

Policy and Procedure Manual



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Our Vision

Our vision is to provide high quality childcare through developing exceptional communicative and co-operative relationships between the families accessing care and the educators providing the care. We want childcare to be a positive learning experience for all involved.

An important factor in the provision of high quality childcare is the standard of programs offered to the children by the educators. Play is an essential tool in the early education of a child. Through play children learn about their world. It is important for a successful childcare environment to understand and emphasise the importance of play in the development of the children in their care. At Shooting Stars we offer a play based educational program which builds the foundation for learning before the child reaches formal education.

Shooting Stars Early Learning Centre Philosophy

On the 1st of January 2012 the first national framework for early childhood education was implemented across Australia. This Early Years Learning Framework includes several important concepts for educators to think about in terms of their own approach to providing for children's learning. The concepts of Belonging, Being and Becoming: Learning Outcomes; Principles and Practices offer us an opportunity to assess and evaluate our philosophy using these as a guide for reflection and inspiration.

The Early Years Learning Framework concepts of Belonging, Being and Becoming reinforce our approach to including families within the service.

*People need and want to feel connected to other people. Families, children and staff want to feel connected to the setting in which these relationships occur. This is made possible when all learning community participants feel respected, acknowledged, safe and welcomed and when the learning environment reflects the values, hopes and dreams of the community it serves.
(Developing a Space for Belonging Every Child Volume 17 Number 2 2011)*

Our corresponding statements of beliefs:

- We believe that for children to achieve their full potential, families and educators must collaborate and communicate to discuss the needs, strengths and interests of each child.
- At Shooting Stars, we have a strong commitment to providing an educational and nurturing environment where the children feel safe and secure and where the parents can feel confident and comfortable leaving their children.
- Educators are encouraged to continue learning and studying early childhood education as new research and advances come to light, updating and refreshing their knowledge and skills thereby ensuring the education they offer to the children in their care is of a high quality.
- Supporting children to develop their confidence and self-esteem through interpersonal relationships, acceptance and understanding, enhances a child's feeling of belonging within the learning environment and ensures their learning success.

The Learning Outcomes from the Early Years Learning Framework underpins our curriculum and approach to education in the early childhood years.

The Learning Outcomes are:

- *Children have a strong sense of identity*
- *Children are connected with and contribute to their world*
- *Children have a strong sense of wellbeing*
- *Children are confident and involved learners*
- *Children are effective communicators.*

Our corresponding statements of beliefs:

- Children have the capacity and capability to take control of their own learning and follow their interests with support from educators.
- Not all learning has a visible 'take home' end product – it is the process of learning that is important not the product.
- Educators aim to facilitate learning across all areas through the provision of a variety of experiences, activities and resources that promote self-expression, exploration, experimentation and problem solving.
- We will provide a secure, friendly environment where children feel important and valued while fostering creativity, individuality and independence.

- We will offer programs that are consistent and flexible with both educator organised, and child initiated activities, active and quiet periods and individual and group experiences.
- We value the contributions children make to their own learning experiences and will actively encourage children to make choices to enhance their sense of autonomy and independence.

The Principles from the Early Years Learning Framework guide our educators through their day to day decision making about the learning environment they are offering to the children in their care:

The Principles are:

- *Secure respectful and reciprocal relationships*
- *Partnerships with families*
- *High expectations and equity*
- *Respect for diversity*
- *Ongoing learning and reflective practice*

Our corresponding statements of beliefs:

- Meaningful relationships between the educators and the children in their care enable children to feel safe and valued within the care environment and enhance and improve each child's learning.
- Effective educators listen to the communication offered by each child and respond to them thoughtfully and attentively.
- Children are competent and confident learners and should be encouraged to shape their own learning environment and the experiences and activities they are offered.
- We believe families are a child's first and most influential educators and it is our role to develop partnerships with families to support and enhance each child's learning journey.
- Educators and families work together to assist each child to thrive and develop.
- We believe all children have the right to succeed in achieving all learning outcomes and as educators it is our role to work with families to promote inclusion and effective participation of all children within the learning environment.
- We acknowledge and include family cultural backgrounds in our curriculum through discussion and consultation with the families.
- We value and encourage parent and extended family involvement, input and suggestions in the learning environment.
- We aim to develop exceptional communicative and co-operative relationships with the families accessing the service by offering a variety of methods of communication between educators and families both formal and informal.
- Management encourages and supports a team environment where all educators are valued and appreciated for their input into the smooth running of the centre.
- Educators are encouraged to use reflective practice to think about their approach to early childhood education and to motivate them to explore new ideas and information.

The Practices from the Early Years Learning Framework guide our educators through their day to day decision making about the learning environment they are offering to the children in their care.

The Practices are:

- *Holistic approaches*
- *Responsiveness to children*
- *Learning through play*
- *Intentional teaching*
- *Learning environments*
- *Cultural competence*
- *Continuity of learning and transitions*
- *Assessment for learning*

Our corresponding statements of beliefs:

- There are many theorists in the early childhood field that inform our approaches to children's learning and development. Our educators are familiar with many of these theorists and draw upon this knowledge as a base for their curriculum and program decisions.
- At Shooting Stars we aim to foster and enhance each child's understanding of the natural environment and the interconnectedness of people, plants and animals.
- It is important to know each child as an individual in order to be able to effectively respond to their needs.
- Educators use intentional teaching techniques to actively promote children's learning through providing a variety of activities and experiences that are challenging and deliberately extend the learning of the child.
- Both indoor and outdoor learning environments should be planned carefully to encourage exploration, problem solving, and decision making through a variety of experiences for both individual children and groups of children.
- Constant assessment of the learning achieved by each individual child enables the educators to support and extend their learning.
- We believe play is an essential and important part of child development. Play is the way children learn. We provide a program based on the benefits and importance of play.
- Through play, children learn about cultural norms and expectations, discover the workings of the world, and negotiate their way through their surroundings.
- Play teaches children about themselves, others, rules, consequences, and how things go together or come apart.
- They learn to understand the feelings of others and develop empathy. These skills are crucial for healthy peer relationships.
- Play fosters language skills. Pretend play encourages language development as children negotiate roles, set up a structure, and interact in their respective roles. Language is tied to emotions, which are expressed and explored through pretend play.
- Pretending gives children the freedom to address feelings, anxieties and fears.
- Play teaches children social skills, it provides opportunities to rehearse social skills and learn about acceptable peer behaviour. With age and experience, children's awareness of peers playing around them increases. This leads to more interactions between children and incorporation of peers into their play.
- Both social and solitary play provides opportunities for children to practice problem solving and negotiating.

The aim of management and educators at Shooting Stars is to inspire and encourage each child in our care to achieve their potential. We aim to create an environment where children can become enthusiastic, inquiring and challenged learners. Each child is encouraged and supported to follow their interests and to become catalysts for their own curriculum. *Curriculum encompasses all the interactions, experiences, routines and events, planned and unplanned, that occurs in an environment designed to foster children's learning and development. (Belonging, Being and Becoming, (The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia)*

The role of our educators is to support learning; offer encouragement and materials; and to provide a secure, caring and stimulating environment that encourages children to develop cognitively, physically, socially, emotionally as well as enhancing their communication and language skills. To do this they will foster effective interpersonal and communicative links with families and colleagues and caring, supportive relationships with each child within their care.

Centre Goals

As Educators we will provide a learning environment which promotes:

- Creativity, individuality and independence in each child in our care.
- Discovery; divergent thinking and problem solving skills.
- Exploration and experimentation with a variety of learning materials and activities.
- A positive self esteem in each child.
- Understanding and empathy of others.
- Community awareness and involvement.
- Awareness of diversity and respect for the differences in others.

As educators we will:

- Recognise and value children's involvement in their own learning.
- Create responsive educational and developmentally appropriate programs based on educator knowledge of each child.
- Encourage each child to participate in a stimulating environment that enables them to achieve positive learning outcomes.
- Provide activities that are interesting and provoke curiosity and imagination.
- Provide an environment where children are free to make choices in activities/experiences based on their own interests.
- Promote language and literature experiences and encourage children to express themselves knowing that they will be listened to and responded to.
- Create a safe and supportive environment where children can feel confident; secure and nurtured.
- Develop an effective communicative relationship with families in order to ensure continuity of care between the service and the home environment.
- Provide support to families in all aspects of child development.

Code of Ethics

A code of ethics is a set of statements about appropriate and expected behaviour of members of a professional group and, as such, reflects its values. The Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics was first developed in 1990 by a national working party, with considerable input from the early childhood field. The 2003-06 Code of Ethics Agenda resulted in a new Code of Ethics, which was endorsed at Early Childhood Australia's National Council meeting in September 2006. The Code of Ethics is owned by the field rather than imposed upon it.

At Shooting Stars we encourage staff to be aware of and follow the Code of Ethics as follows:

In relation to children, I will:

- Act in the best interests of all children.
- Respect the rights of children as enshrined in the United Nations Conventions of the Rights of the Child (1991) and commit to advocating for these rights.
- Recognise children as active citizens participating in different communities such as family, children's services and schools.
- Work with children to help them understand that they are global citizens with shared responsibilities to the environment and humanity.
- Respect the special relationship between children and their families and incorporate this perspective in all my interactions with children.
- Create and maintain safe, healthy environments, spaces and places, which enhance children's learning, development, engagement, initiative, self-worth, dignity and show respect for their contributions.
- Work to ensure children and families with additional needs can exercise their rights.
- Acknowledge the uniqueness and potential of all children, in recognition that enjoying their childhood without undue pressure is important.
- Acknowledge the holistic nature of children's learning and the significance of children's cultural and linguistic identities.
- Work to ensure children are not discriminated against on the basis of gender, age, ability, economic status, family structure, lifestyle, ethnicity, religion, language, culture or national origin.
- Acknowledge children as competent learners and build active communities of engagement and inquiry.
- Honour children's right to play, as both a process and context for learning.

In relation to families, I will:

- Listen to and learn from families, in order to acknowledge and build upon their strengths and competencies, and support them in their role of nurturing children.
- Assist each family to develop a sense of belonging and inclusion.
- Develop positive relationships based on mutual trust and open communication.
- Develop partnerships with families and engage in shared decision making where appropriate.
- Acknowledge the rights of families to make decisions about their children.
- Respect the uniqueness of each family and strive to learn about their culture, structure, lifestyle, customs, language, beliefs and kinship systems.
- Develop shared planning, monitoring and assessment practices for children's learning and communicate this in ways that families understand.
- Acknowledge that each family is affected by the community contexts in which they engage.
- Be sensitive to the vulnerabilities of children and families and respond in ways that empower and maintain the dignity of all children and families.
- Maintain confidentiality and respect the right of the family to privacy.

In relation to colleagues, I will:

- Encourage my colleagues to adopt and act in accordance with this Code, and take action in the presence of unethical behaviours.
- Build collaborative relationships based on trust, respect and honesty.
- Acknowledge and support personal strengths, professional experience and diversity which my colleagues bring to their work.
- Make every effort to use constructive methods to manage differences of opinion in the spirit of collegiality.

- Share and build knowledge, experiences and resources with my colleagues.
- Collaborate with my colleagues to generate a culture of continual reflection and renewal of high-quality practices in early childhood.

In relation to communities, I will:

- Learn about the communities that I work within and enact curriculum programs which are responsive to the contexts and community priorities.
- Connect with people, services and agencies within the communities that support children and families.
- Promote shared aspirations amongst communities in order to enhance children's health and wellbeing.
- Advocate for the development and implementation of laws and policies that promote child-friendly communities and work to change those that work against child and family wellbeing.
- Utilise knowledge and research to advocate for universal access to a range of high-quality early childhood programs for all children.
- Work to promote community understanding of how children learn, in order that appropriate systems of assessment and reporting are used to benefit children.

In relation to students, I will:

- Afford professional opportunities and resources for students to demonstrate their competencies.
- Acknowledge and support the personal strengths, professional knowledge, diversity and experience which students bring to the learning environment.
- Model high-quality professional practices.
- Know the requirements of the students' individual institutions and communicate openly with the representatives of that institution.
- Provide ongoing constructive feedback and assessment that is fair and equitable.
- Implement strategies that will empower students to make positive contributions to the workplace.
- Maintain confidentiality in relation to students.

In relation to my employer, I will:

- Support workplace policies, standards and practices that are fair, non-discriminatory and are in the best interests of children and families.
- Promote and support ongoing professional development within my work team.
- Adhere to lawful policies and procedures and, when there is a conflict, attempt to effect change through constructive action within the organisation or seek change through appropriate procedures.

In relation to myself as a professional, I will:

- Base my work on contemporary perspectives on research, theory, content knowledge, high-quality early childhood practices and my understandings of the children and families with whom I work.
- Regard myself as a learner who undertakes reflection, critical self-study, continuing professional development and engages with contemporary theory and practice.
- Seek and build collaborative professional relationships.
- Acknowledge the power dimensions within professional relationships.
- Act in ways that advance the interests and standing of my profession.
- Work within the limits of my professional role and avoid misrepresentation of my professional competence and qualifications.
- Mentor other early childhood professionals and students.
- Advocate in relation to issues that impact on my profession and on young children and their families.
- Encourage qualities and practices of leadership within the early childhood profession.

In relation to the conduct of research, I will:

- Recognise that research includes my routine documentation and investigations of children's learning and development, as well as more formal research projects undertaken with and by external bodies.
- Be responsive to children's participation in research, negotiating their involvement taking account of matters such as safety, fatigue, privacy and their interest.
- Support research to strengthen and expand the knowledge base of early childhood, and where possible, initiate, contribute to, facilitate and disseminate such research.

- Make every effort to understand the purpose and value of proposed research projects and make informed decisions as to the participation of myself, colleagues, children, families and communities.
- Ensure research in which I am involved meets standard ethical procedures including informed consent, opportunity to withdraw and confidentiality.
- Ensure that images of children and other data are only collected with informed consent and are stored and utilised according to legislative and policy requirements.
- Represent the findings of all research accurately.

Section 1

Educational Program and Practice

Educational Program Policy

Rationale

A childcare service needs to provide a safe nurturing environment that meets the needs of the children who attend and promotes effective development of children across all developmental areas. The programming process is a way of planning developmentally appropriate activities and experiences based on the interests of the children and the educator. Activities and experiences can either be spontaneous, intentional or planned.

Aim

When a child shows an interest in a topic or activity then early childhood educators are encouraged to facilitate this interest by providing resources and materials to help guide the children's learning, exploration and discovery. The aim of facilitating children's learning is to find out how children learn and how they use their personal experiences and knowledge to reach conclusions." (Facilitating an emergent Curriculum by Shauna Woo) Observations allow the educators to develop a clear picture of the child's needs, strengths and interests in order to be able to include them in the learning program. We observe children in order to get to know them better. When we know and acknowledge each child as an individual we can plan learning experiences more easily.

Implementation

For educators to ensure children's interests are integral to the daily program they need to gain genuine understanding of individual children and their interests by taking frequent opportunities to communicate meaningfully and respectfully with them. Children must be made to feel that their contributions, ideas and interests are valued and appreciated. (Involving Children in Program Planning; Angela Owens; Putting Children First Issue 13, March 2005)

The environment will provide a balance of experiences incorporating the following:

- Indoor/outdoor
- Active/passive
- Individual/small group/large group
- Gross motor/small motor
- Child initiated/educators initiated/teacher directed

The indoor environment will be set up in permanent learning areas that reflect the interests and developmental needs of the children, such as dramatic play and visual arts. The structure of the environment allows children to become familiar with the resources and provides them with the freedom and time to explore and master their skills. Materials and resources will be changed and added to the permanent areas to extend learning experiences as children's individual interests emerge

The program is to provide:

- Age/stage appropriate planning for individuals and groups
- Consideration of the needs and interests of individuals and groups
- A variety of developmentally appropriate materials, resources and equipment.
- For gender equity – a non-biased, non-stereotypical approach
- A multicultural perspective and respect of all cultures
- A balance of daily activities, indoor/outdoor, quiet/active
- Small and large groups, individual and child/educators initiated activity
- Large blocks of time for completion of projects, particularly in the over 3 age groups.
- Flexibility to accommodate changing needs and interests of children and spontaneous occurrences.
- Transitions and routines that provide learning experiences
- Activities and learning experiences aimed at fostering and challenging children's development and skills across all developmental and curriculum areas.

The program planning is to:

- Be based on observations of individuals and groups plus long term group goals and learning outcomes.
- Follow the centre format.
- Use a variety of observation types
- Foster a positive self concept
- Develop social skills

- Encourage children to think, reason, question and experiment
- Encourage language development
- Enhance gross motor skills and fine motor skills
- Encourage sound health, safety and nutritional practices
- Encourage creative expression
- Respect cultural diversity of educators and children
- Develop self help skills
- Show linkages back to planned goals and outcomes as well as individual child planning objectives
- Respect the child's right to choose his/her own activity or to choose not to participate as they wish
- Be evaluated daily, weekly, monthly and yearly. Parents should be encouraged to participate in the evaluation process.
- Be sensitive and responsive to individual children's needs
- Be displayed for parents to view and pass comments on
- Be available for parents to participate in and add to as necessary

Special Needs Children

- Educators should be familiar with community resources in order to use them as a referral for parents.
- Educators should liaise with other organisations involved in the caring and programming for the child.
- Minor modifications may need to be made to the environment to accommodate special needs children
- Program planning is based on children's individual strengths, needs and interests and as such the inclusion of special needs children fits well with the ethos of early childhood program planning.

Educators Will

- Involve the families of children and their colleagues in the observation process through ongoing discussion and feedback
- Use a cyclic system to observe, program and evaluate for each child.
- Use a variety of observational techniques to create a profile of each individual child.
- Ensure photographic observations are also included in the child profile – documenting the child's involvement, enjoyment and learning.
- Provide objective interpretations to their observations.
- Use the observational data to provide spontaneous or intentional learning experiences.
- Develop an effective relationship with the parents and extended family of each child and invite their participation in the program
- Create an effective system to organise the individual child profiles.
- Actively observe children to ensure the program directly reflects the interest of the child.
- Seek input from parents and other educators in their program preparation
- Ensure their program reflects the centre philosophy
- Attend professional development opportunities in order to keep abreast of changes within the childcare field.
- Ensure the program is balanced to provide for indoor/outdoor learning experiences, quiet/active times, individual/small group/large group times, time for individual educators/child interaction, individual and group interests and be flexible enough to allow for spontaneity and the unexpected.
- Ensure their program and the environment is child centred and will allow children to experience a variety of materials with which they can pursue their own interest.
- Ensure that there are always additional choices when a child chooses not to participate in a particular activity.
- Ensure children are appropriately supervised at all times.
- Join in the children's play and encourage them to try new experiences.
- Promote creativity through music and movement, art, craft, design, building, problem solving and social interactions with others.

- Become aware of children’s interests by observing and listening to children’s play and interactions within the environment and information provided by parents. This will be documented in the form of written observations, photographs, examples of children’s work and daily evaluations.
- Collaboration with children, educators and parents will be encouraged where ever possible to ensure the program respects individual family cultures. Parents will be invited to become involved in the program through sharing their skills, interests and capabilities, e.g., participating in daily activities, reading with the children or attending meetings.
- Ensure materials and equipment reflect the cultural diversity that exists in our society and will avoid stereotyping of any group. Educators will encourage non-sexist play at all times.
- Respect the child’s right not to participate at times. Where possible and appropriate, children will be provided with an alternate activity/experience to suit their interests.
- Conduct smooth transitions between activities. Transitions are integrated into the program as learning opportunities. Children will be encouraged to participate in routine transition times, such as packing away and setting tables.

Parents Will

- Share information on an informal and formal basis with the staff which will enable them to get to know each child as an individual.
- Provide the educators with feedback.

Management Will

- Allocate an educational leader to supervise and mentor all educators through the programming process of observation planning and evaluation
- Ensure educators receive 2 hours non-contact time per week for documenting their programming
- Provide educators with access to resources and equipment to assist in planning of activities and experiences
- Encourage the professional development of all educators through further study, provision of readings and information and in-service opportunities.

Evaluation and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually. Family and educator feedback will be considered in the review process. Changes in legislation, regulations, and NQS will be considered. Any changes to this policy will be communicated to families and educators verbally and in writing.

Associated Forms and Documentation

Observation templates
 Program Templates
 Child and parent input templates
 Evaluation and reflection tools

Sources

Documenting your Emergent Curriculum by Beryl Capello
 Facilitating an emergent Curriculum by Shauna Woo
 “Involving Children in Program Planning” by Angela Owens Putting Children First; Issue 13, March 2005

Policy Updated Date August 2024

Link to NOS

Standard 1.1	An approved learning framework informs the development of a curriculum that enhances each child’s learning and development
Element 1.1.1	Curriculum decision making contributes to each child’s learning and development outcomes in relation to their identity, connection with community, wellbeing, confidence as learners and effectiveness as communicators.
Element 1.1.2	Each child’s current knowledge, ideas, culture, abilities and interests are the

	foundation of the program.
Element 1.1.3	The program including routines is organised in ways that maximise opportunities for each child's learning.
Element 1.1.4	The documentation about each child's program and progress is available to families.
Element 1.1.5	Every child is supported to participate in the program.
Element 1.1.6	Each child's agency is promoted, enabling them to make choices and decisions and to influence events and their world.
Element 1.2.1	Each child's learning and development is assessed as part of an ongoing cycle of planning, documenting and evaluation.
Element 1.2.2	Educators respond to children's ideas and play and use intentional teaching to scaffold and extend each child's learning
Element 1.2.3	Critical reflection on children's learning and development, both as individuals and in groups, is regularly used to implement the program
Element 3.2.1	Outdoor and indoor spaces are designed and organised to engage every child in quality experiences in both built and natural environments.
Element 3.2.2	Resources, materials and equipment are sufficient in number, organised in ways that ensure appropriate and effective implementation of the program and allow for multiple uses.
Element 4.2.2	Educators, co-ordinators and staff members work collaboratively and affirm, challenge, support and learn from each other to further develop their skills and improve practice and relationships.
Element 5.2.1	Each child is supported to work with, learn from and help others through collaborative learning opportunities.
Element 6.1.2	Families have opportunities to be involved in the service and contribute to service decisions
Element 7.1.4	Provision is made to ensure a suitably qualified and experienced educator or co-ordinator leads the development of the curriculum and ensures the establishment of clear goals and expectations for teaching and learning.
Element 7.2.1	A statement of philosophy is developed and guides all aspects of the services operations.
Element 7.2.2	The performance of educators, co-ordinators and staff members is evaluated and individual development plans are in place to support performance improvement.
Element 7.2.3	An effective self assessment and quality improvement process is in place.

Evaluation/Reflection Policy

Rationale

“Children’s responses to the program are the most important source of information when reflecting upon the effectiveness of the program. This is particularly true for programs to which children are the primary instigators of what is planned.” (“Involving Children in Program Planning” by Angela Owens Putting Children First; Issue 13, March 2005)

“Evaluation and reflection can offer us advice about past practices and directions for future action in partnership with children, families, educators, the setting and other educators. Since evaluation and reflection can occur in everything we do, they readily involve us in continuous self-improvement. Early childhood professionals, through experience and necessity, have learned to plan, reflect and evaluate on multiple levels, moving their focus from the effectiveness of the learning environment to community engagement and from day to day management to the long term strategic planning.” (Program and Planning in Early Childhood Settings Fourth Edition)

Aim

Families and Governments both demand increased accountability from educators to demonstrate positive outcomes for children within early childhood settings. Early childhood is rich in resources for critical reflection to strengthen programs. (Program and Planning in Early Childhood Settings Fourth Edition)

Evaluations are an important professional tool. It allows the educators member to:

- Monitor the effectiveness of the program
- Monitor the children’s developmental progress
- Provide evidence of learning to parents, management, licensing bodies and ACECQA validators.
- Provide opportunities for extension and further planning in the program.

All aspects of the early childhood setting should be evaluated including children’s involvement in their learning and development, group dynamics, educators’ interactions with children and families, as well as evaluation of the overall program and direction within the setting.

Evaluation offers us advice about past practices and directions for future action in partnership with children, families, educators and management. Since evaluation is present in everything we plan it readily involves us in continuous self-improvement cycles.

Implementation

It is important to evaluate the planned program on a regular basis in order to continually improve the process and continue to provide high quality care. There are many reasons we evaluate: to work towards our philosophy, to aim for improved service provision, to meet the continually changing needs of the community. Families who use early childhood services are entitled to know about the effectiveness of children’s programs. Through evaluation we reflect and share dialogue about current and future practices in a responsible and professional manner.

When writing evaluations with respect to children’s involvement, roles and experiences we need to go beyond ‘The children enjoyed the experience’. With effective planning following children’s interests, the children usually will enjoy them. Evaluation means looking at how children responded. Ask yourself the questions:

- Why did they respond in this way?
- What unexpected learning occurred?
- Why did it occur?
- What role did adults and children play during the experience?
- How did children interact with each other?
- Was anyone excluded?
- How effectively did we use the physical environment?
- What does this mean for future planning?
- What are the children teaching us?

Evaluations can also be used to focus on particular aspects of the setting. These evaluations may be ongoing over a period of time. For example we may notice that transitions are not working effectively so we need to evaluate what we currently do before making changes to our planning, perhaps

minimising the number of transitions and ensuring the transitions we do have become effective learning times that are pleasant for children and adults alike.

Educators will:

- Provide documented evaluations on a daily, weekly and monthly basis.
- Ensure evaluations are objective – what went well, what didn't go well, what could have been done to improve the experience.
- Evaluate individual activities as well as the program in general.
- Use the information gained from their evaluation in their next program
- Evaluation of individual objectives are kept in children's developmental files

Reflections should be a comment on what we have observed in the context of the child so far, what we know of them and what we have noticed that interests us as childcare professionals. These should be 'what if' moments that we are prepared to share with others. They can be developmental observations such as when we notice a child achieving something for the first time or a reflection wondering why a child did this or that and what it might mean. (From Observation to Reflection, Joy Lubawy)

Sources

Program and Planning in Early Childhood Settings Fourth Edition
 From Observation to Reflection, Joy Lubawy
 "Involving Children in Program Planning" by Angela Owens Putting Children First; Issue 13, March 2005

Evaluation and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually. Family and educator feedback will be considered in the review process. Changes in legislation, regulations, and NQS will be considered. Any changes to this policy will be communicated to families and educators verbally and in writing.

Associated forms and documentation

Evaluation and reflection templates

Policy Reviewed and Changed Date October 2013

Link to NQS

Element 1.2.1	Each child's learning and development is assessed as part of an ongoing cycle of planning, documenting and evaluation.
Element 1.2.2	Educators respond to children's ideas and play and use intentional teaching to scaffold and extend each child's learning
Element 1.2.3	Critical reflection on children's learning and development, both as individuals and in groups, is regularly used to implement the program
Element 4.2.2	Educators, co-ordinators and staff members work collaboratively and affirm, challenge, support and learn from each other to further develop their skills and improve practice and relationships.
Element 6.1.2	Families have opportunities to be involved in the service and contribute to service decisions
Element 7.1.4	Provision is made to ensure a suitably qualified and experienced educator or co-ordinator leads the development of the curriculum and ensures the establishment of clear goals and expectations for teaching and learning.
Element 7.2.1	A statement of philosophy is developed and guides all aspects of the services operations.
Element 7.2.2	The performance of educators, co-ordinators and staff members is evaluated and individual development plans are in place to support performance improvement.
Element 7.2.3	An effective self assessment and quality improvement process is in place.

Curriculum and Pedagogy Policy

Rationale

“The research emerging from a reconsideration of child-centred play in the early childhood curriculum is contributing to a depth of knowledge regarding the importance of teacher interactions during children’s play (Fleer, 2010; Siraj-Blatchford, Taggart, Sylva, Sammons & Melhusih, 2008; Ryan & Goffin, 2008); the relationship between children’s cultural experiences and their funds of knowledge as a precursor to play-based learning (Brooker, 2005; Hedges, 2008); and the role of teacher planning for learning in play-based activities (Edwards, Cutter-Mackenzie & Hunt, 2010; Gibbons, 2007). Collectively, increased research and theorisation in the field is beginning to suggest that 1) play-based learning needs to draw on and recognise children’s existing cultural competencies; 2) acknowledge and actively include the role of the adult educator in connecting children’s play activities to particular conceptual and content-based ideas; and 3) promote the importance of teacher planning for learning in relation to children’s play and the acquisition of content knowledge. Contemporary research regarding the role of play in the early childhood curriculum therefore represents a shift from the primary developmental child-centred orientation to a focus on the nature of the dynamic relationship between children (learners), teachers and content (Ball & Forzani, 2007; Grieshaber, 2008) within a play-based framework that moves beyond child-centred versus teacher-directed dichotomies (Broadhead, Wood & Howard, 2010).” (Edwards and Cutter-Mackenzie 2011)

Aim

This policy has been developed to ensure that all educators make curriculum decisions and apply principles and practices in their work with children and families that are informed by the appropriate curriculum frameworks and the Centre Philosophy.

Implementation

At Shooting Stars Early Learning Centre we use the following frameworks to guide our curriculum decisions:

- The Early Years Learning Framework ‘Belonging, Being and Becoming’
- The Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework

Our curriculum is based on the five learning outcomes for children taken from these frameworks:

IDENTITY

ELYF Learning Outcome 1

VELYF Learning Outcome 1

CONNECTEDNESS

ELYF Learning Outcome 2

VELYF Learning Outcome 2

WELLBEING

ELYF Learning Outcome 3

VELYF Learning Outcome 3

ACTIVE LEARNING

ELYF Learning Outcome 4

VELYF Learning Outcome 4

COMMUNICATING

ELYF Learning Outcome 5

VELYF Learning Outcome 5

Educators Will

- Read the EYLF documentation “Belonging, Being and Becoming” and use the information they learned to guide their curriculum decision making
- Discuss curriculum with their colleagues and mentor and network to gain further knowledge and experience.
- Attend professional development opportunities to increase and enhance their understanding of early childhood education pedagogy and theorists.
- Adhere to the centre Education Program Policy
- Collaborate and participate in the children’s learning and play.
- Ensure their program includes both child and teacher initiated planning and experiences.
- Scaffold the children’s learning by consolidating and extending their skills and knowledge.

- Encourage children to make choices and practice decision making skills
- Include experiences in their program which foster all developmental areas.
- Use their knowledge of each child's individual interests, strengths, culture, experiences and capabilities when programming experiences for them.
- Assist children to develop dispositions to regulate their own behaviour and support them to identify and deal with their feelings.

Management Will

- Allocate an Educational Leader to support educators in understanding and following the centre programming process and policies.
- Ensure each educator has non-contact time with the Educational Leader for mentoring and support.
- Provide resources to aid in developing knowledge and understanding of pedagogy and theorists.
- Provide access to professional development opportunities to enhance and increase knowledge and skills.

Evaluation and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually. Family and educator feedback will be considered in the review process. Changes in legislation, regulations, and NQS will be considered. Any changes to this policy will be communicated to families and educators verbally and in writing.

Associated Forms and Documentation

Education Program Policy
 Evaluation/Reflection Policy
 Inclusion and Cultural Diversity Policy
 Technology and Media Policy
 Centre Philosophy
 Program Templates
 Belonging, being & becoming

Sources

- *Educators Belonging, Being & Becoming: Educators' Guide to the EYLF for Australia*, Australian Government DEEWR for the Council of Australian Governments. 2010
- *Belonging, being & becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia*, Australian Government DEEWR for the Council of Australian Governments. 2009
- *Environmentalising Early Childhood Curriculum through the pedagogies of play*; Susan Edwards and Amy Cutter-Mackenzie Monash University; Australasian Journal of Early Childhood – Volume 36 No 1 February 2011

Policy Created Date January 2013

Link to NQS

Element 1.1.1	Curriculum decision making contributes to each child's learning and development outcomes in relation to their identity, connection with community, wellbeing, confidence as learners and effectiveness as communicators.
Element 1.1.2	Each child's current knowledge, ideas, culture, abilities and interests are the foundation of the program.
Element 1.2.1	Each child's learning and development is assessed as part of an ongoing cycle of planning, documenting and evaluation.
Element 1.2.2	Educators respond to children's ideas and play and use intentional teaching to scaffold and extend each child's learning
Element 1.2.3	Critical reflection on children's learning and development, both as individuals and in groups, is regularly used to implement the program
Element 4.2.1	Professional standards guide practice, interactions and relationships.
Element	Educators, co-ordinators and staff members work collaboratively and affirm,

4.2.2	challenge, support and learn from each other to further develop their skills and improve practice and relationships.
Element 4.2.3	Interactions convey mutual respect, equity and recognition of each other's strengths and skills.
Element 5.2.1	Each child is supported to work with, learn from and help others through collaborative learning opportunities.
Element 7.1.4	Provision is made to ensure a suitably qualified and experienced educator or co-ordinator leads the development of the curriculum and ensures the establishment of clear goals and expectations for teaching and learning.
Element 7.2.1	A statement of philosophy is developed and guides all aspects of the services operations.

Inclusion and Cultural Diversity Policy

Rationale

Inclusion is a continuous process that provides each individual with opportunities for acceptance and participation in their community. It means more than just “being there”, it means “being with” i.e. learning with, playing with, communicating with and socializing with peers. Inclusion means BELONGING. (Childcare and Children’s Health Vol 6 No 1 March 2003) As belonging is an essential component of the EYLF we believe this process is extremely important.

