

*Youth Justice Policy Determination 4.8:  
Positive Behaviour Support*

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POLICY APPROVER	Name Title	Jeanette Kerr Deputy Chief Executive Officer Operations
	Date	18 January 2018
POLICY OWNER	Executive Director Youth Justice	
POLICY RESPONSIBILITY	Senior Director Youth Justice Programs	
IMPLEMENTATION RESPONSIBILITY	Manager Youth Programs - Superintendent	

*Document Control*

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Version 1.01	January 2018	Update to position titles and policy determination references
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NEXT REVIEW DATE	January 2020, or as directed prior to the scheduled review date.
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## Policy Purpose

To establish a behaviour support framework to promote positive and prosocial behaviour by young people admitted to a youth detention centre. The framework also provides guidance to staff on responding to negative or anti-social behaviours.

## Authority / Responsibility

The Executive Leadership Group and Senior Managers have responsibility for ensuring that supervisors and employees understand and comply with this policy.

This policy applies to all Youth Justice Officers, Senior Youth Justice Officers, Shift Supervisors, the Manager Youth Programs - Superintendent and Assistant Manager Youth Programs - Deputy Superintendent. This policy also applies to all young people accommodated in a youth detention centre.

## Policy Statement

The emphasis of the behaviour support framework is to implement proactive or preventative strategies that are trauma informed and promote positive and prosocial behaviours by young people accommodated in a youth detention centre.

The behaviour support framework:

- sets the standard of behaviour expected;
- aims to provide an environment that fosters the social, emotional, intellectual and physical development of young people;
- promotes respect, fairness and the protection of the rights of young people and staff;
- provides constructive methods that are predictable and consistent to address behaviour displayed by young people;
- assists in maintaining the safety and security of the youth detention centre;
- provides a learning culture for young people that assists them in understanding and self-managing their behaviours;
- provides opportunities for young people to make positive changes and actively participate in their rehabilitation; and
- provides staff with interventions and resources to respond to the individual needs and behaviours of young people.

### *Principles of Positive Behaviour Support*

The behaviour support framework is based on structure and provides clear instruction to both staff and young people regarding behavioural expectations. It is important to note that the behaviour support framework embraces discipline and not punishment.

The key principles of the behaviour support framework are:

- Promote respect  
Respect must be shown to young people and staff through behaviour, actions and words. This includes staff always showing respect in their interactions with their colleagues and others.
- Consistent  
Staff must provide requests, rather than orders, that are clear, consistent and specific. Consequences for negative behaviour must be predictable, fair and clearly articulated.
- Proactive  
Staff must prepare for their shift and identify any potential risks or alerts. Young people must be advised about any change in process or routine and reactions to changes must be considered.

- **Positive**  
Staff should praise small improvements in behaviour to encourage further prosocial behaviour and achievements.
- **Trauma informed**  
Young people who have experienced trauma may be unable to regulate their emotion and lack an understanding of cause and effect. Staff must utilise a trauma informed approach towards all young people in detention.
- **Model prosocial behaviour**  
Staff must be mindful that young people learn appropriate behaviours by observing adults and others. Staff should therefore model appropriate, prosocial behaviour in all interactions with young people, staff and visitors to the centre. Young people respond to effective leadership and it is a key component in guiding young people to learn rules and routines, positive social skills. Staff should immediately address any inappropriate behaviour or language.
- **Engage young people**  
Effective communication is essential for working with young people and encouraging them to build positive relationships, seek advice and access services. Staff should be mindful that an important part of effective communication is the ability to listen and understand others. Young people who feel they are not being heard are more likely to rebel and display challenging behaviours. Motivational interviewing is a collaborative communication method that involves the use of specialised language and techniques to strengthen a person's own motivation and commitment to change. By using effective communication techniques, staff become an active agent in encouraging and supporting a young person to embrace the need for change.  
All young people should be encouraged to actively participate in all suitable activities (except for activities with identified safety or security issues). Staff should actively engage with young people. support their participation in activities and provide appropriate positive feedback.
- **Culturally Appropriate**  
The importance a young person's connection to culture cannot be underestimated and must be recognised and supported by staff to ensure the young person's wellbeing and maintenance of a strong cultural identity. Communication with a young person must be conducted in a culturally appropriate way.

