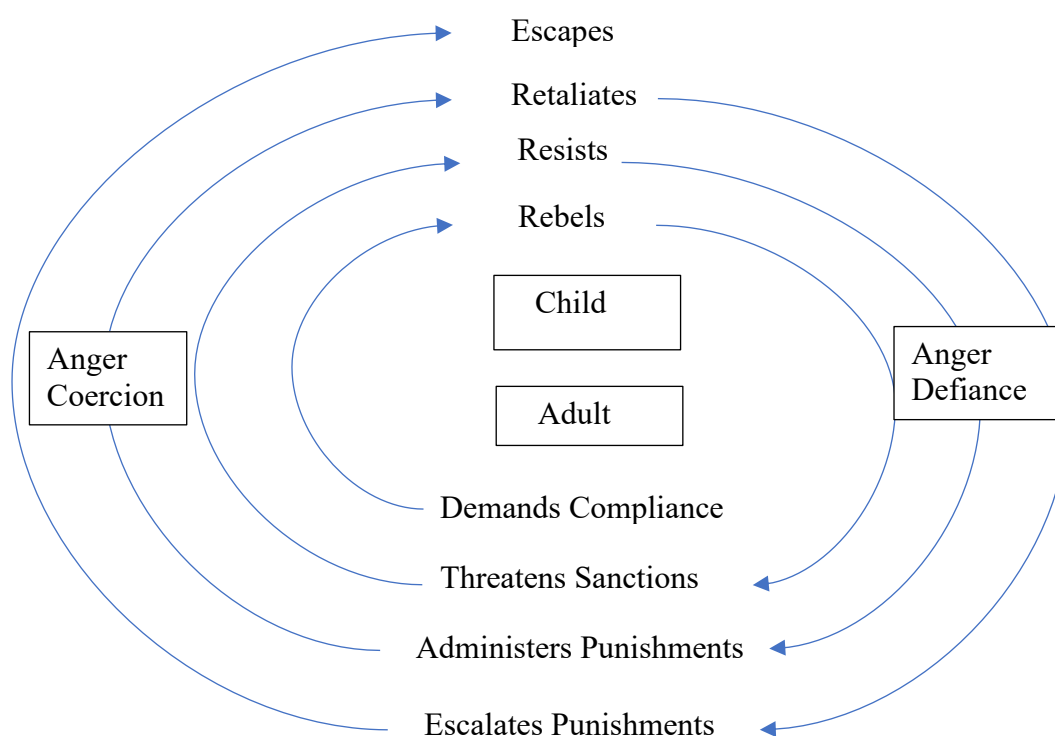
#### Disadvantages of Rewards and Punishments

- They can become addictive and escalate into abuse.
- They can teach children to ignore adults who threaten but do not deliver punishments.
- Children can be shunned by peers as naughty if adults discipline them.
- Punishment can intimidate onlookers.
- They are attempts to manipulate children to do things “our way”.
- The need for agency and to be self-determining is fundamental to all human beings and attempts at external control can excite secondary behaviour problems such as resistance, rebellion and retaliation, particularly with spirited children (Figure 3).



- They encourage children to think about what they will earn for their behaviour rather than the effects of their actions on others.
- Conformist children learn to comply but become submissive. they might avoid taking intellectual risks and being creative for fear of adult disapproval.
- Consequences work mainly for those who are co-operative anyway.
- Children’s intrinsic motivation to learn declines.
- Children become competitive to earn the rewards that are on offer.
- They teach children to control others through verbal/physical aggression and bullying.
- Children become discouraged if they cannot achieve inflated expectations.

**Figure 3: Escalating Demands and Defiance**



Source: Porter (2011)

**Table of Prevention Strategies**

Strategy	Educators must:
<b>Overarching Strategies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Follow the <b>Heritage Philosophy</b> and <b>Code of Conduct/Ethics</b> and deal equitably and respectfully with all families, children, other educators and early childhood professionals. Avoid making comparisons between children and between families.</li> <li>• Provide an <b>inclusive environment</b> when supporting each child to learn self-regulation and manage their own behaviour.</li> <li>• Take into account <b>the individual needs of each child</b> including their stage of development, abilities and seek to understand any reasons underlying their behaviour.</li> <li>• Understand behaviour guidance applies to all forms of behaviour not just those behaviours considered to be inappropriate or harmful and requires the same <b>commitment</b> and support for</li> </ul>



	<p>children as any other area of learning.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote <b>strong, consistent and meaningful relationships</b> as the best base for all children.</li> <li>• Work in <b>partnership</b> with families to guide children to acknowledge their feelings, manage and learn from their behaviours and to express their emotions in positive, non-threatening and productive ways.</li> <li>• Seek to <b>influence and guide</b> each child's behaviour rather than control it.</li> <li>• Use consistent behaviour support and guidance strategies based on current best practices, that <b>preserve the dignity and rights of the child</b> at all times.</li> <li>• Employ <b>patience, time, active listening skills</b> and commit to supporting children to problem solve, to develop a sense of agency to choose their own path and to develop the self-esteem necessary to change patterns of challenging behaviour themselves, rather than simply directing them.</li> <li>• <b>Respond to and acknowledge children's emotions</b>, such as happiness, anger, pleasure, fear, anxiety, frustration, sadness, and pride. Acknowledge the emotions experienced by children are significant. For example, an adult who is not scared of thunder must not trivialise the fear/anxiety expressed by a child.</li> <li>• <b>Intervene as a last resort</b>, when behaviour is perceived to be causing harm to the child or others.</li> <li>• View incidents as <b>"teachable moments."</b></li> <li>• Look to the <b>Phoenix Cup approach</b> and the <b>Dr. Louise Porter approach</b> for the correct response when an incident occurs.</li> <li>• Use the <b>"Say what you see, ask the question"</b> method when guiding behaviours, eg. when a child is climbing on a chair "I can see you want to climb. Can I show you a safe place to climb?"</li> <li>• <b>Reflect</b> on behaviour guidance approaches regularly with educators and families.<sup>22</sup></li> </ul>
<b>Planning the Environment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create physical environments, programs and routines that encourage positive behaviours by taking into account the individual needs of different learners and allowing children the space, time and needed for connection and positive interactions with educators and peers.</li> <li>• Ensure there are multiple resources available for babies and toddlers who may become easily frustrated when toys are limited or need to be shared.</li> <li>• Offer a program of activities based on learning through play that engage the children by allowing them the freedom to make choices according to their interests, while also encouraging children to investigate new ones.</li> <li>• Provide learning spaces that inspire wonder and extended periods of uninterrupted play.</li> <li>• Provide active energetic play spaces as well as quiet, peaceful areas, to allow children to be challenged, to meet their needs for risk taking and be able to retreat when they feel a need to.</li> <li>• Plan the pace and flow of the program to allow a balance of play experiences including individual and group, quiet and noisy, active and passive experiences.</li> <li>• Actively encourage children to develop their sense of ownership over the physical environment and encourage them to use quiet</li> </ul>

<sup>22</sup> Refer to: Attachments: Behaviour Guidance Service and Educator Reflection Checklists



