

Caroline Chisholm School – Chisholm Preschool Unit Interactions with Children Procedure

Purpose

This procedure provides guidelines to ensure:

- The development of positive and respectful relationships with each child at Caroline Chisholm School – Chisholm Preschool Unit.
- Each child at Caroline Chisholm School – Chisholm Preschool Unit is supported to learn and develop in a secure and empowering environment.
- In developing this *Interactions with Children Procedure*, preschools will have affected on the philosophy, beliefs and values of the school, particularly with regard to the relationships with children.

Procedure Statement

1. Values

Caroline Chisholm School – Chisholm Preschool Unit is committed to:

- maintaining the dignity and rights of each child at the preschool
- encouraging children to express themselves and their opinions, and to undertake experiences that develop self-reliance and self-esteem considering the health, safety and wellbeing of each child, and providing a safe, secure and welcoming environment in which they can develop and learn
- maintaining a duty of care (refer to definitions) towards all children at the preschool
- considering the diversity of individual children at the service, including family and cultural values, age, and the physical and intellectual development and abilities of each child
- building collaborative relationships with families to improve learning and development outcomes for children
- encouraging positive, respectful and warm relationships between children and educators/staff at the service
- developing consistency of high quality practices amongst staff members.

2. Scope

This procedure applies to the Nominated Supervisor, Certified Supervisors, educators, staff, pre-service teachers on placement, volunteers, parents/guardians, children and others attending the programs and activities of Caroline Chisholm School – Chisholm Preschool Unit.

3. Background and Legislation

Background

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child is founded on respect for the dignity and worth of each individual, regardless of race, colour, gender, language, religion, opinions, wealth, birth status or ability. Developing responsive, warm, trusting and respectful relationships with children promotes their wellbeing, self-esteem and sense of security. Positive interactions between educators/adults and children can empower children to feel valued, competent and capable.

Actively engaging in children's learning and decision-making during play, daily routines and ongoing activities can stimulate children's thinking, enrich their learning and encourage them to explore and manage their feelings and behaviour.

“Having supportive relationships with the nominated supervisor, educators, co-ordinators and staff members enables children to develop confidence in their ability to express themselves, work through differences, learn new things and take calculated risks” (Guide to the National Quality Standard).

Regulation 155 of the National Regulations requires an Approved Provider of children's services to take reasonable steps to ensure that the service provides education and care to children in a way that encourages them to express themselves, and develop self-reliance and self-esteem, maintains their dignity and rights, provides positive guidance and encouragement towards acceptable behaviour, and respects their cultural and family values.

Regulation 156 requires the Approved Provider to ensure that the service provides children with opportunities to interact and develop positive relationships with each other, and with the staff and volunteers at the service. To meet these requirements, the Approved Provider is expected to consider the size and composition of the groups in which the children are educated and cared for.

Under the ACT's Children and Young People Act 2008 there are provisions regarding maintaining a safe environment (for eg. Repair of buildings, supervision and ratios) for children. In addition, unreasonable discipline includes—

- (a) physical punishment; or
- (b) any behaviour management strategy likely to cause emotional or physical harm to a child.

The examples provided includes:

- smacking
- yelling
- using threatening or humiliating language
- restrictive practices.

It is also noted that these examples are not exhaustive and may extend, but does not limit, the meaning of the provision in which it appears.

Legislation and standards

Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

- Safe and Supportive Schools Policy (2016)
- Children and Young people Act (2008)
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)
- Education and Care Services National Law ACT (Act) 2011: Sections 166, 167
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011: Regulations 73, 74, 155, 156, 157, 168(2)(j)
- *Human Rights Act 2004 (ACT)*
- *Human Rights Commission Act 2005 (ACT)*
- *Public Advocate Act 2005 (ACT)*
- National Quality Standard, Quality Area 5: Relationships with Children
- Standard 5.1: Respectful and equitable relationships are developed and maintained with each child
- Standard 5.2: Each child is supported to build and maintain sensitive and responsive relationships with other children and adults.

4. Definitions

The terms defined in this section relate specifically to this procedure.

Adequate supervision: (In relation to this policy) supervision entails all children (individuals and groups) in all areas of the service, being in sight and/or hearing of an educator at all times including during toileting, sleep, rest and transition routines. Services are required to comply with the legislative requirements for educator-to-child ratios at all times. Supervision contributes to protecting children from hazards that may emerge in play, including hazards created by the equipment used. Adequate supervision refers to constant, active and diligent supervision of every child at the service. Adequate supervision requires that educators are always in a position to observe each child, respond to individual needs and immediately intervene if necessary. Variables affecting supervision levels include:

- number, age and abilities of children
- number and positioning of educators
- current activity of each child
- areas in which the children are engaged in an activity (visibility and accessibility)
- developmental profile of each child and of the group of children

- experience, knowledge and skill of each educator
- need for educators to move between areas (effective communication strategies).

