

## RESPONDING TO VIOLENT AND AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOURS POLICY

The Currajong School takes a zero-tolerance approach to child abuse and is fully committed to ensuring that its strategies, policies, procedures, and practices meet all **Child Safe Standards as specified in Ministerial Order No. 1359 (2022)**

### RATIONALE

- At The Currajong School we implement School Wide Positive Behaviour Supports throughout our school environment. We understand the importance of being proactive in interventions and providing an environment that supports the emotional, physical, educational wellbeing for students. **The Currajong School explicitly prohibits corporal punishment.** We recognise that students may exhibit challenging and violent behaviours, where we will utilise interventions to prevent, de-escalate and respond to violent and dangerous student behaviours of concern can be broken into four categories;



### AIMS

The Currajong School believes in understanding triggers and preventing the occurrence of violent and dangerous student behaviours of concern, educate, and assist staff in how to respond should they occur. This should be read in conjunction with the Student Engagement and Inclusion Guidance from ISV, which provides advice, resources and strategies for schools in developing a Student Engagement Policy, promoting positive student behaviour and responding to challenging behaviour.

Students can sometimes behave in a way that is violent or dangerous. Examples of violent or dangerous behaviours of concern include but are not limited to:

- self-injuring behaviour, such as hitting/kicking walls, head-banging;
- attacking other students or staff, including hitting, biting, kicking, hair pulling;
- throwing furniture or other objects at students and staff;
- a verbal threat of harm which you believe a student will immediately enact; or
- running onto a road or near some other hazard.

Incidents of violent or dangerous behaviour may occur following a period of escalating behaviour or may occur without any notice. In some cases, such behaviour may be associated with a student's disability.

**NOTE: The Currajong School explicitly prohibits corporal punishment.**

## **POLICY**

### **(a) The Currajong School Guiding Principles**

- All students and staff have the right to feel safe and supported in their school environment;
- Policies restricting the use of restraints and seclusion apply to all students.
- The Currajong School follows the legal guidelines recognising that, as set out in the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic), all people, including children, are born free and equal in dignity and rights. This includes freedom from cruel and degrading treatment, protection against discrimination, the right to privacy, liberty and security of the person, and protection of the child's best interests.
- The Currajong School believes in behavioural interventions, prevention, and supporting the development of positive behaviour through School Wide Positive Behaviour and the explicit teaching and learning of behavioural expectations.
- The Currajong School staff working with students with violent or dangerous behaviours of concern should be supported to implement prevention and de-escalation strategies, and, where necessary, undertake training in the safe use of physical interventions.
- Every instance of restraint and seclusion must be reported to enable data collection.
- Although Regulation 15 authorises staff to take action to restrain a student from dangerous acts or behaviour, that action must be reasonable and immediately required to protect the safety of the student or others.
  - For more information: [The Currajong Restraint and Seclusion Policy](#)

### **(b) Legal Obligations (Refer to DET Restraint and Seclusion Guidelines note The Currajong School acknowledges DET guidelines as best practice and this informs practices at our School)**

Physical interventions are not to be used to discipline a student.

- School staff owe a duty of care to all of the students under their care. Professional judgment is required to balance the care requirements of all students at any given time.
- Repeated use of restraint or seclusion for a student should trigger a review of their support.
- Every instance of restraint or seclusion should be visually monitored throughout to ensure appropriateness and safety.
- Mechanical restraints should never be used in schools to restrict a student's freedom of movement, unless the restraint is for a therapeutic purpose with written evidence of the prescription/recommendation or if required to travel safely in a vehicle.

### **(c) Prevention and Early Intervention**

The Currajong School understands that behavioural strategies should always have a focus on promoting positive behaviour, addressing underlying issues and intervening early to prevent foreseeable behavioural problems and maximise a student's positive engagement with school. The Currajong School recognises the importance of intervening early and utilising evidence-based strategies.