	<p>spaces for solitary play and to calm down.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organise intentional grouping of children into small groups through the day based on their rhythms, interests and routines.</li> <li>• Ensure lighting and noise levels are calming and the noise level does not interrupt purposeful activity.</li> <li>• Implement consistent yet flexible arrangements around children's routines and interests and respond and adjust to children's needs.</li> <li>• Minimise transitions and ensure they are planned to reduce stress by offering a variety of materials, equipment and experiences that engage their interests, are culturally relevant and create a sense of belonging and security.</li> <li>• Give sufficient notice before changing activity and be available during transitions to settle children or redirect play as required.</li> <li>• Ensure that individual children's needs for food and rest are accommodated.<sup>23</sup></li> <li>• Regularly reflect on environments, routines and transitions and make changes to meet the evolving needs of children.<sup>24</sup></li> </ul>
<b>Modelling</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand that children learn from observing adults and these core lessons, instilled early on, become part of a child's psyche.</li> <li>• Understand modelling positive, considerate behaviours and consistent expectations for children encourages children to move towards considerate actions and supports an understanding of inter-dependence, reflecting the approach of Dr Louise Porter.<sup>25</sup></li> <li>• Provide examples of caring and co-operative behaviour, speak respectfully and listen actively, taking into account other people's feelings and opinions.</li> <li>• Model working collaboratively with other educators and demonstrate empathetic conflict resolution strategies with both adults and children.</li> <li>• Use a wide range of communication strategies with children, to demonstrate to children there are many approaches to use when they attempt to resolve conflict and organise their own feelings.</li> <li>• Use language that promotes empathy and understanding.</li> <li>• Ensure children feel secure and let them know educators are there to help and support them.</li> <li>• Understand modelling empathy provides children with a repertoire of examples and strategies to use themselves and supports children to manage their own behaviour in a way that tells the child <b>"I understand this is hard for you, I am here to help you."</b></li> </ul>
<b>Being Warm, Responsive and Emotionally Available</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish warm and respectful relationships with all children and treat them equally regardless of their behaviour and background.</li> <li>• Be familiar with each child's background and individual needs as given on enrolment.<sup>26</sup></li> <li>• Ensure children who are new to the service are settled sensitively and according to their individual needs.<sup>27</sup></li> <li>• Help children understand and manage their own feelings and support and encourage children to be respectful and empathetic towards each other.</li> </ul>

<sup>23</sup> Refer to: Sleep, Rest and Relaxation Policy

<sup>24</sup> Refer to: Curriculum and Program Planning Policy

<sup>25</sup> Refer to: Section on Theoretical Background

<sup>26</sup> Refer to: Creating Inclusion and Equity Policy

<sup>27</sup> Refer to: Enrolment, Orientation and Graduation Rooms Policy



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acknowledge that self-regulation skills develop gradually on a continuum, and that children’s capacity to apply these developing skills can change depending on their abilities, mood, health, family circumstances, situations they find challenging etc.</li> <li>• Understand that children may not have developed the appropriate strategies to express their emotions due to their age and/or stage of development.</li> <li>• Be emotionally available to assist children. Understand young children may need help to make sense of intense and confusing feelings such as anger, sadness, disappointment and jealousy.</li> <li>• Show a positive attitude and employ education and care giving strategies that demonstrate an understanding and empathy towards children who display behaviours that are not always consistent with their development and/or general disposition.</li> <li>• View children as capable and competent and approach situations from a strengths-based perspective.</li> <li>• Provide positive reinforcement and encourage a sense of identity and pride in each child.</li> <li>• Encourage children to take on different roles within groups.</li> <li>• Encourage children to use a range of communication strategies to express needs, wants and feelings.</li> <li>• Invite children to collaborate with educators.</li> <li>• Be aware of situations and group dynamics that may provoke children to display behaviours that need support.</li> <li>• Assist children to build friendships and express themselves appropriately with individuals and in groups. Promote a range of social skills such as group entry skills and negotiation as a way of understanding diversity and democracy.</li> <li>• Respond to each child’s behaviour in ways that maintain their dignity and rights. Take a moment and reflect on the best way to respond rather than reacting. If safety is an issue, intervention may need to be swift and firm, but must always be respectful.</li> </ul>
<b>Observing Children and Meeting Individual Needs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acknowledge children as individuals with a range of capabilities, temperaments, experiences and behaviours that may impact how they behave and cope in a group learning setting on any given day.</li> <li>• Understand children’s individual ability to connect with others and build relationships varies greatly.</li> <li>• Offer children individual support and guidance based on observing their behaviour which may be influenced by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Age and development, special or additional needs.</li> <li>○ Personality and temperament.</li> <li>○ General health, wellbeing and disability.</li> <li>○ Relationships with their family.</li> <li>○ Play and learning environments including the physical indoor/outdoor settings, the weather, the time of year, the time of day, eg separating from their families and settling into playing with their peers.</li> <li>○ Care-giving strategies and practices including how those strategies are implemented by educators.</li> <li>○ Relationships with educators, other children and visitors.</li> <li>○ External factors, such as family, home life, peer group experiences or media coverage of traumatic events.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Observe how individual children approach and interact with peers and adults. Discuss these observations with colleagues, families and children in order to develop strategies to assist children to form healthy attachments, relationships and friendships.</li> </ul>





	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be responsive and watch for signs that children are becoming isolated or withdrawn or finding it difficult to interact positively and participate in groups.</li> <li>• Understand that children who appear to be independent and do not seek adult help may also need support in building positive relationships with others.</li> </ul>
<b>Empowering Children</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a caring and respectful environment to assist everyone to feel part of the group and to take responsibility for their own wellbeing and the wellbeing of others.</li> <li>• Understand supporting children to manage their behaviour requires giving them some responsibility. This begins with having appropriate expectations (See below).</li> <li>• Support children's agency by enabling them to make choices and decisions and influence events and their world.</li> <li>• Provide children with an opportunity to implement their emerging skills and develop a strong sense of identity.</li> <li>• Implement strategies, practice and programs that support every child to work with, learn from and help others through collaborative learning opportunities.</li> <li>• Encourage children to help remind others of rules and limits.</li> <li>• Talk with children about their behaviour and let children know they are trusted.</li> <li>• Encourage children to self-regulate, eg, take themselves away from the group to have some quiet time when they need it.</li> <li>• Let children know educators are always there to help.</li> </ul>
<b>Establishing Limits and Intentional Teaching</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand that for children to learn to regulate their own behaviour they need help to understand expectations. Boundaries help them to organise their feelings and responses.</li> <li>• Children need the security of limits and knowing that when they need support with their behaviour, they will get it. Security enables children to feel happy and confident, promoting self-esteem.</li> <li>• Spend time discussing appropriate behaviour during group times including what is safe, what angers, what hurts and what is kind/helpful and why.</li> <li>• Refer to Bucket Filler Resources 0-9 Years: <a href="https://bucketfillers101.com/publications/">https://bucketfillers101.com/publications/</a> The Bucket Filler books aim to help children grow in kindness, self-control, resilience and forgiveness. Bucket Filler Rules:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Be a bucket filler. Be kind.</b></li> <li>○ <b>Do your best not to dip. Don't be mean.</b></li> <li>○ <b>Use your lid. Protect your bucket and the buckets of others.</b></li> </ul> </li> <li>• Tailor explanations of boundaries to the child's level of understanding, using a variety of communication strategies.</li> <li>• Understand that young children may not understand why it is okay to throw a ball outside but not inside; why they must wait to use equipment; why they must wait for an adult before crossing the street; why they cannot draw on the walls; why it is not appropriate to pull someone's hair to get them to move.</li> <li>• Give attention to appropriate behaviour such as, <b>"Thank you for waiting for your turn, Lyn"</b> or <b>"Thank you for finding Lucy's shoe, that was very kind of you, Adam."</b></li> <li>• Teach appropriate behaviour by giving simple explanations and offer alternatives so a child can make judgements/choices and in time, wise choices for themselves.</li> <li>• Use "Say what you see, ask the question", eg, <b>"I can see you wish to throw the sand. That might hurt someone. Can I show you</b></li> </ul>



