

# Code of Conduct Policy

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.

## NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD (NQS)

QUALITY AREA 4: STAFFING ARRANGEMENTS		
4.1	Staffing arrangements	Staffing arrangements enhance children's learning and development.
4.1.2	Continuity of staff	Every effort is made for children to experience continuity of educators at the service.
4.2	Professionalism	Management, educators and staff are collaborative, respectful and ethical.
4.2.1	Professional collaboration	Management, educators and staff work with mutual respect and collaboratively, and challenge and learn from each other, recognising each other's strengths and skills.
4.2.2	Professional Standards	Professional standards guide practice, interactions and relationships.

QUALITY AREA 7: GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP		
7.1.1	Service philosophy and purpose	A statement of philosophy guides all aspects of the service's operations.
7.1.3	Roles and responsibilities	Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined, and understood, and support effective decision-making and operation of the service.

EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL REGULATIONS	
168	Education and care services must have policies and procedures

**RELATED POLICIES**

Privacy and Security Policy Interactions with Children, Family and Staff Policy In-Service and Staff Development Policy Grievance Policy (staff)	Child Protection Policy Record Keeping and Retention Policy Respect for Children Policy Responsible Person Policy
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**PURPOSE**

We aim to establish a common understanding of work place standards and ethics expected of all employees of the Service. We aim to ensure positive working relationships are formed between all educators and management, promoting dignity and respect by avoiding behaviour which is or may be perceived as harassing, bullying or intimidating. Educators and management 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 Service’s philosophy.

**SCOPE**

This policy applies to staff, management and visitors.

**IMPLEMENTATION**

The Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, Educators and Staff, Volunteers, and Students will adhere to the Early Childhood Australian Code of Ethics, National Regulations and Quality Standard, and Service policies and procedures at all times, promoting positive interactions both within the Service and the local community.

**Empowerment of Children:**

All personnel of Our Learning Steps Childcare and Kindergarten are responsible for supporting the safety, participation, wellbeing and empowerment of children by:

- Adhering to Our Learning Steps Childcare and Kindergarten’s child safe environment policy at all times / upholding Our Learning Steps Childcare and Kindergarten’s statement of commitment to child safety at all times
- Taking all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse. The service has a zero tolerance of abuse
- Treating everyone with respect

- Listening and responding to the views and concerns of children, particularly if they are telling you that they or another child has been abused and/or are worried about their safety or the safety of another. Valuing their ideas and opinions
- Promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children (for example, by never questioning an Aboriginal child's self-identification)
- Promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds (for example, by having a zero tolerance of discrimination)
- Promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of children with a disability (for example, during personal care activities)
- Ensuring as far as practicable that adults are not left alone with a child
- Reporting any allegations of abuse to Our Learning Steps Childcare and Kindergarten's Child Safety Officer (Lisa O'Connell – Nominated Supervisor) / leadership, and ensure any allegation to reported to the police or child protection
- If an allegation of child abuse is made, ensure as quickly as possible that the child(ren) are safe
- Encouraging children to 'have a say' and participate in all relevant organisational activities where possible, especially on issues that are important to them
- Interacting with children in an age appropriate and respectful way
- Interacting with all children in a positive way

**Staff, Students and Volunteers must not:**

- Develop any 'special' relationships with children that could be seen as favouritism (for example, the offering of gifts or special treatment for specific children)
- Exhibit behaviours with children which may be constructed as unnecessarily physical (for example inappropriate sitting on laps. Sitting on laps could be appropriate sometime, for example while reading a storybook to a small child in an open plan area)
- Put children at risk of abuse (for example, by locking doors)
- Do things of a personal nature that a child can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes
- Engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children (for example, personal social activities)
- Use inappropriate language in the presence of children
- Express personal views on culture, race or sexuality in the presence of children
- Discriminate against any child, including because of their culture, race, ethnicity or disability

