

1. Purpose

MACSEYE services are committed to creating an environment where children feel valued, respected, and supported to thrive. Positive engagement and behaviour guidance strategies are central to this commitment, focusing on building strong relationships, clear expectations, and consistent routines that help children feel safe and confident supporting children to demonstrate socially acceptable behaviour and self-regulation.

This policy also outlines reasonable steps to ensure the safety, foster engagement, and nurture the wellbeing of all children attending the service. It provides strategies for promoting positive behaviour and details practices for responding when behaviour escalates, ensuring that interventions are respectful, consistent, and focused on restoring a safe and supportive environment for everyone.

2. Scope

This policy applies to children, families and educators who provide services to children at MACSEYE services.

3. Background

Guiding children's behaviour is an important aspect of caring for and educating children. Positive strategies need to be developed and implemented to assist children to learn appropriate ways of behaving and interacting. Supporting children to develop socially acceptable behaviour is a primary goal for educators and families.

Our services align practice with the National Quality Framework (NQF), which requires that care of children is delivered in ways that uphold each child's safety, rights, inclusion and wellbeing. Under the National Law, National Regulations and the National Quality Standards (NQS), services must provide positive behaviour guidance, protect children from harm, and embed inclusive and equitable practice across all aspects of the environment.

The Victorian Child Safe Standards (CSS) require organisations to identify and manage all potential harm to children, including behaviour that poses a risk between children, such as bullying, harassment or abuse, in addition to potential risk from adults to children.

4. Working in Partnership with Families

This section outlines the shared commitments and responsibilities between MACSEYE and families and caregivers in supporting children's wellbeing, and positive behaviour.

MACSEYE commits to:

- Promote positive, inclusive behaviour guidance practices that are developmentally appropriate, strengths-based, and responsive to the individual needs of each child.
- Build respectful, trusting relationships with children and families, recognising relationships as central to behaviour guidance.

- Respond to behaviours of concern in a calm, consistent, and respectful manner, prioritising children’s safety, emotional regulation, and sense of connection and belonging.
- Ensure that educators are trained, supported, and accountable in implementing approved behaviour guidance strategies in line with this policy, National Quality Standards, and relevant legislation.
- Notify the relevant regulatory authorities in circumstance that poses a risk to the health, safety and wellbeing of a child

Families and Caregivers Commit to:

- Work in partnership with MACSEYE services by sharing relevant information about their child’s needs, routines, and behaviour support strategies.
- Engage respectfully with educators and staff when discussing their child’s behaviour, working collaboratively to identify and implement appropriate support strategies.
- Support and reinforce agreed guidance approaches to be used by the service, recognising the importance of consistency between home and care settings.
- Comply with service policies and procedures and support or guidance plans related to behaviour to help maintain a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment for all children.

5. Approved strategies for guiding behaviour

Approved behaviour guidance strategies are categorised into two groups to ensure clarity, consistency, and alignment with best practice approaches. The first category outlines preventative strategies and proactive engagement, which are embedded daily practices designed to promote inclusion, emotional wellbeing, and positive behaviour through predictable routines, supportive environments, and strong educator–child relationships. The second category outlines individualised and targeted behavioural support strategies, which are implemented when a child requires additional, tailored support beyond universal preventative measures. These strategies are used to address specific needs in a developmentally appropriate, respectful, and safety focused manner.

Preventative strategies and proactive engagement

The following approved strategies are used to guide children’s behaviour in positive, respectful, and developmentally appropriate ways. These approaches focus on prevention, proactive teaching, and strong relationships to support children’s wellbeing and reduce the likelihood of behaviour escalating. Educators will implement these strategies consistently to promote emotional regulation, positive interactions, and a safe, inclusive environment for all children.

