

CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY

Related Quality Area	QA1: Governance and Leadership QA4: Staffing Arrangements QA6: Collaborative Partnerships with families and communities
Related Policies	Grievance Policy (Staff) Grievance Policy (Families) Social Media Policy Privacy and Confidentiality Policy Interactions with Children, Families and Staff Policy Respect for Children Policy

PURPOSE

We believe in maintaining an inclusive and welcoming environment and workplace that motivates and facilitates personal growth and development for staff and educators. The values that underpin our work ethic include equality, respect, integrity, and responsibility. We aim to establish a common understanding of workplace standards and ethics expected of all employees and families of the Centre. We aim to ensure positive working relationships are formed between all educators, management and families, promoting dignity and respect by avoiding behaviour which is or may be perceived as harassing, bullying or intimidating. Educators, management and parents will at all times conduct themselves in an ethical manner and strive to ensure that all interactions are positive and respectful and are in accordance with the Centre's philosophy.

SCOPE

The following people are expected to behave in a respectful manner and comply with this code of conduct:

- Committee, management, educators and other staff members
- parents/guardians of children enrolled
- all others involved with our centre (visitors, professionals, students, volunteers)

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR APPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR

Be Respectful

We will

- be respectful of ourselves and other people.
- be respectful of the ideas and feelings of others.
- be respectful of the environment, equipment and materials.
- We will work together towards promoting mutual respect and understanding.

Be Safe

We

- will work and play safely to help keep ourselves and others from getting hurt.
- have the right to privacy, confidentiality and respect.
- understand that management, educators and families do not have to tolerate verbal abuse or accusations at any time.

Be Cooperative

We

- will solve our problems by talking and listening to each other respectfully to find a solution.
- Will ask for help when we cannot solve a problem ourselves

- have an obligation to form good relationships with the staff caring for their child / children.
- Commit to developing a good relationship with parents/staff, and recognise this adds to the quality of care for all children in the centre.

UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOURS

The following behaviours by children, staff, parents/guardians and others involved in our centre are unacceptable at all times:

- all forms of bullying (physical, verbal, emotional, social or cyber bullying), including comments, actions or visual displays that are intentional, hurtful and repetitive
- harassment, including behaviour that degrades, demeans, humiliates or embarrasses someone that a reasonable person would know is unwelcome
- all forms of abuse (sexual, physical or psychological), including verbally, in writing or otherwise
- discrimination against any person or group because of their race, colour, ancestry, nationality or place of origin, ethnic background, religion, age, sex, gender-determined characteristics, sexual orientation, marital and family status, source of income, political belief and physical or mental disability
- actions that put another person at risk of harm, including violent physical acts (with or without a weapon) and threatening someone

Proactive Strategies

We actively strive to create an environment that supports the health, safety and well-being of the children by:

- having realistic and developmentally appropriate expectations for behaviour
- setting up the environment and materials to encourage appropriate behaviour and reduce potential for inappropriate behaviour
- planning a program based on children's interests and developmental needs
- establishing consistent yet flexible schedules and routines that help children gain trust, security and self-control

We create a positive environment for children, parents/guardians, staff and others involved in our centre by:

- developing positive relationships, including making time to talk and listen
- establishing clear, consistent, simple limits
- stating limits in a positive way and periodically reminding people
- providing explanations for limits
- working together to solve problems
- modelling and encouraging appropriate behaviour

Consequences for Inappropriate Behaviour

We will consistently respond to inappropriate behaviour by children, parents/guardians, staff and others involved in our centre by:

- reminding people of expectations and limits (based on the developmental level of the child);
- using a respectful approach to explain why a behaviour is inappropriate and what behaviour is expected;
- talking only about the behaviour, not labelling the person;
- responding sympathetically and acknowledging feelings; and
- establishing natural, logical consequences.

Depending on the severity of the behaviour, additional steps may be taken such as:

- suspending or dismissing a staff member;
- suspending or withdrawing a child from the Centre because of a child's or family member's inappropriate behaviour;
- if the behaviour is from a visitor, not allowing that person to return to the centre; and
- contacting the police and/or Territory Families, if the behaviour is illegal such as abuse, assault or threatening another person.