### *Staff Responsibilities*

Youth Justice Officers spend a significant amount of time with young people and must use this opportunity to model prosocial behaviours and proactively seek opportunities to engage young people.

The development of a positive and therapeutic relationship between staff and young people is a key factor in promoting positive behaviours. Youth Justice Officers are a key member of a young person's therapeutic team and need to respond consistently to the young person.

Youth Justice Officers are to:

- interact with young people in a respectful manner, communicating warmth, genuine positive regard and interest in the young person and their views and opinions;
- demonstrate empathy by accepting and understanding a young person's feelings and opinions;
- listen actively to a young person's views, ask clarifying questions and offer reflective feedback;
- maximise opportunities for young people to participate in decision making processes such as expressing their views;
- use positive and non-threatening body language;
- use clear and simple language and concrete statements;
- ensure the young person understand expectations and directions; and
- set appropriate professional boundaries in interactions with young people.

Staff must provide feedback regularly to a young person. It is important to provide feedback as soon as possible after a positive or negative behaviour is observed. The purpose of relevant and timely feedback is to help the young person learn how to manage their behaviour in more appropriate ways. Feedback must be specific and concrete, delivered in an age and developmentally appropriate way and take into account cultural differences in communication.

Appropriate behaviour should be recognised and encouraged through positive feedback. Inappropriate behaviour should be identified and addressed in a supportive manner – describing and modelling alternative behaviours that would enable the young person to express their feelings or address their concerns more constructively.

### *Positive Behaviour Support Strategies*

#### PROACTIVE STRATEGIES

Proactive strategies promote positive and prosocial behaviour by young people and minimise reliance on responsive strategies to negative or challenging behaviours.

#### Communicating Behaviour Expectations

The effectiveness of the behaviour support framework relies on the effective communication of behaviour expectations to young people. Staff are to communicate this information to young people in the following ways:

- Explaining the daily routine, expected participation levels in activities and the rules of the centre at the time of admission;
- Providing each young person with an induction to the centre so that the young person clearly understands their rights, obligations and behaviour expectations;
- Adapting communication styles to the young person's developmental level and cultural needs
- Providing guidance around behavioural standards by coaching and reinforcing rules and expectations;
- Posting information regarding behaviour expectations around the centre; and
- Provide feedback of the young person's behaviour progress through the Young Person Support Plan (refer to [Youth Justice Policy Determination 4.9: Young Person Support Plan](#)).

#### Normalised Environment

The environment of a youth detention centre can positively or negatively impact on a young person's behaviour. A core Territory Families principle for youth detention centre operations is to foster a positive and normalised environment that promotes positive behaviour and reduces the likelihood of negative behaviour.

The principle of a normalised environment is that the youth detention centre aligns as closely as possible with life in the community and that restrictions for young people are kept to the minimum level necessary to ensure the safety and security of all young people and staff. It aims to ensure that young people have some degree of autonomy to facilitate responsible decision making.

A normalised environment can be promoted in the follow ways:

- Provide structure for young people through daily routines and activities that reflect, as closely as possible, the life of a young person in the community– participating in schooling, vocational training and recreation activities.
- Facilitate opportunities for young people to take responsibility and make meaningful decisions;
- Allow young people to express their identity consistent with policies and procedures, such as personalising their room;
- Promoting socialisation of young people with peers in a range of settings, including recreation activities;
- Supporting young people to express their cultural identity and practice religious beliefs;
- Encouraging young people to take pride in, and responsibility for, their environment;

- Respecting the personal space and privacy of young people as far as possible;
- Modelling prosocial behaviour at all times, including respectful communication between staff;
- Ensuring consistency in communication and approach with young people and all staff members;
- Not labelling young people; and
- Minimising periods of 'lock down' time and other restrictions on movement as far as practicable.

#### Case Management

Case management provides the structure in which interventions address a young person's criminogenic, non-criminogenic and assessed needs. Interventions being implemented under a case plan to address a young person's assessed needs may have a positive effect on the young person's behaviour, particularly as challenging behaviours displayed in the youth detention centre may directly relate to the young person's offending behaviours.