All children have an equal right to life opportunities that promote well-being and support their development in all areas. Shooting Stars Early Learning Centre endorses the concept of a cross-cultural and non-discriminatory curriculum, and expects that this perspective should be implemented throughout all centre programmes. We believe that educational programmes must support the child’s self-esteem and pride in family, community, ethnic and linguistic origins.

Aim

It is important to practice an inclusive approach to childcare because:

- Children learn from being with other children.
- Children’s values and attitudes begin to form at a very early age so they need to be given every opportunity to understand and value differences.
- An inclusive environment provides opportunities for children to have positive experiences of difference and to learn that we are not all the same and that difference is to be valued and appreciated.
- Children begin to see themselves and their peers as valued, worthy individuals because of the positive and responsive interactions that occur within the childcare environment.
- The opportunity to play and learn alongside children with very diverse needs impacts favourably on the children’s increased understanding of both difference and acceptance.
- An inclusive environment allows children to feel good about themselves and to care about the needs and rights of others.
- An inclusive environment can lead to lifelong positive attitudes being formed because of these early childhood experiences.

At Shooting Stars Early Learning Centre children, educators, families, students and visitors will not be discriminated against on the basis of their race, ethnicity, religion, gender, disability or family structure.

Implementation

It is our aim to recognise the beauty, value and contribution of each child and to foster within each child awareness and acceptance of other cultures, religions, disabilities, gender and socio-economic status and to create an atmosphere where all children will feel comfortable, secure and happy.

We respect all families and educators regardless of background or cultural diversification. To foster high self-esteem and positive self-concept in children we help them to explore similarities rather than differences.

Where parents are from non-English speaking backgrounds, they are invited and encouraged to contribute knowledge of their own culture to enhance the overall program. We aim to understand the financial, physical and emotional stresses faced by these families and offer our support.

Our program presents positive experiences for the children, which are not based on sex role stereotypes. Children with disabilities have access to care providing the physical environment and staff can meet the child's individual needs. Members of the community, visiting entertainers, parents, advisory agencies and personnel are used to support our program and enhance the children's understanding of other cultures and people with disabilities.

For educators to be able to:

- Incorporate an anti-bias approach in all interactions with children, their families and fellow educators.
- Develop educational and developmental programs that support the goals of the anti-bias program.

- Regularly assess the physical environment for inclusiveness and undertake to plan changes in the environment where appropriate.

For each child to be able to:

- Feel good about who they are
- Feel comfortable with similarities and differences in others.
- Recognise bias and stereotypes and know they can hurt.
- Stand up for themselves and others when bias occurs.

Educators Will

- Respect the individuality of all children.
- Be positive and sensitive.
- Provide a sharing, caring, inclusive environment with experiences that encourage all children to learn, extend their skills, and have fun.
- Ask the parents of each child to share as much information as possible about their child acknowledging the fact that parents know their child best.
- Develop a positive, collaborative relationship with parents.
- Have adequate clear, uncluttered space for children to move safely around their environment.
- Ensure that all children are able to access experiences together at the same level e.g. floor and table experiences, mealtimes.
- Ensure that programming meets the individual needs of all children.
- Provide a well-rounded program with many different experiences.
- Ensure that all children are able to participate, learn and experience success.
- Provide opportunities for spontaneous fun and positive social interactions.
- Ensure that through their programs:
 1. Boys and girls have equal right to develop to their full potential
 2. All children will have an equal right to develop to their full potential regardless of their race or culture
 3. All children will have an equal right to develop to their full potential irrespective of their abilities or disabilities
- Ensure that their language and daily practise are inclusive and non-discriminatory.
- Have the opportunity to develop their understanding of anti-bias education through education and professional development experience.
- Self-evaluate and monitor their biases concerning gender, stereotypes or other differences between children
- Utilise parent's expertise with regard to the culture and religion that is shared in the household to enhance continuity of care.
- Explore languages other than English to ensure that first home languages are appreciated.
- Provide inclusive models when discussing gender roles and responsibilities.
- Provide inclusive models when discussing family structures.
- Provide inclusive resources and materials regarding gender, race, religion, culture, and ability and family structure.
- Ensure the physical environment of the centre reflects the commitment to a cross-cultural and non-discriminatory perspective.
- Observe the community served by the centre and identify the socio economic and cultural groupings of its families.
- Show respect for the various ways that families care for their children and be aware of the range of child-rearing practises and attitudes of different cultures and groups within Australian society.
- Incorporate into the program the goals that other professionals (paediatricians, child-welfare workers, psychologists or other therapists) have identified in consultation with the family for children with additional needs (language, abilities, cultural, health, behavioural or gifted and talented)

Parents Will

- Ensure educators are given adequate information about their child's needs so that high quality care can be provided.
- Keep educators updated on the progress of the child in the home environment or in any support programs they are participating in e.g. speech therapy, S.E.D.U attendance.

- Be willing to work with educators towards common goals for the child.
- Inform educators of the family and child’s primary language, religious/cultural requirements or requirements for disabilities or special needs on enrolment or whenever identified
- Be encouraged to contribute to the centre programs by sharing information and celebrations from their culture.
- Be invited to attend the centre to share opportunities for celebrating special cultural events.

Management Will

- Ensure all educators are provided with access to training opportunities that will assist them in providing an inclusive environment.
- Regularly discuss inclusive practices with educators at team meetings and informally.
- Establish strong working relationships with community agencies that offer support and assistance to staff providing an inclusive environment.
- Support educators in their professional development opportunities to ensure the provision of cross-cultural non-discriminatory programs.
- Assess centre documents and communications to ensure that it is inclusive and takes into account the language needs of parents.
- Ensure all enrolment policies to be inclusive.
- Provide the opportunity for parents to contribute to the anti-bias policy and review the policy at least annually.
- Ensure that all equipment and resources purchased are inclusive regarding gender, race, religion, culture, ability and family structure.
- Whenever possible, ensure a diversity of staffing to ensure that role models are inclusive to a broader society.
- Include in the educator selection criteria the applicant’s ability to accept and implement anti-bias environment and education.

Evaluation and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually. Family and educator feedback will be considered in the review process. Changes in legislation, regulations, and NQS will be considered. Any changes to this policy will be communicated to families and educators verbally and in writing.

Sources

Inclusion Childcare and Children’s Health Vol 6 No 1 March 2003
Gender Equity Early Childhood Australia Position Statement, October 2004
Cultural Diversity Early Childhood Australia Position Statement, August 2005

Associated Forms and Documentation

Enrolment forms
 Special information forms
 Participating in the Program invitation

Policy Updated Date August 2024

Link to NQS

Element 1.1.1	Curriculum decision making contributes to each child’s learning and development outcomes in relation to their identity, connection with community, wellbeing, confidence as learners and effectiveness as communicators.
Element 1.1.2	Each child’s current knowledge, ideas, culture, abilities and interests are the foundation of the program.
Element 1.1.3	The program including routines is organised in ways that maximise opportunities for each child’s learning.
Element 1.1.5	Every child is supported to participate in the program.
Element 1.2.1	Each child’s learning and development is assessed as part of an ongoing cycle of planning, documenting and evaluation.
Element 3.1.3	Facilities are designed or adapted to ensure access and participation by every child in the service and to allow flexible use, and interaction between indoor and outdoor

	space.
Element 3.2.1	Outdoor and indoor spaces are designed and organised to engage every child in quality experiences in both built and natural environments.
Element 3.2.2	Resources, materials and equipment are sufficient in number, organised in ways that ensure appropriate and effective implementation of the program and allow for multiple uses.
Element 5.1.3	Each child is supported to feel secure, confident and included.
Element 5.2.3	The dignity and rights of every child are maintained at all times.
Element 6.1.1	There is an effective enrolment and orientation process for families
Element 6.1.2	Families have opportunities to be involved in the service and contribute to service decisions
Element 6.2.1	The expertise of families is recognised and they share in decision making about their child's learning and wellbeing.
Element 6.2.2	Current information is available to families about community services and resources to support parenting and family wellbeing.
Element 6.3.1	Links with relevant community and support agencies are established and maintained
Element 6.3.2	Continuity of learning and transitions for each child are supported by sharing relevant information and clarifying responsibilities.
Element 6.3.3	Access to inclusion and support assistance is facilitated.

Technology and Media Policy

Rationale

Modern technologies offer numerous benefits for young children, particularly those that are interactive and support the development of curiosity, problem-solving, and independent thinking skills. While technology can enhance learning, it is essential that parents and educators act as facilitators in children's learning.

Implementation

1. **Balanced Integration:**
 - Ensure that technology is used to enhance the curriculum and experiences for children.
 - Provide a well-balanced set of real-life and technological experiences to help children grow into capable adults who can handle social-emotional interactions and develop their intellectual abilities.
2. **Interactive Technologies:**
 - Prioritize technologies that allow children to interact, control the pace and activity, and make things happen.
 - Encourage repeated activities to help children master skills and reinforce learning.
3. **Facilitation by Educators and Parents:**
 - Act as facilitators in children's learning, guiding and enhancing their experiences with technology.
 - Ensure that children have opportunities for hands-on manipulation of their environment, such as playing with dolls, blocks, toy cars, and engaging in physical activities.
4. **Use of DVD Player:**
 - Limit the use of the DVD player to no longer than one hour per day, preferably only when it is raining or too cold to stay outside in the late afternoon.
 - Use child-appropriate G-rated DVDs.
 - Ensure other activities are available for children who do not wish to watch the DVD.
5. **Addressing Unique Learning Styles:**
 - Recognize that technology can reveal hidden strengths in children with unique learning styles.
 - Use technology to provide additional ways for children to learn and demonstrate their learning.

Associated Forms and Documentation

Rainy Day Procedure

Sources

Using Technology in the Early Childhood Classroom; Dr Bruce Perry; Scholastic.

Evaluation and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually. Family and educator feedback will be considered in the review process. Changes in legislation, regulations, and NQS will be considered. Any changes to this policy will be communicated to families and educators verbally and in writing.

Policy Updated Date August 2024

Link to NQS

Element 1.1.1	Curriculum decision making contributes to each child's learning and development outcomes in relation to their identity, connection with community, wellbeing, and confidence as learners and effectiveness as communicators.
Element 2.3.1	Children are adequately supervised at all times.
Element 4.2.1	Professional standards guide practice, interactions and relationships.

Routine Transitions Policy

Rationale

A transition is moving from one activity or area to another. Transitions can often be the cause of challenging behaviours. Educators can guide children through transitions without confusion and chaos by following a few simple procedures.

Aim

To assist educators in planning and managing routine transitions so that they are smooth, stress free and effective for the children and the educators

Implementation

The key to successful transitions is consistency and routine. Using a familiar routine clarifies what is next and reduces anxiety suffered by children because they know what they have to do.

Educators should be consistent in the routine and should help the children learn the names for the parts of the daily routine so they can anticipate what is coming next. Educators must also be consistent in their expectations of the children. The rules and expectations of the room/playground must remain the same regardless of which adult is available.

- Be aware of children's involvement levels during the day. Children may become very involved in activities and want to do them for long periods of time, yet at other times they may only want to do some activities for brief amounts of time.
- With older children a daily schedule in pictures can be posted on the wall. Educators can review it with the children early in the day.
- Prepare children for changes. Change can cause anxiety, fear or anger which is frequently displayed in negative behaviours.
- Ensure adequate time is allowed to finish activities and clean up so that children don't feel rushed.
- Use non-verbal cues to get the attention of the children if they are all involved in their activities such as flicking the light off then back on or singing a song or starting a simple follow the leader activity such as clapping hands in sequence.
- Individualise transitions such as leaving the circle time individually or in small groups.
- Eliminate or reduce waiting times for children between transitions. Children do not like waiting.
- Have a back-up plan if children do need to wait such as simple songs, finger plays or a story which will keep the children occupied.
- Remain flexible – if children are particularly enjoying an activity and don't wish to pack up just yet allow them more time.

Associated Forms and Documentation

Room Routines

Policy Reviewed and Changed Date October 2013

Link to NQS

Element 1.1.3	The program including routines is organized in ways that maximizes opportunities for each child's learning.
Element 1.1.6	Each child's agency is promoted, enabling them to make choices and decisions and to influence events and their world.
Element 2.3.1	Children are adequately supervised at all times.
Element 3.1.3	Facilities are designed or adapted to ensure access and participation by every child in the service and to allow flexible use, and interaction between indoor and outdoor space.
Element 5.1.2	Every child is able to engage with educators in meaningful, open interactions that support the acquisition of skills for life and learning.
Element 7.2.1	A statement of philosophy is developed and guides all aspects of the services operations.

Language and Literature Policy

Rationale

Literacy is part of everyday life of families. We use literacy as we communicate with friends and family members, do the shopping, cook dinner and participate in leisure activities. (Literacy experiences in the 21st Century)

Aim

Literacy is literally language in use – in speaking, listening, reading, and viewing, writing and drawing. Literacy is critical to a child's success in life. The promotion of language and literacy will be integrated throughout the program planning and documentation.

Implementation

“Literacy involves the exchange of meanings with others. It includes the processes of encoding and decoding print, creating and interpreting images, oral communication and critical thinking. Positive attitudes and values towards literacy are also important. Children are more likely to develop positive attitudes regarding literacy when they see that literacy is meaningful and relevant to their daily lives.” (Literacy experiences in the 21st Century)

Shared book experiences will be encouraged as a major activity due to its contribution to the development of emergent literacy skills in children. Other literacy experiences will include:

- Reading and viewing of signs, labels and logos
- Listening to told stories, rhymes and jokes
- Reading and sending letters, greeting cards, postcodes etc
- Listening to recorded stories on CD
- Viewing magazines, newspapers, comics and store catalogues.
- Drawing and writing using paper and pencils and computer software

Educators will:

- Be aware that support for first language is fundamental to literacy development
- Be aware that the local community can consist of people from vastly diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds.
- Work together to ensure a smooth transition and continuity of learning experiences for children.
- Recognise that children enter early childhood programs having begun to learn to communicate and make sense of their experiences at home and in their communities.
- Respect the children's home language and culture and use that as a base to build and extend their language and literacy experiences.
- Develop an effective partnership between the parents and the educators in order to find out about the children's literacy experiences at home.
- Provide children with many opportunities to observe and actively participate in a wide variety of language experiences – to be immersed in oral, written and viewed texts.
- Provide a supportive environment in which to use and practice their developing language understandings and abilities.
- Show appreciation and encouragement towards the children as they develop their language skills.
- Converse readily with the children in their care – talk and listen to them on an individual basis throughout the day.
- Modify their language so that the children can readily understand what is being said.
- Liaise with parents to learn important words in the home language of the child.
- Read books often – to individuals, small groups and large groups.
- Use spontaneous opportunities to expand the language knowledge of the children.
- Ensure that when introducing new concepts the staff use the words in ways that will affirm the meaning of the words for the children.
- Provide access to a wide variety of reading and writing materials.
- Include simple songs and simple phrases in languages other than English in their learning experiences.
- Lead discussions with older children.

- Include environmental print examples such as magazines, food packaging, store catalogues etc within their program.
- Include literacy examples for use in the dramatic play environment such as menus, notepads and pencils. Road maps and signs in the block construction area.

Evaluation and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually. Family and educator feedback will be considered in the review process. Changes in legislation, regulations, and NQS will be considered. Any changes to this policy will be communicated to families and educators verbally and in writing.

Sources

Early Childhood Australia website

Literacy experiences in the 21st century; Childcare and Children’s Health Vol 8 No 5 November 2005
Parent Fact sheet “Supporting Children’s Literacy Development” NCAC

Associated forms and documentation

Programming templates

Policy Updated Date August 2024

Links to NQS

Element 1.1.1	Curriculum decision making contributes to each child’s learning and development outcomes in relation to their identity, connection with community, wellbeing, and confidence as learners and effectiveness as communicators.
Element 1.1.2	Each child’s current knowledge, ideas, culture, abilities and interests are the foundation of the program.
Element 1.1.3	The program including routines is organised in ways that maximise opportunities for each child’s learning.
Element 1.1.4	The documentation about each child’s program and progress is available to families.
Element 1.1.5	Every child is supported to participate in the program.
Element 1.1.6	Each child’s agency is promoted, enabling them to make choices and decisions and to influence events and their world.
Element 5.1.3	Each child is supported to feel secure, confident and included.
Element 7.2.1	A statement of philosophy is developed and guides all aspects of the services operations.

Music and Movement Policy

Rationale

Music is an important facet across all developmental areas – it can be linked directly to language, cognitive, physical, social and emotional development therefore it is an extremely important activity to offer in our program.

Creativity: Music opens new horizons of the mind and supports wonderment, imagination, appreciation, and sensitivity. Creativity is the source of possibility and is a mental muscle that must be trained and exercised often.

Communication: Music is a language beyond words. Music can only be explained with music because of its various styles, textures, tempos, and dynamics. It can elicit an emotion. Music truly stirs the soul of people. No words or visual display can come close to the emotional impact of music.

Aim

We aim to offer music and movement experiences that will enhance the development, sense of enjoyment and positive self-esteem of all the children in our care.

Implementation

Music and movement experiences are an important element of the early childhood environment. They play an integral role in all areas of development. Music and movement activities need to be planned and relevant to the children's developmental stage.

Developmental Areas

Social

- Provides opportunities to develop social skills such as turn taking, sharing and co-operative play
- Allows a child to participate at own level of skill and interest

Emotional

- Music is joyful and children are usually joyful – the more music experiences you provide the more happy and joyful the children will be
- Music and movement activities can be an outlet for emotions and a method of self expression
- Music introduces endorphins into the body and makes us more relaxed and happy

Physical

- Assists in fine motor development of hands, face and mouth muscles
- Provides opportunities for gross motor development – balance, co-ordination etc
- Assists in the development of body awareness
- Singing increases oxygen intake in the body and actually allows them to be more receptive to learning.

Language

- Assists in the development of language through repetition and introduction of new words
- Helps in the development of sentence structure
- Aids in the development of listening skills

Cognitive Development

- Helps to develop memory and retention
- Introduces simple music concepts such as fast/slow, loud/soft and rhythm
- Singing reinforces patterns such as rhyming and repetition and we learn through patterns from birth.

A wide variety of music types and music activities should be provided in the centre including:

- Music specifically recorded for children
- music from other cultures
- music from different genres e.g. jazz, rock, classical
- relaxation music
- Instruments for children's use
- Scarves for dancing
- Group music times - songs, finger plays and action songs.

- Spontaneous music activities where staff and children sing or dance together

Educators Will:

- Ensure music is not just confined to group time. E.g. incorporate it into routine tasks such as nappy change, sun safe procedures, hand washing etc.
- Use singing as a distraction, to encourage or involve a child who is unsettled or upset.
- Introduce musical instruments as a method of expression.
- Sing a set of songs regularly as young children respond to music that is familiar. Repetition is necessary so that music can be stored in the memory, even of the youngest baby.
- Play a variety of music styles. Some sung by men, some by women solos and choirs so children get used to hearing different voices.
- Include music that is orchestral only and unaccompanied singers.
- Play music from a variety of cultures.
- Teach children simple songs in languages other than English.
- Encourage children to dance to the music, march, sing, whistle melodies, hum tunes and play musical games with other children. These boost a child’s growing language, listening and motor skills.
- Incorporate movement in their music experiences with the children. Movement is an indispensable part of learning and thinking. A child will gain memory skills learning to sing a variety of songs with different rhythms.
- Organise for visitors to come to the centre to offer extended music and movement activities with the children such as music experiences from another cultural group.
- Encourage children to use everyday objects to make music.

Evaluation and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually. Family and educator feedback will be considered in the review process. Changes in legislation, regulations, and NQS will be considered. Any changes to this policy will be communicated to families and educators verbally and in writing.

Source:

Music Experiences for Young Children in Childcare; Childcare and Children’s Health Vol 7 No 5 October 2004

Music and Movement – Tip Sheet for Use; Noah’s Ark Resource Library and Advisory Service fact sheet

Policy Updated Date August 2024

Links to NQS

Element 1.1.1	Curriculum decision making contributes to each child’s learning and development outcomes in relation to their identity, connection with community, wellbeing, and confidence as learners and effectiveness as communicators.
Element 1.1.2	Each child’s current knowledge, ideas, culture, abilities and interests are the foundation of the program.
Element 1.1.3	The program including routines is organised in ways that maximise opportunities for each child’s learning.
Element 1.1.4	The documentation about each child’s program and progress is available to families.
Element 1.1.5	Every child is supported to participate in the program.
Element 1.1.6	Each child’s agency is promoted, enabling them to make choices and decisions and to influence events and their world.
Element 5.1.3	Each child is supported to feel secure, confident and included.
Element 7.2.1	A statement of philosophy is developed and guides all aspects of the services operations.

Problem Solving Skills Development

Problem solving is the foundation of a young child's learning. It must be valued, promoted, provided for, and sustained in the early childhood classroom. Opportunities for problem solving occur in the everyday context of a child's life. By observing the child closely, educators can use the child's social, cognitive, movement, and emotional experiences to facilitate problem solving and promote strategies useful in the lifelong process of learning.

Learning through Problem Solving

By exploring social relationships, manipulating objects, and interacting with people, children are able to formulate ideas, try these ideas out, and accept or reject what they learn. Constructing knowledge by making mistakes is part of the natural process of problem solving. Through exploring, then experimenting, trying out a hypothesis, and finally, solving problems, children make learning personal and meaningful. Piaget states that children understand only what they discover or invent themselves (1963). It is this discovery within the problem solving process that is the vehicle for children's learning. Children are encouraged to construct their own knowledge when the Group Leader plans for problem solving; bases the framework for learning in problem solving; and provides time, space, and materials.

Providing for Problem Solving

Problem solving is a skill that can be learned and must be practiced. It is facilitated by a classroom schedule that provides for integrated learning in large blocks of time, space for ongoing group projects, and many open-ended materials. The educator provides the time, space, and materials necessary for in-depth learning.

1. Time: Educators can provide for problem solving by enlarging blocks of learning time during the routine. Because making choices, discussing decisions, and evaluating mistakes takes time, large time blocks best suit the problem-solving process. It is important that children know they have time to identify and solve problems.
2. Space: Activities may require the removal/relocation of equipment to allow enough space for children to work together in problem solving activities.
3. Materials: The open-ended materials that are needed for the construction and concrete solving of problems should be safe, durable, and varied. Well-marked storage units should be easily accessible to children, and materials should be available for ongoing exploration and manipulation. Access to a variety of materials encourages children to use materials in new and diverse ways. This freedom promotes problem solving.

Helping children to become Problem Solvers

All educators have seen the unique ability of children to use toys and materials in unexpected ways. One child may turn a cup into a hammer or a basket into a hat. Another child may stand on a riding truck to try to reach a toy or pull over a chair to climb onto a bookshelf. Observant adults recognise these innovations as signs that children are learning to use their thinking skills to solve problems.

Experiences in problem solving help children develop curiosity and patience, along with thinking skills such as flexibility, and understanding of cause and effect. They learn to work toward achieving a goal, and gain confidence in their ability to reach a solution.

Even very young children make discoveries on their own. An infant who accidentally creates a noise with a rattle may then make the sound again and again on purpose. An older infant discovers that by looking under a blanket, he can find a hidden toy. A toddler who cannot pull a wagon up a hill by herself learns that she and a friend can push it up from behind.

By not rushing in and rescuing young children who are facing minor everyday problems, adults can help infants and toddlers develop confidence and increase their thinking abilities

It is also helpful for educators to provide materials that encourage children to explore. Some toys, such as jack-in-the-boxes and busy boxes, provide opportunities to explore simple cause-and-effect relationships. Other common materials like empty cardboard boxes, plastic bowls, or scarves can

provide open-ended experiences through which toddlers can make choices and decisions, and find different ways to manipulate the materials.

Other activities can involve materials such as clear plastic tubing (such as the tubing used for aquariums) which children can fill with bright materials, and watch the materials move as they shake the tubes. If you provide inclines or ramps of wooden blocks, a child can watch what happens as objects roll down inside the tubes. They may discover that some objects roll faster than others. They may learn about actions and reactions when he sets plastic bottles at the bottom of the ramp to create a unique bowling game.

These everyday materials are fun, and can hold children's interest for long periods. They also help children experiment with cause and effect and with gravity and physics. In addition to supporting cognitive development, problem-solving activities help in the social arena as well. Groups of children engaged in these activities negotiate with their friends and learn how to solve interpersonal problems.

By providing interesting materials and enthusiastically reinforcing children's attempts to explore and solve problems, parents and teachers can stimulate children's development, promote advanced critical thinking, and help children take pride in their own abilities to find out more about how their world works.

Evaluation and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually. Family and educator feedback will be considered in the review process. Changes in legislation, regulations, and NQS will be considered. Any changes to this policy will be communicated to families and educators verbally and in writing.

Sources

www.naeyc.org

www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au

Policy Updated Date August 2024

Links to NQS

Element 1.1.1	Curriculum decision making contributes to each child's learning and development outcomes in relation to their identity, connection with community, wellbeing, confidence as learners and effectiveness as communicators.
Element 1.1.2	Each child's current knowledge, ideas, culture, abilities and interests are the foundation of the program.
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Element 1.1.4	The documentation about each child's program and progress is available to families.
Element 1.1.5	Every child is supported to participate in the program.
Element 1.1.6	Each child's agency is promoted, enabling them to make choices and decisions and to influence events and their world.
Element 5.1.3	Each child is supported to feel secure, confident and included.
Element 7.2.1	A statement of philosophy is developed and guides all aspects of the services operations.

Artwork Experiences and Display Procedure

Provision of Art Experiences

- Children will be provided with many art experiences enabling them to explore and create with a variety of mediums. Educators will be supportive of a child's interest in the actual experience rather than the end product.
- Art activities will be geared to individual children's needs and skills. E.g. an infant experiencing paint for the first time will need only one colour to spread and smear.
- Educators will not place restrictions on a child's experimentation with art materials as they are developing understanding of the medium while experimenting.
- Process will be emphasised over product e.g. a toddler may approach a collage activity by sticking one piece of paper on contact paper and repeatedly removing it. They are learning about stickiness and textures.
- Children will be encouraged to use raw materials to plan and produce their own creations rather than following a formula dictated by staff.

Display of Completed Artworks

- Educators will ensure that all artwork is displayed in an attractive manner with appropriate labels outlining the type of experience and the benefits to the child of this experience.
- Artwork will be changed frequently to showcase the skills of the children.
- Completed artworks will be filed in a display folder or scrapbook to be presented to the parent at the end of the year.
- Children's artwork can be displayed in a variety of picture frames on the wall.

Multicultural Experiences Policy

As educators, we endeavour to help equip children for life in a multilingual, global community. We welcome children to our centre from all communities and cultural backgrounds.

Teaching children about multiculturalism creates an opportunity for carers and children to

- Learn about other cultures
- Value their culture
- Develop respect for the attitudes and customs of individuals from other cultural backgrounds.

Our goal is to cater for the individual needs of all English and non-English speaking children by creating an atmosphere where children from different cultural backgrounds will feel comfortable, secure and happy. An environment which is familiar, non-threatening and provides meaningful experiences. Cultures are reflected in resources such as literature, posters, pictures, music, dance, cooking and recognition of significant days of the year to each culture.

Children enjoy seeing words written in different languages and may want to learn basic words such as hello, goodbye, how are you? Etc

Drawing, painting, music and dance can be used to encourage children to communicate their ideas and feelings without words.

Members of the community, visiting entertainers, parents, advisory agencies and personnel may be used to support the program and enhance the children's understanding of the cultures.

Considerable planning is required to meet the needs of individual children in the area of language development, especially when English is not spoken at home.

Rainy Day Procedure

Provision of additional activities

- When children cannot access the playgrounds they will need to be provided with more activities than are already stated on the daily program.
- Educators should provide some gross motor activities which allow the children to “let off steam” such as music and movement activities, indoor gym activities, circle games, going on a bear hunt etc. at various times throughout the day.
- The DVD player is only to be used for a small period of time (No longer than 1 hour) DVD’s must be educational content or child appropriate. There must be other activities provided for children who are not interested in watching the DVD.

Adhering to the Routine

- Children do not like too much change. It will be stressful enough for them to be unable to follow their usual procedure of starting the day in the outdoor playground. Educators therefore need to ensure that the accustomed daily routine runs as usual with morning tea, group time’s etc taking place as per usual.
- Separate into your individual rooms as soon as staffing allows so that rooms do not become overcrowded and noisy.
- Provide the children with a few activities during the time they would ordinarily be outdoors then pack up those activities and have morning tea. Follow your normal program and routine for the majority of the morning but perhaps make group time before lunch a physical activity first followed by a calmer activity such as story time.
- Stay separated in individual rooms as long as possible in the afternoon.
- Provide different activities in the afternoon than those provided in the morning so that children do not become bored or disruptive.

Room Transition Policy

Rationale

Each room at Shooting Stars Early Learning Centre caters for selected age ranges to ensure all children are in groups where the program and resources best suit their development and learning.

When it is appropriate to move to an older age group, the centre will consult with families to ensure the transition process is stress free for both the child and family. The decision to move a child to the next room is based on the individual child's development.

Aim

For our educators to ensure the transition between rooms is smooth and work closely with other educators and parents during the process. Transitioning between rooms is an important part of growing up and most children are very happy to change learning environments and explore new surroundings.

Implementation

It is understandable that the transition process from one room to another can be stressful and unsettling for both children and families. It is our goal to make this transition as smooth and as comfortable as possible. The transition process is very individual – each child has different needs and the educators will be sensitive to the needs of the child throughout the transition process.

When children are the right age and your child's educator and the nominated supervisor or educational leader feels they have developed sufficiently, they are "transitioned" or moved to the next room. This process is done in consultation with the parents. The parents are informed that the educational team believe their child is ready to transition to the next room. They are informed about the transition procedure – how it is entirely dependent on the child's comfort and whether they settle. They are given information about the new room and taken to that room and introduced to the educators and shown where everything is in the room such as the communication pockets, lockers etc.

Some children need a little more time than others to transition. This is completely normal. Every child is unique and our team will ensure your child gets as much time as he or she needs to successfully transition.

Transition itself takes place in stages. Your child will 'visit' the new room for small but increasing amounts of time. We'll continue to communicate with you regularly to ensure you are fully aware of your child's progress. They will visit at different times of the day and for different routine times such as lunch time or rest time.

Parents will be given feedback on how the transition is progressing via written and verbal reports and the final decision on the exact date their child will start in that room is decided by the family and the educators together.

Educators Will

- Assess each child's readiness to transition based on their social and emotional development.
- Discuss the transition process with the parents
- Support the parents through the process ensuring they know their child's new educator and the room
- Find out about each child's interests and needs before they are moved into your room.
- Share stories, photos or information about particular experiences or activities the child has enjoyed during the transition process.
- Provide honest and sensitive feedback to the families about how the child is settling in the new room.
- Ensure the child and family feels comfortable and the other educators in the wider environment are welcoming and responsive to the family and the child.
- Work collaboratively with the other educators to ensure the child and family is supported throughout the transition process.

Parents Will

- Be encouraged to spend time with their child in their new room getting to know the educator
- Talk to the room educator and tell them about your child's routine, likes, dislikes, comfort items.
- Complete any administrative form the educator supplies them that will help the educator to get to know their child and program effectively for them.

Management Will

- Ensure families are involved in the decision making process and supported through the transition process.
- Ensure that the transition process remains flexible – if a child is not settling in their new environment cease the transition process and leave it for a few more weeks before starting again.

Evaluation and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually. Family and educator feedback will be considered in the review process. Changes in legislation, regulations, and NQS will be considered. Any changes to this policy will be communicated to families and educators verbally and in writing.

Policy Updated Date August 2024

Links to NQS

Element 1.1.1	Curriculum decision making contributes to each child's learning and development outcomes in relation to their identity, connection with community, wellbeing, confidence as learners and effectiveness as communicators.
Element 1.1.3	The program including routines is organised in ways that maximise opportunities for each child's learning.
Element 1.1.4	The documentation about each child's program and progress is available to families.
Element 1.1.5	Every child is supported to participate in the program.
Element 1.1.6	Each child's agency is promoted, enabling them to make choices and decisions and to influence events and their world.
Element 4.2.1	Professional standards guide practice, interactions and relationships.
Element 4.2.2	Educators, co-ordinators and staff members work collaboratively and affirm, challenge, support and learn from each other to further develop their skills and improve practice and relationships.
Element 4.2.3	Interactions convey mutual respect, equity and recognition of each other's strengths and skills.
Element 5.1.3	Each child is supported to feel secure, confident and included.
Element 6.1.1	There is an effective enrolment and orientation process for families
Element 6.1.2	Families have opportunities to be involved in the service and contribute to service decisions
Element 6.2.1	The expertise of families is recognised and they share in decision making about their child's learning and wellbeing.
Element 6.3.2	Continuity of learning and transitions for each child are supported by sharing relevant information and clarifying responsibilities.

Section 2

Children's Health and Safety

Animals in the Environment Policy

Rationale

Educators are encouraged to foster children's capacity to understand and respect the natural environment and the interdependence between people, plants and the land.(NQS element 3.2) Responsible ownership of pets, animals or birds that may reside at Shooting Stars Early Learning Centre or visit the premises is vital. Role models of appropriate behaviours with animals and guidance in caring for the needs of animals is beneficial for children. This policy also considers the management of unwanted visitors such as pests and vermin.

Aim

Shooting Stars Early Learning Centre will:

- Provide a safe, clean and humane environment for all animals and birds that visit or reside at the centre.
- Ensure that pest control measures are regularly undertaken.
- Ensure there are procedures in place for removing unwanted animals, pests and vermin from the premises.

