

BULLYING POLICY - Children

Bullying can occur among children of any age, sex or background. In most instances, children need adult assistance to deal with bullying. This includes adults taking responsibility to develop strategies for the prevention of bullying, and for dealing fairly and effectively with allegations of bullying.

My Time, Our Place & The Early Years Learning Framework identifies secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships with children as one of the principles that underpin practice. Within our organisation many different relationships are negotiated with and between children, educators and families. The way in which these relationships are established and maintained, and the way in which they remain visible impacts on how the community, functions as a whole. Relationships directly affect how children form their own identity, whether they feel safe and supported, and ultimately, their sense of belonging.

NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD (NQS)

QUALITY AREA 2: CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND SAFETY		
2.2	Safety	Each child is protected.
QUALITY AREA 5: RELATIONSHIPS WITH CHILDREN		
5.1.2	Dignity and rights of the child	The dignity and rights of every child are maintained.
5.2	Relationships between children	Each child is supported to build and maintain sensitive and responsive relationships.
5.2.1	Collaborative learning	Children are supported to collaborate, learn from and help each other.
QUALITY AREA 6: PARTNERSHIPS WITH FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES		
6.1	Supportive relationships with families	Respectful relationships with families are developed and maintained and families are supported in their parenting role.

EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL LAW AND NATIONAL REGULATIONS	
S. 2A	Paramount consideration—safety, rights and best interests of children
S. 3A	Paramount consideration
S.165	Offence to inadequately supervise children
S. 166	Offence to use inappropriate discipline
S.166A	Offence to subject child to inappropriate conduct



	Offences relating to inappropriate conduct
S. 167	Offence relating to protection of children from harm and hazards
S. 174	Offence to fail to notify certain information to Regulatory Authority
73	Educational program
84	Awareness of child protection law
123	Educator to child ratios- centre based services
155	Interactions with children
156	Relationships in groups
168	Education and care services must have policies and procedures
170	Policies and procedures to be followed
171	Policies and procedures to be kept available

Related Child Safety Standards	
1	Child Safety is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture.
2	Children participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.
3	Families and Communities are informed and involved
4	Equity is upheld and diversity is taken into account.
5	People working with children are suitable and supported.
6	Processes to respond to complaints of Child abuse are child focused.
7	Staff are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children safe through continual education and training.
8	Physical and online environments minimize the opportunity for abuse to occur.
9	Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is continuously reviewed and improvised.
10	Policies and Procedures document how the organisation is Child Safe

RELATED POLICIES

Behaviour Guidance Policy	Enrolment Policy
Child Safe Environment Policy	Interactions with Children, Family and Staff Policy
Code of Conduct	Privacy and Confidentiality Policy

PURPOSE

To create a safe and healthy environment for children where bullying behaviours are not tolerated. As reflected in our Service philosophy and the approved learning frameworks *My Time, Our Place Framework (MTOF)* (V2.0, 2022) & *Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF)* (V2.0, 2022), educators will encourage positive and respectful relationships between children and their peers. We believe that children's safety, rights, and best interests are the paramount consideration for all Service operations, decisions and functions. Activity Centres Inc (ACI) ensures that child safety, wellbeing and best interests take priority over all other considerations, including financial interests or other obligations of management, and are embedded in our daily practices, policies and procedures.

SCOPE

This policy applies to Children, Families, Staff, Educators, Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, Students, Volunteers and Visitors.

IMPLEMENTATION

ACI does not tolerate bullying of any kind. Bullying is never OK!

The priority of our Organisation is to provide a safe and inclusive environment to prevent bullying. We aim to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the child experiencing bullying behaviour and take any allegation of bullying seriously.

Although there may be underlying reasons causing a child to display or use bullying behaviour towards others, it is essential that the child experiencing bullying behaviour receives the adult attention and support in the first instance. It is important that the needs of the child who uses or displays bullying behaviour do not overshadow the needs of the child being bullied. The relevant school the child attends may be contacted to ensure consistency between strategies used by the school and whilst in attendance at our service.

WHAT IS BULLYING?

Someone being mean isn't always bullying.

