

# SUPPORTING AND GUIDING CHILDREN'S SOCIAL COMPETENCE POLICY



## Rationale

All early childhood services must develop and implement a written policy on practices for child behaviour which meet the requirements set out in the Education (Early Childhood Services) Regulations 2008(as amended May 2016) Reg. 43 (Criterion C10)

There should be clear guidelines on appropriate and inappropriate behaviour, agreed to among parents and adults who work with children and relating to children's different ages and development. (Te Whāriki, Belonging Goal 4).

1. **For infants;** Infants' behavior on both their good days and their bad days is accepted without judgement, and the programme has sufficient flexibility to accommodate natural variations.
2. **For toddlers;** Toddlers' intensity of feelings is understood, accepted and dealt with, and their conflicting feelings are seen as a normal and important part of their development. Consistent and manageable expectations of limits are set
3. **For Young Children;** There should be clear guidelines on appropriate and inappropriate behavior, agreed to among parents and adults who work with children and relating to children's different ages and development
4. **For adults;** adults should be consistent, reliable, and realistic in their expectations and responses and should foster harmonious working relationships with other adults.

The programme provides frequent opportunities for children to make their own decisions and be self-reliant.

## Objectives

1. To provide children with opportunities to develop social competence in a variety of situations
2. To give guidelines and strategies for staff on positive behavior management to ensure that every child is given dignity and respect at all times
3. To endeavor to ensure the safety of everyone in the centre at all times
4. To ensure that Hagley Community College Preschool will be a '*no hitting place*' and *no punitive discipline* will be used by anyone in the centre
5. To ensure that all procedures are equitable, inclusive and culturally appropriate for this community.

## Responsibilities

The Hagley Community College Preschool Trust is responsible for the administration of this policy, which is implemented by the Pre-school Director and all staff.

**Guidelines** : To be read in conjunction with the Education (Early Childhood Services) Regulations 2008 (as amended May 2016).

**1. Guidelines for adult practice should:**

- Be based on the assumption that children may have sound motives and reason for their actions but are not communicating these effectively
- Not assume that children know what the required behaviour is – what is common sense to an adult may not be so to children
- Be based on the understanding that pro social behaviours are essential to children’s wellbeing – it is important that teachers provide opportunities and activities that promote kindness, caring and sharing – asking a child to say “sorry” is not a pro social behaviour.
- Look at the situation from the children’s perspective, asking questions such as ‘do adults clearly model the desired behavior?’ ‘are rules applied consistently by all adults?’ ‘how similar are the early childhood service’s rules to the ones children are familiar with at home?’
- See issues of conflict as an opportunity to teach children how to manage their feelings and responses
- Support the development of a shared understanding of the limits and boundaries of children’s behaviour. Which “rules” are necessary, which are flexible, which are negotiable, and how well do the rules achieve their intended function

**Desirable adult behaviours are those which:**

- Are responsive, reciprocal, positive and encouraging.
- Are consistent, reliable and realistic
- Respect children’s preferences and involve children in decisions about their participation in activities
- Implement strategies, which include all children
- Model and promote non-discriminatory behavior
- Use positive terms to reinforce appropriate behavior
- Foster harmonious working relationships with other adults
- Ensure that each child receives positive feedback each day
- Avoid attaching blame
- Focus on what the child could achieve

**2. Strategies for supporting infants:**

- Teachers will manage floor space and programme activities that allow infants to be included safely in the company of other children and have a safe area of floor space.

- Uncluttered space to be provided for mobile infants allowing them to move around unhindered and at their own pace.
- Teachers will make eye contact and use each child's name first when talking to infants.
- Talk to infants about what the other children are doing and encourage their interest in other children.
- Include infants in appropriate social happenings
- Routines and activities for infants will be flexible to meet the needs of individual children.
- The preschool will, as far as practical, have familiar teachers in the under two room at all times.

### **3. Strategies for supporting toddlers:**

- Teachers will provide the opportunity for toddlers to help in the care of others, thereby helping them to develop empathy for others.
- Sufficient resources will be provided to minimise conflicts over possessions and the need for toddlers to wait.
- Equipment should be spaced to minimise the need for children to push and feel frustrated
- Noise levels to be monitored and quiet activities offered.
- Activities that encourage turn taking and co-operation among children will be offered
- Teachers will at all times be realistic about toddler's ability to co-operate, take turns and wait for assistance.
- Time and space will be available for children who want to be "on lookers" to allow them to sit apart and observe an activity / other children at play.
- Teachers will be consistent and set manageable limits and expectations having regard for each child's stage of development and understanding.
- Adults should make eye contact with children, use their name and use clear and simple directions and establish clear and consistent rules.
- Familiar staff will work with both infants and toddlers so that teachers can get to know individual children's dispositions. It is important that under - two teachers enjoy working with that particular age group.
- Teachers will supervise toddlers closely to allow for speedy intervention and mediation over conflicts.
- Opportunities will be provided for toddlers to be involved in both small group and individual play.
- Teachers will model appropriate words and actions, using simple words to describe a preferred behaviour.- (positive non-verbal gestures and kind acts are more appropriate in promoting pro social skills than asking a child to say "sorry")
- Options will be given such as time limits, redirection -finding an alternative activity or introducing an alternative activity.