	<p><b>where some balls are that you can throw safely?”</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid using ‘don’t’ and ‘no’.</li> <li>• Set safety limits for younger children and define them positively. For example, say, “<b>Children – walk inside, please</b>”, rather than, “Children, do not run inside”.</li> <li>• Vary communication styles and language with older children to negotiate limit setting, eg, at lunch time, ask older children:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why is it important to wash hands before eating food?</li> <li>• What could happen if you didn’t wash your hands?</li> <li>• Why do we need to sit down while we are eating?</li> <li>• What could happen if you tripped while you were eating?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Acknowledging and Celebrating (NOT PRAISING) Positive, Considerate Behaviour</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acknowledge attempts and positive behaviour and understand that this teaches children to <b>evaluate their own efforts</b>, whereas ‘praise’ gives an adult’s evaluation/judgement of the child’s efforts.</li> <li>• For example, when a child completes a task such as washing their hands before a meal, educators will identify the behaviour that reinforces the achievement and not label the worth of the individual. Instead of ‘good boy/girl’, respond with “<b>Thank you Lucy for washing your hands with soap before lunch</b>” or “<b>thank you for remembering to clean your hands before you eat.</b>”</li> </ul> <p><u>Examples of acknowledging Children’s Achievements</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are you pleased/happy with that? What do you think of that?</li> <li>• You look very pleased/delighted/proud of yourself.</li> <li>• I admire/respect/value/am impressed/appreciate what you did.</li> <li>• Congratulations/you did it!/Wow!</li> <li>• Thank you/I’m grateful/I appreciate that because...</li> <li>• Looks like you worked really hard on that.</li> <li>• Did you know you could do that?</li> <li>• Not only have you finished it, but you worked on it for ages.</li> </ul> <p>When the child responds with thanks, use natural non-patronising manners such as: “You’re welcome” or “It’s a pleasure” or “I hope you enjoy it.”</p>
<p><b>Labeling the Behaviour</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Display respect and empathy towards children by labelling the behaviour and not the individual child. This means that the behaviours will be managed, not the children.</li> <li>• Refrain from labelling children’s inappropriate or negative behaviour as ‘naughty’ or ‘bad’.</li> <li>• Replace traditional labels such as ‘good boy’ or ‘good girl’, which identify the individual but not the positive behaviour, with “<b>Good listening (behaviour)</b>” or “<b>I can see you’re trying really hard to stand in line Hassam. Good work.</b>”</li> </ul>
<p><b>Avoiding ‘Hollow Gestures’ and Power Struggles</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is important, when talking to the child, to get them to genuinely think about what they did and how that made others feel.</li> <li>• Understand that there is little point in getting children to say the words “I’m sorry” without the genuine feeling.</li> <li>• In situations where there are strong feelings and direct conflict, understand and act in ways that let the child know adults are there to help and do not take sides.</li> <li>• Aim for win-win situations. This may require some negotiation with the child and making some concessions. See below.</li> </ul>



### Conflict Resolution Strategies for Young Children

- Conflict resolution is an art rather than a science and varies with an individual's temperament, perceptions and history.
- Through observing adults and early interactions with siblings and peers, children use trial and error to discover how to express their feelings and define personal boundaries without undoing their connection with the people involved.
- Understand children need a lot of practise through experiencing everyday social situations with positive adult support is vital.
- It is important to never use time-out, yelling, anger or shaming/ lecturing to communicate with children they erode confidence and fuel undesirable behaviour by giving negative attention.
- Saying things like: "Look at Jonny's face, he is hurt, do you see how he looks? Do you see how your actions hurt Jonny?" is not effective as very young children may not have the cognition to understand this of others yet. Rather educators can help children manage these momentary impulses.
- It is challenging for adults to let go of the need to control children's disagreements and avoid emotional outbursts, however adult intervention can teach children they are dependent on adults to fix problems and incapable of handling conflicts themselves.
- Educators can wait, even if conflict seems intense. If no one's getting hurt, it is healthy for children to release these feelings.
- The more adults do for children in these situations, the less they learn to handle themselves. The challenge is to allow children to safely engage in conflict and resolve it their way, where safe to do, rather than letting adult discomfort or impatience dominate.
- This means allowing children to do it their way which may differ from an adult's way. Trusting children is a challenge for adults.
- Trust and patience precede learning, however that does not mean avoiding or neglecting to intervene. Depending on the age of the child, other strategies may be scaffolded.  
**Refer to:** Behaviour Guidance for Specific Behaviours by Age Group.
- Educators need to be ready to prevent harmful behaviours by calmly shadowing children who have demonstrated these behaviours in the past or seem in an out-of-sorts mood and divert behaviour when necessary. **Refer to:** Teachable Moments over-page



### Teachable Moments - When an Incident Occurs

- There are times when children's play requires guidance eg, to respect for others and resources.
- The educator's response is paramount for creating an environment of mutual respect and supporting the Heritage Philosophy. As a community we aim to look after all the people, animals, plants and resources in our community.
- "Teachable moment" strategies can be adapted to any age group and for children with individual/additional needs and link with our Philosophy/Acknowledgement of Country.

### Teachable Moments - Guidelines for Educators when an Incident Occurs

#### Educators must:

1. **Never** ignore a behaviour that is needs addressing, ie, is causing harm.
2. If unsure **ask for help** from a more experienced educator.
3. **Be reflective** and responsive and **look to the reasons why** the behaviour is happening, eg, the child's age/developmental stage/abilities, environmental factors, personality types, supervision levels, transitions underway, resources available etc.
4. **Never use time-out/anger/shaming/lecturing** to communicate with children.
5. **Try to distract/diffuse a situation and provide choices** to develop agency, e.g. A child does not want to sit down, say "Who would you like to sit next to?"
6. Positively guide situations and encourage empathy and understanding, by using the **"Say what you see, ask the question"** method (giving them an "out"), e.g. "I can see you want to throw sand. That might hurt. Can I show you balls you can throw safely?"
7. **Use a calm manner** to indicate expectations presenting it as a choice wherever possible, e.g. "You can stay in the sandpit and play safely, or you can ride a bike."
8. **Use positive guiding sentences**, i.e., instead of "Stop running", say "Stop please. We need to walk inside". A hand signal for **"Stop"** can help visualise the message.
9. If a harmful behaviour is not caught in time, matter-of-factly **remind the child of the limits**. "You want that toy, but it is not OK to hit" or model "Can I please have a turn?"
10. **Use respectful language**, explaining why the behaviour was not helpful and encouraging empathy and understanding, e.g. "It's OK to run outside. Inside there are games on the floor inside and you could trip and hurt someone."
11. If a child acts in a way that may harm themselves or hurt others (hitting, kicking, biting, throwing toys, climbing a fence), **consider re-directing**<sup>28</sup> the child from the area. (This would be a last resort).
12. **Be clear about the consequences** of harmful behaviour, eg, clean up mess, self-regulation time.
13. Follow through with the consequences, ie, calmly move the child away from the situation and allow them time to calm down, ie, **self-regulation time**.<sup>29</sup> Stay with the child to reassure and support them.
14. Let the child know their behaviour was not appropriate, allow the child to come up with their own alternatives, reassure them you are there to help if they need.
15. Help the child back into play eg, ask the child which activity they'd like to return to.
16. If a child is extremely distressed, **consider gently holding the child closely** as long as the child and educator are not in danger of injury.
17. **Restore a positive relationship** with the child, eg, later in the day, comment on a positive behaviour. **(For every 1 negative, try to do 5 positives).**

<sup>28</sup> Refer to: Definitions

<sup>29</sup> Refer to: Definitions



## Understanding Behaviour Guidance by Age Group

### Children under 3

At this stage, children generally:

- Use nonverbal gestures such as body movements, facial expressions and vocal sounds to make contact, eg, reaching out, cooing and crying.
- Show the first signs of kindness and empathy.
- Begin to respond to the feelings and needs of others.
- Begin to explore relationships while developing a strong sense of identity and agency.
- Explore and develop early language skills for a variety of social situations.

### Babies (0-18 months)

- Behaviour guidance begins at birth, along with other teaching and learning.
- When children need support between the age of 0-18 months, the aim is to be offering emotional support, acknowledging their emotions and setting up an environment that is appropriate for their age and needs.
- Educators must be ready to distract, guide, and re-direct attention and interest, and remove temptation.

### Toddlers (18 months to 3 years)

- Toddlers are egocentric - the world revolves around them. They have little understanding of other's needs, rights and feelings therefore when they hurt or offend others, they usually do not fully realise what they have done. They may do harsh things with good intentions, e.g. A two-year old gives a toy to a crying baby by dropping it on their head.
- Toddlers explore their world through hands on experience - poking, jabbing, pulling etc. They do not need to be stopped from interacting with other children, rather shown how to do it gently.
- It is characteristic for under 3's to lack willpower or self-control (they simply cannot stop themselves). Many acts that are labelled aggressive or impulsive are due to the child's inability to inhibit or stop due to their stage of development.