Bullying behaviours:

- Are **aggressive, unkind or mean** behaviours that are one-sided
- Are **repeated behaviours** (it must happen multiple times, in an ongoing way to be defined as bullying)
- Happen **on purpose/are deliberate** (i.e. aren't accidental for instance)
- Must have a **power imbalance** – which means that people bullying and the people being bullied aren't seen as being 'equal', or the person being bullied would have a hard time standing up for themselves or fighting back, e.g. older, bigger people picking on smaller, younger people, or 'popular' people targeting someone who they see as being 'unpopular', or a group targeting one person
- Causes **harm** - this can be physical (e.g. bruises), psychological (e.g. distress) or social (e.g. losing friends)

Some other serious types of behaviours, like discrimination, harassment and abuse, can overlap with bullying and are actually against the law.

Bullying is not the same as:

- **Being rude** – saying or doing something hurtful that wasn't planned or meant to hurt someone, e.g. someone pushing in front of you in the canteen line
- **Being mean** – doing something hurtful to someone on purpose once or twice, e.g. a friend refusing to hang out with you one day
- **Conflict** – there's a disagreement, both sides are aggressive/mean and there's no power imbalance (both sides can 'stand up' for themselves or fight back), e.g. two friends getting into an argument or fight and saying mean things to each other
- **Respectful feedback** on behaviours you're doing that aren't ok, e.g. "It's not ok roll your eyes every time they talk about sport."
- **A friend putting in a 'boundary'** e.g. "I don't like it when you keep telling me what to do."
- **Natural consequences** in socialising, e.g. a friend not trusting you because you shared their secret

(Source: [Bullying | Kids Helpline](#))

TYPES OF BULLYING

Bullying can be direct (happening to your face) or indirect (happening 'behind your back'). Bullying can also be super obvious and observable ('overt'), or subtle and hard to prove ('covert'). There are a few different types of bullying, including:

Physical bullying

- hitting, punching, kicking, pinching- directed at the same child/ren over an extended period of time.

Verbal bullying

- calling children names, taunting them, making sexist/racist statements, making cruel statements about personal attributes, clothing etc.

Social bullying

- excluding individual children or groups of children from play or social situations; spreading rumours or playing mean jokes

Cyber bullying

- using technologies such as texting or e-mailing to taunt, insult, intimidate or harass another child.

(source: [kids helpline bullying](#))

SIGNS OF BULLYING

In many cases, bullying occurs without adults being aware of it. Bullying can include physical violence (hitting, shoving), teasing or name-calling, social exclusion, or intimidation. It often occurs over a period of time. Possible signs a child is experiencing bullying behaviour might include:

- unexplained cuts, bruises, scratches
- changes in behaviour, such as becoming moody, teary, depressed
- bedwetting
- complaints of physical ailments such as headaches or stomach aches
- having few friends, or a breakdown in a previous friendship
- does not want to attend school/after school care/vacation care
- does not want to attend parties, visit other children

Children may also disclose to a trusted adult that they are being bullied.

EFFECTS OF BULLYING

Children who are experiencing bullying behaviour are more likely to be depressed, lonely, and anxious and have low self-esteem. They may frequently feel sick and avoid interactions with others.

PREVENTATIVE STRATEGIES

Bullying thrives where there is not enough supervision. If required, and where possible, Services should improve upon the educator-to-child ratios set in the National Regulations. The program of activities should be designed to meet the needs and interests of all children in attendance to prevent periods of boredom.

Educators model appropriate behaviours towards other staff and children, including refraining from teasing, humiliating, or talking 'behind another's back'. This should also include using appropriate language when supporting children to recognise,

manage and learn about their behaviour and develop an understanding of how their behaviour affects others. Children and young people should be encouraged to verbalise their emotions and to develop empathy and compassion.

TALKING ABOUT BULLYING

Educators play an important role in helping children understand and guide their own behaviour as they learn about positive and healthy relationships with others.

Behaviours may be *precursors* to bullying rather than true bullying. This could include making faces, refusing to play together, telling lies or stories about another child, grabbing objects, pushing, pinching or shoving another child. Without intervention, these behaviours could turn into a pattern of bullying.