EXPECTATIONS OF FAMILIES

Families and visitors will:

- Treat all children at the Centre equally and respectfully;
- Report any suspicious behaviour to the Nominated Supervisor or Approved Provider and encourage and actively support a safe and supportive Centre environment.
- Respect the rights, dignity and worth of every person, regardless of their abilities, gender, religion or cultural background.
- Refrain from bullying, harassing or discriminating against any child or adult at the Centre.
- Respect the decisions of educators and staff members and teach children (if adults) to do likewise.
- Tell an Educator (if a child) or the Approved Provider or Nominated Supervisor if witness to any instances of bullying, harassment or discrimination at the Centre.
- Speak to an Educator (if a child) or the Approved Provider or Nominated Supervisor if worried, concerned, or have a grievance about something.

Families, visitors will not:

- Drink alcohol or use illicit substances while on the Centre's premises or come to the Centre under their influence.
- Smoke on the centre's premises including in the car park.
- Remove a child from the premises without advising a staff member.

EXPECTATIONS OF EMPLOYEES

Employees will:

- Ensure their work is carried out proficiently, harmoniously, and effectively. They will act in a professional and respectful manner at all times whilst at work, giving their full attention to their responsibilities and adhering to all Centre policies, procedures, laws, regulations, and National Quality Standard.
- Act honestly and exercise attentiveness in all Centre operations. They will carry out all lawful directions, retaining the right to question any direction which they consider to be unethical. If uncertain they can seek advice from the Nominated Supervisor, Approved Provider or the relevant regulatory authority.
- Have a solid understanding of the Centre's policies and procedures; if uncertain about the content of any policy or procedure with which they must comply employees should seek clarification from the Nominated Supervisor or Approved Provider.
- Be courteous and responsive when dealing with colleagues, students, visitors, children and families.
- Work collaboratively with colleagues.
- Be mindful of their duty of care towards themselves and others.
- Be positive role models for children at all times.

- Respect the rights of all children and families
- Share the work load equitably with team members.
- Respect the confidential nature of information gained about each child participating in the program.

EXPECTATIONS OF MANAGEMENT

In addition to the above responsibilities, leaders and management are expected to:

- Promote a collaborative and interconnected workplace by developing a positive working environment where all employees can contribute to the ongoing continuous improvement of the Centre.
- Promote leadership by working with employees and providing opportunities for professional development and growth.
- Provide ongoing support and feedback to employees.
- Keep employees informed about essential information and changes and make documents readily accessible to them.
- Model professional behaviour at all times whilst at the Centre.
- Implement supportive and effective communication systems, consulting employees in appropriate decision making.
- Take appropriate action if a breach of the code of conduct occurs.
- Share skills and knowledge with employees.
- Give encouragement and constructive feedback to employees, respecting the value of different professional approaches.
- Implement effective communication and consultation procedures with educators and staff members about workplace issues.
- Ensure visitors are only allowed entry to the Centre if they can be adequately identified. Tradespeople, business representatives and early intervention specialists or professionals, or support workers provided by early childhood agencies, must carry appropriate identification. Family members and family friends who, for example, attend Centre events or assist with learning activities may be identified by the parents of children at the Centre.

DUTY OF CARE

- Management and employees have a responsibility to take reasonable care for the health and safety of themselves and others at the workplace to enable compliance with the work health and safety legislation.
- Duty of Care relates to both physical and psychological wellbeing of individuals.
- Management and employees must take reasonable care for the safety and welfare of children and young people in their care. This includes taking all reasonable action to protect children and young people from risk of harm that can be reasonably predicted.

Communication Procedures

- To allow effective communication and consultation to take place with educators/staff the Approved Provider / Nominated Supervisor will use various methods of communication including:
 - direct conversations.
 - phone communication including SMS messaging if appropriate.
 - educator meetings
 - other forms of written communication e.g. StoryPark, letters, notices, emails.
 - educator appraisals and reviews.

- Parents with major concerns about the quality of service provided at this Centre should follow the *Grievance Policy (Families)*.
- In regard to the decision-making process:
 - if a decision cannot be reached about an issue the Nominated Supervisor and/or Management will make an informed decision
 - all decisions made will be made on a trial basis and their effectiveness will be discussed at the next meeting.
 - minutes will be taken at all meetings.

