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1. Objective

This policy provides a clear set of guidelines and procedures to:

- establish the expected standards of behaviour for parents, guardians and families
- create and maintain a Child Safe environment that reflects our Commitment to Child Safety
- articulate desirable and appropriate behaviour
- promote interactions at the service and online which are respectful, sensitive, tactful, non-judgmental, and considerate

2. Scope

This policy applies to parents, guardians and families of children attending programs at bestchance, including during offsite excursions and activities.

3. Context and Guiding Principles

bestchance:

- Respects the rights of the child and values diversity
- Values the contribution of Aboriginal children, children from a culturally and linguistically diverse background and children with a disability
- Has zero tolerance of discrimination
- Maintains a duty of care towards all children at the service
- Is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all staff and the members of our service's community
- Is committed to supporting staff to act cohesively and ethically as a team and provide an environment that is conducive to children's learning and development
- Provides a safe and secure environment for all at the service
- Provides an open, welcoming environment in which everyone's contribution is valued and respected
- Is committed to communicating openly and honestly
- Is committed to continually learning how to be inclusive and respectful of cultural needs
- Encourages relationships that are based on the principles of mutual respect, equity and fairness.
- Encourages both adults and children to identify and raise concerns through the appropriate channels to maintain a culture of reporting and pro-actively responding to concerns
- Encourages volunteers, students, parents/guardians and visitors to support and participate in the program and activities of the service

Relevant legislation sources codes of conduct establish standards of behaviour to be followed and define how individuals are expected to behave towards each other, towards the children in services, and towards individuals in the community.

The approved provider, nominated supervisor, early childhood teachers, educators and all other staff have a duty of care to the children attending the service and must ensure 'that every reasonable precaution is taken to protect children being educated and cared for by the service from harm and from any hazard likely to cause injury' (National Law: Section 167).

Employers also have a legal responsibility to provide, as far as is practicable, a safe workplace that is free from discrimination, bullying and harassment.

Child Safe Standards requires services to develop and review codes of conduct that establish clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children.

4. Accountability

The parent/guardian responsibilities are:

- Being accountable within the service for complying with this policy and responding in the expected manner when behavioural expectations are not adhered to
- Taking part in ensuring the environment encourages positive interactions, supports constructive feedback and holds one another accountable to this policy
- Respecting individual abilities, needs, cultural practices and beliefs in all interactions, both verbal and non-verbal, paying particular attention to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children with disability and children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- Zero tolerance of consuming or being under the influence of alcohol or be affected by drugs whilst at the service or when engaging with the service in other ways such as phone, text or email conversations (refer to E- Cigarettes, Tobacco, Alcohol and other Drugs Policy)
- Contacting police in an emergency situation where it is believed that there is an immediate risk, such as when violence has been threatened or perpetrated or where sexual abuse or grooming is suspected as outlined in the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Reporting and acting on any concerns or observed breaches of this policy
- Not using abusive language and/or behaving in an offensive or threatening manner
- Treating others in a courteous manner and with appropriate tone/volume of speech
- Not to condone or participate in illegal, unsafe, abusive or harmful behaviour towards children – this includes physical violence, sexual abuse, emotional or psychological abuse, grooming, neglect, or sexual misconduct
- Refraining from the use of hurtful or offensive behaviour and/or language with children, other families and staff members
- Not touching children in a way that is unnecessary or unsuitable and falls outside what is appropriate
- Persistent criticism and/or denigration of a child, other family or team member at the service will not be tolerated
- Ensuring that deliberate interference in preventing a child from forming friendships does not occur
- Verbally assaulting a child, other family or team member at the service or creating a climate of fear will not be tolerated
- Parents, guardians or family members are not to offer children and young people, alcohol, cigarettes or other drugs
- Not show children, young people or staff pornographic images or share details of sexual experiences
- Prohibited in use of sexual language or gestures in the presence of children
- Unauthorised contact with children and young people online, on social media or by phone is prohibited
- Taking photographs, screenshots or share images of children involved in activities at the service is prohibited
- Sharing photos of children at the service is prohibited

