

## **Policy Statement**

Scamps & Scholars Childcare recognises all children are individual with unique needs and abilities. We endeavour to manage behaviour through a supportive model. We encourage School Age Children to develop the skills of self-regulation (regulating their emotions), problem-solving and decision-making skills. All staff will support School Age children with their individual needs and adjust the supports as required. Staff will implement clear and consistent expectations for all children. Staff will follow clear strategies to support children as named in this policy. Named Service will work collaboratively with parents/guardians to implement the managing behaviour policy. Through this partnership, it places each child's needs and rights at the centre of our practice.

This policy is available and communicated to all staff, parents and children within the Scamps & Scholars Centre, within the specific School age room, on the parental information disc and on our website.

## **Principle**

This policy is underwritten by Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) (Registration of School Age Services) Regulations 2018

## **Procedure for Supporting Positive Behaviour**

### ***Staff***

- Staff model positive behaviour through how they speak and interact with the school age children.
- Scamps & Scholars has a Code of Conduct for staff relating to behaviour management.
- A key worker is assigned to each child who is responsible for building up a special relationship with them and their family. This helps with getting to know what the child enjoys and some of the situations they may find difficult.
- Staff always comfort an upset child.
- Staff show empathy to the feelings which the child may be experiencing.
- A child's behaviour is not discussed amongst the staff team, or outside Scamps & Scholars. Only relevant staff will be informed of information including action plans, or care plans.
- All staff receive training on this policy at induction and when necessary after that.

### ***School Age Children***

- Expectations are consistent for all school age children, and are dependent on the age, stage of development and needs of the child.
- Children's efforts, achievements and feelings will be acknowledged by sincere encouragement leading to growth in self-esteem and self-discipline.
- A range of activities will be available to the group of children that offer a lot of choice to all children in order to support children's play ideas.
- Scamps & Scholars encourages independence and autonomy for each child.
- This policy is communicated to all children in an age appropriate manner.

### ***Respectful interactions between School Age Children***

A culture of respect is in place within Scamps & Scholars. Scamps & Scholars expect all school age children to show the following:

- To be polite, friendly, respectful and helpful to others.
- To play fairly and include others in our activities.
- Respect one another, accepting differences of race, gender, ability, age and religion.
- Use socially acceptable behaviour.
- Comply with Scamps & Scholars code of behaviour which is developed alongside the School Age Children attending.
- Ask for help if needed.
- To support these guidelines, a code of positive behaviour is developed alongside the School Age children with rules they consider as important in helping them take ownership of their behaviour.
- Scamps & Scholars recognise each individual child is unique and may need different levels of support to manage situations.
- If an issue arises between peers, we encourage all School Age Children to speak to a staff member to develop solutions to resolve the issue.

### ***Parents***

- A summary of the managing behaviour policy is within the parent's information disc.
- All parents have access to the full policy during hours of operation in the early years' service.
- The policy is also available to view or download from our website.

- Requests of specific strategies from parents will only be implemented where it follows the services managing behaviour policy and is in line with best practice.
- Staff implement a balanced approach to communication with parents.
- Staff are aware of respectful communication in supporting school age children in managing their behaviour. Where staff need to speak with a parent/guardian about a child's behaviour, where possible the child is not present.
- Where possible the parent/guardian is informed of incidents of behaviour in a mindful manner e.g. away from the door, not calling the parent into the room in front of other parents, away from other children.
- Parents can request a meeting with the School Age Services to discuss specific elements of the managing behaviour policy. Scamps & Scholars, at the earliest convenience will facilitate this.
- Scamps & Scholars maintains clear procedures on monitoring and recording any incidents or issues in relation to supporting children with managing their own behaviour.
- Information is only shared with parent/ guardians regarding strategies or plans in place to support their child.
- Parents are encouraged to discuss any concern regarding behaviours occurring with Scamps & Scholars. All issues, concerns or grievances are managed within Scamps & Scholars.
- Where an accident and/or incident has been recorded under the managing behaviour policy, details are recorded on two separate records for each parent to sign. Records only disclose the name of the individual child of the parent which is signing. The second child's name is not disclosed.

### ***Communication with Primary/ Secondary school***

- Scamps & Scholars does not have permission to discuss any child's behaviour with a primary and/or secondary school without the parent/ guardian's permission.
- In certain cases, where the Scamps & Scholars is contacted by the school to contribute to an individual care plan parent/guardian consent is sought prior to any information being shared.
- Scamps & Scholars may request to discuss a child's behaviour with the school to ensure consistent strategies are being implemented. Parent/guardian consent will be sought prior to any discussion.