Educators will:

- Not expect them to share, play together or cooperate. Rather conflict can be minimised by distracting children from a situation and ensuring enough resources are available.
- Reserve their intervention for situations when safety or a child's wellbeing is at risk, e.g. biting, hitting and not necessarily taking things from other children.
- Understand disruptive behaviour is an attempt to meet a need and its intensity tells educators how important that need is to the child. Behaviour is children's loudest form of communication and the toddler age group are renowned for this.
- Care less about what the child is doing and try to work out why. Once educators know what inspired the behaviour, it will be easier to find a strategy for meeting that need.
- Focus on teaching social skills (refer to Barb O'Neill on facilitating turn taking in Table of Guidelines for Managing Specific Behaviours), listening skills, empathy and be ready to decode their strong feelings.
- Offer toddlers compassion, help and connection, so they feel understood and experience a release from their strong feelings and become familiar with what it is like to receive empathy. Empathy is respectful understanding for what another person is feeling. It is being connected to their feelings and needs. It is easy to empathise with children who are sad or distressed, but educators also need to be accepting and empathic when a child is acting in a ways that are inconvenient for them.

### **Preschool Children (3-5 Years)**

At this age, children will generally:

- Show more interest in playing with others than by themselves.
- Start to engage in structured games and play involving rules negotiated with others.
- Form friendships with children of a similar age.





- Develop social skills and competence via understanding the perspectives of others and rights and responsibilities within groups.
- Become less egocentric, have more advanced cognitive skills and know more about appropriate ways of behaving and have more self-control. They have more language skills and can understand words well.
- It is reasonable for educators to expect them to share, deal with situations using their words rather than anti-social behaviour, respond to requests from peers and adults, make choices and be more responsible for their own actions, accept consequences and be sympathetic towards other children and adults.

Table of Guidelines for Managing Specific Behaviours by Age Group

Behaviour / Situation	Age and Strategy Options
<b>Sharing and Taking turns; Negotiating with Peers and Displaying Empathy</b>	<p><b>Babies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The concept of sharing and taking turns does not develop until babies are around 18 months.</li> <li>• Allow infants to take toys as long as no-one is hurt, as this is on their short list of “playing together” possibilities.</li> </ul> <p>Educators can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Start to encourage by modelling, at the babies’ level, the passing backwards and forwards of toys as well as turn-taking with equipment.</li> <li>• Encourage the use of words for older babies in conjunction with actions to support them through situations. For example, using the words <b>“Stop” “Mine”</b> or <b>“William’s turn”</b> as the educator passes the toy to the other child.</li> <li>• Matter-of-factly explain the effect of behaviour on feelings and acknowledge the happy with the sad, such as <b>“Taking that toy has made William feel sad.”</b> When returning the toy to the other baby, staff will say <b>“Look William is happy now.”</b></li> </ul>
	<p><b>Toddlers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Toddler Room program will include play and educational activities which encourage turn-taking.</li> <li>• Toddlers will be encouraged to identify with their feelings and the feelings of others.</li> </ul> <p>Educators can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Model turn-taking and also make greater use of words with toddlers when talking through situations.</li> <li>• Encourage the use of words by toddlers, not hands, in conjunction with actions to help them negotiate with their peers.</li> <li>• Allow toddlers to take to toys provided no-one is being hurt. Educators may need to intervene to protect an older toddler’s project or when a child seems stuck in a pattern of toy taking.</li> <li>• Talk through the consequences of actions and how it makes the other child feel, acknowledging the happy and the sad (as for older babies).</li> <li>• <b>Note:</b> Inappropriate intervention might be to demand that toddlers share and take turns and offering ideas like, “How about you both hold the bucket and carry it together?”</li> <li>• Refer to the Barb O’Neil’s method for facilitating turn taking which incorporates <b>“Say what you see, ask the question?”</b></li> <li>• If it is too late to prevent harmful behaviour, matter-of-factly explain the consequences, e.g. <b>“You want that toy, but I won’t let you hit. Hitting hurts.”</b> Role model <b>“Can I please have a turn?”</b></li> <li>• Role model the empathy required to rectify situations. For example,</li> </ul>





	<p>educators can ask if the unhurt child would like to fetch a water bottle, applying an ice block or offer a cuddle to the hurt child.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore emotions and facial expressions using library resources and teachable moments during play.</li> </ul> <p><b>Preschoolers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preschool educators can use more complex words and expressions when talking preschoolers through a situation, encouraging them to identify with their feelings and the feelings of others.</li> <li>• Emotions can also be represented with the use of sad and happy faces.</li> <li>• The Barb O'Neill method of "<b>Say what you see, ask the question?</b>" and supporting social development and turn-taking can be effective with the preschool age group.</li> </ul> <p><u>Supporting Social Development – Barb O'Neill</u> Despite it being a very common technique, she recommends AGAINST telling a child to wait their turn. Why?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Because it clearly does not help many turn taking situations!</li> <li>• Many children are triggered by being told what to do or what not to do.</li> </ul> <p>What can educators do instead?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Say "<b>I can see you really want the truck, Jack</b>". (This is evident with non-verbal children too)</li> <li>• Stay there. Don't move too quickly.</li> <li>• Maybe repeat it a few times. Remain calmly and confident.</li> <li>• Maybe place your body in between the two children if things tend to escalate with that child. If this is the case, maybe say something like; "<b>I can't let you hurt Jill. I'm here to help you. I can see you are angry and want that truck</b>". (You may need to repeat this 100 times!)</li> <li>• This is NOT the moment for talking about better ways to behave, share, taking turns or being nice.</li> <li>• Your goal is to help Jack, who wants the truck, to communicate what he wants to the other child.</li> <li>• Then depending on the child's language and cognitive abilities options include prompting such as saying: "<b>Jack, tell Jill...I want a turn</b>" or "<b>Jack, ask Jill...can I have a turn?</b>" or "<b>Jack, you want the truck and Jill's playing with it, what should we do?</b>"</li> <li>• <b>Note:</b> Educators in this scenario are <b>NOT</b> saying Jill has to give up the truck. It is more important to make sure that Jack knows how to ask for what he wants and gets to practise it.</li> <li>• Jack may also need support/coaching/ teaching in other social skills such as when entering play with children. He may need help finding words like "<b>Can I play too?</b>" through educators modelling words and actions of cooperative, parallel play.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Identifying a Problem and Attempting to Solve it</b></p>	<p><b>Babies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nursery educators can assist babies and show them how to overcome the problem. For example, when a baby gets stuck on a bike and needs assistance to get off, or a baby needs assistance to retrieve a toy that has been taken by another baby (see <i>Sharing</i> above).</li> </ul> <p><b>Toddlers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educators can help toddlers to identify problems. They will talk through possible solutions and a better way of handling a situation. (see <i>Sharing</i> above).</li> </ul>



