|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Staff  Handbook | Insert Year | |
| Reviewed Insert month and year | | Given to all staff on review date |
| **New staff are expected to read a summary** of the staff handbook within 3 days of starting work. The induction process for new staff includes regular feedback meetings during their probationary period.  **New staff are expected to read all sections of the staff handbook during their probation period.**  This is important because new educators:   * must understand and appreciate our service’s operations and policies and procedures soon after commencing to ensure we continue to deliver high quality education and care. The summary will reduce the time you need to be effective in your new job * need to understand and comply with the education and care law and regulations. | | |

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**Policies included:**

# 1. Introduction

We would like to welcome you to the team here at <Service name>.  
We hope you enjoy being part of our dynamic team which is committed to high quality education and care.

**<**centre name> is owned by OWNER/COMMUNITY/COUNCIL/CORPORATE. The centre is licensed to cater for 54 children each day, ages 6 weeks to 6 years. We are licensed through the Department of Education and Training and follow the National Quality Framework including the National Education and Care Laws and Regulations and the National Quality Standard.

Educators and staff are encouraged to continually update their skills and knowledge.

**If the contents of this handbook are altered, the nominated supervisor will provide you with an updated copy.**

# 2. Staff details

Owner/Approved Provider: <insert>

Nominated Supervisor: <insert>

Person in Day to Day Charge: <insert>

Educational Leader: <insert>

Early Childhood Teacher: <insert>

Room Leaders: <insert>

# 3. Philosophy

The decisions we make everyday are directly linked to our Service philosophy which guides all aspects of our operations. Our philosophy is featured in this information folder for you to read and implement in your work

**(ADD YOUR PHILOSOPHY)**

At <insert name of centre> we believe each child is a unique individual in their own right and that their special abilities, interests and cultural backgrounds should be the basis of our curriculum. We will work with families to provide high quality education and care within a warm, secure environment which promotes diversity and inclusion.

We believe that relationships each child has with their families and communities are the foundation for learning, and we will use those relationships to develop our curriculum and extend each child’s learning.

We believe each child’s health, security and wellbeing underpins all learning experiences. We will promote exercise, good nutrition, sleep and rest periods. We will ensure each child feels love, security and a sense of belonging. Our outdoor and indoor areas engage every child in experiences which promote play and learning through stimulation of the senses in built and natural environments.

At <insert name of centre> we will endeavour to build upon the child's self image, independence, belief in oneself and confidence in their well-being by fostering in each child a positive approach to their identity, with a sense of responsibility, self-discipline and self-esteem.

We will scaffold the education of development of each child as an individual who can grow his/her separate identity and qualities, yet still work and contribute constructively within a large group.

We will engage in ongoing reflection about our practices and procedures to drive continuous improvement and to ensure each child can maximise his or her learning opportunities, and as educators we value opportunities for professional development.

# 4. Hours of Operation

Monday to Friday

**7.30 am to 6.30 pm**

# 5. Opening and Closing the Centre

**<centre name>** aim are to ensure the opening and closing procedures run efficiently and effectively at all times providing a secure and protective environment for the safety and welfare of all staff, parents and children.

* Two staff members are always on the premises supervising and interacting with children.
* Staff check all premises before leaving the service and ensure all children are signed out of the centre.

# 6. Employment

## Orientation

All new staff, including students, relief staff and volunteers, must participate in our Induction Process. During this time they will work through our Induction Procedure in consultation with the Nominated Supervisor or their delegate. New staff will be provided with a job description and given access to all our Service Policies and Procedures.

## Probationary Period

All permanent employees except those completing a traineeship will have a 6 month probation period. Trainees have an 8 week probation period. This does not include students and volunteers.

## Illness

Our Illness and Infectious Disease Policies apply to staff and volunteers as well as children. If you suffer from an infectious illness or have symptoms like vomiting, diarrhoea or conjunctivitis, you are required to stay away from the Centre for the Exclusion Periods outlined in the Staying Healthy publication and the Infectious Disease Policy. Similarly, if you have any symptoms or signs of illness that might be potentially infectious you should not come to work. This is to prevent any cross infection. Please make yourself familiar with our Infectious Disease Policy. Please let us know as soon as possible if you are unable to attend work through illness. Please refer to our Personal Leave Policy for more information about illness notifications.

## Immunisation

Staff, volunteers and students should be aware that during their time at the Service they could come into contact with many infectious diseases. We encourage all staff and volunteers to be immunised against vaccine preventable diseases. The National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) recommend that educators be immunised against:

* Hepatitis A
* Measles-Mumps-Rubella (MMR)
* Varicella if they have not previously been infected with chickenpox.
* Pertussis. An adult booster dose is especially important for educators caring for young children who are not fully vaccinated.
* Hepatitis B if caring for unimmunised children with intellectual disabilities.