Implementation

Centre pets and invited visitors:

- Educators will ensure that all pets and their enclosures are kept clean and hygienic.
- Educators must ensure they have clean bedding and water daily.
- Educators must ensure that they have food available, but out of reach of children.
- Children must be supervised at all times when interacting with pets or animals.
- Educators will manage any health or safety risks for the children that may be caused by animals, such as asthma and allergies.
- Pets will not have access to children's bedding, toys, food preparation areas, eating surfaces or utensils.
- Animals and birds visiting the centre as part of the educational program are the responsibility of the owner.
- The educators will ensure the environment remains safe and hygienic at all times during the visit.
- Educators will complete a risk assessment prior to any visits.

Animals and birds other than pets or invited visitors

- There are situations that may spontaneously occur involving animals, such as an animal or bird may find its way into the centre. Educators may use this as a spontaneous learning experience for the children. At all times they will ensure the safety and wellbeing of the children.
- If an animal or bird is potentially dangerous, such as a snake or a spider, educators will contact an appropriate authority for assistance. Wildlife Emergencies: Emergency Response Service 13 000 94535
- The animal's movements should be monitored to ensure a speedy and efficient capture by a professional, but priority is to be given to educator, child and family safety. At no time is anyone to approach the dangerous animal, insect or bird.

Pests and vermin:

- Pest control will occur at the service on a regular basis.
- Educators will monitor any occurrences in the service to determine the success of control measures.
- If pests or vermin are seen, educators will advise management.
- The Approved Provider is responsible for arranging pest control visits.
- Where appropriate, educators discuss with children issues relating to regarding dangerous products, plants, vermin and objects.
- Educators will thoroughly clean all areas that animals or pests have accessed in the centre with hot, soapy water.
- If the remains of an animal or faeces have been found, the remains or faeces will be disposed of according to Casey Council guidelines and the area will be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected.

Evaluation and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually. Family and educator feedback will be considered in the review process. Changes in legislation, regulations, and NQS will be considered. Any changes to this policy will be communicated to families and educators verbally and in writing.

Sources

www.kidsafevic.com.au

Guide to the National Quality Standard (3) ACECQA 2011

Health and Safety in Children's Services Model Policies and Practices- 2nd edition, revised 2003

www.community.nsw.gov.au

Staying Healthy in Childcare – Preventing Infectious Diseases in Child Care – 5th edition

Links to other policies

Illness of Children and Educators Policy

Accidents, Incidents and Emergencies Policy

Asthma Policy

Allergy Policy

Health and Hygiene Policy

Hygiene Practices

Hand Hygiene

Supervision Policy

Link to NOS

Standard 2.1	Each child's health is promoted
Standard 2.3	Each child is protected
Standard 3.2	The environment is inclusive, promotes competence, independent exploration and learning through play

Illness of Children and Educators Policy

Rationale

The well-being of all children who attend the centre and the educators employed is of the highest priority. Young children can become sick in a very short time and educators should be aware of the signs and symptoms of illness in children. Effective observation and documentation is required when monitoring a child showing signs of illness. Other educators and the child's parents may need to be notified of any atypical behaviour or symptoms of illness. It is essential educators are sensitive and responsive to children when sick and showing signs of distress.

Educators and other children often contract the same illness due to the close contacts within the setting. The illness of educators can place additional pressure on the service when they are unable to work. Reducing the spread of infectious disease through hygiene practices such as hand washing, effective cleaning procedures and an understanding and knowledge of children's health are also important in the management of sick children and educators.

Aim

The service aims to reduce the impact of illness through:

- Working co-operatively with parents in the effective management of sick children
- Providing information and training for educators to be able to recognise signs and symptoms of illness
- Ensuring the comfort and safety of sick children
- Ensuring educators are aware of and follow the procedure for identifying, documenting and managing sick children and educators.

Implementation

Shooting Stars Early Learning Centre management is aware that the illness policy is not only intended for children. Families, educators, students, volunteers and visitors can also display signs of illness while in the service environment and the procedure can equally be applied to these stakeholders as it can be applied to children.

Parents will:

- Refer to the “**Exclusions**” information located in the Policy Handbook or phone the Certified Supervisor at the centre if unsure about whether their child can attend.
- Keep children at home or arrange alternative care for sick children until they are fully recovered.
- Notify educators on arrival of any signs or symptoms of possible illness for them to monitor.
- Follow the “Administering of Medication Policy” if applicable.
- Be notified of any signs and symptoms of illness by phone if these occur during the day.
- Maintain current emergency contact information on the enrolment forms for notification of sick children.
- Be notified of an outbreak of an infectious disease within the centre.

Educators will:

- Be aware of the signs and symptoms of illness for children and adults.
- If a child seems unwell – inform the Director who will inform the parents
- Separate the child from other children
- Take the child's temperature if you think the child may have a high temperature. A child with a high temperature could have a febrile convulsion.
- Remind a child who is coughing or sneezing to cover their mouth. Ask the child to **wash their hands** afterwards.
- If you wipe a child's nose, wear a glove and dispose of the tissue and glove in a plastic lined rubbish bin
- If you touch a child who might be sick, avoid touching other children until you have **washed your hands**
- Keep moist skin conditions and abrasions covered unless directed otherwise by a doctor
- Encourage parents to tell you when someone in the family is sick. If someone in the family is sick, watch for signs of illness in the child.
- Ensure the comfort and safety of a sick child. Cushions, a sheet or blanket, soft toy, books etc will be provided for the child and the child will be under constant supervision until the parent arrives.

- Notify the Nominated Supervisor or Certified Supervisor if a colleague becomes ill while at the centre or ASAP if an absence from work is required.
- Be sensitive and responsive to a child's distress if unwell. The child should be comforted whilst still maintaining standard hygiene practices.
- Be sensitive to the pressure parents often feel to fulfil work commitments when their child is sick.
- Complete the illness record form as required to provide to the parent on collecting the sick child.
- Follow correct procedures for handling of body fluids at all times.
- Maintain a hygienic environment through cleaning of floors, surfaces and equipment on a regular basis

Management will:

- Monitor educator compliance with this policy through observations of the educators interacting with sick children and implementing appropriate practices.
- Consistently seek ways to improve the centre's standards for caring for sick children by adhering to current information from recognised health authorities.
- Provide parents with an exclusion schedule for infectious diseases in the enrolment package and again when required or requested by parents.
- Ensure at all times there is at least one educator with a current first-aid qualification on duty.
- Through educator meetings, keep educators up to date with their responsibilities and practices for managing sick children.
- Ensure children are excluded from the centre if they are non-immunised and an outbreak occurs of an infectious disease.
- Encourage all educators and children/parents to be up to date with immunisations (see Children and Educator Immunisation Policy)
- Notify all parents of any outbreak of an infectious disease, signs and symptoms, infectious period and the treatment.
- Review this policy annually in consultation with educators and parents.
- Ensure educators have adequate equipment or products such as gloves, aprons, cleaning products to follow hygiene procedures at all times.
- Educate employees to ensure awareness of cross infection and necessity for hygiene control procedures.

Evaluation and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually. Family and educator feedback will be considered in the review process. Changes in legislation, regulations, and NQS will be considered. Any changes to this policy will be communicated to families and educators verbally and in writing.

Associated Forms and Documentation

Exclusion Schedule for infectious diseases (From Staying Healthy in Childcare 5th Edition: NHMRC 2013)

Illness record form

Children and educator immunisation policy

Sources

Staying Healthy in Childcare 5th Edition: NHMRC 2013

Policy Created Date : October 2013

Link to NOS

Standard 2.1	Each child's health is promoted
Standard 2.3	Each child is protected
Standard 3.1	The design and location of the premises is appropriate for the operation of a service.
Standard 4.1	Staffing arrangements enhance children's learning and development and ensure their safety and wellbeing.
Standard 6.1	Respectful and supportive relationships with families are developed and maintained.

Procedure for Dealing with outbreak of disease

Recording Illness in the Centre

A record will be kept of any illness of both children and educators in the centre. Keeping records can be a factor in preventing the spread of infection, identifying whether infection control methods are working. These records will be kept confidential.

Name	Age	Symptoms	Room	Date	Time of onset	Comments

Educators will need to inform the Director each time there is a notifiable symptom within their room so that the illness can be recorded.

When communicable illness is present in the centre parents will be notified via a poster on the door of the room where the illness occurs. A copy of the fact sheet relating to the specific illness from *Staying Healthy in Child Care 5th edition* will be placed on the notice board.

The Department of Health will be notified in the event of an outbreak of the following serious illnesses within the centre.

Acute Encephalitis	Acute Poliomyelitis	Cholera	Diphtheria
Diarrhoea (if several children are ill)	Dysentery	Food Poisoning	HIB
Leptospirosis	Leprosy	Malaria	Measles
Meningococcal	Mumps	Parvovirus B19 (if 2 or more cases)	Pertussis
Plague	Rabies	Relapsing Fever	Roseola (2 or more cases)
Rubella	Scarlet fever	Smallpox	Tetanus
Tuberculosis	Typhoid Fever	Typhus Fever	Viral Hemorrhagic Fever
Viral Hepatitis	Whooping Cough	Yellow Fever	

Children and Educator Immunisation Policy

Rationale

(For Children)

Immunisation is the safest and most effective way of providing protection against early child diseases. After immunisation, children are far less likely to catch the diseases if there are cases within the community. The benefit of protection against the diseases far outweighs the risks of immunisation. If enough people in the community are immunised, the infections can no longer be spread from person to person and the disease dies out altogether.

(For Educators)

There is increasing evidence to suggest educators working in childcare centres are at a greater risk of catching and/or transmitting infectious diseases.

Early childhood professionals should be up-to-date with all the vaccinations that are recommended for adults, including vaccinations recommended due to increased risk of exposure in the workplace, for example: Hepatitis A&B, HIB, annual flu vaccines etc.

Aim

“Immunisation also protects other people who are not immunised, such as children who are too young to be immunised, or people whose immune systems did not respond to the vaccine. This is because the more people who are immunised against a disease, the lower the chance that a person will ever come into contact with someone who has the disease. The chance of an infection spreading in a community therefore decreases if a large proportion of people are immunised, because the immune people will not become infected and can protect the vulnerable people; this is known as ‘herd immunity’.” (*Staying Healthy in Childcare 5th Edition: NHMRC*)

The aim of our immunisation policy is to protect the health and wellbeing of the children, educators, families and the community from being exposed to disease especially the children who are not yet fully immunised due to their age.

Implementation

The immunisation status of educators and children will be collected by Shooting Stars Early Learning Centre and held confidentially. In the case of an outbreak of some infectious diseases such as measles and pertussis a child or educator who has not been medically vaccinated will be excluded from the care environment even if they show no signs of illness.

Parents Will:

- Upon enrolment, all families will be required to provide a copy of their child’s immunisation details to the centre’s management.
- Any child who is not up to date with their immunisation will be considered not immunised. Non-immunised children will be excluded from the centre if an incidence of any communicable disease occurs for the period of time as recommended by Department of Health
- Families who do not immunise their child/ren, through conscious objection or for medical reasons, are still able to attend the centre. However, if an incidence occurs where a child/ren contract a communicable disease all children deemed not immunised will be excluded from the centre for the period of time recommended by Department of Health.

Educators Will:

- Actively seek immunisation for all diseases currently on the vaccination schedule if not already immunised or unsure of status
- Actively seek immunisation for all other recommended diseases eg Hep A&C, HIB and annual Flu (influenza) Vaccination
- Maintain current immunisation status

Management Will:

- Provide current information on vaccine-preventable diseases to employees and parents
- Plan and provide, periodic educational sessions on infectious diseases and immunisation for all employees

Evaluation and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually. Family and educator feedback will be considered in the review process. Changes in legislation, regulations, and NQS will be considered. Any changes to this policy will be communicated to families and educators verbally and in writing.

Sources

Staying Healthy in Child Care 5th Edition: NHMRC 2013

Infection Control and Some Common Infections in Young Children Childcare and Children's Health
Volume 8 No 3 May 2005

Policy Reviewed and Changed Date October 2013

Link to NOS

Element 2.1.1	Each child's health needs are supported
Element 2.1.4	Steps are taken to control the spread of infectious diseases and to manage injuries and illness, in accordance with recognised guidelines.

Risk Management Policy

Rationale

To ensure children feel secure and safe in the education and care environment, allowing them to safely explore and learn. This policy aims to protect children from harm and any hazards likely to cause injury by managing risks and implementing procedures to maintain a safe environment for children, educators, and families.

Aim

The education and care service will implement procedures to prioritize the maintenance of environments and conditions that are safe for children, families, and educators. Procedures will assist with the early detection of potential hazards and reduce risks within the education and care community.

Implementation

Educators Will:

- Complete daily checklists of the environment before children and families enter the service.
- Avoid putting themselves or others at risk when seeking to reduce or remove potential hazards.
- Implement emergency evacuation/lockdown procedures to ensure the welfare of children, families, and educators.
- Identify any potential hazards, note these on the checklist, and rectify any risks immediately where possible. Any identified hazards that cannot be immediately removed or rectified must be reported to the nominated supervisor immediately.

Management Will

- Conduct a risk assessment to determine potential emergencies relevant to the education and care service. (Refer to Emergency Evacuation Policy.)
- Ensure a risk assessment occurs prior to excursions (see Excursion Policy).
- Liaise with educators to ensure that risk management is part of daily practice, such as completing playground checklists, identifying and removing hazards, and informing management of maintenance issues.
- Ensure that health and safety information and a training strategy are part of the induction and ongoing professional development for all educators.
- Inform families during orientation and enrolment about the need to maintain all emergency contact details. Obtain written consent from families for permission to access urgent medical, dental, hospital, and ambulance assistance.
- Ensure that emergency evacuation and lockdown procedures are rehearsed, documented, and evaluated regularly.
- Ensure that at any time the service is operational, at least one educator who holds a current approved first aid qualification, and at least one educator who has undertaken anaphylaxis management training and asthma training, are in attendance and available.

Chemical Awareness and Minimising Use of Toxic Products

Rationale

Shooting Stars Early Learning Centre endeavours to minimise the use of toxic and other potentially dangerous products and implement strategies and procedures to prevent child poisoning. Just as important as the safe handling of these chemicals, is their safe storage. If not stored properly, chemicals can cause a fire, explosion or personal injury. There are some real and common sense safe storage procedures that should be followed to keep workers and the workplace free of chemical-related accidents.

Aim

- To develop and implement procedures and practices to ensure toxic and other potentially dangerous products are kept out of children's reach.
- To use alternate products that are both non-toxic and environmentally friendly to reduce the risks to children
- To use alternate cleaning products as above but not jeopardise hygiene

Implementation

The most important factor in chemical storage safety is keeping chemicals in their original containers. Check that each chemical container has a label. The label is a quick way of determining whether the material is a fire, health or reactivity hazard. Read the chemical's Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS). The MSDS describes the chemical's properties, hazards, and what to do if there's an accidental spill or exposure. Use the MSDS as a guide for making storage decisions. Chemicals will be stored in well-ventilated areas, away from direct sunlight or other heat source, and away from sparks, flames, static electricity or other sources of ignition.

Management will:

- Consider the toxicity of cleaning products when considering the change to different cleaning products
- Provide educators with cleaning substances that are non-hazardous, non-toxic and biodegradable where possible
- Ensure information is available in the form of **Material Safety Data Sheets** for educators and these will be located where the cleaning products are kept
- Provide other information to staff and parents about minimising the use of toxic substances in the centre and the home as information becomes available

Educators will:

- Be aware of the importance of minimising the use of toxic products within the centre and will use the non-toxic products first
- Receive training through staff meetings about the safe use of all chemicals used within the centre for hygiene purposes
- Not keep any substances stored in the centre such as turpentine, kerosene or petrol. The maintenance person will be contacted for safe storage of such substances at a location away from the centre
- Ensure the laundry where the chemical products are stored is closed at all times.
- Ensure chemicals used in the room are stored away from where children can reach.

Parents will:

- Receive information regarding poisoning in children
- Be advised of the correct procedure for storing medicines and follow this procedure at all times
- Be advised through the use of signs and posters the locations for storage of potentially dangerous products

Building, Grounds and Equipment Safety

Rationale

Management and educators at Shooting Stars Early Learning Centre have a responsibility to ensure buildings; grounds and equipment are safe and hygienic. Child safety is enhanced when procedures in accordance with recognised health & safety authorities are adhered to and systems are in place to monitor standards and educator adherence to these policies.

Aim

- For educators to follow guidelines and procedures developed to ensure buildings, grounds and equipment is maintained for safety and cleaned for hygiene
- For educators to receive training during team meetings for them to successfully adhere to these procedures

Implementation

Parents will:

- Be encouraged to give advice about their views on the safety of buildings and equipment through newsletters from management
- Receive information on health & safety within the centre in the form of information flyers, pamphlets, booklets etc
- Be cautioned of safety concerns with the use of warning signs such as “Slippery When Wet”, “Medications Stored Here” and “Chemicals Storage Cupboard”

Educators will:

- Ensure that set cleaning routines are followed daily, weekly and monthly
- Complete the **Playground Checklists** daily ensuring the grounds and equipment are safe for use.
- Report signs of wear or maintenance required for any equipment and fences and record details in the **Maintenance Book** which is kept in the office
- Ensure electrical cords and appliances are not within reach of children
- Remove children from areas with wet surfaces whenever possible and “Slippery When Wet” signs are to be used in hallways, rooms and concrete areas as necessary
- Cover sandpit areas at the end of each day and check each morning for foreign objects and vermin
- Not use play equipment smaller than a film canister in the babies and toddlers groups to avoid a choking hazard
- Clear tables and sweep floors after meals and remove any slipping or tripping hazards
- Take safety precautions (by removing dangerous equipment) when children of mixed ages are using the same play area
- Develop a playground safety plan where it is difficult to supervise any area of the playground
- Insert safety plugs into power points (that could be accessible to children) and not use double adapters in areas accessible to children

Management will:

- Provide suitable training for staff in accordance with guidelines set by recognised health authorities relating to health and safety of buildings, equipment and grounds
- Ensure all electrical points have earth leakage
- Ensure efficient maintenance and repairs are carried out where necessary using the appropriate tradesperson
- Maintain supply of cleaning and hygiene products
- Seek advice from families about their views on the safety of buildings and equipment through newsletters
- Ensures information about the selection, installation and maintenance of furniture, equipment and buildings is current and from recognised health and safety authorities
- Where required have a plan for playground improvements that is based on current information from recognised child safety authorities

Potentially Dangerous Products, Plants, Vermin and Objects Policy

Rationale

Shooting Stars Early Learning Centre follows recommended guidelines from recognised health authorities with regards to ensuring dangerous products are inaccessible to the children. Because young children do not understand the dangers of such products, plants and other objects we ensure dangerous products are eliminated where possible or are made inaccessible through correct storage, labelling, safety checks etc.

Aim:

- To ensure a safe environment for children
- For educators to perform regular safety checks of the environment for dangerous objects, spiders or vermin
- To inform educators of the dangerous products within the centre and the correct handling for those products
- For educators to have a current first aid certificate to ensure safety of the children

Implementation:

Parents will:

- Correctly store all medications as per the “Medication Policy”
- Be informed of locations where potentially dangerous products are kept by simple warning signs
- Be informed of procedures for safe storage of potentially dangerous products by posters in relevant places around the centre
- Keep emergency contact details up to date on their child’s file
- Receive information from recognised health & safety authorities about safe storage of potentially dangerous products in the home

Educators will:

- Receive information and training on correct labelling of potentially dangerous products and protecting children from other potential dangers (foreign objects, spiders and vermin)
- Ensure potentially dangerous products are inaccessible to children at all times by adhering to the correct storage procedures
- Ensure electrical appliances, kettles, and hot water pipes are not accessible to children
- Ensure safety plugs are fitted to all power points
- Ensure children are not permitted and do not have access to kitchen without adult supervision
- Ensure that children do not have access to plastic bags, polystyrene and that children’s lunch wrappers (plastic cling film) are disposed of immediately after unwrapping food
- Post simple warning signs where potentially dangerous products are stored which are designed to alert adults but not to attract the curiosity of children
- Conduct thorough daily checks and quick mid-day checks of the buildings and grounds for maintenance, foreign objects and vermin
- Discuss with children the safety issues relating to dangerous plants, products, vermin and objects within the program where appropriate
- Ensure that any plants or objects brought to the centre from home are safe and not on the poisonous plants list
- Maintain current first aid certificates
- Cover sandpits at the end of the day to prevent access by animals and vermin

Management will:

- Ensure educators receive information and training in team meetings for the safe labelling and storage of potentially dangerous products, first aid action plans for these products and the procedure for monitoring the building and grounds for potentially dangerous plants, vermin and objects
- Provide information to educators and parents on potentially dangerous products sourced from recognised health authorities

- Ensure that the centre is treated by a pest control operator licensed under the Health Act, as often as is necessary for the control of pests

Evaluation and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually. Family and educator feedback will be considered in the review process. Changes in legislation, regulations, and NQS will be considered. Any changes to this policy will be communicated to families and educators verbally and in writing.

Associated Forms and Documentation

OHS Checklist
 Playground Checklist
 Maintenance Book
 Material Safety Data Sheets

Sources

www.ohs.com.au
[www.australia.gov.au/OHS \(Workplace Health & Safety\)](http://www.australia.gov.au/OHS_(Workplace_Health_&_Safety))

Policy Updated Date August 2024

Link to NQS

Element 2.3.2	Every reasonable precaution is taken to protect children from harm and any hazard likely to cause injury.
Element 2.3.3	Plans to effectively manage incidents and emergencies are developed in consultation with relevant authorities, practised and implemented.
Element 3.1.1	Outdoor and indoor spaces, buildings, furniture, equipment, facilities and resources are suitable for their purpose.
Element 3.1.2	Premises, furniture and equipment are safe, clean and well maintained.
Element 6.1.2	Families have opportunities to be involved in the service and contribute to service decisions
Element 7.1.2	The induction of educators, co-ordinators, staff members, including relief educators is comprehensive.
Element 7.3.5	Service practices are based on effectively documented policies and procedures that are available at the service and reviewed regularly.

Accidents, Incidents and Emergencies Policy

Rationale

Shooting Stars Early Learning Centre recognises the importance of developing procedures to minimise accidents/incidents and provide guidance for educators in their daily practice and during emergencies, in accordance with recommendations from recognised health authorities.

Educators and children need to have well practised evacuation procedures in place and information regarding accidents and emergencies need to be located in appropriate places around the centre for educators, visitors and parents.

Aim

- To have clear procedures and guidelines in place for educators to manage accidents, incidents and emergencies in a calm professional manner to maximise the safety to children, visitors and other educators.
- To provide sufficient training to educators for the above to occur and in the use of emergency equipment, such as fire extinguishers.
- For accident and emergency procedures to be in accordance with current guidelines from recognised health authorities.

Implementation

Parents Will:

- Be informed of the centre's procedures for accidents/incidents and emergencies through suitable notices located in appropriate locations around the centre
- Be requested to sign the Accident/Incident Report Forms if one has been written for their child
- Be issued with relevant information e.g. CPR pamphlets as information becomes available to the centre

Educators Will

- Participate in regular evacuation drills with the children and any visitors to the centre and record these drills on the Emergency Evacuation Report form
- Post informational posters in appropriate locations around the centre for educators, visitors and parents to see
- Ensure evacuation floor plans and the procedure for evacuation near the exits to each classroom
- Participate in educator training with regard to emergency procedures and as new procedures are developed/modified
- Participate in fire training to help reduce or prevent the outbreak of fire including the use of fire equipment, preventative strategies and emergency procedures
- Discuss safety issues with the children before, during and/or after a fire/evacuation drill within the program of activities
- Complete an Accident/Incident Report Form when witness to a child's mishap and ensure this is completed thoroughly and contains as much information as possible
- Personally speak with family regarding their child's accident/incident if possible
- Fill out appropriate forms for themselves in relation to any accident/incident that they may have whilst undertaking their duties

Management Will

- Organise training opportunities for fire training, emergency procedures and first aid for all educators.
- Select, install and maintain emergency equipment in accordance with their legal responsibilities
- Organise regular and systematic safety inspections of all emergency equipment
- Maintain the first aid kits and purchase additional supplies when required
- Issue current information relevant to accidents and emergencies to parents and educators in home languages

- Regularly evaluate accident/incident procedures at educator meetings for any changes necessary
- Inform the regulatory authority of any serious incidents or accidents that occur within the service.

Evaluation and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually. Family and educator feedback will be considered in the review process. Changes in legislation, regulations, and NQS will be considered. Any changes to this policy will be communicated to families and educators verbally and in writing.

Associated Forms and Documentation

Accident/Incident Report Forms
Emergency Evacuation Drill report

Policy reviewed and changed date October 2013

Link to NQS

Element 2.1.4	Steps are taken to control the spread of infectious diseases and to manage injuries and illness, in accordance with recognised guidelines.
Element 2.3.2	Every reasonable precaution is taken to protect children from harm and any hazard likely to cause injury.
Element 2.3.3	Plans to effectively manage incidents and emergencies are developed in consultation with relevant authorities, practised and implemented.
Element 7.1.2	The induction of educators, co-ordinators, staff members, including relief educators is comprehensive.
Element 7.3.3	The Regulatory Authority is notified of any relevant changes to the operation of the service, of serious incidents and of any complaints which allege a breach of legislation.

First Aid Action Plan

Rationale

Working with young children will present occasions that require first aid to be administered.

Aim

To ensure that the centre maintains the necessary resources and appropriately skilled educators to ensure that child and educator first aid needs are met.

Implementation

- All educators will hold a current first aid certificate and current CPR certification.
- Educators will hold Anaphylaxis and Asthma certification.
- The centre will maintain records of educator first aid certificates to ensure that should first aid be required educators have current knowledge and skills to deal with the situation.
- The centre will maintain easily accessible first aid kits, which contain sufficient first aid materials to cater for all likely first aid needs of the children or staff at the centre.
- All applications of any form of first aid will be fully documented using incident report forms.
- Parents will be notified of serious incidents as soon as practicable after they have occurred.
- Individual allergy action plans will be developed for children with known allergies.
- Individual Asthma action plans will be developed for children with Asthma.

Medical Conditions Policy

Rationale

Serious medical conditions including asthma, anaphylaxis, and diabetes need to be effectively managed to ensure that educators are able to adequately care for the needs of children. The management of such medical conditions needs to include the child, the parents, the educators and medical professionals. With effective management of medical conditions children will be able to participate in all aspects of quality care and education.

Aim

This policy has been devised to ensure the appropriate management of medical conditions including asthma, diabetes or a diagnosis that a child is at risk of anaphylaxis.

Implementation

On enrolment parents will be asked to identify if their child has a medical condition, including the diagnosis of asthma, anaphylaxis or diabetes. Where the parent indicates a medical condition the parents will be required to work with the service to develop a risk minimisation plan, communication plan, and an emergency treatment plan (to be developed by a medical professional).

A risk minimising plan will include:

- ways that any risk relating to the child's specific health care need, allergy or relevant medical condition can be minimised
- practices and procedures for safe food handling, preparation, consumption and service of food (if relevant)
- practices and procedures to ensure parents are notified of any known allergens that pose a risk to a child and strategies for minimising the risks (if relevant)
- a picture of the child to ensure all staff and volunteers can clearly identify the child

Parents Will

- Inform the Nominated Supervisor on enrolment of foods and food substances that children are to avoid due to allergy or suspected allergy.
- Where the details of known allergens change or there is a change in the medical condition parents will be required to notify these changes to the Nominated Supervisor as soon as practical, using methods identified in the communication plan.
- Where a child already enrolled in a service subsequently falls into this category then the parents will also be required to follow these procedures as detailed above.
- Not bring food into the service that increase the risk of exposure to peanut products such as peanut butter, nutella, muesli bars containing nuts, snack packs containing nuts.
- Develop an Emergency Action Plan for the child in consultation with the service director and the child's Doctor
- Assist in the completion of a risk minimisation plan that will be conducted in consultation with the Nominated Supervisor to identify any perceived risk and determined strategies to reduce this risk.
- Develop a communication plan with the Nominated Supervisor to determine the most appropriate means of communicating about the child's medical condition
- Give permission for the centre, or educator to display the Emergency Action plan, containing a picture of the child, and parental contact phone numbers, within the centre/home. Parents are to acknowledge that this will be visible to educators, other parents and community visitors within the centre.
- Provide any medication including an Epi-Pen (if required), asthma relieving medication and spacer to the service
- Regularly check the expiration date on any medication
- Inform educators of any changes to the status of the child's medical condition

Educators Will

- Attend Senior First Aid training, current CPR certification and Asthma and Anaphylaxis training.

- Teach children not to share food or utensils
- Supervise all meals closely so that children cannot share food

Management Will

- Display each affected child’s Emergency Action Plan within each playroom or designated eating area of the service
- Ensure that all educators are aware of any child enrolled in the service who has been identified as having an allergy or as anaphylactic, a diagnosis of Asthma, diabetes or any other medical condition. This will occur during induction.
- Ensure all educators have Senior First Aid training, current CPR certification and Asthma and Anaphylaxis training
- Where a child is enrolled with other medical conditions the service will endeavour to have educators trained in any emergency response first aid that may be relevant and appropriate.
- The service will endeavour to ensure all children have access to the daily experiences and activities within the centre bearing in mind the potential risk that such an activity may present to children with identified allergies and anaphylaxis.

Evaluation and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually. Family and educator feedback will be considered in the review process. Changes in legislation, regulations, and NQS will be considered. Any changes to this policy will be communicated to families and educators verbally and in writing.

Associated Forms and Documentation

Enrolment forms

Policy Updated Date August 2024

Link to NOS

Element 1.1.5	Every child is supported to participate in the program
Element 2.1.1	Each child’s health needs are supported.
Element 2.3.1	Children are adequately supervised at all times.
Element 2.3.2	Every reasonable precaution is taken to protect children from harm and any hazard likely to cause injury.
Element 2.3.3	Plans to effectively manage incidents and emergencies are developed in consultation with relevant authorities, practised and implemented.
Element 6.1.1	There is an effective enrolment and orientation process for families

Medication Policy

Rationale

While the child care environment is not an appropriate environment for a sick child sometimes children can be well enough to attend but still require medication throughout the day. Other children may have ongoing health issues such as asthma where medication is a normal part of their daily routine. Children also quickly succumb to a rise in temperature requiring the immediate administration of paracetamol.

Aim

The Shooting Stars Early Learning Centre medication policy aims to ensure that educators have strict guidelines to follow in the administration of any form of medication so as to ensure children are not endangered with an incorrect dosage or a medication that may cause complications

Implementation

Medication must be accompanied by appropriate and well documented instructions. This may include a chemist label or a Doctor's letter with the appropriate dosage and timing of medication.

Prescription medicine and over the counter medications for cold's etc must have a label containing the following information:

- The child's name and date of birth.
- The dosage amount
- The time the medication should be given or number of dosages to be given each day.

Over the counter medications such as cold and flu remedies will only be given with a chemist label. The medication must be in the name of the child to receive the medication – it cannot be medication prescribed for siblings or other family members.

The parent must sign a medication form before the medication will be given.

Medication will be stored in the main fridge in the kitchen.

One educator is to measure out the medication and have it checked by another educator before administering medication. It is the responsibility of the witness to also check the medication label for the required information and dosage before signing off on the medication. Both educators sign the medication form as soon as practicable after administering the medication.

Medication will not be given in order to keep a sick child at the centre. If a child is considered too ill to remain in child care the Nominated Supervisor or Senior Educator will phone the parents and arrange for the child to be collected immediately.

Educators Will

- Check the medication label before giving the child medication
- Always ask another educator to check the dosage and label before administering medication
- Complete and sign the educator section of the medication form
- Show parents the medication procedure – where the medication forms are kept.

Parents Will

- Ensure all medication is correctly labelled for their child
- Complete and sign a medication form for each dose of medication
- Inform the educator that the child has medication and give it to the educator to put in the kitchen fridge.
- Keep contact numbers updated so that they can be contacted if their child is ill.

Management Will

- Inform families of the medication policy on enrolment
- Keep family contact details updated in case of illness.

Evaluation and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually. Family and educator feedback will be considered in the review process. Changes in legislation, regulations, and NQS will be considered. Any changes to this policy will be communicated to families and educators verbally and in writing.

Associated Forms and Documentation

Parent Handbook

Medication Forms
 Allergy Action Plan
 Asthma Action Plan
 Enrolment Forms

Sources

Childcare and Children's Health Volume 8 No 2 April 2005

Policy Reviewed and Changed Date

October 2013

Links to NOS

Element 2.1.1	Each child's health needs are supported.
Element 2.1.2	Each child's comfort is provided for and there are appropriate opportunities to meet each child's need for sleep, rest and relaxation.
Element 2.1.3	Effective hygiene practices are promoted and implemented.
Element 2.1.4	Steps are taken to control the spread of infectious diseases and to manage injuries and illness, in accordance with recognised guidelines.
Element 2.3.1	Children are adequately supervised at all times.
Element 2.3.2	Every reasonable precaution is taken to protect children from harm and any hazard likely to cause injury.
Element 6.1.1	There is an effective enrolment and orientation process for families
Element 7.3.1	Records and information are stored appropriately to ensure confidentiality, are available from the service and are maintained in accordance with legislative requirements.
Element 7.3.2	Administrative systems are established and maintained to ensure the effective operation of the service.

Allergy Policy

Rationale

Some people are sensitive to particular foods like nuts, shellfish and cereals. The symptoms of food allergy can include breathing problems, stomach upsets and skin rashes. They are caused by an immune system response or a chemical reaction in the body. Some severe food allergies can be life threatening.

