

## Protective Behaviours Curriculum Implementation Policy

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### Introduction

Child Side School and Playgroup follow child protection and protective behaviour processes. All staff attend the Keeping Safe: Child Protection Curriculum training through AISWA and educators attend the required Mandatory Reporting workshops or on-line equivalent. At Child Side School Protective Behaviours are an integral part of Health and Safety and are explicitly taught as well as responded to in context when questions, conversations, concerns arise (from children, educators, parents and in media). Protective behaviours are expected to be taught proactively rather than reactively within the developmental organisation of concepts, non-negotiable aspects NNA and the recommended learning strategies RLS from the Keeping Safe: Child Protection Curriculum across each cluster of learning: Early Childhood ECC, Middle Childhood Cluster MCC and Young Adolescent Cluster (YAC). The available learning materials and activities will be approached through the Child Side context.

### Scope and Application

This policy applies to all employees, parents, children, volunteers and visitors of Child Side School. This policy will be reviewed and amended in accordance with Child Side School Policy on Policies and Policy Guidelines and Procedures Contents Schedule.

The use of the word child/children in this policy refers to students in the context of the school environment.

### Related Legislation/Guidelines

- Children and Community Services Act 2004
- Children and Community Services Amendment (Reporting Sexual Abuse of Children) Act 2008
- State Records Act 2000
- Records Retention & Disposal Schedule for Non-Government Schools
- Guide to the Registration Standards and Other Requirements for Non-Government Schools
- Multi-Agency Protocol for Education Options for Young people Charged with Harmful Sexual Behaviours

### Related Policies/Guidelines/Documents

- Access to Students Policy
- Attempted Child Abduction and Child Abduction Response Procedure
- Code of Conduct Policy
- Child Code of Conduct Policy Kindergarten to year 6
- Young Adolescent Code of Conduct
- Staff Code of Conduct Policy
- General Duty of Care Policy
- General Workplace Health & Safety Policy
- Guiding Children's Behaviour Policy
- Nutrition, Health & Hygiene Policy
- Risk Management Policy
- Volunteers Policy
- Guidelines for Engaging Volunteers
- Staff Induction Policy
- Staff Recruitment Policy
- Child Side Child Safe and Friendly Organisation Framework

- Child Side Curriculum Map
- 'Keeping Safe Child Protection Curriculum' Documents

## Definitions

Child Side is aligned with the below definition of bullying:

*Bullying is when someone (or a group of people) with more power than you, repeatedly and intentionally uses negative words and/or actions against you, which causes you distress and risks your wellbeing.*

*National Council Against Bullying (Aust)*

## Policy Statement

Child Side approaches social-emotional conflict through the lens of Dr Louise Porter's Guiding Children's Behaviour, through Maggie Dent's Resiliency Toolbox and the Restorative Justice approach within a No Blame context. All staff are encouraged to be vigilant and proactive, immediately following up on any social-emotional concerns and reporting them to the leadership team to help track any ongoing issues that may lead to bullying. The leadership team will then instigate the appropriate channels to address this. Child Side will also access their attached school psychologist at point of need and refer families/child for further support if requested or deemed necessary by the leadership team.

We are aligned to Maggie Dent's approach to bullying and hurtful behaviour. "Bullying has become such a hot topic in schools that it too may have contaminated some of today's key life skill development for children. As children are still developing skills to be assertive, they will make mistakes at times. An over-focus on bullying instead of developing friendship skills encourages adults to feel under pressure to take every misdemeanour seriously and to step in and work out conflicts—we may be interrupting a normal part of social and emotional development. We need to be careful not to dilute the value of everyday unpleasantness, and of children learning for themselves how to deal with it. At the same time, we must protect and act when real bullying occurs. At other times we need to learn to step back and let kids be kids when other social challenges occur. Vital emotional learning may be taking place."- Maggie Dent *'Real Kids in an Unreal World'*.

Maggie Dent clarifies the difference between childhood nastiness and bullying. "Children have always had moments when the choices they make when interacting with other children are unkind and hurtful. The odd shove, bite or name calling incident is how children learn how to make better social decisions with careful guidance by adults. It shows that emotional competence to manage impulses, delay gratification, manage emotions and develop empathy take time to grow. This is normal childhood nastiness and is different from bullying where there is a deliberate intent to hurt another by using an unacceptable use of power and it is often repeated.

