Mitchelton State Special School

Responsible Behaviour Plan for Students
based on The Code of School Behaviour

1. Purpose

Mitchelton Special School is committed to providing a safe, respectful and disciplined learning environment for students and staff, where students have opportunities to engage in quality learning experiences and acquire values supportive of their lifelong wellbeing.

This Responsible Behaviour Plan for Students is designed to facilitate high standards of behaviour so that the learning and teaching in our school can be effective and students can participate positively within our school community.

2. Consultation and data review

A number of students in our school require a high level of behaviour management support. The understanding and tolerance that many staff and parents communicate with respect to the challenging behaviours some of our students demonstrate is admirable. As a school community we need to be encouraged to broaden our understanding of the complex issues that surround students with disabilities and to understand the challenging behaviours which some of these students present. We believe our school community is one that offers expertise in supporting challenging behaviour and that we take great pride in demonstrating and promoting tolerance, mutual support and acceptance of diversity.

In 2003 parents and staff were involved in a school review process which led to the development of various value and belief statements concerning the management of behaviour. This review influenced the development of our Responsible Behaviour Support Plan 2006. This previous and very well supported plan provided a strong foundation for the 2010 plan. This plan was reviewed in December 2012 to meet the most recent Departmental Framework. Our 2014 plan reflects most recent Departmental amendments.

Our school plan is clear, educational and relevant to the very specific needs and challenges of our school community. This document provides the framework for our staff and parents to ensure students are provided with a safe and supportive learning environment.

The Plan was endorsed by the Principal, the President of the P&C and Assistant Regional Director in the month of August 2014 and will be reviewed as required.

3. Learning and behaviour statement

All areas of Mitchelton Special School are learning and teaching environments. We consider behaviour management to be an opportunity for valuable social learning as well as a means of maximising the success of academic education programs.

Our Responsible Behaviour Plan outlines our system for facilitating positive behaviours, preventing problem behaviour and responding to unacceptable behaviours. Through our school plan, shared expectations for student behaviour are plain to everyone, assisting Mitchelton Special School to create and maintain a positive and productive learning and teaching environment, where ALL school community members have clear and consistent expectations and understandings of their role in the educational process.
As part of our Positive School Wide Behaviour Support our school community has identified the following skills and behaviours to teach and promote. These are known as our Mitchie 5:

- Safe and Supportive
- Kind and Considerate
- Look and Listen
- Accept and Respect
- Responsible

Our school rules have been agreed upon and endorsed by all staff and our school P&C. They are aligned with the values, principles and expected standards outlined in Education Queensland’s Code of School Behaviour.

As a special school we draw upon a range of methods and strategies to assist us in supporting the behaviour of our students. Generally speaking, all of the many different methods and strategies that we may use within special education can be summarised into one of the following major special education models. These models influence the way we think about behaviour and provide us with options for responding to and supporting students. These include:

**The Behaviourist Model**

Advocates of this model suggest that we must actively control or structure a situation in an attempt to avoid or minimise inappropriate behaviour. If we understand the things that trigger appropriate or inappropriate behaviour (we call these antecedents) then we can deliberately attempt to shape a student’s behaviour. Any attempt we make to avoid an inappropriate behaviour from happening can be called an ‘antecedent strategy’ (e.g. predetermined seating plans, structured lunchtime activities, remove an object from sight, praising student for things done well etc). If an inappropriate behaviour does occur we may impose a ‘consequence strategy’ to hopefully deter the behaviour from repeating (e.g. dangerous bike riding may mean no bike riding next break, swearing may lead to time out). Alternatively, praising good work reinforces positive behaviour and its likelihood of reoccurring. This model assumes that managing antecedents and consequences can control behaviour. (N.B. The management of antecedents and consequences can be negative or positive).

**The Ecological Model**

Advocates of this model suggest that the reason why inappropriate behaviour occurs is because there is a mismatch between the demands of the environment and the skills, abilities or attitudes of a student. Therefore, we can try to change the student to meet the demands of the environment (e.g. you will share that toy with others) OR we can change the demands of the environment (e.g. introduce more toys for play). Simply changing the demands of an environment can have desirable impacts on student behaviour.

