



BEFORE, AFTER & VACATION CARE

INTERACTIONS WITH CHILDREN POLICY

TeamKids, February 2026

FUN

GENUINE

INNOVATIVE

INVOLVED

REMARKABLE

POLICY RATIONALE

Team Holiday Pty Ltd and its associated entities, including TeamKids, Kids Unlimited and Stand-Up Project (“the Company”) will ensure that all reasonable steps are taken to maintain a safe and welcoming environment for children and that educators interact with children in a positive and supportive manner.

This includes but is not limited to ensuring new children to the service are actively supported through a positive transition to the program, and encouraging all attending children to develop positive, respectful relationships with others, express their opinions, make sound choices, and develop in a variety of learning outcomes.

Educators and children are expected to establish agreed upon appropriate behavioural guidelines at the start of each program, and to ensure these guidelines are displayed in the program and positively reinforced daily. Positive behaviour management relies on effective communication between all parties, including children, parent/guardians, staff and management.

GUIDING CHILDREN’S BEHAVIOUR

Educators play a vital role in helping children develop self-regulation, confidence, and respect for others. Guidance strategies must always promote positive behaviour, uphold each child’s dignity and rights, and be consistent with the principles of the Education and Care Services National Regulations 155 and 156. Educators will use positive guidance, modelling, and encouragement to support children’s learning, development, and emotional wellbeing, while ensuring all interactions reflect respect for each child’s age, stage, and cultural background.

Positive Behaviour Guidance

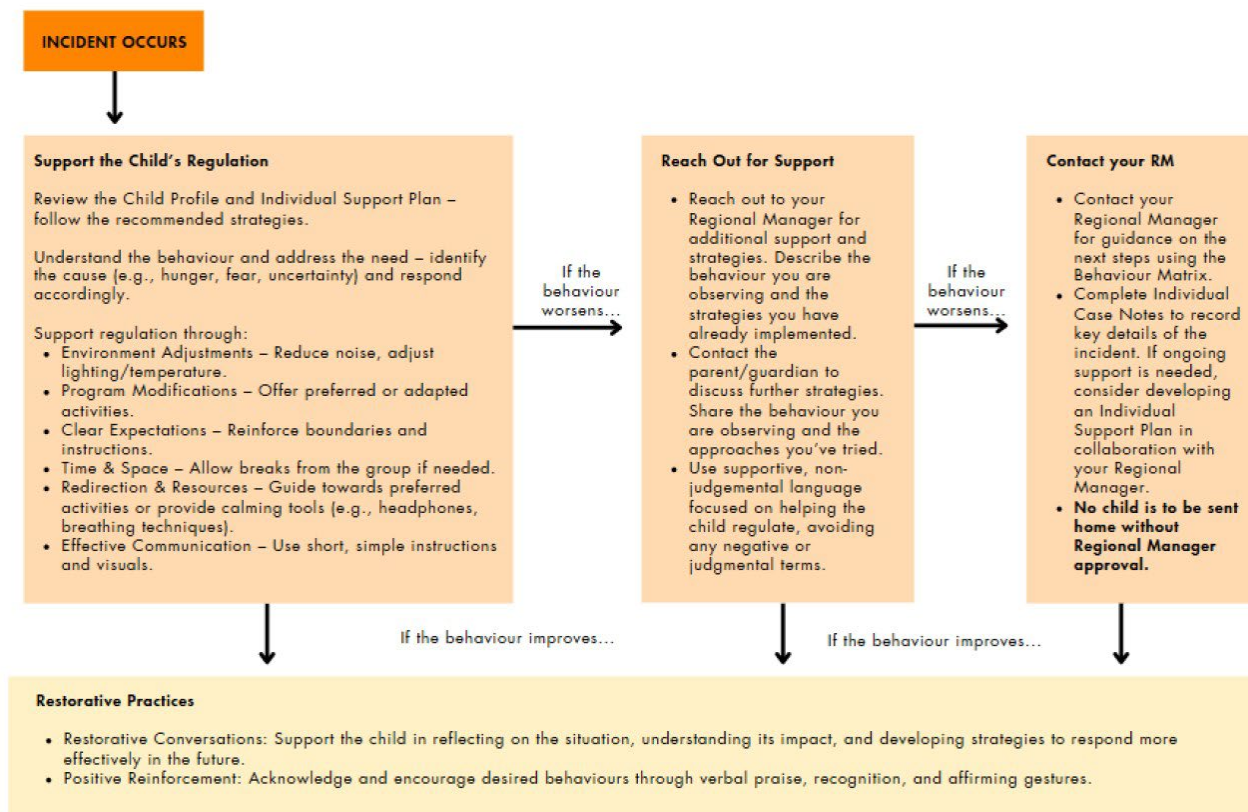
This policy supports the Company’s Positive Behaviour Guidance process (below). If a child’s behaviour is not appropriate, Educators will involve parents/guardians to positively manage the behaviour, including coming up with agreed upon behaviour guidance strategies that will be implemented within the program.

