MOUNT HAWTHORN EDUCATION SUPPORT CENTRE

Behaviour Management Policy and Guidelines

2021-2023

Introduction

At Mount Hawthorn Education Support Centre, we aim to develop appropriate and acceptable behaviour in all of our students. However, we are aware that, for our students, appropriate behaviour depends on firstly helping a student to remain emotionally regulated. We are then able to help them become aware of appropriate behaviours, usually with various levels of prompting which may eventually be withdrawn. Since regulating emotions and learning appropriate behaviours is often quite hard for our students, we rarely suspend a student since this behaviour management strategy has little effect and purpose.

Mount Hawthorn Education Support Centre aims to:

- recognise that emotional regulation is the primary cause of dysregulated behaviours and should be addressed first
- work within an applied behaviour analysis framework to help students learn appropriate behaviours
- create a positive environment within the Centre and the classroom so that the staff and students can work together in harmony
- create a caring school environment where the rights, responsibilities and needs of the individual are recognised and respected.
- establish procedures that protect the rights of individuals
- establish procedures for conflict resolution
- ensure that members of the school community are familiar with and follow the guidelines of the school's Behaviour Management Plan

Right and Responsibilities

RIGHTS

Students have the right to:
- learn in a purposeful and supportive environment
- work and play in a safe, secure, friendly and clean environment
- respect, courtesy and honesty
- learn in an environment that is free from disruptions to their learning

Staff have the right to:
- respect, courtesy and honesty
- teach in a safe, secure and clean environment
- teach in a purposeful and non-disruptive environment
- the co-operation and support from parents
- adequate professional learning to ensure that understanding of behavioural practices and procedures is kept up to date

Parents have the right to:
- be informed about course and curriculum material, behaviour management procedures and decisions affecting their child's health and welfare
- be informed of their child's progress
- access a meaningful and adequate education for their child
- be heard in an appropriate forum on matters related to the rights of their child to an appropriate education

RESPONSIBILITIES

Students (who may need regular prompting to achieve these goals) have the responsibility to:
- ensure that their behaviour is not disruptive to the learning of others
- ensure that the school environment is kept neat, tidy and secure
- ensure that they are respectful, polite and considerate of others, displaying a positive manner
- behave in a way that protects the safety and well-being of themselves and others

Staff have the responsibility to:
- develop a learning environment that is welcoming, supportive and safe
- convey the ways in which students are valued
- reflect expectations regarding behaviour
- model respectful, courteous and honest behaviour
- establish positive relationships with students
- ensure good organization and planning
- report student progress to parents
- give the students the opportunities to demonstrate their responsibilities

Parents have the responsibility to:
- ensure that their child attends school regularly to enable learning to take place
- ensure that the physical, social and emotional condition of their child is at an optimum for effective learning
- ensure that their child is provided with appropriate materials to make effective use of the learning environment
- support the school in providing a meaningful and appropriate education for their children eg. attending IEP meetings, regularly checking daily diaries, signing permission slips, returning notes etc.

Code of Behaviour

> **All members of the school community share responsibility for the maintenance of good order and personal safety within schools.**
> (Regulatory Framework)

At Mount Hawthorn ESC we believe that students must learn (with an appropriate degree of prompting where necessary) to:

- follow directions from staff at all times
- value and respect the needs of others
- think about the safety of others when playing games
- remain on school grounds
- remain in their designated playing area
- walk in the Centre at all times
- learn to keep the Centre neat and tidy
- follow the rules of the bus driver when travelling on the school bus
- use and respect school property appropriately
- follow instructions from the mainstream staff and respect the needs of others during integration and play
- not bring toys or equipment from home unless specifically asked to by a staff member

Emotional Regulation

At Mount Hawthorn ESC, we focus on the importance of emotional regulation rather than behaviour management. We understand the importance of mindfulness (which means that staff are constantly aware of each student's emotional state and sensory needs), use of positive reinforcement to keep students on task and giving sufficient breaks in work sessions to maintain calmness.

