6.1. FAMILY ACCESS, PARTICIPATION AND INVOLVEMENT

QUALITY AREA 6 | VERSION 6.0

Wyndham Policy & 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

Wyndham City is committed to being a Child Safe organization. This policy provides guidelines for involving family members and volunteers in all Wyndham Early Education and Care Services (EECS). These guidelines ensure the health, safety, and wellbeing of children are always protected. Additionally, this policy aims to ensure that educators and families, including vulnerable families, collaborate and work in partnership to enhance children's learning and development.

Policy Statement

EECS values the help and support family members provide. EECS believes that children's first and best teachers are their families, particularly parents. It is vital that parents and families can maintain close bonds with their children while attending the service. EECS encourages and supports:

- **Family Involvement:** Encouraging family members to be involved in the service ensures that the needs of our community are met effectively.
- **Educational Philosophy:** Children benefit from understanding diverse family values and beliefs through interactions with others. Children learn better in the context of their families.
- **Community Engagement:** By fostering family involvement, we aim to challenge children to think broadly about families and their connection to the world.
- **Collaboration**: Wyndham City encourages strong collaboration between all parties to develop and maintain quality learning experiences for all children. Families have a major influence on their children's learning and development.

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, parents/guardians, and children.

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QUALITY AREA 6 | VERSION 6.0

Responsibilities	Approved Provider and EECS Unit	Nominated Supervisors/ Team Leaders	Early Childhood Teacher, Educators, and other staff	Family, parents/guardians	Contractors, volunteers, and students
Create and distribute a user satisfaction and/or quality surveys in line with funding criteria and agreements.	✓	✓			
Ensure data obtained from surveys is analysed, used to plan continuous service delivery improvements, and shared with families.	✓	✓	✓		
Actively seek information to improve children's services and inform educators about family needs.	✓	✓	✓		
Enhance educators' abilities to recognise and engage **vulnerable families** through specialised training.	✓	✓			
Ensure parents have opportunities to meet with educators to discuss their child's development and learning.	✓	✓	✓		
Consistently provide access to information about the educational program, be considerate of the relevant languages and cultural diversity of the families using the services.	✓	✓	✓		✓
Encourage families to engage with and provide feedback on information regarding the educational program.		✓	✓		✓
Provide families with opportunities to express their interest in participating in the educational program.	✓	✓	✓		✓
Ensure the feedback received from families serve as an opportunity for families to influence service decision-making regarding the program.	✓	✓	✓		
Always welcome families and ensure parents/guardians have access to the service whenever their child is attending a program, conditional upon enrolment details and any relevant court orders.	✓	✓	✓		
Recognise and respect that vulnerable parents may face structural barriers when accessing services.	✓	✓	✓		✓
Ensure efforts are made to build relationships with these parents in a respectful and non-stigmatising manner, gradually encouraging their participation in the program according to their own comfort and pace	✓	✓	✓		✓
Facilitate meetings for parents/guardians wishing to discuss matters about their child. Arrange meeting times outside session/teaching times.		✓	✓	✓	
Ensure discussions regarding the child are not conducted during arrival and/or departure times to ensure children safety *(refer to Delivery and Collection of Children Policy).*	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Consistently provide parents/guardians with information about the development of the educational program at the service.		✓	✓		
Offer and actively encourage families to attend two parent/teacher interviews per year: • First to be held during enrolment. • Second to be held mid-year (May/June).		✓	✓		
Establish a culturally safe environment that encourages the participation and involvement of all families in the educational program.	✓	✓	✓		✓

