

INTERACTIONS WITH CHILDREN PROCEDURE



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POLICY AND PHILOSOPHY

This procedure supports Catholic Early EdCare’s obligations as a Child Safe Organisation. It recognises that everyday interactions between educators and children play a critical role in preventing harm, abuse, grooming and boundary violations and must be intentional, professional and child-focused.

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DEVELOPING RELATIONSHIPS

ESTABLISHING A POSITIVE ENVIRONMENT

- Greet each child warmly by name to make them feel recognised and valued from the moment they enter the environment.
- Create a welcoming and safe space that reflects diversity and inclusivity, using posters, books, and materials that represent various cultures, abilities, and family structures.
- Implement a flexible routine, where educators respond and adjust to children's needs.
- Minimise transitions and ensure they are planned to reduce anxiety and stress.
- Offer a variety of materials, equipment and experiences that engage children's interests, are culturally relevant and create a sense of belonging and security.

SAFEGUARDING LENS ON RELATIONSHIPS

- Educators build warm and trusting relationships while maintaining professional boundaries. Interactions must remain visible, appropriate and transparent, ensuring children are never isolated, pressured or made to feel uncomfortable.

POSITIVE COMMUNICATION TECHNIQUES

- Use positive language that encourages and affirms children's efforts, such as, *"I noticed how hard you worked on your drawing,"* rather than focusing solely on the outcome.
- Practice active listening by getting down to the child's level, making eye contact (where culturally appropriate), and reflecting back what the child says to show understanding and respect for their thoughts and feelings.

FOSTERING EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND REGULATION

- Implement daily routines that include discussions and activities about emotions, utilising stories and role-play to teach children about identifying and expressing feelings in appropriate ways.
- Model self-regulation techniques, such as deep breathing or counting to ten, demonstrating to children how they can manage their emotions.
- Support children to develop skills to identify how their actions affect themselves and others, and assist children regulate these independently.

INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENTS AND STRATEGIES

INCLUSIVITY

- Ensure every child is included in activities, adapting tasks as necessary to meet diverse needs and abilities, and encourage children to support each other.
- Celebrate each child's achievements, no matter how small, fostering a sense of belonging and confidence.

MANAGING CHALLENGING BEHAVIOURS WITH POSITIVE STRATEGIES

- Observe for early signs of distress or frustration in children, such as changes in body language, tone and intervene early with calm, supportive dialogue.
- Employ de-escalation techniques tailored to individual children's needs, such as offering choices, to redirect focus and diffuse potential conflicts.

- Use positive reinforcement to encourage desirable behaviours, clearly communicating expectations and acknowledging children when they engage in positive interactions with peers or follow directions well.
- Have age appropriate behavioural expectations of children.

PROMOTING POSITIVE PEER INTERACTIONS

- Guide children in developing empathy and understanding towards others through group discussions and collaborative projects that require teamwork and sharing.
- Monitor peer interactions closely, stepping in to facilitate positive exchanges and teaching conflict resolution skills in a manner that empowers children to resolve minor disagreements independently, with guidance.

SUPPORTING CHILDREN

EDUCATOR STRATEGIES

- Model Positive Behaviours:** Let children learn by watching adults collaborate and model positive behaviours.
- Acknowledge Individuality:** Recognise that each child has unique skills, emotions and experiences that affect their group interactions.
- Use Varied Communication:** Equip children with different communication methods to help resolve conflicts and understand their feelings, e.g. gestures.
- Set Boundaries:** Establish reasonable boundaries and help children manage their emotions and responses.
- Foster Collaboration:** Implement strategies and programs that encourage children to work together and learn from each other.
- Model Empathy:** Show empathy and teach children to manage their behaviour respectfully.
- Respect and Reflect:** Respond to children in ways that maintain their dignity and rights, taking time to reflect on the best response when possible.

- Avoid Negative Labels:** Never attach negative labels to children. This includes when talking to families, other staff, and the children.
- Teach Self-Regulation:** Help children learn to self-regulate by providing quiet time or a ‘cooling off’ period when needed.
- Discuss Expectations:** Provide opportunities for children to discuss and understand group expectations, choices, and ways to rebuild relationships.
- Develop Clear Expectations:** Collaborate with children to create age-appropriate and reasonable behaviour and interaction expectations that consider others and support safety.

