

POLICY/PROCEDURE NAME & REVIEW PROCESS	CODE of CONDUCT POLICY -VICTORIA This policy has been created to provide our stakeholders with clear guidelines and transparency to our practices and procedures. We welcome feedback and input from all our stakeholders at any time and this policy is subject to review based on feedback or due date of annual review.
NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD	QUALITY AREA 4- STAFFING ARRANGEMENTS 4.2 Professionalism management 4.2.1 Professional collaboration 4.2.2 Professional standards
NATIONAL LAW AND REGULATIONS	84- Awareness of child protection law 155- Interactions with children 156- Relationships in groups 168-Education and care service must have policies and procedure 170-Policies and procedures to be followed 171-Policies and procedures to be kept available 172- Notification of change to policies or procedures
RELATED POLICIES and RECORDS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Code of conduct declaration record Code of conduct policy Child protection policy Position description
SCOPE OF POLICY	This policy applies to all children, educators, families, management, students, volunteers, and visitors at our service.
AIM OF POLICY	To ensure that our service has strong guidelines, procedures, and practices in place regarding staff code of conduct and to assure all stakeholders that we are committed to monitoring practices to ensure the safety, wellbeing and protection of all children who attend our service. Our aim is to encourage a culture where the prevention and reporting of abuse is supported. We will encourage all staff and volunteers to be responsible for promoting the safety, wellbeing, and empowerment of children.
SERVICE IMPLEMENTATION	This Code of Conduct Policy aims to ensure that all staff in the service uphold the highest standards of ethical behaviour, foster inclusivity, and align with Victoria's Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy criteria. It outlines our zero-tolerance approach to racism and discriminatory behaviour. Key Principles <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Zero tolerance for racism, harassment, and any form of discriminatory behaviour. Respect for cultural, linguistic, and individual diversity. Adherence to Victoria's Child Safe Standards. Staff expectations All staff, volunteers, contractors, and visitors must: adhere to the following guidelines: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Treat children, families, and colleagues with respect and dignity at all times. Promote a culture of inclusivity and equity. Listen to and empower children to express their views and concerns. Act as positive role models in their interactions. Report any instances of racism, discrimination, or unsafe practices immediately to approved provider/ nominated supervisor. Unacceptable Behaviour All staff will ensure that they are not engaging or are complicit in any of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engaging in or tolerating racist, discriminatory, or harassing behaviour. Ignoring a child's concerns or failing to report allegations of abuse. Using language or behaviour that demeans or marginalises others. Violating confidentiality without a legal obligation to disclose information. Reporting and Accountability <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All individuals are responsible for upholding this Code of Conduct. Concerns must be reported to the designated approved provider/nominated supervisor /child safety officer or relevant authority. Breaches of this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment or involvement.

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Risk Management

Our management and staff will proactively identify and mitigate risks to child safety through the following practices:

- Conduct regular risk assessments of physical and online environments.
- Supervise children at all times.
- Implement safety measures for excursions and other activities.
- Use secure digital platforms for communication and documentation.

Continuous Improvement

We are committed to continuously improving all our practices by:

- Regularly reviewing and updating this policy.
- Seeking feedback from children, families, and staff.
- Ensuring that we upskill staff when skill development is evident.

When recruiting employees

We will follow the procedures outlined in the **staff recruitment policy**. To ensure safety of all children in our service and that employees are suitable candidates for employment. We will: Ensure all employee positions are advertised on the service preferred platform such as seek. Criteria and position requirements should be specific and clear when placing an advert online and could include but not limited to the following:

- Role description.
- Requirements to perform role.
- Qualifications required.
- Experience and skills required.
- Terms and conditions of the role.
- Non-negotiable requirements for the position such as WWCC, National Police Check, Child protection, first aid qualifications.
- Information pertaining to the service philosophy and service expectations.
- Salary.

Shortlist candidates- reading over resumes may be sufficient to shortlist candidates and often another person such as approved provider or 2IC can also read over to confirm the shortlist.

- Once a shortlist is confirmed a phone interview should be completed and may at times further shortlist the candidates.
- Nominated supervisor or approved provider should be responsible for “screening” candidates via phone and should have a set of questions available to conduct the phone interviews.
- The answers of the candidate should be recorded(written) and kept on staff file.

Interviews – Once candidates are shortlisted interviews face to face will be conducted if possible.

