

Interactions with Children, Families, and Staff Policy:



POLICY STATEMENT:

Grays Point Activity Centre (GPAC) will provide an environment that reflects the Principles in “My Time, Our Place” where the development of secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships with children are fostered and encouraged and genuine respect for diversity and a commitment to equity is reflected in all our interactions with children.

We will endeavour through our interactions with children to nurture their optimism, happiness and sense of fun and we will aim to recognise and respond to barriers which may impact on children achieving a positive sense of self identify.

Educators will utilise opportunities in their interactions with children to develop an understanding of each other’s expectations leading to a deeper understanding of each other and the negotiation of clear boundaries regarding safety, respect for others and procedures for creating a caring environment.

We will identify secure, respectful, and reciprocal relationships with children as one of the principles that underpin practice. Within our School aged care setting many different relationships are negotiated with and between children, Educators, and families. The way in which these relationships are established and maintained, and the way in which they remain visible impacts on how the early childhood community functions. Relationships directly affect how children form their own identity, whether they feel safe and supported, and ultimately, their sense of belonging.

PURPOSE:

We aim to build positive relationships with children, families, and Educators through collaboration and interactions, which is reflective of our Service Philosophy and the Framework. Educators will encourage positive relationships between children and their peers as well as with Educators and families at the Service, ensuring children feel safe and supported.

SCOPE:

This Policy applies to children, families, staff, management, and visitors of the Service.

IMPLEMENTATION:

To build and maintain positive and respectful relationships with children, families and Educators of our Service will adhere to our Philosophy and the Code of Ethics to guide:

GPAC Policy and Procedures – Interaction with Children, Families, and Staff Policy (Relationships with Children file tab)

Interactions with children:

Children need positive relationships and interactions with Educators that are trusting and responsive to their individual needs. Through these experiences and interactions children will develop a positive understanding of themselves and feel a sense of belonging. We promote a respectful, child safe culture where children concerns are always responded to, and children feel empowered to participate in decisions and provide feedback to educators and staff. All Educators and staff play a vital role in protecting children from harm by responding to and reporting any incidents, disclosures or suspicions of abuse, harm, neglect or ill-treatment. Our Service upholds a strong reporting culture to safeguard children in our care.

Management and Educators will:

- Create a welcoming and relaxed atmosphere in which children experience equitable, friendly, and genuine interactions with all Educators.
- Role-model appropriate language and behaviour.
- Support children to be aware of their own feelings as well as the feelings of others.
- Encourage children to treat all other children with respect.
- Provide children with the opportunity to explore their dispositions for learning by expressing themselves and their opinions.
- Ensure all Educators and staff have undertaken current child protection legislation training including mandatory reporting requirements and obligations.
- Assist the children to build resilience and self-assurance through positive interactions.
- Guide children's behaviour positively.
- Respect the rights, dignity, and agency of children.
- Always speak to children in a positive manner, 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.
- Respect each child's uniqueness, be attuned to, and respond sensitively and appropriately to children's efforts to communicate and use the child's own language, communication styles, and culture to enhance interactions.
- Listen to children carefully and take them seriously; support and encourage children to use appropriate language in their interactions with adults and peers. Educators will extend upon children's interests and ideas through questions and discussions, supported and made visible in observations, reflections, and programming.
- Communicate with children by getting down to their level, using eye contact, and showing respect to the child whilst engaging in and promoting effective communication.
- Show empathy to children.
- Ensure values, beliefs, and cultural practices of the child and family are considered and respected. (Reg. 155)
- Ensure that no child 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 how these can be improved to benefit each child.
- Facilitate children's individual development extending upon their strengths, interests, and abilities.
- Collaborate with children regarding the daily routines and practices within the Service including programming of experiences in order to meet their individual needs, interests and abilities.
- Organise environments and spaces that promote small and large group interactions and meaningful play and leisure.
- Collaborate with children to develop a set of rules or boundaries to guide their behaviour in the service and discuss clear expectations and consequences of inappropriate behaviours.
- Keep rules simple and only have a small number of concise rules that children understand, focusing on appreciating and caring for each other and the environment. All staff, families and children will be made aware of the rules and the expected consequences. The rules will be clearly displayed.
- Ensure that all Educators enforce the rules and consequences consistently at all times. Consequences will be relevant to the situation and never demeaning.
- Follow up all issues that arise by discussing the situation with the child and strategising for better solutions in future issues.
- Collaborate with family members and School's regarding appropriate Behaviour Management Practices to ensure there is a consistent approach.
- Access professional development and resources related to positive behaviour management and include this in professional development planning.
- Act as a positive role model for appropriate and expected behaviours in the Service being mindful of respectful language and tone.
- Encourage and reward acceptable behaviour by giving praise and positive feedback to children as often as possible.
- Focus on the behaviours being displayed and not the child displaying them.
- Assist children in developing self-discipline skills and regulating their own behaviours by using simple conflict resolution skills, building self-reliance and self-esteem, role modelling and positive direction.
- Provide children with opportunities to interact and develop respectful and positive relationships with each other, Educators and visitors to the Service.
- Ensure that appropriate physical contact is maintained in regards to comforting children, application of First Aid, safety provisions such as holding hands and maintaining respectful bodily space.
- Identify when interactions with a child are not appropriate and refer to the Services 'Providing a Child Safe Environment' Policy to address these concerns.
- Maintain defined boundaries in regards to appropriate behaviour with children and engagement with their families.
- Ensure environments are created to ensure children feel safe, valued, understood and supported to learn.
- Understand their mandatory reporting requirements and respond to any incident, disclosure or suspicion of child abuse, harm, neglect or ill-treatment they witness or suspect immediately.
- Ensure all Educators and staff are aware of the procedure of reporting allegations of abuse, neglect, harm or ill-treatment.
- 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).