Responsibilities	Approved Provider and EECS Unit	Nominated Supervisors/ Team Leaders	Early Childhood Teacher, Educators, and other staff	Family, parents/guardians	Contractors, volunteers, and students
Offer a variety of opportunities for parents/guardians to directly participate in the educational program, including but not limited to: • Spending time with the children. • Assisting with activities, excursions, and special events. • Volunteering special skills to share with the children (e.g., music, gardening, another language). • Providing opportunities for offering feedback to the staff about the program. • Attending Family and Friends Yarning Club. • Exploring other ways as suggested by parents.	✓	✓	✓		
Participation in EECS feedback opportunities, access to information, and involvement in the educational program is encouraged, and extend these opportunities to family members as well.		✓	✓	✓	
Oversee and manage family participation to ensure all legislative requirements are adhered to.		✓	✓		✓
All family members participating in excursions, regular outings, or regularly engaging in the program must undergo a Working with Children Check (WWCC).	✓	✓	✓		
Provide parents/guardians with current information on how to obtain a Working with Children Check (WWCC) and that it is free for volunteers.	✓	✓	✓		
Obtain a Working with Children Check (WWCC) and provide it to the service before participating in the program.				✓	
Always complete and document an online validation check on families' WWCC prior to their ongoing participation and involvement in the program.		✓	✓		
Ensure that a service induction, tailored to their role and participation, is conducted. The induction should include: • Introduction to all educators, staff, and volunteers at the service. • Confirmation of hours of attendance. • EECS Policies and Procedures. • Emergency and Evacuation Procedures. • Brief tour of premises including toilets, office, indoor and outdoor areas, and emergency evacuation points.		✓	✓		
Read, understand, and adhere to EECS Policies and Procedures when participating in the program.				✓	
Ensure participating family members are always under the direct supervision of EECS educators when they participate in the program. *(refer to Supervision of Children Policy).*	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Ensure that participating family members complete the visitors' record each time they join the program. *(refer to Participation of Volunteers, Students and Additional Assistants policy).*	✓	✓	✓	✓	

Responsibilities	Approved Provider and EECS Unit	Nominated Supervisors/ Team Leaders	Early Childhood Teacher, Educators, and other staff	Family, parents/guardians	Contractors, volunteers, and students
Always prioritise the **duty of care** and ensure children's protection from harm takes precedence over parent/guardian participation in the program, especially if it is determined to potentially place children at risk. *(refer to Providing a Child Safe Environment Policy).*	✓	✓	✓	✓	
EECS staff are authorised to request **participating family members** to leave the service if their language, actions, and/or behaviour is in breach of legislative requirements or EECS policies.	✓	✓	✓	✓	

Definitions

The terms defined in this section relates specifically to this policy.

Duty of care: The statutory duty one must take reasonable precautions to prevent sexual and/or physical abuse of a child.

Participating family members: A parent/guardian or authorised family member of a child who volunteers their time to support the educators and the children of the program during excursions or regular program participation.

Vulnerable families: Families with lack of a social support network who are at risk of financial, health and developmental outcomes.

Legislation and Standards

Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

- Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)
- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)
- Child Wellbeing and Safety (Information Sharing) Amendment Regulations 2020
- Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic)
- Child Safe Standards (Vic)
- Crimes Amendment (Protection of Children) Act 2014 (Vic)
- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 (Vic): including but not limited to Sections 165, 166, 167
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 (Vic): including but not limited to Regulations 84, 85, 86, 99, 100, 101, 102, 168(2) (h), 145, 146, 149, 150
- Education Training and Reform Act 2006 (Vic) (As amended in 2014)
- Family Law Act 1975 (Cth)
- Family Violence Protection Amendment (Information Sharing) Act 2017
- National Quality Standard, including Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety
- Worker Screening Act 2020
- Worker Screen Regulations 2021 (Vic)

Related Appendices & Documents

- Appendix 2.14.3: Visitors Record
- Appendix 4.1.1: WCC - Corporate Code of Conduct
- Appendix 4.4.1: Volunteer Induction Checklist

Related Policies

- Arrival and Departure of Children
- Code of Conduct
- Participation of Volunteers, Students and Additional Assistants
- Providing a Child Safe Environment

Authorisation and Version Control

Version	Objective ID	Action	Date	Endorsement date	Next Review Date
3	A2452739	Minor Changes – wording	08/11/2018	Kk – 26/4/19	April, 2021
4	A3871831	Minor Changes – wording Addition – Wyndham City's Statement of Commitment – Child Safe Standards.	28/12/2022	TP	2025
5	A4703150	Minor changes in wording and updated definitions. Updated format Merged Family Access and Involvement with Family Participation policies following review conducted.	July, 2023	TP	July 2026
6	A4703150	Updated Wyndham City's Statement of Commitment to a Child Safe Organisation – as per Wyndham City's Child Safe Management page	23/06/2025	TP TPapaioanou	July 2026