- In some cases, an interview can occur over a Zoom meeting or another preferred online platform, if candidate is unable to attend at the service. However, a face to face will need to follow prior to employment.
- Nominated supervisor or /and approved provider or second in charge will conduct interview. At least 2 management staff – one to interview and one to write candidates responses.
- A list of questions will be asked of each candidate and in order to be fair the same questions will be asked of each candidate.
- We will discuss Child Protection and Child Safe Standards with each candidate to gauge if they have any understanding prior to employment.

Decision Making- At the conclusion of the interview process, the nominated supervisor and or approved provider will discuss the interviews and candidates and decide on the strongest candidate for the role.

- As part of the selection process, nominated supervisor/ approved provider will follow up on at least three professional reference checks.
- Candidates should supply as their referees the following, at least one senior manager reference as current as is possible and not any more than a few years old. Co-workers as references should be a minimum choice and no more than one and a personal reference would be suitable providing the referee is in business and is not a family member.
- A series of questions will be asked of referees, and their feedback will be recorded(written) to be later placed on candidate file.

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- All potential staff are subject to verification or proof of a valid Working with Children Card (WWCC) and National Police Check if applicable.
- Further appropriate documentation will be supplied by the candidate such as qualification documents or proof of enrolment in an approved childcare course, valid first aid, CPR, asthma and anaphylaxis qualification, immunisation status, police check, and food safety qualification dependent on the position the candidate will be performing.
- Nominated supervisor will contact successful candidate, confirm start date, advise of paperwork that will be sent via email or organise for candidate to attend service to sign all documents. Documents will include contract, position description, super choice form, fair work statement, service philosophy.

Each member of the team plays an important role in the implementation of each policies guidelines, and they are outlined as below but not limited to the following:

The Approved Provider

- Will ensure that obligations under the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations are met.
- Will ensure they take reasonable steps to ensure that the nominated supervisor, educators, staff, and volunteers follow the policy and procedures.
- Will ensure they provide the nominated supervisor, educators, staff and volunteers the documentation to perform their role, follow policy, procedure, and document according to regulatory and service requirements.
- Will ensure that adequate induction process is provided to all staff to ensure they have time to read and understand policies and procedures and seek further information if unsure.
- Will ensure that the nominated supervisor and staff are equipped with ongoing professional development and training they require to comply with this policy.
- Will encourage feedback from stakeholders regarding the policy's effectiveness, particularly in relation to identifying and responding to child safety concerns.
- Will ensure the policy is kept up to date with current legislation, research, and best practice.

The Nominated Supervisor

- Will adhere to and implement the obligations under the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations.
- Will ensure they take reasonable steps to ensure that the educators, staff, and volunteers follow the policy and procedures.
- Will ensure they provide the educators, staff and volunteers the documentation to perform their role, follow policy and procedure and ensure they are checking the documentation according to regulatory and service requirements.
- Will ensure that a rigorous recruitment process is completed, and a thorough induction process is provided to all staff to ensure they have time to read and understand policies and procedures and seek further information if unsure.
- Will ensure that the staff are supported with ongoing professional development and training they require to comply with this policy.
- Will encourage feedback from stakeholders and staff regarding the policy's effectiveness, particularly in relation to identifying and responding to child safety concerns.
- Will ensure the policy is kept up to date with current legislation, research, and best practice.
- Will conduct regular staff meetings to address policy compliance with legislation, policy implementation, changes to policy and or collect feedback for annual review of policy.

