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Children Services Code of Ethical Conduct Policy – Centre-based Care/Out of School Hours Care	1.0.0	September 2027
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22 April 2026	7085	New Policy

Purpose

Greater Hume Council Children Services strives to maintain an inclusive and welcoming environment and workplace that motivates and facilitates personal growth and development for staff and educators. The values that underpin our work ethic include equality, respect, integrity, and responsibility.

Our Service is committed to adhere to the Early Childhood Australia (ECA) Code of Ethics (2016) which is based on the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1991) and provides a framework for the reflection about the ethical responsibilities of early childhood professionals.

Greater Hume Children Services aims to establish a common understanding of workplace standards and ethics expected of all staff.

Our Service is committed to creating and maintaining an environment that promotes the safety of all children and embeds the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.

Scope

This policy applies to staff, educators, management, approved provider, nominated supervisor, students, families, children, volunteers and visitors of the Service.

All staff and volunteers are responsible for promoting a culture of safety and wellbeing to minimise the risk of child abuse or harm to children whilst promoting children's sense of security and belonging. Employees, educators, staff and management understand that child safety is everyone's responsibility

Definitions

NAME	DEFINITION
Approved provider	A person who holds a provider approval and has primary legal responsibility under the National Law and National Regulations to ensure good governance and management of the service.
Nominated supervisor	A person with responsibility for the day-to-day management of an approved service. The nominated supervisor has a range of responsibilities under the Law and Regulations that govern the operation of education and care services.
Education and Care National Regulations	The Education and Care National Regulations provide detailed, day-to-day operational rules supporting Australia's National Law , covering staffing, quality standards (NQS), approval processes, and service requirements (like ratios, safety) for early childhood services to ensure child

	safety and quality education, complementing the foundational National Law framework.
National Quality Framework	The benchmark for early childhood education and care, focusing on seven key areas to ensure better outcomes for children and support for families, guiding services through a national framework for quality improvement
Early Childhood Australian Code of Ethics	The ECA Code of Ethics is a set of statements about appropriate and expected behaviour of early childhood professionals.
National Principles for Child Safe Organisations	Reflect ten child safe standards recommended by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse and are the vehicle for giving recommendations relating to the standards.
Mandatory reporter	A person who is required to report known and suspected cases of child abuse and neglect to a nominated government department or agency.
Rights of the Child	Human rights belonging to all children, as specified in the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child.
Wellbeing	Sound wellbeing results from the satisfaction of basic needs. It includes happiness and satisfaction, effective social functioning and the dispositions of optimism, openness, curiosity, and resilience.

Policy Content

The approved provider, nominated supervisor, educators, staff, volunteers, and students will adhere to the Early Childhood Australian Code of Ethics, Education and Care Services National Regulations and National Quality Standard, Child Safe Standards and Service policies and procedures at all times, promoting positive interactions both within the Service and the local community.

Employees, educators, staff and management are committed to the Service philosophy and values, inclusive of best practice in early childhood education and building positive partnership with children, families and staff.

Our Service will conduct a comprehensive probation and induction orientation program for all new employees, volunteers and students to include awareness of their roles and responsibilities in relation to Child Safe practices and Child Protection reporting obligations. Policies and procedures have been developed and implemented to ensure employees, educators, staff, students, visitors and families are aware of the standards of behaviour that is expected within the service. Employees, educators, staff and management are informed that inappropriate behaviour, including bullying, sexual harassment, discrimination and harassment will not be tolerated.

Respect for People and the Service

The following are expected behaviours of all employees:

- effective, open, and respectful reciprocal communication and feedback between employees, children, families, and management
- it is important to treat colleagues, children, and families with respect. Bullying or insulting behaviour, including verbal and non-verbal aggression, abusive, threatening, or derogatory

language or intimidation towards other employees, educators, staff, management, children, visitors, or families is unacceptable and will not be tolerated