If the inappropriate behaviour persists, the Regional Manager will be informed and will determine a further course of action. This may include meeting with the child’s parents/guardians to determine if the program is still appropriate for the child.

The Company reserves the right to send any child home from the program where the child:

- Acts in such a way that threatens the physical and or emotional health of any child, staff member or themselves.
- Repetitively or deliberately does not follow the instructions given by staff.
- Consistently absconds or leaves the premises without adult supervision or permission.
- Has an illness or other health-related issue that may be dangerous to other children, staff members or themselves?
- Deliberately damages any property or belongings.

To implement a proactive behaviour guidance strategy, it is important to consider the role of the educator, program, and environment.



Educators must remember that they are a role model to the children in their care and the other educators at their service, and as such ensure they are role modelling positive behaviours at all times.

At the start of each shift, the Responsible Person will ensure through the mini meeting that all educators are familiar with individual support plans and individual case or behaviour notes, to ensure they understand each child's needs and how to respond appropriately to behaviours. All interactions with children should occur in visible, public spaces within the service. All interactions with children should occur in visible, open and public spaces within the service.

There are multiple factors which influence interactions with children. These factors are listed below and should be followed by educators to ensure appropriate interactions with children at all times.

THE ROLE OF EDUCATORS

Educators, staff, volunteers and students have a responsibility to uphold the highest standards of professional conduct when engaging with children. This means ensuring that all interactions are safe, respectful, developmentally appropriate and consistent with our Code of Conduct, Child Safe Standards, and ethical obligations.

Agreed Behaviours

To create a safe, supportive and respectful environment, all employees will:

- Involve children in setting agreed behaviours at the start of each session, and ensure these behaviours are clearly displayed within the program environment.
- Reinforce agreed behaviours positively and consistently each day.
- Speak to children about behaviour in ways they can understand. For example:
 - "Be kind and care for others."
 - "Respect yourself and those around you."

- “Follow staff instructions to stay safe.”
- “Look after and use equipment responsibly.”
- Ensure that any individual support plans or behaviour guidance strategies are clearly documented and shared with relevant staff and parents/guardians, so that expectations are consistent and transparent.
- Promotes children’s agency in both experiences on offer, and interactions with one another.
- Is open-ended.
- Encourages educators to interact directly with children to support their learning and development.
- Provides opportunity for children to choose to be on their own, while still being actively supervised.
- Enables the children to have some control over the program.
- Supports the theory that ‘process is just as important as product’.

Educators will ensure that the environment:

- Shows that children have a say in the development and implementation of the program.
- Encourages choice when it comes to activities and program participation.

ENSURE THAT NO CHILD IS TO BE SUBJECTED TO:

The following list outlines behaviours that must never occur, as they place children’s safety, dignity and wellbeing at risk and are inconsistent with the values and expectations of the Company.

Inappropriate Physical contact, including.

