

Managing Behaviour Policy

Policy Statement

The Village Childcare & Community Services recognises all children are individual with unique needs and abilities. We endeavour to manage behaviour through a supportive model. We encourage School Age Children to develop the skills of self-regulation (regulating their emotions), problem-solving and decision-making skills.

We at The Village Childcare School Age Childcare shall ensure that no practices that are disrespectful, degrading, exploitive, intimidating, emotionally or physically harmful or neglectful are carried out in respect of an afterschool's child whilst attending the service.

We will work collaboratively with parents/guardians to implement the managing behaviour policy. Through this partnership, it places each child's needs and rights at the centre of our practice.

Principle

This policy is underwritten by Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) (Registration of School Age Services) Regulations 2018

Procedure for Supporting Positive Behaviour

Staff

- Staff model positive behaviour through how they speak and interact with the school age children.
- The Village Childcare & Community Services has a Code of Conduct for staff relating to behaviour management.
- Staff always comfort an upset child.
- Staff show empathy to the feelings which the child may be experiencing.
- A child's behaviour is not discussed amongst the staff team, or outside the service. Only relevant staff will be informed of information including action plans, or care plans.

School Age Children

- Expectations are consistent for all school age children, and are dependent on the age, stage of development and needs of the child.
- Children's efforts, achievements and feelings will be acknowledged by sincere encouragement leading to growth in self-esteem and self-discipline.
- A range of activities will be available to the group of children that offer a lot of choice to all children in order to support children's play ideas.
- The Village Childcare & Community Services encourages independence and autonomy for each child.

Respectful interactions between School Age Children

A culture of respect is in place within The Village Childcare & Community Services, We expect all school age children to show the following:

- To be polite, friendly, respectful and helpful to others.
- To play fairly and include others in our activities.
- Respect one another, accepting differences of race, gender, ability, age and religion.
- Use socially acceptable behaviour.
- Comply with our code of behaviour which is developed by the School Age Children attending.
- Ask for help if needed.

- To support these guidelines, a code of positive behaviour is developed by the School Age children with rules they consider as important in helping them take ownership of their behaviour.
- We recognise each individual child is unique and may need different levels of support to manage situations.
- If an issue arises between peers, we encourage all School Age Children to speak to a staff member to develop solutions to resolve the issue.

Bullying of any form is not allowed in our service.

- Verbal actions
- Gestures or signs
- Physical actions
 - Taking or breaking other people's belongings
 - Leaving people out of games or any other type of exclusion
- Cyberbullying

This is not an exhaustive list and there are other things that could happen that are considered bullying.

The Village Childcare & community Services seeks to identify, responding and manage bullying in a timely and sensitive manner. All incidents of bullying witnessed should be reported to room leaders. The manager will investigate any bullying allegations. This might involve speaking to the children involved, gathering information on who is involved and in the case of cyberbullying recording any posts online. All bullying investigations are handled sensitively. Parents are informed of any bullying investigation. On occasion, it may be necessary for The Village Childcare & Community Services to liaise with the child/children's school. If a bullying issue is also ongoing at school, The Village Childcare & Community Services and the school will communicate about the approach. Following identification of a bullying issue, The Village Childcare & Community Services will implement an intervention that is determined by the nature of the bullying and the children involved. All staff are fully trained on the appropriate interventions. Intervention might include:

- Negotiating agreements between pupils
- Working with parents and guardians
- Mediation
- Buddy/peer mentoring Other strategies will be considered as necessary.

Cyber bullying

Cyber bullying can be defined as bullying above that occurs over the internet or via mobile phone. Named Service is committed to preventing cyberbullying in our service. The following guidelines are followed:

- The children in The Village Childcare & Community Services are not permitted to have a mobile phone switched on while on the premises and grounds.
- The computers/tablets in The Village Childcare & Community Services have block all social media website. This limits access to opportunities to engage in any inappropriate activity online.
- Parents are requested to update The Village Childcare & Community Services of any potential cyberbullying incidents they are aware of.

- Children are required to report any incident of cyberbullying to The Village Childcare & Community Services.

Our Policy is available to all parents/guardians by request and a copy is emailed to them also.

Staff are all trained and regularly updated on our policy collaborating with each other when updating our policy.

There is a child friendly version for all children to look at and staff will communicate with children on our policy regularly. Children are also asked to take part in updating their child friendly policy.

Child Leaving the School Aged Childcare Service Unaccompanied:

During the hours that they are in The Village Childcare & Community Services, children must not leave unaccompanied. They must be signed out by an adult unless prior arrangement has been made. If a child leaves unauthorised and unaccompanied the following procedure will apply:

- Children will never be left unsupervised – a staff member will follow the child if necessary
- The child's parent/guardian will be contacted
- The Gardai will be contacted if there is a concern for the child's safety
- The best interests of the child and their safety is the priority of Named Service at all times Leaving the premises unauthorised is considered a serious behaviour issue.