- employees, educators, staff and management are committed to valuing and promoting the safety, health, and wellbeing of employees, volunteers, children, and families
- employees, educators, staff and management promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander children to express their culture and enjoy their cultural rights
- employees, educators, staff and management promote the safety, participation and empowerment of children with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds to support children to express their culture and enjoy their cultural rights
- employees, educators, staff and management promote the safety, participation and empowerment of children with a disability
- employees, educators, staff and management are committed to an equal opportunity workplace and culture which values the knowledge, experience, and professionalism of all employees, team members, and managers, and the diverse heritage of our families and children
- employees, educators, staff and management respect the privacy of children and their families by keeping all information about child protection concerns confidential and only share information to promote child wellbeing or safety and /or manage risk of family violence with other Information Sharing Entities
- it is important employees, educators, staff and management listen and respond to the views and concerns of children particularly if they are telling you that they or another child has been abused or they are worried about their safety or the safety of another

Compliance with Policy, Procedure, Legislation and Regulations

It is expected that employees will:

- adhere to the Code of Conduct Policy
- ensure their Working with Children Check (WWCC) is valid and current
- ensure their work is carried out proficiently, harmoniously, and effectively
- act in a professional and respectful manner at all times whilst at work, giving their full attention to their responsibilities and adhering to all Service policies, procedures, Child Safe Standards, Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations, and the National Quality Standard
- act honestly and exercise attentiveness in all Service operations
- carry out all lawful directions, retaining the right to question any direction which they consider to be unethical. If uncertain they can seek advice from the nominated supervisor, approved provider or the Ombudsman
- uphold the rights of children and always prioritise their needs
- treat all children and young people with respect
- promote the wellbeing and safety of children and take all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse
- provide adequate supervision of children at all times
- understand their legislative responsibility as mandatory reporters to report any allegation of child abuse, neglect or possible risk of harm to management or Child Protection authority
- understand their 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
- participate in all mandatory training, including update of Child Protection Law training and reporting process
- report any instances of suspected corrupt conduct, mismanagement of government funds or other serious allegation to the Department of Education via their Online contact form. For more information visit the Department of Education website: Reporting fraud via a tip-off <https://www.education.gov.au/early-childhood/providers/compliance-and-enforcement/report-ccs-fraud>
- follow and comply with the Dealing with Complaints Policy when matters are raised regarding child safety and wellbeing

- have a solid understanding of the Service's policies and procedures, Child Safe Standards and the ECA Code of Ethics. If uncertain about the content of any policy or procedure with which they must comply, employees should seek clarification from the nominated supervisor or approved provider
- report any incidents or bullying, discrimination or harassment, including sexual harassment they have experienced or witnessed

Behaviour and Conduct

It is expected that employees will:

- be courteous and responsive when dealing with colleagues, management, students, visitors, children and families
- work collaboratively with colleagues and management families and members of the community with courtesy, respect and recognise and value diversity
- be mindful of their duty of care towards themselves and others
- be positive role models for children at all times
- ensure compliance with a zero tolerance of racism within the Service
- respect the confidential nature of information gained about each child enrolled in our Service
- engage in critical reflection to inform individual and collective decision making and ensure continual improvement, including a review of Child Safe policies and procedures

The following behaviour and conduct is not permitted (but is not limited to the following):

- unauthorised absence
- having personal visitors whilst on shift
- continued personal phone calls
- using a personal mobile phone or device to take photographs or video of children
- unauthorised solicitation or distribution of money or materials
- consistent or ongoing poor work standard
- carelessness in the performance of duties
- consistent or ongoing low level of enthusiasm
- lack of personal cleanliness and hygiene
- taking excessive breaks
- failure to report health, fire or safety hazards
- repeated tardiness.

Expectations of Leaders & Management

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

- 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 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
- 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 Working with Children Checks
- model and provide guidance to educators and staff to ensure compliance with a zero tolerance of racism within the Service.

National Model Code and Guidelines – Digital Technology

Our Service is mindful that educators have a duty of care to ensure children are protected from potential risk of harm. It is imperative that all employees of the Service provide children with their full attention, ensuring supervision is maintained and remains on the children at all times.

Our Service has adopted the [National Model Code and Guidelines](#) for taking images or videos of children.