Allergy is an immune response

Allergies are an overreaction of the body's immune system to a specific part of a food, usually a protein. These proteins may be from foods, pollens, house dust, animal hair or moulds. They are called allergens. The word 'allergy' means that the immune system has responded to a harmless substance as if it were toxic.

Food intolerance is a chemical reaction

Food intolerance is a 'chemical' reaction that some people have after eating or drinking some foods; it is not an immune response. Food intolerance has been associated with asthma, chronic fatigue syndrome and irritable bowel syndrome (IBS). Food intolerance is much more common than food allergy.

Symptoms of food intolerance

Symptoms of food intolerance can include:

- Nervousness, tremor
- Sweating
- Palpitations
- Rapid breathing
- Headache, migraine
- Diarrhoea
- Burning sensations on the skin
- Tightness across the face and chest
- Breathing problems - asthma-like symptoms
- Allergy-like reactions.

Symptoms of food allergy

The symptoms of food allergy can be life threatening. Common symptoms include:

- ❖ Itching, burning and swelling around the mouth
- ❖ Runny nose
- ❖ Skin rash (eczema)
- ❖ Hives (urticaria - skin becomes red and raised)
- ❖ Diarrhoea, abdominal cramps
- ❖ Breathing difficulties, including wheezing and asthma
- ❖ Vomiting, nausea.

Food allergy - common causes

Nuts, eggs, milk or soy cause about 90 per cent of food allergies. Peanut allergy is one of the most common allergies in older children. These foods commonly cause allergies:

- Eggs
- Peanuts
- Milk
- Other nuts
- Sesame
- Gluten
- Fish
- Grains such as rye, wheat, oats
- Soy
- Molluscs such as oysters, mussels, clam, squid and octopus
- Crustaceans such as lobster, prawn, crab, shrimp
- Fruit, berries, tomato, cucumber, white potato or mustard

- Food additives like benzoates, salicylates, and MSG and sulphite derivatives.

Food intolerance - common causes

The foods that tend to cause intolerance reactions in sensitive people include:

- Dairy products, including milk, cheese and yoghurt
- Chocolate
- Eggs, particularly egg white
- Flavour enhancers such as MSG (monosodium glutamate)
- Food additives
- Strawberries, citrus fruits and tomatoes
- Wine, particularly red wine
- Histamine and other amines in some foods.

[www.healthinsite.gov.au/topics/Food Allergies](http://www.healthinsite.gov.au/topics/Food_Allergies)

Aim

Shooting Stars Early Learning Centre aims to provide an environment that is safe and allows any child with allergies to participate in the daily routine of the service without the risk or fear of being exposed to traces of their allergen.

Implementation

Management Will:

- Request information on the enrolment forms regarding known allergies or food intolerances for children being enrolled.
- Discuss the allergies and their treatment with the parents and ensure educators are given all relevant information.
- Ensure parents complete an Allergy Action Plan and that educators are aware of the plan.
- Check that medical and personal information in relation to any child with known allergies is updated regularly.
- Develop an Emergency Action Plan for each child with allergies in conjunction with the child's parents and the child's doctor.
- Ensure that educators are trained and current in the recognition of a severe allergic reaction and the procedure to take when they suspect a child is having an allergic reaction.
- Put procedures in place to exclude food which is known to cause an anaphylactic reaction in any child enrolled at the Centre.

Educators Will:

- Be aware of allergies of children in their care and maintain a copy of the Allergy Action Plan and Emergency Action Plan in the child's file.
- Ensure relief educators are appraised of children within the setting who have known allergies.
- Ensure food is not contaminated or cross contaminated with any product known to cause an allergic reaction with any child currently in care.
- Discourage and prevent children sharing food while in care and to encourage awareness and acceptance of inclusive practices for the different needs of children.

Parents of a child with a known allergy will:

- Provide information regarding any known allergies or intolerances on the enrolment form
- Complete an Allergy Action Plan with the Nominated Supervisor or Educational Leader.
- Provide medical information relating to their child's allergy or intolerance including a recommended Emergency Action Plan from the child's doctor.
- Update the Allergy Action Plan and Emergency Action Plan when necessary
- Provide clear and consistent information to educators regarding the requirements of their child in relation to allergic reactions.
- Assist educators to manage situations where food is shared by children (eg Birthdays).

Responsibilities of other parents:

- Read carefully and adhere to the policies regarding the exclusion of food which is known to cause an anaphylactic reaction in any child enrolled at the centre.

Evaluation and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually. Family and educator feedback will be considered in the review process. Changes in legislation, regulations, and NQS will be considered. Any changes to this policy will be communicated to families and educators verbally and in writing.

Sources

[www.healthinsite.gov.au/topics/Food Allergies](http://www.healthinsite.gov.au/topics/Food%20Allergies)

Associated forms and documentation

Medication Forms

Allergy Action Plan

Emergency Action Plan

Enrolment Forms

Policy Reviewed and changed Date October 2013

Anaphylaxis Management

What is anaphylaxis?

Anaphylaxis is the most severe form of allergic reaction and is potentially life threatening. It must be treated as a medical emergency, requiring immediate treatment and urgent medical attention.

Anaphylaxis is a generalised allergic reaction, which often involves more than one body system e.g. skin, respiratory, gastro-intestinal and cardiovascular. A severe allergic reaction usually occurs within 20 minutes of exposure to the trigger and can rapidly become life threatening.

What causes Anaphylaxis?

Common triggers of anaphylaxis include:

Food

Milk, eggs, peanuts, tree nuts, sesame, fish, crustaceans and soy are the most common food triggers which cause 90% of allergic reactions. However any food can trigger anaphylaxis. It is important to understand that even trace amounts of food can cause a life-threatening reaction. Some extremely sensitive individuals can react to even the smell of a food (e.g. fish)

Insect Venom

Bee, wasp and jumper ant stings are the most common causes of anaphylaxis to insect stings. Ticks and fire ants can also cause anaphylaxis in susceptible individuals.

Signs and Symptoms

The signs and symptoms of anaphylaxis may occur almost immediately after exposure or within the first 20 minutes after exposure. Rapid onset and development of potentially life threatening symptoms are characteristic markers of anaphylaxis.

Allergic symptoms may initially appear mild or moderate but can progress rapidly. The most dangerous allergic reactions involve the respiratory system (breathing) and/or cardiovascular system (heart and blood pressure)

Common Symptoms

Mild to moderate allergic reaction

- Tingling of the mouth
- Hives, welts or body redness
- Swelling of the face, lips and eyes
- Vomiting, abdominal pain

Severe allergic reaction – ANAPHYLAXIS

- Difficulty and/or noisy breathing
- Swelling of the tongue
- Swelling or tightness in the throat
- Difficulty talking or hoarse voice
- Wheeze or persistent cough
- Loss of consciousness and/or collapse
- Pale and floppy (young children)

Diagnosis

A person who is suspected of having a food allergy should obtain a referral to see an allergy specialist for correct diagnosis, advice on preventative management and emergency treatment. Those diagnosed with a severe allergy must carry emergency medication as prescribed as well as an Anaphylaxis Action Plan signed by their doctor. Food allergic children who have a history of eczema and/or asthma are at higher risk of anaphylaxis. Administration of adrenaline is the first line treatment of anaphylaxis.

Management and Treatment

Anaphylaxis is a preventable and treatable event. Knowing the triggers is the first step in prevention.

Children and caregivers need to be educated on how to avoid food allergens and/or other triggers.

However, because accidental exposure is a reality, children and caregivers need to be able to recognise

symptoms of anaphylaxis and be prepared to administer adrenaline according to the individual's Anaphylaxis Action Plan.

Anaphylaxis in Childcare

1. All children who have anaphylaxis must have an emergency kit which contains an EpiPen and an individualised emergency plan which accompanies them everywhere.
2. Children should be taught to only eat food from their own lunch box.
3. Educators should participate in anaphylaxis training

Asthma Procedure

Rationale

Australia has the highest incidence of asthma in the world. Dealing with paediatric asthma is a common expectation of educators working in the early childhood setting. While the illness is common, it is by no means an insignificant problem, it is a serious complaint and can be life threatening to the sufferer.

Aim

To provide the guidelines for educators to follow in order to successfully manage individual Asthmatics.

Implementation

- On enrolment parents are requested to fill out medical details as part of the enrolment process.
- If parents identify the child as suffering from Asthma the parents will also be required to fill out an Asthma Action Plan Form. This form gives us the details as to the normal drug regime the child is on, as well as outlining the treatment that the child's doctor has detailed in the event of an attack occurring.
- Parents are required to keep these plans up to date. Should any part of the regime of treatment alter, our records must be adjusted similarly.
- When a child is suffering or recovering from an attack of Asthma the parents will be required to send along any reliever medication that we may need should the child have a relapse.
- Any medication that the child is to have or may need to have is to be stored as per the medication policy and recorded on the medication sheets found in each room.
- Educators will receive training from a qualified first aid instructor in the management of Asthma.

Emergency Evacuation Policy

Rationale

In the event of an emergency, educators will ensure the safety and well-being of the children during the evacuation procedure. The following procedures have been formulated to prepare educators for any emergency, which would involve an evacuation of the building, and to ensure that educators will be able to react rationally when confronted by such an emergency at the centre.

Designated exits and the procedure for emergency evacuation are shown on evacuation plans throughout the centre.

Designated exits are kept clear and free from obstructions at all times to allow for emergency evacuation. Emergency exits are clearly identified, and a clear path to the exit must be maintained at all times (e.g. no cluttered furniture, boxes, equipment in the way). Emergency contact numbers are beside every telephone.

Fire extinguishers are placed for easy access and are maintained on a regular basis. Fire drills are held monthly and educators and children are given instruction in safe evacuation of the centre and the use of fire safety equipment.

Each educator will have assigned roles for when an emergency evacuation needs to take place. They are made familiar with their assigned roles and ensure that they are carried out in every detail.

Aim

To ensure that all educators are familiar with the evacuation procedure, new educators will be asked to familiarise themselves with the evacuation plans and procedures. Drills will be practiced regularly at different times of the day and when different educators are on duty.

Implementation

Procedure for emergency evacuation

- Sound the fire alarm whistle.
- Find out where the fire is and inform educators to evacuate accordingly.
- The Nominated Supervisor or Certified Supervisor on duty at reception calls 000 for the fire department.
- The Nominated Supervisor or Certified Supervisor on duty at reception is to take the staff sign-in sheets, visitor sign in sheets, emergency folder, children sign in sheets and mobile phone to the designated spot. Before heading to the designated meeting spot they will check all rooms of the service including laundry, staff room, kitchen and individual rooms and bathrooms.
- Any educator s on lunch, programming, study or cleaning should assist the nursery staff with the babies then head to the gate between playgrounds to assist older groups.
- Room educators collect children's roll, close all windows, turn fans off and take any special considerations e.g. asthma puffers for asthmatics while asking children to line up at exit door.
- Take children in your room to the assembly area indicated on plan.
- Re-mark your group roll.
- Notify Nominated Supervisor or Certified Supervisor - all children present and correct

Fire Safety Policy

Shooting Stars Early Learning Centre is committed to ensuring the health and safety of all educators, contractors and visitors. To this end, the following obligations and responsibilities in relation to fire safety must be followed.

Educators Will

- To be aware of and follow fire evacuation procedures
- Participate in training and instruction in relation to fire safety and evacuation
- Be familiar with location and proper use of fire extinguishers and blankets

Management Will

- Will develop and review written evacuation procedures and ensure they are displayed in each room
- Provide instruction to all educators on fire evacuation procedures
- Provide necessary training and instruction to educators in the location and correct use of fire extinguishers, blankets etc.
- Arrange annual checks of fire safety equipment, signage and access to fire exits
- Arrange and participate in regular fire drills.

Other Responsibilities: (parents, visitors etc)

- Parents must sign children in and out daily
- Educators must sign in and out daily
- Visitors must sign in and out in the visitor record book
- Must follow instruction and direction in the event that an evacuation occurs while on the premises

Evaluation and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually. Family and educator feedback will be considered in the review process. Changes in legislation, regulations, and NQS will be considered. Any changes to this policy will be communicated to families and educators verbally and in writing.

Associated Forms and Documentation

Evacuation procedures and diagrams
Fire Drill Evacuation Reports

Policy Updated Date August 2024

Link to NQS

Standard 2.3	Each child is protected.
Element 2.3.3	Plans to effectively manage incidents and emergencies are developed in consultation with relevant authorities, practised and implemented.
Element 7.1.2	The induction of educators, co-ordinators, staff members, including relief educators is comprehensive.

Other Emergencies Procedures

Power Cuts

- In the event of a power failure at the centre, the Certified Supervisor on duty at reception should immediately try to determine if the failure is based at the centre or whether it covers a larger area.
- The children are to be kept inside if the power failure is due to fallen power lines near the centre. The Certified Supervisor on duty at reception will then contact local electricity service (number to be by the telephone) and explain that they are a childcare centre, and request that they respond immediately. Children should be comforted and reassured by staff.
- If the problem is located within the centre, the Certified Supervisor on duty at reception is to call an electrician and arrange to have the problem rectified.

Water Cuts

- In the event of water cuts, the Certified Supervisor on duty at reception should contact the local water board office (number to be by the telephone) to find out how long the centre will be without water.
- If the water cuts are going to occur for an extended period, the Certified Supervisor on duty at reception can arrange for the water board to connect a water tanker to the centre. The educators can assist by storing as much water as possible in buckets etc. prior to the water cuts, if the centre is notified in advance of impending water cuts.
- In the event of a prolonged period indoors, the children's parents are to be notified by educators in a calm manner.

Storms and Natural Disasters

- For storms and other natural disasters, bring children indoors immediately. Check the roll and sign-on sheets to ensure all children are inside. Turn off all electricity. Stay calm and comfort any children who may be distressed. Keep the children away from windows and doors, and ensure these are closed.
- In the event of a prolonged period indoors, the children's parents are to be notified by educators in a calm manner.

Bomb Threats

- In the case of a bomb threat, the educator answering the call should attempt to ask the questions set out below.
- When is the bomb going to explode?
- Where did you put the bomb?
- When did you put it there?
- What does the bomb look like?
- What kind of bomb is it?
- What will make the bomb explode?
- Did you place the bomb?
- Why?
- What is your name?
- Where are you?
- What is your address?

Immediately report the call to the Certified Supervisor on duty at reception or delegated person in charge. The Certified Supervisor on duty at reception is to call the police immediately and give centre details:

- Name of childcare centre
- Address of childcare centre
- Nearest cross street
- Phone number
- Do not re-enter the childcare centre until instructed to do so by the attending police.

Violent Persons/Hostages

- In the case of a non-custodial parent, relative or stranger seeking to remove a child from the centre, educators should:
- Remain calm
- Discuss the matter quietly and calmly with the person while ever he/she remains calm and rational (e.g. point out that you were expecting someone else to collect the child today, and you can only release the child with written permission etc.)
- If practical, inform the custodial parent of the situation
- If the person insists on removing the child, the childcare educators are not to put themselves or the other children at any risk, and should release the child as requested
- If possible, the details of the time, car licence number, a description of the person, or any suggestion of where the child may have been taken should be recorded\
- The custodial parent and Police (if applicable) should be contacted, and given all available information.

Intoxicated Persons:

- Remain calm
- Attempt to keep the children physically removed from the inebriated person
- Contact the Police as quickly as possible to request the removal of the person in question
- If the inebriated person is seeking to collect a child from the centre, do what is sensible and practical (and will not cause risk to any educators or children) to deter them from taking the child. However it may not be possible to prevent them from taking their child.

Violent/Aggressive Persons

- Remain calm, and avoid further contact with the person if possible
- Ensure the children are removed from contact with the aggressor to another area of the service.
- Contact the Police as quickly as possible to request the removal of the aggressor

Lockdown Procedure

Lockdown procedures are designed to secure staff and children in the case of potential threats such as:

- Bad weather
- Toxic spills
- Livestock on the loose
- Dangerous Persons

When a threat occurs the Certified Supervisor on duty at reception should follow these procedures:

- Contact police with as much information as possible and at the same time arrange for a lockdown signal to be activated.
- A designated signal is three long blasts of whistle.

The steps to follow are:

- The code that the lockdown is in effect will be **the fire alarm whistle blown with three long blasts.**
- Immediately bring all children inside and close and lock all doors and windows.
- Keep all children inside your room.
- Do not answer any knocks on the door.
- Do not use the phone except for a medical emergency. In case of a medical emergency, notify the office.
- Certified Supervisor on duty at reception will direct children's release in person or by phone.
- An "all clear" announcement will end the lockdown.

This procedure like the emergency evacuation drill needs be practiced to ensure that it runs smoothly.

Health and Hygiene Policy

Rationale

Infections are common in children and often lead to illness. At home, children are reasonably well protected from infectious diseases because they do not come into contact with as many people as children who attend education and care services. The adults they meet are usually immune to many childhood illnesses because they had them as children, or have been vaccinated against them.

Many children first enter education and care services at a time when their immune systems are still developing. They may not have been exposed to many common germs that cause infections—bacteria, viruses, fungi, protozoa—and they may be too young to be vaccinated against some diseases. The way that children interact in education and care services means that diseases can quickly spread in a variety of ways. Children (particularly younger children) will have close physical contact with other children and carers through regular daily activities and play; they often put objects in their mouths; and they may not always cover their coughs or sneezes.

Staying healthy-Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services is a best practice tool that provides simple and effective ways for educators and other staff to help limit the spread of illness and infectious diseases in education and care settings. (*Staying Healthy: Preventing infectious disease in early childhood and education care settings 5th Edition June 2013*)

Aim

The health and hygiene policy aims to protect the general health and wellbeing of children, families, educators, and the community by minimizing the risk and spread of infections within the centre.

Implementation

Infections with or without illness are common in children. When children spend time in childcare centres or other facilities and are exposed to a large number of children for long periods, the risk of illness is higher and infectious diseases spread. It is not possible to prevent the spread of all infections and illnesses within our centre, especially as most illnesses have an incubation period for a significant number of days **before** any visible signs of illness are noticed (e.g. infectious before symptoms are noticed), however preventing and minimizing the spread of infectious diseases is an important part of the quality childcare provided at Shooting Stars Early Learning Centre. It is by removing sick or unwell children from the centre that we can reduce the risk of infecting other children.

Childcare is labour-intensive, involving many close physical interactions among children and adults each day. Children are particularly at risk of infection because:

1. They have close contact with a whole range of children and adults in closed spaces for long periods of time
2. They have had previously little exposure to many common infectious diseases
3. They are continuously being introduced to new children who come with their own set of pathogens.

Under the Children's Services Act 1986, any child or staff member who appears to be suffering from an infectious illness, disease or condition which may prejudice the health of other children or staff is to be isolated from the other children and removed from the centre as soon as possible. See the Exclusion list for a current list of illnesses and their concurrent exclusion guidelines.

Main ways to prevent infection

The most important ways to break the chain of infection and stop the spread of diseases are:

- Effective hand hygiene
- Exclusion of ill children, educators and other staff
- Immunisation
- Other strategies to prevent infection include:
 - Cough and sneeze etiquette
 - Appropriate use of gloves
 - Effective environmental cleaning

Parents Will

Children should not be brought to the centre unless they are able to cope adequately with the normal daily routines and activities within the program. If the Nominated Supervisor or a senior educator feels that one child is unfairly exposing other children to illness or is too unwell to cope with the centre's program, they will notify a parent and ask for the child to be removed from the centre. The Nominated Supervisor's decision is final. Parents are requested to collect their child as soon as possible after being notified of possible illness, or make alternative arrangements. If parents cannot be contacted the emergency contact numbers on the enrolment form will be used. Please ensure that your emergency contacts are in a position to fulfil this requirement.

Educators Will

- Observe strict health and hygiene conditions. As cleaning is an important part of infection control in a day care facility, it is important to clean thoroughly so as to reduce contamination to such a degree that healthy children are at as low as possible risk of contracting diseases.
- Should an emergency situation arise and a child's health and safety are at risk the Nominated supervisor or Certified Supervisor on duty will act as the parent's agent in acquiring medical treatment. They will make every effort to contact the parent before doing so. The cost of all treatment or services undertaken on the parent's behalf will remain the responsibility of the parent.
- Hold a current approved certificate in emergency first aid treatment including CPR, asthma and anaphylaxis training.

Management Will

Legislation requires the centre to report any cases of vaccine preventable diseases to the NHMRC by phone. If any child or staff member contracts an infectious disease the centre is to be notified immediately. The centre keeps a record of all illnesses occurring within the Centre and will advise parents of any infectious outbreaks. The centre also uses this record to review their policies and procedures, and implement any changes necessary to control outbreaks.

Management ensures the exclusion list is continually updated using information from the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC), The Office of Child Care Exclusion Guidelines and Department of Health.

Confidential records are maintained for each child – health evaluation, record of immunizations, emergency contact numbers, family doctor, and people authorized to collect the child and other relevant information. Please advise the Nominated Supervisor if these records need to be updated.

Evaluation and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually. Family and educator feedback will be considered in the review process. Changes in legislation, regulations, and NQS will be considered. Any changes to this policy will be communicated to families and educators verbally and in writing.

Associated Forms and Documentation

Exclusion list
Centre Cleaning Policy and Procedures
Children and educator immunisation policy
Illness of Children and Educators Policy

Policy Updated Date August 2024

Link to NQS

Element 2.1.3	Effective hygiene practices are promoted and implemented
Element 2.1.4	Steps are taken to control the spread of infectious diseases and to manage injuries and illness, in accordance with recognised guidelines.

Centre Cleaning Policy

Rationale

Effective cleaning techniques can minimise the risk of infection and illness in the child care setting by eliminating the bacteria which cause cross infection.

Aim

Shooting Stars Early Learning Centre aims to provide a safe, hygienic and healthy environment for staff, children, parents and visitors to the service by following effective cleaning procedures eliminating causes of illness and infection.

Implementation

Educators will follow the centre cleaning procedures in relation to the following:

- Cleaning of bathrooms, laundry and kitchen areas used by staff and children.
- Cleaning of floors and rugs.
- Laundry
- Toys and equipment

Washing germs away

Routine cleaning with detergent and water, followed by rinsing and drying, is the most useful method for removing germs from surfaces. Detergents help to loosen the germs so that they can be rinsed away with clean water. Mechanical cleaning (scrubbing the surface) physically reduces the number of germs on the surface, just as hand hygiene using soap and water reduces the number of germs on the hands. Rinsing with clean water removes the loosened germs and any detergent residues from the surface, and drying the surface makes it harder for germs to survive or grow.

Detergent and water should be made up fresh daily in a clean, dry container, which should be labelled with the time it was made, the date and the type of detergent. Do not 'top up' the container with extra water during the day because this dilutes the detergent mixture, making it less effective. Spray bottles are not recommended—spraying a surface with a fine mist and then wiping it with a cloth or paper towel will not be enough to dislodge germs. There is also a greater risk of germs growing in the bottle and in the detergent mixture.

The most effective method is to use a container of fresh detergent and warm water (follow the manufacturer's instructions on how much detergent to use), immerse a cloth, wring it out, then clean the area with a vigorous rubbing action, followed by rinsing and drying. Although it is best to use warm water, cold water can also be used with a little extra scrubbing.

Disinfectants

Disinfectants are usually only necessary if a surface that has already been cleaned with detergent and water is known to have been contaminated with potentially infectious material. Most germs do not survive for long on clean surfaces when exposed to air and light, and routine cleaning with detergent and water should be enough to reduce germ numbers. Disinfectants might be used after routine cleaning during an outbreak of, for example, a gastrointestinal disease.

Clean first, then disinfect

It is more important to make sure that all surfaces have been cleaned with detergent and warm water than to use a disinfectant. If you do need to use a disinfectant, remember that the disinfectant will not kill germs if the surface has not been cleaned first.

To kill germs, any disinfectant must:

- have enough time in contact with the surface to kill the germs (as per the manufacturer's instructions)
- be used at the right concentration
- be applied to a clean, dry surface

- be effective against those particular germs.

Note that you should only use bleach for cleaning up small to large blood spills. Bleach is stronger than other disinfectants and can inactivate blood borne viruses.

Basic steps for effective routine cleaning

- Use detergent and warm water. Follow the manufacturer’s instructions on how much detergent to use.
- Vigorously rub the surface to physically remove germs.
- Rinse the surface with clean water.
- Dry the surface.

Evaluation and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually. Family and educator feedback will be considered in the review process. Changes in legislation, regulations, and NQS will be considered. Any changes to this policy will be communicated to families and educators verbally and in writing.

Associated forms and documentation

General Cleaning Procedure

Source

Staying Healthy in Childcare: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services. 5th Edition; NHMRC; June 2013

Policy Updated Date August 2024

Link to NOS

Element 2.1.3	Effective hygiene practices are promoted and implemented.
Element 2.1.4	Steps are taken to control the spread of infectious diseases and to manage injuries and illness, in accordance with recognised guidelines.

General Cleaning Procedure

EVERY ROOM IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THEIR OWN CLEANING. ROOMS MUST BE LEFT IN A NEAT AND ORDERLY FASHION BEFORE STAFF GO HOME. Colour coded cloths must be used for each task. Gloves are to be worn when handling chemical disinfectants. Cleaning cloths and mops need to be well dried after use preferably in the sun

- Tables, legs and edges need to be wiped often, at least once a week.
- Highchairs – need to be cleaned and sanitised after every use, and cleaned thoroughly with bleach on a weekly basis. The straps from the highchairs need to be washed weekly (more often if soiled)
- Chairs - need to be spot cleaned daily with detergent and water after use and thoroughly cleaned weekly.
- Walls - are to be spot cleaned daily for example if there is paint splattered on the wall or if you notice a mark on the walls.
- Floors are to be swept and mopped daily.
- All sheets and blankets should be allocated to an individual child and washed weekly as a minimum or more often when required.
- Towels, face washers, bibs, cleaning cloths, tea towels, etc. are to be washed daily in the appropriate manner.
- All toys mouthed by children are to be placed in the mouthed toys bucket to be cleaned daily
- All other toys are to be cleaned before being put back into cupboard
- The kitchen needs to be cleaned thoroughly - microwave, bench tops, cupboards, floors, sinks, fridges, - **See Kitchen Cleaning Procedure**
- Bins need to have the rubbish taken out at the end of the day and disinfected
- The bathroom areas need to be cleaned thoroughly including toilets, change areas and floors - **See Bathroom Cleaning Procedure**
- All beds are to be cleaned and disinfected daily after every use
- Cots and cot room is to be thoroughly cleaned weekly
- Windows, mirrors and window ledges, fans are to be cleaned weekly or more often if noticeably soiled
- Cushion covers are to be cleaned weekly more often if soiled
- Home corner equipment is to be thoroughly cleaned weekly
- Lockers are cleaned out and disinfected weekly
- All toys and equipment are to be cleaned on a weekly rotating basis
- All fridges are to be thoroughly cleaned out and cleaned on a weekly basis (Friday)
- Sandpits need to be raked daily and outside equipment needs to be cleaned weekly.

Bathroom Cleaning Procedure

Nappy change area

After each nappy change, clean the nappy change area thoroughly with detergent and water, rinsing and drying with single-use paper towel. If faeces or urine spill onto the change table or mat, clean it with detergent and water, then rinse and dry with single-use paper towel. (Source 5th Edition Staying Healthy in Child Care)

PLEASE DO IN THIS ORDER

Benches

- Clear away EVERYTHING on bench tops
- Use detergent and water and a leaning cloth to wipe down all surfaces. Scrub vigorously.
- Rinse surfaces with cleaning cloth in clean water
- Spray bench with sanitiser
- Use paper towel to dry bench
- Replace everything on bench top

Hand basins

- Use detergent and water and a cleaning cloth to scrub each basin both inside basin and outside of basin and taps.
- Rinse surfaces with cleaning cloth in clean water, dry with paper towel.
- Spray hand basin including taps with sanitiser and leave to dry

Bins (including kitchen bin)

- Empty rubbish
- Spray with sanitiser
- Wipe with paper towel
- Spray with sanitiser and leave to dry
- Replace liner in bin

Shower

- Spray shower, shower rose and taps with sanitiser
- Wipe using paper towel
- Spray with sanitiser and leave to dry

Toilets

- Put on plastic gloves
- Using a fresh cloth in detergent and water for each toilet clean all parts outside of toilet including outside and cistern.
- Rinse using a clean cloth in water.
- Spray bowl with sanitiser.
- Use brush to clean bowl
- Use toilet paper to clean lid that the child sits on and flush
- Use paper towel to dry all other parts of the toilet including outside, cistern etc.

Spray all parts of the toilet (excluding lid that the child sits on) with sanitiser and leave to dry

NOTE: Toilets need to be cleaned often during the day to minimise cross-infection

Gates to toilet

- Spray with sanitiser
- Wipe with paper
- Spray with sanitiser and leave to dry

Floor

- Sweep floor
- Mop floor

Kitchen Cleaning Procedure

NOTE: The kitchen is a food preparation area and must be kept free of all clutter and items need to be put away in their correct place after use. Art materials are not to be stored or left in kitchen or on the bench between kitchen. Dishes MUST NOT be left on benches/sink etc as this encourages vermin to enter

- After using the kitchen for making meals, all utensils used for preparation will be put away in correct place.
- Benches (use detergent and cleaning cloth) are to be wiped down after every use and all equipment put away in correct place.
- Pantry food is to be stored in the correct containers and must be left neat and orderly
- The fridge in the kitchen must be cleaned weekly throwing out leftover food and wiping the fridge clean
- Microwave is to be wiped inside and out after every use
- If the oven is used, it must be wiped out after use
- If the hotplates are used, they must be wiped over after use.
- The floors are to be swept and mopped after use and “wet floor sign” put up to notify people
- Tea towels are to be used only once daily (preferably air dry dishes after washing) – wipe dishes from one room then place in washing machine to be washed.

Hygiene Practices

Appropriate use of gloves

Wearing gloves does not replace the need to wash your hands, and you should ensure that you perform hand hygiene before putting gloves on and after taking them off.

Gloves provide a protective barrier against germs. When educators and other staff wear gloves appropriately, they protect both themselves and the children in their care from potential infection. It is important to remember that using gloves correctly will reduce the spread of germs, but will not eliminate it.

Washing hands before wearing gloves

Wash your hands before putting on gloves so that you remove as many germs as possible from your hands. Otherwise, when you reach into the box of gloves, you can contaminate the other gloves in the box.

When changing a nappy, it is very important to wash your hands before you put on gloves, so that when you have finished changing the child, you can remove the dirty gloves and dress the child without needing to interrupt the nappy-changing procedure to wash your hands before dressing the child.

Washing hands after wearing gloves

When you have finished a procedure that requires you to wear gloves, it is important to wash your hands thoroughly after removing the gloves, because any germs on your hands may have multiplied significantly while you were wearing the gloves. There may also be microscopic tears or holes in the gloves that can allow germs to contaminate your skin. When taking off the gloves, you may contaminate your hands with the dirty gloves; therefore, it is essential that you wash your hands.

Cough and sneeze etiquette

Many germs can be spread through the air by droplets. By covering your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze, you reduce how far the droplets can travel and stop them from contaminating other surfaces.

In the past, people were encouraged to cover their coughs and sneezes with their hands. But if you do not clean your hands immediately, germs stay on your hands and can be transferred to other surfaces.

Effective environmental cleaning

Some germs can survive in the environment, usually on surfaces such as bench tops, door handles and toys. The length of time a germ can survive on a surface depends on the germ itself, the type of surface it has contaminated, and how often the surface is cleaned. Reducing the number of germs in the environment can break the chain of infection.

Nasal discharge

Washing your hands every time you wipe a child's nose will reduce the spread of colds. If you cannot wash your hands after every nose wipe, use an alcohol-based hand rub.

It is not necessary to wear gloves when wiping a child's nose. If you do wear gloves, you must remove your gloves and wash your hands or use an alcohol-based hand rub afterwards.

Dispose of dirty tissues immediately.

Cots

If a child soils a crib or cot:

- **wash your hands** and put on gloves
 - clean the child
 - remove your gloves
 - dress the child and **wash the child's hands and your hands**
 - put on gloves
 - clean the cot
- remove the bulk of the soiling or spill with absorbent paper towels
 - place the soiled linen in a plastic-lined, lidded laundry bin
 - remove any visible soiling of the cot or mattress by cleaning thoroughly with detergent and water

- remove your gloves and **wash your hands**
- provide clean linen for the cot.

Dummies

Never let children share dummies. When not in use, dummies should be stored in individual plastic containers labelled with the child's name. Store dummies out of children's reach, and do not let the dummies come in contact with another dummy or toy.

Toys

Washing toys effectively is very important to reduce spread of disease. Toys need to be washed at the end of each day, especially those in rooms with younger children. Wash toys in warm water and detergent, and rinse them well—many toys can be cleaned in a dishwasher (but not at the same time as dishes).

All toys, including cloth toys and books, can be dried by sunlight.

Only buy washable toys, and discard non-washable toys that are for general use. Individual non-washable toys may be assigned to a child and kept in the child's cot for the use of that child only.

Books should be inspected for visible dirt. They can be cleaned by wiping with a moist cloth with detergent on it, and allowing to dry. Keep damp or wet books out of use until they are dry.

Remove toys for washing during the day. Start a 'Toys to wash' box and place toys in it during the day if you see a child sneeze on a toy or put a toy in their mouth, or if the toy has been used by a child who is unwell.

Toys can also be split into two lots and rotated between washing one day and in use the next.