### ***Encouraging positive behaviours***

Scamps & Scholars encourages positive behaviour through:

- Providing a balance of adult led and child led activities.
- Offering a variety of opportunities to meet the needs of the children attending the service.
- School age children do not sit for long periods of time, Scamps & Scholars encourage choice to move from an activity which does not interest them.

- The environments are laid out into specific spaces with sufficient space, equipment and materials to meet the needs, abilities and interests of the children.
- Flexible routines to meet the needs of the children.
- A code of behaviour is developed alongside the School Age Children and regularly reviewed.

### ***Prohibited Practices***

- Corporal punishment - Any physical force which is used with intent to cause some degree of pain or discomfort, such as hitting, spanking (refers to striking a child with an open hand on the buttocks or extremities with the intention of modifying behaviour without causing physical injury), shaking, slapping, twisting, pulling, pinching, squeezing, or biting is prohibited.
- Practices or the threat of any practices that are disrespectful, degrading, exploitative, intimidating, emotionally or physically harmful or neglectful will not be carried out on any child while attending the service.
- Bullying of any form.
- Restraint of children by unapproved methods.

### **Strategies for Supporting School Age Children**

Each school aged child is assigned a “key person”. This is important for gathering information and knowledge about the whole child. Through their role, key workers can anticipate a child’s reaction and behaviour knowing what is likely to upset a child’s mood or behaviour, knowing when to step-in or just observe from a safe distance.

Scamps & Scholars follow different strategies based on the type, frequency and impact of the behaviour(s).

#### **Resolving an Incident / Conflict Management**

This type of behaviour may be a once off incident or it may be specific times where a child needs support based on their age, stage of development or needs. Scamps & Scholars support the development of self-regulation through the Conflict Resolution Approach or the Whole Brain Child Strategies.

These strategies support the child to develop the skill of regulating emotions and problem-solving. There may be different levels of support which are needed for each individual child, the staff member will adjust support where necessary in this process for each individual child.

## **Strategy**

Below are the steps to follow in using the Conflict Resolution Approach

- Approach calmly – put yourself in the shoes of the child. All their feelings are relevant and real in the moment. Approach the situation calmly and get down to the child's eye level.
- Acknowledge feelings – describe how the School Age child/ children are feeling.
- Gather information – remain neutral by giving each child the opportunity to tell their side of the story. Children sometimes need lots of time to get the words out so take your time and remember the importance of the lessons learnt in these situations.
- Restate the problem – after listening to the children simply describe what the problem is so both/all can understand different sides of the story.
- Ask for ideas for solutions & choose one together - give the children an opportunity to come up with solutions and keep working on it until you all agree on something. This can take a bit of time. The code of behaviour is referred to throughout this conversation. Isolating, undermining, labelling or disregarding practices are not used. Children are encouraged to be respectful and show empathy.
- Be prepared to give follow up support – it is important the staff member follows through on the agreed solution. This helps place trust in the process and children will have confidence in the approach.

## **Communication with parents**

These behaviours may or may not immediately be shared with parents as it may be linked to the age of the child or stage of development. It is the role of the adult to support the child in developing these problem-solving skills

## **Managing Moderate Behaviour Issues**

This type of behaviour can be recognised when a behaviour is becoming a more regular occurrence. Incidents of reoccurring behaviour are documented by Scamps & Scholars, in the Passover over book, child's file or incident/accident report.

The type of information which is recorded may include location, time, date, triggers, witness. This is stored within the child's file in a locked cabinet.

## **Strategy**

The strategy for supporting the child should be consistent. It should follow the Conflict Resolution as outlined above.

## **Communication with the School Age Child**

- The key worker may speak with the child to discuss the behaviour. E.g. why they think it might be happening, what can the School Age Service do to support the child.
- This is an informal conversation in a quiet space away from the child's peers.

- The School Age Child, in so far as practical, may be involved in the development of the action plan between the School Age Service, the child and parent/guardian. This involvement may be directly or indirectly.
- Ideas and solutions are encouraged from the child, and the School Age Service, in so far as practical, will implement them once it is in best practice guidelines.
- Informing the School Age Child of meetings happening between the School Age Service and the School Age Child's parents/ guardians will be decided on a case-to-case basis.