Playground
We ensure that staff are:
- able to identify individual emotional regulation needs for specific students and able to put into practice emotional regulation plans where necessary
- understand that it is the classroom teacher's responsibility to distribute these plans to staff
- encourage children to interact with each other
- encouraged to interact with students and encourage play with peers, use guided play techniques
- observing all students, not just those they are allocated to
- positioned around the perimeter of the play area to minimise opportunities for students to run off

Classroom
We ensure that staff:
- provide a positive classroom environment
- have clear understandings of and put into practice the school approach to emotional regulation and therefore behaviour
- have consistent and achievable expectations for each student
- prepare each activity thoroughly, making allowances for individual students needs and abilities
- give clear instructions; adjust the curriculum and teach at the level of each student
- use appropriate applied behaviour analysis techniques; be flexible and adaptable
- use positive reinforcement to reward behaviour

Behaviourist Theory

For Applied Behaviour Analysis, which we use at Mount Hawthorn ESC, there are two types of action that can be used: reinforcement and punishment. These can be further subdivided into positive and negative reinforcement and positive and negative punishment. These four categories are explained below.

REINFORCEMENT
Reinforcement is used to help **increase** the probability that a specific behaviour will occur in the future by delivering a reinforcer (reward) immediately after a response/behaviour is exhibited.

Positive Reinforcement: is the most used form of behaviour modification at our school
Positive reinforcement works by giving a reinforcer (reward) to a student after the desired behaviour is exhibited, making the behaviour more likely to happen in the future. Another way to put it is that positive reinforcement is adding something that will motivate the child (or individual) to increase the likelihood they will engage in that behaviour again.

The following are some examples of positive reinforcement:

- A teacher gives a student a toy to play with (reward) for doing good work (behaviour).
- A teacher gives his student praise and extra attention (reward) for packing away toys (behaviour).

*Negative Reinforcement: is not particularly effective with students with special needs and we **do not** generally use this method.*
Negative reinforcement occurs when an unwanted (usually an aversive event) is *removed* after a particular behaviour is exhibited. The likelihood of the particular behaviour occurring again in the future is increased because of removing/avoiding the negative consequence.

Negative reinforcement should not be thought of as a punishment procedure. With negative reinforcement, you are **increasing** the likelihood of a behaviour, whereas with punishment, you are decreasing a behaviour.

The following is an example of negative reinforcement:
- a teacher puts social pressure on an overly talkative student, standing beside them (aversive event) until they are quiet then immediately moves away (removal of aversive event)

PUNISHMENT
The aim of reinforcement is to increase the behaviour, whereas 'punishment' procedures are used to decrease behaviour. Punishment is a process by which a disliked consequence immediately follows a behaviour which therefore **decreases** the future frequency of that behaviour. As for reinforcement, a disliked consequence can be added (positive punishment) or a rewarding consequence can be removed (negative punishment).

*Positive Punishment: We **do not** generally use positive punishment with our students since it is not particularly effective with most of them.*

Positive punishment works by presenting an unwanted consequence after an undesired behaviour is exhibited, making the behaviour less likely to happen in the future. The following are some examples of positive punishment:

- A student rips up his work and throws it on the floor (behaviour) and the teacher shouts at him and tells him off (negative consequence)
- A student refuses to do her class work (behaviour) so the teacher gives her detention at lunch time (negative consequence)

Negative Punishment: There are occasions when negative punishment is used at Mount Hawthorn ESC.

Negative punishment happens when a reward is *removed* after a particular undesired behaviour is exhibited, resulting in the behaviour happening less often in the future. The following are some examples of negative punishment:

- a student is aggressive towards another student (behaviour) and the teacher immediately removes her from her preferred activity (negative consequence).
- a student repeatedly makes a loud noise (behaviour) and the teacher immediately removes his iPad (negative consequence)

PROCEDURES

At Mount Hawthorn ESC, we have to be very observant of all students' likes and dislikes as well as sensory needs for several reasons (When students initially enrol in the centre parents complete a Reinforcement Inventory.):

- Knowledge of reinforcers/rewards for each student makes reinforcement of behaviours easier
- Knowledge of sensory needs means that we can provide individual student sensory diets
- Knowledge of reinforcers/rewards means that we will not unintentionally reward a student, for example;
    - staff may see removal from class as a positive punishment when in fact it may be a positive reinforcement for an individual student
    - staff may give additional attention to a student who is showing inappropriate behaviours when in fact the added attention may be reinforcing the behaviour
    - physical removal using positive handling techniques of an aggressive or violent student may in fact be positively reinforcing if physical contact is a desired consequence for a particular student

It will be made clear to students, if they are able to understand the concept, what behaviours are expected of them. They will be guided and prompted to display the expected behaviours and reinforced when they do.

