

# Staff Communication Policy

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## 1. PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

- (1) This policy sets out how and when staff should communicate with each other to ensure that our service is effective, safe for children, and an enjoyable place to work
- (2) Having this policy in place helps our service to comply with legislation related to communication in the workplace, including the *Fair Work Act 2009 (Fair Work Act)*

## 2. SCOPE

- (3) This policy applies to:
  - a. The approved provider, paid workers, volunteers and work placement students, **referred to as 'staff' throughout this policy**
  - b. Third parties who carry out child-related work at our service, including contractors, subcontractors, self-employed persons, employees of a labour hire company, **referred to as 'staff' throughout this policy**
- (4) This policy covers internal communication only. External communication is covered in a range of other policies (e.g. those concerning use of technology and social media, child safe policies, parental interaction and involvement)

## 3. DEFINITIONS

- (5) The following definitions apply to this policy and related procedures:
  - a. 'Communication' refers to both 'official' communication (e.g., announcements, publications, policies, procedures, emails, meetings) and 'unofficial' communication between staff members (e.g., informal conversations, emails). Communication can be written, verbal or non-verbal
  - b. 'Staff' refers to paid workers, volunteers, students, and third parties who are covered in the scope of this policy. Note: 'staff', 'employees' and 'workers' etc may have their own, different definitions in legislation covered in this policy

## 4. POLICY STATEMENT

### **Commitment to positive and professional workplace communication**

- (6) Our service encourages staff to express their opinions and share information, knowledge and ideas
- (7) Staff members should listen and talk to each other respectfully and politely
- (8) Written communication should be acknowledged and responded to in a timely and professional manner
- (9) Staff members should give each other the information they need to do their jobs
- (10) Staff who are in supervisory roles (e.g., the approved provider, nominated supervisor, staff in day-to-day charge, educational leaders) should provide other staff members with clear instructions, standards and expectations for their work
- (11) Staff should give feedback on each other's performance in a constructive and respectful way
- (12) Staff should be mindful of the diverse backgrounds of staff members and tailor their communication accordingly

- (13) All communication between staff (written, verbal, non-verbal) must be consistent with our Child Safe Code of Conduct

## **Communication expectations and responsibilities**

- (14) **All staff members** should:

- Be given accurate, timely and relevant information about their work
- Feel comfortable to ask questions and seek help when needed
- Be meaningfully consulted on procedures, policies and other issues that relate to their work and the service more widely
- Know how to make complaints or raise concerns about workplace issues
- Be allowed to disconnect from work when they are not on duty or call
- Allow other staff members to disconnect from work when they are not on duty and only contact them according to our policy
- Provide other staff members with accurate, timely and relevant information about work matters
- Raise any concerns or questions with supervisors/managers and, if necessary, follow our procedures for making a complaint
- Attend and participate in meetings as requested
- Read and respond to written communication according to this policy (see 'Written Communication' section below)

- (15) **People in supervisory roles** (e.g. room and educational leaders, nominated supervisors, persons in day-to-day charge) should:

- Be allowed to communicate most issues to their team members directly, if possible
- Be given accurate, relevant and timely information from team members and own managers
- Be briefed about sensitive or significant issues in advance of their team members so they are prepared in advance to answer team members' questions
- Be meaningfully consulted on relevant issues or changes to operations, policies or procedures that may or will affect their area of responsibility
- Be kept informed by their manager/supervisor about general developments at the service and communicate these to their team members
- Take seriously and respond to questions and feedback from their team members
- Escalate any problems or concerns to their manager if necessary
- Give team members the information and resources they need to do their job properly
- Encourage their team members to connect and share information with each other and with other parts of the service
- Hold regular meetings with their team members (see 'Workplace Meetings' section below)

## **Workplace meetings**

### **All staff meetings**

- (16) The approved provider/nominated supervisor will schedule regular 'all staff' meetings
- (17) Where possible, staff members will be given at least 2 weeks' notice of the meeting.
- (18) An agenda for the meeting will be circulated 1 week before the meeting is to take place to give staff the opportunity to prepare and add items for discussion
- (19) Staff meetings will take place outside of the hours in which children are being cared for, to allow educators to attend without impacting educator-to-child ratios

- (20) Staff are expected to attend all meetings. If a staff member cannot attend, they should notify the meeting organiser of their absence in advance
- (21) Meetings will:
- Be chaired by the nominated supervisor/approved provider and minutes by another staff member
  - Follow the agenda and generally not run longer than an hour
  - Review previous meeting minutes, including items that required updates or actions
  - Always include a workplace health and safety discussion
  - Include time to discuss child safety and wellbeing
  - Allow time for staff to raise concerns, negotiate solutions for any issues, and share information
  - Provide an opportunity for learning and professional development, and review policies and procedures
  - Used to promote the skills and achievements of staff
  - Meeting minutes will record who was present/absent, and summarise discussions and actions
  - Meeting minutes will be kept on file for 3 years

#### **Room meetings**

- (22) Room leaders will hold regular brief meetings with their team of educators at the end of each day
- (23) Room meetings will cover topics such as educator responsibilities, room routines, teaching practices, the individual and collective needs of children, and any educator needs (e.g., training, resources)
- (24) Room leaders are responsible for passing on any relevant information from these meetings to the educational leaders and/or nominated supervisor/approved provider