Educators

- Will adhere to and implement the obligations under the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations.
- Will ensure they take reasonable steps to follow the service policy and procedures and seek advice or further support if unsure.
- Will ensure they complete and document any related records regarding the implementation of this policy and practice requirements of the service.
- Will attend any ongoing professional development, staff meetings and training they require to comply with this policy and practice requirements of the service.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will provide feedback to the nominated supervisor or approved provider regarding the policy's effectiveness, particularly in relation to identifying and responding to child safety concerns. Will provide feedback regarding policy review when required. Will be aware that any breach of the policy or breach of code of conduct declaration record may result in disciplinary action that may result in termination of their role at the service.
In the event of a breach of this policy or code of conduct declaration record.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All management, staff and volunteers have a legal obligation to report a breach of this policy and the code of conduct declaration record that at any stage places the safety of a child in question. Any witness to a breach of the code of conduct declaration record must immediately inform the nominated supervisor, responsible person, or approved provider. From July 2021 it is a criminal offence to fail to report child abuse. Staff working in a child-related sector will commit an offence if they know another adult working there poses a serious risk of abusing a child, and they have the power to reduce or remove the risk, and they negligently fail to do so (Crimes Act 1900). All adults are required to report information to police if they know, believe or reasonably ought to know that a child has been abused (Crimes Act 1900). It is important that privacy and confidentiality of the child and staff member is maintained at all times and this information is not discussed with any other staff or family of the child until investigation is completed. Nominated supervisor responsible person and or approved provider must conduct a full investigation, take statements, complete child protection process relevant to each state, may need to report to the police, record on the NQAITS portal all dependant on the outcome and the seriousness of the breach and state specific requirements.
REGULATION IMPLEMENTATION	The following regulations and procedures outline and support all stakeholders to understand and implement the regulatory guidelines of this policy.
In regard to regulation 84 – awareness of child protection.	<p>Approved Provider will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that nominated supervisor and all educators, staff and volunteers at the service are aware of the current child protection law in the provider's jurisdiction and understand their obligations under that law. Ensure that nominated supervisor and all educators, staff and volunteers are aware that it is an offence under the National Law to subject a child being educated and cared for by an approved service to any form of corporal punishment, or any discipline that is unreasonable in the circumstances. Be committed to ensuring that nominated supervisor, staff and volunteers follow all state and territory government procedures to protect children within the service. Ensure that nominated supervisor, staff and volunteers are aware of their commitment to child protection, their mandatory obligation and ensure there are clear procedures in place for reporting suspected child abuse as per the child protection policy. Ensure nominated supervisor, staff and volunteers keep up to date and comply with any relevant changes in legislation and practices in relation to this policy. Ensure practices are in place to ensure that all educators, staff, volunteers, and students to hold a current Working with Children Check prior to commencement of employment and it is checked according to state regulations. Ensure the Nominated supervisor updates their child protection obligation for the role annually. Ensure that volunteers/students, parents/guardians, and other visitors to the service are not left alone with individual children or groups of children. Ensure when the service has been notified of a court order prohibiting an adult from contacting an enrolled child, such contact does not occur while the child is on the service premises. Ensure nominated supervisor, educators, staff, volunteers, and students undertake appropriate training and education on child protection, including recognising the signs and symptoms of child abuse know how to respond, and understand processes for reporting and managing concerns/incidents. Ensure the nominated supervisor understands their obligation of reporting any suspected harm or abuse of a child to the regulatory authority.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure all staff and volunteers have been given a position description that supports and further outlines expectations at the service, copy must be read and signed and placed on staff file as well as a copy given to staff member. Ensure all educators and staff have undertaken current child protection legislation training, including mandatory reporting requirements and obligations in their state/territory. If not, develop a plan to ensure training is undertaken in a suitable timeframe and updated annually. Ensure that all staff and volunteers have a signed copy of the code of conduct declaration record on their file and a copy of the code of ethics that it is read and signed as part of the induction process. Ensure that all staff understand the seriousness of the declaration and their commitment to it. Ensure that all staff are given a copy of the code of ethics and united convention on the rights of the child as well as the service philosophy for their reference.
In regard to regulation 155- interactions with children and regulation 156 – relationships in groups.	<p>Approved Provider will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that by providing guidelines through the code of conduct policy and the code of conduct declaration record all staff provide an environment that encourages children to be free to express their opinions through active listening and open-ended questions when engaging with children. Ensure staff engage in experiences that build self-esteem through gentle encouragement and guidance. Staff will encourage children to become self-sufficient through teaching skills and offering assistance to achieve skills when asked. Ensure staff encourage positive behaviour through guidance and focussing on the behaviour and not the child. They will show patience and support at all times. Ensure that staff feel confident to seek support from nominated supervisor when faced with adverse behaviour that they feel is out of their control and is placing children and staff in an unsafe situation. Ensure that all children are treated with respect at all times and ensure that staff are taking into account the abilities of each child based on their age, their family background, their culture, the child's limitations regarding physical and intellectual development. They will treat all children equally and ensure their dignity and rights always. Ensure that staff are providing opportunities for all children to interact with other children from different age groups and develop relationships with staff members from other rooms. Ensure that at all times mixed age groups are not overwhelming to the children or placing undue stress on staff.
In regard to regulation 168- Education and care service must have policies and procedures.	<p>Approved Provider will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that obligations under the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations are met. Ensure they take reasonable steps to ensure that the policy and procedures are current, reviewed regularly, and communicated to educators, staff, and stakeholders. Take reasonable steps to inform and support educators and staff regarding their responsibilities in implementing the policy and procedures at all times. Take reasonable steps to ensure that nominated supervisor, educators, staff, and volunteers follow the policy and procedures. Ensure copies of the policy and procedures are readily accessible to nominated supervisor, educators, staff, stakeholders, and volunteers and are available for inspection. Notify families at least 14 days before changing the policy or procedures if the changes will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Affect the fees charged or the way they are collected or Significantly impact the service's education and care of children or Significantly impact the family's ability to utilise the service. Ensure policies and procedures regarding regulatory requirements are in place at the service. Ensure that a suitable nominated supervisor is in place and will monitor practices relating to all policies in the service. Ensure policies and procedures are reviewed at least annually and changes are made if required prior to this review. Ensure all stakeholders are involved in the review. Ensure the service is conducive to a child safe environment and guidelines set out in the policy and procedure are clearly outlined.