- Any bribe or gift received by a family that may influence or appear to influence a decision or action is to be declined and reported to management.
- Support Educators to use trauma-informed practices to recognise and respond to the emotional needs of children (see Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy).

The children will:

- Be treated with respect, courtesy and understanding regardless of race, cultural background, religion, sex or ability.
- Be encouraged to listen to others respect, courtesy and understanding regardless of race, cultural background, religion, sex or ability.
- Be encouraged to share humour and express themselves in a variety of ways.
- Practice strategies for problem solving, debating, negotiating and interacting with others in an appropriate way with the guidance of Educators.
- Have opportunities to use and share their home language with other children and Educators.
- Collaborate with staff in developing Service routines and procedures including rules and boundaries and the consequences they should expect if these are not followed.
- Encourage their peers to adhere to the rules and expectations.
- Participate in experiences that will build relationships and promote interactions between each other, Educators and visitors to the Service.
- Assist Educators in developing programs and routines for the Service that reflect their individual needs, interests and abilities.
- Have their need for solitude or quiet time supported and respected by Educators and children.
- Develop an understanding of the choices they make and the responsibility they have to manage their own behaviours in conjunction with Educators.

Interactions with families:

Effective communication is 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 to create a responsive and inclusive environment for children, staff, and families. Interactions with families help to inform Educators' knowledge of each child'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.

Interactions with staff and Educators:

The Service recognises that the way Educators interact with each other influences the interactions they have with children and families. Educators working within our Service are required to demonstrate mutual respect towards each other and value the contributions made by each Educator. This enables our Service to maintain positive relationships and model the type of communication they want children to develop.

To always maintain professionalism, Educators will:

- Engage in professional communication to create an effective work environment and to build a positive relationship with Educators, children, 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.
- Collaborate as a team sharing room 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.
- Refer to the Management of Complaints Grievance Handling Policy 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 Service.
- Welcome diverse views and perspectives.
- Work together as a team and always engage in open and honest communication.
- Respect each other's positions and opinions.
- Develop and share networks and links with other agencies.
- Resolve differences promptly and positively and use the experience to develop more effective methods of working together.

To enhance communication and teamwork, management will:

- Provide new Educators with relevant information about the Service and program, through the Staff Handbook, staff meetings, 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 and providing a child safe environment.
- Provide opportunities for professional development.

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 team members.
- 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.

Source:

Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2025). [Guide to the National Quality Framework](#)

Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2023). [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>

Australian Government Department of Education (2022). [My Time, Our Place- Framework for School Age Care in Australia.V2.0](#)

Child Australia *Cultural Connections Booklet*. (2017).

Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics. (2016).

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>

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 NATIONAL 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

Arrival and Departure Policy Behaviour Guidance Policy Child Protection Policy Code of Conduct Policy Enrolment and Orientation Policy Communication with Families Policy Staff Handbook Family Handbook	Confidentiality Policy Digital Device and Social Media Policy Management of Complaints Grievance Handling Policy Student and Volunteer Handbook Supervision Policy Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy
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MANDATORY

ENDORSEMENT BY THE SERVICE:

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July 2018 KK Revised 23 October 2019 KG

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Revised 25/03/2024 KG Revised 3/11/2025 KG

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