RESPONDING TO CONCERNS ABOUT INTERACTIONS

- Concerns about interactions between adults and children, or between children that may indicate boundary violations, grooming behaviours or emotional harm must be documented and escalated through safeguarding and complaints reporting pathways, not managed solely as practice or behavioural issues.

SERVICE LEADER'S SUPPORT

- Partner and communication with families to:
 - Share information about children's needs and any changes at home.
 - Develop expectations, goals, and strategies for children's learning and development.
 - Engage in professional conversations to share strengths, goals and strategies.
 - Share strategies used at home to support consistency.
 - Support and mentor educators to build their capacity in responding positively and appropriately to children.

BOUNDARY AWARENESS AND SAFETY

- Educators support children to understand personal boundaries, respectful interactions and their right to feel safe. Children are encouraged to express when an interaction feels uncomfortable and educators respond promptly and appropriately.

INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT PLANS

AT TIMES, TO SUPPORT THE CREATION OF INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENTS FOR CHILDREN AND PROMOTE CHILDREN'S ACTIVE PARTICIPATION, THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT PLAN IS REQUIRED.

SERVICE LEADERS WILL:

- Collaborate with stakeholders to:
 - Clarify support goals and the shared strategies to achieve these with the family and stakeholders.
 - Gather supporting documentation (observations, specialist reports, etc.).
 - Identify and assess any risks.
 - Identify and plan strategies to mitigate identified risks, including roles responsible for implementation.
 - Develop a communication plan and review timeline (at least annually) agreed upon by stakeholders.
- Document progress at regular intervals to support ongoing discussions and strategies.
- Save the Support Plan on the child's Xplor profile and keep a hard copy available for staff.
- Ensure all educators have read the plans and understand how to implement them to ensure a safe and engaging environment for all children and staff.



SERVICE LEADERS WILL ENSURE SUPPORT PLANS:

- Identify the needs, strengths and interests of the child.
- Develop methods for enhancing the child's learning and social interaction at the service.
- Focus on proactive rather than reactive responses.
- Are developed for that child alone.
- Are reviewed regularly and fine-tuned as required.
- Identify any reasonable adjustments required to the environment and program.
- Outline expectations and strategies to assist the child to make responsible age-appropriate decisions.
- Are not stressful for the child or the educators.
- Use strengths-based language; focus on what the child can do.
- Support regulation of children's emotions and identify risky behaviours.
- Are developed in consultation with families and other relevant stakeholders.
- Consider how the child makes sense of the environment and interpret the space around them.
- Provide children with the opportunity to reflect in an age-appropriate way on:

- The strategies chosen to regulate their emotions and their effectiveness.
- How best to make responsible age-appropriate decisions, to manage challenging situations in the future in a constructive and considerate way.
- Establishing positive relationships and being a socially considerate citizen.
- How decisions made aligned with their, the services', and their family's expectations.

EDUCATORS WILL:

- Act immediately if a child is at risk of harming themselves or others.
- Notify the Responsible Person in Charge and document all incidents as per the CEEC Child Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Procedure.
- Regularly review children's CEEC Individual Support Plans to understand their role in supporting children and maintaining a safe and inclusive service for the child, other children and staff.

ROUTINES, RITUALS AND TRANSITIONS

EDUCATORS WILL ENSURE:

- Routines, rituals and transitions are planned for and reviewed in consultation with children and educators, with a focus on safety and valuing children's rights and capabilities.
 - Children are involved and actively engaged in routines, rituals and transitions rather than being directed and waiting for extended periods.
 - To communicate with children before a transition is set to occur, inviting their involvement, and allowing them to accommodate their play or finish what they are currently engaged in.
 - Educator's and children's roles within routines, rituals and transitions should be clear and managed with care and thoughtfulness.
 - Children being required to wait should be kept at a minimum.
 - Routines, rituals and transitions should reflect the unique nature of each service and strongly promote children's sense of independence and acknowledge their capabilities.
- Routines and transitions are:
 - Clear, sequenced and bring predictability, comfort and security for children.
 - Known to children and follow children's natural rhythms, rather than being dictated by the clock or by rigid schedules.
 - There are anticipatory discussions to support children through transition moments.
 - Programs and transitions support:
 - The participation of all children; empowering them to remain engaged, display dispositions that support learning such as curiosity, focus, persistence, and employ flexibility in thinking and problem solving.
 - Children to manage change and challenges, display considerate behaviours, and empower children to reap the social, emotional, and cognitive benefits of their play.