Youth Justice Officers form a key component in the effective assessment and case management of young people and should work closely with the Case Management Assessment and Throughcare team.

Refer to [Youth Justice Policy Determination 4.1: Case Management, Assessment and Throughcare Services](#).

#### Young Person Support Plan

The Young Person Support Plan is a tool for staff to respond to the day to day behaviour and support of a young person in detention, with proactive strategies that mitigate risks associated with the safety of the young person and maintain a safe and secure environment for all. The plan provides staff with information about:

- any vulnerabilities or special needs of the young person;
- known management strategies for the young person;
- patterns of behaviours and effective responses;
- alerts and triggers for the young person;
- the young person's strengths;
- the young person's identified personal goals; and
- needs and interventions identified by the Case Management Assessment and Throughcare team.

The Young Person Support Plan is closely linked with their case management plan and is to be monitored in line with the young person's progression through the Incentives and Earned Privileges system.

Refer to [Youth Justice Policy Determination 4.9: Young Person Support Plan](#).

#### Incentives and Earned Privileges

The Incentives and Earned Privileges system provides a young person greater access to activities, canteen options and other opportunities by way of allocating daily points based on assessment of their behaviours, achievements and progress.

The system provides young people with an opportunity to gain privileges and rewards through engagement in prosocial behaviours and activities. There are four levels and a young person can progress, or regress, through the four stages as a result of their behaviour.

A young person's progression through the system is linked to their day to day actions and it is the responsibility of staff to guide, encourage and support the young person to achieve their goals. Ongoing and frequent communication with the young person is crucial to their success within the Incentives and Earned Privileges system.

Refer to [Youth Justice Policy Determination 4.6: Incentives and Earned Privileges](#).

## RESPONSIVE STRATEGIES

Responsive strategies are interventions used by staff as a direct response to a young person's negative or challenging behaviours. These strategies are used to de-escalate situations and minimise harm.

Responsive strategies include both the immediate interventions employed by staff in response to a young person's negative or challenging behaviour and also the resulting consequences that are implemented as a direct result of the behaviour.

### Behaviour Support Planning

For young people who display consistent negative or challenging behaviours a more focused approach to behaviour support planning may be required. Where this is identified the Young Person Support Plan should be reviewed and updated to include specific, proactive responsive strategies to assist the young person to address their negative or challenging behaviours and minimise the use of disciplinary actions.

The purpose of the Young Person Support Plan review must be to assist the young person to identify their negative or challenging behaviour and provide a consistent support plan for staff to respond to the young person. The young person must be involved in the behaviour support planning processes and staff must ensure that the young person understands the reasons for the focused approach.

### De-escalation Techniques

De-escalation techniques are Youth Justice Officer's primary tool for responding to young people displaying negative or challenging behaviours. The effective use of these techniques reduces the need for staff to use more restrictive interventions and assists in maintaining a positive learning environment for young people.

De-escalation techniques involve identification of escalating negative behaviours, minimising the escalation of negative behaviour and responding appropriately to an emerging situation.

De-escalation techniques include:

- identification of physical and behavioural signs which indicate that a young person's behaviour or emotions are escalating;
- engaging the young person in distracting activities and shifting their focus to more positive and productive behaviours;
- verbal communication skills such as negotiation, mediation and conflict resolution;
- non-verbal communication skills such as body language and body positioning; and
- safety measures such as removing dangerous objects and calling on others for assistance.

Staff are to be supported to develop and continuously improve their de-escalation techniques and verbal skills. The review of the use of de-escalation techniques should occur in each debrief.

### Verbal Feedback

Verbal feedback should be provided to young people regularly and as soon as practicable after positive or negative behaviour. Providing feedback to the young person assists them to understand the nature of the positive and negative behaviours and provides strategies for positively influencing behaviour. Explaining behavioural expectations and social norms provides the young person with a learning opportunity about behaviour standards and consequences for continued negative behaviour.

In providing feedback to a young person, staff should:

- identify the negative behaviour when it occurs;
- explain why the behaviour is negative;
- discuss strategies with the young person that will assist them to self-regulate their behaviour in the future; and
- write a case note with details of the feedback.