In the nappy change area, have a box of clean toys and a box of toys to be washed. Give a child a clean toy if they need one while being changed. Immediately after the nappy change, place the toy in the 'Toys to wash' box.

(Source: Staying Healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services. 5th Edition; NHMRC; June 2013)

Nappy Change Procedure

- 1 Wash your hands
- 2 Place paper on the change table
- 3 Put disposable gloves on both hands
- 4 Remove the child's nappy and put any disposable nappy in a hands-free lidded bin.
Place any soiled clothes in a plastic bag
- 5 Clean the child's bottom
- 6 Remove the paper and put it in a hands-free lidded bin
- 7 Remove your gloves and put them in the bin
- 8 Place a clean nappy on the child
- 9 Dress the child
- 10 Take the child away from the change table
- 11 Wash your hands and the child's hands
- 12 After each nappy change, clean the change table with detergent and water, then rinse and dry
- 13 Wash your hands

(Reviewed using information from National Health and Medical Research Council June 2013)

Hand Hygiene

Hand hygiene is one of the most simple and effective ways to break the chain of infection. The most effective method of hand hygiene is using soap and water.

Infants need their hands washed as often and as thoroughly as older children:

If the infant can stand at a small hand basin, wash their hands the same way you would wash your own hands.

If the infant cannot stand at a hand basin, wash their hands with pre moistened disposable wipes and then make sure to rinse their hands with water to remove any soap and dry thoroughly.

When to wash hands – Educators and Centre staff

Before:

Starting work
Eating or handling food
Giving medication
Putting on gloves
Applying sunscreen
Going home

After:

Taking off gloves
Changing a nappy
Cleaning the nappy change area
Using the toilet
Helping children to use the toilet
Coming in from outside play
Wiping a child's nose or your own nose
Eating or handling food
Handling rubbish
Cleaning up faeces, vomit or blood
Applying sunscreen
Touching animals

When to wash hands – children

Before

Starting the day at the service
Eating or handling food
Going home

After

Eating or handling food
Touching nose secretions
Using the toilet
Having their nappy changed
Coming in from outside play
Touching animals

Hand washing process

The process should take around 30 seconds

- Wet hands with running water
- Apply soap to hands
- Lather soap and rub hands thoroughly, including the wrists, the palms, between the fingers, around the thumbs and under the nails. Rub hands together for at least 15 seconds.
- Rinse thoroughly under running water
- Dry thoroughly with paper towel.

Using alcohol based hand rub

- Apply the amount of sanitiser recommended by the manufacturer to palms of dry hands
- Rub hands together, making sure to cover between fingers, around thumbs and under nails.
- Rub until hands are dry

Using gloves

Always wash your hands before and after wearing disposable gloves. Wear gloves on both hands

Wear them:

When changing nappies

When cleaning up faeces, urine, blood, saliva or vomit including when it is on clothes

When preparing and handling food

Food Safety and Handling Policy

Rationale

Child care services are responsible for the health and well-being of children during the time they are in care. In order to meet each child's physical needs, and assist in the establishment of healthy lifelong eating habits and food attitudes a childcare service has a duty to ensure that food provided either by the service or the families is nutritious, appetising, culturally and developmentally appropriate and above all safe.

Aim

Ensuring the safety of food consumed at Shooting Stars Early Learning Centre is an essential part of protecting the health of children. It is important for the centre to develop a preventative, proactive, risk management approach towards Food Safety and Handling. Educators need to be aware of the risks associated with handling, storing and serving food and follow the associated food safety plan in order to manage the risk.

The centre goals in food safety and handling are:

- To ensure educators, children and families are aware of and implement appropriate food handling and storage practices
- To provide on-going professional development and training opportunities for educators
- To reduce the risk of infection through inappropriate food handling and storage practices
- To provide guidelines and information to parents in home languages about food handling and storage, where possible

Implementation

Educators Will

- Wash their hands thoroughly with soap: before preparing or handling food
- Encourage children to turn away from food when they cough or sneeze and then to wash their hands
- Use mealtimes to discuss hygiene practices with the children
- Wear a glove if hands will come in contact with food
- Check that all children and educators have washed their hands before preparing or eating food, or drinking
- Clean tables thoroughly with detergent and water before and after using tables for meals
- Make sure children do not share food, plates or utensils
- Remind children that sharing during meals can spread germs that might make them or other children sick
- Use separate utensils for feeding each infant and toddler
- Maintain and check temperatures of refrigeration, if necessary inform Management of broken appliance and make arrangements to use another room's fridge
- Heat food once only
- Ensure children and educators engaged in cooking experiences or food handling follow hygiene practices – tie up any long hair, make sure everyone washes their hands before starting
- Designate a food preparation area where only food preparation is to occur
- Sweep and mop the kitchen floor daily and the rubbish bins are to be emptied after all meals are served and before the end of the day
- Be aware of any religious and cultural aspects of food handling
- Heat milk for bottles once only. Throw away any left-over breast milk or formula milk in bottles. Bottles, teats and teat covers are to be rinsed well in cold running water as soon as possible after the completion of the feed. Items are then washed in warm, soapy water and left to air dry

Parents Will

- Be encouraged to implement appropriate food handling and storage practices in the home according to current information provided by the centre by recognised health authorities

Management Will

- Provide on-going training opportunities for educators to ensure knowledge of safe food handling and storage practices
- Provide families with guidelines and information about food handling and storage
- Implement quality control measures (Cleaning Checklist) to ensure that the centre's policies and procedures relating to food handling and storage standards are implemented systematically and consistently
- Ensure new educators are aware of the food safety and handling policy and procedure.

Evaluation and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually. Family and educator feedback will be considered in the review process. Changes in legislation, regulations, and NQS will be considered. Any changes to this policy will be communicated to families and educators verbally and in writing.

Sources

Childcare and Children's Health Volume 6 No 4 November 2003
Food Safety Standards ANZFA (Australia New Zealand Food Authority)
Food Safety Information Council Website www.foodsafety.asn.au

Associated Forms and Documentation

Cleaning Checklist
Fridge Temperature Checklist
Food Safety Program

Policy Updated Date August 2024

Link to NOS

Standard 2.1	Each child's health is promoted
Element 2.1.1	Each child's health needs are supported.
Element 2.1.3	Effective hygiene practices are promoted and implemented.
Standard 2.2	Healthy eating and physical activity are embedded in the program for children
Element 2.2.1	Healthy eating is promoted and food and drinks provided by the service are nutritious and appropriate to each child.
Element 2.3.1	Children are adequately supervised at all times.

Food Safety and Handling Plan

Handling Food

Educators need to ensure they follow appropriate personal hygiene practices and cleanliness to minimize the risk of food contamination:

- Should not allow any part of their body to come in contact with the food they are serving e.g. ensure long hair is contained, gloves are worn etc.
- Ensure clothing is clean and hygienic
- Make sure bandages or dressings are waterproof and do not come in contact with the food.
- Ensure they do not cough or sneeze either on the food or on the surfaces that the children will be using while eating food.
- Educators will not handle food with bare hands – gloves and tongs will be used at all times.

This includes washing their hands:

- immediately before working with ready-to-eat food after handling raw food;
- immediately after using the toilet;
- before they start handling food or go back to handling food after other work;
- immediately after smoking, coughing, sneezing, using a handkerchief or disposable tissue, eating, drinking or using tobacco or similar substances; and
- after touching their hair or scalp

Food Temperatures

- Chilled food should be kept at a temperature of 5 ° C or below.
- The fridges will have the temperature checked daily to ensure they are operating at the desired temperature.

Preparing, Storing and Heating Bottles Policy

Rationale

Infants grow and develop more rapidly than at any other time of life. This means that they have particularly high nutritional needs. Appropriate infant feeding practices are needed to support normal growth. (Caring for Infants, NSW Health, 2008)

As infants receive most if not all of their nutritional needs from milk – either breast milk or formula it is important that educators prepare, store and heat the milk in an appropriate manner approved by health experts.

Aim

Long day care services have an important role to play in supporting mothers to breastfeed. Services can develop policies that encourage and support continued breastfeeding. Services can also provide comfortable surrounds in which the mother can breastfeed, or express breast milk. (Caring for Infants, NSW Health, 2008) It is the aim of Shooting Stars Management to support families to continue to breastfeed infants who are enrolled in the care environment. For families choosing to formula feed it is equally important for educators to store, prepare and heat bottles in the appropriate manner.

Implementation

Educators Will

Preparing formula bottles

When preparing formula always wash your hands first and ensure that work surfaces, bottles and other equipment are clean.

Place the required amount of boiled water in the bottle. Add the exact amount of formula required. Mix thoroughly by shaking to ensure no lumps remain.

Place the prepared formula in the back of the fridge for a maximum of 24 hours.

It is best to make up fresh formula for each feed and give it to the child as soon as it is cooled. If this is not possible the freshly made formula should be cooled immediately and placed in the back of the refrigerator for no more than 24 hours. Throw away any formula that is left over. Do not freeze or reheat leftover made up formula.

Storing bottles

Formula or breast milk needs to be kept refrigerated or frozen. Check that temperature remains below 5 degrees. All bottles need to be labelled with the child's name and the date the bottle was prepared or brought in by the parent.

Breast milk can be stored in several ways

- Refrigerated for 3-5 days at 4 degrees Celsius or less in the back of the refrigerator not on the door
- Stored without refrigeration for 6-8 hours if the room temperature is less than 26 degrees Celsius

Thawing frozen breast milk

- Thaw frozen breast milk in the refrigerator or, if necessary, by placing the bottle in cool or warm water (shake gently if the breast milk has separated).
- All frozen breast milk thawed in cool/warm water should be used immediately.
- Throw out any left-overs as soon as the feed has finished.
- Frozen breast milk left to thaw in the refrigerator can be kept in the fridge for that day. Once it has been taken out of the fridge for a feed, it should be used and any left-overs thrown out as soon as the feed has finished.

Heating bottles

Feeding an infant cold breast milk or infant formula is not harmful, but drinks warmed to room temperature flow well from the bottle, and infants seem to prefer them at room temperature.

- Warm breast milk and infant formula bottles by standing the bottle upright in warm water just before use. It is the safest way to warm the bottles.

- Bottle warmers can be used, but they must have a thermostat control. Bottles should only be warmed using this equipment for **less than 10 minutes**. Follow the manufacturer’s instructions.
- Avoid using the microwave to warm bottles.
- Shake the bottle and test some of the breast milk/infant formula on the back of a washed hand to make sure it is not too hot.

Clean and sterilise bottles before returning to the family

Our educators will use a microwave steriliser to ensure that all equipment returned to the family each day is already cleaned thoroughly and sterilised for the convenience of the family and to ensure cross infection does not occur.

Parents Will

If the baby is on breast milk supply the amount required for the day or arrange with educators the time you will arrive to breast feed your child. We have several comfortable places where parents may choose to breast feed within the centre.

If your baby is on formula feeds please supply either enough bottles already made up for the day.

Or

Enough bottles for the day and a sectioned container with pre-measured amounts of formula.

Please supply a cap with every bottle for hygiene reasons. Pacifiers also need a cap for hygiene reasons.

Please mark all bottles, caps, pacifiers etc. with your child’s name or initials so that the educators can return your child’s equipment at the end of each day.

Evaluation and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually. Family and educator feedback will be considered in the review process. Changes in legislation, regulations, and NQS will be considered. Any changes to this policy will be communicated to families and educators verbally and in writing.

Associated Forms and Documentation

Fridge temperature check sheets

Sources

- Staying Healthy – Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and Care Services Fifth Edition 2013 NHMRC
- Caring For Infants: A Guide to Feeding 0-12 month old infants in Long Day Care Centres; NSW Department of Health, 2008
- Bottle Feeding - Formula Feeding; Queensland Health Fact Sheet

Policy Updated Date August 2024

Link to NQS

Element 2.1.1	Each child’s health needs are supported.
Element 2.1.3	Effective hygiene practices are promoted and implemented.
Element 2.2.1	Healthy eating is promoted and food and drinks provided by the service are nutritious and appropriate to each child.

Healthy Food Policy

Rationale

All children in child care need regular healthy meals, snacks and fluids. Promoting children's health is an important aspect of good quality child care. Regardless of whether food is provided all childcare services have a responsibility to promote good nutrition for children in their care. (Child care and healthy eating; Better Health Channel)

Learning to eat in a group environment is an important part of a child's social and emotional development. The mealtime environment can have a lasting effect on a child's attitude to food and eating. The centre will make meal times as pleasant as possible to help children develop a healthy relationship with food.

Good nutrition is especially important for children because they need extra nutrients for growth and development. The centre will encourage and support families to provide the children with a balanced variety of food which includes all of the five recommended dietary intakes for the day.

The five food groups are as follows:

- The bread and cereals group provides energy, carbohydrate, protein, B group vitamins and dietary fibre
- The dairy foods group provides energy, protein, calcium and fat soluble vitamins
- The meat and meat alternatives group provides energy, protein, iron and zinc
- Fruit and vegetables as a group provide dietary fibre and the water soluble vitamins
- Fats and oils are needed in small quantities to provide energy and fat soluble vitamins

Aim

Children need to eat a variety of foods every day to be healthy. The centre will provide healthy meals for the children. Healthy foods contain vitamins, minerals and fibre. Not so healthy foods contain lots of sugar and fat and often preservatives and colours, which can cause food allergies and food, related hyperactivity.

The educators will work co-operatively with families to ensure that the food and drink is culturally appropriate, nutritious and meets each child's daily dietary requirements.

Implementation

Educators Will

- Respect children's needs for a balanced and varied diet.
- Promote nutritious and healthy eating habits through discussion, education and role modelling
- Provide a climate for eating which encourages independence
- Promote food storage and handling procedures that reduce the cause of illness.
- Encourage children to be aware of different food varieties and food requirements of various cultures.
- Treat meal times as a social occasion – sit with the children and interact with them to encourage good eating habits and an appreciation for a variety of foods.
- Assist children during mealtimes when required but will also encourage the development of self-help skills.
- Encourage children to drink water frequently throughout the day, by ensuring that there is water available to them at all times.
- Have regular meal and snack times but ensure individual needs are met if a child is hungry or thirsty outside a set meal time
- Encourage children to try new food – children will never be forced to eat a food that they don't wish to.
- Respect family cultural and religious needs in regards to foods.
- Advise families of infants and toddlers what their child's fluid intake has been throughout the day.
- Advise families of all children what the child's food intake has been throughout the day.
- Encourage and support breastfeeding.
- Include information about food and nutrition in the programmed activities with the children.
- Ensure they wash their hands thoroughly and put on fresh gloves before handling food.

- Empty bins containing food scraps as soon as the meal is over.
- Encourage children to wash their hands before and after eating.
- Act as role models for the children, showing enthusiasm for healthy food and setting a good example in table manners and conversation.
- Prevent children from sharing the food or utensils of other children
- Use appropriate food handling techniques when assisting the children to eat their meals

Families Will

- Encourage healthy food habits in the home environment.
- Inform educators about their child’s dietary requirements e.g. allergies and intolerances.
- Inform staff of any religious beliefs which may affect the food experiences the centre can provide for the child or any lifestyle choices such as vegetarianism which will need to be taken into account when planning activities.
- Follow the centre Healthy Eating Plan when providing food for their child.

Management Will

- Ensure educators offer water to the children often throughout the day.
- Provide parents with food and health information produced by recognised authorities e.g. posters, pamphlets, inserts in newsletters etc.
- Ensure foods which may constitute a hazard are not served in the child care environment e.g. having a no peanut policy to protect children with allergies.
- Provide appropriate size tables and chairs for the comfort of the children to eat their meals.
- Ensure educators are informed of children with food allergies
- Ensure emergency food is available for children who require additional food.

Sources:

- Get up& Grow Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for Early Childhood; resources published by the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing; 2009.
- Food Safety Information Council Website www.foodsafety.asn.au
- Fact sheets from Better Health Channel www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au
- www.nutritionaustralia.org

Evaluation and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually. Family and educator feedback will be considered in the review process. Changes in legislation, regulations, and NQS will be considered. Any changes to this policy will be communicated to families and educators verbally and in writing.

Associated Forms and Documentation

Parent Handbook
 Healthy Eating Plan
 Selected brochures and pamphlets
 Get up and Grow resources

Policy Updated Date August 2024

Link to NQS

Element 2.1.1	Each child’s health needs are supported
Element 2.1.3	Effective hygiene practices are promoted and implemented.
Element 2.2.1	Healthy eating is promoted and food and drinks provided by the service are nutritious and appropriate to each child.

Healthy Eating Plan

Breakfast

We understand that some children arriving early in the morning may not have had the time or inclination to eat breakfast before they leave home. Educators will happily serve and supervise breakfast until 8:30am.

Morning and Afternoon Tea

We supply a variety of fresh fruit for morning tea each day. Afternoon tea varies day to day. Some examples of foods that may be served are biscuits with cheese, fruit and custard or yoghurt, pancakes, rice cakes with jam or honey, sweet biscuits and sultanas, raisin bread, and sometimes we may have cake for a special occasion.

Lunch

We vary the menu daily ensuring that all meals are healthy and nutritious. All meat used in cooking is supplied from a Halal certified butcher to ensure that it is culturally appropriate. Examples of what may be served for lunch are chicken curry and rice, assorted sandwiches, fish fingers and chips, tuna mornay with pasta, spaghetti bolognese, shepherd's pie, sausages with mashed potatoes and baked beans.

We do not allow any peanut or nut products to be bought into the centre. The risk to children with an allergy can be life threatening. This includes peanut butter, nutella and snack nuts —please do not send these products with your child!

Non-nutritional foods such as chocolate, chips, lollies, highly processed and sugary treats such as roll ups and high sugar pre-packaged bars, chocolate custards and flavoured milks are not acceptable as daily foods. We believe treat foods are best left for the home environment rather than for everyday consumption in the service.

Dental Health Policy

Rationale

Good oral health is vital to general wellbeing and early childhood dental hygiene is a key factor in the development of healthy adult teeth. In Australia, significant numbers of young children spend time in non-parental care. Childcare Providers have an important role to play in promoting and implementing good oral health practices. (Healthy Teeth in Childcare; *Childcare and Children's Health* Vol 7 No 4 August 2004)

Aim

The centre will assist families to implement good oral health practices by providing families with information on good oral health and by including oral health education as part of their program.

Implementation

Management Will:

- Ensure oral health education programs are offered to the children by recognised authorities
- Support educators to offer additional oral health education as part of their program by providing resources and training as required.
- Provide teeth friendly drinks according to the centres nutrition policy. (Ensure water is given at the completion of a meal to rinse the mouth and remove food residue that may affect teeth)

Educators Will:

- Report to the parent any sign of tooth caries, any accident, injury or suspected injury to teeth and gums, swelling of the gums, infection of the mouth or problems, pain or discomfort the child has with chewing, eating or swallowing.
- Provide appropriate dental and oral health education and health promotion programs (including literature for families in their home language)
- Avoid the use of nursing bottles with sweetened drinks to aid the child with going to sleep.
- Offer water in preference to carbonated or sugary drinks.
- Encourage children to rinse their mouth with water after eating
- Deal efficiently with first aid injuries involving teeth. If a tooth is knocked out of mouth gently rinse with milk to remove blood then place it in a container or wrap in cling wrap to give to parent or dentist. Inform the parent immediately.
- Discuss dental health with the families of the children.

Parents Will:

- Follow the centre healthy food policy and provide their children with appropriate food for the day in care.
- Provide water bottles for their child rather than cordials or fruit juice while in the service.

Evaluation and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually. Family and educator feedback will be considered in the review process. Changes in legislation, regulations, and NQS will be considered. Any changes to this policy will be communicated to families and educators verbally and in writing.

Source

Healthy Teeth in Childcare; *Childcare and Children's Health* Vol 7 No 4 August 2004

Policy Updated Date August 2024

Link to NOS

Element 1.1.1	Curriculum decision making contributes to each child's learning and development outcomes in relation to their identity, connection with community, wellbeing, and confidence as learners and effectiveness as communicators.
Element 2.1.1	Each child's health needs are supported.
Element 2.2.1	Healthy eating is promoted and food and drinks provided by the service are nutritious and appropriate to each child.

Sun Protection Policy

Rationale

Australia has one of the highest rates of skin cancer in the world. Each year in Australia skin cancer claims many lives. Along with this substantial loss of life, this preventable disease costs millions of dollars annually. Sun damage to skin in the first five years of life is a major cause of skin damage in later life.

Aim

Exposure to the sun's ultraviolet radiation (UVR) in childhood is a major risk factor for all forms of skin cancer. Reducing children's exposure to UVR is considered to be the single most effective strategy for reducing future rates of skin cancer in Australia. Our educators will play an important role in protecting children from excess exposure to the sun while educating children about sun safety.

Implementation

Shooting Stars Early Learning Centre encourages all families to bring a named hat for their child/children to use while at the centre. We do keep a supply of spare hats at the centre for children to use. We also supply sunscreen and ensure this is applied regularly throughout the day.

Educators Will

- *Ensure children are not outdoors when the uv index is in the extreme range
- *Be effective role models in the wearing of hats and sunscreen and appropriate sun safe clothing
- *Encourage children to wear hats in the outdoor areas
- *Assist children to apply sunscreen at appropriate intervals throughout the day
- *Initiate discussions with children about sun safety and encourage independent efforts to engage in sun safe behaviour
- *Set up outdoor activities in the shaded areas
- *Monitor clothing worn by children to ensure their shoulders are covered
- *Label each hat so that every child has their own hat. And ensure children don't share hats.
- *Store the hats in a hygienic way
- *Wash the hats each week.

Parents Will

- *Ensure that children bring a hat to the centre
- *Be encouraged to provide clothing which protects children from the sun

Management Will

- *Supply sunscreen approved by the Cancer Council for use of all children in the Centre.
- *Ensure adequate shade is provided in outdoor areas
- *Ensure information is available for families about sun protection
- *Encourage educators to be role models for the children in sun safe practices
- *Discourage educators from using outdoor areas when the uv index is in the extreme range

Evaluation and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually. Family and educator feedback will be considered in the review process. Changes in legislation, regulations, and NQS will be considered. Any changes to this policy will be communicated to families and educators verbally and in writing.

Associated Forms and Documentation

Hat and sunscreen checklist

Sources

Keeping sun safe in child care; Putting Children First; Issue 37; March 2011
Cancer Council of Victoria
www.sunsmart.com.au

Policy Updated Date August 2024

Link to NOS

Element 2.1.1	Each child's health needs are supported.
Element 2.3.2	Every reasonable precaution is taken to protect children from harm and any hazard likely to cause injury.
Element 3.1.1	Outdoor and indoor spaces, buildings, furniture, equipment, facilities and resources are suitable for their purpose.

Water Safety Policy

Rationale

The safety and supervision of children in and around water is of the highest priority. This relates to water play, excursions near water, hot water, drinking water and hygiene practices with water in the service environment. Children will be supervised at all times during water play experiences.

Aim

To ensure the safety of children in any situation where water could be considered a hazard.

Implementation

Educators Will

- Ensure water troughs or containers for water play are filled to a safe level. These activities will be supervised at all times and containers or troughs will be emptied onto garden areas after use. Children will be discouraged from drinking from these water activities.
- Teach children about staying safe in and around water.
- Empty buckets used for cleaning immediately after use. No buckets are left in play areas or accessible to children
- Provide clean drinking water at all times. This water will be supervised to ensure that it is safe and hygienic for consuming.
- Water containers will be securely sealed. At the end of each day, the water container will be emptied and cleaned thoroughly.
- Adults may carry and consume hot drinks only in a thermal cup or mug with a screw lid that prevents spilling.

Management Will

- Provide guidance and education to educators and families on the importance of children's safety in and around water.
- Ensure work, health and safety practices incorporate approaches to safe storage of water and play
- A risk assessment will be conducted prior to any excursion taking place. Particular attention will be focused upon water safety where the excursion is near a body of water.

Evaluation and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually. Family and educator feedback will be considered in the review process. Changes in legislation, regulations, and NQS will be considered. Any changes to this policy will be communicated to families and educators verbally and in writing.

Policy Updated Date August 2024

Link to NQS

Element 2.3.1	Children are adequately supervised at all times.
Element 2.3.2	Every reasonable precaution is taken to protect children from harm and any hazard likely to cause injury.
Element 7.3.5	Service practices are based on effectively documented policies and procedures that are available at the service and reviewed regularly.

Excursion Policy

Rationale

Excursions can be an important component of learning in an early childhood setting. When organising an excursion, parent/friend involvement can be essential to supplement child/adult ratios. For this reason clear guidelines need to be set in place so that uniformity of procedures and actions applies to all adults involved in the excursion.

Aim

Excursions require appropriate planning and risk management to ensure the best experience and enjoyment for all. Shooting Stars Early Learning Centre is committed to providing excursions that are well considered and planned, provide meaningful experiences and ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of children at all times.

Implementation

- *All plans for excursions need to be authorised by the Nominated Supervisor. Prices for excursions need to include all costs e.g. transport, admission, refreshments
- *There must be a certified supervisor as the educator in charge.
- *A comprehensive risk assessment using the ACECQA Excursion Risk Management Plan Template must be completed prior to making the decision on whether the proposed excursion will proceed.
- *Parents will be given sufficient detail about the excursion and reasonable prior notice, in order to consider whether their child will participate.
- *All permission forms will be kept together and handed to the Nominated Supervisor before the excursion.
- *All excursions will be undertaken subject to having sufficient adult help to adhere to regulatory requirements regarding adult/child ratios. Should insufficient adults be available the excursion will be cancelled.
- *All excursions are to meet regulations for adult/child ratios. No excursion is to leave the centre if educator/child ratios are compromised.
- *All parents need to authorise their child's participation in the excursion in writing.
- *Comprehensive rolls will be made up of the lists of adults and the children that will be assigned to each adult during the excursion.
- *Each adult will have their own roll and the children will be marked off against the roll at specified times during the excursion.
- *The educator in charge of the excursion will carry a mobile phone with them during the time they are away from the centre.
- *The educator in charge will carry an emergency first aid kit.
- *During the excursion the group is to stay together. Educator in charge is to take overall responsibility for ensuring that no one is left behind.
- *A total head count is to be carried out by the Educator in charge of the excursion at departure times and specified times during the day.
- *Thank you notes will be given to all adult helpers the following day.
- *Parent helpers will be issued with a Parent Helper Form
- *The transport procedure will be followed at all times when on an excursion.

Educators Will

- Ensure supervision is adequate so children cannot be separated from the group
- Have strategies in place to ensure access to hazardous equipment and environments are minimised
- Plan adequate access to food, drink and other facilities, toilets, hand washing
- Consideration is given to the mobility and supervision requirements of children with additional needs
- Ensure that adequate sun and shade protection is available.
- Conduct a risk assessment prior to proposing the excursion

Management Will

- Plan for excursions with careful consideration of the safety of children and adults.
- Carry out excursions only where full documentation and permissions have been completed and obtained

- Undertake full risk assessments, consideration of value of educational excursions, and plan for first aid requirements.
 - Inform families of the details of the excursion including destination, objectives and outcomes, and what the child should bring
 - Provide parents or legal guardians with an excursion permission form to complete to authorise their child to participate on the excursion
 - Collect completed permission forms for each child attending the excursion
 - Request additional adult participation on the excursion where required
 - Arrange for a suitably equipped first aid kit (including EpiPen) and mobile phone to be taken on the excursion.
-
- For all excursions parents or legal guardians will be given an excursion permission form with full details of the excursion including:
 - Date, description, duration and destination of proposed excursion including route transport will follow
 - Method of transport to be used.
 - Reason for the excursion, and proposed activities to be conducted on the excursion
 - The anticipated adult: child ratio – outlining number of educators and other adults attending;
 - A statement that a risk assessment has been prepared and is available at the service for parents to view.
 - No child will be taken on an excursion unless written permission from parents or legal guardian has been received.

Evaluation and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually. Family and educator feedback will be considered in the review process. Changes in legislation, regulations, and NQS will be considered. Any changes to this policy will be communicated to families and educators verbally and in writing.

Associated Forms and Documentation

ACECQA Excursion Risk Management Plan Template
 Transport Procedure
 Emergency Contacts Register
 Parent Helper Forms
 Excursion forms

Policy Updated Date August 2024

Link to NQS

Element 1.1.1	Curriculum decision making contributes to each child’s learning and development outcomes in relation to their identity, connection with community, wellbeing, and confidence as learners and effectiveness as communicators.
Element 2.3.2	Every reasonable precaution is taken to protect children from harm and any hazard likely to cause injury
Element 7.3.5	Service practices are based on effectively documented policies and procedures that are available at the service and reviewed regularly

Transport Procedure

At all times when children are being transported, the following will apply:

- At all times we will meet or exceed the excursion ratios outlined in the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011. The ratios are as follows:
 - For Children who are less than 3 years – 1 adult for each 2 children
 - For children who are at least 3 years old but not yet school age – 1 adult for each 4 children
 - For Children who are of at least school age – 1 adult for each 8 children
- During transportation, the driver of the vehicle will carry an emergency contacts register (see below) for each of the children and staff in the vehicle.
- Victorian Department of Transport Guidelines concerning the appropriate safety restraints and seats will be used to determine what equipment is required to transport each child e.g. child safety seat or booster seat, safe fit device, 3 point harnesses.
- No child will be transported without the appropriate safety restraint for their weight and age.
- Transportation of the children is considered to continue until they reach their destination – even if the vehicle temporarily stops before reaching the destination.

Emergency Contacts Register

Driver Name	Date of Birth	Name of Primary Contact	Contact Numbers for Primary Contact	Name of Secondary Contact	Contact Numbers for Secondary Contact
Educator Name	Date of Birth	Name of Primary Contact	Contact Numbers for Primary Contact	Name of Secondary Contact	Contact Numbers for Secondary Contact
Child Name	Date of Birth	Parent Name	Parent Contact Numbers	Emergency Contact Name	Emergency Contact Numbers

Parent Helper – Excursion Form

Thank you for offering to assist us on the excursion on ____ / ____ / ____
to _____ leaving at _____
_____ and returning at _____

For us to adhere to regulations regarding correct child: adult ratios on excursions your assistance is greatly appreciated. Please read the following information to enable our excursion to be as enjoyable and safe as possible.

You will be allocated a small group of children to supervise under the guidance of the certified supervisor

At all times these children must be within your sight

The children will be wearing an identification sticker or tag that has the name of the centre and contact phone number on it

The educators attending the excursion will have a current first-aid certificate and CPR certificate. They will also have a mini first-aid kit on hand

You will be advised if the children in your group have any additional needs e.g. allergies, physical, medical or behavioural

Please follow all road safety rules when supervising children from the centre. This includes while driving in your car and when walking with the children

If you are assisting with transport on the excursion, please do not seat any children in the front seat of your car. Please ensure the safety restraints (seatbelts) are tightened and are fitted correctly for your small group

Regulations require you to have an open drivers licence to assist with transport and have a roadworthy vehicle

Please don't hesitate to ask the certified supervisor or other educators for help or assistance with your group of children during the excursion

I _____ have read and understand the information regarding the excursion policy at Shooting Stars Early Learning Centre. I am happy to assist with transport/supervision for the excursion as detailed above.

Signature: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / ____

Printed Name: _____

Excursion Roll Template

Each adult accompanying the excursion will be provided with a roll naming each of the children attending the excursion who have been allocated to them for the duration of the excursion. They are expected to mark it off at the times listed. (They will also have an emergency contacts register for all children they are responsible for)

Excursion to: _____ Date of Excursion:
 ____/____/____

Name of Adult: _____ Signature:

Child Name	Prior to departure from Centre	On arrival at excursion venue	Prior to departure from excursion venue	On arrival at centre

Child Protection Policy

Rationale

“Child maltreatment refers to any non-accidental behaviour by parents, caregivers, other adults or older adolescents that is outside the norms of conduct and entails a substantial risk of causing physical or emotional harm to a child or young person. Such behaviours may be intentional or unintentional.” www.aifs.gov.au

Shooting Stars Early Learning Centre aims to promote the safety and well-being of all the children within care, which is each child’s “Human Right”

Aim

Educators in early childhood services are in a unique situation in relation to observing changes in children’s behaviour. This policy was developed to provide a framework for the protection of the child and to clarify procedures for educators. It is inevitable that at some stage educators may identify a child at risk, so it is essential that the policy and procedures for notification and protective guidelines for staff be specified.

Harm is the impact on the child; what is actually experienced or likely to be experienced by the child. What is important in terms of the Child Protection Act 1999 is whether the child has suffered harm, is suffering harm or is at unacceptable risk of suffering harm; does not have a parent who is able and willing to protect them from harm. Harm can occur as a result of one serious incident or a series of incidences that occur over time.

Harm to a child can be categorised as follows:

Physical Abuse: punching, slapping, kicking, shaking, biting, applying physical ‘discipline or punishment’ causing harm or injury

Emotional or psychological abuse: constant criticism, scapegoating, name-calling, belittling, excessive teasing, ignoring, punishing normal behaviour, exposure to domestic violence, withholding praise and affection.

Neglect: failing to meet the child’s basic needs for adequate supervision, food, clothing, shelter, safety, hygiene, medical care, education, love and affection and failure to use available resources to meet those needs.

Sexual Abuse or exploitation: any sexual act or sexual threat imposed upon a child including exposure, indecent phone calls, voyeurism, persistent intrusion of a child’s privacy, penetration, rape, incest, involvement with pornography, child prostitution

These types of harm often occur together. The younger a child is the more vulnerable they are and the more serious the consequences are likely to be.