IN LONG DAY CARE, EDUCATORS WILL ENSURE:

- Children's transitions to a new group are planned ahead of time, in consultation with the family and educators groups.
- Children are offered opportunities to visit the room and meet the group prior to transitioning.

IN KINDERGARTEN, EDUCATORS WILL:

- Regularly discuss transitioning to school in a positive manner and undertake planned transition to school activities with the co-located school.
- Offer opportunities during Term 4 for the children to meet the OSHC coordinator and staff are encouraged to support those children who will also be attending the OSHC.

IN OUTSIDE SCHOOL HOURS CARE, EDUCATORS WILL ENSURE:

- All Prep children are accompanied to and from the service to the area closest to their classrooms for at least Term 1, and where the entire year.
- Each day a range of activities is setup purposefully for children to transition into, depending on their age, interests and abilities.

ROLES AND **RESPONSIBILITIES**

APPROVED PROVIDERS

(Including Leadership and Management Teams)

- Ensure that obligations under the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations, and Disability Act are met.
- Ensure that the service provides education and care to children in a way that:
 - Encourages the children to express themselves and their opinions.
 - Allows the children to undertake experiences that develop self-reliance and self-esteem.
 - Maintains at all times the dignity and rights of each child.
 - Gives each child positive guidance and encouragement toward acceptable behaviour.
 - Has regard to the family and cultural values, age, and physical and intellectual development and abilities of each child ([Regulation 155](#)).
- Ensure that the service provides children with opportunities to interact and develop respectful relationships with each other and with educators and volunteers, having regard to the size and the composition of the groups in which children are being educated and cared for ([Regulation 156](#)).
- Ensure that no child is subjected to any form of corporal punishment, or any discipline that is unreasonable or inappropriate in the circumstances.
- Prohibit the use of physical, verbal or emotional punishment, practices that demean, humiliate, frighten, segregate or threaten a child.
- Ensure the service meets minimum educator and staff requirements, such as qualifications and educator to child ratios.
- Ensure all educators have undertaken current child protection legislation training, including for the mandatory reporting requirements and obligations in their jurisdiction.
- Take reasonable steps to ensure that nominated supervisors, educators and volunteers follow the interactions with children policy and procedures.
- Ensure that copies of the policy and procedures are readily accessible to nominated supervisors, coordinators, educators, volunteers and families, and available for inspection.
- Notify families at least 14 days before changing the policy or procedures if the changes will:
 - Affect the fees charged or the way they are collected.
 - Significantly impact the service's education and care of children.
 - Significantly impact the family's ability to utilise the service.

NOMINATED SUPERVISORS AND RESPONSIBLE PERSONS

- Implement this procedure and related policy.
- Devise methods to lead the development and implementation of quality practices across the service that ensure that the requirements of [Regulation 155](#) and [Regulation 156](#) are met.
- Support educators to promote quality practice approaches to interactions with children.
- Support educators to care for children in a way that:
 - Encourages the children to express themselves and their opinions.
 - Allows the children to undertake experiences that develop self-reliance and self-esteem.
 - Maintains at all times the dignity and rights of each child.
 - Gives each child positive guidance and encouragement toward acceptable behaviour.
 - Has regard to the family and cultural values, age, and physical and intellectual development and abilities of each child ([Regulation 155](#)).
- Ensure that no child is subjected to any form of corporal punishment, or any discipline that is unreasonable in the circumstances.
- Provide environments that are welcoming, dignified, respectful, inclusive and equitable.
- Develop Individual Support Plans in consultation with stakeholders, other staff members, Parents/Carers and the individual child.
- Consult with Parents/Carers, other professionals and resource agencies and work with them to improve interactions/relationships.
- Consult with Parents/Carers to establish support strategies for children.
- Regularly reflect with staff on the planning cycle, educational program and practices and how each promotes quality interactions with children.
- Provide educators with time off the floor for reflection and programming.
- Provide opportunities for children and families to contribute to programming and planning.
- Ensure minimum educator and staff requirements are met, such as qualifications and educator-to-child ratios.

- Ensure all educators and staff have undertaken current child protection legislation training, including for the mandatory reporting requirements and obligations in their jurisdiction.
- Provide induction training, standalone training sessions, and regular updates and reviews at team meetings.
- Regularly reflect (e.g. at team meetings) about how educators interact with children.
- Set clear roles and responsibilities for educators.