- only service-issued/approved devices are to be used when taking images or video of children
- personal electronic devices that can take images or videos (such as tablets, phones, digital cameras, smart watches and personal storage and file transfer media (such as SD cards, USB drives, hard drives and cloud storage) should not be in the possession of any person while providing education and care and working directly with children
- Staff must disable notifications on smart watches and refrain from interacting with watches during supervision or direct engagement with children
- authorisation is only provided for a staff member or educator to use a personal electronic device for essential purposes (personal health requirement, disability, family necessity, local emergency event, technology failure)
- strict protocols are implemented for appropriate storage and retention of images and videos of children
- adhere to the Bring your Own Device and Mobile Policy

Appropriate Use of Electronic Communication and Social Networking Sites

Social Media

As a Child Safe Organisation, our Service has the responsibility to ensure children and educators are protected from harm when they engage with digital technology including social media.

Strict guidelines for the use of social media are outlined in our Social Media Policy and in association with our Safe Use of Digital Technologies and Online Environments Policy - CBC – OSHC the following applies:

- the Service offers its current enrolled families and staff members a Facebook page as a communication tool. The administrator of the account is the Service's Nominated Supervisor
- the Administrator controls the content on the page and ensures that the postings are relevant and respectful of the Service, the children, the staff, families, and greater community
- staff members who have a personal Facebook account are not permitted to post any negative comments relating to the Service, children, colleagues, or families
- staff members are to use their own personal discretion when adding a family of the Service as a 'friend' on Facebook. The Service does not recommend staff to add families of the Service as they will be seen still as a representative of the Service and held to the Service's Code of Conduct on all posts on their private 'wall' if families have access
- families are advised to please respect that staff may have a personal policy on adding families due to their professional philosophy and that the Service does not recommend staff to have families as friends on their private account.

Personal Phone Calls/Mobile Phones/Smart Watches

- employees are not authorised to use the Service's phones for personal reasons unless in the case of an emergency or with permission from management
- no personal mail or deliveries should be directed to the Service unless prior approval has been

granted by the nominated supervisor/management

- employees are not to contact families or children of the Service for personal reasons
- if, for personal reasons an employee needs to remain contactable from someone outside the Service they should ensure that the situation is explained to management and that the service's primary contact details are passed on to the persons/family outside the Service
- children are at no time to be given access to staff mobile phones
- employees are not permitted to use smart watches to access emails and social media during working hours. Smart watches are only to be used for viewing the time
- if it becomes apparent that employees are using their smart watches to check and respond to messages during shifts, they will be asked to either leave them at home or place in a designated locker / secure location until the end of their shift
- personal mobile phones and smart watches may be used during shift breaks when employees are free from work and supervision duties, they are not to be used in general sight of children, unless a situation arises where there is an emergency

Service Email

- email is to be used only for company usage, not for private communications
- passwords and access privileges are strictly confidential and to be used only by the educator issued with that access, or persons delegated to know and use that access in the normal course of operation
- it is the responsibility of the authorised user to take fair and reasonable steps to ensure the passwords and other forms of access are held safe
- employees are to be aware that their Service email account may be accessed by management at any time.

Use Of Alcohol, Drugs and Tobacco

- smoking or vaping is NOT permitted in or on surrounding areas of the Service
- it is expected that the odour of cigarette smoke will not be detected on an employee's clothing. If an employee is found smoking/vaping on the premises, that employee's employment may be terminated. Our Service supports the Smoke Free Environment Act 2000. The Service and its employees will follow all conditions outlined in this act
- our Service is bound by the Education and Care Services National Regulations. Alcohol, drugs, or other substance abuse by employees can have serious adverse effects on their own health and the safety of others. As such, all employees must not:
 - consume alcohol nor be under the influence of alcohol while working
 - use or possess illegal drugs at any workplace
 - drive a vehicle, having consumed alcohol or suffering from the effects of illegal substances, or
 - bring alcohol or any illegal drugs onto the premises.
- if a co-worker suspects a colleague to be affected by drugs or alcohol, they must inform the nominated supervisor immediately. No employee will be allowed to work under the influence of drugs or alcohol. (See: Alcohol and other Drugs Policy)
- employees undergoing prescribed medical treatment with a controlled substance that may affect the safe performance of their duties are required to report this to the nominated supervisor. Consideration will be given as to whether the particular medication affects the person's capacity to provide education and care to children
- all issues pertaining to these matters shall be kept strictly confidential. A breach of this policy may initiate appropriate action including the termination of employment