Some infectious diseases, including chickenpox, cytomegalovirus and rubella (German measles), may injure an unborn child if the mother is infected while pregnant. Female staff should consult their doctor to ensure their vaccinations are up to date before becoming pregnant.

National immunisation schedules are available from <https://www.health.gov.au/>

or phone 1800 671 811.

## Personal (sick) Leave /Carer Leave/Compassionate Leave

Permanent employees are entitled to personal, carer and compassionate leave in accordance with the National Employment Standards (NES). All staff must call the Nominated Supervisor (or Person in day to day charge if relevant) at the Service between 6:30am and 7am on the day they will take the leave unless they have a good reason for not doing so. Notice must be provided verbally to the Nominated Supervisor and not through a third party or via text message.

Applications for sick leave must include a medical certificate from a doctor in ALL circumstances ie paid and unpaid leave. A medical certificate simply stating that the staff member is suffering a medical condition or a personal illness will not be accepted. The medical certificate must state the nature of the illness or injury suffered. The NES also provide for entitlements to unpaid compassionate and carer’s leave for casual staff. Please see Personal Leave Policy for more information.

## Annual Leave

Permanent employees are entitled to paid annual leave in accordance with the National Employment Standards. The planning of annual leave needs to be done in consultation with the Nominated Supervisor. At least 4 weeks’ notice in advance of the leave should be provided. Leave loading will be paid as set out in your award. Refer Annual Leave Policy.

## Parental Leave

Permanent and casual employees are eligible for unpaid parental leave of up to 24 months if they have continuous service of at least 12 months. (The period depends on the amount of leave taken by the other parent). There are options to take the leave in a flexible way. Notification and evidence requirements apply before taking the leave and before returning to work. Full details are in our Parental Leave Policy.

## Wages and Conditions

All employment conditions and pay are consistent with the relevant Award and Fair Work requirements. Wages are paid weekly, on Wednesday, by direct deposit into your nominated bank account. We can assist you to access your Award online at any time.

## Punctuality

Being on the job, ready and on time is very important. Staff are expected to arrive at the centre prior to their shift to ensure there is ample time to organise themselves and be on the floor at the commencement of the shift. If you are going to be absent or late unexpectedly, you must call the Nominated Supervisor before your assigned starting time. Without notification, your absence or late start will be noted as “unexcused” and could have a detrimental effect on your employment.

## Attendance & Absenteeism

Regular attendance contributes significantly towards strong teamwork and effective service operations. Good attendance is an essential component of employee performance. If you are going to be absent for any reason, you are expected to give your Nominated Supervisor as much advance notice as possible (see also ‘Punctuality).

## Resignation

An employee is required to submit their resignation in writing addressed to ‘The Nominated Supervisor.’ The employee must give us the same amount of notice as we would be required to give if terminating the employee’s service. The period of notice is based on the employee’s length of service and is detailed in the National Employment Standards and in your employment contract.

## Termination

Dismissal of an employee is not considered lightly. Should it become necessary to dismiss an employee, the appropriate processes required by Industrial Law and the relevant Award will be applied. We will also ensure employees’ are afforded procedural fairness and termination is not harsh, unjust or unreasonable.

Staff may be dismissed for serious and continued breaches of any of our Policies and Procedures. Dismissal will be instant for Serious Misconduct which includes actions that cause or could cause serious and imminent risk to the health, wellbeing and safety of children, staff and families, or the reputation of the Business. Serious misconduct also includes theft, fraud, assault (including assault of children) or refusing to carry out a lawful and reasonable direction.

## Equal Opportunity

The centre is an equal opportunity employer. In accordance with Federal and State Laws, recruitment, promotion and evaluation of employees occurs without regard to race, age, religious beliefs, marital status, membership of an ethnic or racial minority group, or sexual preference.

# 7. Visitors, Students and Volunteers

Visitors, students and volunteers are part of our involvement with the wider community. They must adhere to our Policies and Procedures when attending the centre. All staff must ensure they role model appropriate behaviour and practices at all times and provide guidance where necessary.

**Visitors, staff and students must always be supervised by educators or staff.**

# 8. Professionalism

Our service always strives to achieve a high level of professionalism. It is expected that staff and educators conduct themselves in a professional manner at all times with the children, parents, other staff and community members.