	<p><b>Preschoolers</b> Educators can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teach preschoolers to problem solve with assistance (see <i>Sharing</i> above) and use collaborative problem solving.</li> <li>• Define the problem using I-messages, eg, <b>'I understand that you...however I need you to...'</b> Ask: <b>'What are your ideas? What can we do about that?'</b></li> <li>• Select a realistic suggested solution that is mutually satisfactory and carry out solution.</li> <li>• Support the child, as if the behaviour were easy, and the child would already be doing it.</li> <li>• If the solution fails, repeat the process.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Active Listening to Educators</b></p>	<p><b>Toddlers and Preschoolers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One of the most important strategies educators can offer young children is to help them learn to listen more mindfully.</li> <li>• Listening is an active process. Attentive, conscious listening can help relax the mind, nervous system and muscles which increases the child's ability to focus and concentrate.</li> <li>• Physical activity, music and speech programs are three of the most effective strategies for promoting listening and concentration skills.</li> <li>• One simple strategy is for educators to ask children to put on their "thinking caps" by massaging their earlobes from top to bottom several times a day. This is a Brain Gym® activity<sup>30</sup> that stimulates the nerve endings in the earlobes for improved listening abilities.</li> <li>• <b>Note:</b> Celebrating diversity at Heritage is part of our Philosophy and it is important for educators to acknowledge that children listen and learn in different ways.<sup>31</sup></li> <li>• It is important to know the child and approach the situation in the way that best suits their learning style.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Managing Emotions Appropriately (Tantrums)</b></p>	<p><b>Preschoolers</b> Preschoolers are beginning to learn how to manage their emotions such as anger and frustration. Meltdowns are a sign that children are out of control of their feelings and can present themselves in four main ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Protesting tantrum:</b> thrashing, screaming, crying, spitting.</li> <li>• <b>Whinging/sulking:</b> passive version of protesting tantrum.</li> <li>• <b>Social tantrum:</b> bossing others, aggression.</li> <li>• <b>Uncooperativeness.</b></li> </ul> <p>"When a child is in a meltdown, they are beyond reason; and you cannot reason with people while they are being unreasonable... or put it another way, when a person is drowning, it is not the time to give swimming lessons." (Louise Porter, 2015, pg 175).</p> <p>In situations where a loss of emotional control (eg tantrum) occurs, an educator will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Give the child space to let their feelings out.</li> <li>• Stay with the child and support and reassure them, discussing with them what happened (Self-regulation Time).</li> <li>• Identify the cause of the tantrum and address it by discussing alternatives.</li> <li>• Assist the child to follow through with role modelled behaviour.</li> </ul>

<sup>30</sup> Refer to: References: Useful Websites

<sup>31</sup> Refer to: Creating Inclusion and Equity Policy; Curriculum and Program Planning Policy



	<p><u>Example:</u> A child will not co-operate with putting their hat on and loses emotional control by yelling and throwing themselves to the floor. An educator will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make sure they are in a safe space to let go or respectfully re-direct<sup>32</sup> them to a safe place.</li> <li>• Stay with the child until they calm down or assist them to do so by holding them close if appropriate <sup>33</sup> (as far as possible without the risk of injury to the educator if the child is very distressed).</li> <li>• Give reassurance and support. Discuss the issue calmly with the child. Use <b>“say what you see, ask the question”</b>.</li> <li>• Expect the child to follow through with hat wearing.</li> <li>• If they continue to be uncooperative, patiently work through the alternatives together again.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Biting</b></p>	<p><b>Background</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are different types of biting: teething, experimental, communicating frustration, exercising power, biting under stress etc.</li> <li>• Biting is one of the main ways that infants explore the world - putting everything into their mouths.</li> <li>• Altering a child’s impulsive responses to a situation requires patience, persistence and time for change.</li> <li>• Both educators and parents can feel angry and guilty when repeated biting behaviour occurs in a play environment and need support.</li> <li>• Educators can employ strategies to deter children from biting as a means of meeting their emotional needs and expressing feelings, and to protect children from being bitten either randomly or in response to an interaction with another child.</li> <li>• In an early learning setting it is not possible to provide one-to-one supervision and therefore Heritage cannot give a guarantee that biting will not occur. However, educators will ensure that all reasonable steps are taken to prevent or minimise biting.</li> <li>• Educators will ensure the play environment and daily routines allow for minimal opportunity for biting to occur especially in the toddler room grouping.</li> </ul> <p>Parents/Guardians are asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If a child has shown signs of biting in the home situation, families are asked to inform educators so that they are aware that they may attempt to bite while at Heritage and discuss appropriate strategies to ensure consistency between home and Heritage.</li> <li>• On receiving a report from Heritage that their child has bitten another child, Heritage educator’s will respectfully communicate with parents to discuss the circumstances.</li> <li>• If the biting continues, families are asked to work with educators to develop an individual Behaviour Guidance Management Plan.</li> </ul> <p><b>Babies</b></p> <p>Biting is a normal developmental behaviour for babies (see above) However, it is harmful where another child is bitten. Educators will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attend to the hurt child.</li> <li>• Use words and actions to let the baby know it is not OK to bite and how they have made another child feel hurt using simple words e.g. <b>“Biting hurts... no biting... Sam is sad”</b></li> <li>• Redirect the baby away from the child they have bitten so they can see</li> </ul>

<sup>32</sup> Refer to: Definitions: Re-direction

<sup>33</sup> Refer to: Definitions: Restraint



	<p>the affection and cuddles given by another educator. This must occur immediately as babies have short attention spans and cannot relate to the consequences if they are not immediate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Involve the child in helping give first aid while reflecting on emotions.</li> <li>• Respectfully return the baby to play promptly after the incident, but ensure they are closely supervised.</li> <li>• Complete an Accident/Incident Form and discuss it with parents to inform them of the steps being taken to prevent it happening again.</li> <li>• Inform the Room Leader or Director if the biting continues who will develop an individual <u>Behaviour Guidance Plan</u>. See next section: Individual Behaviour Guidance Management Plan.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Toddlers</b> Educators will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Watch for situations where two children might want the same toy and step in to distract them.</li> <li>• Supervise children known to bite closely and acknowledge their feelings, <b>“You were upset when Peter took your truck”. “If you feel angry tell me and I will help you”. “Biting is not OK. It hurts.”</b></li> <li>• Support a bitten child and include the biting child into the situation to develop empathy – show them the hurt.</li> <li>• Acknowledge what the toddler has done: <b>“Peter, you have bitten Aiden. This is not OK.”</b> Then acknowledge the other child’s feelings and the consequences: <b>“Aiden is hurt – he is crying.”</b> For a short time, Peter can watch as Aiden is comforted to become aware of the consequences of his actions.</li> <li>• Encourage the child to reflect on more helpful ways of dealing with the situation including how to use his words and not actions to handle it. <b>“Next time Peter, you could use your words and ask Aiden for a turn with the truck.”</b></li> <li>• Help the toddler back into a calming activity/play - they may be upset and need a cuddle/reassurance to support self-esteem.</li> <li>• Complete an Accident/Incident Form and discuss it with parents to inform them of the steps being taken to prevent it happening again.</li> <li>• If the behaviour continues, inform the Room Leader and Director who will develop an individual <u>Behaviour Guidance Plan</u>.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Preschoolers</b> Should a biting situation arise with preschoolers, it is essentially the same teaching method as for babies and toddlers, but with more words and suggestions, to help the preschooler solve the problem themselves. Educators will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure the child acknowledges the hurt they have inflicted on another child: <b>“Samantha, I can see you are frustrated but it is not OK to bite. You’ve hurt her arm.”</b></li> <li>• Encourage the child to take some self-regulation time to consider a more helpful way of doing things using problem solving skills: <b>“What would be a more helpful choice? How could you do it better next time?”</b></li> <li>• Encourage the child to make things right. The child may wish to offer acknowledgement in words (saying sorry) or actions (hug, gesture of friendliness). If the child is unable to do this alone, the educator could role model and discuss the issue again later.</li> <li>• Help the child back into play with the other children.</li> <li>• Complete an Accident/Incident Form and if the behaviour continues, inform the Room Leader and Director who will develop an individual <u>Behaviour Guidance Plan</u>.</li> </ul>