### **(d) Promoting Positive Behaviour and Preventing Behaviour Issues**

The Currajong School recognises the importance of promoting positive behaviours to assist in preventing behaviour incidence of challenging behaviours. The Currajong School uses the following strategies through School Wide Positive Behaviour Support (SWPBS) Framework:

- All staff explicitly teaches school-wide and classroom behavioural expectations through our behavioural matrix and incidental observations
- Recognise and rewarding positive behaviour
- Where appropriate have consistent school-wide and classroom consequences for challenging behaviour
- Early identification of students experiencing academic and/or behaviour difficulty
- Staff collect ongoing data for decision-making on students displaying challenging behaviours
- Involve students to take responsibility and be involved in decision-making in the classroom
- Providing physical environments conducive to positive behaviours and effective engagement in learning
- Utilise evidence-based interventions, monitored regularly for those students who face difficulty with learning and/or behaviour

Staff at The Currajong School provide and plan tailored engaging learning programs that support students' needs and take into account strategies to prevent and reduce challenging behaviour. Some specific instructional strategies include:

- Teachers when planning activities, consider both how much time students will need to complete it and how long they are likely to be fully engaged by it - this will often vary depending on the type of activity;
- Take into account the interests of your students and integrate these into lessons;
- Be mindful of how much time you spend on lesson introductions and instructions. Align this time with the amount of time students are able to actively pay attention;
- Use clear, consistent, step-by-step instructions to support students;
- Provide additional instructions when students are working in smaller groups; and
- Try to minimise interruptions to your learning activities.

### **(e) Assess Student Need and Risk**

The Currajong School will assist in identifying educational and behavioural needs of all students, especially those likely to exhibit violent and dangerous behaviours. We will seek all relevant information about a student's education and behavioural needs upon enrolment. This information can be gathered from the student, their parent/carer, school staff and a previous enrolling school to identify any behavioural issues and support needs.

### **(f) Convene a Student Support Group (SSG)**

The Currajong School will convene SSG meetings which will ensure that parents/carers and teaching and wellbeing staff are working in partnership to address behavioural issues. The role of the SSG is to oversee and assist with the development of an Individual Learning Plan, which will include when appropriate, a Behaviour Support Plan. This SSG may be an extra to those conducted in week four each term.

### **(g) Information About the Student**

The Currajong School where appropriate, and with the permission of the student/parent/carer, contact could be made with relevant health, community and/or statutory services that are providing support to the student and/or their family, to ensure that school strategies are informed by comprehensive information about the student and are aligned with what other services are doing.

### **(h) Modifications to Routines or Learning Environment**

The Currajong School staff will carefully consider the learning environment which can play a significant role in maintaining positive behaviours and escalating or de-escalating violent and dangerous behaviours of concern. To assist students, staff will review and modify classroom routines, placement of particular students and positioning of furniture in the room, have visual timetables displayed and discussed in their classrooms, use sensory education and teach explicit behaviours from the Schools SWPBS matrix, which may increase engagement and reduce the likelihood of some behaviours.

### **(i) Make Reasonable Adjustments for Students with Disabilities**

The Currajong School ensures that legal requirements for schools to make reasonable adjustments for students with disabilities to enable them to participate in their education on the same basis as their peers. Examples of reasonable adjustments will depend on the needs of the individual student but could include modifications to the curriculum, additional support or changes to the student's routine or timetable. For more information, see: Disability Discrimination Obligations.

### **(j) Data Collection**

It is the responsibility of staff to keep detailed records of student's behaviour to assist in the identification of triggers. Documenting on our School Management System-Sentral.

### **(k) Discuss Behavioural Modifications and Strategies**

The Currajong School Staff will organise a meeting time with the Assistant Principal or Principal to discuss behaviours and modifications trialled in the classroom. Staff will implement recommendations discussed and review behaviour. Where appropriate meet / discuss behavioural concerns with parent/carer and begin identifying triggers and possible de-escalation strategies.

### **(l) Referral to Student Case Management**

If a student continues to escalate and require more intensive interventions the Assistant Principal, Principal and Teacher will work together to complete a referral to assign relevant support to the student and at times, families.

### **(m) Student Case Meetings**

The Currajong School will have regular Student Case Management meetings, which analyse the student information and make recommendations to support the student/families. These could include assessments from the external Occupational and Speech therapist, and referral to psychologist or family support worker who will support student /families and linking them to appropriate outside services.