Holding or restraining a child to prevent harm

The purpose of this intervention can only be to prevent injury to the child, another child or to an adult, or to prevent serious damage to property.

Physical holding as prevention must only be used:

To prevent injury to the child or other children

To prevent an accident

Used only as a last resort.

Ensures no pain is inflicted

If this method has to be used an Incident record is completed. Parents/Guardians are advised on what happened and will sign the record. This method an approved evidence-based method

All staff are trained and certified in this method.

Regardless of age, physical restraint must only ever be used for immediate safety reasons, with the minimum force and for the minimum amount of time.

In some cases, an individual care plan may be developed from external agencies who are supporting the child. The Village Childcare & Community Services, in so far as practical, will implement this care plan in collaboration with parents/ guardians.

Parents

- A summary of the managing behaviour policy is within the parent's handbook. All parents have access to the full policy during hours of operation in the early years' service.
 - Requests of specific strategies from parents will only be implemented where it follows the services managing behaviour policy and is in line with best practice.
 - Staff implement a balanced approach to communication with parents.
 - Staff are aware of respectful communication in supporting school age children in managing their behaviour. Where staff need to speak with a parent/guardian, the child is not present.
 - The parent/guardian is informed of incidents of behaviour in a mindful manner e.g. away from the door, not calling the parent into the room in front of other parents, away from children.
 - Parents can request a meeting with the School Age Services to discuss specific elements of the managing behaviour policy. Our service at the earliest convenience will facilitate this.
 - The Village Childcare & Community Services maintains clear procedures on monitoring and recording any incidents or issues in relation to supporting children with managing their own behaviour.
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- Information is only shared with parent/ guardians regarding strategies or plans in place to support their child.
 - Parents are encouraged to discuss any concern regarding behaviours occurring with the manager or assistant manager.

All issues, concerns or grievances are managed within The Village Childcare & Community Services.

- Where an accident and/or incident has been recorded under the managing behaviour policy, details are recorded on two separate records for each parent to sign. Records only disclose the name of the individual child of the parent which is signing. The second child's name is not disclosed.

Communication with Primary Schools

- The Village Childcare & Community Services does not have permission to discuss any child's behaviour with a primary school without the parent/ guardian's permission.
 - In certain cases, where The Village Childcare & Community Services are contacted by the school to contribute to an individual care plan parent/guardian consent is sought prior to any information being shared.
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- We may request to discuss a child's behaviour with the school to ensure consistent strategies are being implemented. Parent/guardian consent will be sought prior to any discussion.

Encouraging positive behaviours

The Village Childcare & Community Services encourages positive behaviour through -

- Providing a balance of adult led and child led activities.
- Offering a variety of opportunities to meet the needs of the children attending the service.
- School age children do not sit for long periods of time, Our service encourage choice to move from an activity which does not interest the child.
- The environments are laid out into specific spaces with sufficient space, equipment and materials to meet the needs, abilities and interests of the children.
- Flexible routines to meet the needs of the children.
- A code of behaviour is developed by the School Age Children and regularly reviewed.

Prohibited Practices

- Corporal punishment - Any physical force which is used with intent to cause some degree of pain or discomfort, such as hitting, spanking (refers to striking a child with an open hand on the buttocks or extremities with the intention of modifying behaviour without causing physical injury), shaking, slapping, twisting, pulling, pinching, squeezing, or biting is prohibited.
- Practices or the threat of any practices that are disrespectful, degrading, exploitative, intimidating, emotionally or physically harmful or neglectful will not be carried out on any child while attending the service.

Strategies for Supporting School Age Children

Each school aged childcare room is assigned a "Childcare Practitioner". This is important for gathering information and knowledge about the whole child. Through their role, practitioners can anticipate a child's reaction and behaviour knowing what is likely to upset a child's mood or behaviour, knowing when to step-in or just observe from a safe distance.

The Village Childcare & Community Services follow different strategies based on the type, frequency and impact of the behaviour(s).

1. Resolving an Incident / Conflict Management

This type of behaviour may be a once off incident or it may be specific times where a child needs support based on their age, stage of development or needs.

We support the development of self-regulation through the Conflict Resolution Approach.

This strategy supports the child to develop the skill of regulating emotions and problem-solving.

There may be different levels of support which are needed for each individual child, the adult should adjust support where necessary in this process for each individual child.