- Any form of corporal punishment.
- Any discipline that is unreasonable under the circumstances.
- Inappropriate interactions which are unnecessary, intrusive, harmful or not aligned with professional standards in the code of conduct, child safe standards or United Nations Convention on the Rights of the child or ECA Code of Ethics.
- This includes but is not limited to:
 - **Uninvited touching:** Hugging, patting, or touching children without consent or a clear need.
 - **Touching private areas:** Any contact with a child’s private parts (other than necessary and appropriate nappy changing or toileting, with consent and proper procedure).
 - **Overly intimate gestures:** Prolonged cuddling, sitting a child on their lap unnecessarily, stroking hair, or kissing.
 - **Using physical interactions for favouritism or grooming:** Touch that creates or implies special relationships, such as repeated touching under the guise of affection.
 - **Negligent physical care:** Rough handling during toileting, feeding, dressing, or moving children.
 - **Invasive help with personal care:** Assisting with toileting or changing clothes in ways that don’t respect the child’s privacy, independence, or dignity.
 - **Lifting or picking up children** – unless required for the child’s safety or medical/disability needs.

Sexual or inappropriate verbal conversations

- Talking to a child about sexual acts, body parts in a sexualised manner, or personal sexual experiences.

- Using suggestive language, innuendos, or “jokes” that are inappropriate for a child’s developmental age.
- Asking children about their bodies, relationships, or private life without a safeguarding reason.

Disrespectful, shaming or bullying language

- Yelling, threatening, or using intimidating language e.g. “You must do this or else”.
- Using insults e.g. “you’re being stupid”, “You’re being a bad person”, “I don’t like you”.
- Shaming or humiliating children in front of others.
- Parents/guardians must not be used as threats. Staff should not imply that they will inform parents/guardians in an attempt to shift a child’s behaviour e.g. “What would your parents think?”, “I’m calling your mum/dad about this”.
- Calling a child’s parents/guardians in front of other children.
- Making fun of a child’s appearance, behaviour, choices or family.
- Using sarcasm that could confuse or belittle a child.
- Laughing at child’s mistakes or distress.

Personal or overly familiar conversations

- Discussing personal problems e.g. mental health, relationship, issues, or finances.
- Seeking emotional support from a child or treating them as a confidant.
- Discussing behaviours or challenges with other children.
- Showing favouritism using phrases such as “You’re my favourite”, “Don’t tell anyone about this”, “Everything is better when you’re here”.

Manipulative or grooming behaviour

- Asking children to keep secrets from other staff, children or families.
- Offering gifts, favours or special treatment.
- Using guilt or emotional manipulation e.g. “I’ll be sad if you don’t do this for me”.
- Inviting children to personal events.
- Unnecessary touching without consent or a clear need e.g. hugging, patting, holding hands, allowing children to sit on laps, styling hair, kissing.
- Physical interactions which indicate favouritism e.g. Touch that creates or implies special relationships, repeated touching under the guise of affection.
- Touching private areas e.g. any contact with a child’s private parts, other than necessary and appropriate nappy changing or toileting, with consent and proper procedure.

THE USE OF RESTRAINT

The company supports the guidance provided in the ACECQA tipsheet titled Inappropriate Discipline.

Occasionally, there may be circumstances where a child becomes a risk to themselves or others and may need to be removed from the situation or physically restrained to prevent harm to themselves or others.

Children should be physically restrained only in emergency situations.

Before the use of restraint is appropriate, strategies must be implemented to ensure the safety of all children and educators and support the child to de-escalate.

Examples of strategies include:

- Offering the child an alternative activity and time/space to reset
- Following behaviour guidance strategies
- Moving children away from the space/risk
- Guiding the child away from the group or to an alternative area

If a child is moved away from other children to help them regulate, the Responsible Person should inform the child's parent or guardian of the circumstances of the event and complete an incident report and behaviour case notes accordingly. The Responsible Person will also notify the service Regional/Area Manager as soon as practicable, to ensure procedures noted in the behaviour guidance matrix are followed.

Physical restraint should only be used when there is an immediate danger of the child being hurt or hurting others and when other strategies to guide the child's behaviour or maintain safety of others have not worked. In these situations, supportive holding of a child may be required. This means that the child is only held long enough to be removed from the situation, and the danger has been addressed or subsided.

Examples of emergency situations include when a child is:

- In a clearly unsafe situation, for example, 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.

If a child is physically restrained in any way, the Responsible Person should inform the child's parent or guardian of the circumstances of the event and complete an incident report and behaviour case notes accordingly. The Responsible Person will also notify the service Regional/Area Manager as soon as practicable, to ensure procedures noted in the behaviour guidance matrix are followed.

