



Wangaratta Children's Services Centre  
**Code of Conduct Policy**

<b>Document Type</b>	<b>Corporate Policy</b>
<b>Department</b>	<b>Children's Services</b>
<b>Date of Council Endorsement</b>	<b>27 September 2023</b>
<b>Date for Review</b>	<b>September 2027</b>
<b>Responsible Officer</b>	<b>Family and Early Childhood Services Coordinator</b>
<b>Authorising Officer</b>	<b>Director Community and Infrastructure</b>
<b>Version Reference Number</b>	<b>1.0</b>
<b>SIM Reference Number</b>	<b>TBC</b>

**National Quality Standard**

<b>4.1</b>	Staffing arrangements enhance children's learning and development.
<b>4.1.2</b>	Every effort is made for children to experience continuity of educators at the service.
<b>4.2</b>	Management, educators, and staff are collaborative, respectful and ethical.
<b>4.2.1</b>	Management, educators, and staff work with mutual respect and collaboratively, and challenge and learn from each other, recognising each other's strengths and skills.
<b>4.2.2</b>	Professional standards guide practice, interactions, and relationships.
<b>7.1.1</b>	A statement of philosophy guides all aspects of the service's operations.

7.1.3	Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined, and understood, and support effective decision-making and operation of the service.
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### National Regulations

Regulation	Description
Regulation 82	Tobacco, drug, and alcohol-free environment
Regulation 84	Awareness of child protection law
Regulation 155	Interactions with children
Regulation 168	Education and care services must have policies and procedures

### Statement and Purpose

The Rural City of Wangaratta's (RCoW) Children's Services Department aim to establish a common understanding of workplace standards and ethics expected of all employees of the Service. Ensuring positive working relationships are formed between all educators and management, promoting dignity and respect by avoiding behaviour which is or may be perceived as harassing, bullying or intimidating.

Educators and management will at all times conduct themselves in an ethical manner to ensure that all interactions are positive and respectful and are in accordance with the Service's philosophy. Our Service takes every reasonable effort to accommodate the diversity of all children in implementing the Child Safe Standards. We are committed to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. We recognise the importance of and responsibility for, ensuring our Service provides a safe and supportive environment which respects and fosters the rights and wellbeing of children in our care. We are dedicated in promoting cultural safety for all children. This Code of Conduct is to be read alongside RCoW's overarching Code of Conduct for staff and in the event of any inconsistency, RCoW's Code of Conduct applies.

### Policy and Procedures

The Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, educators and staff, volunteers, and students will adhere to the Early Childhood Australian Code of Ethics, Education and

Care Services National Regulations and National Quality Standards and Service policies and procedures at all times, promoting positive interactions both within the Service and the local community.

### **Respect for People and the Service:**

- Employees 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.
- Employees and management adhere to our Child Safe Environment Policy and Child Protection Policy at all times and take all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse and harm.
- Staff and management understand that child safety is everyone's paramount responsibility.
- Staff are committed to valuing and promoting the safety, health, and wellbeing of employees, volunteers, children, and families.
- Effective, open and respectful reciprocal communication and feedback between employees, children, families, and management is conveyed.
- It is important to treat colleagues, children, management, and families with respect. Bullying or insulting behaviour, including verbal and non-verbal aggression, abusive, threatening, or derogatory language or intimidation towards other employees, administration, children, visitors, or families is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Furthermore, this is a both a dismissible and/or termination of enrolment offence.
- Employees 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 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 (IES) as per state/territory legislation.

### **Expectations of Employees**

#### Employees will:

- Ensure their work is carried out proficiently harmoniously and effectively. They will 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 the National Quality Standard and all applicable RCoW policies;

- Act honestly and exercise attentiveness in all Service operations. They will 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;
- Always provide adequate supervision of children;
- 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;
- 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;
- Report any instances of suspected corrupt conduct, mismanagement of government funds or other serious allegation to the appropriate agency;
- Have a solid understanding of the Service's policies and procedures 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;
- Be courteous and responsive when dealing with colleagues, students, visitors, children and families;
- Work collaboratively with colleagues and recognise and value diversity;
- Be mindful of their duty of care towards themselves and others;
- Be always positive role models for children;
- 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.