**The Developmental Model**

Although social, emotional and physical development is generally predictable, many students we support may experience developmental delays and in some cases deviate from expected developmental milestones. Advocates of this model emphasise the importance of considering the developmental skills, abilities and attitudes of each student. It is critical that what we expect of a student is in line with their physical, social and emotional development and skill level and not just their age. Understanding whether developmental goals are achievable or appropriate can present difficulties throughout the teaching and learning process (e.g. at some point we may need to move from teaching specific reading skills to reinforcing other important daily life skills).
The Humanistic Model

All of us are better motivated to learn when we can exercise some choice about when and what we do. Advocates of this model suggest we attempt to provide students with opportunities to develop positive self-image and confidence by allowing independence and choice making. When good choices are made, students feel great and highly motivated. The development of trust and respect is reinforced. Intervention is only necessary when student choices are inappropriate.

Cognitive Methods

Advocates of this model remind us that how and what we think influences what we do and how we behave. Many teaching and learning strategies involve us helping students to understand their own behaviour and to think about what good and bad, or right and wrong mean. Unfortunately for some of our students their ability to think, reason, remember and consider their behaviour is very difficult. The use of visual reminders and visual sequence charts is one way that we can help our students to think, plan and structure their behaviour.

Medical Methods

We also rely on support from medical specialists to manage behaviour. Medical specialists believe that underlying physiological, psychological or neurological imbalance may contribute to inappropriate behaviour. This imbalance may be partially restored through the use of prescribed medication. Medical specialists NOT teachers makes these decisions. We can work with specialists to provide feedback on a student’s behaviour.

It is important to remember that there is no ‘one model’, ‘one way’ or ‘one method’ of supporting the behaviour of students at this school. An understanding of the individual needs of each student, their different medical conditions, and the diversity of after school contexts will highlight the significant differences across our student population. While supporting each student is a priority, success is rarely quick and easy. It is often difficult to know which method and response is best to manage inappropriate behaviour.

These above models provide important guidance for us in responding to supporting behaviour throughout our school.

4. Processes for facilitating standards of positive behaviour and responding to unacceptable behaviour

Universal Behaviour Support

All behaviour communicates a message. Unfortunately for many of our students their communication attempts are not always easily understood, socially appropriate, welcomed, tolerable and safe.

As teachers and parents it is important that we understand the motivation or communication intent behind a student’s behaviour in order for us to assist in developing appropriate strategies to assist.

Intent or motivation behind behaviours may include:
- frustration
- boredom
- attention seeking
- unmet need or want
- escape or avoidance
- modelling or imitation behaviours
- anxiety
- inability to express self or feelings
- limited communication skills
- habitual patterns of behaviour
- ???

The nature and types of behaviours that may occur in this school include:
- non-compliance/refusing directions
- running away
- swearing at others
- biting
- pulling hair
- throwing objects
Please Note: Organised bullying and cyber-bullying cultures have not been identified within our school. Like all other schools, the bringing of weapons to school is not permitted. We seek support from parents to help identify those students in our school who from time to time take various items from home. We respond swiftly to this information and from time to time will search bags with students to return items that they may have taken. Responses to these situations are individualised and will reflect the most appropriate strategies to support the child’s learning.

Targeted Behaviour Support

Our Individual Support Plan for Complex Behaviours:
- reflects values and beliefs of our school community
- describes the nature of challenging behaviours within school
- identifies Special Education models about behaviour
- aligns with Education Queensland policy and guidelines statements
- recognises complexities surrounding the diversity of student’s ages, needs and abilities.

Any support we offer students must have a sound educational rationale or principle to guide what and how we do things. A principle can be defined as a general or fundamental truth. Our Behaviour Support Policy has been developed based on a set of general truths we have in relation to supporting students with disabilities and support behaviour within the context of our special school.

In our school the following five principles summarise what we believe to be good research literature, special education theory and experience and successful behaviour support policies and practices. The five principles comprise the acronym **FOCUS**:

**Principle 1.** Facts not opinions should be used to guide our understanding of behaviour. Information gathering and analyses are essential components to enable accurate and informed decisions to be made.

**Principle 2.** Offering refers to what we do to skilfully redirect or distract a student’s attention or behaviour, to offer students alternatives to minimise difficulties and maximise success, and to offer various types of reinforcement schedules to help shape desirable behaviours.

**Principle 3.** Consistency with expectations, managing emotions and providing consistent responses, routines and consequences is an important pre-requisite to developing a happy, safe and predictable learning environment for students and staff.

