

Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety

Child Safe Code of Conduct



Commitment to Child Safety

At Kootingal & District Preschool we are committed to creating and maintaining an environment that promotes the safety of all children. This includes encouraging a culture where the prevention and reporting of abuse is supported and encouraged. All staff and volunteers are responsible for promoting the safety, wellbeing, and empowerment of children.

Goals – What are we going to do?

At all times:

- We place children at the centre of every aspect of our service delivery.
- Provide a child safe environment with fully trained educators is a priority in all aspects of policy development, planning and programming.
- Create a learning environment where children have a voice about their own safety and wellbeing.

Strategies – To achieve our goals

We will commit to:

- Creating a safe and nurturing education and care service that at all times promotes the safety and wellbeing of all children in our care.
- Encouraging a culture where there is zero tolerance to any forms of abuse by any workers, students, volunteers, visitors or any other stakeholder.
- Upholding the rights of the child as per the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Upholding the ECA Code of Conduct
- Upholding the values and commitments outlined in our Philosophy
- Listening to a child's voice and encourage them to raise concerns around their own safety
- Having policies and procedures in place to protect children from any form of abuse
- Take every allegation seriously as an integral part of our promotion of a child safe environment.
- Creating an environment where all concerns regarding the safety of children no matter how small are reported and acted on.

Forms of Child Abuse

Physical: the intentional or reckless use of physical force against a child that results in harm to the child's health, development, or dignity, or which has a high likelihood of resulting in such harm. It may also include the threat of abuse where the child reasonably fears it may occur.

Sexual: any act which exposes a child to, or involves a child in, sexual processes beyond his or her understanding or contrary to accepted community standards. This can include both sexual offences (a child-related criminal offence of a sexual nature) as well as sexual misconduct (conduct with, towards, or in the presence of a child that is sexual in nature but is not a sexual offence).

Emotional abuse: behaviour towards a child that is likely to damage a child's self-esteem or social competence.

Neglect: behaviour by a person responsible for the care of a child (such as a parent, carer or staff member if the child is in their care) that constitutes a failure to act in ways consistent with accepted community standards about what is necessary to meet the developmental needs of a child.

Ill-treatment: the Children's Guardian Act defines ill-treatment as 'conduct towards a child that is unreasonable and seriously inappropriate, improper, inhumane or cruel.'

Roles and Responsibilities

I will:

- Treat all children and young people with respect
- Ensure their Working with Children Check (WWCC)/ Vulnerable Person Check is valid and current
- Notify the approved provider, within 72 hours of any changes, or within 24 hours of becoming aware of any changes, to their WWCC status, changes to their teacher registration or fit and proper status (including show cause notice, suspension notice, supervision notice, disciplinary notices/orders or prohibition notices)
- Gain permission to have physical contact or show affection to a child
- Respect the rights of each child and their own personal boundaries
- Listen to and value children and young people's ideas and opinions
- Welcome all children and their families and carers by actively promoting cultural safety and inclusion
- Listen to children and respond to them appropriately
- Welcome parents and carers to participate in decisions about their child's training schedule and any other matters about their safety
- Be open and transparent with every family
- Report any conflicts of interest (such as an outside relationship with a child)
- Adhere to all relevant Australian and NSW legislation and our child safe policies and procedures
- Work within a team to ensure that the needs of the child (and their family) remain the paramount focus
- Immediately raise concerns with supervisors if I identify or observe negative behaviours
- Be proactive in ensuring a high-level duty of care to all children who are within our service community
- Participate in all compulsory training
- Raise concerns with management if risks to child safety are identified, including cultural, environmental and operational risks
- Report and act on any concerns or observed breaches of this Code of Conduct
- Take all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse
- Respect the privacy of children and their families by keeping all information about child protection concerns confidential
- Inform parents and carers if there are situations that need to be safely managed but are outside the boundaries of this Code of Conduct
- Take a child seriously if they disclose harm or abuse
- Ensure breaches of this Code are reported immediately
- Uphold the rights of the child and always prioritise their needs

- understand my legislative responsibility to report any inappropriate action of any other employee that involves children or young people to management as part of the Reportable Conduct Scheme (if applicable in your state/territory)
- participate in all mandatory training, including mandatory National Child Safety Training for the Early Childhood Education and Care Sector (effective January 2026)
- not be under the influence of drugs or alcohol while working; bring alcohol or drugs onto the premises
- not smoke or vape in or on surrounding areas of the Service

I MUST not:

- Drag, push, hit, strike, kick or slap a child or throw/use items which can hurt a child
- Engage in conduct that is detrimental to the professional standing of our Service, is improper or unethical, is an abuse of power, or harasses, discriminates against, victimises, humiliates, intimidates, or threatens other educators, staff members, volunteers, or visitors at the Service, either directly or indirectly via information technology such as email, text or social media. Additionally, they must
- never support or encourage this behaviour in others
- Ignore or disregard any concerns, suspicions or disclosures of child abuse
- Exaggerate or trivialise child abuse issues
- Use hurtful, discriminatory or offensive behaviour or language with children
- Fail to report information to police if I know a child has been abused
- Engage in unwarranted and inappropriate touching involving a child
- Persistently criticise, tease, yell, bully and/or denigrate a child
- Deliberately prevent a child from forming friendships
- Verbally assault a child or create a climate of fear
- Make a child feel worthless, unloved, alone or frightened
- Offer children and young people alcohol, cigarettes or other drugs
- Show children pornographic images
- Encourage a child to communicate with me in a private setting
- Share details of sexual experiences with a child
- Use sexual language or gestures in the presence of children
- Deprive a child of necessities such as food, drink, clothing, critical care or shelter
- Fail to adequately and appropriately supervise a child which could result in injury or harm
- Make excessive and/or degrading demands of a child
- Discipline or correct a child in an unreasonable and seriously inappropriate or improper manner
- Use inappropriate and/or degrading comments or behaviour towards a child
- Exhibit repeated hostility towards a child
- Engage in restrictive practices
- Offer a child gifts, attention or affection different to what is given to other children
- Lock a child in a room or any enclosed space
- Travel alone with a child
- Use social media as a form of connection or communication with children