Bullying is a complex issue, however where bullying is occurring (beyond normal childhood 'nastiness') we need to recognise both the bully and the victim have some problems with their emotional and social competence. Prolonged bullying can be fatal and professional help is encouraged as soon as possible and removal from a toxic environment is often recommended. However, without serious help the issue will come up again in a child's life – both for victims and bullies. I firmly believe that bullying is a sign of low self-esteem, poor social and emotional skills, and human disconnectedness.

Both the bully and the victim are struggling with emotional illiteracy and a low sense of self. The bully covers his or her inadequacy by acting out; being tough; when they are really struggling to cover up a low self-esteem and a fear of being rejected.

Many victims are chosen because they appear vulnerable or just because they are different: not because they are weak. They have a different culture, they have big ears, they are overweight, they seem to have no friends or they have a noticeable life challenge. Then there are the victims who are chosen because

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they have what the bully values and wishes he/she had: good looks, wealthy family, courage to be individual, a girlfriend/boyfriend, artistic talent, lots of good friends, school success or even a happy family. The bully's actions are what then causes the victim to struggle — being frightened for one's safety, being shamed, harassed, constant verbal and psychological abuse, and being excluded all cause deep trauma within children and adolescents. The thinking processes become distorted and the inner critic voice of many victims will become negative, toxic and the cycle of self-destructive and critical thoughts continually erodes the victim so that they then attack themselves. Effectively, **they bully themselves and expect to be bullied**. This is a very difficult cycle to break and this can have lethal consequences especially in adolescence". *Nurturing Kids Heart and Souls*. Maggie Dent 2005.

We approach any situation of conflict and harm through an approach to protect the human-being, focusing on what is right and healthy for humans regardless of gender, age, religion, lifestyle choice, past history. We approach conflict with two ears and two hands to listen and respond to both sides of the story. We focus on developing emotional intelligence and focusing on acknowledging feelings and reasons behind behaviours but not excusing behaviours. We focus on supporting individuals to develop protective strategies from a range of real and perceived hurts. We know that it is how we respond to conflict and trauma that is vital in the healing and restorative process.

The leadership team, in particular the Senior Educator, is across any direct and formalised teaching of protective behaviours from the Keeping Safe: Child Protection Curriculum and across any conversation or debrief that has arisen in the course of the children/families' experiences. It is the responsibility of educators and all staff to inform the leadership team regarding anything that has arisen that they regard to be a teachable moment regarding safety and protection as well as children's interpretations around social and emotional conflict. The leadership team is the cornerstone for children across the school and as the point of reference between clusters. They also have knowledge of each child and may have confidential knowledge which may impact on how the child copes with the information in a class setting. It is also part of Child Side School's protective behaviours to keep all adults safe and protect themselves by having another adult in the room with them to approach and respond to sensitive topics. This is especially important if the adults themselves happen to feel vulnerable through personal experiences. All staff are expected to seek support if they are vulnerable from any prior or current circumstance and to protect themselves and others from being affected by further pain and trauma that may result from incidences or protective behaviour discussions in the school context. Staff are expected to have identified trusted networks at work to be able to access support. This is very important in a small community to have more than one person to access in times of personal stress but still retain confidentiality and respect privacy.

Educators are required to inform the leadership team when they are planning to discuss, view, read or teach anything from the Keeping Safe curriculum and/or through the history or English literature lens eg: Stolen Generation, war... and through any current events such as terrorism, suicide, natural disasters, domestic violence that touch the school community, the local community or are under current media scrutiny. Educators and all staff are made aware to refrain from pushing personal priorities and advocating children and families attend rallies, gatherings, sign petitions, share literature etc about a particular viewpoint. All staff have a responsibility to inform the leadership team and another educator as soon as they become aware of any digital or cyber concerns involving the children, families, staff, themselves or random texts, images, content. Families are informed about protective behaviour conversations and how we responded to any concerns.

