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Respect | Learning | Teamwork | Perseverance

OSHC POLICY: RELATIONSHIPS AND INTERACTIONS WITH CHILDREN

HELP FOR THOSE WITH LIMITED ENGLISH LANGUAGE SKILLS

Neerim South Primary School Outside School Hours Care Service offers support to stakeholders who have limited English language skills, including access to interpreting and translation services, to communicate key information about service policies and procedures.
If you need assistance to understand the information in this policy, please contact the Neerim South Primary School OSHC Service Coordinator or the School Administration Office and ask for language assistance.

POLICY STATEMENT & PRINCIPLES

Neerim South Primary School Outside School Hours Care (NSPS OSHC) recognises the importance of children experiencing nurturing, respectful and reciprocal relationships with educators, which helps support their understanding of themselves as competent, capable and respected individuals.

The OSHC service is committed to ensuring all interactions with children are **respectful, inclusive, positive, and child-centred**. Educators recognise that children have the right to feel safe, be heard, and be treated with dignity. Interactions will support children's agency, wellbeing, and participation, while protecting them from harm, abuse, or neglect.

We value the important role that OSHC educators and staff play in children's education and care. We equip them with the necessary knowledge and skills to enable them to interact positively with the children and promote relationships between children.

In compliance with r.155 and r.156 of the National Law, Educators at NSPS OSHC Service are committed to developing and maintaining positive relationships in groups and interacting with children in a way that:

- Encourages each child to express themselves and their opinions
- Allows each child to undertake experiences that develop self-reliance and self-esteem
- Always maintains the dignity and rights of each child
- Gives each child positive guidance and encouragement toward acceptable behaviour
- Has regard to the family and cultural values, age, and physical and intellectual development and abilities of each child at the service
- Ensures children have opportunities to interact and develop respectful and positive relationships with each other and with educators, staff, and volunteers

The following principles guide positive interactions between educators and children in OSHC and are, aligned with the Child Safe Standards, the National Law & National Quality Framework (NQF), and the My Time, Our Place – Framework for School Age Care in Australia:

PRINCIPLE	PRACTICE
Prioritise child safe and wellbeing	All interactions must protect children from harm, uphold their rights, and promote emotional and physical safety. Educators remain vigilant, responsive, and trauma-informed.
Build respectful, warm and trusting relationships	Educators show genuine interest, listen attentively, and respond sensitively. Children feel heard, valued, and respected.
Promote children agency and choice	Children are supported to express opinions, make choices, negotiate play, and influence program decisions—reflecting the approved framework for school age care's focus on agency and active citizenship.
Ensure inclusive and culturally safe practice	Interactions embrace diversity, respect cultural identities (including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures), and foster a sense of belonging for every child.
Maintain professional boundaries and transparent conduct	Educators interact in ways that are appropriate, observable, and accountable, in line with child-safe standards, ECA code of ethics, and NSPS OHSC Service policies and procedures such as code of conduct and child safe behaviours; children's devices, technologies and online environments; providing a child safe environment; and behaviour support.
Communicate positively and constructively	Educators use strengths-based language, encourage problem-solving, and model positive social behaviours and interactions. Feedback is supportive, not punitive.
Foster collaborative learning and play	Interactions encourage cooperation, teamwork, creativity, and exploration. Educators join children's play respectfully.
Respond to children's behaviour with support and guidance	Behaviour guidance strategies are consistent with the National Law: respectful, developmentally appropriate, restorative, and focused on skill-building. Refer to service behaviour guidance and support policy.
Create predictable, fair and empowering environments.	Clear expectations, routines, and shared agreements help children feel safe and confident. Children participate in setting group norms.
Engage in reflective practice	Educators regularly reflect on their interactions—considering power dynamics, equity, emotional safety, and continuous improvement aligned with approved learning frameworks and the NQS.

BACKGROUND & SCOPE

Child Safe Standard 3 promotes the empowerment of children and young people by ensuring they understand their rights, are supported to participate in decisions that affect them, and are taken seriously. When educators

use strategies that value children's voices and build respectful, meaningful relationships, children are more likely to speak up about their safety and wellbeing.