Children who have been harmed or are at risk of harm may show behavioural, emotional or physical signs and some children may show no signs at all.

Implementation

Initially an educator may have suspicions of a child abuse/neglect case (based on observed changes in the child’s behaviour; instability; physical evidence of neglect or abuse; witness of inadequate provision and/or care by parent(s) or guardian; incidents of ridicule; verbal abusive interactions and inconsistent attendance etc.).

Educator is to record concerns; date and observations (specify interactions objectively).

The confidentiality of the child and the family concerned must be recognised and abided by.

On collecting facts, speak to the other educators in the room expressing and sharing concerns and the documented observations. Discuss the urgency of the situation and/or the necessity for further observations.

The educators inform the Nominated Supervisor and discuss the issue.

Further observation of the child and monitoring the situation is to be specific and concise and include the following: written running records and anecdotal records, signed and dated by the observer; any relevant conversations with the parents/staff/family; name age and address of the child; information about the parents or caregivers.

The Nominated Supervisor will then contact the Department of Human Services for advice and support.

After discussion with Department of Human Services, Management will decide to notify formally. The Department will implement effective and sensitive investigation procedures.

Nominated Supervisor is to keep educators informed of any ongoing investigations into the matter.

Procedures for dealing with complaints regarding the abuse of a child at Shooting Stars Early Learning Centre by a staff member:

If:

- There is any suspicion of a child being abused by a person working at the Centre, or
- A parent or outside person reports an alleged act of abuse against a child while at the Centre, or
- An Educator reports an alleged act of abuse against a child while at the Centre, or
- A child makes a report of an alleged act of abuse by a person working at the Centre

The following must take place:

The person suspecting, witnessing or receiving a verbal report must immediately inform the Nominated Supervisor or the Certified Supervisor in charge at the time. If the Nominated Supervisor or the Certified Supervisor in charge at the time is the subject of the complaint, then the educator can contact the Police and/or Department of Human Services confidentially.

Written reports of time, place and children involved are to be collected to support suspicion

The Certified Supervisor in charge will contact the Nominated Supervisor, who will contact the Police and/or Department of Human Services for advice and support

Practice:

General Policy

This policy is to be explained to all educators at time of recruitment and from time to time throughout their employment

The safety of children remains at all times an adult responsibility. This responsibility should not be placed on children, implicitly or explicitly. While it can help children to develop useful skills it is neither reasonable nor realistic to expect children to be able to guarantee their own safety.

In all abuse situations the child's best interest must be considered first. Protection from further abuse must be ensured. The child is not to be held in any way responsible or to blame for the abuse.

Educator – Child Interactions

Educators are to be trained to understand that they are likely to find some children more difficult than others, to discuss these situations with other educators and the Nominated Supervisor, and to devise strategies to minimise negative interactions with children.

Individuals or groups of children will never be withdrawn into areas where they cannot be seen by other staff or taken into rooms that can be locked.

Changing baby's nappies will take place in view of other adults

Centre educators, students or volunteers are not to be alone with children or out of sight of other staff, or away from ready access by other staff. On formal and informal outings there are always to be at least two educators present.

Prohibited discipline practices

The following behaviour by educators is not permitted:

Corporal punishment or any type of physical punishment including hitting, spanking, beating, shaking, pinching or other measures which produce physical pain

Abusive, profane or derogatory language including yelling and belittling

Any form of public or private humiliation including threats of physical punishment

Any form of emotional abuse including threats of physical punishment

Withdrawal of food, rest or opportunity to use the toilet

Physical restraint of children will not be used except as necessary to ensure a child's safety or that of others, and then only for as long as is necessary for control of the situation.

Steps for Notification:

Causes for concern

Discussions with appropriate educators

Notification to Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, Department of Human Services and Police

Follow-up with Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, Department of Human Services and Police

De-brief for appropriate educators

Educators **MUST** maintain strict confidentiality at all times.

Sources

www.napcan.org.au

www.aifs.gov.au

Evaluation and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually. Family and educator feedback will be considered in the review process. Changes in legislation, regulations, and NQS will be considered. Any changes to this policy will be communicated to families and educators verbally and in writing.

Associated Forms and Documentation

Indicators of Abuse Information

Protective Behaviours Policy

Policy Updated Date August 2024

Link to NQS

Standard 2.3	Each child is protected.
Element 2.3.2	Every reasonable precaution is taken to protect children from harm and any hazard likely to cause injury.
Element 2.3.3	Plans to effectively manage incidents and emergencies are developed in consultation with relevant authorities, practised and implemented.
Element 2.3.4	Educators, co-ordinators and staff members are aware of their roles and responsibilities to respond to every child at risk of abuse or neglect.
Element 4.2.1	Professional standards guide practice, interactions and relationships.
Element 5.2.3	The dignity and rights of every child are maintained at all times.
Element 7.1.5	Adults working with children and those engaged in management of the service or residing on the premises are fit and proper.
Element 7.3.5	Service practices are based on effectively documented policies and procedures that are available at the service and reviewed regularly.

Indicators of Abuse

Following are indicators of abuse for educators to observe, if required.

A word of warning:

Indicators should be seen as a guide rather than conclusive proof. It is important to be aware that many of the indicators listed are not only common to different forms of child abuse, but may be caused by factors other than child abuse. There may be instances where the results of problems are associated with family disruptions/tensions, or stem from a child's illness, undiagnosed disability or learning problems. While it is important to avoid jumping to conclusions, it is equally as important to recognise that a child who shows a number of physical signs and/or behavioural symptoms obviously has some kind of problem. Even if the problem is not related to child abuse, the child is still clearly in need of some help. If in doubt, discuss your concerns with the Department of Human Services. It is then their responsibility to make a professional decision as to the nature of follow up.

Physical abuse: "Any non-accidental injury to a child"

CHILD PHYSICAL INDICATORS

- Unexplained welts and bruises
- Unexplained burns
- Unexplained fractures
- Unexplained lacerations or abrasions
- Head injuries
- Human bite marks
- Premature loss of teeth
- Verbally reports abuse
- Wary of adult contacts
- Consistent anger, aggression, hyperactivity
- Behavioural extremes
- Role reversal
- Developmental lags
- Appears frightened of carer
- Apprehensive when other children cry
- Wears clothes to cover injuries
- Seeks affection from any adult with no discrimination
- Non-expression of his/her needs
- Non-communicative

CARER BEHAVIOURAL INDICATORS

- Seems unconcerned about child
- Seems anxious and overwhelmed by their child's needs
- Takes an unusual amount of time to obtain medical care for their child
- Offers an inadequate or inappropriate explanation for their child's injury
- Takes child to a different doctor or hospital for each injury
- Substance abuser
- Disciplines the child too harshly
- Describes child in a consistently negative manner
- Has poor impulse control

Sexual abuse: "Utilization of a child for sexual gratification by an adult or an older child in a position of power, or permitting another person to do so"

CHILD PHYSICAL INDICATORS

- Difficulty in walking or sitting
- Torn, stained or bloody underclothing
- Pain or itching in genital area
- Bruises or bleeding in external genitalia, vaginal or anal areas
- Venereal disease (especially in pre-teens)
- Pregnancy
- Foreign matter in bladder, rectum or urethra

- Recurrent urinary tract infections

CHILD BEHAVIOURAL INDICATORS

- Aggressive, overt sexual behaviour
- Drawing pictures of people with genitals
- Cruelty to animals without physiological basis
- Pre-mature knowledge of explicit sexual acts
- Sleep disorders
- Taking frequent baths
- Starting fires
- Poor peer relationships
- Wary of physical contact, especially with an adult
- Onset of bedwetting, nightmares or thumb sucking
- Reports of sexual abuse
- Self inflicted injuries

CARER BEHAVIOURAL INDICATORS

- Very protective or jealous of child
- Extremely protective of family privacy
- Does not allow child to be involved in extra-curricular activities
- Encourages child to engage in prostitution
- Substance abuser
- Is geographically isolated and/or lacking in social and emotional contacts outside the family
- Has low self esteem

Emotional abuse: "Chronic failure by the carer to provide support and affection necessary to develop a sound and healthy personality"

CHILD PHYSICAL INDICATORS

- Speech disorders
- Lags in physical development
- Failure to thrive
- Attempted suicide
- Child Behavioural Indicators
- Habit disorder (sucking, biting, rocking etc)
- Has low self-esteem
- Difficulty forming positive relationships
- Elimination problems
- Neurotic Traits (sleep disorders, inhibition of play etc)
- Behaviour extremes (compliant, passive, shy, aggressive, demanding)
- Overly adaptive behaviour (inappropriately infantile)
- Apathetic
- Withdrawal
- Inability to trust
- Reports emotional maltreatment

CARER BEHAVIOURAL INDICATORS

- Treat children in family unequally
- Does not appear to care much about the child's problems
- Blames or belittles child
- Is cold and rejecting
- Withholds love
- Finds nothing good or attractive in the child
- Demonstrates inconsistent behaviour in the child

Neglect: "Chronic failure to provide for a child's physical and emotional needs, such as food, clothing, shelter, medical care, education or supervision"

CHILD PHYSICAL INDICATORS

- Consistent hunger, poor hygiene, inappropriate dress, chronically unclean

- Consistent lack of supervision, especially in dangerous activities for long periods
- Unattended physical problems or medical/dental needs
- Often tired or listless
- Abandonment
- Underweight
- Dirty
- Developmental lags
- Flat bald spots on infants head
- Begging or stealing food
- Extended stays in school (early arrival or late departure)
- Attendance at school infrequent
- Substance abuser
- States there is no parent or carer

CARER BEHAVIOURAL INDICATORS

- Has disorganized, chaotic, upsetting home life
- Is apathetic, feels nothing will change
- Is isolated from friends, relatives, neighbours
- Cannot be found
- Expects too much from child
- Substance abuser
- Exposes child to unsafe living conditions

Protective Behaviours Policy

Rationale:

The centre's educators will help children learn about self-protection and to ask someone they trust for help if they feel unsafe, by carrying out protective behaviour programs. These programs should be carefully considered so that they are age appropriate, take into account the developmental stages of the children and do not shift onus for safety from adult to child.

Implementation:

Educators will:

- Help children to identify and discuss their feelings in a variety of situations, to recognise negative feelings such as “butterflies in the tummy”, “tight feelings” in the throat as well as happy, safe feelings
- Encourage children to talk about situations where they feel safe and don't feel safe
- Listen to children so that they know their questions and concerns are being understood
- Encourage questioning and decision making skills
- Respect children's choices and decisions and encourage them to respect other children's choices, especially where touching is concerned
- When developmentally appropriate, teach children the basic principles of “No, Go and Tell” – to say “no” if they feel uncomfortable, to get out of the situation if possible and tell someone they trust as soon as possible
- Help at risk children to identify of network of five people they can trust and turn to when they feel unsafe
- Use correct terminology for all body parts

Management will:

- Inform parents about protective behaviours programs for children before implementation within the centre
- Provide information from recognised sources for families to access in regard to child protection and safety

Evaluation and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually. Family and educator feedback will be considered in the review process. Changes in legislation, regulations, and NQS will be considered. Any changes to this policy will be communicated to families and educators verbally and in writing.

Policy Updated Date August 2024

Link to NQS

Standard 2.3	Each child is protected.
Element 2.3.4	Educators, coordinators and staff members are aware of their roles and responsibilities to respond to every child at risk of abuse or neglect.
Element 4.2.1	Professional standards guide practice, interactions and relationships.
Element 5.2.3	The dignity and rights of every child are maintained at all times.
Element 7.1.5	Adults working with children and those engaged in management of the service or residing on the premises are fit and proper.
Element 7.3.5	Service practices are based on effectively documented policies and procedures that are available at the service and reviewed regularly.

Arrival and Departure Policy

Rationale

We encourage families to stay for a period of time to settle your child into the centre and also to stay at departure time so that educators can discuss with you any issues of your child's day. Our service provides a roster of staffing that provides continuity of care for your child both at arrival and departure. Children may be accepted into a combined group for a period of time both in the morning and evenings. These groups will remain within regulatory requirements. All educators endeavour to make themselves available for informal chats at this time, however if they are busy they will arrange a time to make contact at a time where the welfare of the children is not placed at risk. Strict guidelines are necessary to ensure that parents and relatives are aware of the process for signing in and out their child so that an accurate record of attendance of each child is available.

Aim

To ensure that all educators are aware of the children who are in attendance at the centre at any time.

- To ensure that educators can account for all children in case of emergency and evacuation
- To ensure continuity of care for the child
- To enable parents to discuss their child with an educator at arrival and departure times.

Implementation

There must be accurate attendance records which show for each child in attendance at the centre the:

- Child's name
- Date and time of arrival at the centre, and
- Date and time of each departure from the centre

Educators Will

- Check the authorisation list if someone unknown to them arrives to collect the child and take a copy of photographic ID. If the person is not on the authorisation list they will either ask the Nominated Supervisor to contact the parent or contact them directly to seek authorisation.
- Pass on information about the child's day to the person collecting the child
- Ensure when the child leaves the centre the person who collects the child is the child's parent or a person who is authorised in writing by the parent to collect the child.

Parents Will

- Record the time of arrival, their name and signs the attendance record on arrival at the service.
- Record the time of departure, their name and sign the attendance record before departure from the service.
- Approach an educator on arrival and ensure they are aware that the child has arrived.
- Acknowledge and ensure that children can only be released to authorised adults – 18 years and older.
- Inform the centre educators in writing of any change to persons authorised to collect their child and or supply any court orders affecting the child. Educators will maintain strict confidentiality in these matters at all times.
- Provide a copy of any court orders pertaining to child custody or access arrangements.

Management Will

- Ensure if someone arrives at the centre to collect a child who is not authorised on the enrolment form to collect a child the child will not be handed over to that person. The parents will be contacted immediately – they will need to fax confirmation in writing that this person can collect their child and the person will be required to show identification.
- Introduce newly enrolled families to all educators
- Roster educators so that educators familiar with families are on duty at open and closing times.

Evaluation and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually. Family and educator feedback will be considered in the review process. Changes in legislation, regulations, and NQS will be considered. Any changes to this policy will be communicated to families and educators verbally and in writing.

Associated Forms and Documentation

Enrolment forms
Attendance Records

Policy Updated Date August 2024

Link to NQS

Element 2.3.1	Children are adequately supervised at all times.
Element 4.1.1	Educator to child ratios and qualification requirements are maintained at all times
Element 5.1.3	Each child is supported to feel secure, confident and included.
Element 7.1.3	Every effort is made to promote continuity of educators and co-ordinators at the service.
Element 7.3.1	Records and information are stored appropriately to ensure confidentiality, are available from the service and are maintained in accordance with legislative requirements.
Element 7.3.2	Administrative systems are established and maintained to ensure the effective operation of the service.
Element 7.3.5	Service practices are based on effectively documented policies and procedures that are available at the service and reviewed regularly.

Priority of Access Policy

Rationale

The centre has obligations to parents and funding bodies to provide care according to the Priority of Access Guidelines set down by the Australian Government. Childcare is resourced with a major purpose of meeting the child care needs of Australian families; however, the Government recognises that demand for child care sometimes exceeds supply.

Aim

To allocate available places to those families with the greatest need for child care support as per the Australian Government Priority of Access Guidelines.

Implementation

Priority of Access Guidelines identify three levels of priority for child care as follows:

Priority 1 – a child at risk of serious abuse or neglect

Priority 2 – a child of a single parent who satisfies, or of both parents who both satisfy the work/training/study test under section 14 of the Family Assistance Act

Priority 3 – any other child

In the case of families accessing care for social purposes should the position be required by a child considered priority 1 or 2 alternative days of care or termination of care may be necessary in line with the priority of access guidelines.

Evaluation and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually. Family and educator feedback will be considered in the review process. Changes in legislation, regulations, and NQS will be considered. Any changes to this policy will be communicated to families and educators verbally and in writing.

Policy Created Date

October 2013

Link to NQS

Element 2.3.4	Educators, co-coordinators and staff members are aware of their roles and responsibilities to respond to every child at risk of abuse or neglect.
Element 7.3.2	Administrative systems are established and maintained to ensure the effective operation of the service.
Element 7.3.5	Service practices are based on effectively documented policies and procedures that are available at the service and reviewed regularly.

Late pick up of Children Procedure

Parents/guardians who are unavoidably delayed and are unable to collect their child before closing time (6.30 pm) must telephone the centre at least half an hour earlier to advise of their delay and expected time of arrival. They should try to arrange for another nominated responsible adult to collect their child before closing time.

If the child is not collected by 6.30 pm a late fee of \$1 per minute will be charged.

If the Certified Supervisor on duty has not been contacted by the parent prior to closing time that they are delayed educators will attempt to contact the parents and emergency contacts on the enrolment form to arrange collection. They will also contact the Nominated Supervisor to inform her that there is an issue.

If the Certified Supervisor is unable to contact the parents or emergency contact people within 30 minutes of closing time they will contact the Local Police Station to arrange for the child to be collected by a Crisis Care representative. If the child is collected by Crisis Care a notice to this effect and the contact phone numbers will be displayed on the front door for the parent.

The late fee of \$1 per minute will be charged until the child is collected by Crisis Care or the parent.

Parents will be expected to pay the late fee no later than 2 days after they incur the fee.

Sleep/Rest Policy

Rationale

Sleep and rest periods during a child's day at a childcare centre are essential for developing bodies. Rest time should be promoted as a time when our bodies can rest, rejuvenate, and grow. It should be adapted to meet children's individual needs for comfort, rest, and safety. Children should be encouraged to rest but not forced to sleep if they do not want to. Consulting parents about each child's needs for rest and sleep can encourage continuity between home and the centre.

Sleep and rest times should be positive experiences for the children, with safety being a primary concern, especially for infants and toddlers. Children are to be comfortably dressed for sleep and covered appropriately for room temperatures. Dressing provides opportunities for playful conversation and interaction with young children, while for older children it provides opportunities to develop independence.

Educators are sensitive to cultural differences in attitudes towards dressing

Aim

- To ensure safe and hygienic sleep procedures, equipment, and areas.
- To ensure sleep and rest periods meet children's individual needs for comfort, rest, and safety.
- To provide information to parents regarding the sleep and rest needs and routines of young children.
- To provide a safe and risk-free sleep environment for children in the rooms by following guidelines set out by the National SIDS Council of Australia

Implementation

Educators Will

- Ensure individual needs for rest, comfort, and safety are met for each child.
- Encourage older children to engage in quiet activities during the rest period.
- Ensure sleep and rest times are positive experiences by providing a recorded story or music to ease the transition to sleep/rest, spending time settling each infant.
- Ensure sleep equipment is hygienic by disinfecting mats after each use. Infants should be allocated the same cot each time.
- Ensure children are comfortable by adjusting the temperature of the room, loosening tight restrictive clothing, and removing shoes (cultural needs considered).
- Ensure children are supervised at all times during the rest period.
- Ensure the viewing window in the nursery is clear of obstructions and that infants are checked at least every five minutes when sleeping, with staff initialing the sleep chart.
- Allow children to sleep as long as they wish (in consultation with parents) and will comfort and attend to them in a sensitive manner when they wake.
- Assist management in providing information to parents on rest/sleep time safety and equipment.

Infant Sleeping Procedure

Shooting Stars Early Learning Centre will follow the guidelines suggested by Sids and Kids at www.sidsandkids.org

Sleeping on the back is safest for babies.

The baby's face and head will not be covered when they sleep

Mattresses will be firm and well-fitting in the cot.

If covers are used they will be tucked in firmly

No fluffy toys, pillows or bumpers will be placed in the cot while children are sleeping.

The sleep room will be temperature controlled so the children do not become overheated.

The infants feet will be placed at the end of the cot with the cover sheet folded back to the centre of the cot

If the baby requires a pacifier to sleep staff will ensure it is not attached in any way to the child's clothing.

Educators will ensure the child does not go to bed with a bib on

Educators will check on each infant in the sleep room every 5 minutes and initial the sleep chart located on the door of the sleep room.

Wrapping Infants

Research shows that one of the best ways to reduce the risk of SIDS is to sleep infants on their back. Managing unsettled infant behaviour and promoting infant sleep, whilst ensuring that the safe sleeping recommendations are adhered to is sometimes difficult for parents. Wrapping is a useful method to assist infants to settle and sleep on their back. (Information Statement – Wrapping Infants – *Sids and Kids Safe Sleeping*)

Wrapping techniques that use tight wrapping with the legs straight and together have been associated with an increased incidence of abnormal hip development. Other studies have linked tight chest wrapping with an increased risk of pneumonia. It is therefore important to allow for hip flexion and chest wall expansion when wrapping. (Information Statement – Wrapping Infants – *Sids and Kids Safe Sleeping*)

- Ensure that the baby is positioned on their back with the feet at the bottom of the cot

- Ensure that the baby is wrapped from below the neck to avoid covering the face

- Sleep the baby with face uncovered. (No doonas, pillows, cot bumpers, lambs wool or soft toys in the sleeping environment)

- Use only lightweight wraps such as cotton or muslin (bunny rugs and blankets are not safe alternatives as they can cause overheating)

- The wrap should not be too tight and should allow for hip and chest wall movement

- Make sure that the baby is not overdressed under the wrap.

- Provide a safe sleeping environment

Parents Will

- Be encouraged to evaluate the centre's sleeping and rest routines and equipment at least annually.

- Provide information about their child's individual sleep and rest requirements on enrolment and regularly during the child's attendance at the centre. This may occur during informal daily discussions, when moving up to the next age group, or at other times when required.

Management Will

- Maintain current information and provide parents and staff with information on safe rest/sleep time procedures and equipment from recognised health and safety authorities

- Evaluate annually in consultation with staff and parents the sleep/rest policy in accordance with current health and safety information

Evaluation and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually. Family and educator feedback will be considered in the review process. Changes in legislation, regulations, and NQS will be considered. Any changes to this policy will be communicated to families and educators verbally and in writing.

Associated Forms and Documentation

Enrolment forms

Links to NOS

Element 1.1.5	Every child is supported to participate in the program.
Element 1.1.6	Each child's agency is promoted, enabling them to make choices and decisions and to influence events and their world.
Element 2.1.1	Each child's health needs are supported.
Element 2.1.2	Each child's comfort is provided for and there are appropriate opportunities to meet each child's need for sleep, rest and relaxation.
Element 2.1.3	Effective hygiene practices are promoted and implemented.
Element 2.3.1	Children are adequately supervised at all times.
Element 2.3.2	Every reasonable precaution is taken to protect children from harm and any hazard likely to cause injury.
Element 6.1.1	There is an effective enrolment and orientation process for families
Element 6.1.2	Families have opportunities to be involved in the service and contribute to service decisions
Element 6.2.1	The expertise of families is recognised and they share in decision making about their child's learning and wellbeing.

Clothing and Comfort Policy

Rationale

The clothing children wear while in care influences the quality of their experiences as clothes can affect their health, safety, comfort, play and learning. These issues apply to the clothes children wear to child care, the extra clothes provided by families, clothes provided by the child care service and to dress-up clothes. Dressing children is one of the many aspects of children's care where services and families share responsibility and need to work in collaboration to promote positive outcomes for children.

Aim

The health and safety of children are affected by the clothing they wear. Children should be encouraged to dress properly for play and for varying weather conditions. Children need clothing in which they can be active. Clothing which is not binding, is easy to remove and easy to clean. To promote self-help environment clothing should be easily managed by the child e.g. elastic waistbands, Velcro closures, and large zippers. Pants or shorts are a good choice for both boys and girls; dresses or skirts can become a hazard when climbing or running. If shoes are necessary (i.e. in winter) shoes with non slip soles are best for safety when climbing e.g. sneakers rather than boots, sandals, thongs etc.

Implementation

Educators will:

- Wear clothing which adheres to the centre sun-safety policy such as hats and sun-safe clothing
- Wear clothing which allows them to move freely and comfortably interact with the children.
- Wear shoes which are safe and comfortable.
- Ensure children to remain appropriately dressed for the weather conditions e.g. remove layers as it warms up and add clothing when it cools.
- Ensure babies are dressed comfortably and appropriately for sleep.
- Assist children in developing self-help skills when dressing
- Encourage children wearing unsafe clothes or shoes in the playground to change or remove them

Parents will:

- Provide clothing for their child which adheres to the sun-safety policy of the centre – clothing that covers the shoulders and have sleeves for sun protection
- Select clothing for their child which allows freedom of movement
- Select clothing which is easy for the child to manipulate for toileting purposes
- Supply spare sets of clothing in case of toileting accidents, messy play, water play etc
- Send appropriate clothing for the weather conditions e.g. jackets to wear as the day gets cooler, t-shirts to change into when long sleeves are too warm, shorts for warm weather.
- Ensure their child wears safe comfortable footwear that children can still participate fully in active activities while wearing. Thongs, sandals etc are not safe for climbing and balancing etc.
- Ensure the clothing worn to childcare is suitable for all activities including messy play – if they wear “good” clothes they may not wish to participate fully in the daily experiences and will be missing out.

Management will:

- Provide a large range of dress-up clothes for children to enhance and develop their play.
- Provide spare clothing for children in case of toileting accidents etc.

Sources

QAIS Factsheet # 15 Children's clothing in child care

www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au

Evaluation and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually. Family and educator feedback will be considered in the review process. Changes in legislation, regulations, and NQS will be considered. Any changes to this policy will be communicated to families and educators verbally and in writing.

Associated Forms and Documentation

Enrolment forms
Special information sheets
Parent handbook
Enrolment information booklet

Policy Created Date October 2013

Links to NOS

Element 1.1.5	Every child is supported to participate in the program.
Element 1.1.6	Each child's agency is promoted, enabling them to make choices and decisions and to influence events and their world.
Element 2.1.1	Each child's health needs are supported.
Element 2.3.1	Children are adequately supervised at all times.
Element 2.3.2	Every reasonable precaution is taken to protect children from harm and any hazard likely to cause injury.
Element 6.1.1	There is an effective enrolment and orientation process for families
Element 6.1.2	Families have opportunities to be involved in the service and contribute to service decisions
Element 6.2.1	The expertise of families is recognised and they share in decision making about their child's learning and wellbeing.

Section 3

Physical Environment

Sustainability Policy

Rationale

Teaching children about caring for the natural environment provides them with a range of opportunities for rich, hands-on learning experiences about nature and the environment, and provokes curiosity, creativity and critical thinking skills. The intention of adopting sustainable practices should be to encourage a questioning and investigative approach amongst children regarding their surroundings and environment, rather than to dictate a particular set of values. (“Going ‘green’ in child care services” 2009)

Aim

Adopting environmentally responsible practices in the care environment can provide children with a range of valuable learning experiences. It also conveys important information to them about the natural world, and the key role that they can play in sustaining it.

Implementation

Discussion can be stimulated by even the simplest observations, such as prompting children to question where uneaten food scraps go. Child care professionals can discuss more complex environmental issues with older children, such as the concept of drought, by examining photographs and reading stories. Children can also be involved in water conservation projects by making signs, drawing pictures and writing messages about what is needed to conserve water, which can be placed near taps and bathroom areas. (“Going ‘green’ in child care services” 2009)

Environmentally sustainable practices at Shooting Stars Early Learning Centre will focus on the positive rather than the negative, and be child orientated and relevant to the local community and the service environment. Current sustainable practices include feeding food scraps to the chickens, rabbits and guinea pigs, and using the eggs from the chickens in cooking meals for the children. Also collecting boxes for box construction, and using recycled materials to create play spaces for the children. Environmental sustainability practices will be a continual program, and part of the daily routine within the centre. Areas of interest to evaluate within the centre include, but are not limited to, water usage, the use of chemicals in cleaning, energy usage, recycling, sustainable equipment purchases, service surrounds, the use of plants and garden materials, worm farms and composting etc.

Areas to include in the program, include, but are not limited to, looking at vegetables and herbs for use in cooking, plants and gardens and the benefit to the environment, worm farms or composting bins, the use of recycled materials, books/DVD’s looking at environmental sustainability, discussions on the difference the children can make to their local environment, weather experiences, looking at the natural elements of service and surrounding environments, local plants and wildlife, discovering how the environment links together between humans, animals and plants, children’s responsibilities to their immediate environment.

Educators Will

- Use a worm farm to reduce food waste. The ‘worm juice’ collected can then be used on our gardens as natural fertilisers to help the plants grow.
- Involve the children in maintaining the worm farm and watching how the worms recycle the food scraps.
- Discuss sustainable practices with the children and families as part of the curriculum.
- Role model energy and water conservation practices of turning off lights when a room is not in use, emptying water play containers onto garden areas.
- Supervise children in the bathroom and teach them how to effectively use the dual flush system plus monitor water usage on hand washing.
- Educators will keep up-to-date with the latest research on environmental education through journals, resource agencies and professional development. This information will be shared with families and children.
- Involve the children in planting activities such as sensory herb garden for smell and texture and flower garden for colour and smell.
- Use the washing line or clothes airer to dry washing
- Ensure the washing machine has a full load before using it – consolidate to a couple of larger loads per day rather than several small loads.

- Collect and explore natural objects with the children and use them in art and craft and imaginative play.
- Talk about the process of reduce, reuse and recycle
- Use recycled yoghurt pots for glue activities etc.
- Use the greenhouse to plant and germinate seeds then transplant these to the garden with the children
- Use recycled or donated paper for art and craft activities rather than purchase paper
- Wash in cold water whenever practicable to reduce energy use
- Use watering cans and buckets to water plants with the children rather than a hose which will use more water.
- Use water for water activities wisely – when the activity is completed use the water on the gardens

Parents Will

- Donate useful items for art/craft activities such as empty boxes, fabric, ribbon and other useful items.
- Be provided with information on sustainable practices that they can introduce in their home.

Management Will

- Encourage educators, families and children to engage in innovative practices and appreciate the wonder of the natural world while protecting the planet for future generations.
- Aim to purchase equipment that is eco-friendly where possible. Educators will reduce the amount of plastic and disposable equipment they purchase and select materials that are made of natural materials and fibres.
- Provide resources for educators to assist them in including sustainability experiences in their curriculum
- Provide information to families on sustainable practices that are implemented at the education and care service and encourage the application of these practices in the home environment.
- Purchase potted plants for indoors and out. Chosen to be hardy and safe
- Purchase gardens and plants for outdoors for children and educators to use as class gardens
- Work with suppliers to purchase recycled paper products such as paper towel and toilet paper
- Use environmentally friendly cleaning products wherever possible
- Reuse materials such as cardboard boxes and containers where appropriate
- Organise a regular supply of one sided paper for use in art activities from parents and local businesses
- Use re inked cartridges rather than brand new ones.

Evaluation and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually. Family and educator feedback will be considered in the review process. Changes in legislation, regulations, and NQS will be considered. Any changes to this policy will be communicated to families and educators verbally and in writing.

Sources

Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities –

www.environment.gov.au

Early Childhood Environmental Education Network – www.eceen.org.au

Australian Association for Environmental Education

“Going ‘green’ in child care services” *Putting Children First*, Issue 29 March 2009 (Pages 12-15)

Policy Updated Date August 2024

Link to NQS

Element 1.1.3	The program including routines is organised in ways that maximise opportunities for each child’s learning.
Element 2.2.2	Physical activity is promoted through planned and spontaneous experiences and is appropriate for each child.

Element 3.1.1	Outdoor and indoor spaces, buildings, furniture, equipment, facilities and resources are suitable for their purpose.
Element 3.2.1	Outdoor and indoor spaces are designed and organised to engage every child in quality experiences in both built and natural environments.
Element 3.3.1	Sustainable practices are embedded in service operations.
Element 3.3.2	Children are supported to become environmentally responsible and show respect for the environment.
Element 6.2.2	Current information is available to families about community services and resources to support parenting and family wellbeing.

Child Supervision Policy

Rationale

Supervision is one of the key requirements in the prevention of accidents and injury throughout the centre. Educators require the skills to be able to assess potential risks during supervision and be able to implement changes to supervision to avoid accident or injury. New and relief educators should be informed of potential supervisory risks according to each individual child in a confidential and sensitive way.

Aim

- To ensure the potential for accidents and injury to children is minimised
- For educators to be aware of the variables relating to supervision
- To ensure safety for children when participating in excursions
- For educators to evaluate supervisory practices

Implementation

Educators Will

- Never leave a child unattended on the nappy change table/mat
- Ensure infants are securely buckled into highchairs and the drop side of cots must be raised when children are in cots
- Never leave a child unattended to eat or drink, including from bottles (choking is often silent)
- Ensure that all children are within sight and/or hearing of educators at all times
- Ensure that where multiple areas are available to children at the same time (indoor/outdoor activities) all areas are supervised
- Position themselves (do not sit back to the children) and arrange equipment, furniture and activities appropriately
- Communicate effectively by informing other educators if they are leaving an area
- Be aware of the releasing of children procedure and ensure children are only released to authorised people
- Be flexible to allow for small groups of children who may require supervision e.g. a group of children who are still eating their lunch
- Continue to supervise even when talking to parents (it can get very busy at peak times and a number of educators could be talking to parents at the same time, still need to be supervising the children)
- Be aware of the cultural and individual supervision needs of each child e.g. a child may require private space but will still need to be supervised
- Ensure younger children's safety is not compromised in mixed age groups
- Develop a plan (short & long-term) to improve facilities and correct problems if effective supervision is difficult due to the design of buildings and grounds
- Do regular head counts of children in their care (especially when entering the playground and on leaving the playground)
- Be aware of where every child is at all times
- Discuss best position points of supervision (especially in the playground) to avoid clustering in one spot. Supervision should be active and interacting with the children (not just standing and watching)
- Ensure educator: child ratios are correct at all times to assist supervision
- Encourage children to inform educators when they are leaving an area to use the bathroom
- Question any stranger to the centre in a friendly way e.g. "Hello, can I help you?" (And observe the persons actions)
- Ensure an educator is allocated to supervise a water play activity. A water trough must be emptied into the garden before leaving the playground as the group entering the playground after may not be aware that it has water in it
- Ensure supervision of excursions adheres to Regulation guidelines
- Ensure front gates and playground gates are closed after entry and exit
- Follow a close-down procedure as they vacate their room
- Correct number of children are placed in the care of late shift staff
- Doors and windows are locked as educators vacate the room

Parents Will

- Hand children over to an educator on arrival and ensure an educator is informed when departing
- Inform an educator if someone other than those who are authorised to will be collecting the child and provide written authority
- Ensure the authorised person to collect information is up to date
- Inform educators of any current or pending court orders affecting the child and provide the centre with a photocopy of the court order to be kept with the child's enrolment form
- Adhere to correct sign in and out procedures
- Ensure that front gates and playground gates are closed after entry or exit
- Understand that when talking to an educator that they still need to be supervising children hence may not be able to give undivided attention. If parents have concerns that need undivided attention, parents will need to make arrangements for a convenient time to talk.