- When a toddler loses control, he /she will be given one to one guidance with a caring adult. Children with verbal skills should be encouraged to say how they feel.
- Teachers will communicate regularly with parents to foster a good working relationship, to share information regarding their child and to try to maintain consistency between home and centre.

#### **4. Strategies for supporting young children:**

- Make eye contact with the child, use their name and use simple and clear directions
- Role model appropriate words and actions and work as a team to be consistent, reliable and realistic in their expectations.
- Acknowledge and talk to children about their feelings – use activities to support children to identify their emotions
- Intervene quickly to prevent any child being hurt, provide praise to the child for not carrying out the action (even if this is because the adult has taken control)
- State a preferred action clearly, avoiding a focus on the undesirable behavior
- Set up opportunities for children to display appropriate behavior and give positive feedback to the child/ren when this happens (comment on and describe appropriate behaviours when they occur)
- Let children know when their behavior is becoming unacceptable and what the consequence of that behavior will be (remind children of the rules and their rationale as needed)
- When a child behaves inappropriately towards another, talk to them about feelings and emotions. Ask how they think other child feels, does she look sad, angry? (use the ‘emotions’ display photos, puzzles or books), talk about kindness and caring rather than asking a child to say ‘sorry’
- Provide logical consequences when limits are broken, such as not being able to play in sandpit after sand has been thrown.
- Strategies, which set the child apart from other children, are not intended and should not be used as a threat or punishment.

A copy of these strategies will be displayed on both the under two and over two notice boards. Relieving staff will read and follow the strategies and guidelines contained within this policy.

#### **5. Supporting children with challenging behaviours**

Challenging behaviours are any repeated pattern of behaviour that interferes with learning or engagement in interactions with peers and adults. Behaviours that are not responsive to the use of developmentally appropriate guidance procedures include;

- prolonged tantrums
- physical and verbal aggression

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- disruptive vocal and motor behaviour
  - self-injury
  - noncompliance, and withdrawal.
1. Adults should follow the guidelines and strategies set out in this policy. If inappropriate/challenging behaviours that cannot be linked to developmental or environmental factors continue then further assessment of the child's overall behaviour is needed. This is the first step to establishing whether there is an underlying reason for the behaviour.
  2. Use observations to find out what triggers the behaviour. Observations should be made at various times and in different circumstances to gain a well-rounded picture. The A.B.C format could be used to investigate 'triggers' (Antecedent, behaviour and consequences).
  3. Observe as a team and provide positive feedback to parents. Focus both on individual behaviour and on the environmental and other factors (such as sleep, nutrition, staff, child interactions) which may impact on behaviour.
  4. From the observations, staff will develop a plan of action. Management and staff will need to consider the various factors that impact on children's interactions and behaviour.
  5. The child's parents or guardian should be involved from the beginning. The decision to approach the parent will be made by the Director who will then make the approach.
  6. Work together as a team to develop a shared understanding of goals for children and the learning and development processes used to achieve these.

### **Individual Action Plan**

- Consider the child's family values and traditions and work with parents using a positive approach.
- Decide together what support or professional development from relevant agencies we could access
- Decide if it is appropriate to have one person who will have prime responsibility from working with the child within the centre and if so, who that person will be
- Develop strategies to suit the individual child; accepting that what works one day may not work the next.
- Write successful strategies on whiteboard; these may change from day to day
- Talk to parents to find out what works at home. Share with them the strategies that work within the centre.
- Be clear, consistent and fair; keep to familiar routines as much as possible
- Take into account the child's developmental level and temperament.
- Structure the environment to support the child and consistently work with the child in positive ways.

- Allow child time to prepare for transitions; give clear, consistent warnings in advance of any change, these can be verbal or by use of picture cards.
- Plan activities that allow for the child's disposition; keep turn taking activities and waiting times to a minimum.
- Notice every sign of progress, however small, noting what strategy works and what doesn't work. Provide positive feedback to child immediately and tell parents.
- Keep notes to reflect on the effectiveness of the strategies used; how often are they used? Do they work for the teachers and the child?
- Share the information with other staff, parents and specialist.
- Maintain confidentiality and respect all children's right to dignity and protection at all times.

### **References**

- The Education (Early Childhood Services Regulations 2008 (as amended May 2016)
- Providing Positive Guidance (Guidelines for Early Childhood Education Services) Ministry of Education
- Te Whāriki, (Early Childhood Curriculum) Ministry of Education 1996