An **Authentic Learning Environment** Initiative
Behaviour & Anti-bullying Policy & Procedure

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Statement

Lens: Authentic Learning Environments view all behaviour as a barometer for the learner's development, well-being and a reflection of their environment/s.

Boundaries: Authentic Learning Environments promote an optimum learning environment. *Aggressive, disruptive and bullying behaviour* is not tolerated. Social learning behaviour is tolerated. A *safe, secure and stable environment* is essential for learning, development and achieving authentic learning states.

Balance: Authentic Learning Environments educate, teach and develop social emotional mobility skills, while maintaining a *safe, secure and stable environment.*

Aims

This Behaviour Policy and Procedure aims to teach social literacy, self-regulation and maintain optimum learning conditions through a three-part sequence: 1, **Preventative Environment**: A preventative environment (trauma-aware) eliminates unnecessary stress on the developing individual. We do not wait for a learner to be 'stressed out' before we step in with corrective measures; providing a preventative environment sees the reduction and prevention of *disruptive, unwanted* and bullying behaviours. 2, **Learning Environment**: Information and practical skills enable participants in an Authentic Learning Environment to: make informed decisions, learn to work in agreement, create a skilled social environment and maintain an optimum learning environment. 3, **Corrective Environment Procedure**: The corrective environment procedure for *disruptive, unwanted and bullying behaviour* maintains roots in the preventative where adults continue to maintain a fair and just atmosphere and safety for all.

Objectives

- Authentic Learning Environments are designed for the children. To develop and learn in conditions that support 'best' psychological and physiological development. These conditions are held and maintained by able adults, teachers, hosts, and parents.
- To maintain a safe, secure and stable environment essential to learning.
- To provide a socially literate environment for the healthy development of all those in it.
- To restore power imbalance dynamics and educate learners in partnership dynamics (theory) and working in agreement (practical).

Outcome

When a child's environment <u>sees them</u>, <u>hears them</u>, and honour's their <u>natural stages of development</u>, <u>unique interests and pace</u> – children thrive and are capable. All children will explore and develop behaviour, the level of healthy behaviour and the way safety is maintained remains in the hands of the adults who hold the environment. This environment is held by capable adults – the outcome is dependent on the capability of the adults.

Definition

Behaviour is the most accurate measure for healthy development, to see how the learner is developing, where their development is and if their environment(s) are supporting healthy development.

Behaviour is the product of:
- Basic needs being met for the individual
- Environmental response, both physical and emotional environments
- Developmental stages and abilities
- Biological urges, for example play schema, motor development, reflexes
- 'Caught' then explored, expressed and mimicked, for example power dynamics and role-play

Aggressive, disruptive and bullying behaviour is behaviour that is:
- Intentionally hurting someone either physically or emotionally
- Unintentionally hurting someone either physically or emotionally
- Discrimination aimed at certain groups or individuals, for example those with differing beliefs (religion, ideals) or physical make up (gender, race)
- Unwanted behaviour, such as force or power-over dynamics
- Aggressive behaviour
- Breaking shared agreements
- Behaviour which hurts others, done in the name of jesting

When the inappropriate behaviour is:
- Repeated, or has the potential to be repeated over time

It takes many forms and can include:
- Physical assault
- Teasing and shaming
- Making threats
- Name calling
- Damaging property
- Stealing
- Possession of illegal substances
- Cyberbullying

Equally as concerning, though often unseen as these behaviours fail to trigger the alarm systems of others:
- Avoidance
- Withdrawal
- Sulking
- Self-harm (physical and emotional)

We draw the line: *Aggressive, disruptive and bullying behaviour* requires our close attention, as it can impinge on learners' ability to learn. *Aggressive, disruptive and bullying behaviour* can also be referred to as 'unacceptable', 'inappropriate' and behaviour we do not 'tolerate'. This list applies to all those in the environment, children and adults.

Section 1 Preventative Environment

***Aggressive, disruptive and bullying behaviour* can be prevented when the conditions and content of a developing child's environment support their healthy development.**

The Preventative Environment is provided through:
- Agreement
- Observing Human Rights
- Skilled teachers/hosts
- Relationship first - secure attachment
- Rhythm-regulated environment

Agreement
Working from agreements helps *everyone* to know what is expected from them and what they are entitled to. Working "in agreement" offers willing participation partnership dynamics and supports human rights. We ask every

person entering an Authentic Learning Environment to agree on a set of social parameters that provide the safe learning environment.

- We agree to not hurt anyone or anything (including ourselves), or destroy property
- Choose respectful and kind language, with considered response
- Use clear descriptions to replace judgemental language
- Every person has the right to their opinion and voice
- Problems are raised as soon as they come up

Observing Human Rights
Authentic Learning Environments value the learner's right and ability to participate, alongside the right and ability of the adult to protect the learner, ensuring that the rights and choices of the learner are for the well-being of all.

