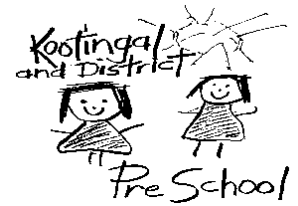


## Quality Area 6: Collaborative partnerships with families and communities

### Parent/Guardian Code of Conduct



#### Introduction

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At Kootingal & District Preschool we endeavour to ensure that we provide a welcoming and safe environment. We believe that all families and volunteers play an important role in the effective operation of the preschool. The Code of Conduct has been developed to provide information on acceptable conduct that is required of all educators, parents/guardians and volunteers at our preschool to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all stakeholders.

This policy works in conjunction with our service's *Enrolment and Orientation* policy, *Complaints and Feedback* policy, *Privacy and Confidentiality* policy, Family Handbook and the Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics. The Parent/Guardian Code of Conduct policy is in place to emphasize the commitment and ethical responsibilities each family adopts when enrolling their child/ren at Kootingal & District Preschool.

#### Goals – What are we going to do?

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The aim is to provide information to support families and the service develop clear and effective methods of communication to support the building of genuine partnerships and adopt appropriate and expected behaviour for families and educators. This includes acting as an advocate for individual children and discussing more complex and challenging issues that call for astute attention and respect.

It is anticipated that all stakeholders within the service will adopt the following qualities during their interactions:

- Honesty
- Integrity
- Inclusivity
- Democracy
- Respect
- Confidentiality

This policy also aims to define clear expectations and boundaries for interactions and to provide guidelines for staff and families to follow if boundaries are breached. In doing so, this provides an environment which protects the rights of children, caregivers, and staff to feel safe and respected.

#### Strategies – To achieve our goals

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Kootingal & District Preschool works very closely with all families who have children attending the service. Every family has different needs and educators work in accordance with each individual family's beliefs, customs, and values. This cannot occur when families are disrespectful or intimidating in any form and trusting relationships will inadvertently break down. These relationships need to be reciprocal and respect the rights of both parties.

If a family member or authorised person listed on a child's enrolment card has a concern or grievance it is expected they will raise this in an appropriate manner during operational hours. This will be addressed by the

Nominated Supervisor via email with *Complaints and Feedback* policy to be attached. All communication between families and staff need to occur during these operational hours

It is expected that families will collaborate with their child's educator/s, working together to support their child's learning and development. Our educators understand that families are often eager to find ways to strengthen the connection between home and our service within their busy lifestyle. We have a range of methods to promote effective communication with families and encourage families' interaction. Effective communication builds mutual respect, understanding and trust. For educators working with families, building a positive partnership includes sharing knowledge and experiences to understand your child.

We appreciate when families share information with our educators about their child. This may include informing the educator when your child has a restless night, sharing something your child has disclosed, or even talking about an activity or experience your child would like to do or share with others.

This continued information helps our educators support your child throughout the day. Communication is vital within our service, ensuring children's needs are being met.

### **Meeting with Educators or Management**

It is not always possible or effective to discuss issues 'on the spot'. Usually, most communication between families and educators occurs at child drop-off and pick-up times. This transition time typically is not conducive to meaningful exchanges; families can be rushed, educators are understandably focused on children's transitions, and in the case of full-day programs, educators who spend the largest amount of time with your child may not be available or not rostered on that day.

We encourage families to arrange a time away from the learning environment, where the educator can give families their full attention and make decisions that have been given careful consideration.

### **Respecting our Educators**

We request that all stakeholders involved with the service are respected. This includes respect for our educators, respect for the children and respect for the families.

If we work to share information, contribute ideas and together, reflect on practices we will have a network for your child that not only supports their time here at Kooitngal & District Preschool, but will also see them thrive.

We all have a common goal: What's best for your child. With that in mind, this journey will be rewarding for all.

