

ST. CATHERINE'S EARLY EDUCATION CENTRE

INTERACTIONS AND RELATIONSHIPS WITH CHILDREN, FAMILIES & STAFF POLICY

The Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) identifies secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships with children as one of the principles that underpin practice. Within an early childhood community many different relationships are negotiated with and between children, educators and families.

National Quality Standard (NQS)

Quality Area 5: Relationships with Children		
5.1	Relationships between educators and children	Respectful and equitable relationships are maintained with each child
5.1.1	Positive educator to child interactions	Responsive and meaningful interactions build trusting relationships which engage and support each child to feel secure, confident and included.
5.1.2	Dignity and rights of the child	The dignity and rights of every child are maintained
5.2	Relationships between children	Each child is supported to build and maintain sensitive and responsive relationships
5.2.1	Collaborative learning	Children are supported to collaborate, learn from and help each other

Quality Area 6: Collaborative partnerships with families and communities		
6.1	Supportive relationships with families	Respectful relationships with families are developed and maintained and families are supported in their parenting role
6.1.1	Engagement with the service	Families are supported from enrolment to be involved in the service and contribute to service decisions
6.1.2	Parents views are respected	The expertise, culture, values and beliefs of families are respected and families share decision-making about their child's learning and wellbeing
6.1.3	Families are supported	Current information is available to families about the service and relevant community services and resources to support parenting and family wellbeing

Education and Care Services National Regulations

Children (Education and Care Services) National Law NSW	
155	Interactions with children

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156	Relationships in groups
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Aim

Our service aims to ensure that all educators form relationships with children that make them feel safe secure and supported in the service. Our educators will encourage positive relationships between the children, families, their peers as well as other educators and students and volunteers at the service.

Related policies

Additional Needs Policy
Code of Conduct
Continuity of Education and Care Policy
Enrolment / Orientation Policy
Education, Curriculum and Learning Policy

Implementation

Interactions with children

Our service's statement of philosophy will guide our interactions with children as follows:

St Catherine's Early Education Centre will be inventive and unique to ensure that we, St Catherine's community are distinctive within the early childhood education sector.

We acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we stand on. We pay our respects to the Elders, past and present extending our respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who are the traditional custodians of this land.

At St Catherine's we value and work undern the national quality framework guiding principles and national quality standards. In delivering our education and care curriculum, we follow the principles, practices and learning outcomes of the national early year's framework.

Our Vision

We recognise the uniqueness of each child and the importance of play in the lives of children. We will, working in partnership with families be committed to providing exceptional education and care within a welcoming environment that embraces diversity and the local community.

Philosophy

We will deliver the highest level of care and education for your child in a warm, nurturing and safe environment.

We will respect the children's rights to feel safe, secure and comfortable in their environment. We will listen and respond to their feelings and needs as required.

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As educators we will work, together to create a welcoming environment that the children want to be a part of.

We will treat all children equitably and give each child an opportunity to develop skills for life-long learning focusing on each child's strengths and interests.

We will create opportunities for children to build friendships, laugh, smile and jump in puddles.

We will respect and respond to the needs and interests of each individual child and continually encourage children to develop an understanding of who they are and how they fit into the world.

We will continually encourage and support the development of self-esteem, confidence and independence of children.

We will work in partnership with families to build relationships-based co-operation and a mutual respect for the reciprocal roles that each play in the lives of the children.

We will encourage support and guide all families in an inclusive environment filled with wonder and awe.

We will include and work towards parents' goals for their children and consider them valuable.

We as a team, through our leadership and management, encourage educators to work collaboratively by sharing knowledge and experiences.

We will as educators work with the children to discover ideas and provide opportunities for learning through emergent intentional teaching.

We will provide an inclusive environment and aim to increase the children's awareness and respect of cultural differences.

We value belonging to the North Melbourne community and will involve our centre in the diverse cultures, communities and events that make up the local area.

We will engage with our community and encourage the children, families and staff to be part of the cultural events and celebrations that occur.

We will expose the children to different members of our community.

In order to maintain positive interactions and relationships with children our service and educators will:

- Create a welcoming and relaxed atmosphere in which children experience equitable, friendly and genuine interactions with all Educators
- Use appropriate language and behaviour will be role modelled by Educators and staff
- Support children to be aware of their own feelings as well as the feelings of others
- Encourage children to treat all children with respect and empathy
- Provide children with the opportunity to explore their dispositions for learning by expressing themselves and their opinions
- Assist the children to build resilience and self-assurance through positive interactions
- Guide children's behaviour positively
- Respect the rights of all children

