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SOLID BEGINNINGS

NURSERY AND DAY CARE

ECD

CHILDREN DISCIPLINE POLICY

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Created in 2026 and reviewed in every two years unless there are amendments in the South African legislations relevant to this policy.

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CGB Chair's Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Reviewed By _____ ***Date:*** _____

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1. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

This ECD children's discipline policy is guided by legislative frameworks and national policies that prioritise the rights, safety, and well-being of children in the ECD environment in South Africa. Key, legally binding requirements include prohibiting corporal punishment, abuse, and neglect, as well as mandated supervision ratios, positive reinforcement strategies, and transparent, consistent rules for behaviour management to ensure a safe, nurturing environment. This policy is informed by and complies with the following legislative and regulatory frameworks:

Legal Framework	Function
Constitution of South Africa (Section 14)	The 1996 Constitution of South Africa protects children from abuse, and mandate that all discipline must respect their dignity.
The Children's Act No. 38 of 2005	The Children's Protection Act as amended, is South Africa's primary legal framework for protecting children's rights, promoting safety, well-being, and providing for care, protection from abuse/neglect, foster care, adoptions, and early childhood development.
The National Education Policy Act 32 (Section 3(4) (n))	The policy expressly prohibits physical or psychological abuse and corporal punishment in any educational institution.
The 2015 South African National Integrated Early Childhood Development Policy (NIECDP)	The policy ensures universal, equitable access to a comprehensive, quality package of ECD services from conception to creche entry. It mandates a multi-sectoral approach to deliver essential health, nutrition, education, and social protection services, recognising ECD as a universal right and public good.
South African Schools Act (SASA) No. 84 of 1996	The South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 (SASA) mandates a fair, corrective, and non-violent approach to learner discipline, emphasising the protection of rights. It strictly prohibits corporal punishment
The Basic Education Laws Amendment (BELA) Act 32 of 2024	The BELA Act 32 of 2024 officially bans all forms of corporal punishment, including humiliation and emotional abuse, and streamlines procedures for school discipline. It formally bans practices like smacking, pinching, forcing uncomfortable positions, or restricting bathroom access. It

	prioritises restorative justice while ensuring fair, age-appropriate disciplinary measures.

2. TERMS AND ABBREVIATION

Term/Abbreviation	Description
BELA Act	The Basic Education Laws Amendment (BELA) Act, signed into law in September 2024, strengthens the existing ban on corporal punishment in South African schools by explicitly defining it as any deliberate act causing physical pain or discomfort.
Corporal punishment	The Basic Education Laws Amendment (BELA) Act defines corporal punishment as any deliberate act against a child that inflicts pain or physical discomfort, however light, to punish or contain them. This includes, but is not limited to, hitting, slapping, pinching, forced uncomfortable positions, or restricting bathroom access or food.
Constitution	Refers to the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996)
Children's Act	The Children's Protection Act No, 38 of 2005 as amended, is South Africa's primary legal framework for protecting children's rights.
CGB	The Solid Beginnings Nursery and Day Care Creche Governing Body, a group that oversees the management and governance of the Solid Beginnings ECD centres and ensures compliance with the admission and DBE guidelines.
DBE	Department of Basic Education, the South African government department responsible for ECD, primary and secondary education policies and administration. The DBE in promotes positive, rights-based discipline, strictly prohibiting corporal punishment in favour of proactive, restorative approaches. DBE requires institutes to implement a Code of Conduct, featuring a structured, fair disciplinary system, while supporting safety through the National School Safety Framework.
ECD Centre	Refers to the Solid Beginnings Early Childhood Development Centres.
CMT	Refers to the Solid Beginnings Centre Management Team
National Education Policy (NEPA)	Refers to the National Education Policy (Act 27 of 1996). The policy guided SASA Act No.84 of 1996 (NEPA), strictly bans corporal punishment and physical abuse. It mandates a rights-based, pro-active code of conduct implemented by School Governing Bodies (SGBs) that emphasises fairness, safety, and positive discipline.

National integrated Policy	The 2015 South African National Integrated Early Childhood Development Policy (NIECDP). The NIECD Policy in South Africa creates a framework for comprehensive services (health, education, nutrition) for children from birth to age four, aiming to reduce inequality and ensure holistic development. Regarding discipline, policy enforces positive discipline, making corporal punishment illegal in schools and childcare settings
Responsible Party/Parties	The entity (in this case, the creche), learner and parent/guardian and or any other relevant stakeholders as determined in this policy
SASA	South African Schools Act, No. 84 of 1996, which governs the administration and governance of creches in South Africa, mandates that school discipline be maintained through a formal Code of Conduct (Section 8), strictly prohibiting corporal punishment and physical or psychological abuse (Section 10).
Solid Beginnings	Solid Beginnings Nursery and Day Care Centres
Staff	The Solid Beginnings Nursery and Day Care teaching and non-teaching staff.