Management Will

- Support educators in developing a plan for improving facilities and correcting problems if effective supervision is difficult due to the design of building or grounds
- Maintain current records relating to authorised people to collect each child, court orders and custody issues

Evaluation and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually. Family and educator feedback will be considered in the review process. Changes in legislation, regulations, and NQS will be considered. Any changes to this policy will be communicated to families and educators verbally and in writing.

Associated Forms and Documentation

Supervision diagram

Risk Management Policy

Accidents Incidents and Emergencies Policy

Policy Reviewed Date August 2024 October 2013

Link to NQS

Element 1.1.3	The program including routines is organised in ways that maximise opportunities for each child's learning.
Element 2.3.1	Children are adequately supervised at all times.
Element 2.3.2	Every reasonable precaution is taken to protect children from harm and any hazard likely to cause injury.
Element 2.3.3	Plans to effectively manage incidents and emergencies are developed in consultation with relevant authorities, practised and implemented.
Element 3.1.1	Outdoor and indoor spaces, buildings, furniture, equipment, facilities and resources are suitable for their purpose.
Element 3.2.1	Outdoor and indoor spaces are designed and organised to engage every child in quality experiences in both built and natural environments.
Element 4.1.1	Educator to child ratios and qualification requirements are maintained at all times
Element 7.1.2	The induction of educators, co-ordinators, staff members, including relief educators is comprehensive.
Element 7.3.3	The Regulatory Authority is notified of any relevant changes to the operation of the service, of serious incidents and of any complaints which allege a breach of legislation.

Smoke Free Environment Policy

Rationale

Promoting a safe environment for all persons means ensuring that the areas used by Shooting Stars Early Learning Centre are free of smoke, and satisfy legal duty of care requirements under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* (2000).

According to the Cancer Council Australia's Position Statement 'Passive Smoking' (2004) there are three types of tobacco smoke: mainstream (smoke directly inhaled by the smoker), exhaled (smoke breathed out by the smoker) and side stream (smoke that drifts from a burning cigarette). In some cases the side stream smoke can contain 30 times higher concentrations of carcinogenic chemicals than mainstream smoke. Passive smoking is 'an important and avoidable cause of a number of diseases and conditions in both adults and children, including several types of cancer.'

In children, exposure to environmental tobacco smoke can contribute to the following diseases or conditions:

- Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS or cot death)
- Lower birth weight
- Bronchitis, pneumonia and other airways infections
- Asthma
- Middle ear disease
- Respiratory symptoms (coughing, wheezing)
- Adverse effects on cognition and behaviour
- Decreased lung function
- Worsening of cystic fibrosis
- Meningococcal disease

In adults passive smoking can contribute to the following diseases and conditions:

- Heart disease
 - Lung cancer
 - Nasal sinus cancer
 - Irritation of the eyes and nose
 - Miscarriages
 - Cervical cancer
 - Breast cancer
 - Stroke
 - Asthma
- (Cancer Council NSW, 2004)

A smoke-free policy is vital because children model adult behaviour.

Children are prone to the harmful effects of environmental tobacco smoke because:

- Their lungs and body weight are small so the dangerous substances in smoke are more harmful
- Children are not always able to move away from a smoker as adults are able to do so.

(Cancer Council NSW, 2004)

Aim

Passive smoking increases potentially harmful risks to health. Shooting Stars Early Learning Centre has a duty of care under *Occupational Health and Safety* legislation to provide a safe and healthy environment for all persons who use the service for child care requirements or employment.

Shooting Stars Early Learning Centre does not permit smoking of any substance in any areas used for child care requirements or employment of persons. The premises or areas used include: the Shooting Stars Early Learning Centre building and outdoor play areas and the car park.

Shooting Stars Early Learning Centre has adopted a Smoke Free Policy to protect all persons – children, families, educators, students and visitors - from the effect of environmental tobacco smoke.

Implementation

- Smoking will not be permitted within the Shooting Stars Early Learning Centre building, playgrounds or car park.
- Smoking will not be permitted in any open space 10 metres from the Shooting Stars Early Learning Centre outdoor play equipment or fence line.
- Educators employed by Shooting Stars Early Learning Centre not smoke in front of, or in the sight of children in their care.
- Employees who wish to smoke during work hours may do so outside the workplace in their scheduled lunch break.

- Students, parents, family members or relatives of children enrolled in the service, volunteers and visitors to Shooting Stars Early Learning Centre will not be permitted to smoke on the premises and will adhere to the Smoke Free Policy.
- Shooting Stars Early Learning Centre will support and provide assistance for educators who smoke to quit smoking.
- Educators who do chose to continue to smoke are expected to ensure that their clothing and hair remains uncontaminated by the activity and that children, colleagues, parents and management cannot discern that the educator is a smoker due to the odour remaining on their person.

Evaluation and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually. Family and educator feedback will be considered in the review process. Changes in legislation, regulations, and NQS will be considered. Any changes to this policy will be communicated to families and educators verbally and in writing.

Sources

National Occupational Health & Safety Commission (2003) *Australian Workplaces Free From Injury and Disease: Guidance Note on the Elimination of Environmental Tobacco Smoke in the Workplace.*

Centre for Community Child Health (2006) *Preventing Passive Smoking Effects On Children: Practice Resource*

The Australian Safety and Compensation Council (2006) *Environmental Tobacco Smoke*

The Cancer Council Australia (2004) *Position Statement: Passive Smoking*

The Cancer Council New South Wales (2004) *Smoke-free playgrounds :Fact Sheet 5*

Policy Updated Date August 2024

Link to NQS

Element 2.1.1	Each child's health needs are supported.
Element 2.3.2	Every reasonable precaution is taken to protect children from harm and any hazard likely to cause injury.
Element 4.2.1	Professional standards guide practice, interactions and relationships.
Element 7.1.2	The induction of educators, co-ordinators, staff members, including relief educators is comprehensive.
Element 7.3.5	Service practices are based on effectively documented policies and procedures that are available at the service and reviewed regularly.

Supporting Play in the Learning Environment Policy

Rationale

- Play is the most important activity in the lives of children.
- Sometimes play is easy and fun
- Sometimes play is trying hard to do something right.
- Play is the work, the occupation of childhood.
- Physical play improves strength, endurance and balance. Body co-ordination improves when children play in physical ways.
- Play is important because children can learn about the meaning of things in the world.
- Children learn about art, science, math, music, nature, animals and people when they play.
- Play is important because it helps children learn social skills such as taking turns and sharing.
- They learn to act out their feelings, listen and talk to playmates and follow rules.
- They try leading and following.
- During play they can pretend to be someone else like a fireman, doctor or teacher.
- Play is important because it helps children learn and grow in a way that helps them feel good about themselves.
- It is easier to learn when we are relaxed and having fun.
- Play helps children to learn problem-solving skills.
- Children develop their imagination when they play.
- They learn to follow directions.

Aim

Our Centre Philosophy (August 2012) states:

- We believe play is an essential and important part of child development. Play is the way children learn. We provide a program based on the benefits and importance of play.
- Through play, children learn about cultural norms and expectations, discover the workings of the world, and negotiate their way through their surroundings.
- Play teaches children about themselves, others, rules, consequences, and how things go together or come apart.
- They learn to understand the feelings of others and develop empathy. These skills are crucial for healthy peer relationships.
- Play fosters language skills. Pretend play encourages language development as children negotiate roles, set up a structure, and interact in their respective roles. Language is tied to emotions, which are expressed and explored through pretend play.
- Pretending gives children the freedom to address feelings, anxieties and fears.
- Play teaches children social skills, it provides opportunities to rehearse social skills and learn about acceptable peer behaviour. With age and experience, children's awareness of peers playing around them increases. This leads to more interactions between children and incorporation of peers into their play.
- Both social and solitary play provides opportunities for children to practice problem solving and negotiating.

The aim of this policy is to support and resource educators to provide a learning environment that values the concept of 'play is learning' through the provision of information and examples.

Implementation

Ages and Stages of Play

As a child grows, their play styles and tastes change drastically. From their first steps to their first day of preschool, it is important that the changes they experiences in themselves and their surroundings are reinforced through play.

Infants

- Use their bodies as the primary avenue to explore the world.
- Learn to participate in and control simple social interactions with caregivers.
- Learn to recognize, explore, and control objects, sights, sounds, textures, and tastes.
- Explore, master, and learn to use their body parts.

- Learn how to get desired reactions from people and objects.

Examples of appropriate infant toys: mobiles, rattles, toys with wheels, stacking and nesting toys, unbreakable mirrors, washable stuffed animals and dolls, cloth and heavy cardboard books.

Toddlers

- Enjoy the physical activity that comes from their new mobility in the environment.
- Explore relationships between objects and how to control them.
- Expand their understanding of object permanence--e.g., hide-and-seek activities.
- Start to see themselves as part of the community and develop skills to participate, especially language.
- Work on using symbols and make-believe in play.

Examples of appropriate toddler toys: pull-push toys; blocks; an assortment of balls; Play Dough with simple tools (craft sticks and wooden rollers); picture books; containers, scoops, sifters, and other objects for sand and water play; toys and props for dramatic play like scarves, hats, a toy telephone, stuffed animals, and generic baby dolls; large pegged-top puzzles.

Pre-schoolers'

- Develop friendships and skills for playing with other children.
- Learn to use symbols in more complex ways and in two-dimensional form.
- Expand their ability to attach language to actions and ideas.
- Explore relationships between objects and how parts and wholes fit together (as in making constructions).
- Experiment with how to make desired effects happen with objects and people.
- Develop increasingly complex large and small motor skills.
- Learn how to plan ahead.

Examples of appropriate pre-schoolers' toys: Construction toys with interlocking pieces; new dramatic play items -props to recreate real life (petrol station, post office, shop) and puppets; art materials such as felt pens, paint, scissors, glue, and an assortment of blank paper of various colours and textures; simple musical instruments and noisemakers, including shakers and rhythm sticks; wheel toys (ride-on equipment such as bikes and wagons); outdoor play materials (balls, bats, bubble blowers and liquid soap, and giant chalk pieces); and natural outdoor materials, (rocks, sticks, and leaves).

Play Spaces should be included for:

- challenging activities such as balancing, climbing high, tunnelling, jumping, swinging from arms and by legs
- sensory play opportunities that include sand, mud, water, pebbles, stones, sawdust
- hiding away, making cubbies and campsites, having picnics
- meandering up a shady path, stopping off to pick flowers or watch a snail
- sitting with a friend to talk or play with dinosaurs or butterflies
- meeting as a group to sing songs, listen to stories or play games
- imaginative play environments with small dolls, teddies, jungle animals, blocks etc
- pretend work such as laying drains, washing clothes or building tunnels as well as real work such as gardening, sweeping and raking
- running, ball games, chasing bubbles, pushing and pulling, rolling and spinning and riding wheel toys.

Play ideas to encourage the exploration of feelings

- Messy play such as playing with sand, mud or paints is a great way for kids to express feelings, particularly if they're upset or angry.
- Acting out feelings with puppets or toys can help make sense of emotions.

- Playing in an open area with lots of space for running, tumbling and rolling helps to release emotions.
- Painting, drawing and collage are great for expressing feelings.
- Music also provides a great opportunity to express these emotions; children may like to jump around and ‘act out’ the music or to make their own music with simple instruments.

Ideas to encourage imaginative and creative play

A child's imagination and creativity are blossoming, and there are many ideas to enhance this through play. You can try:

- telling stories and reading books
- sharing silly rhymes and riddles
- playing dress-ups – a box of old clothes filled with cast-off shoes, old sports jumpers, boots, handbags and other odds and ends is great for boys and girls alike to rummage through at any time
- playing with musical instruments or listening to different genres of music
- messy play with sand, clay, play dough, paints, water or mud
- keeping small food boxes, paste and scissors, margarine containers and plastic bottles for construction activities
- making musical instruments from everyday objects such as empty milk cartons filled with uncooked rice
- turning a cardboard box into a playhouse, boat or car, or turning a small table on its side and draping it with a blanket to make a house, pirate's cave or local shop.
- providing dress-ups that children can use to act out scenarios and express emotions – an eye patch will turn a child into a pirate; a newspaper hat will make them an admiral; an old feather stuck in a hat will turn them into a buccaneer; a towel will make a caped crusader
- playing outdoors in a safe space with freedom and time to explore
- drawing with crayons or pencils
- buying toys, such as blocks, that allow for open-ended play
- saving old magazines for them to cut and paste with

Play ideas to encourage thinking

- Offer challenging puzzles.
- Play board games together.
- Read books and tell jokes and riddles.
- Introduce basic magic tricks.
- Play memory card games.
- Encourage building and construction games.
- Do simple jigsaw puzzles together.
- Play card games such as ‘fish’ and ‘snap’.

Educators Will

Provide activities and experiences that enhance all developmental areas.

Gross motor: using large groups of muscles to sit, stand, walk, run, etc., keeping balance, and changing positions.

Fine motor: using hands to be able to eat, draw, dress, play, write, and do many other things.

Language: speaking, using body language and gestures, communicating, and understanding what others say.

Cognitive: Thinking skills: including learning, understanding, problem-solving, reasoning, and remembering.

Social: Interacting with others, having relationships with family, friends, and teachers, cooperating, and responding to the feelings of others.

Program intentional experiences or offer spontaneous experiences responding to the interests of the children in the following areas:

- Construction activities and manipulative play
- Dramatic Play
- Problem Solving
- Cognitive Concepts such as science and maths
- Multicultural Experiences
- Art Experiences
- Language and Literature
- Transitions
- Self Help Skills
- Music and movement
- Parent input, ideas and participation
- Spontaneous/special events
- Fine and gross motor activities
- Sensory experiences
- Nature and the environment
- Health and human body

Ensure their learning program provides opportunities for the children to participate in:

- Indoor play like cognitive, science, cooking and maths activities.
- Outdoor activities that allow children to move about and to exercise and develop their gross motor skills
- One-to-one interactions for social and emotional development
- Small group times for stories, dramatic play, art activities, construction activities, games
- Large group times for language activities, music experiences, movement games, mealtimes
- Spontaneous learning experiences
- Transition times between activities.

The learning program in each room should:

- be based on the needs of the individual child both as an individual and as part of a group
- be planned to enhance the development of the whole child
- be inclusive of all children
- be responsive to cultural differences and expectations
- provide choice and variety
- support the development of trusting relationships between children and staff
- encourage respect and empathy for others
- lead to growth and learning.

Management Will

- Provide resources for educators to be able to provide a large variety of learning experiences and activities.
- Provide mentoring support to enable educators to program effectively for the children in their care.
- Purchase and update reference materials about different areas of learning and development
- Encourage educators to share ideas and support for their colleagues.
- Share new articles, reference materials and readings with the educators to continue their professional learning opportunities.
- Include professional learning opportunities in educator meetings and the opportunity to discuss new topics and research as a group.

Evaluation and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually. Family and educator feedback will be considered in the review process. Changes in legislation, regulations, and NQS will be considered. Any changes to this policy will be communicated to families and educators verbally and in writing.

Associated Forms and Documentation

Centre Philosophy

Policy Updated Date August 2024

Link to NOS

Element 1.1.1	Curriculum decision making contributes to each child's learning and development outcomes in relation to their identity, connection with community, wellbeing, confidence as learners and effectiveness as communicators.
Element 1.1.2	Each child's current knowledge, ideas, culture, abilities and interests are the foundation of the program.
Element 1.1.3	The program including routines is organised in ways that maximise opportunities for each child's learning.
Element 1.1.4	The documentation about each child's program and progress is available to families.
Element 1.1.5	Every child is supported to participate in the program.
Element 1.1.6	Each child's agency is promoted, enabling them to make choices and decisions and to influence events and their world.
Element 1.2.1	Each child's learning and development is assessed as part of an ongoing cycle of planning, documenting and evaluation.
Element 1.2.2	Educators respond to children's ideas and play and use intentional teaching to scaffold and extend each child's learning
Element 2.2.2	Physical activity is promoted through planned and spontaneous experiences and is appropriate for each child.
Element 3.1.1	Outdoor and indoor spaces, buildings, furniture, equipment, facilities and resources are suitable for their purpose.
Element 3.2.1	Outdoor and indoor spaces are designed and organised to engage every child in quality experiences in both built and natural environments.
Element 3.2.2	Resources, materials and equipment are sufficient in number, organised in ways that ensure appropriate and effective implementation of the program and allow for multiple uses.
Element 4.2.2	Educators, co-ordinators and staff members work collaboratively and affirm, challenge, support and learn from each other to further develop their skills and improve practice and relationships.
Element 5.1.2	Every child is able to engage with educators in meaningful, open interactions that support the acquisition of skills for life and learning.
Element 5.1.3	Each child is supported to feel secure, confident and included.
Element 5.2.1	Each child is supported to work with, learn from and help others through collaborative learning opportunities.
Element 6.2.1	The expertise of families is recognised and they share in decision making about their child's learning and wellbeing.
Element 7.1.4	Provision is made to ensure a suitably qualified and experienced educator or co-ordinator leads the development of the curriculum and ensures the establishment of clear goals and expectations for teaching and learning.

Section 4

Staffing Arrangements

Determining a Responsible Person Policy

Rationale

The *Education and Care Services National Law* (National Law Act 2012) requires that approved providers must have a responsible person present at all times an education and care service is educating and caring for children.

A responsible person is defined in the National Law as:

- the approved provider - if the approved provider** is an individual - in any other case, a person with management or control of the service
- the nominated supervisor of the service
- a certified supervisor who has been placed in day to day charge of the service.

Aim

For management to ensure that the best possible team of educators is responsible for the quality of care and education offered by the service.

Implementation

The following roles within the service will be allocated based on the required qualifications, experience and professionalism of the educators who wish to fulfil the role.

Responsibilities of the Nominated Supervisor

A nominated supervisor is a person who has consented to be the primary supervisor of the day to day operation of an early childhood education and care service. The nominated supervisor will have primary management and control of a service in the absence of the approved provider.

Only individuals who hold a supervisor certificate are eligible to be the nominated supervisor of a service.

If a service employs two or more educators who hold supervisor certificates, any of them could consent to be:

- The nominated supervisor
- The responsible person in charge when the nominated supervisor is not on duty.

As the nominated supervisor is the key responsible person for a service (in addition to the approved provider) the nominated supervisor has various responsibilities under the National Law.

Together with the approved provider the nominated supervisor must ensure that the children are adequately supervised and that they are not subjected to any form of corporal punishment or unreasonable discipline.

The nominated supervisor must also ensure that every reasonable precaution is taken to protect the children from harm and hazards likely to cause injury. Additionally, the nominated supervisor is responsible for ensuring that the program delivered to the children is based on an approved learning framework, as well as ensuring that the relevant educator to child ratios are being met within the service.

Responsibilities of the Certified Supervisor

A certified supervisor who is placed in day to day charge of a service when the approved provider and nominated supervisor are absent would be expected to ensure that the service continues to operate in accordance with the National Law and the policies and procedures of the service. This would include the matters for which the nominated supervisor is responsible. However, the overall responsibility for such matters remains with the approved provider and the nominated supervisor.

The National Regulations set out minimum requirements for qualifications, experience and management capability needed to gain a supervisor certificate.

The applicant must:

- be 18 years or above
- satisfy the Regulatory Authority that they are a fit and proper person to be the supervisor of a service (see fitness and propriety test information below)

- have adequate knowledge and understanding of the provision of education and care to children
- have the ability to effectively supervise and manage an education and care service
- have at least one of the following:
- at least three years' experience working as an educator in an education and care service or children's service or school or a service regulated under the former law (i.e. a child care service)
- an approved diploma level education and care qualification
- an approved early childhood teaching qualification.

<http://deta.qld.gov.au/earlychildhood/office/national/framework/regulations/supervisor-certificates-nominated-supervisors.html>

Responsibilities of the Educational Leader

An educator, co-ordinator or other individual who is suitably qualified and experienced must be appointed to lead the development and implementation of the educational program (or curriculum) in the service. This person may have suitable qualifications and experience, as well as a thorough understanding of the Early Years Learning Framework to be able to guide other educators in their planning and reflection, and mentor colleagues in their implementation practices.

The National Regulations require the Approved Provider to appoint the educational leader in writing and note this designation in the educators record of the service.

As part of continuous improvement, the educational leader should consider what strategies are needed to improve the educational program in the Approved Service. Strategies might include:

- leading and being part of reflective practice discussions about practice and implementing the learning framework
- mentoring other educators by leading quality practice
- discussing routines and how to make them more effective learning experiences
- observing children and educator interactions, and making suggestions on how to improve interactions and intentional teaching
- talking to parents about the educational program
- working with other early childhood professionals such as maternal and child health nurses and early childhood intervention specialists
- considering how the program can be linked to the community by working with other community services such as Aboriginal Elders
- establishing systems across the service to ensure there is continuity of learning when children change room or attend other services, and then in their transition to school
- assisting with documenting children's learning and how these assessments can inform curriculum decision making.

National Law: Section 169 National Regulations: Regulations 118, 148

Educators Will

- Comply with education and care services law, children's services law or education law.
- Retain their working with children suitability card current at all times.
- Ensure they continue to update their skills and knowledge and attend professional development opportunities.
- Follow their training plan while studying for qualifications.
- Comply with the directions of the Nominated Supervisor, Certified Supervisor and Educational Leader at all times.

Management Will

- Offer in-service opportunities to encourage professional development in educators.
- Supervise trainees and offer mentoring opportunities to improve their on-the-job skills and knowledge.
- Ensure appropriately qualified and experienced educators are employed within the service.
- Ensure a certified supervisor is nominated during service operating hours.

Evaluation and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually. Family and educator feedback will be considered in the review process. Changes in legislation, regulations, and National Quality Standards will be considered. Any changes to this policy will be communicated to families and educators verbally and in writing.

Associated Forms and Documentation

Job descriptions

Certified Supervisor Certificates

Resources

www.acecqa.gov.au

ACEQUA fact sheets Nominated Supervisor and Certified Supervisor

Policy Created October 2013

Link to NOS

Element 4.1.1	Educator to child ratios and qualification requirements are maintained at all times
Element 4.2.1	Professional standards guide practice, interactions and relationships.
Element 4.2.3	Interactions convey mutual respect, equity and recognition of each other's strengths and skills.
Standard 7.1	Effective leadership promotes a positive organisational culture and builds a professional learning community.
Element 7.1.1	Appropriate governance arrangements are in place to manage the service.
Element 7.1.2	The induction of educators, co-ordinators, staff members, including relief educators is comprehensive.
Element 7.1.3	Every effort is made to promote continuity of educators and co-ordinators at the service.
Element 7.1.4	Provision is made to ensure a suitably qualified and experienced educator or co-ordinator leads the development of the curriculum and ensures the establishment of clear goals and expectations for teaching and learning.
Element 7.1.5	Adults working with children and those engaged in management of the service or residing on the premises are fit and proper.
Element 7.3.5	Service practices are based on effectively documented policies and procedures that are available at the service and reviewed regularly.

Educator Induction Policy

Rationale

New staff members need to be able to perform their duties effectively as soon as possible following commencement of employment. This is essential to the quality of care of children. This induction policy outlines the requirements for induction within the first week of employment. Ongoing training and development is the subject of the Professionalism Policy and Professional Development Expectations

Aim

To ensure that new educators receive the necessary levels of information and initial training to enable them to perform their duties effectively.

Implementation

On or before commencement of employment, the Education Leader will schedule and conduct an induction session for the new Educator. The induction session will include briefings in relation to all items listed on the induction checklist and checklist for new staff.

Educators Will

- Complete the forms in the Staff Pack and hand them to the Nominated Supervisor or Educational Leader
- Provide copies of all documentation required such as qualifications, working with children check and first aid certificate.
- Read the Educator Handbook, Workplace Health and Safety Handbook and Policy Manual as soon as possible after commencing employment.

Management Will

- Provide new educators with a one on one induction session as soon as possible on commencing employment.
- Allocate a mentor in the form of a senior educator to assist the new educator to perform their role successfully.
- Provide ongoing training as required on review of the educator's capabilities and requested support.

Evaluation and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually. Family and educator feedback will be considered in the review process. Changes in legislation, regulations, and NQS will be considered. Any changes to this policy will be communicated to families and educators verbally and in writing.

Associated Forms and Documentation

Professionalism Policy
Professional Development Expectations
Educator Handbook

Policy Updated Date August 2024

Link to NQS

Element 4.2.1	Professional standards guide practice, interactions and relationships.
Element 4.2.2	Educators, co-ordinators and staff members work collaboratively and affirm, challenge, support and learn from each other to further develop their skills and improve practice and relationships.
Element 4.2.3	Interactions convey mutual respect, equity and recognition of each other's strengths and skills.
Element 7.1.1	Appropriate governance arrangements are in place to manage the service.
Element 7.1.2	The induction of educators, co-ordinators, staff members, including relief educators is comprehensive.
Element 7.1.3	Every effort is made to promote continuity of educators and co-ordinators at the service.
Element 7.1.4	Provision is made to ensure a suitably qualified and experienced educator or co-ordinator leads the development of the curriculum and ensures the establishment of clear goals and expectations for teaching and learning.

Staffing and Continuity of Care Policy

Rationale:

Our educators are selected for their professionalism and love of their job. The most important focus of our educators is to ensure that the needs of each and every child in their care are being met to the highest standard possible. Childcare is a demanding job and our aim is to provide the support and encouragement that each childcare professional needs in order to continue to grow and develop professionally. We encourage a team environment where all educators are valued and appreciated for their input into the smooth running of the centre.

Aim:

The aim of ensuring educators employed by Shooting Stars Early Learning Centre are committed and enthusiastic early childhood education professionals is to fulfil our philosophy of ensuring high quality care is provided at all times and reduce educators turnover.

Implementation:

Management recognises that the early childhood education professionals in the centre environment are a critical factor in providing the quality and consistency of care valued and appreciated by management, families and the community.

Management will:

- Ensure educators are chosen for their qualifications, experience and professionalism.
- Support employees to further their training and ongoing professional development
- Organise in-service opportunities to further knowledge and skills of the early childhood education professionals.
- Ensure teamwork is supported and encouraged both within the rooms and as a whole centre.
- Have a dedicated group of relief educators who are familiar both with, and to the children in order to provide continuity of care for children when room educators are absent on meal breaks, sick days and annual leave days.
- Ensure processes are in place for room educators to exchange information with relief educators who are replacing them in their rooms.

Evaluation and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually. Family and educator feedback will be considered in the review process. Changes in legislation, regulations, and National Quality Standards will be considered. Any changes to this policy will be communicated to families and educators verbally and in writing.

Policy Updated Date August 2024

Link to NOS

Standard 7.1	Effective leadership promotes a positive organisational culture and builds a professional learning community.
Element 7.1.2	The induction of educators, co-ordinators, staff members, including relief educators is comprehensive.
Element 7.1.3	Every effort is made to promote continuity of educators and co-ordinators at the service.
Element 7.1.4	Provision is made to ensure a suitably qualified and experienced educator or co-ordinator leads the development of the curriculum and ensures the establishment of clear goals and expectations for teaching and learning.
Element 7.1.5	Adults working with children and those engaged in management of the service or residing on the premises are fit and proper.
Element 7.2.2	The performance of educators, co-ordinators and staff members is evaluated and individual development plans are in place to support performance improvement.
Element 7.2.3	An effective self assessment and quality improvement process is in place.
Standard 7.3	Administrative systems enable the effective management of a quality service

Educators Communication Policy

Rationale

'Positive educators' interactions between educators are essential in creating an environment and atmosphere in which children feel emotionally safe, secure and happy. It is in this environment that children are able to develop positive relationships and attachments with staff.' Putting Children First Issue 14 June 2005

Aim

- For educators to maintain positive communication with each other whilst at the Centre
- For management to support an environment that fosters open and honest communication, effective teamwork and positive educator relationships.
- For the Nominated Supervisor to maintain effective communication strategies and procedures for ensuring educators are informed and involved in decision-making

Implementation

Educators will:

- Greet and speak with colleagues in a positive tone
- Support colleagues in busy times by assisting when required
- Be aware of and receive information on the Grievance Procedure for educator conflict
- Share skills and knowledge with colleagues, especially throughout educator meetings
- Value the skills of their colleagues.
- Follow expectations as outlined in Job Roles.
- Empathise with, and support all colleagues regardless of personality clashes and differences of opinion.
- Treat other educators with respect and fairness.
- Be aware of the need to treat some information shared by educators or families confidentially and be diligent in doing so
- Monitoring their own behaviour with regards to being an active team member
- Respect the rights of their colleagues to have a different opinion to their own.
- Work as a team to ensure high quality care is being provided at all times.
- Model effective communication for children and their parents/carers
- Be friendly towards new educators and be involved in the orientating of new colleagues by providing constructive comments and mentoring to new colleagues
- Value the different backgrounds, attitudes and beliefs of each other
- Be aware of and have an understanding of effective communication strategies
- Effective listening
- The use of "I" statements
- Using positive language
- Use centre procedures for communicating with others
- Maintenance book
- Contributions to newsletters
- Memos
- Verbal communication for passing on messages from parents etc.
- Educator Appraisals, in-services and workshops, educator meetings

Management will:

- Support early childhood professionals in their use of effective communication skills by discussing educator communication in Educator Appraisals
- Organise regular Team Meetings for educators to discuss issues of concern, share ideas and knowledge, and receive training for new procedures/policies
- Oversee the grievance procedure in the event of conflict or issues needing to be resolved between colleagues
- Develop strategies and procedures in consultation with early childhood professionals for effectively communicating information between team members
- Be available for counselling or confidential advice/support when issues between team members arise

Evaluation and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually. Family and educator feedback will be considered in the review process. Changes in legislation, regulations, QAIS and standards will be considered. Any changes to this policy will be communicated to families and educators verbally and in writing.

Sources

Putting Children First Issue 14 June 2005

Associated forms and documentation

Educator Appraisal forms

Job Descriptions

Staff handbook

Grievance Policy and Procedure

Policy Updated Date August 2024

Link to NOS

Element 4.2.1	Professional standards guide practice, interactions and relationships.
Element 4.2.2	Educators, co-ordinators and staff members work collaboratively and affirm, challenge, support and learn from each other to further develop their skills and improve practice and relationships.
Element 4.2.3	Interactions convey mutual respect, equity and recognition of each other's strengths and skills.
Standard 7.1	Effective leadership promotes a positive organisational culture and builds a professional learning community.
Standard 7.3	Administrative systems enable the effective management of a quality service

Professionalism Policy

Rationale

Professionalism is the adherence to a set of values comprising statutory professional obligations, formally agreed codes of conduct, and the informal expectations of parents and colleagues. ... Professionalism is a set of internalized character strengths and values directed toward high quality service to others through one's work. Professionals show self-respect in their work. They understand that their work reflects their inner character and is a statement of their personal commitment to excellence of performance.

Aim

Regardless of educational background, no individual can expect to be regarded as truly professional unless he or she adopts a code of conduct and an attitude that reflect a desire to contribute to society and to the profession. Educators at Shooting Stars Early Learning Centre are expected to behave in a professional manner at all times. They are considered to be representatives of both the company and early childhood educators as a profession and as such are expected to follow the Early Childhood Code of Ethics.

A childcare centre builds a good reputation by providing a professional attitude in its dealings with employees, parents and other agencies. If a parent or visitor walks into the centre when colleagues are talking to each other, they should stop immediately and attend to the needs of that person. The few minutes per day that a parent attends the centre is the only chance we have of creating a welcoming, trusting and professional relationship with the parents; and to give them a favourable impression of the educators members and the centre.

Professionalism at Shooting Stars Early Learning Centre is:

- being aware of the centre expectations for employee behaviour, interactions and communication
- performing job roles and responsibilities to the best of your abilities
- asking for help when you need it
- being familiar with the Centre Policies and Procedures and following them at all times
- taking responsibility for your actions
- completing administration tasks such as timesheets and checklists immediately when required
- Treating all colleagues with respect and friendliness.
- Working as a team member in a team environment.

