Behaviour support response

Direction to staff

This document provides overarching principles by which Child and Youth Protection Services (CYPS) conducts its business. All staff must comply with it.

Note: Unless otherwise indicated, the term 'child' or 'children' also refers to 'young person' or 'young people'. The term 'children in care' refers to 'children in out of home care'.

Purpose of this document

This policy outlines the CYPS principles and processes to support the safety and wellbeing of children and young people in out of home care with behaviours that are likely to pose a risk to themselves or others. These are referred to as 'behaviours of concern'.

Scope

This policy applies to all staff within CYPS with case management responsibility for children in out of home and/or those responsible for receiving information about children in care who exhibit behaviours of concern.

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Policy statement

Children in out of home care often require *behaviour support* due to their unique vulnerabilities, stemming from exposure to some form of abuse or neglect. They will have also experienced trauma caused by separation from their birth parents and the move into kinship, foster or residential care. Exposure to continued trauma can lead to permanent changes to a child's brain and the way it develops, including impacts on behaviour and skills such as; impaired impulse control, attention span, capacity to manage emotions, organising and planning.

Some children with disability may also demonstrate behaviours which require support. These may be either behaviours associated with the disability, or behaviour stemming from other factors including a trauma history and the impacts of abuse and neglect.

A *behaviour support response* is available to CYPS staff when responding to circumstances where a child case managed by CYPS exhibits a *behaviour of concern*.

A behaviour of concern refers to any behaviour that causes either actual **physical harm** to the person exhibiting the behaviour or another person, or **risk of harm** to the person or any other person[i]. This can include acts of destruction or other behaviours which may result in injury, whether intended or otherwise.

A *behaviour support response* is a planned process of identifying behaviours of concern, endeavouring to understand the behaviours and their triggers through a behaviour of concern consultation process, and where required, developing and implementing a **positive behaviour strategies** to help reduce the behaviour and support the individual needs and circumstances of the child or young person.

A behaviour support response will occur where CYPS becomes aware a child is displaying behaviours of concern. These behaviours may be identified through:

- general health and wellbeing checks
- a therapeutic assessment
- critical incident reports
- child concern and child protection reports
- restoration panel
- information brought to the attention of a case manager by a parent, carer, teacher or other person involved with the child
- a critical incident report.

When a behaviour of concern is identified by CYPS staff, they must record it as a behaviour of concern on the client management system and email the case manager and the Therapeutic and Assessment and Planning Team to commence the process for a behaviour of concern consultation. The consultation will provide CYPS staff with advice, strategies or referral to assist them to work with all key people in the child's life to understand and assist to manage the behaviour using positive, collaborative, age appropriate and trauma informed approaches.

The consultation will identify if there is a need for a registered positive behaviour support plan, in accordance with the *Senior Practitioner Act 2018*.

Identified behaviours of concern will be managed and monitored through ongoing case management and Care Team meetings.

ACT Together will in the same way, identify and develop behaviour support responses for children and young people where they have case management responsibility.

Policy principles

When undertaking the behaviour support response process, CYPS will:

- refer to the 'Behaviour support response' procedure and the 'Restrictive practices' practice guide to assist in developing an appropriate behaviour support response
- comply with the Director-General's obligations pursuant to the *Senior Practitioner Act* 2018 (SP Act) which stipulates a legal responsibility for CYPS to **identify** and **support** children in out of home care with behaviours of concern, and to **report** to the Senior Practitioner, any acts of **restrictive practice** by carers (kinship, foster or residential).
- understand what **restrictive practices** are and identify where they occur, in order to ensure they are addressed and monitored using an approved positive behavior management plan which may need to be registered with the Senior Practitioner.
- ensure that restrictive practices (outside of an approved positive behaviour plan) are not supported in any circumstance, and in particular, investigate any report of restrictive practice being used as a form of physical punishment.
- ensure the child is not at immediate risk to themselves or others during the course of a behaviour support response process.
- use positive behaviour management strategies underpinned by a trauma informed framework to respond to the behavioural needs of the children and young people.
- work collaboratively with key stakeholders in the child's life and seek consultations to draw on specialist knowledge and experience to implement a consistent positive behaviour management approach.
- children should be provided with the opportunity to express their views and participate in the development of a positive behaviour management approach (as appropriate to their age and capacity). Families and other support services should be included where appropriate.
- monitor a positive behaviour strategies and/or Positive Behaviour Support Plan over time, seeking to reduce and eliminate where possible, over time, the behaviour of concern and the restrictive practice.
- seek the advice of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Services Team where the child is Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander to ensure proposed responses demonstrate culturally sensitivity
- respond holistically to a child or young person's situation, appreciating the complexity of their situation and the context.
- ensure decisions and actions are consistent with the principles of the *Children and Young People Act 2008, Senior Practitioner Act 2018* and CYPS practice standards.

Related materials

The following materials directly relate to this policy.

Legislation

- *Senior Practitioner Act 2018*

Procedures and practice guides

- Procedure: Behaviour support response
- Practice guide: Restrictive practices

Other documentation

- Case Management Framework
- Our Practice Standards CYPS
- Risk Assessment Framework
- Fact sheet: Behaviours of concern

Document information

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Version history

The following table details the published date and amendment details for this document.

Date	Amendment details
06/08/2020	First publication of this policy.

Definitions

For definitions of terms used in this document, access the CYPS glossary.

[i] Reference: aussiechildcarenetwork.com.au/forum/certificate-3-assignments/redirecting-behaviour-of-concern-9279