

# Code of Conduct for Families Policy

## 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 behavior
- 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. Values

**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.

## Code of Conduct for Families Policy

### 4. Responsibilities

#### The parents/guardians are responsibilities:

- 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 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 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.
- 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.

## Code of Conduct for Families Policy

- Harassment of any type will not be tolerated. Demeaning, derogatory or intimidating behavior 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.

The approved provider and persons with management or control (in accordance with the Early Childhood Education and Care National Law and Regulations) responsibilities set out in appendix No 1 located at the end of this policy.

### 5. Sources

- Early Childhood Australia, *Code of Ethics*: [www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/our-publications/eca-code-ethics/](http://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/](http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/)
- United Nations, *Convention on The Rights of the Child*: [www.unicef.org/crc/](http://www.unicef.org/crc/)
- Victoria Legal Aid: [www.legalaid.vic.gov.au](http://www.legalaid.vic.gov.au)
- Victorian Institute of Teaching – *The Victorian Teaching Profession Code of Conduct and Code of Ethics*: [www.vit.vic.edu.au](http://www.vit.vic.edu.au)
- Commission for Children and Young People: [www.ccyp.vic.gov.au](http://www.ccyp.vic.gov.au)

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.

### Legislation and Standards

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)

# Code of Conduct for Families Policy

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

Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004

Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2007

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

## Appendix No. 1

### 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 Tobacco, Alcohol and other Drugs Policy*).
- Notifying DET 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) and*

## Code of Conduct for Families Policy

176(2)(b)) via the NQAITS.

- Notifying Worksafe of any reportable incidences that have occurred in the workplace.
- Activating the *Complaints and Grievances Policy* on notification of a breach of the *Code of Conduct for Families Policy*.
- Engaging in open, two-way communication with families and communities about the service's child safety approach and providing relevant and accessible information.
- 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 Safe Environment Policy*.
- Providing an environment that encourages positive interactions, supports constructive feedback and holds one another to the codes of conduct.
- Ensuring that parents & guardians sign the Code of Conduct Acknowledgement upon enrolment.
- Being attentive to signs of harm and facilitating child-friendly ways for children to communicate and raise their concerns.