Child Side also has a set of resources designed to both respond to and instigate conversation and learning around protective behaviours appropriate to developmental needs across the school. These have been purchased through PROTECTIVE BEHAVIOURS WA (Inc.) Child Safety Education, Training and Resources and parents are informed and are able to access these through the senior educator.

Educators have a consistent and cohesive approach to protective behaviour education, accessing shared recommended resources on-line:

The fundamental messages to children are:

- **Conceptual knowledge that bodies have private zones.** Private zones are made clear using correct terminology, using anatomically correct dolls and simple drawings denoting 3 areas that belong just to them. Private parts have very important functions, and we all have them. We can talk about them and ask questions about them because they are part of our bodies but who, where, why, when and how we talk about them is important to make clear.
- **Conceptual Knowledge that permission must be sort from the individual in cases where doctors will need to examine these private zones for related health reasons.** Adults not related to the health professions (including teachers, parents, coaches etc) should never ask to see or touch private zones and adults and children should refuse to see, touch or ask because we are not doctors and therefore it is inappropriate and unnecessary. No need to intentionally see or touch.
- **Conceptual understandings that 'danger' is not always frightening or physically hurtful.** Make explicit that there are **Delicate Dangers**. Touching and seeing these private parts are not generally related to anger, pain, distress or even fear (educators are aware that often children's confidence and trust has been specifically gained through grooming). An adult or another child deliberately asking, viewing and touching private parts is a 'danger', even if not 'perceived' as a traditional danger eg: fire, vehicles, deep water, dogs, spiders, snakes, knives, hot ovens, strangers....
- **No secrets are good secrets. Secrets are not ok and exclude. Secrets are unhealthy, unfriendly and can be dangerous. A secret is different to a surprise.** A surprise will be shared in with others eventually (have a definite sharing timeline eg: surprise revealed at Christmas or when a baby is born or at the end of term). Surprises should be fun, safe, exciting, good news... Surprises are not a surprise if they are never shared. Children should have examples of both so can be aware of the difference. A secret is when anyone says 'Don't tell ever' and in particular when you are the only one to know this secret. Teach children to ask others if they mean a secret or a surprise and explain the difference.
- **Passing on or TELLING is a way of helping others.** Telling is not just OK, it is expected, healthy and safer in the end (even if at first others are cross with you or leave you out and exclude you). Make clear that it is important to have 5 adults they feel safe to tell. Make clear that anything to do with private parts (even if not involving your own) is a MUST tell and tell and tell again until adults acknowledge and respond.

**Process is to-** NO- say no, GO- away, TELL- an adult (at Child Side we say 'Tell **more** than one adult' as part of the protective behaviour). It is recognised that it is very difficult for anyone, let alone a child to say NO or even to GO so the TELL MORE THAN ONE ADULT is the vital step.

Educators are referred to the red, orange, green light of sexual behaviours in children on the Protective Behaviours WA website. Educators help parents understand natural and healthy **developmental curiosity** and how to distinguish and 'manage it'. Families are encouraged to share concerns. Educators and other adults on site are aware of the importance of 'protective behaviours for themselves from the other angle' as adults and older children on-site can help any protect themselves from misunderstandings, misinterpretations and compromising situations. A definite process of communication is made clear. Conversations about bodies and sex (in particular what children see, hear and are exposed to through the media and other communities eg: sporting groups, adult conversations, older siblings, neighbourhoods...) are responded to at PON and at point of interest and developmental curiosity, that is: discussion has boundaries and adult responds to what children are sharing or asking NOT going beyond or in depth. Adult makes it clear that they will inform other staff of this conversation (as part of protective behaviours) and

they should inform their parents (not siblings) – open, natural developmental curiosity process of sharing and communicating appropriately.

## Version Management

VERSION:	DATE REVIEWED:	DATE RATIFIED:	CHANGES MADE:	AUTHOR OF CHANGES:	Policy Review Date
1	May 2015			Senior Educator	
2	June 2016			KM	
3	Nov 2017	Dec 2017	KCS Curriculum Definition of Bullying- Maggie Dent	Senior Educator LO	
4.	Oct 2022	07/12/2022	Transferred to updated policy format, updated related policy list	KM	Term 4 - 2024