- Providing an environment that encourages positive interactions, supports constructive feedback and holds one another to the codes of conduct
- Signing the declaration upon enrolment to say that you have read this policy and will share this information with other family members etc. who may access the service if required
- Ensure that all responses and comments on Storypark are of a positive nature and are not abusive towards staff, children or other families at the service
- Harassment of any type will not be tolerated. Demeaning, derogatory or intimidating behaviour or towards another person will not be tolerated. Harassment includes racial taunts, taunts about sexual orientation or gender identity, sexual harassment including unwelcome physical, verbal or written behaviour of a sexual nature, repeated insulting remarks.
- Bullying towards any individual at a service as per the following definition will not be tolerated: Bullying: Repeated verbal, physical, social or psychological behaviour that is harmful and involves the misuse of power by an individual or group towards one or more persons. Bullying occurs when one or more people deliberately and repeatedly upset or hurt another person, damage their property, reputation or social acceptance.
- Understanding and accepting that serious breaches of this code will be deemed misconduct and may lead to disciplinary or legal action and being banned from attending the service and/or any service activity
- Adhering to the Code of Conduct at all times

The approved provider and persons with management or control are responsible for:

- Providing a safe environment for everyone attending the programs and activities of bestchance
- Providing a workplace that is free from unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and bullying where all persons attending are treated with dignity, courtesy and respect
- Ensuring that the children educated and cared for at bestchance are protected from harm and from any hazard likely to cause injury (National Law: Section 167)
- Developing a culture of accountability within the service by complying with this policy as well as the Child Safety and Wellbeing Code of Conduct which is in place for all staff, volunteers and contractors
- Responding when behavioural expectations are not adhered to
- Ensuring that parents/guardians of a child attending the service can enter the service premises at any time that the child is being educated and cared for (Regulation 157), except where this may pose a risk to the safety of children or staff, or conflict with any duty of care of the approved provider, nominated supervisor or early childhood teachers and educators under the National Law: Section 167 & 17
- Ensuring that contractors, volunteers, parent/guardians, students or visitors at the service are not placed in a situation where they are left alone with a child
- Respecting individual abilities, needs, cultural practices and beliefs in all interactions, both verbal and non-verbal, paying particular attention to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children with disability and children from CALD backgrounds
- Engaging in open, two-way communication with families and communities about the service's child safety approach and providing relevant and accessible information
- Ensuring all staff, contractors, volunteers and students do not consume or are under the influence of alcohol or be affected by drugs (refer to E- Cigarettes, Tobacco, Alcohol and other Drugs Policy)

- Notifying DE within 24 hours of a serious incident or of a notifiable complaint being made at the service (National Law: Sections 174(2)(b) and 174(4), National Regulations: Regulations 175(2)(c))

5. Related Documents

- Child Safe Environment and Wellbeing Policy
- Child Safety and Wellbeing Code of Conduct
- Child Safety and Wellbeing Commitment
- Compliments, Feedback and Complaints Policy
- Children's Complaint Policy
- Delivery and Collection of Children Policy
- Family Conduct Guidelines (Appendix1)
- Inclusion and Equity Policy
- National Model Code of Conduct
- Privacy and Confidentiality Policy
- Safe Use of Digital Technology and Online Environments Policy
- Tobacco E-Cigarettes, Alcohol and Other Drugs Policy
- Early Childhood Australia, Code of Ethics: www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/our-publications/eca-code-ethics/
- United Nations, The Universal Declaration of Human Rights: www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/
- United Nations, Convention on The Rights of the Child: www.unicef.org/crc/
- Victoria Legal Aid: www.legalaids.vic.gov.au
- Victorian Institute of Teaching – The Victorian Teaching Profession Code of Conduct and Code of Ethics: www.vit.vic.edu.au
- Commission for Children and Young People: www.ccyp.vic.gov.au