Skilled Teachers/Hosts
Teachers and hosts who lead and hold Authentic Learning Environments provide practical application of:

- Partnership dynamics
- Learning-ally skills, to support interdependent learning
- Personal social-emotional literacy
- Conflict resolution
- Attunement
- Self-regulation
- The lens to decode behaviour
- Growth mindset and vocabulary

Relationship First - Secure Attachment
The basic need for secure attachment that is recognised in early childhood and continues through childhood is key to emotional development and achieving authentic learning states. Learners of all ages require their own 'trusted adult' to work alongside, to make sure their educational and development needs are met, providing what would be termed as "additional support" in a traditional education setting. This role can include: identifying the *learners'* interests, concerns, areas of growth, along with help planning their day, making resources available to the learner.
Key areas to accommodate for are:

- Adult to child ratio
- Trust-based settle-in policy
- Sense of belonging, both physically and emotionally
- Every learner has an emotionally available, mutually responsive adult

Rhythm-regulated Environment
Over time, all learners learn and develop self-regulation patterns from their environment. The Authentic Learning Environment promotes healthy regulation patterns. A Rhythm-regulated environment is stable, the learner finds security in the rhythm, delivering that feeling of safety.

Section 2 **Learning Environment**

The Learning Environment provides skills to solve and resolve *Aggressive, disruptive and bullying behaviour.* **Supporting learning can vary depending on group dynamics and developmental readiness.**

The Learning Environment is provided through:
- Maintaining a safe Learning Environment (Preventative Environment)
- Modelling and Facilitating
- Information on child development and behaviour (theory)
- Practical Application and Participation (practical)
- Parent-Child Group Policy & Procedure
- Regular and immediate meetings
- Group Policy & Procedure (for groups ages 5+)

Maintaining a Safe Learning Environment (Preventative Environment)
The successful practice of a Preventative Environment, which eliminates unnecessary stress and trauma on the developing individual, means that anti-social and bullying behaviours can be avoided or eliminated.

Modelling and Facilitating
The behaviour of every person in the environment is important to creating an Authentic Learning Environment, as behaviour is often 'caught' from peers and other adults. Teaching social literacy skills requires 'teachers' to be socially literate and self-regulated. When facilitating communication breakdowns it is not the role of the teacher to solve the problem *for the learners,* but rather to facilitate the solving of the problem *by the learners* to the satisfaction of those involved.

Information on Child Development and Behaviour (theory)
To support everyone's growth and ability to maintain a safe, secure and stable environment integral to learning, information on child development and behaviour is provided through on-line resources and workshops. Growing the understanding and skills of adults, benefits all those in the learning environment.

Practical Application and Participation (practical)
Adults in the environment provide the space, place and time for learners to learn through experience, process, participation and play. When adults apply information on child development and behaviour (head work) into the practice (hand work) we provide the environment is essential to development and learning. This 'head and hands' optimum learning environment hinges on the environment feeling safe, secure and stable for the learner to achieve authentic learning states.

Parent-learner Group Policy & Procedure
Parents participating in the parent-learner groups have the opportunity to learn from:
- Rhythm-regulated environment total immersion
- Modelling of the teacher/host
- Additional available information

In parent-learner groups the parents are responsible for their own child/ren. The responsibility of the teacher/host remains with maintaining a safe, secure and stable environment for the learning environment.

Regular and Immediate Meetings
Meeting at the beginning of each session or day provides the opportunity for connection, plan and agree, and to raise, resolve and agree any problems. These meetings act as a platform for any learner or teacher to raise an issue for discussion, with the goal of resolving it to the satisfaction of those involved. If the conflict arises during the day, a meeting can take place immediately with at least one facilitator, at the time of the conflict or shortly thereafter, as soon as all parties are able to bring themselves to a meeting.

Group Policy & Procedure (for groups ages 5+)
Within the policy and procedure set up and maintained in this document, there is a space for young learning-group participants (ages 5+) to arrive at a shared agreement for the behavioural policy and procedure within their group. This participation supports the healthy development of social literacy.

The following five discussion points deliver Shared Agreement Strategies for the group's policy. It is important that the learners provide as many of the strategies as possible – adults/teachers take a supportive role.
1. If someone is hurting you (emotionally/physically) what can you do to gently let them know, in a way that will feel safe?
2. If you see someone hurting another person (emotionally/physically), what can you do?
3. If you see someone looking upset when you are relating to them – what can you do?
4. Any other ideas for maintaining a safe environment for everyone?
5. Agree on what behaviour that is not okay in the group. Using the definition in this document, discuss and agree on a list of behaviours that are not acceptable or conducive to an authentic learning environment.

Section 3 Corrective Environment Procedure

If *aggressive, disruptive and bullying behaviour* cannot be resolved in the Preventative and Learning Environments (sections 1 & 2), we work closely with those individuals struggling.

When the group environment is not a **safe place for <u>everyone</u>**, measures are taken to **make <u>the group</u> environment a safe place**.

This procedure is set out in three parts, each observing the careful balance required in maintaining the *safe, secure and stable* environment.

Every Corrective Environment Procedure is recorded in detail.

Part 1: Remaining in the learning environment
- Safe team
- Co-regulation intervention
- Physical intervention

Part 2: Leaving the learning environment
- Temporary withdrawal
- Permanent withdrawal

Part 3: Adult behaviour

Part 1: Remaining in the learning environment

If the learner remains *aggressive or disruptive,* their behaviours, however, do not negatively impact on the freedom of others causing an unsafe situation, the learner can remain in the environment to work closely with a 'safe team'.