#### **Induction and professional development meetings**

- (25) All new staff, including volunteers and students, are inducted
- (26) Staff have a structured program of professional development and training, which includes regular performance appraisal meetings
- (27) We use the induction and professional development program meetings to communicate to individual staff about their role and responsibilities, and our policies and procedures (see our [Recruitment, Induction and Training Policy](#) for more detail)

#### **Written communication**

- (28) All written communication should be: appropriate, relevant, able to be understood, professional and consistent with the service's values and our codes of conduct
- (29) The email and electronic messaging systems should only be used to communicate about matters related to the service
- (30) Staff must not use the email and electronic system for improper personal use or in such a way that would breach our [Child Safe Code of Conduct](#) or any other policies related to staff conduct or the use of technology in the service
- (31) Staff should be aware that the service may be liable for defamatory material that is sent via the email system and electronic communication such as contracts or offers may be considered legally binding
- (32) Internal emails / messages should be responded to as soon as possible and within 24 hours of receipt. Urgent matters should be dealt with in person or on the telephone
- (33) Emails, messages (e.g. WhatsApp, text messages etc) should generally only be sent during working hours (see 'Right to disconnect' section below)

- (34) Staff must not send official work emails from their personal emails or devices

### **Right to disconnect**

- (35) By law, staff have the right to refuse contact outside their ordinary working hours, unless it is unreasonable to refuse
- (36) Staff will not be expected to monitor, read or respond to contact from our service (including texts, emails, phone calls etc)
- (37) Our service may contact a staff member outside of their ordinary hours if it is reasonable to do so. For example, it may be reasonable to contact staff:
- To arrange/change work rosters where it has not been possible to do so within a staff member's working hours
  - If the staff member's role has a level of responsibility that requires them to be contacted outside of hours
  - Where we compensate or pay extra for the staff member to be available to contact outside of their ordinary hours of work
  - If the safety or health of a child or a staff member is at risk
- (38) Staff members should try to resolve any concerns they have about their right to disconnect with their supervisor/manager before seeking help from the Fair Work Commission

## **5. PRINCIPLES**

- (39) Staff can express their opinions, and share information, knowledge and ideas
- (40) Communication between staff is respectful and polite
- (41) Staff members exchange information about their roles and responsibilities effectively
- (42) Our service is an inclusive, culturally safe and positive place to work
- (43) All communication between staff (written, verbal, non-verbal) is consistent with our Child Safe Code of Conduct

## **6. POLICY COMMUNICATION, TRAINING AND MONITORING**

- (1) This policy and related documents can be found on our website and in the front office.
- (2) The approved provider and nominated supervisor provide information, training and other resources and support regarding our Staff Communication Policy and related documents
- (3) All staff (including volunteers and students) are formally inducted. They are given access to review, understand and formally acknowledge our Staff Communication Policy and related documents
- (4) Each staff member engages in a professional development program, which covers this policy and procedures
- (5) Roles and responsibilities are described in our Staff Communication Policy and in individual position descriptions. They are communicated during staff inductions and in ongoing training
- (6) The approved provider and nominated supervisor monitor and audit staff practices through performance reviews and careful supervision and address non-compliance. Breaches to this policy are taken seriously and may result in disciplinary action against a staff member

## **7. LEGISLATION OVERVIEW**

### **Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations**

Not applicable

### **Other applicable laws and regulations**

Act/Regulation	Description
<i>Privacy Act 1988</i>	Promotes and protects the privacy of individuals
<i>Fair Work Act 2009 (Fair Work Act)</i> <i>Fair Work Regulations</i>	Governs employee and employer relationships

### National Quality Standard

Standard	Concept	Description
4.2	Professionalism	Management, educators and staff are collaborative, respectful and ethical
4.2.2	Professional standards	Professional standards guide practice, interactions and relationships
7.1	Governance	Governance supports the operation of a quality service
7.1.2	Management systems	Systems are in place to manage risk and enable the effective management and operation of a quality service
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7.1.2	Management systems	Systems are in place to manage risk and enable the effective management and operation of a quality service
7.1.3	Roles and responsibilities	Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined, and understood, and support effective decision-making and operation of the service
7.2	Leadership	Effective leadership builds and promotes a positive organisational culture and professional learning community
7.2.3	Development of professionals	Educators, co-ordinators and staff members' performance is regularly evaluated and individual plans are in place to support learning and development

### My Time, Our Place (MTOP) V2.0 / Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) V.20

Not applicable

### National Principles for Child Safe Organisations

#### Most relevant principles

Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture

## 9. RELATED DOCUMENTS

Key policies      Child Safe Environment Policy | Child Safe Code of Conduct | Recruitment, Induction and Training Policy | Privacy and Confidentiality Policy | Complaint Handling Policy | Educator and Management Policy | Continuity of Education and Care Policy | Governance Policy | Work Health and Safety Policy | Technology and Device Use Policy | Social Media Policy | ECEC Code of Ethics

Tools/resources      Resource [Rights and obligations in the workplace](#)  
Resource [Communicating with people who have a disability](#)

## 10. POLICY INFORMATION

Approval date	28/8/24
Effective date	28/8/24
Review date	28/8/25
	Reviewed annually and when there are changes that may affect this document. The review will include checks to ensure the policy reflects current legislation, continues to be effective, or whether any changes and additional training are required

Approved by

Dina Kahn

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