I understand the following types of behaviour may also be of concern:

- Showing favour to one child over others
- Babysitting a child out of work hours (without managerial approval for this kind of secondary employment)

I acknowledge that:

Any breach of these behaviour expectations will constitute criminal behaviour and as such I will report to the person(s) responsible within the organisation including:

- The Nominated Supervisor or Responsible Person
- A representative of the Committee

REPORTING RESPONSIBILITIES

- as mandatory reporters, all employees, students and volunteers must report possible risk of harm to children or young persons to management and/or Child Protection authority, police (see Child Protection Policy)
- the approved provider/management will report any allegations or child related misconduct as per their legislative requirements (this may include reporting the matter to the Police, Department of Communities and Justice and the Office of the Children’s Guardian in NSW. Reports will be made via the Child Protection Helpline on 13 21 11 or by submitting an eReport via the ChildStory Reporter website
- employees will report any concerns they may have about inappropriate actions of any other employee that involves children or young people to the approved provider as per the Reportable Conduct Scheme
- if employees become aware of a serious crime committed by another employee, they are required to report it to management
- all prospective employees are required to complete a prohibition notice declaration on the Employment Application Form to acknowledge they do not hold any prohibition notices that would prevent them from working with children
- employees are required to notify management immediately of any enforcement actions issued to them during their course of employment.

A breach of the Code of Conduct may also need to be reported to an external agency as outlined below:

- Behaviours that may amount to criminal conduct should be immediately reported to the NSW Police Force.
- Behaviours that indicate that a child is at risk of significant harm should be immediately reported to the Department of Communities and Justice.
- Allegations of reportable conduct should be notified to the Office of the Children’s Guardian.

EXPECTATIONS OF LEADERS AND MANAGEMENT

In addition to the above responsibilities, leaders and management are expected to:

- model child safe values in daily practices and decision-making

- monitor and review compliance with National Child Safe Principles (Child Safe Standards) (insert state/territory CSS) mandatory reporting, National Law and Regulations
- promote a collaborative and interconnected workplace by developing a positive working environment where all employees can contribute to the ongoing continuous improvement of the Service
- promote leadership by working with employees and providing opportunities for professional development and growth
- provide flexible opportunities to ensure all employees can participate in staff meetings and professional development
- promote open and effective communication with all staff regarding Right to Disconnect provisions under Fair Work Act- including out of hours emergency contact and expectations of staff
- provide ongoing support and feedback to employees
- keep employees informed about essential information and any relevant changes and make all documents readily accessible to them
- ensure copies of the ECA Code of Ethics and National Child Safe Principles are available to staff and families (or specific Child Safe Standards for your state/territory)
- model professional behaviour at all times whilst at the Service
- implement supportive and effective communication systems, consulting employees in appropriate decision making
- take appropriate action if a breach of the code of conduct occurs
- share skills and knowledge with employees
- give encouragement and constructive feedback to employees, respecting the value of different professional approaches
- follow recruitment policies and procedures to ensure all potential candidates undergo appropriate background checks, including WWCC and a police check where required
- model and provide guidance to educators and staff to ensure compliance with a zero tolerance of child abuse, racism and bullying within the Service.

Monitoring, Review and Evaluation

This policy will be monitored to ensure compliance with legislative requirements and unless deemed necessary through the identification of practice gaps. The service will review this policy annually.

Families and staff are essential stakeholders in the policy review process and will be given opportunities and encouragement to be actively involved.

In accordance with Regulation 172 of the *Education and Care Services National Regulations*, the service will ensure that families of children enrolled at the service are notified at least 14 days before making any change to a policy or procedure that may have significant impact on the provision of education and care to any child enrolled at the service; a family's ability to utilise the service; the fees charged or the way in which fees are collected.

Links to other policies:

Child Protection

Code of Conduct for Staff

Parent/Guardian Code of Conduct

Participation of Volunteers and Students

Providing a Child Safe Environment

Complies with:

NQS

Quality Area 2	Children's health and safety
Quality Area 4	Staffing arrangements
Quality Area 5	Relationships with children
Standard 5.1	<i>Relationships between educators and children</i>
Standard 5.2	<i>Relationships between children</i>
Quality Area 6	Collaborative partnerships with families and communities
Standard 6.1	<i>Supportive relationships with families</i>
Quality Area 7	Governance and leadership
Standard 7.1	<i>Governance</i>

National Regulations

Reg	166	Children are not to be alone with visitors
Reg	167	Record of service's compliance
Reg	168	Education and care service must have policies and procedures
Reg	174	Time to notify certain circumstances to Regulatory Authority
Reg	175	Prescribed information to be notified to Regulatory Authority

Sources:

- Children's Guardian Act 2019
- Child Protection (Working with Children) Regulation 2013
- Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998
- United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child
- Child Safe Standards
- Disability Inclusion Act 2014
- Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Regulation 2012

I acknowledge that I have read and understood my responsibilities regarding Child Safety, in being an employee of Kootingal & District Preschool Inc.

NAME	SIGNATURE	DATE

Developed: 2023
Reviewed: May 24