Strategy

Below are the steps to follow in using the *Conflict Resolution Approach*

- Approach calmly – put yourself in the shoes of the child. All their feelings are relevant and real in the moment. Approach the situation calmly and get down to the child's eye level.
- Acknowledge feelings – describe how the School Age child/ children are feeling.
- Gather information – remain neutral by giving each child the opportunity to tell their side of the story. Children sometimes need lots of time to get the words out so take your time and remember the importance of the lessons learnt in these situations.
- Restate the problem – after listening to the children simply describe what the problem is so both/all can understand both sides of the story.
- Ask for ideas for solutions and choose one together - give the children an opportunity to come up with solutions and keep working on it until you all agree on something. This can take a bit of time. The code of behaviour is referred to throughout this conversation. Isolating, undermining, labelling or disregarding practices are not used. Children are encouraged to be respectful and show empathy.
- Be prepared to give follow up support – it is important the staff member follows through on the agreed solution. This helps place trust in the process and children will have confidence in the approach.

Communication with parents

- These behaviours may or may not immediately be shared with parents as it may be linked to the

age of the child or stage of development. It is the role of the adult to support the child in developing these problem-solving skills.

2. Managing Moderate Behaviour Issues

This type of behaviour can be recognised when a behaviour is becoming a more regular occurrence. Incidents of reoccurring behaviour are documented by The Village Childcare & Community Services. The type of information which is recorded may include location, time, date, triggers, witness. This is stored within the child's file in a locked cabinet.

Strategy

The strategy for supporting the child should be consistent and it should follow the Conflict Resolution as outlined above.

Communication with the School Age Child

- The childcare practitioner may speak with the child to discuss the behaviour. E.g. why they think it might be happening, what can the School Age Service do to support the child.
- This is an informal conversation in a quiet space away from the child's peers.
- The School Age Child, in so far as practical, may be involved in the development of the action plan between the School Age Service, the child and parent/guardian. This may be directly or indirectly.
- Ideas and solutions are encouraged from the child, and the School Age Service, in so far as practical, will implement them once it is in best practice guidelines.
- Informing the School Age Child of meetings happening between the School Age Service and the School Age Child's parents/ guardians will be decided on a case-to-case basis.

Communication with Staff

- The staff team will discuss the reoccurring behaviour and put a plan in place. The plan will have a start and end date for review.
- Staff may observe the child to identify any triggers of the behaviour. The plan will identify the duration of observations e.g. for one week, two weeks.
- When the behaviour happens the steps above will be implemented.
- Where observations are carried out, the child should not feel isolated. It is important at this stage, that staff involved are clear on the purpose of the observations and behaviours being observed.
- In respecting the dignity and rights of the child, where observations are carried out, information should only be shared with relevant staff.
- The well-being of the children and staff is paramount, and The Village Childcare & Community Services may put varied supports in place where needed.
- Following the observations, staff are supported to reflect on trends and/or triggers for the behaviour. Additional strategies may be suggested at this stage e.g. staggered transitions, one-to-one support at mealtimes, visual routine, increasing adult: child ratio, physical layout is arranged so that there is a high level of visibility.

Communication with Parents

Reassurance should be provided to parents on supporting their child and open communication should be encouraged throughout this process.

In setting up a meeting to with parent/guardian The Village Childcare & Community Services will consider the following:

- Where possible, a suitable time/day is prearranged with the parent and service e.g. after the session, collection time or during the day.
- Possible supports the parent/guardian might need for the meeting e.g. family member - Meetings

are in a comfortable uninterrupted space.

- All conversations are away from the child.
- Consistent staff attend the meeting e.g. room leader and manager
- All meetings, plans and observations will be recorded and stored in the child's record in a locked cabinet.

Before observations are carried out, we will consider the following:

A meeting may be set up with the parent/guardian. The childcare practitioner and/or manager may speak with the parent / guardian about the reoccurring behaviour.

- A plan will be developed between the staff and parent/guardian to support the child. This plan will be short-term of 1-2 weeks approx. The strategies and timeframe of the plan will be clear.
- Staff encourage questions and discussion with parents.
- Where possible, the time/day for the next meeting is decided.

After carrying out the observation:

- The practitioner and/or additional staff member may request to speak with the child's parent/guardian.
- During the meeting, the plan, trends and/or noticeable triggers may be discussed with the parent/guardian.
- Parent/ guardians are encouraged to contribute to the plan.
- Staff encourage questions and discussion with parents.
- When the service has decided to continue observing the child, a further plan may be put into place in collaboration with the parent/ guardians.
- Where possible, the time/day for the next meeting will be decided.

This process may be cyclical and reoccur many times to identify a trigger or the appropriate strategy and The Village Childcare & Community Services service will have additional procedures in this process which need to be detailed.

Examples of Serious Behaviour Issues

- Behaviour that is hurtful (including bullying, harassment, discrimination and victimisation)
- Continuous behaviour that impacts on the child's learning or engagement.
- Threats or physical hurt to another person.
- Damage to property or other people's property.
- Prolonged tantrums, physical and verbal aggression or disruptive behaviour.
- Assault on a staff member or another child.