### Verbal Warnings

A verbal warning provides the young person with an opportunity to change their behaviour before it escalates. Staff must explain the consequences for continued non-compliance or negative behaviours. In issuing a verbal warning, the staff member must:

- identify the negative behaviour when it occurs;
- explain why the behaviour is negative;
- provide the young person with a warning that continued behaviour will result in a consequence;
  - Consequences must be proportionate to the behaviour and based on the principle of restorative justice;
- discuss strategies with the young person that will assist them to self-regulate their behaviour in the future;
- inform the unit manager of the verbal warning; and
- write a case note with the details of the warning.

### Reflecting Behaviour in Incentive Points

Negative or challenging behaviours displayed by a young person should be reflected in their daily incentive points. The allocation of points impacts directly on a young person's access to rewards and privileges.

Incentive points or rewards already earned cannot be removed from a young person as punishment.

Refer to [Youth Justice Policy Determination 4.6: Incentives and Earned Privileges](#) for further guidance on allocating incentive points.

### Use of Reflection Room

The reflection room is a private space a young person can retreat to during times of heightened behaviour or emotion. The use of the reflection room is to encourage young people to self-regulate and de-escalate their own behaviour. Where a young person has not responded to verbal reminders and other de-escalation techniques, a Youth Justice Officer responding to the behaviour may encourage the young person to remove themselves from the situation and utilise the reflection room to calm their emotional state.

The door to the reflection room should not be locked and a young person may voluntarily leave the reflection room when their behaviour and emotions have de-escalated. The young person should be allowed to return to scheduled activities.

While a young person is in the reflection room, they should have access to a staff member they can debrief with, if they choose. The young person's welfare should be monitored regularly and if their behaviour or emotions continue to escalate, Youth Justice Officers must respond accordingly.

Only one young person may occupy the reflection room at a time.

**Young people must not be placed in the reflection room as a disciplinary measure or for punishment. A staff member should never use force to move a young person to the reflection room.**

### Use of Force

Youth Justice Officers must manage incidents of misbehaviour in the manner that is most appropriate having regard to all the circumstances, including the interests of the young person, other people involved and the security of the centre. The use of force or use of approved restraints is always a response of last resort.

Refer to [Youth Justice Policy Determination 2.5: Use of Force](#).

## Isolation/Separation

Each time a young person is removed from participation in mainstream activities and separately confined in a room it is considered a period of isolation/separation.

Where a young person's behaviour is unable to be de-escalated or managed by any other strategy, the Manager Youth Programs - Superintendent may determine that a young person should be isolated from other young people:

- to protect the safety of another person; or
- for the good order and security of the detention centre.

It must be understood that isolation/separation can cause harm to a young person's psychological wellbeing. Isolation/separation should not be a common response to behaviour management, given the purpose of behaviour management is to teach young people to self-regulate and de-escalate their own behaviour. Therefore, isolation/separation is an extreme response and should only be employed as a last resort.

### **Isolation/separation must never be used to punish a young person.**

In accordance with Section 153(5) of the Youth Justice Act, the Manager Youth Programs - Superintendent may isolate the young person for a period not exceeding 24 hours. The use of isolation/separation for discipline should be individualised and therefore, a young person who is subject to isolation/separation is not automatically isolated for 24 hours. Where the Manager Youth Programs - Superintendent receives permission from the Chief Executive Officer, a young person may be isolated for a maximum of 72 hours.

The young person should only be isolated until their behaviour has de-escalated. It is the responsibility of the Officer in Charge to ensure that a young person is not kept in isolation/separation any longer than necessary to de-escalate their behaviour and emotional state.

**At a minimum, a young person's placement in isolation/separation is to be formally reviewed every two (2) hours.** This review must be documented with clearly articulated rationale for extending an isolation/separation placement beyond two (2) hours.

The Youth Justice Officer must explain to the young person;

- the reasons for the isolation/separation placement;
- how long they will be isolated before a review of the placement will occur; and
- the behaviour expectations and how the decision to end the isolation/separation placement will be made.

The Youth Justice Officer must confirm that the young person understands. However because the young person will initially be in a heightened state, the Youth Justice Officer may need to repeat the explanation and reconfirm the young person's understanding once their behaviour starts to de-escalate.