Personal Standards and Presentation

Educators will:

- wear enclosed shoes at all times (strictly no high heels, thongs, or wedges)
- ensure clothes must be suitable for free movement, active play, and messy play
- not wear items of clothing with offensive logos or political statements
- ensure jewellery is appropriate – for earrings small studs only to be worn

Personal Hygiene

All employees are to adhere to the following standards:

- long hair is to be clean and neatly tied back, ensure hair does not hang in your eyes
- makeup is to be light and natural
- fingernails are to be clean and well groomed
- nail polish (if worn) cannot be chipped
- employees will follow appropriate oral hygiene practices
- an appropriate deodorant/antiperspirant will be worn
- strong perfumes will not be worn as they may cause allergic reactions in children

Requests by Families for Outside of Service Care

Where a staff member is approached by a family or guardian to provide care and supervision arrangements (i.e. babysitting) external to the services of Greater Hume Council, the following applies:

- should employees undertake private babysitting arrangements with families, our Service takes no responsibility for any private arrangements between staff members and the family. However, we do expect staff to inform the Service if they are babysitting or caring for a child that attends the Service
- all staff are bound by contract to the Service's Privacy and Confidentiality Policy, where they are unable to discuss any issues regarding the Service, other staff members, parents/families, or other children

Employee Obligations

- all employees are required by law to undergo a Working with Children Check (WWCC) which is verified by the employer to ensure it is valid and current
- employees are required to notify management immediately of any enforcement actions issued to them during their course of employment
- if employees become aware of a serious crime committed by another employee, they are required to report it to management
- 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
- 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
- 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)

Adhering To Service Confidentiality

- unless authorised to do so by legislation, employees must not disclose or use any confidential information without appropriate approval (including written approval as required)
- lawful sharing of information with other parties must be to promote the wellbeing or safety of children and adhere to guidelines under Child and Family Information Sharing Schemes
- all employees are to ensure that confidential information is not accessed by unauthorised people
- employees will adhere to the Service's Privacy and Confidentiality Policy

Record Keeping

- Employees and management will maintain full, accurate, and honest records as required by the Education and Care Services National Regulations
- The approved provider has a responsibility to ensure that employees comply with their record keeping obligation outlined in the Record Keeping and Retention Policy
- Employees must not destroy records without permission from management
- Records must be retained and stored securely.

Duty Of Care

- the approved provider, management and employees have a responsibility to take reasonable care for the health and safety of themselves and others at the workplace
- duty of Care relates to both physical and psychological wellbeing of individuals
- the approved provider, management and employees must provide adequate supervision of children at all times and ensure the health, safety and welfare of children and young people in their care, this includes taking all reasonable action to protect children and young people from risk of harm that can be reasonably predicted

Breach of this Policy:

Breaches of the Code of Ethical Conduct and role responsibilities may result in disciplinary or legal action which may lead to termination of the Educator with the service.

More specifically, if an Educator or staff member was found to have engaged in the following conduct this may constitute serious misconduct and may result in disciplinary or legal action that may lead to termination:

- 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 will not support those who do this
- condone or participate in illegal, unsafe or abusive behaviour towards children, including physical, sexual or psychological abuse, ill-treatment, neglect or grooming
- exaggerate or trivialise child abuse issues
- fail to report information to the approved provider if they know a child has been abused
- engage in unwarranted and inappropriate touching involving a child
- persistently criticise and/or denigrate a child
- verbally assault a child or create a climate of fear
- encourage a child to communicate with an adult in a private setting
- share details of sexual experiences with a child
- use sexual language or gestures in the presence of children
- discriminate against any child, because of culture, race, ethnicity or disability
- put children at risk of abuse- refusing food/play, making threats, exposing children to inappropriate language or material (movies, internet, photos)
- show preferential behaviour towards any child
- accept an offer of money, regardless of the amount
- seek or accept a bribe
- acquire personal profit or advantage because of their position (e.g., through the use of Service information)
- exchange any property of the Service for own use unless properly authorised
- engage in any action in breach of our Privacy and Confidentiality Policy, including but not limited to disclosure of confidential Service or customer information, or the improper or illegal use of that confidential information; authorised persons will only access confidential information for the purpose intended
- engage in or support any action in breach of Service policies and/or procedures