This policy outlines how educators interact with children in ways that support their safety, wellbeing, dignity, rights, and development. It promotes respectful, positive, and inclusive interactions and ensures compliance with the National Quality Framework (NQF), Victorian Child Safe Standards, and relevant legislation.

Under the National Regulations, r.168 requires an approved provider to ensure that policies and procedures are in place for interactions with children that includes matters set out in r.156 for interactions with children and r.156 for relationships in groups. R.170 requires the approved provider to take reasonable steps to ensure those policies and procedures are followed.

This policy applies to children, families, staff, educators, Approved Provider (including School Council, School Principal and OSHC Sub-Committee) , nominated supervisor (including OSHC Coordinator), students on practicum placement, and volunteers at NSPS OSHC Service.

PROCEDURES

Respectful and positive interactions

Educators who are responsive to children's thoughts and feelings are supporting them to develop a strong sense of wellbeing. By interacting positively and meaningfully with children, educators help each child to feel accepted and to develop a sense of attachment and trust.

To ensure that interactions with children are respectful and positive, Educators will:

- Act in the best interests of the child at all times
- Respect children's rights, voices, culture, and individuality
- Build secure, trusting, and meaningful relationships
- Promote children's confidence, independence, and sense of belonging
- Use interactions as opportunities for learning, guidance, and connection
- Communicate with children in a calm, respectful, and age-appropriate manner
- Listen actively and take children's views and concerns seriously
- Use encouragement and positive guidance strategies
- Support children to resolve conflict respectfully
- Promote fairness, inclusion, and empathy

In daily practice, educators will:

- Greet each child respectfully on arrival and acknowledge their presence.
- Engage with children at their eye level using calm, positive language.
- Observe children's emotional and physical wellbeing throughout the session.
- Support inclusive play and encourage respectful peer interactions.
- Actively supervise children at all times, including during transitions, routines, and free play.
- Model respectful communication and behaviour expected of children.

Child Voice and Participation

When interacting with children to promote **Victorian Child Safe Standard 3**, educators will:

- Encourage children to express their views, ideas, concerns or worries.
- Provide opportunities for children to participate in decisions affecting their OSHC experience.
- Explain rules, expectations, and routines in ways children can understand.
- Take children's concerns seriously and respond appropriately.
- Support children to identify trusted adults and ways to seek help.
- Support children to understand their rights

Behaviour Guidance

When interacting with children to guide and support behaviour, Educators will:

- Respond calmly and consistently to behaviour.
- Acknowledge children's feelings and support them to express emotions safely.
- Use guidance strategies such as redirection, problem-solving, and discussion.
- Support children to understand the impact of their actions on others.
- Work with children to identify appropriate choices and solutions.
- Seek guidance from the Nominated Supervisor when behaviour concerns persist.
- Use guidance strategies that are consistent, supportive, and developmentally appropriate
- Focus on teaching skills, self-regulation, and problem-solving
- Support children's emotional expression and wellbeing

Educators must not use physical punishment, threats, intimidation, humiliation or degrading practices; or exclude, isolate or shame children as punishment.

Physical Contact

When interacting with children in a way that incorporates physical contact, Educators will:

- Ensure physical contact is appropriate, visible, and responsive to children's needs.
- Respect children's personal space, comfort levels, and cultural context and service expectations.
- Seek consent where appropriate (verbal or non-verbal).
- Maintain transparency and use professional judgement when providing comfort, first aid, or support.

Physical contact must not be secretive, forced, inappropriate, sexualised, or emotionally harmful. Physical contact must not continue if a child appears uncomfortable or withdraws consent.

Child Safety and Protection

Positive interactions are a key child safety strategy under the **Victorian Child Safe Standards**. Educators will:

- Remain alert to signs of harm or distress.