Behaviour guidance: A means of assisting children to self-manage their behaviour. It differs from traditional 'behaviour management' or 'discipline' which generally implies that an adult is 'managing' children's behaviour or using punishment to control children. Behaviour guidance applies to all forms of behaviour, not just behaviours labelled as 'negative'.

Positive Behaviour Plan: A plan that documents strategies to assist an educator in guiding a child with diagnosed behavioural difficulties to self-manage his/her behaviour. The plan is developed in consultation with the Nominated Supervisor, educators, parents/guardians and families, and other professional support agencies as applicable. At Caroline Chisholm School – Chisholm Preschool Unit the Disability Education Coordinator will support the development of plans.

Challenging behaviour:

Behaviour that: disrupts others or causes disputes between children, but which is part of normal social development infringes on the rights of others causes harm or risk to the child, other children, adults or living things is destructive to the environment and/or equipment inhibits the child's learning and relationship with others is inappropriate relative to the child's developmental age and background.

Restrictive Practices: is defined as any practice or intervention that has the effect of restricting the liberty or freedom of movement of a person, with the primary purpose of protecting the person or others from harm. Restrictive practices must only ever be used as a last resort option to prevent harm to the individual or others. They should only be used within the context of a positive behaviour support approach, and only after all other less restrictive options have been applied, or are not practicable in the circumstances. They **must not** be used to gain compliance in students. Refer to *Safe and Supportive Schools Policy Procedure B*. Restrictive Practices include:

- **Restraint** is the use of force to subdue or restrict a person's movement. It can be mechanical (using an object) or physical, using a part of a person's body.
- **Seclusion** is the sole confinement of a person in a room or place where the doors and window cannot be opened by the person.

(see also **checklist for developing a positive behaviour plan**)

Notifiable complaint: A complaint that alleges a breach of the Act or Regulation, or alleges that the health, safety or wellbeing of a child at the service may have been compromised. Any complaint of this nature must be reported by the Principal to the Office for Schools of the complaint being made (Section 174(2)(b), Regulation 176(2)(b)). reports to the Office for Schools must include:

- details of the event or incident
- the name of the person who initially made the complaint
- if appropriate, the name of the child concerned and the condition of the child, including an AIR (accident or incident report) where relevant
- any other relevant information.

Serious incident: An incident resulting in the death of a child, or an injury, trauma or illness for which the attention of a registered medical practitioner, emergency services or hospital is sought or should have been sought. This also includes an incident in which a child appears to be missing, cannot be accounted for, is removed from the service in contravention of the Regulations or is mistakenly locked in/out of the service premises (Regulation 12). A serious incident should be documented in an Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Record (AIR) as soon as possible and within 24 hours of the incident. The Regulatory Authority (through Office for Schools) must be notified within 24 hours of a serious incident occurring at the service (Regulation 176(2)(a)). Records are required to be retained for the periods specified in Regulation 183.

Supervision: see adequate supervision in definitions above.

5. Sources and Related Policies

Sources

- Belonging, Being & Becoming – The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia:

- www.deewr.gov.au/EarlyChildhood/Policy_Agenda/Quality/Pages/EarlyYearsLearningFramework Early Childhood Australia (ECA) Code of Ethics (2006):www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/code_of_ethics/early_childhood_australias_code_of_ethics.htm
- Guide to the National Quality Standard, ACECQA: www.acecqa.gov.au and <http://acecqa.gov.au/links-and-resources/national-quality-framework-resources/>
- Guiding children's behaviour in child care – a NCAC Factsheet for Families: http://ncac.acecqa.gov.au/family-resources/factsheets/guiding_children's_behaviour.pdf
- Inclusion and Professional Support Program (IPSP), Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, Australian Government: www.deewr.gov.au/earlychildhood/programs/childcareforservices/supportfamilyccs/pages/inclusionsupportprogram.aspx
- Rothwell, Philip (2008), 'Guiding Children's Behaviour', from Putting Children First, Newsletter of the National Childcare Accreditation Council, 25 March, p16–18
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child: www.unicef.org/crc

Procedures

The Nominated Supervisor is responsible for:

- Developing and implementing the Interactions with Children Policy at the service.
- Ensuring educators, staff and parents/guardians are provided with a copy of the Interactions with Children Procedure and comply with its requirements.
- Ensuring all staff are aware of the service's expectations regarding positive, respectful and appropriate behaviour, and acceptable responses and reactions when working with children and families (refer to Code of Conduct Policy).
- Ensuring children are adequately supervised (refer to definitions), that educator-to-child ratios are maintained at all times and the environment is safe, secure and free from hazards considering the size and composition of groups when planning program timetables to ensure all children are provided with the best opportunities for quality interactions and relationships with each other and with adults at the service. Smaller group sizes are considered optimal.
- Developing and implementing educational programs, in accordance with an approved learning framework, that are based on the developmental needs, interests and experiences of each child, and take into account the individual differences of each child (refer to Inclusion and Equity Policy).
- Ensuring the educational program contributes to the development of children who have a strong sense of wellbeing and identity, and are connected, confident, involved and effective learners and communicators ensuring that educators provide education and care to children in a way that:
 - encourages children to express themselves and their opinions
 - allows children to undertake experiences that develop self-reliance and self-esteem
 - maintains the dignity and the rights of each child at all times
 - offers positive guidance and encouragement towards acceptable behaviour
 - has regard to the cultural and family values, age, and the physical and intellectual development and abilities of each child being educated and cared for
 - ensuring clear and straightforward documentation of the assessment and evaluation of each child's:
 - developmental needs, interests, experiences and program participation
 - progress against the outcomes of the educational program (Regulation 74) organising appropriate training for educators/staff to assist with the implementation of this procedure.
- Ensuring educators and all staff members at the service who work with children are aware that it is an offence to subject a child to any form of corporal punishment, or any discipline that is unreasonable or excessive in the circumstances (National Law: Section 166).
- Ensuring that procedures are in place for effective daily communication with parents/guardians to share information about children's learning, development, interactions, behaviour and relationships informing the Office for Schools of any notifiable complaints (refer to Definitions) or serious incidents (refer to definitions) at the preschool.

- Ensuring that where 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.
- Ensuring educators and staff use positive and respectful strategies to assist children to manage their own behaviour, and to respond appropriately to conflict and the behaviour of others.
- Ensuring that an individual learning plan is created to support children as required.
- Co-operating with other services and/or professionals to support children and their families, where required.
- Maintaining confidentiality at all times.

Certified Supervisors in Day-To-Day Charge and other educators are responsible for:

- Assisting with the development and implementation of the Interactions with Children Policy, in consultation with the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, parents/carers and families.
- Providing copies of the Interactions with Children Policy to parents/carers and families
- Complying with the requirements of the Interactions with Children Procedure.
- Being aware of service expectations regarding positive, respectful and appropriate behaviour, and acceptable responses and reactions when working with children and families.
- Providing adequate supervision of children at all times.
- Communicating and working collaboratively with parents/guardians and families in relation to their child's learning, development, interactions, behaviour and relationships.
- Delivering educational programs, in accordance with an approved learning framework, that are based on the developmental needs, interests and experiences of each child, and take into account the individual differences of each child.
- Delivering programs that develop a sense of wellbeing and identity, connection to community, and provide skills for lifelong learning in all children.
- Providing education and care to children in a way that:
 - encourages children to express themselves and their opinions
 - allows children to undertake experiences that develop self-reliance and self-esteem
 - maintains the dignity and the rights of each child at all times
 - offers positive guidance and encouragement towards acceptable behaviour
 - has regard to the cultural and family values, age, and the physical and intellectual development and abilities of each child being educated and cared for
 - developing warm, responsive and trusting relationships with children that promote a sense of security, confidence and inclusion
 - supporting each child to develop responsive relationships, and to work and learn in collaboration with others.
- Using positive and respectful strategies to assist children to manage their own behaviour, and to respond appropriately to conflict and the behaviour of others.
- Documenting assessments and evaluations for each child to inform the educational program (Regulation 74).
- Being aware that it is an offence to subject a child to any form of corporal punishment, or any discipline that is unreasonable or excessive in the circumstances maintaining confidentiality at all times.

Parents/carers are responsible for:

- Reading and complying with the 'Interactions with Children Procedure'.
- Engaging in open communication with educators about their child.
- Informing educators/staff of events or incidents that may impact on their child's behaviour at the preschool (e.g. moving house, relationship issues, a new sibling).
- Informing educators/staff of any concerns regarding their child's behaviour or the impact of others.
- Working collaboratively with educators/staff and other professionals/support agencies to develop or review an individual behaviour guidance plan for their child, where appropriate.

EVALUATION

In order to assess whether the values and purposes of the policy have been achieved, the Nominated Supervisor will:

regularly seek feedback from everyone affected by the policy regarding its effectiveness monitor the implementation, compliance, complaints and incidents in relation to this policy keep the policy up to date with current legislation, research, policy and best practice revise the policy and procedures as part of the service's policy review cycle, or as required notify parents/carers at least 14 days before making any changes to this policy or its procedures.

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