- **Reminders** - Educators will remind children of expectations before transitions, high-energy activities, or situations where challenges commonly occur.
- **Redirection** - When early signs of disengagement, dysregulation or escalation are observed, educators will attempt to guide children toward a more appropriate activity or behaviour.
- **Clear and Consistent Expectations** - Educators will communicate behavioural expectations so that children always know what to do, why, and how to be successful. This will be done using simple, direct, and positively framed language.
- **Positive Reinforcement** - Educators will promote desired behaviours by recognising and encouraging them through positive reinforcement.

- **Demonstrate positive regard**- Educators will maintain a warm, respectful, and accepting approach toward every child. They will assume the good in the child and separate the behaviour from self to promote emotional safety, strengthen relationships, and encourage cooperation.
- **Actively build positive relationships with children** - Educators will intentionally develop positive, respectful relationships with children to promote trust, emotional safety, and cooperative behaviour.
- **Promote child voice and autonomy** - Educators will provide children with meaningful, age-appropriate choices to promote deeper levels of engagement, confidence, independence and agency.
- **Model Appropriate Behaviour** - Educators will model the behaviours they expect from children, including respectful communication, problem-solving, and emotional self-regulation.
- **Teach Replacement Behaviours** - Educators will support children to learn and practise appropriate alternatives to unwanted behaviours, such as using words to express needs, seeking help, or taking space when overwhelmed.
- **Emotion Coaching** - Educators will validate children’s feelings, support emotional literacy, and guide children through calming strategies when they are experiencing distress or dysregulation.
- **Environmental Adjustments** - Educators will adjust environmental factors as necessary e.g. noise levels, layout, sensory demands, transitions, or activity structure to prevent behaviours of concern and support individual needs.
- **Visual Supports** - Educators will use visual tools (e.g., schedules, transition cards, first/then boards, social stories) to assist children who benefit from additional structure and predictability.

Individualised and targeted behavioural support strategies

When preventative strategies are insufficient for managing behaviours of concern, educators may implement the following targeted and corrective interventions in a timely, proportionate, and respectful manner. These strategies aim to guide behaviour, support self-regulation, and reduce further escalation. All corrective responses will be developmentally appropriate, consistent, neurodiversity-affirming and will uphold the child’s dignity, rights, and sense of safety.

- **Individualised behaviour support strategies** - Personalised goals, visual supports, reward systems, or positive behaviour charts, developed in response to the child’s strengths, interests, and needs.
- **Collaborative planning with families** - to ensure consistency between home and the service, share insights, and jointly identify strategies that best support the child’s regulation and wellbeing.
- **Increased educator support or environmental adjustments** - including changes to routines, group size, transitions, or learning spaces to reduce triggers and support regulation.
- **Intentional teaching of self-regulation and social skills** - including co-regulation, emotion coaching, problem-solving, and modelling appropriate behaviours.

- **Early Pick-Up** - From time to time, children may experience big feelings or behaviours that become difficult to manage safely within a group setting. When this occurs, the service's priority is to ensure that all children feel safe, supported, and understood, particularly the child experiencing distress. Where it is determined to be in the best interest of a child, or other children, MACSEYE may request that a child be collected early from the service. This supportive measure aims to help the child regulate in a calmer, familiar environment and allows time for reflection and planning for any additional supports that may be required.
- In some cases, frequent need for early pick-up or increased support may indicate that further planning or additional supports are required and may prompt consideration of a temporary Pause to Care.

Unapproved Behaviour Guidance Strategies

This section outlines practices that are not permitted in our services because they conflict with our commitment to children's safety, wellbeing, and dignity. These strategies are incompatible with positive, relationship-based behaviour guidance and are therefore prohibited.