Positive Reinforcement (most usual form of reinforcement at MHESC as it is the most effective)

Students will be given appropriate positive reinforcement to reward correct behaviours. This may take the form of play with specific toys, going outside, using a swing etc, and will be determined by the student. Positive reinforcers may change with time, students are given choices of positive reinforcers and will know which one they will get after they have completed some work or followed an instruction etc.

Negative Punishment (may be used)

In some circumstances negative punishment may be used. Students may have rewarding objects/situations taken away if they exhibit unwanted behaviours. For example, a student who hits another student while using an iPad may have the iPad taken away.

Use of Token Economies

Reinforcers (rewards) are very important tools for learning to take place. However, the eventual goal is for students to gain a reward from finishing work and being praised for doing so (intrinsic motivation). A stepping stone on this path may be to use a token economy. At first, reinforcers are often very large and obvious when first used, e.g. flashing, sparkly or noisy toys. These reinforcers are effective in gaining attention at the start but once a student has become used to the process of work followed by a reinforcer, these rewards can generally be reduced in impact. For students who are able to understand, we may reduce reward still further by introducing the concept of delayed gratification using tokens or stickers which are added to a chart and a reward is obtained when the chart is filled.

Withdrawal from Class Activities

Staff are mindful of the fact that when our students exhibit unwanted behaviours, it is very likely that withdrawal from class will not be a negative consequence, since they enjoy being by themselves, particularly when they then get one on one attention from staff so this strategy is not likely to succeed for this reason. Most of our students need regular sensory breaks so withdrawal is a positive consequence for them. If students are withdrawn to the sensory area, it should be done before they become highly dysregulated and seen as a sensory break.

Detention during breaks and in-school suspension

At MHESC we have found that detentions and suspensions generally are not understood by our students and are not used.

Low stimulus environment

Students may be withdrawn and placed in a low stimulus environment, ie in the outdoor sensory area, when they become emotionally dysregulated and their behaviour places them or others at risk. They are left alone quietly with staff present nearby and observing until they regain their emotional regulation. Staff are not to talk to them while they are dysregulated as this often prolongs the event due to the sensory overload being experienced by the student. A low stimulus environment will be used for short periods and with the aim of re-establishing emotional regulation.

Physical Restraint

As a last resort, students may be physically restrained in response to spontaneous, potentially harmful behaviour that places at risk the physical safety of the student, other students, school staff, any other person or threatens damage to property. This restraint is only used to remove

a student to the sensory are when they will be given quiet time with no interference but with staff present and observing, until emotional regulation has been regained. Restraint is practised according to the principles of TEAM TEACH, POSITIVE HANDLING TECHNIQUES.

Key principles of Team Teach – Necessary, Reasonable and Proportionate. When restraint does have to be used, it is it always only when absolutely necessary, with the least amount of force and for the shortest amount of time. Part of the process includes recording of incidents and notification to appropriate parties.

All staff have regular refresher professional learning in the theory of emotional dysregulation, de-escalation procedures and positive handling techniques. Two staff will safely move a student at all times.

Protective Isolation

Protective isolation is a strategy whereby a student is left alone by themselves in a recognised and approved safe area with no students or staff present in the same area due to extreme and violent aggression when dysregulated. The student is observed continuously and removed from the area as soon as emotional regulation has been established. This procedure can only be used when permission is given and signed off for a specific student by the Regional Executive Director who has previously established that a suitable area exists at a school.   At Mount Hawthorn ESC, we have been assessed as not having any suitable area at all for protective isolation. This is as a result of our being a very small school sharing a campus with an overly full primary school of well over 900 students. Therefore, due to our limitations in size and accommodation, we are unable to accommodate a student with extreme behaviours.