- Report any concerns about a child's safety or wellbeing must be reported in line with:
    - Mandatory reporting requirements
    - The service's Child Safe and Reportable Conduct policies

When interacting with children where a child raises a concern or discloses information, Educators will:

- Listen calmly and without judgement.
- Reassure the child that they have done the right thing by speaking up.
- Do not promise confidentiality.
- Record the concern as soon as practicable using the service's reporting procedures.
- Report the matter immediately to the Nominated Supervisor or Responsible Person.
- Follow mandatory reporting and child safety procedures as required.

Managing Inappropriate Interactions

If an educator observes or becomes aware of inappropriate interactions, they will:

- Act immediately to ensure the child's safety.
- Report the concern to the Nominated Supervisor or Approved Provider.
- Document the incident in accordance with service procedures.
- Cooperate with any investigation or follow-up actions.
- Maintain confidentiality at all times.

Educators who are unsure about appropriate interactions must:

- Seek guidance from the Nominated Supervisor.
- Reflect on practice during team meetings or supervision.
- Participate in additional training if required.
- Follow service policies, the ECA Code of Ethics, and Child Safe expectations.

Communication with Families

To ensure that families are aware of the how Educators can be expected to interact with children in outside school hours care, the service will:

- Inform families of the service's approach to positive interactions and behaviour guidance.
- Communicate respectfully with families about children's wellbeing or behaviour concerns.
- Maintain confidentiality and professionalism in all discussions.
- Work in partnership with families to support children's needs.
- Provide families access to a copy of this policy/

Documentation and Records

The service will maintain records of:

- Behaviour guidance strategies and support plans (where required)
- Reports of concerns or disclosures
- Training and professional development related to child safety and interactions

RESPONSIBILITIES

Responsibilities of the School Council (as the Approved Provider) and the OSHC Management Sub-Committee:

- Review and develop this policy at least annually, and when the need arises.
- Authorise any changes to this policy.
- Ensure this policy is implemented.
- Monitor complaints and incidents regarding this policy.
- Ensure that copies of the policy and procedures are readily accessible to nominated supervisors, coordinators, educators, staff, volunteers and families, and available for inspection.
- Notify families at least 14 days before changing the policy or procedures if the changes will affect the fees charged or the way they are collected or; significantly impact the service's education and care of children or; significantly impact the family's ability to utilise the service.

Responsibilities of the OSHC Coordinator (or in the absence of the OSHC Coordinator, the Nominated supervisor/ Responsible person present):

- Contribute to the review and development of this policy at least annually, and when the need arises.
- Ensure this policy is implemented.
- Monitor complaints and incidents regarding this policy.
- Take reasonable steps to ensure that nominated supervisors, educators, staff and volunteers actively implement this policy.
- Ensure that copies of the policy and procedures are readily accessible to nominated supervisors, coordinators, educators, staff, volunteers and families, and available for inspection.
- Communicate openly with families and stakeholders about this policy and its implementation.
- Assess the needs of staff and families and, where required, provide policies and procedures in multiple languages or an appropriate alternative such as online translation software and/or in audio versions.
- Consider the needs of any temporary or casual staff and how they will access the policies and procedures.

Responsibilities of Educators:

- Be familiar with this policy.
- Ensure this policy is implemented.
- Monitor complaints and incidents regarding this policy.
- Support families to approach leadership or service management with questions or concerns.

Responsibilities of Families:

- Be familiar with this policy.
- Ask questions about implementation, and raising concerns with leadership or service management.

