



Guidance for Policy on Managing Behaviour and Promoting Positive Behaviour in Pre- school and School Age Services

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1.0 Purpose

The purpose of this guidance document is to provide early years (pre-school and school age) services with the regulatory requirements for the specific policy on Managing Behaviour and supporting and promoting positive behaviour, as set out by the [Child Care Act \(1991\) Early Years Service Regulations \(2016\)](#) and the [Child Care Act \(1991\) Registration of School Age Services \(2018\)](#). This document sets out the core requirements that should be addressed in this policy, as well as prompts and considerations that will support registered providers to ensure that their policy and procedures are fully developed and are reflected in the practices in their service.

The information in this document should be applied to the specific policy on Managing Behaviour and the accompanying procedures of the service. This document should be read in conjunction with Tusla's [Practical Guide to Developing Policies, Procedures and Statements in Early Years Services](#), the [Quality and Regulatory Framework](#) and the [National Quality Guidelines for School Age Child Care Services](#).

Note: *This policy is required for both pre-school and school age services. This document will provide the reader with policy considerations for their service type, the children, young people and staff members within it. Unless specified, the policy considerations within this document apply to both pre-school and school age services.*

This document is for reference only. It should not be assumed that the guidance provided is comprehensive or that it provides a definitive answer in every situation.

Further resources are available in [Appendix 1](#).

Regulatory Requirements for this policy

Pre-school; Child Care Act (1991) Early Years Services Regulations (2016) Schedule 5.1 (e)

A policy on managing behaviour in relation to a pre-school service, means a policy that

- (a) supports positive behaviour by the pre-school children attending the service,
- (b) specifies approaches for managing challenging behaviour by a pre-school child attending the service and assisting the child to manage his/her behaviour as appropriate to the age and stage of development of the child

School Age Care; Child Care Act (1991) Registration of School Age Services (2018) Schedule 6. 1 (d)

A policy on managing behaviour in relation to a school age service, means a policy that

- (a) supports positive behaviour by the school age children attending the service,
- (b) specifies approaches for managing challenging behaviour and bullying by a school age child attending the service and assisting the child to manage his or her behaviour as appropriate to the age and stage of development of the child.

2.0 Core policy requirements

A Policy Statement is recommended in this policy alongside the core requirements as set out further in this document. The managing behaviour/supporting positive behaviour policy statement should set out the service's commitment to safeguarding children, and to providing a safe, respectful, and nurturing environment where each child and/or young person can play, learn, relax, and develop. The policy statement should outline the service's commitment to implementing safe, respectful, developmentally appropriate and child-centred strategies to manage and promote positive behaviour.

The policy statement should commit the service to ensuring that clear expectations for all adults regarding appropriate interactions and respectful practices with children and young people are detailed and understood. A service's managing behaviour and supporting positive behaviour policy is a core component of the Child Safeguarding Statement as required by Children First (2015). While there may be over-lap, there is a legislative requirement to have both documents in place, and this should be clearly stated within the policy statement.

Requirement 1

The managing behaviour policy sets out how children's positive social, emotional, and behavioural wellbeing is supported and promoted, reflecting up-to-date professional practice.

Prompts and considerations (not an exhaustive list)

The policy specifies:

- (a) The strategies in place in the service to promote positive behaviour, confirming that these strategies are developmentally and culturally appropriate for the children attending.
- (b) How the service works proactively and in partnership with children on behavioural expectations.
- (c) That staff are encouraged to be responsive, reflective and caring in their approach to children, and aim to keep the delivery of the service predictable, consistent, responsive and secure for children.
- (d) Where a key person approach is in place, the policy outlines this approach as a way of supporting children and young people to form secure attachments and build close relationships.
- (e) How the service creates and fosters an environment in which each child and young person's well-being is supported and promoted.
- (f) That staff will consider children's individual needs and requirements when developing plans to support and promote positive behaviours.

Preschool Services	<p>For Pre-school services, the policy specifies:</p> <p>(g) The approach to follow for developmental matters which may arise between children from time to time, for example biting behaviours.</p>
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School age services	<p>For School Age Care Services, the policy specifies:</p> <p>(h) How the service works proactively and in partnership with children on behavioural expectations.</p> <p>(i) That bullying is not tolerated within the service. The policy provides a definition of bullying and types of bullying and sets out the actions which the service follows to respond to and manage bullying.</p>
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Requirement 2

The policy sets out practices that are prohibited in the service (e.g., corporal punishment, degrading or neglectful practices).

