

Families and Community Policy

Policy Number:	10 TEN
Purpose:	To ensure all Families and the community are welcomed and supported by all staff and understand their responsibility to ensure reciprocal relationships
Scope:	To provide Families and the community with information on how the centre operates, allowing for diversity, participation, and a sense of belonging for everyone.

Relevant Legislation

National Law

- 170 Offence relating to unauthorised persons on education and care service premises

National Regulations

- 76 Information about educational program to be given to parents
- 82 Tobacco, drug and alcohol-free environment
- 149 Volunteers and students
- 157 Access for parents
- 166 Children not to be alone with visitors
- 168 Education and care service must have policies and procedures
- 170 Policies and procedures to be followed
- 171 Policies and procedures to be kept available
- 172 Notification of change to policies or procedures

National Quality Standard

- Element 1.3.3 – Information for families – Families are informed about the program and their child's progress.
- Element 6.1.1 – Engagement with the service – Families are supported from enrolment to be involved in the service and contribute to service decisions.
- Element 6.1.2 – Parent views are respected – The expertise, culture, values and beliefs of families are respected and families share in decision-making about their child's learning and wellbeing.
- Element 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.
- Element 6.2.1 – Transitions – Continuity of learning and transitions for each child are supported by sharing information and clarifying responsibilities.
- Element 6.2.2 – Access and participation – Effective partnerships support children's access, inclusion and participation in the program.
- Element 6.2.3 – Community engagement – The service builds relationships and engages with its community.

Supporting Documents / References:

- Revised National Quality Standard
- Education and Care services Regulations and laws
- Education and Care services Regulations 2013 QLD
- Early Years Learning Framework
- Birralee Child Care Centre Philosophy

Related Policy or Documents:

- Governance Policy
- Programming Policy
- Enrolment Policy

Contents

Engagement with Families 3

 Valued 3

 Family Handbook 3

 Support 3

 Inclusiveness 3

 Parent Contribution 4

 Personal devices..... 4

 Information 4

 Participation..... 4

 Sharing information between families 5

Engagement with the Community 5

 ACECQA requirements..... 5

 Regular and Occasional Visitors..... 5

 Cultural..... 5

 Students 6

 Volunteers..... 6

 Visitors/Students/Volunteers - personal devices 6

 Celebrations 6

 Community Connections..... 7

Communications 7

 With Families 7

 With Families with Language Barriers 7

With Community.....	7
Child Development	8
Transitions.....	8

Engagement with Families

Valued

Families are children’s first teachers and know their child best. Educators will respect the Family and build relationships with them to obtain knowledge that will benefit the education and care of their child. Families’ requests will be supported, and Educators will work with Families to implement individual routines for children. Educators will work with Families with all developmental, behavioural, and cultural concerns, and keep Families updated regularly. Educators will not be bias against any Family member and treat all Families equally and with respect.

Family Handbook

Families will be provided with an up-to-date copy of the Family Handbook, to help them understand the daily running of the centre, fee structure and their responsibilities. The Family Handbook will be reviewed regularly and the Director and 2IC will ensure all information in the Family Handbook is current and relevant. It is the responsibility of the Director and 2IC to be knowledgeable of the Family Handbook content and be able to answer all Family’s questions as required.

Support

Educators will perform to the best of their ability, ensuring professional obligations and role descriptions are met. Educators will provide Families with support that will ensure best outcomes for everyone. Families will be able to request meetings / informal chats and Educators will conduct themselves in a professional manner, only providing guidance that is at their professional expertise and supportive of the Family’s needs. All support will be confidential, and Educators will ensure any communications are conducted in a manner that ensures privacy. The centre maintains current information on outside agencies that may benefit Families and their children. The Director, 2IC, Early Childhood Teacher [ECT] or Lead Educator will be able to explain the agencies’ role and how they can support the Family and the child.

Inclusiveness

All Families will be treated equally and be provided with the same opportunities to feel welcomed, safe, and a part of the Birralee Family. Management will ensure no Family is denied education and care because of:

- Culture
- Religion
- Family Status
- Personal Opinions
- Social Standing and Status

- Pre-perceived Notions
- Attire

Educators will be welcoming and positive to all Families, working to develop strong relationships that will strengthen the inclusive environment.

Parent Contribution

All Families will be provided with opportunities and encouraged to contribute to Birralee's goals and outcomes.

Families can contribute by:

- Applying for and becoming a committee member. Birralee requires a committee to operate, and the services requires a minimum of 2 and a maximum of 4 Family members to become a part of the committee that is the Approved Provider
- Adding suggestions for the program
- Contributing to Policy Reviews
- Utilising their talents to better the centre
- Joining in experiences
- Attending special functions

Personal devices

On enrolment families will be provided with information on the safe use of personal devices and child safety. Families will not be permitted to use their personal devices to take photos without prior permission and in accordance with Governance policy – Media. Families not adhering to policy will be asked to stop using their personal device and any photos taken will be required to be removed.