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- Speak to children in a positive manner at all times, promoting respect, tolerance and empathy; this includes children using non-verbal cues
- Engage in meaningful, open interactions that support the acquisition of skills for life and learning of children
- Respect each child's uniqueness, are attuned to and respond sensitively and appropriately to children's efforts to communicate and will use the child's own language, communication styles and culture to enhance their interactions
- Listen to children and take them seriously; they will support and encourage children to use appropriate language in their interactions with adults and peers.
- Educators will extend upon children's interests and ideas through questions and discussions, supported in observations, reflections and programming
- Communicate with children by getting down to their level, showing respect to the child whilst promoting effective communication and eye contact.
- Ensure that the values, beliefs and cultural practices of the child and their families are considered and respected
- No child is ever isolated for any reason other than illness, accident or pre-arranged appointment with parental consent. During this time, they will be under adult supervision
- Regularly reflect on their relationships and interactions with children and how these can be improved to benefit each child
- Challenge children's individual development

Group Relationships

In order to encourage respectful and positive relationships between children and their peers and educators our service will adhere to the following practices:

- Our service will encourage all children to participate in enjoyable interactions with their peers, respond positively to ideas, negotiate roles and relationships, contribute to shared play and develop friendships.
- Our educators will engage children in ongoing projects that involve research, planning, problem solving and shared decision making.
- Our educators will model strategies for children to initiate interactions and participate in group play and social interactions and assist them when they have trouble understanding or communicating with each other.
- Our service will ensure that all children have many opportunities for peer scaffolding.

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- Our service will coordinate staff arrangements and grouping arrangements to support positive relationships between children.
- Our educators will support and promote children's interpersonal relationships and support the inclusion of children from diverse backgrounds and capabilities in group play, projects and experiences.
- Our educators will learn about the children's shared interests and will use this information to plan further experiences that provide collaborative learning opportunities.
- Our educators will pre-empt potential conflicts or challenging behaviours by monitoring children play and supporting interactions where there is conflict.
- Our service will ensure that all programs and routines will include regular opportunities for children to engage in social play and group experiences.
- Our service will ensure that food is being used appropriately not as a reward or punishment.
- Our service will encourage children to develop autonomy, independence, competency, confidence and pride.
- Our service will ensure that corporal punishment is not used as part of behaviour guidance or any other aspect of our interactions with children.

Corporal punishment is NEVER used in our service.

Behaviour Guidance

At St Catherine's Early Education Centre we encourage positive, co-operative behaviour through:

- Establishing trust and confidence between adults and children.
- Considering the stage of development of each child.
- Considering the interests, concerns and abilities of the individual child.
- Showing sensitivity to the child's background current home situations.
- Examining the reasons behind the behaviour that suggested a need for disciplinary action.
- Getting down to the child's level to establish and maintain eye contact.
- Using language that is positive, clear and developmentally appropriate for the child in question.
- Being consistent with behaviour expectations.
- Setting limits and reminding children of them of such limits regularly or whenever necessary.

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- Involving the children in the setting of limits and explaining as to why certain types of behaviour are unacceptable.
- Encouraging the children to show sympathy towards children experiencing difficulties.
- Guidance and discipline to encourage individuality and confidence of children as to enhance their self-esteem.
- Positive modeling by educators. E.G. *"the sand needs to stay in the sand pit so we can dig with it"* and showing the child how to dig, rather than *"don't throw the sand"*
- Discussing with parents the behaviour management policy and seek their assistance for solutions should the need arise.

THE USE OF PHYSICAL FORCE, EMBARRASSMENT, SARCASM OR PROLONGED PUNISHMENT IS NEVER PRACTICED.

Inclusion

Our service will be encouraging, unprejudiced and authentic, ensuring that all children are treated equally and fairly and have the opportunity to grow and develop to their individual potential.

- We will promote and value cultural diversity and equity for all children, families, and educators from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds.
- Our service will provide positive support for fostered and adopted children to develop a sense of heritage and belonging
- Our service will avoid common stereotypes and recognise individual differences within a cultural or ethnic group.
- We understand that additional needs arise from different causes, and that causes require different responses. Any child may have additional needs from time to time.
- Our educators will be actively involved in the development of appropriate resources, support and implement an anti-bias, cross cultural program through the service which is reflective of all families, children and the diversity present in our community.
- Our educators will ensure the curriculum program meets the needs of the individual children, and is in line with the children's voices, the educator's voices and the voices of the parents.
- our educators will reflect on the service's philosophy and ensure that practices and attitudes harmonise with the philosophy.

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Supporting children through difficult situations

When a child, family, educator or the service as a whole experience a stressful or traumatic situation such as a fire, car accident, sudden illness or death, crime or a violent situation, it is important to provide appropriate support so they can recover from the ordeal. A child's reaction to a stressful or traumatic situation will depend on many factors such as their age, stage of development and the impact of the event on individuals around them. A child may react in ways that you don't expect and sometimes will act normally at first but then have a delayed reaction.