- **Physical punishment** - Including physical restraint (except where required to prevent immediate harm), or any form of physical force.
- **Humiliation, shaming, or ridicule** - Including sarcasm, name-calling, public reprimands, or making children feel embarrassed about their behaviour.
- **Threats or intimidation** - Threats of punishment, exclusion, withdrawal of affection, or invoking fear to gain compliance.
- **Emotional punishment or withdrawal of care** - Including ignoring a child's emotional needs, deliberate exclusion from relationships, or withholding comfort or support.
- **Forced apologies or compliance** - Educators will not force children to apologise, to make eye contact, or comply before they are emotionally ready or able to do so.
- **Time-out as a punitive measure** - Choosing to have time out, or alone time to regulate will only be used as a form of regulation and will be child directed. An educator will not require children to sit in time out or force them to isolate as a punishment.
- **Collective or unfair punishment** - Educators will not punish a group of children for the behaviour of an individual child.
- **Removal of basic rights or needs** - This includes withholding food, drink, toileting access, rest, or participation in essential routines
- **Labelling or pathologising children** - Educators must not refer to children using deficit-based or judgmental language (e.g. "naughty," "bad," "difficult"), define children by their behaviour, or apply assumed or unconfirmed diagnostic labels.
- **Behaviour management based on control or compliance** - Practices that prioritise obedience over understanding, emotional regulation, skill-building, and relationship repair.

- **Any practice that disregards trauma-informed, inclusive, or neurodiversity-affirming principles** - Including strategies that do not consider a child's developmental stage, sensory profile, cultural background, or additional needs.

6. Individualised Support and Collaborative Planning

MACSEYE recognises that some children may benefit from tailored strategies and additional supports to participate meaningfully and safely in the program. Individualised planning may occur at any stage, including at enrolment, after observation, or following discussions with families.

Individualised Support Plans (ISP)

- An Individualised Support Plan (ISP) may be developed when a child is identified as requiring additional behavioural support, or when families share information or concerns about behaviours that may affect the child's safety, regulation or participation.
- ISPs may also be created proactively at enrolment, particularly for children with known support needs related to behaviour, ADHD, autism, trauma, disability, or other developmental considerations.
- The ISP is developed collaboratively with the child's family or caregivers, and where appropriate, relevant external allied health professionals, and/or school staff to ensure strategies are coordinated, consistent, and strengths-based.
- The plan will outline agreed goals, proactive and targeted strategies, environmental adjustments, and roles and responsibilities for implementation and review.

Collaboration with the Victorian Inclusion Agency (VIA)

- MACSEYE may engage the Victorian Inclusion Agency (VIA), with the consent of families, to support the development of inclusive practices, access specialised behavioural guidance, or explore the need for additional resources or funding. When support is requested, VIA will allocate an Inclusion Professional who will work collaboratively with the Coordinator and MACSEYE educators to develop a Strategic Inclusion Plan (SIP) outlining strategies, adjustments, and supports that promote the child's safe, consistent, and positive participation in the program.

Ongoing Review and Alignment Across Documents

- ISPs, and any strategies arising from VIA consultations, will be regularly reviewed to ensure they remain effective, responsive, and aligned with the child's wellbeing and participation.
- Where a "Pause to Care: Review and Re-engagement Plan" is used, the ISP (or development of one if it is not already in place) will support planning for safe and successful re-engagement.

7. Pause to Care

A temporary Pause to Care may be required in limited situations where a child's safety or wellbeing, or that of others, may be impacted without an opportunity for additional planning and support.

Implementing a Pause to Care

Our services are committed to supporting every child in a safe, inclusive and trauma-informed environment. Occasionally, despite the consistent use of approved positive behaviour guidance practices and targeted supports, a child's behaviour continues to escalate, or where a child is assessed as being unable to safely self-regulate and presents a risk to their own safety or the safety of others, a temporary Pause to Care may be requested.

A Pause to Care provides a short, planned break in attendance to allow families, educators and relevant professionals to work collaboratively on strategies that address factors impacting the child's participation, regulation and wellbeing. The approach prioritises safety, emotional wellbeing and the child's long-term success.

During an active Pause to Care, staff will work in partnership with parents/guardians and, where appropriate, other professionals supporting the child (such as allied health practitioners), to better understand the factors affecting the child's wellbeing or regulation and to identify strategies to support successful re-engagement. This collaborative process includes reviewing or developing an Individual Support Plan and considering any adjustments required to support a safe and positive return to the service.