Suspension from school

The decision to suspend a student from school will be made in conjunction with the classroom teacher and parent or guardian after careful consideration of all factors involved. Any suspension will adhere to the procedures as defined in section 4.2.3 of the Department of Education, Regulatory Framework. However, this practice rarely happens at MHESC since it has little effect on our high needs student behaviour.

Categories of suspension

CATEGORY 1: Physical intimidation refers to any physically threatening behaviour towards school staff.

CATEGORY 2. Verbal abuse or harassment of staff including offences such as stalking, sexual harassment, sexual innuendo and manipulation.

CATEGORY 3. Physical intimidation refers to any physically threatening behaviour towards a student.

CATEGORY 4. Verbal abuse or harassment of students including offences such as stalking, sexual harassment, sexual innuendo and manipulation.

CATEGORY 5. A wilful offence occurs when there is intent to deface or cause damage to property. It also encompasses the act of theft.

CATEGORY 6. Violation of school Code of Conduct, Behaviour Management Plan, Classroom or School rules.

CATEGORY 7. Substance misuse - incidents involving substances that are not illegal but threaten the good order and proper management of the school. Substances such as cigarettes, alcohol and misuse of prescribed medicines are covered by this category.

CATEGORY 8. Illegal substance offences - The substances referred to in this category are those deemed illegal under the Criminal Code.

CATEGORY 9. Other - This category is retained for other serious incidents that are not encompassed by the first eight suspension categories.

Good Standing

The Department mandates that we have the following concept of Good Standing embedded in our Behaviour Plan:

GOOD STANDING
All students commence with and retain good standing while exhibiting behaviours that align with the school's values and beliefs as articulated in the school's behaviour plan.

Loss of good standing
- Loss of good standing occurs after a suspension or series of behaviours that are not aligned with the school student behaviour plan. These behaviours must include, but are not limited to:
    o starting a fight
    o making physical contact with the intention to harm another student or staff member
    o videoing a fight in the grounds of the school or off-site where there is reasonable nexus between the incident and the school, with the intention of publishing on social media.
- Students who breach the school student behaviour plan will have privileges removed such as being banned from school social activities.
- This should involve a discussion with the student and/or their parent/carer to highlight the issues that led to the loss of good standing.

Re-instate good standing
- Implement a restorative and educative return to school process to re-establish positive behaviour.
- Develop a re-entry and/or individual behaviour plan focusing on the identified areas for improvement citing strategies, milestones and desired outcomes.
- Re-instate a student's good standing after such period as decided by the principal.

LOSS OF GOOD STANDING AT MHESC
Should we have a student in our Centre who fulfils the criteria for Loss of Good Standing, we will follow the Department Procedure. However, when our students exhibit behaviours which are not acceptable, as above, they are unaware of the consequence of their actions. Although their intent may, in fact, be to 'make physical contact with the intention to harm' others, their disability takes away their understanding of how these actions appear to and act on others, why these actions are not acceptable or what Loss of Good Standing is. Therefore, we will generally do not invoke the Loss of Good Standing for our students.

Our preferred course of action, which increases the likelihood that the child will comprehend and maintain appropriate behaviour is;

- to follow the **Procedures** outlined above to minimise the occurrence of aggressive behaviours
- the use of regular positive reinforcement for appropriate behaviours
- frequent sensory breaks during the day
- awareness of a student's sensory triggers such as tolerance of personal space, noise, light etc
- to follow aggressive incidents if they do occur by:
    - low stimulus environment for de-escalation
    - possible removal of positive reinforcers depending on the understanding of the student
    - examination of the situation to determine if a trigger was present
    - discussion with parents regarding therapist/paediatrician intervention if incidents become frequent

Bullying

A SAFE ENVIRONMENT FOR ALL

The Centre believes that the working environment for students and staff should be safe and free from violence, harassment and bullying of any kind. Bullying, violence and harassment are not tolerated because they infringe our fundamental right to safety and fair treatment. Bullying refers to a wilful, conscious desire to hurt, threaten or frighten. It can be verbal or physical in nature and is ongoing. It gives power through another's pain, fear and humiliation. This Centre will not tolerate such behaviour in any circumstances. Our high needs students are capable of bullying, however the methods of dealing with it are somewhat different to that of a mainstream school.

SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN WHO ARE BULLIED

Our students are generally not able to report to members of staff and/or parents any incidents of bullying, violence and harassment. Staff are always present, our students are always watched and staff will report any incident of bullying by one student of another. The environment in the classroom or playground may be modified to limit the opportunity for bullying; the bullying child may be given a more structured place to play. If appropriate, bullied students will be told how to say 'No' when a peer interacts with them in an aggressive way. Staff will be made aware of students who have been bullied or who have a tendency to bully so that they can be under closer observation at all times.

PREVENTION PROGRAMS

The students involved in bullying incidents will be dealt with immediately using ABA principles. The school will ensure that students who have shown the potential to bully have emotional regulation plans and are given access to a variety of strategies so that, with appropriate prompting, they can learn to display more suitable behaviours. Staff will be made aware of any potential bullying by students who will then be under greater observation. The classroom or playground environment may be modified to ensure bullying cannot take place.

Travelling by Bus

The majority of students who attend Mt Hawthorn Education Support Centre are transported to and from school by privately contracted school buses. Students also attend excursions by bus. Certain rules must be adhered to for the safety of all.

Students must, (with prompting as necessary);
- listen to directions from the bus driver and bus aide
- remain seated at all times
- keep hands and feet to themselves
- not use unpleasant, rude or abusive language towards other students or bus staff
- not shout
- not damage any part of the bus or property on the bus
- not touch the property of other students
- not eat or drink on the bus

Good behaviour may be rewarded by individual bus drivers and bus aides.

Inappropriate behaviour is reported to the parents and if necessary to the school by the bus staff. These behaviours are usually dealt with immediately by the bus staff and followed up by the parents and if necessary the school. The school may help with ideas and resources to help keep a student motivated on the bus.

Our students have high needs so rules and punishments are relatively ineffective when unwanted behaviours occur. However, the driver is able to suspend a student from the bus should dangerous behaviour such as jumping up and running around continues. It will be the responsibility of the parent/guardian to provide alternative transport during the suspension period. Generally, the suspension will end when the student has been provided with a necessary resource such as a reinforcer, social story or harness. In the case of the harness, this has to be fitted by a trained occupational therapist provided by the parent/carer. The bus company will provide parents with the paperwork needed to apply for a bus harness.

Social interaction between staff and students

A number of guidelines will be followed in order to maintain appropriate student behaviour. Level of prompting should always be the minimum to obtain the required behaviour. Extra wait time should always be given to allow the student to process requests. Prompting should be faded whenever possible.

The following guidelines should be used;
- refrain from picking up or carrying unless in an emergency. Non-ambulant students should be moved in a buggy or wheelchair
- discourage students from hugging staff by holding their hand for a moment, high fiving, or briefly touching on the shoulder, thereby maintaining acceptable social distance
- it is fine to shake hands with students when met for the first time, with younger students we do a 'high- five' as they understand the concept more.
- use discretion if having close contact with a student, for example, under normal circumstances students should not be allowed to sit on laps but if younger students are very distressed it may be appropriate to allow this
- do not hold a student's hand to take the student to and from the playground unless the child in non-ambulant or it is required for safety reasons
- use appropriate, ie minimal necessary, level of prompting

Inappropriate social/sexual behaviour at school

All staff must be aware of the requirements of the Child Protection Policy as directed by the Department of Education.

If an incident of an inappropriate social/sexual nature occurs whilst students are in our care it is not necessarily a child protection issue but may involve duty of care responsibilities.

- Students should not be told **not** to do something, e.g. 'no, don't touch'. They should be told to do an alternative activity, such as 'hands on the table'.

- Staff to intervene early in all situations where inappropriate behaviour occurs, eg a child touching his/her private areas. A student should be redirected and encouraged to engage in an appropriate alternative activity e.g. swings, drawing etc.

- Where two students are involved, it will be made clear that it is inappropriate (if students have the capacity to understand this) and redirect the students to another behaviour/activity.

A requirement of the Child Protection Policy is that all school staff need to be able to recognise the indicators of abuse and neglect in order to take appropriate mandatory action. Observations will be recorded accurately and in a non-judgemental manner. Staff must share any concerns immediately they are noted, with the Principal.