Some reactions include:

- Physical symptoms such as stomach aches and headaches.
- Being anxious or clingy.
- Suffering from separation anxiety.
- Re-living the experience through drawings or play.
- Losing interest in play and activities.
- Loss of self-control
- Regressing to "baby like" behaviors.

Our educators will talk to the child about the event by

- Reassuring the child that they are safe and are not to blame.
- Talking to the child about what happened in a way that the child will understand and without going into frightening or graphic details. They will tell the truth and will not leave out important information through as children will fill the gaps.

Interactions with Families

Effective communication is the key to developing and maintaining positive interactions and relationships with others. Educators working within or service are required to demonstrate mutual respect towards each other and value the contributions made by each educator. This enables our Service to maintain positive relations and model the type of communication they want children to develop. Educators also need to use positive communication with families and children in order to create a responsive and inclusive environment for all.

Our Service and Educators will ensure:

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- All families are treated equitably without bias or judgement; recognising that each family is unique
- Families and children are greeted upon arrival
- Two-way communication is established through leading by example and asking questions
- Common terminology is used when talking to parents regarding their child's development
- Never to discuss another child or family information with a parent or visitor
- To remain sensitive to cultural differences amongst families and are to encourage families to share cultural aspects with the children and Educators at the Services
- To always endeavor and seek the advice and opinion from experts with family permission, to help with regards to a child with additional needs or support a family through resources available from such support agencies as KU Inclusion Support Agency, Area Health or the private sector
- To endeavor to recognise and implement several different ways to communicate with families in their preferred chosen way
- Verbal communication is always open, respectful and honest
- Families are provided with up-to-date service information and notices through Daily Reports, Newsletter, communal signs, emails and sign-in sheets
- To regularly reflect on parent input into the program and make changes where necessary that will best benefit the service and children
- Children are treated and programmed for as individuals

Interactions with Staff and Educators

The Service recognises that the way Educators interact with each other has an effect on the interactions they have with children and families.

To maintain professionalism at all times, Educators will:

- Preserve professional communication in order create an effective work environment and to build a positive relationship with Educators, Children and Families. Communication amongst colleagues creates a positive atmosphere and a professional Service for families. Communication between staff and families ensures that important information is being passed on and that consistency occurs
- Collaborate together as a team sharing room roles and responsibilities through the use of a roster where necessary

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- Be respectful when listening to each other's point of view and ideas
- Maintain effective communication to ensure that teamwork occurs
- Use staff meetings to communicate their professional reflections and ideas for continuous improvement as a team
- Attend In-service training to update and refresh individual skills and knowledge
- Refer to the Staff Grievance Policy/Procedure if they feel a situation with another Educator is not being handled with professionalism, respect and quality
- Recognise each other's strengths and valuing the different work each does
- Work collaboratively to reach decisions which will enhance the quality of the Education and care offered at the Service
- Welcome diverse views and perspectives
- Work together as a team and engaging in open and honest communication at all times
- Respect each other's positions and opinions.
- Develop and share networks and links with other agencies
- Resolve differences promptly and positively and using the experience to learn more effective methods of working together

To enhance communication and teamwork, Educators will:

- Provide new educators with relevant information about the Service and program through an Educator handbook, induction and daily communication
- Maintain confidentiality
- Treat each team member with respect
- Be sensitive to the feelings and needs of other team members
- Provide constructive feedback to each other
- Trust each other
- Value the role and contribution of each educator
- Provide opportunities for all educators to have input and evaluate the program
- Appreciate and utilise educator skills and interests
- Provide support and assistance to each other
- Share responsibilities
- Have a flexible attitude towards team roles and responsibilities
- Greet each other by name

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- Show genuine interest in the other person by using active and reflective listening
- Communicate ideas and opinions clearly and professionally
- Use a communication book or daily diary to pass on messages and record relevant information
- Hold regular educator meetings
- Use appropriate conflict resolution techniques to solve problems
- Ensure policies and procedures are up to date regarding communication, expected behaviour and grievances
- Opportunities for professional development

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT/REFLECTION

Our children with children, families and Staff policy will be reviewed on a regular basis in consultation with children, families, staff, educators and management.

Review

This policy will be reviewed regularly.

The review will be conducted by:

- Management
- Employees
- Families
- Interested Parties

Sources

Australian education and care quality Authority(2021) policy and procedure Guidelines-interactions with Children
Education and care services National Law act 2010
Guide to the national quality framework 2018(amended 2023)
Privacy and personal information ACT 1988

Date Reviewed	Modifications	Next Policy Review Date
January 2018	This policy was created	March 2019

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March 2019	Sections for interaction with families and educators were added. Full Philosophy statement was added.	August 2020
February 2021	Mission statement was added	August 2023
October 2023	Sources has been added Continuous improvement/reflection section added No major changes to policy	October 2025