Strategies

Specific strategies may be followed to support the child including Conflict Resolution Approach. If appropriate, The Village Childcare & Community Services may develop an individual care plan to support the child.

Where other strategies are in place to support the child, there is a clear outline provided in the care plan. These strategies follow best practice guidelines. The Village Childcare & Community Services may also use the following to support serious behaviour issues:

• **Time to one side with support of an adult**

In rare situations, it may be appropriate to use time to one side with the support of an adult, for short periods of time, to enable a child to calm down. Adult support is needed throughout this time,

and a child must never be isolated in any space or room without adult support. This will not be used as a form of time out and/or isolating a child.

Communication

- The childcare practitioners will carry out a meeting to discuss the behaviour and develop an action plan to support the School Age Child.
 - Observations will be carried out at different times of the day to try establish triggers of the behaviour. All observations will be discussed with the parent/ guardian.
 - Practitioners may speak with the child to discuss the behaviour. E.g. why they think it might be happening, what can we do to support.
 - The School Age Child, in so far as practical, may be involved in the development of the action plan between The Village Childcare & Community Services and parent/guardian. This may be directly or indirectly.
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- Informing the child of meetings happening between the service and the child's parents/ guardians will be decided on a case-to-case basis.
 - A plan will be developed in collaboration with the staff team, family of the child and in so far as practical, the child.
 - If necessary, the family will be supported to contact any relevant external professionals.
 - If the behaviour is a child protection concern the Child Protection Policy will be implemented.
 - All information gathered and discussed will be stored securely and all conversations are highly confidential.
 - All meetings, plans and observations will be recorded and stored in the child's record in a locked cabinet.
 - The staff will always work in the best interest of the child using their best judgement in situations which can be demanding and stressful on all involved.
 - When all reasonable attempts to support the child, whose challenging behaviour is causing the difficulties have failed, it may be necessary to suggest to parents/guardians to seek professional advice, such as a psychologist or play therapist. The parent/guardian may then seek the advice or request referral to other professionals. The Village Childcare & Community Services will support parents/guardians in seeking any professional advice. Serious incidents may result in a meeting with the Manager/Assistant Manager/Parents to discuss the way forward. Occasionally, a shortened day may be more appropriate in order that the child's experience of the service remains positive. In certain circumstances we may phone the parents / carers and request that they collect their child and keep the child out of the service until which time an individual action plan is in place.

Suspension/Termination

Before serious sanctions such as suspension or termination of a child's place in our School Age service, the normal channels of communication between the service and parents/guardians will be utilised. For serious misbehaviour or repeated instances of serious misbehaviour suspension may be considered. Parents/Guardians will be invited to the service to discuss the child's case. Assault, aggressive, threatening, or violent behaviour will be regarded as serious misbehaviour.

Where there are repeated instances of serious misbehaviour, the Chairperson of the Board of Management will be informed, and the parents/guardians will be requested in writing to attend the service to meet with the Chairperson and Manager. If the parents/guardians do not give an undertaking that their child will behave in an acceptable manner in the future the child may be suspended for a period.

Prior to suspension the manager may review the case in consultation with other practitioners and together with parents/guardians, staff and put a behaviour plan in place. The manager and childcare practitioners of The Village Childcare & Community Services must be satisfied that reinstating the child into the After Schools programme will not constitute a risk to the child's own safety or that of the other children or staff.

Below are the steps that we will take when there is serious misbehaviour, these steps are in our child friendly policy so you child can follow.

If it's a big behaviour (like Kicking or hitting or if you find it very hard to calm down or to stop a behaviour) ...

The leaders will:

- help you by staying with you or going with you to a quieter space until you feel calmer. You can use the sensory room at any time with the permission of a leader.
- talk to your parent/guardian and ask them to help find a plan together of how best to change the behaviour. Sometimes we might write this plan down, so we don't forget. This is called a good behaviour contract.
- If you break your Good Behaviour contract you will be suspended for 1 week 5 school days. When you return, we will revisit your good behaviour contract.
- When you break your Good Behaviour contract for a second time you will be suspended for 10 schools' days. On return your good behaviour contract will be revisited.
- When you break your Good Behaviour contract for a third time you place in after school will be terminated this is for the safety of children and staff.

Violence of any form is not allowed in our Afterschools

This Policy will be given to each parent when they register their child into our School Age Childcare service, and they must sign that they have read and agreed to the policy and procedures.

Complaints Policy

The Village Childcare & Community Services complaints policy and procedures will be followed where there any issues or concerns regarding the implementation of the managing behaviour policy.

Person Responsible: _____ Date implemented: _____

Signed by: _____ On behalf of Management

Review Date: _____