

# INTERACTIONS WITH CHILDREN, FAMILIES & STAFF POLICY

My Time, Our Place (MTOPI) identifies secure, respectful, and reciprocal relationships with children and young people as one of the principles that underpin practice. Within our Out of School Hours Care (OSHC) community many different relationships are negotiated with and between children and young people, educators, and families. The way in which these relationships are established and maintained, and the way in which they remain visible impacts on how our community functions as a whole. Relationships directly affect how children and young people form their own identity, whether or not they feel safe and supported, and ultimately, their sense of belonging.

## 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 LAW AND REGULATIONS	
S.166	Offence to use inappropriate discipline
73	Educational program
84	Awareness of child protection law
115	Premises designed to facilitate supervision
117A	Placing a person in day-to-day charge
118	Educational leader
123	Educator to child ratios-centre-based services
126	Centre-based services- general educator qualifications
145	Staff record
155	Interactions with children
156	Relationships in groups
157	Access for parents
168	Education and care services must have policies and procedures
170	Policies and procedures to be followed

## RELATED POLICIES

Behaviour Guidance Policy Child Protection Policy Child Safe Environment Policy Code of Conduct Policy Dealing with Complaints Policy Delivery of Children to, and Collection from and Education and Care Service Premises Educational Program Policy Enrolment Policy Family Communication Policy	Governance Policy Management Committee Policy Orientation of Families Policy Open Door Policy Privacy and Confidentiality Policy Relief Staff Policy Respect for Children Policy Social Media Policy Staffing Arrangement Policy Student and Volunteer Policy Supervision Policy
----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

## PURPOSE

We aim to build positive relationships with children and young people, families, and educators through



collaboration and interactions, which are reflective of our Out of School Hours Care (OSHC) Service philosophy and the *My Time, Our Place Framework* (V2.0). Educators will encourage positive relationships between children and young people and their peers as well as with educators and families at the Service, ensuring children and young people feel safe and supported.

## SCOPE

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

## IMPLEMENTATION

Under the *Education and Care Services National Regulations*, the approved provider must ensure that policies and procedures are in place for interactions with children and young people (Regulation 168) and take reasonable steps to ensure those policies and procedures are followed.

To build and maintain positive and respectful relationships with children and young people, families, and educators our OSHC Service will adhere to our statement of philosophy and the ACA Code of Ethics. We aim to provide a child safe culture where our values and practices that guide the attitudes and behaviour of all staff are guided by the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations and the implementation of the Child Safe Standards.

## INTERACTIONS WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Children and young people need positive relationships with educators that are trusting and responsive to their individual needs. Through these experiences and interactions children and young people will develop a positive understanding of themselves and feel a sense of belonging. We promote a respectful, child safe culture where children and young people concerns are always responded to, and children and young people feel empowered to participate in decisions and provide feedback to educators and staff.

## THE APPROVED PROVIDER/ NOMINATED SUPERVISOR WILL:

- ensure obligations under the *Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations* are met



- ensure educators, staff, students, visitors and volunteers have knowledge of and adhere to this policy and procedure
- ensure all new employees, students and volunteers are provided with a copy of this policy as part of their induction process
- create a welcoming and relaxed atmosphere in which children and young people experience equitable, friendly and genuine interactions with all educators
- meet educator to child ratio and qualification requirements
- ensure all educators and staff have undertaken current child protection legislation training including mandatory reporting requirements and obligations
- ensure that no child is subjected to any form of corporal punishment or any discipline that is unreasonable or inappropriate in the circumstances (S. 166 National Law)

#### EDUCATORS WILL:

- role-model appropriate language and behaviour
- support children and young people to be aware of their own feelings as well as the feelings of others
- encourage children and young people to treat all other children and young people with respect
- provide children and young people with the opportunity to explore their dispositions for learning by expressing themselves and their opinions
- ensure children and young people are aware of how to raise concerns or provide feedback
- respond or report to children and young people about how their feedback has been acted upon
- assist the children and young people to build resilience and self-assurance through positive interactions
- guide children and young people's behaviour positively
- respect the rights, dignity and agency of children (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child)
- support children and young people within the OSHC learning environment
- provide appropriate supervision so children and young people feel safe in their interactions with other children
- speak to children and young people in a positive manner at all times, promoting respect, tolerance and empathy, including the use of non-verbal cues and communication
- engage in meaningful, open interactions that support the acquisition of skills for life and learning of children and young people