<b>Physically Aggressive (Hitting, Pinching, kicking) and Bullying</b>	<p><b>All ages.</b> Similar to approach for biting. Educators will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Give attention and support to the hurt child (call another educator if necessary)</li> <li>• Kneel and talk to the child directly.</li> <li>• Identify and explain what the unacceptable behaviour is and why. eg. <b>‘I see you are frustrated. Please be gentle with Tim, hitting hurts...’</b></li> <li>• If child is very upset, direct other children away. Stand nearby and when child has calmed, reassure the child that it will be all right.</li> <li>• Acknowledge the child for calming down.</li> <li>• Support the child to have self-regulation time and the allow child to consider alternatives.</li> <li>• Complete an Incident Form and discuss it with parents to inform them of the steps being taken to prevent it happening again.</li> <li>• If the behaviour continues, inform the Room Leader or Director who may develop a Behaviour Guidance Plan.</li> </ul>
<b>Swearing</b>	<p><b>Older Toddlers and Preschoolers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educators will ignore swearing if possible (eg, other children are not within hearing distance) as toddlers do not yet understand polite conventions or the meaning of swear words and may use them simply to get a reaction from adults.</li> <li>• If the child persists, educators will let them know it is not OK to use inappropriate words at Heritage and explain. “We don’t use those words at Heritage.”</li> <li>• This will be discussed this with parents, to ensure consistency.</li> </ul>
<b>Spitting on the Floor or at Others</b>	<p>Educators will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tell the child it is not OK to spit on the floor or at others and explain to older children it may spread germs.</li> <li>• Encourage older children to clean the area where they spat.</li> </ul>
<b>Not Wanting to Join in</b>	<p><b>Toddlers and Preschoolers</b> Educators will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage the child by providing choices e.g. “You can sit with Sarah or there is a spot next to Molly. Where would you like to sit?”</li> <li>• If they still do not want to join in, accept them as they are and make it clear they will help them join in if they want, but not force them.</li> <li>• Ensure there is no safety issue.</li> <li>• Educators may say, <b>“It is OK for you to watch for a while. If you need help or want to talk, I’ll be right here, and you can join in when you are ready.”</b></li> </ul>
<b>Separation Anxiety</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Separation anxiety is a normal part of development and usually occurs between <b>9-18 months of age</b> when the development of memory means the child becomes more wary of strangers, but can happen at any age and recur, particularly <b>around the age of 3</b> when children start to become more aware of the world and therefore shy in social situations.</li> <li>• Children experiencing such feelings need a predictable routine and lots of reassurance. Families also need emotional support from responsive and empathetic educators.</li> <li>• It can take 2-10 weeks to resolve and there is no quick-fix solution.</li> <li>• Communication and sensitivity are key to resolving separation anxiety.<sup>34</sup></li> </ul>

<sup>34</sup> Refer to: Enrolment, Orientation and Graduating Rooms Policy for more detailed strategies





### Individual Behaviour Guidance Management Plans

- Where a child is persistently unable to interact within developmentally appropriate limits of play and there is a risk of harm to others, Heritage management and educators will employ a Behaviour Guidance Management Plan in order to formally observe, plan, implement, evaluate and document the strategies used by educators to manage the inappropriate behaviour and support the child and family.<sup>35</sup>
- Such plans may be required for persistent swearing or biting/hitting/kicking other children or adults.
- Before employing an individual behaviour guidance management plan, it is important that educators identify the context of the behaviour and take into account individual developmental needs. For example, if a child consistently displays tiredness at lunch and then hits other children, it may be that the child's lunch needs to be scheduled earlier to meet their individual needs and minimise the risk of inappropriate behaviour, rather than employing a behaviour management plan.
- If the inappropriate behaviour continues, despite adjustments to the environment and the implementation of the various strategies outlined in this policy, an individual plan will be developed.
- At all times confidentiality will be maintained.<sup>36</sup>

#### An Example of an individual Behaviour Guidance Strategy: A Baby Continues to Bite.

- An educator may be allocated to shadow and give one-on-one support to the baby.
- A wristband may be used to identify the educator and be passed on to another educator if they leave the room. At **no time** will the biting baby be left unsupervised.
- The baby will be given positive attention to build self-esteem.
- The shadowing educator will help identify situations in which the baby may feel stressed or frustrated that may trigger the biting behaviour and support the baby to manage their behaviour.
- This may involve responding promptly and calmly to prevent any biting behaviour such as using the “**Stop**” hand signal and then distracting the child away from a situation to one they can cope with and finding another outlet for expressing their feelings.

Individual Behaviour Guidance Management Plans - Responsibilities	
<b>Educators will:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observe and record the child's behaviour including:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The children involved in the scenarios.</li> <li>○ The location, date and time</li> <li>○ A description of the behaviour/ injuries.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Reflect on a pattern or cause and propose strategies to modify the behaviour in line with this policy and the developmental needs of the child and other children in the group.</li> <li>• Ensure the child's family is supported and informed of any changes in observations, eg, if the behaviour is becoming more or less frequent.</li> </ul>
<b>The Room Leader will:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Notify the Director of the nature of the behaviour and possible underlying reasons/causes.</li> <li>• Contact the child's parents promptly and organise a meeting, including other educators as deemed necessary to discuss:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Any background information which may be relevant in establishing a reason for the behaviour.</li> <li>○ Appropriate strategies for dealing with the behaviour which can be implemented consistently both at Heritage and at home. This may include seeking additional support from external agencies.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Understand it may be difficult for the family to hear 'negative' information about their child and provide positive feedback as well.</li> </ul>

<sup>35</sup> Refer to: Attachment: Individual Behaviour Guidance Management Plan

<sup>36</sup> Refer to: Privacy and Confidentiality Policy





	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Document agreed strategies on the Behaviour Management Plan.</li> <li>• Organise a follow-up meeting (preferably within 2-3 weeks).</li> <li>• Inform all educators who are involved with the child that a Behaviour Management Plan is in place and provide them with a copy.</li> <li>• Continue to reflect and organise regular follow-up meetings to evaluate and adjust the Behaviour Management Plan as required.</li> <li>• Document all discussions, strategies and evaluations of strategies.</li> </ul>
<b>The Director will:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attend the second meeting and discuss progress and whether alternative approaches need to be considered. This may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Referring the child to a Paediatrician or another agency to assess the child for any additional needs or underlying medical reasons for the behaviour such as Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).<sup>37</sup></li> <li>○ A recommendation to the family such as reducing the number of days the child spends at Heritage or shorter days.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Where an underlying condition has been identified, implement an Additional Needs Management Plan as required. See: next section.</li> <li>• Where the child is deemed to be not coping in the early learning environment and a danger to him/herself or others at Heritage, contact the family and ask them to take the child home for the day.</li> <li>• If at any time it is deemed that the child's parents are not supporting the process and the child's behaviour is not improving, the Director, in consultation with the Management Committee, may reassess the child's ongoing enrolment.<sup>38</sup></li> </ul>
<b>Families will:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue with the agreed behaviour guidance strategies at home to ensure a consistent approach.</li> <li>• Talk to the Room Leader or Director if experiencing difficulties implementing the strategies at home as soon as possible, before the second meeting.</li> </ul>

### Managing Challenging Behaviours with Children who have Additional Needs

- Where a child has been identified as having additional needs, it is important for educators to remember that some of the behaviours displayed by such children simply cannot be helped by the child.
- Educators may use several common strategies to guide behaviour including:
  - Keeping the daily routine and physical environment consistent.
  - Using visual cues to communicate the daily routine and instructions to children.
  - Keeping instructions short or breaking them down into parts. See also table below.
- A **Strategic Inclusion Plan** (see: External Support Agencies) will be created as required to support the child's education and care within the service environment.<sup>39</sup>

Example of Additional Need	Educator Strategies
<b>Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) or Oppositional Defiance Disorder (ODD)</b>	<p>The following strategies can assist educators with managing challenging behaviour displayed by a child with these disorders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep time spent doing one activity short. If the child is becoming distracted, remind them of the other activities available before the behaviour escalates.</li> <li>• Set up a self-regulation space for when the child becomes upset where educators can continue to fully supervise the child.</li> </ul>

<sup>37</sup> Refer to: Creating Inclusion and Equity Policy

<sup>38</sup> Refer to: Non-Compliance Policy

<sup>39</sup> Refer to: Creating Inclusion and Equity Policy; Additional Needs Management Plan



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wait until the child is calm before trying to talk to them. A child may be unable to listen when they are upset or angry.</li> <li>• Label children's feelings so they understand they are valid.</li> <li>• Explain, in a developmentally appropriate way, alternative ways deal with these feelings in a more helpful way in the future.</li> <li>• Provide experiences to allow the child to release their energy in a socially acceptable way.</li> </ul>
<b>Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)</b>	<p>Children with ASD can display many different behaviours. The following strategies can assist with managing these behaviours:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow the child to look down or away while you are talking to them. Making the child look at your eyes is distressing for them and may make it difficult for them to hear what you are saying.</li> <li>• Allow the child to sit at the front of the group during group activities to minimise distractions from other children.</li> <li>• If a child is hypersensitive allow them to avoid activities which may distress them. For example, if a child is sensitive to sound, give them an alternative activity away from the rest of the group during music experiences.</li> </ul>

### Working with External Professionals and Support Agencies

- Educators will collaborate with external professionals and specialist services as required. Children with a diagnosed additional need will often have other professionals who work with them. These can include early intervention workers, speech pathologists, occupational therapists or child psychologists. These professionals play an important role in the care of the child and can assist with developing strategies to support their ~~manage~~ behaviour.
- Where it is deemed necessary, the services of external agencies will be sought to help support a child's behaviour and inclusion in the program, such as through the Inclusion Support Program.<sup>40</sup>
- Where relevant, Heritage educators may receive professional development from the external professionals working with children, who may also be invited to a staff meeting to share some information about the additional need and what behaviours to expect.