**Principle 4.** Understanding the purpose or intent of behaviour, understanding the context and environment and understanding triggers or antecedents is essential in order to make interventions and support specific and meaningful.

**Principle 5.** Skill development is necessary to enable students to gain new and appropriate behaviours or habits. Providing direct teaching and modelling of new skills is fundamental to helping student ‘unlearn’ inappropriate behaviours and to helping them learn new and appropriate habits, behaviours, skills and attitudes.

Our school curriculum outlines the types of social skill development programs we provide for our students. Please refer to FOCUS on Individual Support Plan document for the details about supporting individual student needs.
Intensive Behaviour Support

‘Time Out’ may be used in our school

Principals and School Staff may use ‘Time Out’ as:

- a strategy for students to manage their own behaviour, in order to assist a student in calming down, or as a strategy to reduce the frequency of a particular behaviour.
- a way of keeping other students and staff safe
- a procedure (as part of a particular student’s Individual Support Plan for Complex Behaviours)

Principals and School Staff:

- keep student in any time out area under supervision at all times
- ensure student is safe
- give student opportunity to re-join class in intervals of no more than 10 minutes
- if applying time out as a management technique, ensure that it is consistent with:
  - developmental stage of the student
  - any special needs that the student may have
- should use of time out with a particular student become increasingly frequent or regular, develop more comprehensive strategy to support student’s full participation in the educational program

Physical Restraint may be used in our school

Principals and School Staff:

- use physical restraint:
  - as an immediate or emergency response
  - as part of student’s individual plan, including prevention of self-harming behaviours
  - when other options have been considered such as allowing the student to withdraw or move away, or moving other people from the situation
  - after considering welfare of student, staff and other students
  - with such force as is reasonable under the circumstances
  - in conjunction with teaching and reinforcement of alternative appropriate behaviour
- when developing strategies to deal with situations involving physical restraint:
  - use risk management procedures
  - follow procedures in accordance with Code of Conduct and follow procedures in accordance with SMS-PR-012: Student Protection
- consider any issues that might exacerbate the situation such as:
body language, tone of voice or facial expressions
student's sensitivity to sounds or touch
student's methods of communication

• assume calm demeanour to avoid escalating student's behaviour
• maintain appropriate observation or monitoring of student during and after incident of physical restraint
• follow specific processes for:

  ➢ Physical Restraint – Immediate or Emergency Response
  ➢ Physical Restraint – Planned response including Prevention of Self-Harming Behaviours (individual plan)

Immediate or Emergency Response

Principals and School Staff:

• give clear verbal instruction before physical intervention is used, unless the urgent nature of the situation makes this impractical
• call for assistance from another member of the school staff and make arrangements to ensure that other students in the vicinity are safe and properly supervised
• notify principal (if not directly involved) and student's parent/carer of incident, detailing:

  ➢ the behaviour that preceded the use of physical restraint
  ➢ the type and duration of restraint used
  ➢ staff members and other witnesses present during the period of the incident
  ➢ student's physical condition before and after physical restraint
  ➢ counselling provided to the student following the period of physical restraint
  ➢ planned future action to prevent further incidences of the behaviour.

• prepare an incident report
• provide debriefing for the student and any other students after a suitable interval of time has elapsed
• hold a debriefing meeting with relevant staff members
• develop individual plan if physical restraint is necessary as an ongoing strategy.

Planned Response including Prevention of Self-Harming Behaviours (Individual Plan): When physical restraint is used as part of a student's individual plan:

Principals:

• provide physical restraint training for staff when individual plans involve physical restraint
• document any staff training and professional development
• include physical restraint processes in the school's Responsible Behaviour Plan for Students in locations where individual plans may involve physical restraint
• approve individual plans and provide copy of plan to principal's supervisor or delegate.

Principals and School Staff:
• develop student individual plan by:
  ➢ employing strategies to reduce the frequency and severity of inappropriate behaviours and increase socially appropriate and positive behaviours
  ➢ not using physical restraint process in isolation
  ➢ developing procedures with support personnel, parents and relevant staff including medical practitioner or other appropriate professional personnel where applicable
  ➢ identifying strategies to reduce and eliminate the need for physical restraint
  ➢ establishing regular review process to monitor effectiveness of strategies and procedures, including advice from medical practitioner or other appropriate professional personnel where applicable

• in preventing self-harming behaviours:
  ➢ consider whether you can restore safety in another practicable way such as removing potentially harmful objects
  ➢ employ a range of responses including increased monitoring and support within the classroom and/or referral to appropriately trained staff
  ➢ use postural, or movement limiting, and/or protective devices at times when there is a high risk of injury
  ➢ complete documentation according to Student Protection

• employ responses to support student and to support any other student or staff who may be affected by witnessing an incident of self-harm
• establish regular review process to monitor effectiveness of strategies and procedures, including advice from medical practitioner or other appropriate professional personnel where applicable.
• ensure Principal's Supervisor receives and monitors individual plans.