- respect each child and young person’s uniqueness, be attuned to, and respond sensitively and appropriately to children and young people’s efforts to communicate and use the child and young person’s own language, communication styles, and culture to enhance interactions
- listen to children and young people and take them seriously; support and encourage children and young people to use appropriate language in their interactions with adults and peers. Educators will extend upon children and young people’s interests and ideas through questions and discussions, supported and made visible in observations, reflections, and programming.
- understand their reporting requirements and respond to any incident, disclosure or suspicion of child abuse or harm
- communicate with children and young people by getting down to their level, using eye contact, and showing respect to the child and young person whilst engaging in and promoting effective communication
- show empathy to children and young people
- ensure that the values, beliefs, and cultural practices of the child and young people and family are considered and respected (Reg. 155)
- ensure that no child or young person 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 young people and how these can be improved to benefit each child
- facilitate children and young people’s individual development extending upon their strengths, interests and abilities

### INTERACTIONS WITH FAMILIES

Effective communication is the key to developing and maintaining positive interactions and relationships with others and helps to build trusting and respectful partnerships with families. Educators use positive and open communication with families and siblings in order to create a responsive and inclusive environment for children and young people, staff and families. Interactions with families help to inform educators’ knowledge of each child and young person’s distinctive interests, skills cultures and abilities. This helps to build a positive experience and a safe learning environment that encourages children to expand their knowledge and understandings.

### MANAGEMENT AND EDUCATORS WILL ENSURE:



- all families are treated equitably without bias or judgement, recognising that each family is unique
- families are provided with information and resources in their first language
- families are asked to identify a preferred method of regular communication with the Service (this may include utilising a translator service)
- families and children and young people are greeted upon arrival in a respectful manner
- the names of family members are learnt and these names are used when they greet them
- two-way communication is established through leading by example and asking questions and a willingness to offer information about ourselves
- common terminology (not jargon) is used when talking to parents regarding their child and young person's development
- privacy and confidentiality are respected at all times
- information about another child or young person or family information is never discussed with a parent or visitor
- sensitive to cultural differences amongst families are remained and families are encouraged to share cultural aspects with the children and educators at the service
- the advice and opinion from other professional experts are requested, with parental permission, to assist educators develop and implement strategies to support the inclusion of children and young people with additional needs
- additional resources and professional support for families is sought through a range of organisations such as KU Inclusion Support, Area Health and other specific health professional networks
- verbal communication is always open, respectful and honest
- families are provided with up-to-date service information and notices through Audiri and Seesaw.
- regularly reflect on family input are reflected regularly into the program and changes are made where necessary that will best benefit the service and children and young people
- connections between families are promoted and enhanced through inviting families to participate in routines and events at the OSHC Service
- families are aware of our complaint handling process- (*Dealing with Complaints Policy*)

## INTERACTIONS WITH STAFF AND EDUCATORS

The OSHC Service recognises that the way educators interact with each other has an effect on the interactions they have with children and young people and families. Educators working within our OSHC Service are required to demonstrate mutual respect towards each other and value the contributions



made by each educator. This enables our OSHC Service to maintain positive relations and model the type of communication they want children and young people to develop.

#### **TO MAINTAIN PROFESSIONALISM AT ALL TIMES, MANAGEMENT WILL:**

- provide new educators with relevant information about the OSHC Service and program through a Staff Handbook, induction, and daily communication
- treat educators with respect
- be sensitive to the feelings and needs of educators
- provide constructive feedback to educators as part of their professional learning plan support
- value the role and contribution of each educator
- demonstrate commitment to ongoing collaboration and engagement to support staff wellness
- provide opportunities for all educators to have input into the program development and evaluation
- appreciate and utilise educator skills and interests
- provide support, assistance and mentoring to educators
- hold regular educator meetings to encourage and support professional growth and reflective practice
- use appropriate conflict resolution techniques to solve problems
- ensure policies and procedures are up to date regarding communication, expected behaviour and grievances
- provide opportunities for professional development.