Employees will not:

- 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 me 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; and
- Put children at risk of abuse- refusing food/play, making threats, exposing children to inappropriate language or material (movies, internet, photos)

### **Expectation of Leaders and 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;
- 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 Early Childhood Australia (ECA) Code of Ethics is 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; and
- Give encouragement and constructive feedback to employees, respecting the value of different professional approaches.

### **Reporting a Breach of The Code of Conduct:**

- 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;

- If employees become aware of a serious crime committed by another employee, they are required to report it to management as per the Reportable Conduct Scheme;
- As mandatory reporters, all employees must report possible risk of harm to children or young persons to management and/or Child Protection;
- Employees will report any concerns they may have about inappropriate actions of any other employee that involves children or young people to management as per the Reportable Conduct Scheme; and
- Management will report any allegations or child related misconduct as per their legislative requirements.

## **Managing Conflict in the Workplace**

### Management will:

- Remain objective and impartial when managing conflict in the workplace;
- Be responsive and address a possible breach of the code of conduct by any employee as soon as they are aware of the breach;
- Investigate all allegations which may result in remedial action, or disciplinary action ranging from a caution to dismissal; and
- Consider all relevant facts and make decisions or take actions fairly, ethically, consistently, and with transparency. If they are uncertain about the appropriateness of a decision or action, they will consider:
  - Whether the decision or action is lawful.
  - Whether the decision or conduct is consistent with Service policies and objectives.
  - Whether there will be an actual, potential, or perceived conflict of interest involving obligations that could influence the business relationship or conflict with business duties.

## **Adhering to Service confidentiality**

- Unless authorised to do so by legislation, employees must not disclose or use any confidential information without appropriate approval.
- All employees are to ensure that confidential information is not accessed by unauthorised people.
- Employees will adhere to the Service and RCoW's respective 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 Act and Regulations;
- Managers have a responsibility to ensure that employees comply with their record keeping obligation outlined in RCoW's Record Keeping Policy; and
- Employees must not destroy records without permission from management.

### **Duty Of Care**

- 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;
- 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.

### **• Human Rights**

This policy has considered and complies with the Human Rights and Responsibilities contained in the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006.'

### **• Gender Impact Assessment**

This policy has considered and applied Council's Gender Impact Assessment Template and satisfies the provisions established in the Gender Equality Act 2020 (Vic).

## **References**

### **Legislation**

Anti-Discrimination Act<sup>1</sup>  
 Australian Human Rights Commission  
 Fair Work Act 2009

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<sup>1</sup> See <https://raisingchildren.net.au/disability/disability-rights-the-law/law/antidiscrimination-laws> for Acts for specific Australian states and territories.

Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2017.

Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014

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Work Health and Safety Act 2011

Workplace Relations Act 1996

Workplace Law <https://www.workplacelaw.com.au/getting-your-mobile-phonepolicies-right/>

### **Guidelines**

Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics 2016

Family Violence Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework.

Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services

Guide to the National Quality Framework 2017

Revised National Quality Standard 2018

Victoria State Government Department of Health and Human Services Child Safe Standards toolkit

### **Policies**

Children's Services

Governance and management of the service Policy 2023

Interactions with Children Policy 2023

### **Council**

Child Protection Policy 2023

Child Safe Environment Policy

Dealing with Complaints Policy

Responsible Person Policy



Social Media Policy Tobacco, Drug and Alcohol-Free Policy  
Occupational Health and Safety Policy 2023

## Definitions

Term	Definition	Source
<b>Code of Conduct</b>	Together with a code of ethics, the code of conducts helps guide interactions between management,	Guide to the NQF

	educators and staff, as well as informing the service decision-making processes relating to professional standards.	
<b>Code of Ethics</b>	Together with a code of conduct, a code of ethics help guide interaction between management, educators, and staff, as well as informing the service decision-making processes relating to professional standards, especially when there are conflicting obligations or responsibilities.	Guide to the NQF

## Version History

Version Number	Date of change	Reasons for change
1.0	September 2023	Re-formatting and restructure of Council's Children's Services policy framework

<sup>i</sup> <https://www.humanrights.gov.au/our-work/childrens-rights>