Educators can assist children recognise bullying behaviour and assist children in developing strategies to develop positive relationships and prevent bullying. Skills to develop to assist in preventing bullying include:

- empathy- understanding and responding to what others feel
- problem solving- how to resolve problems constructively without using aggression
- language- understanding what to say when the child is feeling targeted by another child- 'stop it!'

EDUCATORS WILL:

- teach social skills through role-plays, stories and games.
- avoid using terminology such as 'bully' or 'victim' when describing behaviour being displayed
- focus and guide children to practice more appropriate ways to interact with others positively and respectfully when talking about bullying
- maintain and respect the dignity and rights of children
- refrain from any behaviour that may be considered inappropriate conduct or inappropriate discipline, including behaviour that is threatening, intimidating, humiliating, degrading, hostile or otherwise inappropriate.

PROCEDURE WHEN A CHILD DISCLOSES ALLEGED BULLYING OR AN EDUCATOR SUSPECTS BULLYING IS OCCURRING.

EDUCATORS WILL:

- refer to the *Behaviour Guidance- Bullying Response Procedure* (see Appendix A) for steps to undertake when approaching a bullying situation
- refrain from any behaviour that may be considered inappropriate conduct, including behaviour that is threatening, intimidating, humiliating, degrading, hostile or otherwise inappropriate
- immediately report any behaviour by another person that may constitute inappropriate conduct towards a child to the nominated supervisor/approved provider and regulatory authority

- understand their mandatory reporting requirements and respond to any incident, disclosure or suspicion of child abuse, harm, neglect or ill-treatment they witness or suspect immediately by notifying the approved provider and NSW Department of Communities and Justice (Child Protection Helpline)
- listen when a child attempts to tell you about behaviours that might indicate bullying
- learn as much as possible about the children involved and the tactics used
- summarise the problem they are discussing
- ensure the child knows that the educators at the service are there to help them
- provide support and empathy
- empathise with the child and reassure them that it is not their fault
- ask the child what they think could be done to help, what will make them feel safe
- encourage and support the child who is experiencing bullying behaviour to contribute to discussions on actions to challenge or stop bullying behaviours.
- notify the Nominated Supervisor of the allegation
- document the incident and record strategies used to guide and support the child
- inform and communicate with families regarding instances of bullying involving their child (See Involving Families section below)

STRATEGIES TO PREVENT AND MANAGING BULLYING WHEN IT OCCURS -

- adopt a zero tolerance for bullying
- model respectful ways of interacting with colleagues, children and families
- ensure children are adequately supervised at all times and be aware of any indicators of bullying if it occurs
- teach children strategies to challenge bullying-type behaviours- e.g., *"I don't like it when you call me names"*.
- critically reflect on environmental factors within the Service to support children and foster positive, respectful relationships
- take action when they suspect a child is experiencing bullying behaviour
- try to talk with the child who is alleged to be using or displaying bullying behaviours about their behaviour and the outcomes of their behaviour on others
- let them know that this type of behaviour is not acceptable and provide guidance and encouragement toward acceptable behaviour
- don't force a meeting between the child who is alleged to be using or displaying bullying behaviours and the child who is experiencing bullying behaviour. Forced apologies are not constructive.
- ask the child who is suspected of bullying for possible reasons for the bullying
- consider the age, cultural values, and physical and intellectual development and abilities of each child
- support children's agency by assisting the child to move toward more considerate actions

- develop a *Behaviour Guidance Plan* in collaboration with the child, family and support agencies if required.

INVOLVING FAMILIES

Our Service will seek the cooperation and support from families for bullying prevention initiatives and reinforcement of positive interactions with other children.