#### **TO MAINTAIN PROFESSIONALISM AT ALL TIMES, EDUCATORS WILL:**

- engage in professional communication in order to create an effective work environment and to build a positive relationship with educators, children and young people and families. Communication amongst colleagues creates a positive atmosphere and a professional image for families. Communication between staff and families ensures that important information is being passed on consistently.
- champion a child safe culture through their attitudes, behaviours and actions
- collaborate together as a team sharing roles and responsibilities through the use of a roster where necessary
- 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 and add to individual skills and knowledge



- keep up to date with current legislation to child protection including mandatory reporting requirements – (*Child Protection, Reportable Conduct Scheme*)
- refer to the *Dealing with Complaints Policy (Staff) /Procedure* if they feel a situation with another educator is not being handled with professionalism, respect, and fairness
- recognise each other’s strengths and value the contribution each person makes to different work roles
- work collaboratively to reach decisions which will enhance the quality of the education and care offered at the OSHC Service
- welcome diverse views and perspectives
- work together as a team and engage 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 use experience to develop more effective methods of working together.

### TO ENHANCE COMMUNICATION AND TEAMWORK, EDUCATORS WILL:

- maintain privacy and confidentiality
- be respectful, caring and inclusive of all colleagues
- be sensitive to the feelings and needs of other colleagues
- support colleagues during difficult situations
- provide constructive feedback to each other
- trust each other
- value the role and contribution of colleagues
- appreciate and utilise colleague skills, strengths and interests regardless of qualification and experience
- provide support and assistance to each other
- share responsibilities
- have a flexible attitude towards team roles and responsibilities
- greet each other by name
- 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

- use appropriate conflict resolution techniques to solve problems
- engage in opportunities for professional development.

## CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT/REFLECTION

Our *Interaction with Children, Families and Staff Policy* will be reviewed on an annual basis in consultation with children, families, staff, educators and management.

## SOURCES

- Australian Children’s Education & Care Quality Authority. (2014).
- Australian Children’s Education & Care Quality Authority. (2023). [Guide to the National Quality Framework](#).
- Australian Children’s Education & Care Quality Authority. (2021). Policy and Procedure Guidelines- *Interactions with Children*
- Australian Human Rights Commission. Child Safe Organisations. <https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/childrens-rights/projects/child-safe-organisations>
- Child Australia *Cultural Connections Booklet*. (2017).
- Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics. (2016).
- Australian Government Department of Education (2022). [My Time, Our Place- Framework for School Age Care in Australia.V2.0](#)
- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010. (Amended 2023).
- [Education and Care Services National Regulations](#). (Amended 2023).
- NSW Department of Education. (2021). [Implementing the Child Safe Standards: A guide for early childhood education and outside school hours care services](#).
- Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998* (Cth).
- Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (2011) Melbourne Graduate School of Education *Evidence Paper Practice Principle 5: Respectful relationships and responsive engagement* <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/childhood/providers/edcare/respectrelns.pdf>
- [Western Australian Education and Care Services National Regulations](#)

## REVIEW

POLICY REVIEWED BY	Xin Wang & Sheridan Fiegert	Deputy Director and Director	23/10/24
POLICY REVIEWED	October 2024	NEXT REVIEW DATE	October 2025
VERSION NUMBER	V9.05.24		
MODIFICATIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• annual policy maintenance</li> <li>• added information about receiving gifts from families</li> <li>• minor edits</li> <li>• sources checked for currency and updated as required</li> </ul>		

POLICY REVIEWED	PREVIOUS MODIFICATIONS	NEXT REVIEW DATE
MAY 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• annual policy maintenance</li> <li>• hyperlinks checked and repaired as required</li> <li>• continuous improvement/reflection section added</li> <li>• link to Western Australian Education and Care Services National Regulations added in 'Sources'</li> </ul>	MAY 2024
MAY 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• policy maintenance – change of name of related policy</li> <li>• no major changes to policy</li> <li>• minor formatting edits within text</li> <li>• hyperlinks checked and repaired as required</li> </ul>	MAY 2023
AUGUST 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• edits to policy guided by ACECQA <i>Interactions with Children policy guidelines</i> (August 2021)</li> <li>• inclusion of additional regulations</li> <li>• inclusion of commitment to Child Safe Standards to ensure a child safe culture within the service</li> </ul>	MAY 2022
MAY 2021	No major changes to policy sources checked for currency	MAY 2022
MAY 2020	additional content added to sections as highlighted rewording of some points to ensure clarification some statements moved into interactions with staff and educators minor adjustments to formatting for consistency additional sources utilised within policy as referenced	MAY 2021
MAY 2019	Added section ' <i>To enhance communication and teamwork, Management will:</i> ' taking relevant points from section ' <i>To enhance communication and teamwork, Educators will:</i> '. Sources checked for currency. Sources/references alphabetised	MAY 2020
MAY 2018	New policy created	MAY 2019