3. INTRODUCTION

The Solid Beginnings children discipline policy focuses on positive, developmental, and child-centred approaches, strictly prohibiting corporal punishment, abuse, or neglect in accordance with the Children's Act No. 38 of 2005; the Schools Act No. 84 of 1996 and the Bela Act No. 32 of 2024. The programme aims to create a place where staff and children are respectful and kind to one another.

4. PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

The policy aims to foster safe, nurturing environments where children develop emotional management and behavioural control, acquiring self-discipline and respect for others. Discipline is viewed as an educational process that focuses on **positive instruction** and **self-regulation**. Positive discipline guides children to act appropriately without causing harm, fear, or humiliation. We pledge to model desired behaviours through positive discipline rather than punitive action. These are the values children will learn, and we encourage parents to reinforce them at home. Key policy elements include explicit classroom rules, consistent routines, nurturing, and clear communication with parents. The policy emphasises promoting and restoring positive behaviour through guidance rather than punishment.

5. THE KEY PRINCIPLES OF THE SOLID BEGINNINGS CHILDREN'S DISCIPLINE POLICY

I. **Prohibitions:** Hitting, smacking, slapping, kicking, pinching, threatening, degrading, or withholding food is strictly forbidden.
II. **Positive Reinforcement:** Focuses on rewarding good behaviour and teaching social-emotional skills, often using frameworks like positive behaviour support (PBS).
III. **Preventive Strategies:** Uses consistent daily routines, supervision, and engaging activities to prevent misbehaviour.
IV. **Correction Processes:** Emphasises age-appropriate, restorative measures (e.g., redirection, time-in, natural consequences) that teach, rather than punish
V. **Communication:** Regular communication with parents regarding a child's behaviour, particularly if issues persist.
VI. **Staff Conduct:** Requires staff to maintain professional, calm, and respectful behaviour, with severe consequences for violating child protection regulations.

6. THE ACTIONS THAT ARE CONSIDERED AS NEGATIVE ACTIONS CALLING FOR DISCIPLINE IN A CRECHE ENVIRONMENT

6.1 Disruptive Behaviour

Disruptive Behaviour distracts from the full benefit of the programme and will result in consequences. The following behaviours are considered disruptive:

- Requires constant attention from the staff making it difficult to attend to other children.
- Inflicts physical or emotional harm on other children, adults or self.
- Disrespects people learning resources and materials provided.
- Consistently disobeys the classroom rules.
- Verbally threatens other children and/or staff
- Uses verbal or physical activity that diverts attention away from the group of children
- Crying for no reason making it difficult to for the staff and other children to engage in the planned or any developmental activities.

7. POSITIVE GUIDANCE STRATEGIES

7.1. Positive Guidance Strategies

Solid Beginnings Staff will use the following proactive methods to encourage good behaviour:

- **Positive Reinforcement:** Praising specific good choices (e.g., "I like the way you play with others")

- **Redirection:** Guiding a child from an inappropriate activity to a positive one.
- **Modelling:** Teachers will demonstrate the kindness and respect they expect from children.
- **Logical Consequences:** Consequences will relate directly to the action (e.g., if a child spills juice on purpose, they help clean it up).
- **Clear Boundaries:** Using simple "Golden Rules" (e.g., "We should display love and kindness to each other because we are a family", “Say thank you when you are given something”) that are reinforced daily.

7.2 Corrective Measures (Age-Appropriate)

When a child’s behaviour is disruptive or unsafe, the following steps apply:

- ✓ **Verbal Warning:** A calm, private reminder of the rule.
- ✓ **Cool-Down/Time-Out:** If the behaviour continues, the child may be moved to a quiet space to regain control.
- ✓ **Duration:** Maximum of 1 minute per year of the child's age.
- ✓ **Supervision:** A staff member must always be able to see the child; children are **never** left alone.
- ✓ **Reflection:** Once calm, the teacher will briefly discuss what happened and how to make a better choice next time.

7.3 Prohibited Practices

Under the Children’s Act the following are **strictly forbidden**:

- Corporal punishment (hitting, smacking, pinching, or shaking, pulling hair, paddling or forcing children into uncomfortable positions).
- Verbal abuse (yelling, shaming, or using profane language).
- Withholding food, water, rest, or toilet access as punishment.
- Placing children in locked or dark rooms.

7.4 Parental Collaboration and Escalation

- **Incident Reports:** Parents will be notified of significant or repeated behavioural issues through a written report (see the attached Incident Report Annexure: Annexure C

- **Formal Meetings:** For persistent challenges, a meeting will be scheduled between parents, teacher and management to create a "Behaviour Support Plan"

The implementation of this policy is the responsibility of Solid Beginnings Creche, CGB, Staff, Children and all the Solid Beginnings Creche relevant Stakeholders.

8. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

8.1 SOLID BEGINNINGS STAFF DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Solid Beginnings Staff is responsible for:

- Ensuring implementation of this policy to safeguard the safety and wellbeing of at Solid Beginnings Nursery and Day Care.
- Always ensure maximum supervision of children.
- Never leave children alone in class. Always call someone to supervise your children when a need to leave class arises.
- To meaningfully always occupy children to avoid boredom which is regarded as a common cause for disruptive and unwanted behaviour in children.
- To guide and teach children about discipline.
- To understand the terms and conditions of contracts of employment's clause on disciplinary actions taken against teachers when any form of corporal punishment or abuse is exercised on children.
- Seek for assistance from the ECD management to provide discipline guidelines for children who constantly repeat negative behaviour.
- Love and care for the children unconditionally as this helps to yield positive behaviour from children.

- Greet each child as they enter the classroom and reinforce the classroom rules in a friendly manner,
- Guide each child through the early routine of unpacking backpacks
- Console/Comfort any crying or upset children
- Ensure all worksheets and activities are ready a day in advance
- Toilet time must be supervised
- Follow daily routines and work as a team
- Never leave children unattended on the playground
- To properly communicate creche correspondence to the parents
- Our cell phone policy prohibits the use of cell phones in during working hours to ensure children's safety. Please ensure compliance with the creche cell phone policy.
- Follow the creche's communication policy to escalate children's discipline issues to parents. NB- Always inform the ECD management of the any discipline related issues before approaching the parent and escalation of children's discipline issues is done via creche management.

8.2 SOLID BEGINNINGS GOVERNING BOARD DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Taking part in the development of such policies as the Children's Discipline Policy
- Reviewing and approving Solid Beginnings Policies
- Ensuring policy implementation
- Taking part in the creche's child's discipline policy
- Help other parents understand the creche policies.

8.3 SOLID BEGINNINGS PARENTS DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Collaborating with the creche to reinforce children's positive behaviour.
- Work together with the creche staff to correct negative behaviour
- Cooperate with the creche staff and management in children's discipline issues.
- Participate in the creche policy development and implementation.
- Acknowledge the receipt of this policy and sign accordingly

9. CONCLUSION

Children cannot become self-disciplined unless adults teach them right from wrong. At Solid Beginnings Nursery and Day Care, children will be taught the expectations for correct behaviour and encouraged to live and act accordingly.

Annexure A: SOLID BEGINNINGS CHILDREN DISCIPLINE STAFF PLEDGE

Adopted from the Department of Education online ECD registration Drive (April 2026 version.

I, _____ ID/Passport number _____ employed as _____at Solid Beginnings Nursery and Day Care, have read and understood the Discipline Policy of Solid Beginnings Nursery and Day Care.

I Pledge to support the children by:

- ✓ Using positive guidance, distraction, and redirection to help manage children's behaviour.
- ✓ Set reasonable rules for children's behaviour, tell them about the rules and ensure that the rules are applied consistently.
- ✓ Seeing potential problems before they happen and preventing them from taking place (e.g. too few toys).
- ✓ Helping children to understand the consequences of bad behaviour and when it is important to say sorry.
- ✓ Be an example of behaviour that children sometimes find hard such as patience and sharing.
- ✓ Raising any concerns about a child's development or behaviour with the caregiver or parent in a private conversation.
- ✓ Always implement this policy diligently.

NB- Behaviour such as biting, hitting, kicking, pinching, and pushing is quite common among young children. For children at our programme to remain safe and enjoy their environment we will deal with this kind of behaviour firmly and promptly, using the methods described above, and encouraging them to speak to an adult when they feel frustrated.

I commit to never:

- ✓ physically hit, smack, slap, kick or pinch a child
- ✓ threaten to physically punish a child
- ✓ use rude and unkind language towards a child

NB- The safety of all children is a priority for us. We reserve the right to ask parents to remove their child from the programme if the child continues to behave aggressively and poses a risk to other children.

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Annexure B: Parent Acknowledgement of the Children Discipline Policy

I, _____ (the parent/guardian of_____ [Child's Full Name], have read and understood the Discipline Policy of Solid Beginnings Nursery and Day Care

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Annexure C: The Discipline Report Annexure: Child's Information

Child's Name and Surname: _____,

Date of Birth: _____ **Age:** _____ years

Incident Date: _____

The "ABC" of the Incident:

Antecedent: What happened just before the behaviour? *(e.g., a toy was taken away).*

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

The Child's Behaviour and Action leading to the displayed discipline challenge**:** *A factual description of the action (e.g., "Child pushed a peer").*

_____

_____

_____

_____

Consequence: What did the teacher do? *(e.g., redirection, 5-minute time-out, or loss of a privilege).*

_____

_____

_____

Parental Notification:

Parents were notified on (Date) _____

Parents Name & Surname_____ ID Number _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

I Teacher/Principal (Name & Surname) _____ confirm the occurrence of the event further verify that parents have been notified of the discipline challenge and the corrective action has been taken.

Teacher/ Principal's Signature: _____ **Date**: _____