



## Isabella Plains Early Childhood School

### Providing a Safe and Supportive Learning Environment Policy

#### Purpose

To provide clear and consistent information on how a safe and supportive environment will be maintained that allows all children and adults to learn and work to their potential.

#### Beliefs

We believe that

- all children can learn
- all children and adults have the right to feel safe at school
- all children and adults have the right to be treated with respect and dignity
- behaviours are designed to meet one of five basic needs: survival, love and belonging, power, freedom and fun
- all we do is behave
- almost all behaviour is chosen
- we can only control our own behaviour



#### Procedures

##### ***Class agreements***

A class agreement is a shared understanding between teachers and children about fair, reasonable, safe, age-related, expected behaviour in the class group.

*(Rogers & McPherson, 2009)*

Class agreements are reinforced throughout the school year. They are formed at the beginning of each school year and relate to the three school agreements of:

- |                         |               |
|-------------------------|---------------|
| • Look after yourself   | Y- Yourself   |
| • Look after each other | E- Each Other |
| • Look after our school | S- School     |

Class agreements are used positively and reflect positive statements about the desired behaviour expectations. A 'Y' chart can be used in class to focus on the positive aspects of the agreement i.e. what does being respectful look like, sound like, feel like.

Regular class discussions throughout the year focus on the rights and responsibilities of learners and explore what each of these agreements means in action.

### **Core routines**

Classes develop core routines in the first few days of the school year. These routines are designed to establish and maintain a positive learning environment. Routines are developed for areas including:

- cueing for and sustaining children's attention
- seeking teacher help
- putting up hands
- transition from one learning space to another
- noise volume
- use of equipment

Core routines are reinforced and discussed throughout the year.

### **Explicit teaching**

IPECS is a Kids Matter school. The four elements of Kids Matter are

1. A positive school community
2. Social and emotional learning for students
3. Working with parents and carers
4. Helping students experiencing mental health difficulties

Teaching and learning programs embed the teaching of values and social skills. We use the Bounce Back program for teaching the following in P-2:

- Relationships
- Core values
- People Bouncing back
- Courage
- Looking on the bright side
- Emotions
- No Bullying
- Humour
- STAR- Success



Children also learn about skills such as sharing, cooperating, listening, turn taking, sharing thoughts, feelings and values, as well as the nine Values for Australian Schooling:

- Care and Compassion;
- Doing Your Best;
- Fair Go;
- Freedom;
- Honesty and Trustworthiness;
- Integrity;
- Respect;
- Responsibility and Understanding,
- Tolerance and Inclusion.

*(Australian Government, 2005)*

## ***Counselling***

As children learn and develop they may make choices which are not aligned to school and class agreements. It is the role of adults to guide children and enable them to make decisions about their behaviours which are based on the rights and responsibilities of themselves and others.

A child will be given a reminder about the class agreement if they are not following it. If the behaviour continues they are given the choice to follow the agreement or have the relevant consequence. For example: *you can choice to work quietly or move to another part of the room; or you can use the equipment safely or work without it.* In most instances a child will make the appropriate choice. On occasions where the behaviour continues the teacher will counsel the child or ask a colleague to counsel the child. A leadership team member may be called at this point to take the class to allow counselling to occur, or to carry out the counselling.

Children on the playground may at times make choices that do not align with our school agreement and/or are unsafe behaviours for themselves or others.

At these times adults will intervene as necessary to remind the child of the appropriate choice and counsel the child to effectively repair any harm that has occurred and seek appropriate choices for behaviour.

Adults will also remind themselves of the checklist for dealing with inappropriate behaviour at IPECS.

*When we encounter inappropriate behaviour at IPECS:*

### *Being Proactive*

Have I tried strategies to build relationships?

### *Understanding developmental stages*

Have I considered what the child is developmentally capable of?

### *Restoring Relationships*

Have I acknowledged feelings?

Have I used the script?



Adults use counselling that is designed to teach children problem solving skills as well as fix the damage they may have caused to relationships. The questioning structure used in counselling is from the Restorative Practices procedures. The questions have been modified to meet the needs of younger children.

*Counselling questions:*

What happened?

What did you want to happen?

When you \_\_\_\_\_ was that a good choice?

How did you make \_\_\_\_\_ feel when you \_\_\_\_\_?

At school it is not ok to \_\_\_\_\_, next time I want you to \_\_\_\_\_

To fix this up you need to \_\_\_\_\_

## ***Consequences***

A consequence is the outcome of a particular behaviour. Consequences are put in place to protect the rights of others. At Isabella Plains Early Childhood School we use natural consequences. Natural consequences are based on notions of fairness and restitution. They are based on solutions to problems rather than a quick fix. For this reason logical consequences do sometimes take longer to show results, however are based on the principle that children are learning that behaviour is learned and aimed at meeting a need.

Examples of consequences are: *if a child is rough in the playground they lose their right to play there; or if a child is refusing to complete the assigned task they will need to complete it at another time.*

In situations where children continue to make inappropriate choices or continually hurt others they will move through a set of escalating consequences which include

- Time off the playground (usually one to three days)
- Half day in school suspension – this involves the child completing work in a learning space other than their own
- Full day in school suspension – this involves the child completing work in a learning space other than their own
- Out of school suspension – the child is excluded from school for the day and is provided with work to complete in the care of the family. Paperwork is forwarded to the family, the Education Directorate and recorded on the child's file. Out of school suspensions escalate with each repeat offence, for example one day for the first occasion, up to a total of 15 days for continued occasions.

At all of these steps a re-entry discussion is held with the child, family members, class teacher and a leadership team member. The purpose of the re-entry discussion is to help the child understand the impact of their behaviours and to encourage them to use other strategies to meet their needs. These plans are recorded and maintained on the child's file here at school.



Parents / Carers are always notified in person or via phone of any incident which may happen at school that is considered unsafe, harmful to others, a repeated behaviour and/or serious. Staff and parents need to work together to help children learn about rights and responsibilities as well as problem solving skills. Children are reminded on a regular basis that they need to talk to an adult if they feel unhappy about something at school.

### ***Related DET policies***

*Providing Safe Schools P-12*

*Suspension, Exclusion or transfer in ACT public Schools*

*Countering Bullying, Harassment and Violence in ACT Public Schools*

*Countering Racism in ACT Public Schools*

*Countering Sexual Harassment in ACT Public Schools*

*Students with a Disability: Meeting their Education Needs*

### ***Related Documents***

*National Safe School Framework*

*Protocols for Student Management*

*The Inclusivity Challenge*

*Disability Standards for Education*

### ***References***

*Critical First Steps: Behaviour Management in the Early Years* by Bill Rogers & Elizabeth McPherson, 2009

*Values for Australian Schooling*, Australian Government, 2005