Displaying a professional image to our parents and community members involves things like confidentiality and privacy, dressing appropriately, using correct language, evaluating and reflecting on your own performance and educational strategies, attending professional development activities like workshops and seminars to increase your knowledge base, as well as creating an aesthetically pleasing and professional environment for our children. Please review our Code of Conduct which all staff must comply with.

## Code of Conduct

We expect all staff, students and volunteers to comply with our Code of Conduct at all times. We also adhere to the Code of Conduct Ethics published by Early Childhood Australia. Copies are provided in this folder.

## Confidentiality

Please read our Privacy and Confidentiality Policy. There is a copy in this folder and you have also been provided with a copy in your employment package. You will be asked to sign a confidentiality agreement if you have not done so already. Please note staff must not give out the phone number of any staff member or family without prior permission from that person. This is a matter of both courtesy and confidentiality.

## Tobacco, Drugs and Alcohol

Smoking and the consumption of illicit drugs is prohibited at all times on the service premises, including on the Centre’s grounds, car park and during excursions. Alcohol may be consumed outside operating hours and business activities, for example at social functions, if children are not present. Please refer to the Tobacco, Drug and Alcohol Policy for more information.

## Personal Hygiene

We take our obligations about health and safety very seriously, and take every reasonable precaution to prevent children and employees from being exposed to infectious diseases. It is essential that staff/educators act as role models for the children and parents and follow our hygiene procedures at all times. Our hand washing, nappy change and cleaning procedures are in this package. Please familiarise yourself with these procedures and use them consistently.

## Dress Code

Please ensure you always comply with our Dress Code Policy which ensures that all staff present a professional appearance.

## Staff Appraisals

Staff appraisals are completed by the Nominated Supervisor at least once a year. They provide staff with important feedback and a chance to further develop their skills. Staff will be assessed against the position description, the outcomes required to meet each NQS Quality Area for their specific job and our Core Values. You are welcome to view our appraisal templates at any time.

In addition to staff appraisals, the performance of staff is regularly assessed to ensure they are meeting their job requirements. Students will also receive feedback on their performance.

## Training & In-services

In-services and other forms of professional development are an integral part of ongoing staff training and development. The Nominated Supervisor is responsible for informing all staff of upcoming in-services and workshops that will take place. It is each staff member’s responsibility to attend in-services throughout the year to further develop their skills and knowledge base. Staff members are expected to attend at least 2 professional workshops/seminars each year.

# 9. Workplace (Occupational) Health and Safety

In line with the legal responsibilities of both the Business and its employees to ensure the safety of our children, staff and visitors, we take a risk management approach to Business operations. This means we are continually assessing situations for risk and taking action which reduces or eliminates the risk. You must implement this approach at all times and familiarise yourself with all of our work health and safety practices and procedures.

Please also review our Workplace Health and Safety Policy.

## First Aid

All staff at our Service are required to hold a current First Aid qualification which includes the management of asthma and anaphylaxis. You must be aware of the location of our First Aid Kit(s).

## Emergency Evacuation

An emergency evacuation diagram and instructions are on the wall next to the door in the main room. Please familiarise yourself with these and all of our emergency procedures to ensure you can respond competently in an emergency situation. All potential emergency situations are rehearsed at least once every 3 months, on different days and times each quarter.

## Cleaning

All staff and students are required to tidy and clean up after themselves and the children. Please involve the children in the cleaning and packing up as these routines also offer opportunities for learning. Staff are required to clean tables, toys and equipment using detergent and water in accordance with our cleaning schedules and procedures. Staff are required to thoroughly disinfect any area contaminated by blood, urine, faeces, or vomit as soon as possible. Cleaning is the responsibility of every team member. You may be allocated particular cleaning responsibilities.

## Storage of Hazardous Chemicals

All chemicals must be stored in locked cupboards or storage areas out of reach of children. Signage is placed on doors or areas indicating hazardous substances are stored there. Chemicals must be labelled clearly and stored in original containers. We keep a register of all hazardous chemicals, substances and equipment used at the Service. Information recorded includes where they are stored, their use, any risks, and the current Safety Data Sheet (SDS). Please ensure you are aware where this register and the SDS are located.

POISONS PHONE NUMBER- 13 11 26

## Medication (including Panadol)

Our Administration of Authorised Medication Policy and Procedure must be followed on every occasion children require medication. Please note

we do not accept written or verbal authorisations to administer Over-the-Counter pain relief medication like Panadol

OR

We only accept written authorisations to administer Over-the-Counter pain relief medication, including Panadol, where parents authorise this in writing. We do not administer pain relief medication if parents authorise us to do this over the phone. Information about identifying and responding to fevers in children is contained in our Infectious Disease Policy. Please review this Policy together with our Administration of Authorised Medication Policy to ensure you are familiar with required practice.

