

Behaviour guidance – sample policy

This sample policy statement is provided as a guideline for wording and layout. We recommend that the specific wording be carefully considered to properly reflect the particular circumstances and procedures in your OSCAR service. The Out of School Care Network accepts no liability for any events arising from the implementation of procedures outlined in this document.

Children have the right to be safe and feel safe; to receive care and attention; to be treated fairly and with dignity and respect. Through consistent behaviour guidance practices, staff at XYZ OSCAR Programme will help children to learn helpful and co-operative behaviours. This approach includes maintaining a positive environment, early intervention with low-key responses and utilising consequences for persistent or more serious misbehaviour.

This policy also includes steps for responding to children's behaviour that poses a significant safety risk. This is given a high priority, to ensure the safety of children and programme staff.

A positive environment

Children are encouraged to behave appropriately through a range of supportive strategies, including:

- A stable programme routine, implemented with flexibility in response to children's changing needs
- Facilities and resources that allow for varied activity – including rest and relaxation
- Children can assist with programme tasks and have choice/input into the programme activities
- Children are well-supervised during all activities and staff intervene early if there is any problem
- Staff model appropriate behaviour including friendly and attentive interactions with all children
- Staff recognise appropriate behaviour and encourage children to make good behaviour choices
- Rules/boundaries clearly outline expectations for behaviour – children help to establish rules and expectations and help to regularly review / update these.

Our programme rules:

Upon enrolment, parents are asked to provide information to assist with caring for their child/ren. If individual support needs are indicated, appropriate strategies will be noted. Parent input and experience will always be sought when planning individual support strategies: these are discussed with all programme staff, with the aim of achieving a consistent approach for the whole programme.

Children are encouraged to learn simple conflict resolution techniques e.g. using 'paper, scissors, rock' to choose who has first turn. When the issue is more substantial, children may be asked to take time to cool off, discuss the problem with staff assistance and then reach a solution together.

Behaviour Guidance Policy – sample (cont.)

Low-key response

When responding to misbehaviour, staff initially use low-key, unobtrusive responses e.g. ignoring, non-verbal signals or short, simple reminders, directions, questions or re-direction.

Early intervention is usually always preferable: staff members are pro-active in responding to behaviour problems before they escalate, although options to ignore some behaviours will also be considered.

Staff members communicate calmly and assertively, and do not shout, threaten or intimidate children.

Children are usually given reasonable time and space to comply with any instruction or expectation.

Staff aim to reconnect positively with children after intervening. Each day is viewed as a fresh start.

Inappropriate discipline practices

Punitive discipline is not acceptable at our programme. This includes punishing by hitting, the withholding of food or drink, isolation from the group, humiliation, ridicule or other forms of verbal abuse.

Staff will not use physical force to direct children or make them comply with instructions.

No physical restraint or intervention will be used with children, unless it is an immediate issue of safety for children or staff, and direct verbal commands have not been effective.

Consequences for persistent misbehaviour

If the behaviour persists, staff will state a choice or consequence e.g. “if you continue with then”

In any instance where a child is agitated or in an extreme emotional state, the child will be given time and space to cool down, with appropriate monitoring by staff before further steps are taken.

Staff always follow through appropriately with consequences, which may include loss of privileges or equipment; remedying damages; follow up with parents.

Any communication with parents about a child’s behaviour must first be approved by the supervisor. An incident report may be required – staff will consult with the supervisor about this.

All parents and children are advised that a possible consequence for a serious or persistent incident is that the supervisor may ask parents to come and remove the child from the programme immediately.

Serious behaviour problems & exclusion of children

Where there is a repeated pattern of inappropriate behaviour staff will consider:

- if there are any triggers for the behaviour at the programme and how to manage these
- if the response the child gets for the behaviour (from staff or other children) is meeting the goal of the behaviour and therefore reinforcing the behaviour, making it likely to re-occur
- staff will take a problem-solving approach, with the aim of forming a consistent set of responses, used by all staff, to help the child behave appropriately. Parents will be kept informed of this process and given the opportunity to offer suggestions towards a suitable strategy.

Serious or repeated incidents of misbehaviour are recorded and reported to parents. Parents will be asked to meet with the supervisor to discuss concerns. The child will have the chance to participate. The meeting will review steps that have been taken to help the child and aims to reach an agreement for a behaviour guidance plan, including clear consequences should the behaviour recur.

Behaviour Guidance Policy – sample (cont.)

In the case of more serious behaviour incidents, the programme may exclude children from the programme effective immediately. This could apply where behaviour has been, or could be, harmful to other children or staff, or where the behaviour seriously or repeatedly compromises supervision e.g. repeated situations that require staff attention and leave other parts of the programme inadequately supervised.

In the case of immediate exclusion, parents will still be given the chance to meet with the supervisor, to have the reasons for the exclusion explained.

Where a child is excluded from the programme, written confirmation will be provided, giving the reasons for the exclusion.

Appropriate confidentiality will be maintained in all discussions and recording of children's behaviour.

Staff professional development and support

Induction for staff includes this behaviour guidance policy. New staff members receive regular support and feedback about their behaviour guidance practices.

Staff will receive ongoing support, through formal and informal staff meetings where issues or concerns can be discussed.

Staff will be offered professional development whenever possible, in order to learn more about child development and enhance their behaviour guidance skills.

**Parent information re-behaviour guidance:
sample wording**

Behaviour guidance at XYZ OSCAR Programme

We aim to provide a positive environment for children, where they can enjoy their out of school time while learning to get along with others, become more independent and take responsibility for themselves. Our behaviour guidance policy helps our staff to work consistently towards this goal, while keeping all children safe, physically and emotionally. If you would to read this policy in full it is available..... (where/how)

In summary, our behaviour guidance policy covers:

- Creating a positive environment that encourages appropriate behaviour
- Low-key, early response to minor misbehaviour and consequences for more persistent misbehaviour
- Planning and problem-solving for more disruptive behaviour
- Exclusion of children from the programme, where there are safety concerns

Our programme uses incident reporting to help get a clearer picture of what might be causing, and what might help with, more challenging behaviour. It is our policy that we do not report every behaviour incident to parents, but we will do so if we consider the matter sufficiently serious, or persistent. We keep any information recorded about children confidential. We will share with parents any information we have recorded about their child, if requested.

We are confident that most behaviour problems can be addressed through the fair and consistent application of our policy. It is very helpful that we have your support in positively reinforcing our programme behaviour expectations with your children.

Include current programme rules....