### Supporting Children through Difficult Situations

When a child, family, educator or the Heritage service as a whole, experiences a traumatic event, eg, car accident, fire, sudden illness or death or violent situation, Heritage educators will provide appropriate support to aid their recovery. Our educators understand that children react in different ways depending on their nature, stage of development and how the individuals around them react and may:

- Have physical symptoms such as stomach aches or headaches.
- Become anxious and have separation anxiety.
- Suffer sleep problems or have nightmares.
- Re-live the experience through drawing or play.
- Lose interest in activities.
- Lose confidence and show regressive behaviours.

Educators may use the following strategies:

- Reassure the child they are safe, but only if they really are.
- Talk through the situation with the child honestly, without going into frightening detail.
- Ensure the child has not jumped to wrong conclusions, eg, thinking they are responsible for the situation.
- Let the child have their say and talk about how their feelings are normal and how everyone reacts differently.

<sup>40</sup> Refer to: Creating Inclusion and Equity Policy



Families may use the following strategies:

- Give children a sense of control of their environment and allow them to make minor decisions such as what to wear/eat/play with.
- Allow children plenty of time to play and do physical exercise to burn off stress hormones and promote sleep.
- Encourage relaxation through story times and cuddles.
- Limit stimulants such as sugar.
- Talk through the situation, be understanding, provide emotional support and model coping strategies and seek help for themselves if necessary.

## Planning Excursions

Prior to excursions, Room Leaders will:

- Ensure quality adult-child ratios and adequate supervision taking into account the venue and the individual and additional needs of the children attending through a thorough Risk Assessment.<sup>41</sup>
- Investigate the excursion venue ahead of time to identify situations which may lead to disruptive behaviour, such as having to queue for up to 30 minutes, and will plan how these situations will be managed.
- Establish clear behaviour guidance limits and strategies and communicate these to children, educators and family volunteers.

## The Role of the Family in Behaviour Guidance

- Heritage recognises that the role of families, especially parents/guardians is crucial to the success of behaviour guidance at Heritage. Developing collaborative partnerships that involve respectful communication about each child's learning helps families and educators adopt a holistic and consistent approach.
- Heritage educators play an important role in helping families support and guide their child's behaviour in positive and effective ways.
- Heritage recognises it is important to inform families about the service's philosophy and approach in regard to supporting children's behaviour and self-regulation. The Director will inform families about the Behaviour Guidance Policy on enrolment and will seek information about strategies used at home and share this with educators.<sup>42</sup>
- Families are encouraged to express their thoughts, expectations and feelings openly with educators and the Director. At any time, parents can discuss their child's progress with individual Room Leaders for brief periods. For an in-depth discussion, Heritage asks that parents make an appointment with the Director or Room Leader. In addition, Heritage educators will conduct Parent Interviews three times per year.<sup>43</sup>
- Families will be provided with regular opportunities to contribute to the development and review of any Behaviour Guidance or Strategic Inclusions Plans which have been put in place to support their child while at Heritage.
- Heritage understands that families may need support as it is hard to hear negative feedback, and educators must respond in non-judgemental ways, taking a positive, strengths-based approach when discussing the child and empathising with the family.
- Educators will at all times take a professional approach means that even when unsure of a solution, educators must present a positive attitude to families, and work collaboratively to identify options to solve problems.
- Heritage educators will aim for a consistent approach with families regarding behaviour guidance, however Heritage asks that families recognise that some behaviour guidance strategies or practices established in the home may not be appropriate in the early learning environment.
- Where opinions differ regarding behaviour guidance, educators may need to seek support from colleagues, reflect on the guidelines in this policy and negotiate solutions

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<sup>41</sup> Refer to: Excursions and Incursions Policy

<sup>42</sup> Refer to: Enrolment, Orientation and Graduating Rooms Policy

<sup>43</sup> Refer to: Curriculum and Program Planning Policy; Communication and Family Involvement Policy



that promote the best outcome for the child.

- Families will be encouraged to contribute to the review of the Behaviour Guidance Policy and Procedures as part of the service policy review cycle and as needed.

## Recognising Inappropriate Discipline

The following are examples of inappropriate discipline which may constitute a serious breach of the National Law and/or Regulations and may be considered criminal matters:

- Hitting, pushing, slapping, pinching, or biting a child
- Force-feeding a child
- Yelling at or belittling a child
- Humiliating a child
- Physically dragging a child
- Locking children away (or isolating them)
- Depriving a child of food or drink
- Unreasonable restraining of a child (this may include restraint in a highchair)
- Excluding children from events
- Consistently moving children to the office or other space away from the play areas
- Moving children to another room as punishment
- Verbally or physically threatening a child.

Other examples of inappropriate practice are:

- Negative labelling of child or family
- Criticising a child's actions or behaviours
- Discouraging a child from taking part in activities
- Blaming or shaming a child
- Making fun of or laughing at or about a child
- Using sarcastic or cruel humour with or to a child
- Excessive use of negative language such as, "no" "stop that!" "don't..." "you never..."

## Reporting Obligations

### ACT Regulatory Authority (CECA)

- Under National Law Section 174, an incident of inappropriate discipline (corporal punishment or any discipline that is unreasonable in the circumstances) must be reported to the ACT Regulatory authority (CECA).
- Reports must be made through the **ACECQA portal site**.<sup>44</sup>
- It is an offence to fail to notify the Regulatory Authority of:
  - Serious incidents (within 24 hours)
  - Complaints of serious incidents (within 24 hours)
  - Circumstances posing risk to the health, safety or wellbeing of a child at an education and care service (within 7 days)
  - Any incident or allegation that physical or sexual abuse of a child or children has occurred or is occurring while the child/ren are being educated at the service (within 7 days).

### The ACT Ombudsman

The Heritage Committee must notify the ACT Ombudsman<sup>45</sup> as soon as possible, and within at least 30 days, of becoming aware that an employee (including volunteers and others engaged to provide services to children) has engaged in:

- Offences against the *Education and Care Service National Law* (inappropriate discipline or offences relating to protecting children from harm).
- Ill-treatment of a child (including emotional abuse, hostile use of force/physical contact, neglect and restrictive intervention).
- Psychological harm.

<sup>44</sup> Refer to: Definitions

<sup>45</sup> Refer to: Reportable Conduct Policy



### Police

- Instances of physical and sexual abuse of children are crimes and must be reported to ACT Policing without delay. For example, physical punishment is a crime when it falls outside the bounds of “reasonable chastisement”.
- Police must be contacted on 000 if it is believed a child is in immediate danger.