Reporting a breach in the code of conduct

- All employees are required by law to undergo a Working with Children Check, which is verified by the employer.
- If employees become aware of a serious crime committed by another employee, parent/s, carer/s they are required to report it to management.
- All employees must report possible risk of harm to children or young persons to management.
- Employees will report any concerns they may have about inappropriate actions of any other employee, parent/s, carer/s and families that involves children or young people to management.
- Management will raise any breach of the conduct with families, carer/s and address it appropriately.
-

Managing conflict in the workplace

- Management will remain objective and impartial when managing conflict in the workplace.
- Management have a responsibility to address a possible breach of the code of conduct by any parent/s, carer/s, families and employee as soon as they aware of the breach.
- Allegations will be investigated and can result in remedial action, or disciplinary action ranging from a caution to dismissal.
- Management will consider all relevant facts and make decisions or take actions fairly, ethically, consistently, and with transparency. If they are uncertain about the appropriateness of a decision or action they will consider:
 - whether the decision or conduct is lawful,
 - whether the decision or conduct is consistent with Centre policies and objectives,
 - whether there will be an actual, potential, or perceived conflict of interest involving obligations that could influence the business relationship or conflict with business duties.
- If an educator feels stressed in any way they should:
 - approach the Nominated Supervisor and talk together to see if the situation can be remedied in any way.
 - approach their team leader, the Approved Provider, or if relevant a Union official if the educator feels unable to approach the Nominated Supervisor.
 - accept opportunities to have stress alleviated (including counselling if recommended).

Adhering to confidentiality

- Unless authorised to do so by legislation, employees must not disclose or use any confidential information without appropriate approval.
- All employees are to ensure that confidential information is not accessed by unauthorised people.
- Employees will adhere to the Centre's *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy*.

Social media - Facebook

- The Centre offers its current families and staff members a Facebook page as a communication tool. The administrator of the account is the Centre's Nominated Supervisor.
- The Administrator controls the content on the page and ensures that the postings are relevant and respectful of the Centre, the children, the staff, families, and greater community.
- Staff members that have a personal Facebook account are not permitted to post any negative comments relating to the Centre, children, colleagues, or families. If they choose to 'like' the Centre's page they have a responsibility to ensure that their profile picture is an appropriate representation of an early childhood Educator. If it is not, we request that they do not 'like' the page.
- Staff members are to use their own personal discretion when adding a family of the Centre as a 'friend' on Facebook. The Centre does not recommend staff to add families of the Centre as they will be seen still as a representative of the Centre and held to the Centre's Code of Conduct on all posts on their private 'wall' if families have access.
- Families are asked in our Social Media policy to respect that staff may have a personal policy on adding families due to their professional philosophy and that the Centre does not recommend staff to have families as friends on their private account.
- Staff members are not permitted to request the 'friendship' of families from the Centre.
- The Centre offers its current family members Storypark. This is another great tool for communication and for the centre to post notifications to Families.
- Educators in the rooms can use story park to communicate with families and post photos and stories of the children to particular families. It is expected that educators use Storypark to communicate positively and respectfully about children and families.

Use of alcohol, drugs, and tobacco

- Smoking is NOT permitted in or on surrounding areas of the Centre.
- It is expected that the odour of cigarette smoke will not be detected on an employee's clothing. If an employee is found smoking on the premises, that employee may be terminated.
- Our Centre is bound by the Education and Care National Regulations. As such, alcohol, drugs, or other substance abuse by employees can have serious adverse effects on their own health and the safety of others. As such, all employees must not:
 - Consume alcohol nor be under the influence of alcohol while working,
 - use or possess illegal drugs at any workplace,
 - drive a vehicle, having consumed alcohol or suffering from the effects of illegal substances, or
 - bring alcohol or any illegal drugs onto the premises.
- If a co-worker suspects a colleague, parent/s, carer/s or family member to be affected by drugs or alcohol, they must inform the Nominated Supervisor immediately. No employee will be allowed to work under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- Employees undergoing prescribed medical treatment with a controlled substance that may affect the safe performance of their duties are required to report this to the Nominated Supervisor.
- All issues pertaining to these matters shall be kept strictly confidential. A breach of this policy may initiate appropriate action including the termination of employment.

REVIEW

POLICY REVIEWED	OCTOBER 2021	NEXT REVIEW DATE	OCTOBER 2023
MODIFICATIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No Modifications		
POLICY REVIEWED	October 2023	NEXT REVIEW DATE	October 2025
MODIFICATIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Policy reviewed as per review cycle• Sources checked for currency		