While isolated in a room, the young person must be constantly monitored via closed circuit television or in person by a Youth Justice Officer. At minimum intervals of 15 minutes, the Youth Justice Officer should engage with the young person to determine their behavioural and emotional state. During this time, the Youth Justice Officer must employ verbal de-escalation techniques to support the young person to reduce their stress levels and identify a positive pathway to return to their normal activities.

The Youth Justice Officer responsible for observing the young person must record all behavioural observations at intervals not exceeding 15 minutes. The recorded observations should summarise the observed behaviours over the entire 15 minute period, not just the behaviour at a single point in time.

The Assistant Manager Youth Programs - Deputy Superintendent is responsible for ensuring the Young Persons Support Plan is updated in line with behaviour support planning to ensure that all staff are able to respond effectively and consistently to the young person once the isolation/separation placement is resolved. The Manager Youth Programs - Superintendent is responsible for ensuring the

person with parental responsibility for the young person is notified of the isolation/separation placement in a timely manner.

### *Formal Responses to Negative or Challenging Behaviours*

Negative or challenging behaviours are behaviours that are undesirable, socially unacceptable and/or inappropriate. This includes non-compliant behaviour, aggressive and violent behaviour, oppositional behaviour and breaches of rules.

Negative or challenging behaviours are part of a continuum – from behaviour that does not cause risk or harm to a person, property, safety or security, through to behaviour that causes minor, moderate or serious risk or harm to a person, property, safety or security.

<b>No</b> risk or harm to a person, property or safety and security	<b>Minor</b> risk or harm to a person, property or safety and security	<b>Moderate</b> risk or harm to a person, property or safety and security	<b>Serious</b> risk or harm to a person, property or safety and security
Negative Behaviour	Minor Misbehaviour	Moderate Misbehaviour	Serious Misbehaviour

Negative or challenging behaviours must be viewed in the context of the:

- characteristics of the young person including their age, maturity, developmental level, wellbeing and rehabilitation needs;
- circumstances of the behaviour displayed by the young person, such as a negative event experienced by the young person which assists in understanding the behaviour or aggravating circumstances;
- overall behavioural record of the young person;
- rehabilitative needs and goals of the young person identified through the young person’s case management plan.

The nature of the response to a negative or challenging behaviour must be:

- prompt and timely
- managed in the least restrictive manner possible and ensuring that consequences are graduated;
- proportionate and reasonable to the circumstances and seriousness of the behaviour as identified on the continuum of risk or harm to a person, property or safety and security; and
- assist the young person to understand why the behaviour is negative, the nature of and reasons for the response and actions they can take to modify their behaviour.

Youth Justice Officers must be vigilant in assessing a young person’s risk of self-harm or suicide. A young person may be displaying negative or challenging behaviours in response to a heightened risk of self-harm. Where a young person is identified as at risk, they must be responded to in accordance with [Youth Justice Policy Determination 5.1: Young People At Risk](#).

### RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

Restorative justice emphasises repairing the harm caused by challenging behaviours to people, relationships and the community (this applies to the community within the detention centre and the wider community).

Restorative justice requires young people to accept responsibility for their actions and the harm they have caused. The four key principles of restorative justice are:

- Inclusion of all parties in the repairing of harm;
- Encountering, or understanding, the behaviour from the other side;
- Making amends for the harm caused through apology, changed behaviour, generosity or restitution; and
- Reintegration of the parties back into the community.

## MISBEHAVIOUR

There are times when a young person's negative or challenging behaviours require a formal response.

To determine if a behaviour is a misbehaviour, consideration must be given to:

- characteristics of the young person, including their age, maturity, development stage, rehabilitation stage, whether they have a disability or mental health concern or known history such as a history of trauma;
- the circumstances of the behaviour, such as a negative event experience by the young person preceding the behaviour;
- the overall behavioural record of the young person whilst in the centre;
- whether the young person has previously displayed negative behaviour in the same or similar manner; and
- where the behaviour fits on the continuum of negative behaviour – from causing no harm or risk to causing minor, moderate or serious harm or risk.

### Minor/Moderate Misbehaviour

Examples of minor or moderate misbehaviour include:

- Non-compliant behaviour;
- Displaying rude or disrespectful attitudes and language;
- Minor property damage such as graffiti; or
- Refusing to participate in education or programs.