### Professional Development and Wellbeing

Educators will be:

- Professionally qualified and aware of appropriate behaviour for varying age groups.
- Assessed during the recruitment process on their knowledge of age appropriate and up to date behaviour guidance management strategies.
- Informed during the induction process of the Behaviour Guidance Policy and Procedures.
- Provided with regular training days to update their professional knowledge on behaviour guidance. Extra training will be scheduled with external professionals as needed.
- Provided with opportunities to informally discuss ways to deal with children who display inappropriate behaviours at staff and room meetings.<sup>46</sup>
- Supported to manage their own wellbeing and to support their colleagues. Relevant resources such as the Be You Wellbeing Plan for Educators will be provided.  
<https://beyou.edu.au/resources/tools-and-guides/wellbeing-tools-for-you><sup>47</sup>

### Non-Compliance

- Heritage will not tolerate the use of physical or mental punishment, restrictive practices, isolation, intimidation or negative labelling by educators, students, volunteers or visitors to Heritage under any circumstances.<sup>48</sup>
- Heritage families agree to respect and adhere to all Heritage policies and procedures.
- Should the Director raise a concern with a family according to the guidelines in this policy, and the family will not work together towards a solution, the Heritage Non-Compliance Policy and Procedures may be invoked. For example, where a family refuses to accept educators’ observations that their child repeatedly bites other children, or the family refuses to engage in developing a behaviour guidance strategy with educators, then the safety of other children and educators is deemed to be at risk.

### Privacy and Confidentiality

- Heritage is committed to maintaining and respecting children’s and families’ right to privacy and confidentiality in relation to children’s developmental records and when behaviour management plans are developed and implemented.
- At no time will educators discuss the behaviours of specific children in front of other children or adults (families, visitors etc). These discussions must take place in private such as in the office or staff room.
- Information concerning a child’s behaviour is not to be conveyed to families in front of their child. If necessary, a time will be organised for a private discussion.
- When children or families express concerns to educators about a particular child’s behaviour, such conversations will be discreet and confidential.<sup>49</sup>

### Policy Evaluation and Review

In order to assess whether the aims of this policy have been achieved, the service will:

- Regularly seek feedback from everyone affected by the policy regarding its effectiveness.
- Monitor implementation, compliance, complaints and incidents in relation to this policy.
- Keep the policy up to date with current legislation, research, policy and best practice in relation to this policy.

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<sup>46</sup> Refer to: Reportable Conduct Policy

<sup>47</sup> Refer to: Work Health and Safety Policy

<sup>48</sup> Refer to: Creating Inclusion and Equity Policy

<sup>49</sup> Refer to: Privacy and Confidentiality Policy





- Revise the policy and procedures as per the service policy review cycle and as required.
- Notify parents/guardians at least 14 days before changing this policy or procedures.

## Related Policies

Name	Location
Child Protection Policy	
Communication and Family Involvement Policy	Heritage website:
Complaints and Grievance Management Policy (Staff and non-Staff)	Policies and
Curriculum and Program Planning Policy	Procedures in
Creating Inclusion and Equity Policy	Members Area.
Interactions with Children Policy	Policy and
Enrolment, Orientation and Graduating Rooms Policy	Procedures
Complaints and Grievance Management Policy	Manuals in Main
Heritage Code of Conduct/Ethics	Office, Front
Heritage Philosophy Statement	Entrance and Staff
Non-Compliance Policy and Procedures	Resources Room.
Privacy and Confidentiality Policy	Family Handbook
Reportable Conduct Policy	and Educator
Supervision Policy	Handbooks
Work Health and Safety Policy	

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### Legislative References

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### Useful Websites and Factsheets

**Barb O'Neill:** <https://www.transformchallengingbehavior.com/>

**Brain Gym:** <https://braingym.org.au/>

**Bucketfillers:** <https://bucketfillers101.com/>

**Dr. Louise Porter:** <http://www.louiseporter.com.au>

**Fraser Child and Family Centre:** [www.fraser.org](http://www.fraser.org)

**Inclusion Support Program (ISP):** <https://www.education.gov.au/inclusion-support-program-isp>

**Martin Seligman:** [www.authentic happiness.sas.upenn.edu](http://www.authentic happiness.sas.upenn.edu)

**Parentline:** <http://parentlineact.org.au/>

**Phoenix Support:** <https://www.phoenix-support.com.au/>

**Parentlink:** <https://www.parentlink.act.gov.au/>

**Raising Children Network:**

[http://raisingchildren.net.au/articles/encouraging\\_good\\_behaviour.html](http://raisingchildren.net.au/articles/encouraging_good_behaviour.html)

**Ross Greene:** [www.livesinthebalance.org](http://www.livesinthebalance.org)

**Red and Green Choices:** <http://www.redandgreenchoices.com/articles.htm>

**Steve Biddulph:** [http://www.stevebiddulph.com/Site\\_1/Home.html](http://www.stevebiddulph.com/Site_1/Home.html)

**What is Self-Regulation?**

<https://raisingchildren.net.au/toddlers/behaviour/understanding-behaviour/self-regulation>

**Encouraging Good Behaviour. 15 Tips:**

<https://raisingchildren.net.au/toddlers/behaviour/encouraging-good-behaviour/good-behaviour-tips>

**Child Biting:** <https://www.parentlink.act.gov.au/parenting-guides/babies-toddlers-and-young-children/children-biting>

**Challenging Behaviour, Toddlers and Young Children:**

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**The Terrible Twos and Threes – Your Child's Behavioural Development:**

<https://www.rch.org.au/uploadedFiles/Main/Content/ccchdev/CPR-Vol24-No2-family-info-sheets-combined.pdf>

### Version Control and Change History

Version Number	Approval Date	Approved by	Author and Amendments
1	October 2001	Management Committee	
2	July 2009	Management Committee	Complete rewrite to meet 2009 Standards
3	Sept 2009		Amended in consultation with Bobbi Cook, Child and Youth Behaviour Therapist.
4	May 2013	Management Committee	Author: Julia Charters Updated Rationale and References. Added Behaviour Guidance Flow Chart. Restructured Managing Behaviours by Age Group. Added "Great to be Green" Guidance Strategy'. Added guidelines for establishing Limits, Planning the Environment, Swearing, Spitting, Refusing to Join in, Separation Anxiety, Behaviour Management Plans, Confidentiality, Support Agencies, Excursions, Managing Behaviour with Children with Additional Needs.



5	June 2015	Management Committee	Added new examples of behavioural guidance based on Louise Porter's presentation. Removed old, less inclusive practices.
6	July 2018	Management Committee	<p>Added Phoenix Cups strategies by Sandy Phoenix and updated behaviour support strategies after Heritage Educators Development Day hosted by Dr Louise Porter and Sandy Phoenix.</p> <p>Updated incident management strategies. Removed old version: When a specific incident occurs, Heritage educators will follow a simple but effective form of behaviour guidance which allows children to learn from their inappropriate the choices without the use of punishment and which is adapted to each age group. Each incident is viewed as a "teachable moment".</p> <p>In general, when an incident occurs, educators will let the child know that the behaviour is not OK as explained below. They:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acknowledge the act (what has occurred).</li> <li>• Acknowledge the feeling or hurt the behaviour has caused the other person.</li> <li>• Consider respectfully moving the offending child away from the situation.</li> <li>• Suggest/discuss an alternative way of behaving before returning to play.</li> <li>• If the behaviour continues, develop a Behaviour Guidance Management Plan.</li> </ul>
7	August 2019	Director	Added restrictive practices points after attending Senior Practitioner Seminar by Sue Packer.
8	12 October 2021	Management Committee	<p>Author: Julia Charters</p> <p>Added Contents page and Definitions.</p> <p>Expanded Rationale to include ECA Code of Ethics, Nationals Law and Regulations, Quality Standards, EYLF Principles &amp; Outcomes.</p> <p>Added Summary of Responsibilities.</p> <p>Expanded Theoretical Background to include Circle of Security.</p> <p>Expanded and re-organised Strategies into tables to improve readability. Added more details on Barb O'Neill's method: <b>Say what you see. Ask a Question.</b> Added Bucket Filler Resources.</p> <p>Added sections on Identifying Inappropriate Discipline and Reporting Obligations. Updated all references and links. Added attachments: Service Checklists and ACECOA Factsheets.</p>