**Students must not administer any medication, including paracetamol.**

## Sun Safety

All staff are to follow our Sun Safe Policy including effective role modelling of sun safe practices. The Policy is part of our Physical Environment (Workplace Safety, Learning and Administration) Policy. Please read and adhere to it.

## Food handling

Our food handling procedures are contained in our Health Hygiene and Safe Food Policy and our Food Preparation, Food Storage and Food Transport Procedures. Please familiarise yourself with these and use them consistently.

## Water Safety

All staff are to follow our Water Safety Policy and risk management practices. The Policy is part of our Physical Environment (Workplace Safety, Learning and Administration) Policy. Please read and follow it at all times.

# 10. Communication

## Parents and Families

Please treat all parents/families courteously and with respect, and make them feel welcome and at ease in our Service. They are the main caregivers of their children and are an invaluable source of information about the knowledge, skills, interests of the children and their family and community. We encourage staff to work in partnership with children’s parents. When staff and parents work together it provides the children with consistency and security, and ensures we meet their interest and needs. Educators should talk to parents daily about their child’s achievements and experiences. Staff should advise parents, verbally and in writing about up-coming events.

## Staff

The way in which staff relate to each other at a service has a major influence on the atmosphere. Please ensure you behave professionally at all times, respect all staff, accept differences in your colleagues, look for strengths rather than weaknesses, and approach the staff member involved about any grievance you may have with them. Please refer to our Educator and Management Policy and Code of Conduct, and Grievance Policy.

## Children

Interactions between staff and children should be positive, warm and friendly. Staff need to listen to children and get down to the child’s level when engaging in discussion. Move to the children when guiding behaviour and speak in a calm and respectful manner. Children will be treated with respect at all times. No child will be belittled or yelled at. Staff must not spend time talking amongst themselves, but instead must at all times be aware of the children and encourage their development and communication skills. Staff should use open-ended questions wherever possible and ensure that all directions are given in a positive way using different methods of communication like discussion, song and stories. Please refer to our Relationships with Children Policy.

## Staff Meetings

Staff meetings are held once every 4 to 5 weeks on the first Monday of every month. Regular staff meetings are an essential part of the smooth running of a centre. They allow staff to have input into the decisions being made, and act as a means of receiving and discussing information. All staff (other than students) must make every effort to attend staff meetings, as this ensures **there is no communication breakdown.**

# 11. Complaints

Our Serviceis committed to ensuring that work related problems, concerns or complaints are resolved quickly and fairly. We have documented complaint handling procedures available to staff. Staff members or students who have a grievance should talk directly to the staff member they have the grievance with. Together, they should try to resolve the issue and develop possible solutions to ensure the situation does not arise again. If the staff members or students are unable to resolve the grievance they should talk to the Nominated Supervisor as soon as possible who will investigate, address and document the complaint in a timely, confidential, non-judgmental, unbiased and ethical manner. The Nominated Supervisor will not discriminate against the staff member or student because of the complaint. The Nominated Supervisor may request the complaint be put in writing. It is not appropriate for employees to involve outside agencies before the grievance is investigated and addressed by the Nominated Supervisor. However, staff members may contact their trade union at any time. Refer to our Grievance Policy and Procedures for more if information.

# 12. Collection and Delivery of Children

Children delivered to the centre must be signed in on each occasion, and the child and parent must be greeted by a staff member so information can be exchanged between the parent and educator.

Children must be signed out when they are collected and must not be released into the care of persons not authorised to collect the child. It is our policy that we do not allow anyone under the age of 16 to collect children. Children must not be released into the care of an unknown adult. If you have not met the person before, they must produce photo identification. If you cannot verify the person’s identity, do not release the child into that person’s care.

Children must not be released into the care of a person who appears to be intoxicated, or under the influence of drugs unless the person is the child’s parent. If an impaired parent insists on collecting the child, inform the police of the circumstances, the person’s name and vehicle registration number.

Further information, including what to do if a child has not been collected by closing time, is in our Delivery and Collection of Children Policy and Procedure. Please follow these at all times.

# 13. Custody and Access

Staff must be aware of any custody orders applying to children at the Service. Services cannot legally allow children to leave the Service without permission of a custodial parent/guardian. If confrontations arise over custody, keep the child at the Service and contact the custodial parent without delay. If necessary also contact the Police. Note staff cannot refuse to let a child leave with a parent if there is no Parenting Order.

