

Gillybird Nature Schools Guidance Policy

Guidance is something adults do *with* and *for* children, rather than something they do *to* children. The intention of Early Years Educators is to help children become self disciplined as they learn appropriate and acceptable behaviour.

We believe that children thrive in an environment that is secure, predictable, nurturing and supportive. We believe it is important to set realistic expectations and limits for young children to ensure the safety of each child; the protection of his/her rights and those of others; and the protection of property.

When a child exceeds the limits, we guide in a manner that is firm, positive and still maintains the child's self-respect. When a child's behaviour is inappropriate, we believe that they are most likely to learn from the experience when educators offer appropriate choices or redirect their behaviour to an activity or task that helps them calm their body and reset their emotions.

We will strive to help the children solve problems within their social dynamic by allowing them time to self govern, and intervene when they are unable to navigate the situation between themselves. We acknowledge the child's feelings and help him/her to be considerate of the feelings of others.

We will accomplish this by:

- Providing an aesthetic, adequately size, organised, play space which will allow children to play in a relaxed manner and avoid conflicts which may arise from crowded play areas or areas designated for adults
- Following a flexible routine so that children gain trust and security
- Providing a variety of toys, which will stimulate cognitive, physical and emotional growth
- Approaching children individually, establishing eye contact and using a clam controlled voice
- Recognizing a child's feelings before discussing behavioural limits
- Focusing on the child's behaviour rather than the child
- Minimising minor incidents
- Discussing acceptable behaviour and setting limits at a level children understand
- Using positive reinforcement in words and actions, focusing on what to do rather than what not to do
- Encouraging caring and cooperative relationships
- Allowing children to make choices where applicable
- Reminding children of limits by reinforcing their choices for appropriate play

- Diverting a child's interest when necessary
- Assisting children to solve problems when necessary
- Giving a warning cue that will indicate a coming change in activities and giving appropriate amounts of time for transitions
- Using logical and natural consequences (ex if a child spills food or dumps toys they will be asked help to clean up)
- Removing toys that may cause dysregulation when necessary
- Using time in/away as a last resort
 - The child will be asked to remove their body away from the situation, in a safe place that they choose, that is still near the group and next to an educator
 - If a child is experiencing emotional dysregulation, we allow them time to calm their body before initiating conversation
 - The child is allowed time to express their feelings, explain their behaviour and is offered time with a teacher to discuss how they can navigate their emotions in the future
 - We let the child know that they may rejoin play whenever they are ready to keep themselves and their friends safe
 - We do not practice guidance or discipline that excludes a child, or shames them for experiencing dysregulation in any way

For repetitive issues that are an ongoing challenge, we will invite parents or guardians to join us for an in person meeting where we brainstorm ways to help the child both in the centre and at home. We believe in a collaborative effort between provider and parent and having seamless expectations in their environments is the most effective way of achieving that.

We acknowledge that a parent or guardian will always have the closest relationship with the child and will have the most intimate knowledge of their strengths and challenges, and we will always seek guidance from parents first for ways we can attempt to support the child. Because a centre with up to 15 children will obviously provide different challenges and more stimulation than a child may experience at home, parents may be asked to use similar strategies that we use at the facility to see if it benefits the child.

If we believe that we have utilised all of our resources and the child is not thriving in our current ratio, we may suggest an alternate model of care; eg: if a child cannot be properly supported in a 1:8 ratio at the preschool age, they may thrive in a lower ratio of care such as an LNR (1:2) or a Family Licence (1:6/7) that will have less stimulation and more opportunity for 1:1 with the provider.

If behavioural challenges can not be mitigated by collaboration with parents, if the health safety of the child or other children is compromised, or if the manager or licensee of the centre feels that a child's behaviour is putting their licence at risk, care may be terminated as a very last (and unwanted) resort.

Note: We do not practice corporal punishment (clapping, shaking, spanking, etc) at this center. We believe in a positive approach to child rearing. We do not humiliate, confine or deprive children from meals, snacks or toilet uses as a form of discipline.