

Beacon Learning Centre

Positive Guidance Approach and Prohibited Practices Policy

The Ontario General Regulation 137/15 made under the Child Care and Early Years Act (CCEYA), 2014 requires that Child Care agencies such as the Beacon Learning Centre develop policies and procedures that set out expectations for child guidance as well as prohibited practices. The BLC supports a positive child guidance approach and has measures in place to deal with non-compliance of prohibited practices. *Ontario's How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years, 2014* document has been a valuable tool for creating our approach.

Positive Guidance Approach

Our positive child guidance approach holds an emphasis on self-regulation as it is an important component of children's development. It governs how a child is able to deal effectively with stressors and then recover. Self-regulation is different from self-control or compliance in that it is not resisting an impulse, suppressing behaviour to avoid punishment or to receive a reward. Children who are learning to self-regulate in many ways can manage their own behaviour and learn how to take responsibility for their actions.

It is your responsibility as a staff, volunteer or student at the BLC to understand and implement the following positive guidance approach. It is important to:

- 1) Be responsive and attuned to children's individual cues.
- 2) Be an advocate for learning strategies that help children become/stay calm by encouraging the use of self-regulating skills such as taking a deep breath or choosing to sit quietly in a comfortable space.
- 3) Use descriptive language to help children learn to identify and express their feelings. Express that you recognize their feelings and their ability to self-regulate (i.e. "I can see you are upset. I am proud of how you took a deep breath and then used your words").
- 4) Be a model of prosocial behaviour. Be kind, compassionate, helpful and respectful to oneself and to others.
- 5) Discuss the children's individual needs within the program on a regular basis.
- 6) Communicate with parent(s) on a regular basis about their child's emotional and social growth such as their ability to cope with stressors in their environment. Constructive and encouraging words should be used for both positive feedback and when discussing sensitive, difficult or recurrent behaviours.

The **goals** we strive for when using a positive child guidance approach are to:

- Give children a sense of belonging.
- Support children's developing ability and efforts to self-regulate.
- Promote kind, compassionate and positive interactions.
- Nurture the ability to cope with social challenges and develop complex thinking skills.
- Foster the overall well-being of each child including their physical and mental health (i.e. self-care, self-esteem, sense of self and independence).
- Provide ongoing opportunities for physical and verbal expression through body, voice and use of materials.
- Foster ongoing communication with children and their families about the child's social, emotional, cognitive, and physical development. The different forms of communication may include word of mouth, photographs, videos, formal and informal observations, learning stories, as well as individual or group documentation boards – all should be reviewed on a regular basis.

We believe strongly in providing an environment that reduces stressors, encourages children to make their own choices and enables them to interact in a positive way. When we feel a child needs further direction we use problem solving alternatives, coupled with the positive approach above, as a way to guide the child's behaviour in a positive way.

As a staff, volunteer or student at the BLC the following are **problem solving alternatives**.

- 1) Use a firm but gentle verbal approach.
- 2) Set realistic and developmentally appropriate expectations. Be clear and consistent. Follow through and always provide a reason why you have set these expectations.
- 3) Create a culture of accountability when it is developmentally appropriate to do so (i.e. teaching a child to ask "Are you okay?" and/or apologizing).
- 4) Make them aware of logical and natural consequences as a result of their actions.
- 5) Use positive verbal reminders regarding inappropriate behaviour (i.e. "It's important to use your walking feet inside and your running feet outside. I care about you and don't want you to get hurt.").
- 6) Provide both verbal and non-verbal positive reinforcement of appropriate behaviour (i.e. "It makes me happy to see you using your gentle hands" or give a smile/high five).
- 7) Ignore inappropriate behaviour (unless the child is exhibiting harmful behaviour to themselves or to others).
- 8) Channel the child's energy to a closely supervised area.
- 9) Redirect the child to a quiet (non-isolated) space where they can reflect on their actions. A brief discussion/explanation should follow in order to help the child understand why they needed this time to reflect. Use discretion when using this alternative and after other alternatives have been tried.

Prohibited Practices

It is your responsibility as a staff, student, volunteer and parent to act in a positive and respectful way with children. The following are **prohibited practices** at the BLC, as stated in CCEYA General Regulation 137/15 section (48) (a-e):

- Corporal punishment of the child (i.e. spanking, hitting, shaking etc.)
- Deliberate use of harsh or degrading measures on the child that would humiliate the child or undermine his or her self-respect (i.e. shouting, yelling, sarcasm, put downs, force feeding etc.)
- Depriving the child of basic needs including food, shelter, clothing or bedding
- Locking the exits of the child care centre for the purpose of confining the child; or
- Using a locked or lockable room or structure to confine the child.