### **(n) Conduct a Functional Behaviour Assessment (FBA)**

The Currajong School will have trained individuals that can conduct FBA assessments to provide a systematic way to understand why behaviours are occurring, their triggers and antecedents, and the strategies that may be useful in addressing these.

### **(o) Develop a Behaviour Support Plan**

A Behaviour Support Plan (BSP) is a school-based document designed to assist individual students. BSPs can be developed for a range of students, including students who have experienced harm, are at risk of harm, or have caused harm to others, been diagnosed with behaviour disorders and students who require additional assistance because they display difficult, challenging or disruptive behaviours.

### **(p) Conduct an Occupational Violence Risk Assessment**

Violent and dangerous student behaviour may constitute occupational violence, which is defined by WorkSafe Victoria as "any incident in which a person is abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances relating to their work".

Where a student has a history of violent or dangerous behaviours of concern, the school should undertake an occupational violence risk assessment to help meet their occupational health and safety obligations. This assessment should be done as early as possible to minimise risk of harm; this could be at the point of enrolment or prior to enrolment in some cases. An occupational violence risk assessment checklist is available from WorkSafe.

## **Professional Learning / Training Needs of Staff**

The Currajong School will offer staff working closely with students exhibiting or at risk of violent and dangerous behaviours of concern, intensive training in preventing and managing behavioural incidents by an authorised trainer/facilitator. Team Teach is a mandated program for all staff to complete if employed at The Currajong School.

All staff are responsible for completing the course "**Preventing and responding to extreme behaviour**" can be accessed via the DET Professional Learning Portal

<http://www.tech-savvy.com.au/deecdvic>

[Enrolment key: 8Vy79Szl](#)

### **(q) Working with Parents/Carers**

The Currajong School recognises that parents/carers are essential partners in developing effective responses to students who are exhibiting violent and dangerous behaviours or are at risk of these behaviours, as they can often be able to share critical information about a student's needs, preferences and the function of and triggers for their behaviours:

- provide details of health and support services that may already be working with their child.
- discuss strategies that have been successful or could be tried at home (agreeing on consistent strategies at home and school may help to maintain consistency, promote positive behaviour and avoid confusion for the student).

The Currajong School will seek to engage with parents/carers as soon as a risk of violent and dangerous behaviours of concern is identified:

- providing them with a copy of the Parent Fact Sheet: Violent and Dangerous Student Behaviours of Concern and/or the Parent Fact Sheet: Violent and Dangerous Student Behaviours of Concern - Use of physical interventions in schools.
- ensuring they have contact details for the relevant school staff member(s)
- invite them to participate in Student Support Group meetings and work with the school to develop a Behaviour Support Plan and sign off on the strategies

### **(r) Actions to Take Place**

Where a student has demonstrated violent or dangerous behaviours of concern, and/or has been physically restrained or secluded to protect safety, their school needs to:

- notify parents/carers as soon as practicable (must be on the same day) after the incident;
- invite parents/carers to meet with school staff to establish or review a student's Behaviour Support Plan to include strategies to support positive behaviour and reduce the likelihood of future incidents. In the case of students with disabilities, this meeting should occur via the student's existing Student Support Group; and

- keep a record of the incident and document on Sentral.

### **(s) De-Escalation**

The risk of violent and dangerous behaviours of concern can often be minimised by actions taken immediately before or as a behaviour begins to escalate. Therefore, it is important for teachers to strive to identify a student's triggers and early signs of escalation so they know when and how to act.

If a student is becoming agitated, but their behaviour is not placing them or others at imminent risk of harm, teachers should employ de-escalation tactics to prevent behaviours from escalating.

Some recognised de-escalation strategies include:

- acknowledging the student's anger/distress;
- using a calm tone of voice and clear, direct language or student's preferred method of communication (focusing on the behaviours you want them to display rather than the ones you don't);
- adopting a non-threatening body stance and body language;
- allowing adequate personal space;
- using non-verbal cues;
- distracting the student from the source of their anger or distress by discussing another topic of their interest; and
- providing options (within limits) to help the student feel they are still in control of their decisions.