INAPPROPRIATE CONDUCT

When implementing behaviour guidance in a TeamKids service, it is important that any person working directly with children, considers that it is an offence under the Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010, (Section 166A) to subject a child to inappropriate conduct.

There are specific elements to be considered depending on the role that you hold within TeamKids:

Approved providers and nominated supervisors must ensure that children are not subjected to inappropriate conduct while at an education and care service and failure to do so will be an offence. The approved provider will value and model a child safe culture, practices and appropriate conduct at all times. This is supported by monitoring and supporting all staff and educators, through providing guidance and professional development.

It is an offence for an approved provider, nominated supervisor, staff member or volunteer (including students) to subject a child to conduct that a reasonable person would consider to be inappropriate in an education and care service.

The legislation references conduct that a reasonable person would consider to be inappropriate in the circumstances, while that child is being educated and cared for at an education and care service including:

- Whether it is likely to cause harm (physical, emotional or psychological) to the child.
- Whether the behaviour is consistent with expected practice in an early childhood setting (OSHC)

- Whether it transgresses expectations about what is acceptable in an education and care service
- The child's age and developmental stage
- Whether the behaviour is sexual, violent or aggressive.

Factors that will not be taken into account in determining whether the conduct is inappropriate include:

- Whether or not the child consented to the conduct
- Whether the person accused of the offence is related to the child.

A child may be subjected to inappropriate conduct:

- In person, either directly or by witnessing it happening to others
- Through verbal or electronic communication
- By electronic capture, including photographs, recordings or live video.
- Through repeated actions or ongoing patterns of behaviour over time.

How to recognize inappropriate conduct:

Inappropriate conduct breaches professional boundaries and may pose a significant risk to children's safety and wellbeing.

- **Inappropriate physical conduct** – touching a child in a sexualised or intrusive way, including tickling, wrestling, prolonged or unnecessary hugging that is not warranted in the circumstances, massaging or physical closeness (such as encouraging a child to sit on an educators lap for an extended period) that is not age appropriate or required, based on the needs or abilities of a child.
- **Grooming behaviours** – including but not limited to favouritism, offering gifts or special privileges, encouraging emotional dependency (attachment fostering), or initiating private or secret communication with a child.
- **Ill Treatment that is not disciplinary in nature** – including physical or verbal abuse, threats, yelling, swearing, rough handling or other conduct likely to cause emotional, physical or psychological harm. This may include speaking aggressively to a child or using negative language towards a child, which may be perceived as bullying or harassment.
- **Unprofessional communication** – such as sending personal messages, capturing or sharing images of children via unauthorised devices or platforms, or engaging with children online through social media or apps unrelated to your role. This may also include inappropriate staff to staff conduct. Examples of this are an educator yelling to another educator in front of children, make sarcastic comments about their competence or question their decisions in a hostile tone.

Educators need to notify their Director of Service, Regional Manager or other management representative if they observe, suspect or receive an allegation that someone is engaging in, or has engaged in inappropriate conduct. The Quality and Compliance Team are then notified to ensure the Regulatory Authority is notified within the legislated 24-hour period.

BREACHES OF POLICY

Any breach of this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

This includes, but is not limited to, inappropriate physical or verbal interactions or inappropriate behaviour towards on in the vicinity of children.

All staff are expected to uphold the standards outlined in this policy at all times and to act in accordance with the Code of Conduct, relevant legislation, and privacy regulations. Suspected or confirmed breaches must be reported immediately to the appropriate Company Manager, People and Culture team or childsafety@teamkids.com.au.

Failure to comply with this policy may also result in legal action where breaches involve violations of child safety laws or privacy legislation.

REFERENCES

ACECQA National Quality Framework Resource Kit (2012)

Quality Area 1 – Educational program and practice.

Quality Area 2 – Children’s health and safety

Quality Area 5 – Relationships with children

Education and Care Services National Regulations (2011), R 155 & 156

Inappropriate discipline AQECQA - chrome-

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VERSION CONTROL

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Interactions with children Procedures No. PR-00