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In regard to regulation 170- Policies and procedures to be followed.	Approved Provider will <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that all staff and volunteers are made aware of Regulatory policies and procedures by ensuring that this forms a part of the induction process. Ensure probationary reviews will be conducted once new staff are appointed at the 3- month and 6-month mark to ensure that they are following policy and procedure and to review and revise regulatory policies. Ensure staff meetings will be conducted on a regular basis to allow for review of policy and procedure and further training and revision of procedural practices in relation to policy and procedure. Ensure annual review and revision of policies and procedures will be conducted, and all educators will be given the opportunity for input.
In regard to Regulation 171- Policies and procedures to be kept available.	Approved Provider will <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that policies and procedures are available to all staff and the location and availability will form a part of the induction process. Ensure policies will be available on request for all staff members to have access when required. Ensure policies will be available when required for staff members to download copies and/or print out if required in order to complete assignments or to form part of their research and/ or update their knowledge. Ensure policies will be available for all stakeholders when requested and when updating.
In regard to Regulation 172- Notification of change to policies or procedures	Approved Provider will <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure staff meetings will be conducted on a regular basis to allow for review of policy and procedure, provide further training and allow for input if required in relation to policy and procedure. Ensure stakeholders will be invited to provide feedback for policies and procedures at any time, not just on annual review but will also be invited to add feedback at review time or after an event that may require change to policy or procedure. Ensure policies and procedures will be emailed or put on display in the foyer for stakeholders to have the ability to provide feedback. Ensure feedback will be considered from stakeholders and educators and may result in a change in policy. Ensure policy and procedure may be changed at any time if there has been an incident in the service that has required a change to be implemented for the safety and health of children and or educators. Ensure in the event of a change to a policy after feedback or a situation that occurs, we will provide 14 days' notice to all stakeholders before the change takes effect.
CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT	<p>We are dedicated to the ongoing improvement of our practices and procedures through the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conducting regular reviews and updates of this policy with all stakeholders. Actively seeking feedback from children, families, and staff members. Providing targeted skill development and training for staff when areas for improvement are identified or when gaps in policy and procedure implementation are observed.
KEY TERMS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ACECQA – Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority- The independent national authority that works with all regulatory authorities to administer the National Quality Framework, including the provision of guidance, resources, and services to support the sector and services to improve outcomes for children. Code of Conduct-combined with a code of ethics, the code of conduct helps guide interactions between management, educators, and staff, as well as informing the service decision-making processes relating to professional standards. ACECQA Stakeholder - a person or group of people who have an interest in a business, a person such as an employee or customer. They have a sense of responsibility toward it and an interest in its success.
WE GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGE THE FOLLOWING SOURCES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Australian Children’s Education & Care Quality Authority. ACECQA Child and youth risk management strategy toolkit Child safe – Australian Human Rights.gov.au Child Safe Code of Conduct Code of Ethics

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- Child Safe Standards
- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)
- CCYP | Standard 1: Organisations establish a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children and young people are respected and valued.
- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010.
- Education and Care Services National Regulations.
- Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations.
- Guide to the National Quality Framework.
- National Quality Standard.
- United Convention on the Rights of the Child

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