KEY TERMS

TERM	MEANING	SOURCE
Dignity and rights of the child	Element 5.1.2 of the National Quality Standard ('Dignity and rights of the child') aims to achieve the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, a universally agreed set of non-negotiable standards and obligations founded on respect for the dignity and worth of each child, regardless of race, colour, gender, language, religion, opinions, origins, wealth, birth status or ability. Article 19 of the Convention states that children have the right to be protected from being hurt and mistreated, physically, or mentally. Guide to the NQF (Element 5.1.2)	Guide to the NQF (Element 5.1.2)
Positive interactions between educators and children	Involves educators viewing each child as capable and competent, with a right to a voice, and able to contribute to decisions that affect them. This enables educators to focus their practices on children's strengths and inclusion in the group environment. Educators who are responsive to children's thoughts and feelings are supporting them to develop a strong sense of wellbeing. By interacting positively and meaningfully with children, educators help each child to feel accepted and to develop a sense of attachment and trust. Children who are supported to understand themselves experience a sense of belonging that fosters self-esteem which contributes to the development of identity and is critical to children's capacity to understand their own strengths, abilities, and interests. When children feel safe, secure and supported, they develop confidence to explore and learn.	Guide to the NQF (Element 5.1.1) Framework for School Age Care, p. 19
Relationships between children	When educators create supportive environments in which children experience mutually enjoyable, caring and respectful relationships, children respond accordingly. Positive relationships provide children with the confidence and agency to explore and learn about their world. As their relationships become more complex and far-reaching over time, children's interactions with others also help them to extend their knowledge, thinking and ability to apply what they already know in new and unfamiliar contexts. Developing effective	Guide to the NQF (Standard 5.2) Framework for School Age Care, p. 19

	relationships with others is a key part of children's social development	
Relationships between educators and children	When children experience nurturing and respectful reciprocal relationships with educators they develop an understanding of themselves as competent, capable and respected. Consistent emotional support contributes to children developing a strong sense of wellbeing and belonging. Relationships are the foundation for the construction of identity, and help shape children's thinking about who they are, how they belong and what influences them.	Guide to the NQF (Standard 5.1) Framework for School Age Care, p. 24

LINKS TO OTHER NSPS OSHC SERVICE POLICIES

NSPS OSHC Service provides a suite of policies and procedures in relation to educator interactions with children that should be referred to in relation to this policy, such as:

- Child safety and wellbeing
- Peer interactions and children's relationships
- The Educational Program
- Wellbeing, engagement and behaviour
- Staff code of professional conduct and child safe behaviour
- Unsatisfactory work performance and gross misconduct
- The management of a complaint that alleges a child is exhibiting harmful sexual behaviours

Other associated NSPS OSHC Service policies and procedures include:

- Child, family and community complaints
- Incident, injury and trauma
- Medical conditions and the administration of medication
- Participation of volunteers and students on practicum placement
- Privacy, confidentiality and management of records

In compliance with the National Law, copies of current OSHC policies and procedures are available for inspection at the OSHC Service at all times that the service is operating, or otherwise on request.

SOURCES

Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (February 2024); ***Guide to the National Quality Standard.*** https://www.acecqa.gov.au/national-quality-framework/guide-nqf
Australian CHildren's Education and Care Quality Authority (July 2018) ***Information sheet, Relationships with children*** https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2018-07/QA5_RelationshipsWithChildren.pdf
Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (2022) ***Six reasonable steps to ensure staff follow policies and procedures*** https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2022-11/13-Six-steps-staff-policies-procedures%20v3.pdf
Commission for Children and Young People (July 2022); ***Child Safe Standards.*** https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/child-safe-standards/

NATIONAL QUALITY FRAMEWORK

Education and Care Services National Law https://www.acecqa.gov.au/nqf/national-law-regulations/national-law
The National Quality Framework operates under an applied law system, comprising the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations. The purpose of the applied law system is to set a national standard for children's education and care across Australia. The following regulations inform the implementation of this policy.

Regulation	Description
Regulation 8	National Quality Standard
Regulation 12	Meaning of serious incident
Regulation 84	Awareness of child protection law
Regulation 85	Incident, injury, trauma and illness policies and procedures
Regulation 86	Notification to parents of incident, injury, trauma and illness
Regulation 87	Incident, injury, trauma and illness record
Regulation 97	Emergency and evacuation procedures
Regulation 146	Nominated supervisor
Regulation 149	Volunteers and students
Regulation 150	Responsible person
Regulation 155	Interactions with children
Regulation 156	Relationships in groups
Regulation 168	Education and care service must have policies and procedures
Regulation 170	Policies and procedures to be followed
Regulation 171	Policies and procedures to be kept available
Regulation 172	Notification of change to policies or procedures
Regulation 174	Time to notify certain circumstances to Regulatory Authority
Regulation 174A	Prescribed information to accompany notice
Regulation 175	Prescribed information to be notified to Regulatory Authority
Regulation 176	Time to notify certain information to Regulatory Authority
Regulation 181	Confidentiality of records kept by approved provider
Regulation 183	Storage of records and other documents
Regulation 191	False or misleading information or documents