Information

The Director or 2IC are responsible in ensuring all information provided to families is reliable and accurate. All Employees will only provide information to families that they are knowledgeable on. Any information required by families, that Employees are not knowledgeable on, Employees will direct the family to the Director or 2IC.

Participation

Participation will be encouraged in a positive manner that does not make the Family feel obligated. All special functions will be organised to best suit the demographics of current Families. Educators will encourage a Family member's request to participate and will work with the Family member and Management to incorporate the request into the program. Participation does not only mean contributing to the program, but participation can also be a Family member being able to attend the centre during the day to be with their child, this will be encouraged, and Family members will be welcomed at any time, unless the visit breaches any court orders or the children will be put at risk. Participation is also when Family members engage within the social media platforms, by conversing over comments and discussion threads.

Sharing information between families

Birralee encourages families to engage and support the relationships between children. Families have access to the pockets and pigeonholes of other children to place written communications to other children or families. This will include;

- Birthday invites.
- Christmas cards.
- Birthday presents.
- Play dates.
- Any other form of positive communication between families.

Families will need to place all communications into the pockets/pigeonholes themselves and at no time is any staff member at Birralee responsible for ensuring the collection or delivery of written communications between families. Families who request Educators to pass out information will be directed to the pigeonholes/pockets. Families wanting to inform other families about items in pockets/pigeonholes can request management to inform families via the closed Facebook page, by either submitting the notice themselves for approval or by asking management to place the notice for them.

Engagement with the Community

ACECQA requirements

All students and regular visitors will be required to complete the required government child safety training [Geecko training] and provide the certificate of completion before visits or placement start.

Regular and Occasional Visitors

All visitors to the centre will be required to sign in and out at the appropriate times. At all times, a visitor will need to be supervised by an educator. No visitor can be left alone with the children. A regular visitor will be required to provide a copy of their blue card and complete a personal details form; the documentation will then be kept on file. This information will be kept on file and secured as per the governance policy -records - storage. Information will also be uploaded to the National Early Childhood Worker Register. Occasional visitors, including contractors and maintenance personal, will be escorted around the centre by Management or an educator. All visitors will be required to comply with Birralee's policies and procedures and conduct themselves accordingly, any visitor not complying will be asked to comply or leave the premises immediately.

Cultural

Birralee encourages cultural diversity and will endeavour to connect with cultural communities to participate within the centre. Any ongoing relationship will be encouraged, and cultural communities will be welcomed into the centre either as a part of the regular program or as visitors. Educators will be encouraged to partake in professional development and seek clarification on all cultural experiences, to ensure respect for the culture and its peoples are maintained.

Students

Students will be welcomed at the centre, and Educators will encourage and inform students on best practices. The Director, 2IC and ECT will be responsible for signing students third party reports and will seek clarification from Educators that the student is competent. The Director, 2IC and ECT will ensure all signed documentation is for third party reports and hours attended only, no other documentation will be signed. Students will be given an induction before commencing placement, with all required documentation to be completed and students will be informed of their responsibilities and the centre's responsibilities. Students will be required to follow all policies and procedures and conduct themselves in the same manner as Educators. Students needing assistance with their studies will ensure support from Educators or Management does not affect the supervision of children or the completion of Educator's daily tasks. Any student not complying will be given warnings and provided with training to change current practices, and then if no change is made the student's trainer will be notified and action will be taken to cease placement. In the case of a serious incident/breach of policy the student will have placement ceased immediately. Students will refrain from carrying children and will only change nappies when supervised by an Educator.

Volunteers

Volunteers are welcome at Birralee and will be provided with a welcoming environment and support from staff to ensure their time is beneficial to all stakeholders. All volunteers to the centre will be required to sign in and out at the appropriate times. Regular volunteers will be required to obtain a blue card and complete a personal detail form. This information will be kept on file and secured as per the governance policy -records - storage. Volunteers will not be left alone with children and will follow all directions given to them by Educators. All volunteers will be required to comply with Birralee's policies and procedures and conduct themselves accordingly, any volunteer not complying will be asked to comply or leave the premises immediately. Visitors are not to pick up or carry children around.

Visitors/Students/Volunteers - personal devices

No visitor, student or volunteer is permitted to have personal devices on their person while in the presence of children. Visitors, students or volunteers are required to store their devices in the staffroom or safe place deemed by management. Exceptions will be granted to regular visitors using their devices to educate and entertain the children. Regular visitors will be required to communicate their needs with management and a device use plan created to ensure that no photos or information can be uploaded to their devices ensuring all Birralee policies and procedures are followed.