Parents and family members are expected to model appropriate behaviour and suitable conduct when interacting with children and staff at our service, including various communication methods such as written, spoken or through social media. If the behaviour of a family member or visitor within the service is deemed threatening or violent, the Police may be informed and the child's enrolment position may be ceased.

### **Complaints or Grievances**

If there is an incident that has occurred that families are concerned with, we always want to hear and discuss the issue. We ask families to be mindful about discussing or talking about sensitive issues in front of others, including children. Where possible, ask your child's educator or relevant educator for a suitable time to discuss your complaint.

Families are encouraged to document their concerns via email outlining the incident or concern and submit this to the approved provider or nominated supervisor. Management will acknowledge your complaint and endeavour to achieve an outcome that supports the best interests and wellbeing of the child where possible. (See our *Complaints and Feedback* policy). We encourage all parents, carers and family members to work cooperatively with the person managing the complaint. Inappropriate behaviour will not be tolerated, and a meeting may be arranged.

Management will adhere to privacy and confidentiality laws. However, if the complaint is a notifiable incident (related to child protection or fraud), we are required to notify relevant authorities immediately.

## **Confidentiality**

Confidentiality is something we will not waiver on and expect the same from everyone involved, educators and families alike.

Information, including personal information (addresses, telephone numbers, email addresses) will not be disclosed to any individual without obtaining prior written permission of the respective person, including educators, staff, family members and parents. Families must ensure they do not share data or personal information of other family members, children or staff members from the service with anyone, including other families of the same Service. (See *Privacy and Confidentiality* policy).

We request that management is kept up to date with any parenting court orders or parenting agreements under Family Law if applicable.

All families are not to use or share images obtained from the service, via the Facebook page or other format. Families are not to share photographs taken during special events for publishing on any social media or for sharing in any format.

Families are asked to respect that staff are prohibited to share information about other children, families or staff members without expressed written consent to whom the information relates to. Additionally, families are not to connect with staff on social media platforms.

If you do have concerns regarding your child, please see your child's educator to arrange a time to meet. The meeting will be in a private area within the Service. If issues are still unresolved, then contact our nominated supervisor and reschedule a second meeting.

## **Policies and Procedures**

Our policies and procedures are reviewed at least annually or in the event of legislation changes, or upon critical reflection when modifications are required. We ask families to contribute and provide feedback to our policies and procedures to ensure child safety and wellbeing remains our priority. We aim to provide an environment that promotes and enables children's participation and is welcoming and culturally safe and inclusive for all children and families. We request that your feedback and contribution to policy review is through relevant communication channels and not derogatory in any way to our service.

## Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Authority/Responsibility For
Approved Provider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Provide and maintain safe systems of work</li> <li>➤ Maintain the workplace in a safe and healthy condition</li> <li>➤ Identifying, preventing, and addressing potential concerns before they become formal complaints/grievances if necessary</li> <li>➤ Assist in reaching a resolution with a family member if Nominated Supervisor cannot or the unacceptable behaviour is directed at the Nominated Supervisor</li> </ul>
Nominated Supervisor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Provide information, training and supervision for all educators enabling them to work alongside families in a respectful manner at all times</li> <li>➤ Notifying the Approved Provider if a situation escalates or is unable to be resolved appropriately in a timely manner</li> <li>➤ Listen to and aim to take on all feedback and information provided by a child's family</li> </ul>
Early Childhood Educators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Listen to and aim to take on all feedback and information provided by a child's family</li> <li>➤ Will make time to discuss children's development throughout the day, at pick up and drop off times</li> <li>➤ Will always interact in a respectful manner towards children and their families</li> <li>➤ Act in the best interests of children, families, other staff members and all stakeholders who use the service</li> <li>➤ Communication will include courteous, respectful and acceptable language</li> <li>➤ Seek help, advice or assistance when needed</li> <li>➤ On any occasion when a staff member has cause to believe that another staff member is being threatened or intimidated in any manner by a parent or other authorised person, they can choose to enter the interaction to support that person or immediately inform the Nominated Supervisor or Responsible Person</li> <li>➤ If a staff member feels that it is warranted or if there is an escalation in the unacceptable behaviour Police will be called.</li> </ul>
Families	<p>Parents/Guardians will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ If a parent wishes to meet with an educator for an extended time, they can request a more suitable time for both parties</li> <li>➤ Speak to all employees at Kootingal &amp; District Preschool with respect and courtesy and communicate in an appropriate manner</li> <li>➤ Share any pertinent information in a timely manner to ensure staff working with the child will be able to support the best interest of the child</li> <li>➤ Understand that unacceptable behaviour will not be tolerated</li> <li>➤ Advise Kootingal &amp; District Preschool or any potential conflict such as parent and family court orders in accordance with relevant laws</li> <li>➤ Respect the right to peace and privacy in their personal lives in a small community</li> <li>➤ Discuss issues with relevant staff members in private</li> </ul> <p>Parents/Guardians will not:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Exhibit verbally or non-verbally intimidating or abusive/aggressive behaviour</li> <li>➤ Refuse to engage in reciprocal and respectful communication</li> <li>➤ Place unfounded blame onto staff</li> <li>➤ Use any social media platform, text messages, phone calls or email communication to participate in negative communication</li> <li>➤ Misrepresent staff or Kootingal &amp; District Preschool in any form or in any place within the community</li> <li>➤ Discuss staff with other staff members or families in a negative manner</li> <li>➤ Use the preschool environment to air personal issues with other members of the preschool community</li> <li>➤ Discipline any child who is not their own</li> <li>➤ Present to the service affected by drugs/alcohol or consume these whilst present at the service</li> <li>➤ Smoke at the service</li> <li>➤ Disclose any personal details of a child or parent to another person without consent</li> <li>➤ Take photos of any child/children other than their own</li> </ul>
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### **Breaches to Kootingal & District Preschool policy:**

The Approved Provider reserves the right to take appropriate action if these policy guidelines are breached in any way.

Following are the consequences of such a breach:

- The staff will cease communication or interaction with the parent/carer
- The Nominated Supervisor will be informed of the breach and either verbally or in writing warn the family that such behaviour(s) is unacceptable and is not to occur again
- If the behaviour is repeated, a member of the Kootingal & District Preschool Management Committee will be contacted to speak with the family and a meeting will be arranged at a mutually agreeable time. It will be explained to the parent/guardian that further incidences of unacceptable behavior will result in exclusion from the service (the length of time/permanency will be decided between the Nominated Supervisor and committee member).

*Please note: The child may be able to continue attending the service. But arrangements must be made for another authorised person to drop off/pick up the child*

- A further meeting will be held to determine an appropriate course of action in order to move forward

If parents or family members are consistently in breach of these guidelines and following an evaluation by the nominated supervisor and/or the approved provider, any related enrolment/s may be at risk of being terminated.

### **Monitoring, Evaluation and Review**

Management and staff will monitor and review the effectiveness of the Workplace Health and Safety policy regularly. Updated information will be incorporated as needed.

Kootingal & District Preschool will have a safe and healthy work environment for educators, visitors, and families.

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 every two years.

Families and staff are essential stakeholders in the policy review process and will be given opportunity 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:

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Code of Conduct for Staff Members

Complaints and Feedback

Emergency and Evacuation

Participation of Students and Volunteers

Family Participation and Communication

### Complies with:

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## NQS

Quality Area 6	Collaborative partnerships with families and communities
Quality Area 7	Governance and leadership

## National Law

Section	168	Policies and procedures are required in relation to health and safety
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### Links to:

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- Children (Education and Care Services National Law) Act 2010
- Educational and Care Services National Regulations
- Work Health and Safety Bill 2011
- Community Early Learning Australia Sample Policy: Parent Code of Conduct

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