### **Communication with Staff**

- The staff team will discuss the reoccurring behaviour and put a plan in place.

The plan will have a start and end date for review.

- Staff may observe the child to identify any triggers of the behaviour. This may be the key worker, and/or another staff member. The plan will identify the duration of observations e.g. for one week, two weeks.
- When the behaviour happens the steps above will be implemented.
- Where observations are carried out, the child should not feel isolated. It is important at this stage, that staff involved are clear on the purpose of the observations and behaviours being observed.
- In respecting the dignity and rights of the child, where observations are carried out, information should be shared with relevant staff.
- The well-being of the children and staff is paramount, and the school aged childcare service may put varied supports in place where needed.
- Following the observations, staff are supported to reflect on trends and/or triggers for the behaviour. Additional strategies may be suggested at this stage e.g. staggered transitions, one-to-one support at mealtimes, visual routine, increasing adult: child ratio, physical layout is arranged so that there is a high level of visibility.

### **Communication with Parents**

Reassurance should be provided to parents on supporting their child and open communication should be encouraged throughout this process. In setting up a meeting to with parent/guardian, Scamps & Scholars should consider the following:

- Where possible, a suitable time/day is prearranged with the parent and service e.g. after the session, collection time or during the day.
- Possible supports the parent/guardian might need for the meeting e.g. family member
- Meetings are in a comfortable uninterrupted space.
- All conversations are away from the child.
- Consistent staff attend the meeting e.g. room leader and manager

- All meetings plans and observations will be recorded and stored in the child's record in a locked cabinet.

Before observations are carried out, the Scamps & Scholars should consider the following:

- A meeting may be set up with the parent/guardian.
- The key worker and/or manager may speak with the parent / guardian about the reoccurring behaviour.
- A plan will be developed between the staff and parent/guardian to support the child. This plan will be short-term of 1-2 weeks approx.
- The strategies and timeframe of the plan will be clear.
- Staff encourage questions and discussion with parents. Where possible, the time/day for the next meeting is decided.

### ***After carrying out the observation:***

The key worker and/or additional staff member may request to speak with the child's parent/guardian. During the meeting, the plan, trends and/or noticeable triggers may be discussed with the parent/ guardian.

Parent/ guardians are encouraged to contribute to the plan. - Staff encourage questions and discussion with parents. - Where the service has decided to continue observing the child, a further plan may be put into place in collaboration with the parent/ guardians. - Where possible, the time/day for the next meeting will be decided.

This process may be cyclical and reoccur many times to identify a trigger or the appropriate strategy.

### **Serious Behaviour Issues**

Serious behaviour issues may include the following:

Repeated pattern of behaviour which impacts with the child's learning or engagement  
Behaviours that are not responsive to process described above.

Prolonged tantrums, physical and verbal aggression, disruptive behaviour Dangerous behaviour that is a risk to the child or other children.

### **Strategies**

Specific strategies may be followed to support the child including Conflict Resolution Approach or the Whole Brain Child Strategies. If appropriate, Scamps & Scholars may develop an individual care plan to support the child. Where other strategies are in place to support the child, there is a clear outline provided in the care plan. These strategies follow best practice guidelines.

Services may also use the following to support serious behaviour issues:

Time to one side with support of an adult. In rare situations, it may be appropriate to use time to one side with the support of an adult, for short periods of time, to enable a child to calm down. Adult support is needed throughout this time, and a child must never be isolated in any space or room without adult support. This should not be used as a form of time out and/or isolating a child.

Holding or restraining a child to prevent harm The purpose of this intervention can only be to prevent injury to the child, another child or to an adult, or to prevent serious damage to property.

***Physical holding as prevention must only be used:***

- To prevent injury to the child or other children
- To prevent an accident Regardless of age, physical restraint must only ever be used for immediate safety reasons, with the minimum force and for the minimum amount of time.

If staff physically intervene to prevent injury to a child or others, staff are aware of the following:

- Physical intervention is used only as a last resort Staff ensure no pain is inflicted upon children An incident report is completed Parent/Guardians are informed of the staff intervening An approved evidence-based method is used
- In some cases, an individual care plan is developed from external agencies who are supporting the child. The School Age Service, in so far as practical, will implement this care plan in collaboration with parents/guardians.