Our goal is to work collaboratively with families to maintain a positive, inclusive environment where every child can thrive.

A decision to pause care is not punitive or disciplinary. It is a safety-based and child-focused response made in the best interests of the child, and to support the safety and wellbeing of all children and staff.

Prior to any Pause to Care being implemented, the Review and Re-engagement Plan document **PART 1** must be completed, authorised by the Area Manager, and clearly communicated with families.

Following the commencement of a Pause to Care, **PART 2: Re-engagement Plan** will be developed to support the child's safe, supported and timely return to the service.

8. Responding to Bullying

The Victorian State Government defines bullying as:

"...an ongoing and deliberate misuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical and/or social behaviour that intends to cause physical, social and/or psychological harm. It can involve an individual or a group misusing their power, or perceived power, over one or more persons who feel unable to stop it from happening. Bullying behaviour is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time...Single incidents and conflict or fights between equals, whether in person or online, are not defined as bullying." (Victorian State Government, 2024)

MACSEYE Position on Bullying

MACSEYE upholds a zero-tolerance approach to bullying. Bullying behaviour - whether physical, verbal, social, relational, or online- is inconsistent with the service's commitment to children's safety, inclusion, and wellbeing. Educators will make reasonable efforts to notice behaviours consistent with bullying and will take appropriate action if such behaviours are identified. MACSEYE acknowledges that not all peer conflict constitutes bullying; however, all reports of harm, intimidation, or ongoing relational difficulties will be taken seriously, investigated, and responded to in accordance with this policy.

Procedure when there are concerns around Bullying

When a child alleges bullying, or when an educator observes behaviours that may indicate bullying, the following procedure must be followed:

- 1. Listen to the child or person reporting the concern.**
Seek to understand what occurred, who was involved, the frequency of the behaviour, and the impact on the child.
- 2. Summarise the concern back to the child** to ensure accuracy and validate their experience.
- 3. Reassure the child and ensure they feel safe.**
Inform them that educators are there to help and ask what they need to feel supported.
- 4. Implement immediate measures to reduce harm or risk**, such as adjusting supervision, separating play areas, or modifying group structures.
- 5. Document the incident** using Safety Culture, ensuring that the behaviours, context, child's perspective, and educator responses are clearly recorded.
- 6. Provide support to all children involved**, including the child who experienced harm and the child displaying concerning behaviour. This may include restorative conversations, emotional regulation support, modelling of skills, or targeted behaviour guidance.
- 7. Inform and communicate with families** of the children involved, in line with the "Involving Families" section of this policy.
- 8. Notify the Nominated Supervisor** of the allegation and provide all relevant documentation and updates.
- 9. Monitor for ongoing incidents.**
If behaviours persist, educators may seek guidance from support services (with consent), and consider whether additional measures or reviews of supervision, environment, or groupings are required.

Responding to ongoing Incidents

If bullying behaviours continue despite preventative and corrective strategies:

- MACSEYE staff and families or caregivers may work together to develop an Individualised Support Plan that outlines strategies to support the child's safe, positive, and consistent participation.
- Educators will collect ongoing observations and incident records to monitor patterns, triggers, and progress.
- Families will be engaged in regular communication and collaborative planning.
- Where required, and with consent, external Inclusion Support or other allied health services may be consulted.
- In cases where behaviours pose a risk to the child or others, the service may consider temporary measures such as increased supervision, modified routines, or, as a last resort, temporary Pause to Care in accordance with policy guidelines.

Involving families

Our OSHC Service will seek the cooperation and support of families when behaviour guidance or escalation concerns arise, including in relation to bullying prevention and the reinforcement of positive interactions between children. The service will communicate openly with families of children whose behaviours are impacting the safety and wellbeing of others, working in partnership to implement appropriate and supportive strategies. Where required, with consent from caregivers, the service will seek additional guidance from relevant Inclusion Support Services.