In some cases, physical intervention may be needed to direct a student away from the source of their distress. For more information on physical interventions with students, see: Physical Interventions.

For students with a pattern of behaviour escalation, effective de-escalation techniques should be detailed in a Behaviour Support Plan. Teachers and other staff who are likely to be in close contact with that student should be familiar with the strategies outlined in the plan. Including parents/carers in this planning process is important as the use of consistent de-escalation strategies across both school and home environments will help to make sure these strategies are effective and do not cause confusion for the student. See: Behaviour Support Plans.

When attempting to de-escalate a student's behaviour, staff members should observe whether the student's agitation is lowering or if the behaviour is continuing to escalate. If it appears the behaviour is escalating to the point that it is placing the student or others at imminent risk of harm, the staff member present will need to move from a de-escalation approach to incident intervention.

### **(t) Incident Intervention**

Occasionally a student's behaviour may reach the point where their behaviour threatens the safety of themselves or others. This may occur following a period of

escalating behaviour, when de-escalation techniques have been employed but have not been effective. In either scenario, the actions of school staff should focus on protecting the safety of all students (including the student behaving dangerously), themselves and other staff

Where possible, staff members should:

- seek help from School Leadership and other staff members to manage the incident;
- move all other students in the vicinity to a safe distance away from the student behaving dangerously;
- remove objects that may be used to cause harm from the vicinity of the student, if safe do so; and
- follow emergency response procedures set out in the School's Emergency Management Plan, including calling emergency services on 000 if necessary.

### **(u) Physical Interventions**

In some situations, school staff may need to physically intervene to protect a student who is behaving dangerously from harming themselves, other students or staff members.

It is useful to distinguish between three different types of physical intervention:

- Protective physical interventions;
- Physical restraint; or
- Seclusion of students.

### **(v) Protective Physical Interventions**

Protective physical interventions are interventions involving physical contact that serves to block, deflect or redirect a student's actions, or disengage from a student's grip, but from which a student **can freely move away**.

Examples of protective physical interventions include:

- guiding a student's arm away from their mouth to prevent biting behaviour (without using force to prohibit further movement);
- using your arm to block a student from hitting you;
- physically redirecting a student who is aggressively running towards you; or
- breakaway techniques to disengage from the inappropriate grip or hold of a student.

The particular physical intervention used must be the least invasive way of protecting those involved. If there is a less invasive way of protecting those involved, then that approach should be used.

Situations involving the use of protective physical interventions must be reported via the School's incident reporting system.

Parents/carers must be notified or attempts made to notify them as soon as practicable and by the end of the day on which the incident occurred.

The decision to use protective physical intervention rests on the professional judgment of the staff member(s) involved, who will need to take into account their duty of care to the students, their right to protect themselves from harm and obligations under the Human Rights Charter. For more information see: Legal Obligations.

Staff should be guided by the following principles:

**Guiding principles for the use of protective physical interventions with a student demonstrating violent or dangerous behaviours of concern**

- A protective physical intervention should only be used as a last resort to protect the safety of students or staff members.
- A protective physical intervention should only be used when other less restrictive interventions have been ineffective, are not feasible, or would not be sufficient for the staff member to discharge their duty of care responsibilities to all students.
- Where a protective physical intervention is required, the least restrictive approach should be used.
- Any protective physical intervention should be stopped as soon as the risk has been reduced.
- A protective physical intervention should not be confused with physical restraint. Physical restraint involves the use of physical force to prevent, restrict or subdue the movement of a student's body or part of their body. Students are not free to move away when they are being physically restrained.
- All staff will be trained annually in the guidelines to reduce and eliminate restraint and seclusion. The information is also available to staff on the school server.

**EVALUATION**

This policy will be reviewed as per our three-year review cycle or more often if necessary due to changes in regulations or circumstances.

Approval date:	Approved by:	Next review:
October 2021	School Board	October 2024



The Currajong School acknowledges the traditional owners of this country throughout Australia and their continuing connection to land and community. We pay our respects to them and their cultures and to the Elders past, present and emerging.