National Quality Standard https://www.acecqa.gov.au/nqf/national-quality-standard
The National Quality Standard (NQS) sets a high national benchmark for early childhood education and care and outside school hours care services in Australia. The NQS includes 7 quality areas that are important to outcomes for children. NSPS OSHC Service is assessed and rated by the Victorian Government Department of Education against the NQS and given a rating for each of the 7 quality areas and an overall rating based on these results. The following quality areas, standards and elements support the implementation of this policy.

Standard/Element	Item
Standard 1.2	Practice
Element 1.2.1	Intentional teaching
Element 1.2.2	Responsive teaching and scaffolding
Element 1.2.3	Child directed learning
Element 1.3.3	Information for families
Standards 2.2	Safety
Element 2.2.1	Supervision
Element 2.2.2	Incident and emergency management
Element 2.2.3	Child protection
Standard 4.1	Staffing arrangements
Standard 4.2	Professionalism
Standard 5.1	Relationships between educators and children
Element 5.1.1	Positive educator to child interactions
Element 5.1.2	Dignity and rights of the child
Standard 5.2	Relationships between children
Element 5.2.1	Collaborative learning
Element 7.2.3	Development of professionals

Framework for School Age Care in Australia https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-01/MTOP-V2.0.pdf
Under the National Law, services must deliver an educational program to all children being educated and cared for that is based on an approved learning framework, delivered in accordance with that approved learning framework, based on the developmental needs, interests and experiences of each child , and designed to take into account the individual differences of each child. The following principles, practices and learning outcomes support the implementation of this policy.

Principle/Outcome	Description
Principles	Partnerships
	Respect for diversity
	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives
	Equity, inclusion, and high expectations
Practices	Holistic, integrated and interconnected approaches
	Collaboration with children and young people
	Play leisure and intentionality
	Environments
	Cultural responsiveness
Learning outcomes	Children and young people have a strong sense of identity
	Children and young people and connected with and contribute to their world
	Children and young people have a strong sense of wellbeing
	Children and young people are confident and involved learners
	Children and young people are effective communicators

INDUCTION AND ONGOING TRAINING

The NSPS School Council the Approved Provider acknowledges the important role played by our service leaders, educators and staff. To ensure that all NSPS OSHC service stakeholders are given adequate induction and ongoing support to develop a thorough understanding of these procedures, this policy will be provided in accordance with induction processes for the OSHC Service staff team.

The School Council as the Approved Provider will ensure that each nominated supervisor and person in day-to-day charge of the service has successfully completed the child protection training required in Victoria, whether under the law of the jurisdiction or by other means (Section 162A of the National Law). Staff records must also include evidence of the approved training completed by that staff member (r.147).

The School Council as the Approved Provider will ensure that nominated supervisors and staff members at the service who work with children (including volunteers and students on practicum placement) are advised of the existence and application of current child protection laws, and understand any obligations that they have under those laws (r.84).

EVALUATION, REVIEW & DEVELOPMENT

This policy will be reviewed and developed accordingly as part of the NSPS OSHC Service annual review process, or more often if necessary due to changes in regulations, circumstances, or operational matters. All staff will be encouraged to participate in review and development activities and raise any issues about policy implementation as they occur.

In response to any breach of this policy, this policy and procedures (and any directly associated policies and procedures) will be reviewed and developed to ensure the effectiveness of their implementation.

NSPS OSHC Service ensures that all relevant stakeholders are notified at least 14 days before making any change to this policy, unless that notice period would pose a risk to the safety, health or wellbeing of any child

enrolled at the service. In this instance, stakeholders will be notified as soon as practicable after making a change in accordance with requirements under the National Law.

Date	Description	Author
06/02/2026	New policy developed in relation to child safety standards and	OSHC Sub-Committee
16/02/2027		

Next scheduled review due by February 2027