The above prohibited practices apply to interactions between staff, students, volunteers and parents as well. Disrespectful or aggressive behaviour (such as yelling, hitting etc.) towards staff, students, volunteers or parents **shall not be permitted** by anyone on the premises of the BLC. Failure to comply with any or all of these policies may result in measures as stated below.

Contravention of Prohibited Practices

Everyone including staff, students, volunteers and parents are expected to comply with the program's policies and procedures stated above and the requirements of the Child Care and Early Years Act (CCEYA). Failure to comply could result in:

For Students and Volunteers:

- 1) A verbal warning
- 2) Termination of placement

For others, including parents:

- 1) A verbal warning
- 2) A written warning
- 3) Dismissal

For staff:

- 1) A verbal warning
- 2) A written warning
- 3) Dismissal

Contravention measures for staff are normally a three step process. The exception is for certain kinds of conduct which, because of its seriousness, will justify omitting one or more of the steps. When determining which contravention measure(s) will be taken, the following criteria will be considered by the Director, or by the Chair of the Parent Board in the case of the Director:

- 1) The seriousness of the offence
- 2) The actual or potential risk, or harm to the child
- 3) The past and recent performance of the employee
- 4) The frequency of occurrence
- 5) Previous contravention measures taken

Where action is necessary, it will be taken IMMEDIATELY by the Director in the case of the staff, students, volunteers, parents and others, and by the Chair of the Parent Board in the case of the Director.

Monitoring Positive Child Guidance Practices

The following practices are in place to help ensure that only positive approaches are used at the BLC:

- 1) A comprehensive discussion of each staff's child guidance philosophy will be completed during the hiring process to ensure compatibility with the BLC's program statement and the CCEYA requirements.
- 2) Staff, students and volunteers will be made aware of the BLC's policies and procedures through the review and sign off of this document and through staff meetings which include discussions of prohibited practices.
- 3) The Director will complete an annual Staff Performance Review. The Director will monitor the staff regularly and use the attached Child Guidance Monitoring Chart to document incidents of non-compliance of the child guidance approaches and prohibited practices policy.
- 4) All complaints regarding prohibited practices made by anyone including parents, children, staff, students, and volunteers will be investigated and acted upon immediately by the Director or Chair of the Parent Board. Serious occurrence procedures will be followed when required.

Review and sign off

The Positive Guidance Approach and Prohibited Practices policy will be reviewed **prior** to working with children for the first time and at least annually thereafter with each staff, student and volunteer. The prohibited practices are also reviewed and signed by parents during the enrollment process. After reviewing the policy each person will sign and date that

they have read the policy and agree to follow it. The Director of the BLC will review the policy annually to ensure that it remains appropriate and up-to-date.

Record Retention

All records related to the review and sign off of the positive guidance approach, prohibited practices, contravention measures as well as the monitoring of compliance will be kept on file at the BLC for at least three years after the last date of the entry in the log.

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Positive Guidance and Prohibited Practices Monitoring Chart

It is the policy of the Beacon Learning Centre that all staff, volunteers and students are to read the **Positive Guidance Approach and Prohibited Practices Policy** and sign that they have done so **prior** to working or volunteering. The policy is to be reviewed annually by staff, volunteers and students. Positive guidance and prohibited practices will be monitored by the Director of the BLC and will be discussed with staff, volunteers or students immediately (i.e. in the case of non-compliance). The Director shall review any incidents with staff at their annual Staff Performance Review.

Policy Guidelines	Incident/date	Review/date
Under no circumstances are any physical punishments or harsh, degrading verbal measures to be used as a form of discipline.		
It is not permitted to deprive a child of basic needs including food, shelter, clothing or bedding.		
It is not permitted to use a lockable room or structure as a method of confining a child. A child should not be put on a "time out" chair in a secluded location.		
The adult's verbal approach to children should be firm but gentle. Words such as "You need to help tidy up the toys." Should be used rather than "I told you to tidy up!"		
Rules need to be consistent and reasonable. Once stated to a child they must be followed through.		
Use a positive approach to help guide children's behaviour. A team approach is preferred. Teachers will discuss children's individual needs, and appropriate guidance practices are decided upon and reviewed.		
Be responsive and attuned to children's individual cues and responses to various stressors. Model prosocial behaviour (i.e. be kind, compassionate, helpful and respectful to oneself and to others etc.)		

Name and signature of staff/student/volunteer: _____

Name and signature of Director or Chair: _____