A Youth Justice Officer may take one or more of the following actions if they believe that a young person has committed to a minor behaviour breach:

- Giving the young person verbal feedback about their behaviour;
- Giving the young person a verbal warning;
- Encouraging the young person to self-manage their behaviour using the reflection room;
- Reflecting the behaviour in the allocation of daily incentive points; and/or
- Reprimanding the young person through consequences consistent with the principles of restorative justice.

### Serious Misbehaviour

Serious misbehaviour is behaviour that has the potential to cause a serious risk or harm, or behaviour that is more persistent in nature than minor or moderate misbehaviour. Examples of serious behaviour include:

- Bullying or harassing others;
- Engaging in sexual acts;
- Committing, planning or participating in an assault of another person;
- Possessing a prohibited or illegal item such as lighters, illicit drugs, alcohol, tools or weapons; or
- Attempting or planning an escape from custody.

A Youth Justice Officer may take one or more of the following actions if they believe that a young person has committed an act of serious misbehaviour:

- Giving the young person verbal feedback or a verbal warning about their behaviour;
- Giving the young person a verbal warning;
- Encouraging the young person to self-manage their behaviour using the reflection room;
- Reflecting the behaviour in the allocation of daily incentive points;
- Reprimanding the young person through consequences consistent with the principles of restorative justice; and/or
- Referring the matter to the Manager Youth Programs - Superintendent for a disciplinary review and application of an appropriate sanction.

### *Referral to the Manager Youth Programs - Superintendent for Disciplinary Review*

A young person may be referred to the Manager Youth Programs - Superintendent for a disciplinary review where they have displayed serious misbehaviour which requires the imposition of higher behaviour management consequences.

Youth Justice Officers must provide the Manager Youth Programs - Superintendent with a written report of the serious misbehaviour and all strategies implemented during the initial response to the behaviour. The Manager Youth Programs - Superintendent must consider the report and may choose to investigate the incident further before making a decision about whether further behaviour management consequences should be implemented.

The Manager Youth Programs - Superintendent may consider the consequences imposed by Youth Justice Officers are proportionate and reasonable and choose not to impose further consequences.

Where the Manager Youth Programs - Superintendent deems it appropriate, they may take one or more of the following actions:

- Give the young person feedback regarding their behaviour;
- Give the young person a verbal warning;
- Reprimand the young person;
- Impose behaviour management consequences in line with restorative justice principles; and/or
- Refer the incident to the police for criminal investigation.

Prior to imposing behaviour management consequences, the Manager Youth Programs - Superintendent must review previous behaviour management consequences imposed on the young person for misbehaviour. The review must consider the cumulative total of behaviour management consequences previously imposed, particularly in relation to withdrawal of privileges.

Behaviour management consequences imposed by the Manager Youth Programs - Superintendent may include:

- A requirement for the young person to make an apology to the person/s affected by their behaviour;
- Impose a requirement for the young person to perform extra chores for a specified period of time;
- Withdraw the young person's access to specific privileges for a designated period of time, such as removing access to an approved room item; or
- Restrict a young person's access to rewards assigned to their current incentive and earned privileges level.

### *Incident Reporting*

**Incident reporting must comply with [Youth Justice Policy Determination 2.3: Incident Recording and Reporting](#).**

Youth Justice Officer must record any responsive strategies used in response to negative or challenging behaviours. Where the response involved verbal feedback or a warning, this should be noted in a case note.

Where the response was in relation to an incident, an incident reporting must be completed in IOMS prior to the end of the shift.

### *Review of Decisions and Complaints*

A young person may request a review of a decision or make a complaint regarding any behaviour management consequences imposed.

Where a young person requests a review of a decision or consequence imposed, the review should be considered by the Assistant Manager Youth Programs – Deputy Superintendent where the decision or consequence was imposed by a Youth Justice Officer. Where the decision or consequence was

imposed by the Manager Youth Programs - Superintendent, the review should be undertaken by the Senior Director Youth Detention Programs.

A young person may make a complaint either verbally or writing. All complaints must be managed in accordance with [Youth Justice Policy Determination 3.3: Complaints](#).