

# 5.01. INTERACTIONS WITH CHILDREN

QUALITY AREA 5 | VERSION 6.0

Regulatory Policy &amp; Procedure



## Statement of Commitment

Wyndham City Council is committed to safeguarding children younger than 18 and ensuring their active participation as valued members of our community, while fostering a child-safe environment. We focus on early identification of risks to protect children from harm, whether caused by adults, harmful behaviours between children, exposure to family violence, or concerns like grooming, cumulative harm, or neglect.

We encourage the reporting of any concerns or suspicions of child abuse or harm. The Reportable Conduct Scheme improves how organisations respond to allegations of abuse, harm, neglect, and risk to children. Under this scheme, the CEO, or their delegate, must report any allegations of child-related misconduct to the Commission for Children and Young People within a specific timeframe.

All allegations are taken seriously, and reporting does not require agreement on the conduct. Concerns can be reported to a line manager or directly to the Senior Child Safe Advisor. Investigations will be conducted by an external party under the oversight of relevant authorities, including Victoria Police, the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing, and Child Protection.

Furthermore, Wyndham City Council has also publicly declared its commitment to being a Child Safe Organisation on our external website and recognises the importance of Child Safety in the provision of quality community services. All children and young people who attend services, programs, events, and community spaces have a right to feel safe, be safe, and be heard. We are committed to maintain a child safe environment, and value a culture of safety within council and its operations.

There are also behavioural expectations to recognise the importance of an inclusive and welcoming environment to all children & young people of the wider community including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, culturally and/or linguistically diverse, those with a disability and promoting an environment with no tolerance for racism.



## Purpose

This policy provides guidelines to ensure the development of positive and respectful relationships with each child and is supported to learn and develop in a secure and empowering environment at Wyndham City Early Education and Care Services (EECS).



## Policy Statement

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child values everyone's worth and dignity, irrespective of race, colour, gender, language, religion, opinions, wealth, birth status, or ability. Building attentive, caring, trusting, and respectful relationships with children enhances their self-esteem and security.

EECS promotes positive adult-child interactions, empowering children to feel valued, confident, and capable. Actively engaging in children's learning and decision-making during play, daily routines, and ongoing activities enhances their thinking, deepens their learning, and aids in managing emotions and behaviour.

When educational leaders and educators adopt a positive, strengths-based approach to guide children's behaviour, they empower children to regulate their own behaviour and develop effective interpersonal skills. As older children prioritise relationships with peers, supportive connections with educators help them gain confidence in expressing themselves, navigating differences, embracing new experiences, and taking calculated risks (Source: Guide to the National Quality Standards, page 224).

Child Safe Standard 3 mandates services to empower children about their rights, involve them in decisions, and treat their input seriously. Valued and respected children are more likely to speak up about their safety and wellbeing. Empowering child participation not only enhances child safety but also demonstrates a commitment to child rights, ensuring services align with children's preferences, fostering communication and leadership skills.



## Scope

This policy applies to the approved provider, persons with management or control, nominated supervisor, persons in day-to-day charge, early childhood teachers, educators, staff, students, volunteers,

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parents/guardians, children, and others attending the programs and activities of EECS, including during offsite excursions and activities.



<b>Responsibilities</b>	Approved Provider and EECS Unit	Nominated Supervisors/ Team Leaders	Early Childhood Teacher, Educators, and other staff	Family, parents/guardians	Contractors, volunteers, and students
Develop and implement the Interactions with Children Policy in consultation with stakeholders.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ensure stakeholders are provided with a copy of the policy and comply with its requirements.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ensure staff are aware of the service’s expectations regarding interactions when working with children and families. <i>(refer to Code of Conduct Policy)</i>	✓	✓			
Ensure educator-to-child ratios are always maintained.	✓	✓	✓		✓
Ensure children are always <b>adequately supervised</b> . <i>(refer to Supervision of Children Policy)</i>	✓	✓	✓		✓
Ensure the environment at the service is safe, secure, free from any hazards. <i>(refer to Child Safe Environment Policy, Occupational Health and Safety Policy)</i>	✓	✓	✓		✓
Ensure the service environment promotes the active participation of all children.	✓	✓	✓		✓
Ensure group size and composition are reviewed to give all children the best opportunities for meaningful interactions and connections with one other and staff. To encourage focused instruction and responsive engagement, smaller groups are best.	✓	✓	✓		✓
Develop and implement educational programs that complies with legislative requirements and approved learning framework. <i>(refer to Inclusion and Equity Policy)</i>	✓	✓	✓		✓
Ensure the educational program contributes to the outcomes in the approved learning frameworks. <i>(refer to Educational Program and Planning Policy)</i>	✓	✓	✓		✓
Ensure the service offers education and care that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• promotes self-expression, self-reliance, and self-esteem in children.</li> <li>• always upholds the dignity and rights of each child.</li> <li>• offers positive <b>behaviour guidance</b> and encouragement towards acceptable behaviour.</li> <li>• considers cultural and family values, the age, physical, and intellectual development of each child.</li> </ul>	✓	✓	✓		✓
Ensure the service gives children opportunity to connect and form positive relationships with each other and with staff and volunteers.	✓	✓	✓		✓
To help children feel safe and connected, encourage friendships and peer support.	✓	✓	✓		✓
Ensure each child’s learning and development is observed, assessed, planned for, and documented in accordance with legislative requirements. <i>(refer to Educational Program and Planning Policy)</i>	✓	✓	✓		✓