- Have contact with a child or their family outside of our organisation without our child safety officer's knowledge and/or consent (for example, no babysitting). Accidental contact, such as seeing people in the street is appropriate
- Have any online contact with a child or their family (unless necessary, for example providing families with e-newsletters which will only be emailed out by Approved Provider or Nominated Supervisor)
- Have unauthorised contact with children and/or young people by phone or online
- Ignore or disregard any concerns, suspected or disclosed child abuse a child or adult may have
- Seek to use children in any way to meet the needs of adults
- Engage in inappropriate games with children. E.g. rough and tumble games
- Have unnecessary physical contact with children
- Use inappropriate tone of voice with the children e.g. yell at the children in an aggressive manner

### Respect for People and the Service:

- Employees and Management are committed to the Service philosophy and values, inclusive of best practice in early childhood education and building positive partnership with children, families and staff.
- Effective, open, and respectful reciprocal communication and feedback between employees, children, families, and management is conveyed.
- It is important to treat colleagues, children, and families with respect. Bullying or insulting behaviour, including verbal and non-verbal aggression, abusive, threatening, or derogatory language or intimidation towards other employees, children, visitors, or families is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.
- Employees are committed to valuing and promoting the safety, health, and wellbeing of employees, volunteers, children, and families.
- Employees are committed to an Equal Opportunity workplace and culture which values the knowledge, experience, and professionalism of all employees, team members, and managers, and the diverse heritage of our families and children.

### 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 Service policies, procedures, laws, regulations, and National Quality Standard.

- Act honestly and exercise attentiveness in all Service 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 Ombudsman.
- Have a solid understanding of the Service'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.
- Respect the confidential nature of information gained about each child participating in the program.

### Expectations of Leaders and 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 Service.
- 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 Service.
- 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.

### 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, 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 that involves children or young people to management.

### 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 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 Service 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.

### Adhering to service 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 Service's *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy*.

### Babysitting:

- We do not provide babysitting services outside normal operating hours.
- Employees will not undertake private babysitting arrangements with families who are enrolled at our Service.

### Record keeping:

- Employees and Management will maintain full, accurate, and honest records as required by national regulations.
- Managers have a responsibility to ensure that employees comply with their record keeping obligation outlined in the *Record Keeping and Retention Policy*.

### 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.

### Social media:

- Refer to Social Media Policy

### Use of alcohol, drugs, and tobacco

- Smoking is NOT permitted in or on surrounding areas of the Service.
- 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 Service supports the [Smoke Free Environment Act 2000](#). The company and its employees will follow all conditions outlined in this act.
- Our Service 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 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.

#### Dress code:

- All employees must adhere to our uniform/dress code supplied during induction including the display of their name badge whilst on shift.
- Enclosed shoes must be worn at all times (strictly no high heels, thongs, or wedges).
- Clothes must be suitable for free movement, active play, and messy play.
- No offensive logos or political statements are to be displayed on clothing.
- Jewellery – one (1) earring per ear (small studs).

#### Personal Hygiene

All employees are to adhere to the following standards:

- Long hair is to be clean and neatly tied back: Ensure hair does not hang in your eyes.
- Makeup is to be light and natural.
- Fingernails are to be clean and well groomed.
- Nail polish (if worn) cannot be chipped.
- Employees will follow appropriate oral hygiene practices.
- An appropriate deodorant/antiperspirant will be worn.
- Strong perfumes will not be worn as they may cause allergic reactions in children. .

#### Personal phone calls/mobile phones

- Employees are not authorised to use the Service's phones for personal reasons unless in the case of an emergency.
- No personal mobile phones are to be used or carried during working hours.
- No personal mail or deliveries should be directed to the Service unless prior approval has been granted by the Nominated Supervisor/management.
- Educators and staff are not to contact families or children of the Service for personal reasons.