We will:

- ensure families are aware of our *Service Philosophy, Behaviour Guidance, Bullying Policy* and *Child Safe Environment Policy*
- provide information to families about the nature and harmful consequences of bullying- e.g., newsletters, parent information sessions
- openly communicate with families of children who use or display bullying behaviours or experience bullying, and work in partnership with them to implement appropriate strategies to support the children involved (*refer to Privacy and Confidentiality Policy and Code of Conduct Policy*)
- if required, seek further strategies from relevant inclusion Support Services (implementation of *Inclusion support Plan*)
- support families to guide their child's behaviour with effective strategies and provide support – such as Kids Helpline
- ensure notification is made to parents/guardians as soon as practicable, but within 24 hours, if their child is involved in a serious incident/situation at the Service. Details of the incident/situation are to be recorded on the *Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Record*.

POTENTIAL FURTHER ACTIONS

Possible actions may be required to ensure our Service provides a child safe environment for all children. Any action taken by management will be dependent on each individual case following regular communication with families, professional support and intervention. Should the bullying behaviour continue and children's wellbeing and safety is at risk, management may request a:

- temporary exclusion of the child from the Service, or
- permanent exclusion from the Service (*see: Behaviour Guidance Policy*)

The Approved Provider will ensure that any allegation, concern or suspicion that a child has been subjected to inappropriate conduct or inappropriate discipline is responded to immediately and reported to the regulatory authority, within 24 hours, with mandatory notifications made to other relevant authorities as required including Office of the Children's Guardian- Reportable Conduct Scheme (NSW), NSW Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ), NSW Police and internal incident management procedures.

RESOURCES

[Bullying- NO WAY!](#)

[Kids Help Line](#)

[Kids Help line Dealing with bullying](#)

NSW Department of Education [Anti-bullying Parents and carers tips Fact sheet](#)

Raising Children [Signs of bullying in children and teenagers](#)

Queensland Government Early Childhood Education and Care [Managing conflict and recognising bullying](#)

SOURCES

Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2026). [Guide to the National Quality Framework](#)

Australia Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2026). [Inappropriate Discipline.](#)

Australian Government Department of Education. (2022). [My Time, Our Place- Framework for School Age Care in Australia.](#) (Version 2.0)

Australian Government. Australian Institute of Family Studies. (2014). [Helping your child stop bullying. A guide for parents](#)

[Children \(Education and Care Services\) National Law \(NSW\)](#) (NSW services only)

[Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010.](#)

[Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011](#)

[Education and Care Services National Regulations \(NSW\) \(2025\)](#) (NSW services only)

NSW Department of Education [Anti-bullying- Parents and carers tips- Fact Sheet](#) (2020).

[Western Australian Legislation Education and Care Services National Law \(WA\) Act 2012](#) (WA Services only)

[Western Australian Legislation Education and Care Services National Regulations \(WA\) 2012](#) (WA Services only)

REVIEW

POLICY REVIEWED BY	Rachael Bajo & Jessie McCulloch	Role: Head Office	Date: July 2026
ENDORSED BY 2 PARENT COMMITTEE MEMBERS (initial/date)	K.K & A.S (6/8/26)	UPDATES/MODIFICATIONS	-Moved to childcare desktop
NEXT REVIEW DATE: January 2028			

APPENDIX A- BULLYING RESPONSE PROCEDURE

STEP 1: PROCEDURE WHEN A CHILD DISCLOSES ALLEGED BULLYING		
1	Listen carefully to any attempts a child or young person may make to tell you about other children or young people's behaviours that may indicate bullying is occurring, either to that child or another child or young person.	
2	If you feel it necessary to take notes, ask the child or young person's permission. Support the child or young person to express their perspective.	
3	Gather information about who may be involved in the bullying and exactly what has happened/is happening.	
4	Try to summarise what the child or young person is telling you	
5	Reassure the child or young person that it is not their fault. <i>"It's not OK for (name) to treat you like that."</i>	
6	Reassure the child or young person that their safety and wellbeing is your (and other educators) priority and that the educators are there to help them	
7	Advise the child or young person of what you intend to do about the situation, including that you will need to speak to the child or young person alleged to be using bullying behaviour. Invite the child or young person to contribute to solutions in an age-appropriate way.	
8	Avoid using terminology such as 'bully' or 'victim' when describing behaviour being used or displayed	
9	Maintain and respect the safety, rights and best interests of all children and young people. View behaviour as communication and prioritise emotional safety before behaviour correction.	
10	Where behaviour raises concerns about harm, risk of harm, or child protection, educators must follow the <i>Child Protection Policy</i> and mandatory reporting obligations	
STEP 2: FOLLOWING THE DISCLOSURE		
1	Separate children or young people involved immediately (without blame) and assess risk of ongoing harm. Increase supervision or adjust staffing ratios if required.	
2	Talk to the child or young person who is alleged to be using bullying behaviour and any witnesses separately to gain as much detailed information as possible. Ensure emotional regulation support for all children and young people involved.	
3	If possible, ascertain a reason from the child or young person who is alleged to be using bullying behaviour as to why the behaviour is taking place. Fill out as much of the <i>Bullying Incident Report</i> as possible at this stage	
4	Notify all parents involved of the allegation of bullying, ensuring the identity of children and young people involved is not discussed (refer to <i>Confidentiality Policy</i> and <i>Code of Conduct Policy</i>)	
5	Follow the procedure below: <i>Following any suspicion of bullying</i>	