EDUCATORS

- Be aware of current child protection legislation, including the Mandatory Reporting requirements and obligations.
- Monitor and maintain educator-to-child ratios to ensure adequate supervision of children.
- Contribute to the development of, and implement quality practices that ensure that the requirements of Regulation 155 (interactions with children) and Regulation 156 (relationships in groups) are met.
- Support children by:
 - Reviewing Individual Support Plans
 - Being aware of expectations across the service and what the shared responsibilities of educators are.
 - Being aware of expectations across the service and what the shared responsibilities of educators are.
 - Being aware of children's abilities, challenges and unique needs, as well as supporting transitions.
 - Creating physical environments, programs and routines that allow children the time and resources needed for positive interactions with their peers.
- Supporting children to explore reciprocal rights and active community participation, as well as fostering resilience and agency through activities that recognise children as capable and competent learners.
- Considering the pace and flow of the program that allows a balance of play experiences, such as individual and group, quiet and noisy, active and passive experiences.
- Being intentional in planning and support to scaffold learning.
- Promoting a range of social skills, such as group entry skills and negotiation, as a way of considering expectations, diversity and democracy.
- Implementing flexible arrangements centred around children's routines, interests and offering extended periods of uninterrupted play.
- Encouraging children to take on different roles within groups.
- Encouraging children to express themselves and their opinions.
- Inviting children to collaborate with educators.
- Allowing children to undertake experiences that develop self-reliance and self-esteem.

- Clearly communicate expectations in positive terms and reinforce consistently in a developmentally appropriate way.
- Demonstrate to children through modeling, use of positive and engaging language, gestures, body language, facial expressions, tone and volume of voice when redirecting or during discussions with children.
- Discuss expectations, the importance of empathy, treating others equally and celebrating differences with children.
- Develop supportive relationships with children which encourage self-regulation skills through supporting, encouraging, listening, accepting, trusting, respecting and negotiating differences.
- Communicate concerns with children respectfully and preferably away from the rest of the group.
- Do not use corporal punishment or food as a reward or punishment at any time.
- Maintain a consistent approach when interacting with children to develop their social and emotional learning through collaboration with Parents/ Carers and other staff members.
- Use problem solving techniques as a learning opportunity with children i.e. collaboration with deciding on rules for games and methods for working together that are supportive and safe.
- Support children to make appropriate choices, accept challenges, manage changes, cope with frustration, and experience the consequences of their actions.
- Understand in OSHC, older children may be provided with privileges and increased freedom in recognition of their growing maturity and ability to take responsibility for their own actions.
- Resource the learning environment to engage children in play whilst providing clear boundaries, precise and simple directions that invite and encourage success.
- Arrange the physical environment to provide ample opportunities for children to explore safely, where there are opportunities for children to play alone but remain within the group.
- Provide soft areas in the room where children can be comfortable.
- Keep the daily schedule consistent and predictable, with appropriate transition activities to assist children to move comfortably between activities and minimise waiting times for them.
- Be aware and cater to children's physical and emotional needs as they occur throughout the day. Including adapting meal and rest schedules as required.
- Consider the size and composition of the groups in which children are being educated and cared for by the service.

FAMILIES

- Acknowledge the need to be contactable while the child is in care, as in the event of an incident the service will call.
- Collaborate to develop a Support Plan in consultation with the Service Leader, the Portfolio Manager, other staff members, Parents/Carers and the individual child when required.
- Provide permission for the service to liaise with other professionals and support agencies in order to support the child, e.g. the school.

MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW

Centacare will place this policy on the Archdiocesan Intranet (AI). Service Leaders and Managers are responsible for ensuring that the appropriate communication of policies and supporting documents to staff has occurred.

- All staff are responsible for understanding and complying with this policy.
- Summary information about fees and related procedures will be included in the CEEC information handbooks.
- Educators and families will be invited to participate in the review of this procedure.
- Changes to this document will be shared with families and educators.
- Ongoing training opportunities for Service Leaders and Responsible Persons in Charge will be provided using a range of learning platforms. Videos of some Xplor processes are available on AI.
- Contact the Policy Sponsor for further interpretation of this policy.
- Information from observations, incident reports, complaints and safeguarding concerns related to interactions with children is analysed to identify risks, inform professional learning and strengthen child safe interaction practice across services.