Even if there is not a formal custody order, staff should encourage parents to keep the Service informed about the child’s family circumstances, especially where there is a family breakdown. Warm, positive and accepting relationships will encourage parents to feel safe and disclose information. Staff should also respect parents’ right not to disclose information. Staff must treat all information about families in the strictest confidence. Refer to our Family Law and Access Policy for more information.

# 14. Child Abuse - Suspected or Disclosed

We take Child Protection matters very seriously and are committed to the Child Risk Management Strategy in our Child Protection Policy. You must understand the child protection law and your obligations, including your obligations to report disclosed or suspected abuse and neglect.

If you know or suspect a child in your care could be suffering Child Abuse in the form of neglect, physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse or domestic violence refer to our Child Protection Policy and Procedures and ensure you adhere to them.

# 15. Supervision

It is your job to ensure children are adequately supervised at all times, both indoors and outdoors, so that you can respond immediately, including when a child is distressed or in a hazardous situation. Effective supervision requires you to be actively involved with children and know where they are at all times. You must not ‘stand back and watch’, but actively and diligently monitor every child. Note maintaining minimum ratio requirements is not always enough to ensure adequate supervision. You must also consider things like the children’s ages, activity, hazards, group size etc.

**Visitors, volunteers and students must never be left alone and unsupervised with children.**

# 16. Sick Children

Staff and students should be aware of signs and symptoms that indicate children may be ill, both on arrival and during the day. All children who are unwell must not attend the Service. Many illnesses, whether contagious or not, can make a child too ill to comfortably participate in normal activities. The best place for unwell children to regain their health is at home.

Illness can be transferred from one child to another at a rapid rate. Certain symptoms may suggest the present of an infectious disease. To control the spread of illness it is necessary to exclude children who exhibit any signs that accompany these diseases for the minimum Exclusion Periods recommended by the National Health and Medical Research Council and included in the Staying Healthy Publication. You must discuss Exclusion Periods with parents where relevant and liaise with the Nominated Supervisor to ensure ill children do not attend. Refer to the Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy and Infectious Diseases Policy for more information.

# 17. Curriculum

We are committed to the principles and practices of the Early Years Learning Framework. The curriculum is based on the interests, skills, abilities and knowledge of each child, taking into account their cultural heritage and family and community connections. We work hard to build partnerships with families and engage children in spontaneous and intentional teaching that encourages collaborative learning. Our curriculum is inclusive and recognises the value and strengths offered by diversity. Our educators continually reflect on the curriculum (planning and outcomes), and on the way their values and beliefs affect the children. We document children’s achievements and progress against the EYLF Learning Outcomes.

# 18. Daily routines

There is a copy of the daily routines in this folder. These routines are also displayed in the rooms. We feel that it is important to have a basic routine but also to be flexible, especially when meeting the individual needs of children. Our routines are organised in a way that maximises opportunities for children’s learning. Learning can happen during routines just as easily as at other times.

# 19. Guiding Children’s Behaviour

Our service will encourage children to engage in cooperative and pro-social behaviour and express their feelings and responses to others’ behaviour confidently and constructively, including challenging the behaviour of other children when it is disrespectful or unfair. Please read the Behaviour Guidance Policy which is embedded in the Relationships with Children Policy.

# 20. Sleep and Rest Time

It is essential that a rest or quiet time be provided to allow the children a chance to unwind and if needed to have a sleep. We recognise that children’s needs for sleep and rest will differ depending on their age. Older children must not be forced to sleep if they are happy to rest and relax. You must provide meaningful quiet activities for these children to engage in. Please refer to our Sleep, Rest, Relaxation and Clothing Policy.

Educators must always follow the safe sleep practices outlined in the Policy, even where parents request alternate sleep practices, unless a doctor has provided a medical management plan with different sleep practices for medical reasons.

# 21. Technology Usage and Social Media

Staff must not use their own devices, including phones, laptops, tablets, while interacting with and supervising children. Personal devices must also not be used to take photos of children. Please refer our Technology Usage Policy for more information, including the appropriate use of Business devices.

Our Code of Conduct also applies to the use of personal and Business Social Media accounts. Educators and Staff must always behave in a way which is professional and safeguards the reputation of the Business. Please read and become familiar with the requirements outlined in the Social Media Policy.

# 22. Collection of Money

Staff, volunteers and students **should not accept money** from parents for fees or other items or issue change or receipts to parents. Parents are to place all money into the fees box.

# 23. Enrolments/Waiting List

All new enrolments or enrolment enquiries are to be handled by the Nominated Supervisor or Administration Manager. Waiting list applications can be given out by any staff member along with our Service information pack. If a prospective new enrolment phones, staff are to take details and pass them onto the Nominated Supervisor or Administration Manager.