STEP 3: PROCEDURE WHEN EDUCATORS AND STAFF SUSPECT POSSIBLE BULLYING		
1	Closely supervise the children and young people and document any suspicions of bullying	
2	Consider developmental stage, disability, communication needs and cultural context when interpreting behaviours	
3	Speak to the child or young person experiencing the behaviour if they have not been forthcoming with a disclosure and encourage them to tell you what has been happening	
4	Encourage the child or young person experiencing the behaviour to come to you if there are further incidents and/or if they are feeling unsafe	
5	Discuss the observed behaviours with the child or young person who is alleged to be using bullying behaviour - how has their behaviour affected the other child or young person? (see below). Ensure children and young people are involved in decisions affecting their safety where appropriate.	
6	Document everything	
7	Follow the procedure below: Following any suspicion of bullying	
STEP 4: FOLLOWING ANY SUSPICION OF BULLYING		
1	Advise the director/nominated supervisor and any educators in the Service of the suspected bullying behaviour	
2	Schedule a meeting with involved educators and staff to discuss possible strategies to address the issue	
3	Fill out Incident reports with as much detail as possible	
4	If necessary, at this stage advise the parents/guardians of the incident/s and work collaboratively with families to co-design strategies and responses to prevent further incidents	
5	Adhere to <i>Privacy and Confidentiality Policy</i> and do not divulge names of other children or young people involved in the incident to other parents/guardians	
6	Continue to closely supervise and observe the children involved, using the <i>ABC Charts, inclusion plans and general documentation</i>	
7	Address any changes required that may become apparent from ABC charts or Inclusion Plans . For example, is the environment contributing (e.g., not enough age-appropriate and stimulating experiences available)? Do the behaviours occur during times the children are bored or required to wait for a long period of time with nothing to do (e.g., transitions or waiting for lunch)? Is the child or young person who is alleged to be using bullying behaviour being unintentionally supported through what happens immediately after the incident (e.g., having one-on-one time with an educator, or being taken out of a group time that they don't enjoy)?	
8	DO NOT force the child or young person alleged to be using bullying behaviour and child or young person experiencing the behaviour to participate in a group meeting, as this may be extremely intimidating for the child or young person experiencing the behaviour	

9	Support the child or young person experiencing the behaviour in developing friendships with other children and young people	
10	Help all children and young people learn strategies to respond to bullying	
11	Encourage and support the child or young person who is experiencing bullying behaviour to contribute to discussions on actions to challenge or stop bullying behaviours	
12	Continue to observe and document. Review effectiveness of strategies, update the <i>Inclusion support Plan</i> if required, reflect as a team on environmental or supervision factors and document improvements.	
13	The approved provider must be notified of serious incidents. The regulatory authority must be notified via the NQA ITS within 24 hours of any serious incident.	
14	Continue to communicate concerns with the director/nominated supervisor so that strategies can be implemented to effectively address bullying behaviours and developing emotional literacy. This may include involving parents/families of children and young people who are demonstrating a repeated pattern of behaviour bullying towards other children at the Service.	