### Service email

- Email is to be used only for company usage, not for private communications.
- Passwords and access privileges are strictly confidential and to be used only by the Educator issued with that access, or persons delegated to know and use that access in the normal course of operation.
- It is the responsibility of the authorised user to take fair and reasonable steps to ensure the passwords and other forms of access are held safe.
- Employees are to be aware that their Service email account may be accessed by Management at any time.

### Dismissal

All staff members are made fully aware that the following breaches of the Code of Conduct and role responsibilities may lead to termination of employment:

- Reporting to work under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- Refusal to complete required additional training.
- Possessing or selling drugs at the Service.
- Immoral, immature, or indecent conduct while at the Service.
- Inappropriate use of company equipment and/or resources.
- Refusing to work as reasonable directed.
- Possessing a dangerous weapon whilst at the Service.
- Bringing disrepute to the Service.
- Causing disruption or discontent in the relationship between a family and the Service.
- Disclosure of confidential information.
- Falsifying documentation.
- Associating with families without disclosing this information with management.
- Taking, abusing, defacing, or destroying company property.
- Interfering with work schedules.
- Falsification of reports, documents, or wages information.
- Failure to report for work without notice.
- Walking off the job.
- Failure to follow policies and procedures.
- Vulgarity or disrespectful conduct to families, management or colleagues.
- Making or publishing false, vicious, or malicious statements about any employee of the Service, or the Service itself.

- Failure to hand in lost property (this is regarded as stealing): Lost property is to be handed to the Nominated Supervisor.

**Disciplinary Action**

All staff members are made fully aware that continued abuse of the following may result in disciplinary action. These include, but are not limited to the following:

- Unauthorised absence.
- Consistent or ongoing late arrivals and/or unauthorised extended breaks.
- Having personal visitors whilst on shift.
- Continued personal phone calls.
- Carrying a personal mobile phone whilst on shift.
- Using a personal mobile phone or device to take photographs of the children.
- Unauthorised distribution of Service resources or materials.
- Consistent or ongoing poor work standard.
- Carelessness in the performance of duties.
- Consistent or ongoing low level of enthusiasm.
- Lack of personal cleanliness and hygiene.
- Failure to report health, fire, or safety hazards.

**CODE OF CONDUCT AGREEMENT**

I have read and understood the Services Code of Conduct and agree to abide by the provisions set out in the Code of Conduct at all times. Failure to do so may lead to disciplinary action or dismissal.			
NAME		SIGNATURE	
POSITION		DATE	

**JURISDICTION SPECIFICATIONS**

**VICTORIA (VIC)**

For Working with Children Check information, refer to the website:

- <http://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au/home/>

**Source**

*Anti-Discrimination Act*: See <https://raisingchildren.net.au/disability/disability-rights-the-law/law/anti-discrimination-laws-for-acts-for-specific-australian-states-and-territories>.

Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2014).

Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics. (2016).

*Fair Work Act 2009* (Cth).

Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations. (2017).

Guide to the National Quality Framework. (2018).

*Ombudsman Act 2001* (Cth).

*Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998* (Cth).

Revised National Quality Standard. (2018).

*Work Health and Safety Act 2011* (Cth).

*Workplace Relations Act 1996* (Cth).

**REVIEW**

POLICY REVIEWED	January 2019	NEXT REVIEW DATE	January 2020
MODIFICATIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Divided some lengthy points containing unrelated information into individual points.</li> <li>• Additional information added to points.</li> <li>• Rearranged the order of points for better flow</li> <li>• Points added (Highlighted).</li> <li>• Sources/references updated and alphabetised.</li> <li>• Minor formatting (LH margin for dot points changed in some sections) for consistency throughout policy.</li> </ul>		
POLICY REVIEWED	PREVIOUS MODIFICATIONS		NEXT REVIEW DATE

January 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Minor changes made to support operational delivery</li><li>• Related policy section added</li></ul>	January 2019
October 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Updated the references to comply with the revised National Quality Standard</li></ul>	January 2018
January 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Minor changes made</li></ul>	January 2018