***Communication***

- The staff team may carry out a meeting to discuss the behaviour and develop an action plan to support the School Age Child.
- Observations may be carried out at different times of the day to try establishing triggers of the behaviour. All observations will be discussed and/or made available to the parent/guardian.
- The School Age Child's key worker may speak with the child to discuss the behaviour. E.g. why they think it might be happening, what can the School Age Service do to support.
- The School Age Child, in so far as practical, may be involved in the development of the action plan between the School Age Service, and parent/guardian. This may be directly or indirectly.
- Informing the School Age Child of meetings happening between the School Age Service and the School Age Child's parents/ guardians will be decided on a case-to-case basis.
- A plan may be developed in collaboration with the staff team, family of the child and in so far as practical, the child.
- If necessary, the family will be supported to contact any relevant external professionals.

- If the behaviour is a child protection concern the Child Protection Policy will be implemented.
- All information gathered and discussed will be stored securely and all conversations are highly confidential.
- All meeting plans and observations will be recorded and stored in the child's record in a locked cabinet.
- The staff will always work in the best interest of the child using their best judgement in situations which can be demanding and stressful on all involved.
- When all reasonable attempts to support the child, whose challenging behaviour is causing difficulties to have failed, it may be necessary to suggest to parents/guardians to seek professional advice, such as a psychologist or play therapist. The parent/guardian may then seek the advice or request referral to other professionals.

### ***Staff Training and Development:***

All behaviour management strategies implemented by staff in Scamps & Scholars are in keeping with the ethos and the mission of the service.

Staff are fully trained on this behaviour management policy.

### **Child Leaving the School Aged Childcare Service Unaccompanied**

During the hours that they are in Scamps & Scholars, children must not leave unaccompanied. They must be signed out by an adult unless prior arrangements have been made.

If a child leaves unauthorised and unaccompanied the following procedure will apply:

- Children will never be left unsupervised – a staff member will follow the child if necessary
- The child's parent/guardian will be contacted
- The Gardai will be contacted if there is a concern for the child's safety
- The best interests of the child and their safety is the priority of Scamps & Scholars at all times

*Leaving the premises unauthorised is considered a serious behaviour issue.*

### **Bullying**

Scamps & Scholars is committed to be a safe and friendly place for all children. We expect all children and staff to be treated with respect and kindness at all times.

Bullying is not tolerated, and we have specific steps we follow in the event of bullying. Scamps & Scholars seeks to identify, responding and manage bullying in a timely and sensitive manner.

Bullying can include different types of actions:

- Verbal actions
- Gestures or signs
- Physical actions
- Taking or breaking other people's belongings
- Leaving people out of games or any other type of exclusion
- Cyberbullying

This is not an exhaustive list and there are other things that could happen that are considered bullying. All incidents of bullying witnessed should be reported to Derek O Leary (manager) or the next person in charge in his absence, as soon as possible. The manager will investigate any bullying allegations. This might involve speaking to the children involved, gathering information on who is involved and in the case of cyberbullying recording any posts online.

All bullying investigations are handled sensitively. Parents are informed of any bullying investigation. On occasion, it may be necessary for Scamps & Scholars to liaise with the child/children's school.

If a bullying issue is also ongoing at school, Scamps & Scholars and the school will communicate about the approach. Following identification of a bullying issue, Scamps & Scholars will implement an intervention that is determined by the nature of the bullying and the children involved. All staff receive training and support on the appropriate interventions. Intervention might include:

- Negotiating agreements between pupils
- Working with parents and guardians
- Mediation
- Buddy/peer mentoring

Other strategies will be considered as necessary.

## **Cyber bullying**

Cyber bullying can be defined as bullying above that occurs over the internet or via mobile phone.

Scamps & Scholars is committed to preventing cyberbullying in our service. The following guidelines are followed:

- The children in Scamps & Scholars are not permitted to have a mobile phone switched on while on the premises and grounds.
- The computers/tablets in Scamps & Scholars will only be used under staff supervision.
- This limits access to opportunities to engage in any inappropriate activity online.
- Parents are requested to update Scamps & Scholars of any potential cyberbullying incidents they are aware of.
- Children are required to report any incident of cyberbullying to Scamps & Scholars.

## **Complaints Policy**

The services complaints policy and procedures should be followed where there any issues or concerns regarding the implementation of the managing behaviour policy.

Links with other Policies:

- Child protection policy
- Parents as Partners
- Staff Development & Training Policy
- Support & Supervision Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Complaints Policy

*All staff receive training on this policy.*

APPROVAL DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

IMPLEMENTATION DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNED: \_\_\_\_\_  
(On behalf of the Board of Directors)