9. Induction and ongoing training

This policy will be accessible to all staff via the intranet. Training will be provided to all relevant staff at implementation and as needed. All line managers are responsible for ensuring their staff are aware of and understand this policy and attend the required induction and ongoing training. All staff are responsible for understanding and complying with this policy.

10. Child Safety

MACSEYE policies and practices prioritise the safety and wellbeing of children, who are central to everything we do. We recognise a child safe organisation is a dynamic and ongoing process of learning, monitoring and review. When all levels of the organisation work together to protect children from harm, children are safer, valued, and more likely to thrive in their educational learning.

This Policy supports MACSEYE's obligations under the **Victorian Child Safe Standards** by providing a structured, child-centred framework for identifying, assessing and responding to risks to children's safety and wellbeing. In particular, it establishes clear processes to guide decision-making where a child's needs cannot be safely met without additional planning or support, ensuring that responses are proportionate, documented, authorised and focused on the best interests of the child.

MACSEYE recognises that risks to children can be heightened during periods of transition, including movement between services, changes in routine, or times of increased emotional or behavioural support needs. This Policy helps mitigate those risks by promoting a consistent, organisation-wide approach to child safety, including shared expectations, collaborative planning with families and professionals, and structured review processes across all MACSEYE services.

Child Safe Standards	
Standard 1	Promote child-centred, culturally safe and trauma-informed decision-making that respects each child's identity, experiences and wellbeing.
Standard 5	Ensure children's diverse needs are recognised and supported through reasonable, individualised adjustments and targeted supports to enable safe and inclusive participation in the service.
Standard 9.3	Risk management plans consider risks posed by organisational setting, activities and the physical environment.

11. Legislative requirements

This policy is consistent with the following legislative and regulatory requirements:

NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD (NQS)	
QUALITY AREA 2:	Children's Health and Safety
QUALITY AREA 5:	Relationships with Children
QUALITY AREA 6:	Partnerships with Families and Communities
QUALITY AREA 7:	Governance and Leadership

EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL LAW ACT 2010 (VIC)	
S. 162A	Child protection training- each nominated supervisor and each person in day-to-day charge and each family day care co-ordinator to have completed the child protection training required or under law for this jurisdiction
S. 166	Offence to use inappropriate discipline
S. 167	Offence relating to protection of children from harm and hazards
S. 174	Offence to fail to notify certain information to Regulatory Authority

EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL REGULATIONS 2011	
12	Meaning of serious incident
84	Awareness of child protection law
147	Staff members [records]
155	Interactions with children
156	Relationships in groups
168	Education and care service must have policies and procedures
175	Prescribed information to be notified to Regulatory Authority

DISABILITY STANDARDS FOR EDUCATION 2005 (CTH)	
Part 4	Participation
Part 6	Student support services
Part 7	Elimination of harassment and victimisation

DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION ACT 1992 (CTH)	
S.5	Direct disability discrimination
S. 6	Indirect disability discrimination

DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION ACT 1992 (CTH)

S. 11	Unjustifiable Hardship – Determining reasonable adjustment
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EQUAL OPPORTUNITY ACT 2010 (VIC)

S. 8	Direct discrimination
S. 9	Indirect discrimination
S. 18	Discrimination in education
S. 15	Reasonable adjustments for persons with disability

12. Policy information

Policy information

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Authorised Executive:	Director – Services	Responsible Manager:	Director - Services
Approving authority:	Managing Director	Approval date:	19/03/2026
Effective date:	19/03/2026	Review date:	19/03/2028
Review approval date:		Next review date	

Version control

Version	Date	Changes
0.1	04/03/2026	Policy developed and consultation undertaken
1.0	19/03/2026	Policy approved

References:

Victoria State Government. (2024). *What is Bullying?* <https://www.vic.gov.au/what-bullying>