Respectful behaviours (interactions with children)

Introduction

Bega Valley Shire Council education and care services are committed to becoming a community where each person is treated with dignity, fairness and respect and has access to learning and relationships. Respectful behaviours will involve building strong connections with each other and appreciating our rights and responsibilities to each other. Respectful behaviours may also include advocacy on behalf of others and challenges to unfairness or inequity.

Strategies

The Approved Provider and the Nominated Supervisors will

- Ensure all Educational Leaders, Educators, staff and others follow the Bega Valley Shire Council Code of Conduct (procedure 5.02.1), Children’s Services Communication Protocols and Respectful behaviours procedures in their interactions with others at all times.

Build strong, secure and trusting relationships

Educational Leaders, Educators, Staff and others will work together with children and families to:

- Ensure each child and family has a special relationship with an educator and an opportunity to regularly exchange information, be listened to, ask questions, discuss similarities or differences, and share aspirations.
- Ensure every child has opportunities to build respectful and reciprocal friendships with children and adults
- Ensure each child and family has a space or place in the service that indicates they belong
- Follow the Bega Valley Shire Council Code of conduct, Children’s Services communication contract and Communication with families protocols at all times

Support children to become secure, confident and empathetic learners and collaborators

Educational Leaders, Educators, Staff and others will work together with children and families to:

- Create spaces and use teaching strategies that enable children to make real and meaningful choices about learning and relationships
- Consult with children about significant decisions that affect their learning and relationships
- Provide opportunities for children to work alone and with others
- Provide opportunities for children to be responsible, share their strengths and celebrate their achievements with others
Identify agreements for community living

Educational Leaders, Educators, Staff and others will work together with children and families to:

- Establish agreements for community living based on dignity, fairness, respect and safety
- Regularly review shared agreements for relationships and learning with children and display these for the community
- Use visual cues, learning stories, social stories, persona dolls and other teaching aids that assist and support children to children to explore the issues that arise from community living. These may include sharing, taking turns, expressing anger or sadness, colonising spaces, including and excluding others, listening, appreciating similarities and differences

Include everyone safely and respectfully in our community

Educators and others working with children may use a range of strategies to ensure every child is included in play safely and respectfully, and that children become secure, capable learners and empathetic collaborators.

Educational Leaders, Educators, Staff and others will use some or all of the following:

1. Document
   Record significant aspects of a child’s day and the effects of their approach to learning and relationships for themselves and others. This may include a range of factors such as group dynamics, environment, issues of inclusion or exclusion, health, family stories of skills and abilities, children’s stories of what is happening between them.

2. Reflect Critically
   Consider different ways of understanding a child’s learning and relationships, the effects of these understandings for the child’s safe and respectful inclusion in the community.

3. Intercede
   Intercede immediately as an advocate or protector to stop the behaviour or language

4. Offer comfort
   Offer comfort to any child who is hurt or upset

5. Ask for information
   Ask each child to define the problem or what is unfair, hurtful or disrespectful

6. Help children to work out what is happening
   Describe the risks, consequences and effects for each child of what is happening

7. Remind children about community agreements
   Outline the expectations that we share as a community:
   a. that we look after each other
   b. we let everyone play
   c. we look after our spaces
   d. we solve problems using words.

8. Reflect and problem solve together
   Reflect with children on how best to address the problem fairly using questions like “Do you think this is fair?” “How would you feel if it was you?” “What would you want someone to do?”
9. Remind children about strengths and other successes
   Share stories with children about their strengths and other successes they have had in solving problems to explore if there are strategies that could be applied to this situation.

10. Provide alternatives
    a. Redirect children to other experiences
    b. Provide examples of what others have done that children can use in this situation
    c. Model behaviours or actions that children can use
    d. Provide time and space for quiet thinking and reflections about a different outcome

11. Involve families
    a. Let the child know that we will talk with her/his family about what has happened
    b. Share what has happened with the child’s family and listen to how they understand the situation. This may require a phone call to the family, or a special meeting to discuss
    c. Ask families about how they would like us to respond to future situations and document this
    d. Communicate this information to other educators

12. Seek assistance from other specialists
    With family permission seek additional expert help from other professionals including early intervention specialists, mental health workers, community health workers and others to identify strategies that support the child’s inclusion

13. Seek funding support
    Where appropriate and with family permission seek inclusion support funding for eligible children to provide additional resources, professional learning, equipment or staffing

14. Undertake professional learning
    Educators may require access to professional learning to provide more effective teaching support to children and families with different abilities. This should be included in Service Support Plans and targets set at a Skills and Performance review meeting.

15. Establish a behaviour contract
    With the family present identify agreed limits and boundaries with the child and group of children, document these and identify what everyone will do to keep the contract.

16. In a crisis
    a. In a crisis where there are risks of serious harm to a child, holding a child close may prevent them from harming themselves or others until they have calmed sufficiently. This should only occur with agreement from family and specialist staff involved in the support of the child.
    b. In a crisis removing other children from the immediate area may be necessary to ensure that they are not at risk of harm from the effects of the behaviour of the child in crisis. This should only occur with agreement from family and specialist staff involved in the support of the child.

Evaluation

Relationships between children, families and educators are based on respectful, reciprocal and ethical interactions.
Legislative requirements

- Education and Care Services National Regulations, 2011.

References

- Bega Valley Shire Council policy 5.02 Behaviour of Councillors and Staff procedure 5.02.1 Code of Conduct. Online: www.begavalley.nsw.gov.au
- Community Child Care Co-operative, Sample Policy, Interactions with Children
- NSW Office for Children, The children’s guardian. Guidelines for designated agencies for developing a behaviour management policy. Version 2.0 4/12/08