Prompts and considerations (not an exhaustive list)

The policy specifies:

- (a) That it is prohibited in the service for staff to use any practices which are disrespectful to children and/ or their families, degrading, exploitive, intimidating to a child, and/or emotionally or physically harmful or neglectful towards any child. Staff are aware that any threats expressed through body language and/or verbal interactions with children are intimidating and will not be tolerated in the service.
- (b) That the use of corporal punishment is prohibited in the service.
- (c) That practices that exclude children from their peers are prohibited in the service.
- (d) That staff are aware of these prohibited practices and that these can never be used in the service.

Requirement 3

The policy specifies that the procedures for the protection and welfare of children are managed in line with the service's safeguarding statement.

Prompts and considerations (not an exhaustive list)

The policy specifies:

- (a) That the service has an up-to-date child safeguarding statement on display in the service, which all staff are aware of and able to refer to.

- (b) That staff have participated in online Children's First training, and certificates for this are held on file. Staff are aware they are mandated persons under the Children First Act 2015.
- (c) That the service had a Designated Liaison Person for managing child protection issues, and staff are aware of who this person is. This person should avail of appropriate training and be aware of their responsibilities, including where safeguarding concerns relate to staff treatment of children.

Requirement 4

The policy outlines how assistance is offered to staff supporting children's behaviour and emotional needs.

Prompts and considerations (not an exhaustive list)

The policy specifies:

- (a) That staff team members will be provided with the supports required to respond positively to children and young people's behaviours. This may include but not limited to providing information, training, team meetings and/or support and supervision.
- (b) The measures to ensure that staff members are supported to work in partnership with parents/guardians to ensure that children receive a consistent and shared approach to responding to behaviour.

3.0 Best Practice in developing and implementing a Managing Behaviour Policy

In addition to the regulatory requirements for this policy as set out in this document, service providers can enhance the quality of practice in the implementation of the managing behaviour policy in the service. In this section, best practice in this policy is outlined and further information is signposted where available.


- Implementation of this policy in Pre-schools should reflect Siolta Standards in particular Standard 5 [Interactions](#).
- Providers should take an open-minded approach to the support of positive behaviours and remain open to any opportunity for learning and service improvement.
- Strategies for children and young people should be proactive and consider how the service supports children to develop skills such as negotiation, problem solving and asking for help, which may include group discussions or anti bullying programmes.

- For services with pre-school and school age children, the policy should be age appropriate. For example, the strategies outlined for pre-school children may not be age appropriate for young people.
- The service, in partnership and with the consent of parents, may seek external advice and/or support from relevant agencies in developing appropriate and effective strategies for the child.
- The language within the policy should be easily understood. There may be a children and young people's version available in an age-appropriate language.
- Services should maintain children's confidentiality and dignity in any communication with parent(s) or guardians. Any communication should be carefully planned to be respectful to the child/young person.
- If services have a separate anti-bullying policy, it should be referenced within the policy on managing behaviour.
- The policy may identify what behaviour(s) or instances are considered as challenging behaviour and/or serious incident(s).
- Providers should ensure that staff are aware of trauma- informed approaches to supporting children and promoting positive behaviours.
- Providers and services should approach and resolve any behavioural issues arising using a rights-based and considered process that takes account of what is right for the child or children concerned.
- Providers and services should make every effort to ensure that strategies used support positive behaviours for children have the child's input where appropriate.
- Providers and services should ensure that practices used to support positive behaviours are transparent and are communicated to parent/guardians and anyone connected to the service.
- Strategies to manage behaviours should be fair, developmentally appropriate and equitable for all children and young people.
- Processes for supporting positive behaviours should be subject to ongoing monitoring and review to uphold the service's commitment to providing safe and high-quality services for children, young people and their families.

4.0 Appendix

4.1 Supporting Information

- Aistear Siolta: [Using a key person approach](#)
- Aistear Siolta: [Practice Guide](#)
- Barnardos: [How relationships impact on children's behaviour in ELC](#)
- Barnardos: [Building Trauma awareness in ELC](#)
- Department of Children, Disability and Equality: [National Quality Guidelines for School Age Childcare Service's](#)
- Linc Programme: [Supporting Children's Emotional Wellbeing | Leadership for Inclusion](#)
- National Child Safeguarding Programme: [Safeguarding for Early Learning and Child Care Services](#)
- Tusla Child and Family agency: [Safeguarding Statement](#)
- Tusla: [Behaviour Management for your child](#)



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