6. Relevant Legislation

Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

- Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic)
- Child Safe Standards (Vic)
- Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)
- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)
- Early Childhood Australia's Code of Ethics (2016)
- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010: Sections 166, 167, 173, 174
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011: Regulations 83, 155, 156, 157, 168, 170, 171, 174, 175, 176
- Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)
- Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth)
- Fair Work Regulations 2009 (Cth)
- National Quality Standard, Quality Area 4: Staffing Arrangements, Quality Area 6: Partnerships with Families, Quality Area 7: Governance and Leadership
- Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004
- Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2017

- Racial Discrimination Act 1975
- Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001 (Vic)
- Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)
- Victorian Institute of Teaching the Victorian Teaching Profession Code of Conduct
- Victorian Institute of Teaching the Victorian Teaching Profession Code of Ethics

The most current amendments to listed legislation can be found at:

- Victorian Legislation – Victorian Law Today: www.legislation.vic.gov.au
- Commonwealth Legislation – Federal Register of Legislation: www.legislation.gov.au

7. Document Control

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Appendix 1**Family Conduct Guidelines**

The Family Conduct Guidelines works in conjunction with our Service's Enrolment Policy, Code of Conduct for Families, Dealing with Complaints Policy, Privacy and Confidentiality Policy, Family Handbook and the Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics. The Family Conduct Guidelines are in place to emphasize the commitment and ethical responsibilities each family adopts when enrolling their child/ren at bestchance Early Years Childcare and Kindergarten Services.

AIM

The aim of the Family Conduct Guidelines is to provide information to support families and bestchance services to develop clear and effective methods of communication to support the building of genuine partnerships and adopt appropriate and expected behaviour for families and educators. This includes acting as an advocate for individual children and discussing more complex and challenging issues that call for astute attention and respect.

It is anticipated that all stakeholders within the service will adopt the following qualities during their interactions:

- Honesty
- Integrity
- Inclusivity
- Democracy
- Respect
- Confidentiality

COMMUNICATION

It is expected that families will collaborate with their child's educator/s, working together to support their child's learning and development. Our educators understand that families are often eager to find ways to strengthen the connection between home and our service within their busy lifestyle. We have a range of methods to promote effective communication with families and encourage families' interaction. Effective communication builds mutual respect, understanding and trust. For educators working with families, building a positive partnership includes sharing knowledge and experiences to understand your child.

We appreciate it when families share information with our educators about their child. This may include informing the educator when your child has a restless night, sharing something your child has disclosed, or even talking about an activity or experience your child would like to do or share with others.

This continued information helps our educators support your child throughout the day. Communication is vital within our Service, ensuring children's needs are being met. We ask that families nominate their preferred method of communication which will be amended as required, so we can do our best to be open and responsive.

MEETING WITH EDUCATORS OR MANAGEMENT

It is not always possible or effective to discuss issues 'on the spot'. Usually, most communication between families and educators occurs at child drop-off and pick-up times. This transition time typically is not conducive to meaningful exchanges; families can be rushed, educators are understandably focused on

children's transitions, and in the case of full-day programs, educators who spend the largest amount of time with your child may not be available or not rostered on that day.

We encourage families to arrange a time away from the learning environment, where the educator can give families their full attention and make decisions that have been given careful consideration.

RESPECTING OUR EDUCATORS

We request that all stakeholders involved with the service are respected. This includes respect for our educators, respect for the children and respect for the families.

If we work to share information, contribute ideas and together, reflect on practices we will have a network for your child that not only supports their time here at our services, but will also see them thrive.

We all have a common goal: What's best for your child. With that in mind, this journey will be rewarding for all.

Parents and family members are expected to model appropriate behaviour and suitable conduct when interacting with children and staff at our Service, including various communication methods such as written, spoken or through social media. If the behaviour of a family member or visitor within the Service is deemed threatening or violent, the Police may be informed.