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Establish effective daily communication with parents/guardians regarding children's learning, development, interactions, behaviour, and relationships.	✓	✓	✓		✓
<b>Responsibilities</b>	<b>Approved Provider and EECS Unit</b>	<b>Nominated Supervisors/ Team Leaders</b>	<b>Early Childhood Teacher, Educators, and other staff</b>	<b>Family, parents/guardians</b>	<b>Contractors, volunteers, and students</b>
Make sure staff who educate and care for children know that corporal punishment or excessive discipline is illegal. ( <i>refer to Behaviour Guidance Policy</i> )	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
To improve children's education and care, encourage collaboration between children/families and program support groups.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ensure notifications of serious incidents are made to the regulatory authority (DE) through the NQA IT System as soon as practicable, but not later than 24 hours after the occurrence. ( <i>refer to Notification to Regulatory Authority Policy</i> )	✓	✓			
Notify DE within 24 hours of becoming aware of a notifiable complaint or allegation regarding the safety, health and/or welfare of a child at the service.	✓	✓			
Ensure that the service does not allow adult contact with enrolled children while they are on the premises if a court order prohibits it.	✓	✓	✓		✓
Make sure staff, volunteers, and contractors use positive and respectful strategies to help children regulate their own behaviour and respond to conflict and others.	✓	✓	✓		✓
Where children are experiencing social, emotional, and behavioural difficulties utilise referral pathways to develop connection between support services, children, and their families.	✓	✓	✓		✓
If educators are concerned that a child's behaviour may endanger themselves, other children, staff, or others, work in partnership with the family and support services (where appropriate) to develop an <b>individual learning plan</b> .	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Consult DE if a suitable and mutually agreeable individual learning plan cannot be established.	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Set and uphold clear timelines for review and evaluation of the individual learning plan.	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Provide contemporary, evidence-based pedagogical support to staff, enabling them to support the safety, health and wellbeing of children accessing the service.	✓	✓	✓		
Where needed, ask the <b>Preschool Field Officer</b> , or other agencies working with the child, about <b>Kindergarten Inclusion Support</b> or training.	✓	✓	✓		
Where necessary, ensure that additional resources are obtained to implement an individual learning plan.	✓	✓			
Ensure staff are encouraged and supported to access professional development opportunities to strengthen their skill in supporting children with <b>challenging behaviour</b> .	✓	✓	✓		
Inform staff about any concerns, events, or occurrences that may affect their child's behaviour at the service (e.g., moving house, relationship troubles, a new sibling).				✓	
Always comply with the <i>Privacy and Confidentiality Policy</i> .	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

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#### Definitions

The terms defined in this section relate specifically to this policy:

**Adequate supervision:** Refers to constant, active, and diligent supervision of every child at the service. Adequate supervision requires that educators are always able to observe each child, respond to individual needs and immediately intervene if necessary.

**Behaviour guidance:** a means of assisting children in a positive and effective ways to help children gain understanding and learn skills that will help them learn to manage their own behaviour.

**Individual learning plan:** A plan that documents strategies to assist an educator in guiding a child with diagnosed behavioural difficulties or challenging behaviours to self-manage their behaviour. The plan is developed in consultation with the nominated supervisor, early childhood teachers, educators, parents/guardians and families, and other professional support agencies as applicable.

**Challenging behaviour:** behaviour that can be described as:

- infringes on the rights of others.
- disrupts others or causes disputes between children.
- causes harm or risk to the child, other children, adults or living things.
- is destructive to the environment and/or equipment.
- inhibits the child's learning and relationship with others.
- a child presenting as shy, withdrawn or excessively passive in a way which is inhibiting their learning and/or development.
- is inappropriate relative to the child's developmental age and background.

**Kindergarten Inclusion Support Program (KIS):** Supports funded kindergartens to plan and implement a program that is responsive to the individual abilities, interests and needs of children with a disability, developmental delay, or complex medical needs.

**Preschool Field Officer (PSFO) Program:** The role of the PSFO Program to support the access and participation of children with additional needs in their kindergarten program.



#### Legislation and Standards

Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

- Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic)
- Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)
- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)
- Child Wellbeing and Safety Amendment (Child Safe Standards) Act 2015 (Vic)
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)
- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
- Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)
- National Quality Standard, Quality Area 5: Relationships with Children



#### Related Appendices & Documents

- Appendix 5.1.1: UN Rights of Child Poster



#### Related Policies

- Behaviour Guidance
- Code of Conduct
- Dealing with Compliments and Complaints
- Education Program and Planning
- Inclusion and Equity
- Occupational Health and Safety
- Privacy and Confidentiality
- Providing a Child Safe Environment
- Supervision of Children

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## Authorisation and Version Control

Version	Objective ID	Action	Date	Endorsement date	Next Review Date
3	A2340478	Minor Changes - wording	08/10/2018	KK 22/01/2019	2021
4	A3871491	Addition of legislation and standards Addition of WCC commitment to CSS	23/12/2022	TP	2025
5	A4673707	Minor wording changes. Policy format updated	June, 2023	TP	June, 2026
6	A4673707	Updated Wyndham City's Statement of Commitment to a Child Safe Organisation – as per Wyndham City's Child Safe Management page Updated name of Policy	23/06/2025	TP <i>J. Papacianov</i>	June, 2026