Celebrations

Celebrations of all cultures will be supported by Birralee. When celebrating, respect and understanding for all Families will be taken into consideration. Educators will communicate with Families on the impending celebrations and seek feedback or clarifications from Families who may not wish to participate in the celebration. Educators will then explore all options to support and work with Families to come to a mutual agreement to move forward with the celebration.

Community Connections

Management and Educators will ensure connections in the community are made and maintained. Connections will take varying forms and will support the holistic development of children and their Families. Management will ensure information on community connections is relevant and up to date.

Connections can be but not limited to:

- Relationships with schools
- Relationships with local council
- Relationships with neighbours
- Relationships with tradespeople
- Relationships with outside agencies to support children
- Relationships with charity organisations

Communications

With Families

Communication with Families will always be professional and positive. Educators will understand their role in communication with Families and not overstep their responsibilities. An educator that is found to have communicated with a Family member in a negative or derogative way, will be subject to disciplinary action. When communicating with Families on sensitive matters, Educators will seek clarification and / or support from Management before approaching the Family. Communication on sensitive matters will be respectful and supportive, with the privacy of all parties maintained. The Family will be required to communicate with Educators in a positive manner and avoid negative and abusive behaviour. A Family member with a grievance or complaint will be required to follow the correct complaint procedures as per governance policy – grievance and complaints. A Family member will be asked to leave if their communication is deemed offensive or threatening.

With Families with Language Barriers

Management will ensure families who require assistance are provided with support with all communications. This could include but not limited to

- Visual guides
- Interpreters
- Community members
- Employees

Communication barriers will not be used to disadvantage any family from accessing Birralee.

With Community

All Birralee Employees are to ensure when in the community and representing Birralee, professionalism is paramount. Staff will ensure they conduct themselves in a manner that will not be detrimental to Birralee. Community members attending the centre will be welcomed and made to feel supported and accepted. While at Birralee, community members will be required to conduct

themselves according to policies and procedures. Any community members not abiding by this will be asked to leave the premises.

Child Development

All Educators will ensure they understand child development and be able to provide guidance and experiences to allow each individual child to reach goals at their own pace. All Educators will understand that each child will develop at their own pace and refrain from judging children's abilities or requiring a child to "keep up with their peers". Educators with concerns about a child's development will communicate with their Lead Educator, Director and 2IC who will observe the child and make the decision to approach the Family. Documentation will be required before approaching the Family and all Educators will be required to provide written reports on their concerns. When approaching Families with child development concerns the individual staff member talking with the Family will be sensitive, knowledgeable on the issue and be able to support the Family moving forward. At no time will Educator's force Families to believe their concerns and expect the Family to commit to the educator's opinions and solutions. Educators will be required to come up with other strategies, seek outside support and work with Families when Families decide to follow a different path to the Educator's opinions and suggestions. Families may take time to digest the information and all Educators and Management will support the needs of the child and Family during this time.

Transitions

To support the child's smooth transition from one room to another, Educators will communicate with each other, providing knowledge of the child's stage of development, likes and dislikes, eating habits, sleeping habits and any further information that will allow the child's new Educators to provide a positive transition for the child.

Transitions will be communicated to Families before the transition commences. Families will be required to acknowledge the transition in writing and Educators will ensure the Family understand the transition process. Families will be updated on the progress of the transition and will be given a date when the transition will finish, and the child is permanently in the new environment. The child will be given a transition period according to their individual needs, children will not be rushed into moving from their current environment. Within the centre, children will not be required to "be made ready" for the next environment by educators, the transition time will allow the child to settle into the new environment at their own pace, varying for each individual child.

Transitioning from the kindergarten to school will differ from the room to room transition. The ECT will inform Families if their child is ready for the step to formal education and will encourage Families to participate in their chosen schools' prep transition days. The ECT will develop relationships with all local schools and encourage visits from teachers, so children can begin to understand the next step in their education. The kindergarten program will support the development of social and self-help skills as well as building resilience to support the independence required for children to succeed at school. The ECT will provide Families with termly reports, and keep Families updated if any concerns for school readiness are present, the ECT will work with the Family on any concerns and support Families with their decision on school readiness.

Definitions:

Term	Definition	Source
Cultural Diversity	The existence of a variety of cultural or ethnic groups within a society	
Committee	A group of people appointed for a specific function by a larger group and typically consisting of members of that group.	
Approved Provider	For the purposes of CCS, an approved provider is an entity (such as company, individual, partnership) who operates a child care service or services and to which all obligations and liabilities of the service are attached.	

Policy Details:

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