If behaviour cannot be understood, appropriate intervention strategies and behaviour plans developed, or if behaviour has been extreme and has caused harm to other or property then consideration will be given to suspension or exclusion consequences. Such consequences will be considered on an individual and situation specific basis. These consequences will be implemented to ensure additional help or medical expertise to support a student’s behaviour.

5. Emergency responses or critical incidents

The fundamental principle guiding our emergency responses to challenging student behaviour is safety. Physical intervention, including physical restraint, will be used if students are posing a danger to themselves, other students or staff. Physical restraint is implemented in accordance with the following principles;

Proportionate: The restraint/s is proportionate to the student’s size, age and level of aggression
Reasonable: A third party witness would deem the use of physical restraint as a reasonable intervention
Necessary: Without the use of physical restraint the safety of the student, other students or staff would have been compromised

Finally the use of physical restraint should always be in the best interest of all students and staff involved.
6. Consequences for unacceptable behaviour

Behavioural consequences such as detentions, suspensions and exclusions are rarely implemented at Mitchelton Special School. Instances of unacceptable student behaviour are judged on the specific context in which they occur, with particular consideration given to behavioural intent. Appropriate consequences will be discussed with staff and parents within the context of the theoretical model of special education which guide our practice.

7. Network of student support

School-based Support
- Classroom Teacher/ other teaching staff
- School Principal
- Guidance Officer and Therapy Staff
- Administration staff
- Parents

External Agencies
- Child Youth Mental Health Service (CYMHS)
- Family GP
- Education QLD Management of Young Children Program (MYCP)
- Parentline
- Kids Helpline
- Department of Communities (Child Safety Service)
- Disability Services
- Queensland Health
- Police
- Child Development Network (Mater Hospital)
- Evolve

Online
- http://raisingchildren.net.au/
- http://www.headroom.net.au/
- http://raisingchildren.net.au/
- http://www.triplep.net/

8. Consideration of individual circumstances

Students who require intensive behaviour support will have an Individual Behaviour Support Plan developed using our FOCUS on Behaviour Framework and documentation. Please Note:

- Any student who requires time out or “chill out” strategies more than once a day will require an Individual Behaviour Support Plan.
- Any student who requires possible Physical Restraint will require an Individual Behaviour Support Plan.
- These plans will be developed in consultation with parents and school staff. These plans will be made available to all staff and will be filed within each section’s Specialised Plans Folder.
9. Related legislation

- Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992
- Commonwealth Disability Standards for Education 2005
- Education (General Provisions) Act 2006
- Education (General Provisions) Regulation 2006
- Criminal Code Act 1899
- Anti-Discrimination Act 1991
- Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian Act 2000
- Judicial Review Act 1991
- Workplace Health and Safety Regulation 1997
- Right to Information Act 2009
- Information Privacy (IP) Act 2009

10. Related procedures

- Safe, Supportive and Disciplined School Environment
- Inclusive Education
- Enrolment in State Primary, Secondary and Special Schools
- Student Dress Code
- Student Protection
- Hostile People on School Premises, Wilful Disturbance and Trespass
- Police and Child Safety Officer Interviews with Students, and Police Searches at State Educational Institutions
- Acceptable Use of the Department's Information, Communication and Technology (ICT) Network and Systems
- Managing Electronic Identities and Identity Management
- Appropriate Use of Mobile Telephones and other Electronic Equipment by Students
- Temporary Removal of Student Property by School Staff

11. Some related resources

- National Safe Schools Framework
- Working Together resources for schools
- Cybersafety and schools resources
- Bullying, No way!
- Take a Stand Together

Endorsement

Principal ___________________________  P&C President or Chair, School Council_________________________  Regional Executive Director or Executive Director (Schools)_________________________

Effective Date: 21 August 2014