Safe Team

When the learner is struggling, our extra support is required to provide the *safe, secure and stable* environment the child needs, through the child's relationships. A safe team consists of 2-3 adults, and will include the child's trusted-adult/parent. The learner may be asked to participate in this meeting, this participation supports the healthy development of social literacy.

The team comes together to decide changes to upgrade and maintain the *safe, secure and stable* environment for the learner.

1. Safe (emotionally) – We review how the learner can feel safe, for example the way they are spoken to, participate in daily care, building trust experiences.
2. Secure (co-regulation) – We review how to provide a responsible adult to look out for the learner at all times. For example, we make changes to our responses and correction behaviour, shadow without intimidation.
3. Stable (emotionals) - We review all the environments and see if transitions can be smoother. For example, when rules are made universal and do not change they are easier to follow for everyone.

Co-regulation Intervention
The role of the learner's 'trusted adult' steps up to one-to-one co-regulation. This role requires the co-regulator to find behaviour patterns and triggers, hone their own self-regulation skills, an appropriate outlet to safely express themselves, as well as intervening to provide a *safe, secure and stable* environment. Thus, providing the environment for the learner to regulate themselves in and an adult they can co-regulate with.

Interventions are low-key with as little disruption to the learning environment as possible. The key to their success is based on the quality of the relationship the adult offers the child during any of the following practical activities:
- Removing the learner from the group, to connect, calm and reflect
- Non-verbal connection, for example eye contact, hand on shoulder, sitting or standing with
- Grounding, for example, attending the animals, foot bath, nature-bath
- Social engagement, for example 'serve and return' care moments or sharing food.

Physical Intervention
Any person may use physical intervention to avert immediate danger of personal injury to any other person.

Physical Intervention can only be used for self-defense or to restrain a person who is:
- Committing a criminal offence (or what would be a criminal offence if they were old enough)
- Injuring themselves or others
- Damaging property
- Acting in a way that threatens the optimum learning environment, negatively impact on the freedom of others

Reasonable physical interventions include:
- Physically interposing between persons, blocking a path
- Holding
- Pushing or pulling
- Leading by the hand or arm

Physical intervention requires appropriate restraining techniques. Records are kept of any incidents where force is used: what occurred, witnesses, why it was necessary and any consequences. Parents are informed to discuss any such incident with them.

Part 2: Leaving the learning environment
If the learner remains *aggressive or disruptive* or whose behaviours continue to negatively impact on the freedom of others causing an unsafe situation the learner must be removed from the environment.

Removing individuals is only taken when safety becomes an issue, or when there is no other foreseeable way to resolve the issue.

Temporary Withdrawal
A meeting with the learner, their family and members of the 'safe team' meet to discuss the following options, while considering the age of the learner, resources for corrective help, the safety of all others in the learning environment:
- The learner and family are offered the option to temporarily withdraw, to seek professional help (for example, Educational Psychologist Assessment, or a Shanker Self-Reg® Specialist). The ideas put forth by the professional will be taken into account when determining what actions will be taken next.
- The learner and family are offered the option to permanently withdraw.

Families may be asked to attend as many as 4 meetings to resolve the issues when the behaviours are significantly impacting on the rights of others.

Permanent Withdrawal
When returning from temporary withdrawal, if *aggressive, disruptive, and bullying behaviour* persists, then it is agreed that the Authentic Learning Environment can ask the family to withdraw their child on a permanent basis. This action will only be taken if all other options have failed.

Part 3: Adult behaviour
Behaviour of the adults models and sets the culture in an environment. It is therefore of the utmost importance that adult behaviour is in line:
- Maintaining a safe, secure and stable environment essential to learning.
- Providing a socially literate environment for the healthy development of all those in it.
- Uphold healthy power balance dynamics, partnership dynamics and working in agreement.

Because the environment is designed for the healthy development and learning of children and held by the capable adults, the Adult Behaviour procedure is shorter.

When adults are struggling with their own behaviour, are not able to self-regulate, and when behaviours match behaviours outlined as *aggressive, disruptive and bullying behaviour* in the definition section of this document, the following steps take place;
1. The adult is removed from working with the children and takes on a secondary-care role in the environment.
2. The adult is made aware of their behaviour
3. A plan is made to adjustments and change behaviour to meet the safety requirements, within a time frame and completed with

assessment meeting.
4. A limit of three planning sessions, with the goal of resolving it to the satisfaction of those involved.
5. The adult is offered the option to permanently withdraw.
6. The adult is asked leave.

*This document is the outline for a **working agreement**, laying out how a group dynamic can work 'in agreement' while holding a healthy optimum learning environment for developing and learning children.*

Entering an environment where there is a working agreement 'policy and procedure' requires us to enter with agreement.

You have the right and choice to agree. In the environment outlined in this document you will have the voice to speak, find ears to hear you, develop the vocabulary to be heard and ears to hear others – this environment provides skill development for working in agreement.