All employees are made fully aware that the following breaches of the Code of Ethical Conduct Policy and role responsibilities may result in disciplinary action which may lead to termination of employment. The following conduct will also constitute a breach of this policy:

- reporting to work under the influence of alcohol or drugs
- refusal to complete mandated professional training
- possessing or selling drugs at the Service

- immoral, immature, or indecent conduct while at the Service
- inappropriate use of company equipment and/or resources
- refusing to work as reasonably directed
- possessing a dangerous weapon whilst at the Service
- bringing disrepute to the Service
- causing disruption or discontent in the relationship between a family and the Service
- disclosure of confidential information
- falsifying documentation
- stealing, abusing, defacing, or destroying company property
- interfering with work schedules
- falsification of reports, documents, or wages information
- failure to report for work without notice
- walking off the job
- failure to follow policies and procedures
- vulgarity or disrespectful conduct to families, management or colleagues
- making or publishing false, vicious, or malicious statements about any employee of the Service, or the Service itself
- failure to hand in lost property (this is regarded as stealing): Lost property is to be handed to the nominated supervisor
- unable to maintain or hold a current Working with Children Check/Clearance.

Reporting and Managing a Breach

Our Service aims to foster a culture of transparency and accountability while supporting employees to report any reasonable suspicion of reportable matters of improper, illegal or misconduct within the service to management including, but not limited to:

- breaches of the Service code of conduct or service policies
- breaches of Education and Care Services National Law or Regulations
- breaches of legislation or law
- criminal activity
- corruption
- conduct that poses a danger or harm to any person/s
- harassment or discrimination
- improper or misleading financial practices.

Our Service will implement protective practices to ensure employees identity is not compromised or disclosed, where applicable, following a report of a reportable matter including storage of documents in a secure and confidential manner and ensuring access to confidential documents is restricted to authorised personnel only. Once a report has been made the matter may be investigated through a formal investigation.

Continuous Improvement/Reflection

The Code of Ethical Conduct Policy will be evaluated and reviewed on an annual basis in conjunction with children, families, staff, educators and management.

Links to Policy

Child Protection Policy

Child Safe Policy

Safe Use of Digital Technologies and Online Environments Policy

Governance and Management

Privacy and Confidentiality

Complaints Handling

Interactions with Children Policy

Determining Responsible Person Policy

Staffing Policy
Social Media Policy
Inclusion Policy
Incident Injury Trauma and illness Policy
Code of Conduct for NSW Local Councils 2020
Alcohol and Other Drugs Policy
Providing a Child Safe Environment Policy

Links to Procedure

Code of Conduct Procedure
Complaints Handling Procedure
Child Protection Procedure
Determining the Responsible Person Procedure
Inclusion Procedure
Privacy and Confidentiality Procedure

Links to Forms

Complaint form

References

Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2024).
National Quality Framework [Guide to the National Quality Framework](#)
National Model Code for Early Childhood Education and Care [National Model Code for Early Childhood Education and Care](#).
Anti-Discrimination Act: See <https://raisingchildren.net.au/disability/disability-rights-the-law/law/anti-discrimination-laws> for Acts for specific Australian states and territories.
Australian Human Rights Commission <https://www.humanrights.gov.au/our-work/childrens-rights>
Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics. (2016).
Australian Government. Fair Work Ombudsman. (2024). [Hiring employees](#)
National Principles for Child Safe Organisations
NSW Government [Office of the Children's Guardian](#) *Code of Conduct- a guide to developing child safe Codes of Conduct*. (2020).
Ombudsman Act 2001 (Cth).
Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 (Cth).
Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (Cth).
Workplace Relations Act 1996 (Cth).
Smoke Free Environment Act 2000

Responsibility

Nominated Supervisor (Manager Children Services)

Document Author

Nominated Supervisor (Manager Children Services)

Relevant Legislation

Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010: Section 167
Education and Care Services National Regulations: Regulations 99, 102, 160, 161, 168(2)(m)
Family Law Act 1975 (Cth), as amended 2011
Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998
Disability Inclusion Act 2014
Disability Inclusion Regulation 2014.

Associated Records

Nil