COMPLAINTS OR GRIEVANCES

If there is an incident that has occurred that families are concerned with, we always want to hear and discuss the issue. We ask families to be mindful about discussing or talking about sensitive issues in front of others, including children. Where possible, ask your child's educator or relevant educator for a suitable time to discuss your concerns.

Families are encouraged to document their concerns by completing a 'Complaints/Grievance Form' outlining the incident or concern and submit this to the approved provider or nominated supervisor. Management will acknowledge your complaint and endeavour to achieve an outcome that supports the best interests and wellbeing of the child where possible. (See our Dealing with Complaints Policy). We encourage all parents, carers and family members to work cooperatively with the person managing the complaint. Inappropriate behaviour will not be tolerated, and a meeting may be arranged.

Management will adhere to privacy and confidentiality laws, however if the complaint is a notifiable incident (related to child protection or fraud), we are required to notify relevant authorities immediately.

Should you wish to raise concerns regarding the management of Child Care Subsidy, please speak to the nominated supervisor as soon as possible. Concerns can also be directed to the Department of Education via their Online contact form or potential fraud breaches can be reported anonymously through an online report form: Reporting fraud via a tip-off.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Confidentiality is something we will not waive on and expect the same from everyone involved, educators and families alike. We request that management is kept up to date with any parenting court orders or parenting agreements under Family Law if applicable.

Information, including personal information (addresses, telephone numbers, email addresses) will not be disclosed to any individual without obtaining prior written permission of the respective person, including educators, staff, family members and parents. Families must ensure they do not share data or personal

information of other family members, children or staff members from the service with anyone, including other families of the same service. (See Privacy and Confidentiality Policy).

All families are not to use or share images obtained from the service, via the service's Storypark app, social media pages or other format. Families are not to share photographs taken during special events for publishing on any social media or for sharing in any format.

Families are asked to respect that staff are prohibited to share information about other children, families or staff members without expressed written consent to whom the information relates to. Additionally, families are not to connect with staff on social media platforms.

If you do have concerns regarding your child, please see your child's educator to arrange a time to meet. The meeting will be in a private area within the service. If issues are still unresolved, then contact our nominated supervisor and reschedule a second meeting.

CHILD CARE SUBSIDY OBLIGATION

We remind families that there are some issues that the service has no influence over such as Child Care Subsidy, and timing of payments to the service and your account. When families enrol their child into our service, it is the family's responsibility to provide us with the required information to receive Child Care Subsidy. This includes the correct Customer Reference Number (CRN) and date of birth of the child and parent/guardian the child is linked with.

To receive Child Care Subsidy (CCS) families must apply through the myGov website/app. This includes completing the Child Care Subsidy activity test. The approved provider and family will enter into an agreement regarding the planned arrangements for care. This is called a Complying Written Arrangement (CWA) and is an agreement to provide care in return for fees. Once the provider submits an enrolment notice, the family will be asked to confirm the enrolment through their myGov account. This is the final step to complete the Child Care Subsidy. It is important for families to understand that until this step is complete, Child Care Subsidy entitlements will not be confirmed.

Families are required to advise Centrelink of any changes to circumstances within 14 days to avoid a debt. Changes to circumstances may impact CCS payments.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Our policies and procedures are reviewed regularly or in the event of legislation changes, or upon critical reflection when modifications are required. We ask families to contribute and provide feedback to our policies and procedures to ensure child safety and wellbeing remains our priority. We aim to provide an environment that promotes and enables children's participation and is welcoming and culturally safe and inclusive for all children and families. We request that your feedback and contribution to policy review is through relevant communication channels and not derogatory in any way to our service.

BREACH OF FAMILY CONDUCT GUIDELINES (CODE OF CONDUCT)

If parents or family members are consistently in breach of these guidelines and following an evaluation by the nominated supervisor and/or the approved provider, any related enrolment/s may be at risk of being terminated.