Implementation

Educators will:

- Always speak professionally about the centre and their colleagues.
- Greet arriving and departing children and parents happily and by name.
- Be available to parents when necessary; this demonstrates to parents that you have genuine concern and interest for their child while they are at the centre.
- Not discuss personal matters, other children, or other parents with a parent.
- Be positive role models for the children and their families concerning consideration of others, language and tone of voice. Modelling is one of the most effective ways to instil socially appropriate behaviour in the children.
- Provide professional support and encouragement to their colleagues.
- Establish a co-operative, sharing relationship with the families of the children in care.
- Take pride in the quality of their work and the high quality of care the centre can offer to families.
- Master the theoretical knowledge involved in child development and apply it to practical, everyday situations.
- Show enthusiasm and commitment.
- Involve themselves in ongoing professional development situations through attendance at educators meetings, interactions with their colleagues, further study and in-service training.
- Value the opinions of both colleagues and families. Respect the rights of others to have different opinions to their own.

Qualities that professionals exhibit

- Professionals are not satisfied with simply completing the task – they desire to deliver the highest quality possible.

- Professionals stay abreast of constant changes in their field.
- Professionals are creative and use this ability to solve problems in new ways.
- Professionals delight in sharing their knowledge.
- Professionals understand and accept setbacks as a normal part of the process.
- Professionals realise that the way they look, act, speak and write impacts the way others perceive them.
- Professionals understand that a positive attitude can have a considerable impact on their success.
- Professionals understand the ethical, legal, regulatory, and industry issues involved in their work.
- Professionals learn every aspect of their job and perform it with pride.
- Professionals persist until they have achieved their goal and objectives.

Management Will:

- Provide employees with information about professional attitudes
- Involve educators in in-service training about professionalism
- Offer educators the opportunity to participate in external in-service courses, conferences etc which can enhance their professional development
- Assist employees to achieve the aims of their professional development plan

Resources

www.businessballs.com

Evaluation and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually. Family and educator feedback will be considered in the review process. Changes in legislation, regulations, QAIS and standards will be considered. Any changes to this policy will be communicated to families and educators verbally and in writing.

Associated forms and documentation

Educators Appraisal forms
Professional development plans

Policy Updated Date August 2024

Link to NOS

Element 4.2.1	Professional standards guide practice, interactions and relationships.
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Element 7.1.4	Provision is made to ensure a suitably qualified and experienced educator or co-ordinator leads the development of the curriculum and ensures the establishment of clear goals and expectations for teaching and learning.
Element 7.1.5	Adults working with children and those engaged in management of the service or residing on the premises are fit and proper.
Element 7.2.1	A statement of philosophy is developed and guides all aspects of the services operations.
Element 7.2.2	The performance of educators, co-ordinators and staff members is evaluated and individual development plans are in place to support performance improvement.
Element 7.2.3	An effective self assessment and quality improvement process is in place.

Teamwork Policy

Rationale

Effective teams support the achievement of common goals for improving the quality of care and education at services. Individuals within a team do not have to think the same way. However, they do need to respect each other's values, skills and experiences. Respect for diverse viewpoints and backgrounds enriches the team by bringing together different perspectives and ideas. (*Building and Supporting Teamwork* Putting Children First Issue 20 December 2006)

Aim

Effective teamwork is important in the creation of positive outcomes in the development and learning of children as all team members are working together towards the common goal which in the case of Shooting Stars Early Learning Centre is the provision of high quality care. Effective communication in the childcare environment encourages educators to operate as a team, to reflect upon, plan for, improve centre practice, and provides a positive role model for children.

Working as a team provides each participant with the opportunity for personal and professional growth. Teams become vehicles for affirmation, sharing of resources, constructive peer criticism, problem solving and reflection.

Effective teamwork contributes to stability in childcare services by improving the self-esteem, job satisfaction and morale of educators and can reduce stress and burnout. It is also crucial in achieving goals and accomplishing tasks.

Implementation

It is the policy of Shooting Stars Early Learning Centre that all employees work as a team, both in their individual rooms and as a centre as whole. Effective teamwork can only occur when educators know and understand other's responsibilities, routines, and the ability to think for themselves and use their initiatives whilst maintaining a high level of communication with others.

Teamwork requires early childhood professionals to share the workload, the "chores", and the willingness to help each other out. If colleagues are having a hectic day, yet your room is quiet, offer to help out. Be aware of the other rooms; understand when their busy times are and work together to get the jobs done. Setting up each other's rooms so that they have all the necessary equipment ready for the day is one way in which to work as a team, as well as communicating and expressing your needs so that others know and can help wherever they can.

Educators Will:

- Engage in active listening techniques when communicating with their colleagues.
- Seek to understand each other's feelings and points of view.
- Share information and resources.
- Respect and appreciate the values, knowledge and skills of others.
- Work together to solve problems in a collaborative manner.
- Resolve personal conflict positively.
- Provide support to colleagues who are experiencing stress
- Act promptly to support other team members in difficult situations.
- Support and assist new educators during their orientation and induction period.
- Support each other to reflect on their interaction and relationships with children.
- Offer constructive peer criticism to colleagues in relation to tasks or areas they may need to develop further. This should be done one-on-one; not in the company of other colleagues, children or parents.
- Contribute new and innovative ideas and approaches.

Evaluation and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually. Family and educators feedback will be considered in the review process.

Resources

www.griffith.edu.au

Building and Supporting Teamwork Putting Children First Issue 20 December 2006

Associated forms and documentation

Educator Appraisal forms

Role descriptions

Policy Updated Date August 2024

Link to NOS

Element 4.2.1	Professional standards guide practice, interactions and relationships.
Element 4.2.2	Educators, co-ordinators and staff members work collaboratively and affirm, challenge, support and learn from each other to further develop their skills and improve practice and relationships.
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Element 7.2.3	An effective self assessment and quality improvement process is in place.

Professional Development Expectations

Shooting Stars Early Learning Centre is committed to providing QUALITY service and recognises the need for all educators to have access to continuing education to keep fresh and absorb new developments within early childhood education. All Educators are encouraged to attend in-service training as it becomes available and within the financial constraints of the Centre's budget.

It is expected that each educator will attend to at least two (2) in-service courses per year. The training programme may incorporate both in-service courses as well as externally conducted programme. However, the conduct of these courses must not interfere with the efficient running of the centre. Educators will be expected to develop a professional development plan and continually update this plan and include in-service seminars attended.

Performance Review Procedure

All educators employed at Shooting Stars Early Learning Centre will participate in an educator appraisal process.

Management will perform educator appraisals annually.

New educators will have an appraisal completed within 3 months of commencing employment with Shooting Stars Early Learning Centre.

Educator completed appraisals will be provided for educators to complete annually as part of their professional expectations and to assist in the development of their professional development plan.

Educator Code of Conduct

Rationale

The purpose of the Code of Conduct is to guide and enhance the conduct of educators in performing their duties at Shooting Stars Early Learning Centre. Management requires employees to be professional, responsible, accountable and conscientious in all their dealings with parents, children, colleagues, licensing bodies, NQS representatives, childcare trainers, volunteers and students.

Respect for persons

- Educators should treat their colleagues, students and members of the community equitably and with respect. This involves:
- Courtesy and responsiveness in dealing with others
- A responsibility of fairness in supervising colleagues
- Making decisions that are procedurally fair to people
- Avoiding discrimination on grounds such as gender, race or religion
- A responsibility for fairness and encouragement when in the training role with new colleagues

Shooting Stars Early Learning Centre seeks to create an environment where all persons are treated equitably and with respect; where a person's rights are respected; and where educator and child efforts are encouraged and their achievements given due recognition.

Respect for persons extends to the manner in which educators deal with colleagues, children, students, parents and other members of the community. Management regards an employee's personal behaviour towards and interaction with others as a vital part of the duties of their position.

Confidentiality

Educators are expected to follow very strict confidentiality rules and guidelines at all times to protect the privacy and confidentiality of the information we have collected.

Educators will:

- Ensure information collected from families in order to deliver high quality care to the child is stored in a manner where only employees can access the information.
- Not disclose information held about families to anyone other than those involved in the care of the child.
- Provide parents with access to the information held about themselves and their child when requested.
- Ensure enrolment forms are kept in a secure area.
- Ensure details kept about families are accurate, complete and up to date.
- Not discuss personal information disclosed to them by families with anyone other than those who directly care for the child.
- Ensure child progress records are stored in an appropriate manner to prevent unauthorised access.
- Information given to educators in confidence by parents will be kept confidential.
- Ensure no information about the child or the parent is given to a third party without their consent.
- Refuse to confirm or deny attendance or non-attendance of a child when asked by an unauthorised person.

Respect for the opinions of others

Everyone has the freedom to hold and voice their opinion. Educators should not cut off a colleague's right to voice an alternative point of view. Professionalism is expected at all times; when colleagues have differing views or opinions – they should show courtesy and respect and listen to the alternate view and recognise their colleague's right to have differing views to their own. Criticism should only be constructive, voiced in a manner which will not offend and spoken in private – not with an audience of other colleagues. Criticism should never be personal, abusive or belittling. Defamatory or inflammatory comments about colleagues will result in disciplinary action.

Standards of Performance

Employees are expected to maintain and enhance their skills and expertise through ongoing training and professional development courses. High standards of performance and a focus on client service are expected.

Educator Grievance Policy

Rationale

Shooting Stars Early Learning Centre aims to foster positive relations between all management, parents and educators. All staff members have the right to a positive and sympathetic response to their concerns. Solutions are sought to resolve all disputes, issues or concerns that impact or affect the day-to-day well-being of the centre in a fair, prompt and positive manner.

Aim:

- All educators are provided with clear written guidelines detailing grievance procedures
- All confidential conversations/discussions with educators will take place in a quiet area away from children, other parents and educators who are not involved.

A grievance procedure is the process by which solutions are sought to resolve disputes in a fair, equitable and prompt manner. Grievances should be resolved as informally and quickly as possible by the parties involved. When the persons directly involved cannot resolve grievances informally, a formal grievance process is implemented.

Not all disputes can be handled in one particular format and judgement needs to be made on what particular style is appropriate to suit each individual dispute.

Procedure for dealing with staff conflict:

- In the event of an employee disagreeing with or being in dispute with a colleague or management, a number of steps should be taken to resolve the issue.
- If the behaviour of another educator is interfering with your work then advise that person of the problem directly and try to work out a mutual resolution.
- In the event that a resolution cannot be found, the employee must formally meet with the Lead Educator, raise the issue and seek resolution using, as a yardstick, common sense and compromise.
- (If the dispute is of an extremely sensitive nature or involves the Lead Educator, contact the Nominated Supervisor or Educational Leader and a **Grievance Report Form** must be completed)
- In the event that a resolution still cannot be found, and the employee wishes to pursue the issue, a **Grievance Report Form** must be completed, detailing the issue and point of concern and the Nominated Supervisor notified with a request for a meeting.
- On receipt of the report, the Nominated Supervisor must convene a formal meeting to review the original discussion between the parties concerned and/or the management and again seek resolution. Copies of the employees report and Nominated Supervisor's report detailing results of the meeting must be signed by all parties and filed in the educator file. It is clearly understood that the objective of this procedure is designed to:
 - Encourage the use of common sense and reasonable compromise as the primary means of resolving misunderstandings, disagreement or dispute
 - Ensure that detailed and possible confusing dialogue does not prolong or delay resolution
 - Prevent erosion or circumvention of the authority by the employee appealing directly to the Regulatory Authority or Union without the knowledge of the Nominated Supervisor.

This procedure applies to work or personal issues relating to work. It is not designed to accommodate personal, private concerns of an employee seeking support or assistance. The employee should at any time bring such personal, private issues directly to the Nominated Supervisor, Educational Leader or Quality Assurance Supervisors.

It is not ethical to involve other educators or parents in an individual concern, and it is not ethical to have that concern affect educator relationships. It is also not appropriate to involve outside agencies before seeing the Nominated Supervisor with your concerns. The Nominated Supervisor will try all avenues to solve the problems at Centre level. If this becomes impossible, or no apparent progress or compromise is being made, a mediator may be contacted to attempt to solve the problem. The mediator's role is to be non-judgemental, unbiased and fair.

Educators are always encouraged to communicate openly with their Nominated Supervisor, Educational Leader or Quality Assurance Supervisors and fellow educators, and to discuss any

concerns informally or at educator meetings. Working as a team is also encouraged and having respect for other members of the team is imperative.

Educators who belong to a trade union may contact the union at any time if they have major concerns.

Educators are encouraged to attend union meetings.

Evaluation and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually. Family and staff feedback will be considered in the review process. Changes in legislation, regulations and national quality standards will be considered.

Any changes to this policy will be communicated to families and staff verbally and in writing.

Associated forms and documentation

Grievance Report Form

Parent Handbook

Policy Reviewed and Changed Date October 2013

Links to National Quality Framework

Element 4.2.1	Professional standards guide practice, interactions and relationships.
Element 4.2.2	Educators, co-ordinators and staff members work collaboratively and affirm, challenge, support and learn from each other to further develop their skills and improve practice and relationships.
Element 4.2.3	Interactions convey mutual respect, equity and recognition of each other's strengths and skills.
Element 7.1.1	Appropriate governance arrangements are in place to manage the service.
Element 7.1.2	The induction of educators, co-ordinators, staff members, including relief educators is comprehensive.
Element 7.3.4	Processes are in place to ensure that all grievances and complaints are addressed, investigated fairly and documented in a timely manner.

Procedure for resolving poor work performance and unacceptable behaviour

Stage 1 – Verbal Warning

- An employee should be told as soon as possible of any complaint concerning their work performance and given the opportunity to respond to the concerns expressed and changes required.
- An informal, un-minuted interview should be held, attended by the employee and one or more of the following persons – Nominated Supervisor or Educational Leader. (Although un-minuted, a record should be made that the interview took place).
- Complaints about the employee’s work should be specific and relate to the job as summarised in the job description and relevant competencies. An outline should be given to the employee on how they must improve their work performance and a review period set for 1-4 weeks depending on the particular circumstances.
- Any support that the employee requires to make the required changes should be identified and appropriate steps made to implement

Stage 2 – Written Warning

- The employee is to be advised (24 hours in advance) of the date, time and reason for the interview.
- A formal documented interview should be held with a copy of the record of the interview provided to the employee, Nominated Supervisor and one placed on the employee’s file. Documentation to include:
 - Specific details of performance standards not being achieved or not maintained
 - Action to be taken if standards are not achieved or maintained
 - The date at which the performance will be reviewed
 - Signatures of all relevant parties at the interview that it is an accurate record of the proceedings however on the part of the employee not necessarily agreement
 - If the employee disagrees with the assessment then there must be a right of written reply, which will also be attached to the file

Stage 3 – Written Warning

- A second formal written documented interview is held. A verbal warning is given followed by a “Written Warning” from either the Nominated Supervisor or the Educational Leader which includes specific areas where improvement must be achieved, the consequences for lack of improvement (that job loss may be the final result) and the review date
- Documentation of the interview follows the same requirements as set out in Stage 2

Stage 4 – Final Written Warning

- The Nominated Supervisor will conduct a third formal documented interview with the employee in which another written warning may be given that continuing failure to improve will result in suspension or dismissal
- All other procedures as set out in Stage 2 will be followed

Termination of Employment

If the panel believe that the employee’s performance is unlikely to improve after the Stage 1V interview, it must be decided whether:

- Alternative employment is available and should be offered. If the employee does not accept then Management may issue a notice of dismissal. If the employee accepts, a new contract is issued “without loss of service”.

Or

- Employment should be terminated

A dismissal notice should include the effective date of dismissal, reasons for dismissal and termination of payment as per the award.

Where an employee in the workplace:

- Intentionally endangers life
- Is found stealing
- Reports to work under the influence of drugs or alcohol
- Inflicts or threatens physical or sexual abuse or harassment
- The Nominated Supervisor or Educational Leader suspends the employee without loss of pay pending an investigation. The investigation is to be completed within 72 hours and an interview date determined (If there are grounds for a further legal investigation this time frame may be extended)
- The interview is to be attended by the employee, the person reporting the unacceptable behaviour, the Nominated Supervisor or Educational Leader. The employee is to be advised formally of the findings of the investigation and the action being taken
- When immediate termination is required, a dismissal notice is prepared at the termination interview. When continued employment is recommended, a warning letter is to be issued.
- If the employee is vindicated of the accusation, all relevant formal documentation is to be removed from their file
- It is not necessary to give the minimum notice or compensation in lieu of notice if the employee is guilty of misconduct, which would make it unreasonable to continue employment throughout the notice period. In this case salary shall be paid up to the time of dismissal

Evaluation and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually. Family and staff feedback will be considered in the review process. Changes in legislation, regulations and national quality standards will be considered. Any changes to this policy will be communicated to families and staff verbally and in writing.

Associated forms and documentation

Grievance Report Form

Written Warning

Policy Updated Date August 2024

Links to National Quality Framework

<i>Standard 2.3</i>	Each child is protected
<i>Element 4.2.2</i>	Educators, co-ordinators and staff members work collaboratively and affirm, challenge, support and learn from each other to further develop their skills and improve practice and relationships.
<i>Element 5.2.3</i>	The dignity and rights of every child are maintained at all times.
<i>Element 7.1.5</i>	Adults working with children and those engaged in management of the service or residing on the premises are fit and proper.
<i>Element 7.3.4</i>	Processes are in place to ensure that all grievances and complaints are addressed, investigated fairly and documented in a timely manner.

Participation of Students and Volunteers Policy

Rationale

At times Shooting Stars Early Learning Centre will become involved with local schools and colleges, helping to provide an insight into the childcare industry through a hands-on approach, which may assist students and volunteers in deciding on their future career in early childhood education.

Aim

To ensure students and volunteers who seek placement within the service are given the opportunity to experience the childcare setting while still adhering to the regulations and framework that govern the industry.

Implementation

- Students/volunteers must report to the Certified Supervisor on duty. The Certified Supervisor will familiarise them with the centre layout, evacuation procedures etc. and introduce them to the educators.
- Students/volunteers must sign the visitor's book in the foyer on arrival and departure each time they attend the service.
- Students and volunteers act under the direction of the Nominated Supervisor or Certified Supervisor at all times and must refer all enquiries to senior educators.
- They are not responsible for centre programs or the supervision of children at any time they cannot be included in the educator count for ratios.
- Students/volunteers are not able to accept money, medication or information from parents.
- Students of early childhood education programs may observe children for training purposes but they must seek the written permission of the parent beforehand.
- Educators are NEVER to leave a student/volunteer unsupervised.
- Students/volunteers are not to do nappy changes or supervise toileting unless they are under the direct supervision of an educator.
- Educator or parent concerns about students/volunteers are to be discussed immediately with the Nominated Supervisor.
- Students on a bloc prac should have an information sheet about them on the door of the room they are placed in with their photo, name and the reason they are at the centre.
- Students/volunteers are not to be given confidential information about children, educators or parents.
- Students/volunteers are not to discuss the children with the parents or be given any messages to give to parents.
- Students/volunteers must show evidence of a Working With Children Check and be covered by Work cover insurance whilst in the service.

Evaluation and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually. Family and educator feedback will be considered in the review process. Changes in legislation, regulations, and National Quality Standards will be considered. Any changes to this policy will be communicated to families and educators verbally and in writing.

Associated forms and documentation

Visitor's Sign in Book

Policy Reviewed and changed Date October 2013

Links to NQS

Standard 2.3	Each child is protected
Element 2.3.1	Children are adequately supervised at all times.
Element 2.3.2	Every reasonable precaution is taken to protect children from harm and any hazard likely to cause injury.
Element 4.2.1	Professional standards guide practice, interactions and relationships.
Element 7.1.5	Adults working with children and those engaged in management of the service or residing on the premises are fit and proper.

Workplace Health and Safety Policy

Rationale

Good workplace health and safety practices ensure that the service is a safe place for educators, children, families, volunteers, students and visitors. Early childhood educators are at high risk of workplace injury due to the physical nature of the job. Every day early childhood educators lift children and move playground equipment and furniture, bend to sit at child size tables and chairs and crouch down to speak with children at eye level and deal with clutter underfoot.

The six most common causes of injuries and poor health to early childhood educators are:

- Lifting and moving children in and out of cots and on and off change tables and lifting children to comfort them.
- Sitting and working at low levels puts additional strain on backs and knees.
- Moving play equipment and furniture.
- Storage areas being allowed to become cluttered without clear paths to walk through.
- Office workstations can be cramped – poor ergonomics.
- Slips and trips on floor surfaces such as through cleaning, damaged floor surfaces, mats, scattered toys and equipment and falling from chairs when hanging artwork.

www.careforkids.com.au

At Shooting Stars Early Learning Centre we are committed to ensuring the highest level of workplace health and safety practices in the centre environment for all participants within the service.

Management and educators recognise the importance of Workplace Health & Safety legislation, emphasising consultation and co-operation between employers and employees concerning the sharing of information in order to reduce the risks of injury and disease. The centre protects the health and safety of children, educators, families and visitors to the Centre by keeping informed about the Victoria Work, Health and Safety Act (2012) and ensuring appropriate codes of practices are followed at the Centre.

Aim

- To promote Workplace Health and Safety within the centre for educators, children, families, volunteers, students and visitors.
- To provide educators, families and visitors with the necessary information and/or training to fulfil Workplace Health and Safety requirements.
- To maintain a healthy, safe environment through implementation of relevant Workplace Health and Safety procedures and practices.
- For all educators, families, visitors, employers, suppliers and contractors to recognise their duties of care.

Implementation

The provision of a safe environment is a shared responsibility. Owners/licensees have a legal responsibility to provide a duty of care to employees; and educators have a professional and ethical duty to ensure children, families and colleagues are kept safe healthy and protected. (As Safe as Houses: Occupational Health and Safety in Childcare)

To achieve a safe working environment it is our policy that:

Management Will

- Develop and maintain workplace health & safety policies and procedures in consultation with educators and parents in accordance with recognised authorities
- Provide a safe and healthy working environment for all employees.
- Making and monitoring arrangements for the safe use, handling, storage and transport of substances.
- Provide adequate facilities to protect the welfare of all employees.
- Provide information and training whenever appropriate to ensure educators can identify:
- Key elements of the OH&S Act
- The Centre's health and safety procedures and policies
- Safe and healthy workplace practices
- How to report hazards
- How to have a say in safe work practices and procedures

- Educators will be encouraged to report incidents leading to high stress levels and positive steps will be taken to understand and minimise stress suffered by individual educators.
- Check all new equipment against Australian Standards
- Provide training and instruction in the correct use of all equipment and work processes being used. (New Employee Mentoring Checklist)
- Provide a consultative framework to address workplace health and safety issues
- Address work hazards as they are observed or reported.
- Investigate incidents and amend issues as necessary
- Ensure inspections and reports are carried out (Monthly Workplace Health and Safety Checklist)
- Ensure educators are aware of first aid locations, fire protection and evacuation procedures.

Educators Will

- Follow Workplace Health & Safety Policy
- Know and follow all health & safety policies
- Ensure that health and safety standards are met
- Act responsibly
- Perform work in accordance with safety standards and training
- Follow lawful instructions of Nominated Supervisor, Educational Leader and Certified Supervisors.
- Properly use control measures and protective equipment supplied by the employer e.g. electrical equipment, gloves etc.
- Maintain the workplace in a safe and healthy condition
- Regularly check play areas and equipment to ensure they are clean and safe.
- Wear the required uniform for personal protection e.g. fitted closed in non-slip shoes, sun safe shirts and hats when outdoors
- Work as a team following manual handling procedures when moving heavy or bulky and awkward equipment.
- Use appropriate adult size equipment when sitting for long periods of time.
- Use ladders to reach high places not chairs or tables.
- Keep access areas clear and uncluttered.

Families will:

- Be provided with information relevant to OH&S which may concern parents while visiting the centre (e.g. floor plans for fire evacuations located on the classroom walls)
- Notify management of any potential hazards within the centre or grounds.
- Notify management of any unsafe practices that they deem relates to OH&S within the centre.
- Be involved in the consultative process through review of the OH&S policy at least annually

Visitors will:

Comply with the safety standards of the centre.

Evaluation and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually. Family and educators feedback will be considered in the review process. Changes in legislation, regulations, NQF and standards will be considered. Any changes to this policy will be communicated to families and educators verbally and in writing.

Associated Forms and Documentation

Workplace health and safety checklist
 Workplace Health and Safety Manual
 Hazard Reporting forms
 Maintenance Lists
 Evacuation Plan and Procedure

Sources of Information

www.careforkids.com.au
www.worksafe.vic.gov.au

www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au

As Safe as Houses: Occupational Health and Safety in Childcare, *Putting Children First*, Issue 37
March 2011

Slips, trips and falls guide
Sprains and Strains booklet

Policy Created Date: October 2013

Link to NOS

Standard 2.1	Each child's health is supported
Standard 2.3	Each child is protected
Standard 3.1	The design and location of the premises is appropriate for the operation of a service
Standard 6.1	Respectful and supportive relationships with families are developed and maintained.
Element 7.1.2	The induction of educators, co-ordinators, staff members, including relief educators is comprehensive.
Element 7.3.2	Administrative systems are established and maintained to ensure the effective operation of the service.
Element 7.3.3	The Regulatory Authority is notified of any relevant changes to the operation of the service, of serious incidents and of any complaints which allege a breach of legislation.

Safe Work Practices – Manual Handling

Manual handling is any activity that requires the use of force exerted by a person in order to lift, push, pull, carry or otherwise move or restrain a person, animal or thing. Manual handling covers a wide range of activities including lifting, pulling, pushing, grasping, throwing and carrying. Writing, typing, placing boxes and other items on shelves, lifting, moving and carrying children are just some examples of manual handling tasks in an early childhood setting.

Manual tasks can contribute to a number of musculoskeletal disorders including:

- sprains and strains of muscles
- injuries to muscles, ligaments, intervertebral discs and other structures in the back
- Injuries to soft tissues such as nerves, ligaments and tendons in the wrists, arms and shoulders.
- Slips and falls resulting in injury.
- Cuts, bruises and broken bones.

Musculoskeletal disorders occur in two ways:

- gradual wear and tear caused by frequent or prolonged periods of muscular effort associated with repeated or continuous use of the same body parts, including static body positions
- Sudden damage caused by intense or strenuous activity or unexpected movements such as when materials being handled move or change position suddenly.

Most disorders are due to wear and tear in daily tasks. Although an injury could appear to be the result of an overload situation, the event that triggered the injury may have been the ‘last straw’ on already damaged tissues.

What activities contribute to musculoskeletal disorders?

The back, shoulder and wrist are the most frequently injured parts of the body. The following table summarizes the major work-related contributors to injury to different areas of the body:

Back

- load handling – frequent and repetitive lifting with a bent and/or twisted back (even for relatively light loads), lifting at a fast pace, or pushing/pulling activities
- static working positions with the back bent or continuous and sustained sitting or standing
- driving vehicles for prolonged periods (whole body vibration). Driving followed by manual handling of loads is particularly hazardous.

Upper limb

- repeated or sustained exertions, including gripping, with or without high force
- static postures involving the neck, shoulders and arms while using tools or word processor, or when lifting/carrying heavy loads
- repeated use of vibrating tools and equipment especially while working in cold conditions.

Lower limb

- prolonged squatting or kneeling
- using the knee to hit a tool (as in carpet laying)
- jumping.

Manual Handling Injuries

Manual handling injuries account for about one third of workers compensation costs and due to the number and severity of many of these injuries, their control must be given high priority.

Manual handling can lead to injury of almost any part of the body including hands, wrists, arms, shoulders, necks, backs, groins, legs and abdominal muscles.

Injuries often take the form of sprains and strains caused through the parts of the body concerned being subjected to physical stresses that are greater than the strength of the structures bearing the load. However, other injuries can occur through manual handling such as lacerations from gripping sharp edges, burns from handling hot or very cold objects, fractures from falling while handling items under difficult circumstances, bruising or contusions by direct blows from the object being handled.

By far the greatest cost from manual handling comes from back injuries, where damage may be permanent if serious injury such as a ruptured intervertebral disc occurs.

Since back pain is the most common consequence of manual handling problems it is important to have an understanding of the structure of the back and nature of injuries.

The basic structures of the back are vertebrae (bones), discs (shock absorbers), ligaments (bands of tissue holding the joints together), muscles (movers of joints), nerves (powering the muscles) and blood vessels (providing nutrient).

Damage to any part of the back can occur through sudden stress or can result from the accumulation of minor damage over time.

Various soft tissue structures of the spine cause pain when injured, for example ligaments and muscles. Certain other structures, such as the nucleus of the discs, have limited nerve endings and injury can occur without causing pain. Such injuries can go unnoticed, though damage to the disc has occurred.

Back pain with a sudden onset is commonly caused by ligament or muscle damage. Chronic back pain is usually related to disc injury or damage to facet joints, both of which develop from minor injuries over time.

The cumulative nature of the injury, particularly to discs over time, has implications for prevention.

Even tasks which rarely cause a lost time injury may still be contributing to long term disc damage. Therefore, all tasks should be assessed for their potential to cause either acute or chronic back injury.

In addition to minimising the manual handling tasks at work, back problems can also be minimised by having an adequate diet and by keeping fit. "Warm up" exercises for a few minutes before starting work, especially in winter, have also proven effective in minimising back problems.

Educators should become knowledgeable in:

- Safe manual handling methods
- Specific manual handling hazards
- Safe work practices.

Ways to reduce the risk:

- Lighten loads – break them into smaller quantities
- Lift heavy or bulky items with another team member
- Prevent muscle strain and fatigue.

Back Care

When looking after children, an educator can rarely avoid lifting and carrying children. This is particularly so when caring for infants and toddlers. When considering that a two year old can weigh up to 18 kilograms, then the weights that the educator may carry are considerable.

Early childhood educators are also generally responsible for setting up their own outdoor equipment. Planks, trestles etc. can be heavy and awkward to carry – lifting and carrying these alone can be hazardous to a person's back.

In order to reduce back injury educators are requested to:

- Team lift bulky and heavy items such as playground equipment, tables, chemical containers etc.

- Provide cuddles and reassurance to older/heavier children while sitting down rather than lifting them.
- Use prams to transport infants from room to room within the centre rather than carry them or holding them for long periods.
- Assist older children to use steps to access the nappy change area rather than lifting them.

Regulations

Workplace Health and Safety Department of Victoria highlights that occupational back injuries occur at a high rate of cases a year. Most of these cases are due to poor workplace design and work practices – such as sitting in chairs sized for children and inadequate training – such as not knowing how to lift objects correctly.

Employers have a duty of care to provide a workplace design that will minimise the risk of back injury; while employees have a duty of care to follow instructions, use equipment provided and not act in a way that places their own health at risk.

Advised Maximum Weight when lifting

- From standing, the advised maximum weight to be lifted should not exceed 16-20 kilograms.
- From sitting, the advised maximum weight should not exceed 4.5 kilograms.

The Back Support System

To understand caring for your back and preventing injuries, knowledge of how the back works is helpful.

The back is made up of many bones and muscles, nerves, tendons, ligaments, cartilage, discs and joints. The vertebral column (the backbone) consists of 33 bones called vertebrae, 26 of these bones are individual. These bones are grouped into different regions including cervical (Neck region), thoracic (upper back region), lumbar (lower back region) and sacrum (pelvic region). The vertebral column is not straight but curves forward at the neck, backwards at the upper back, forwards at the lower back and backwards at the pelvis.

As we move down the vertebral column, each vertebrae (individual bone) needs to support more weight, thus the lower vertebrae are larger in size than the upper vertebrae. These bones encase the spinal cord that extends from the lower end of the brain. Their function then is not only to support the body's posture and movement but also to protect the delicate spinal cord.

The inter-vertebral discs are pads of cartilage that lie between each vertebra. These discs have a very important function in movement, as they act as “shock absorbers”, so that as we move, they are compressed.

In the lower back these discs are quite thick. They are thicker at the front than at the back, which contributes to the forward curve of this part of the vertebral column. These discs can become displaced – hence the term “slipped disc”. The fibres holding the discs in place may tear and the disc slips backwards pressing on the spinal nerves causing severe pain.

Muscles attached to the vertebral column are very powerful. They support these bones and allow us to bend, twist and turn. If a muscle supporting the bones of the back is strained, then the alignment of the vertebral column may be affected, placing stress on other muscles, ligaments and tendons holding the column.

Back Injuries

Back injuries do not however, generally result from one strain. Usually these injuries are caused by years of abuse, making part of the back support system weaker than it should be. Such abuse includes:

- Incorrect posture
- Poor physical fitness
- Stress
- Overweight/underweight
- Continual use of poor lifting and carrying techniques.
- Continual over-stressing and weakening of the back muscles may eventually lead to back injury triggered by a specific incident.

Lifting Children

- Do not lift a child if he/she weighs more than 35% of your body weight. Therefore, if you weigh 50 kilograms you should not lift a child who weighs 17.5 kilograms.
- Find a good base support with your feet before lifting – your feet should be approximately shoulder width apart.
- Keep back straight and bend your knees. Make sure you are close to the child before your attempt to lift him/her.
- When lifting the child, keep your body upright and straighten your knees.

Carrying Children

- Carry the child at waist level or slightly below.
- Use both hands for carrying.
- Alternate hips if carrying the child on a hip.

Lifting Objects

Many objects that need to be lifted by the childcare worker are not only heavy but also bulky and awkward. A relatively light object that is long is just as likely to cause back injury as heavier compact objects.

- Awkward objects should be carried by two people
- Objects over 20 kilograms should be carried by two people.
- Sharing the load with a child is not likely to minimise the risk of back injury. Asking a child to help you carry a heavy object should be avoided as:
- The child's safety is placed at risk
- The height difference causes an imbalance in the lifted object. The child will bear more weight if lifted equally.
- The adult is likely to sustain greater injury by attempting to compensate for the child's lack of strength and size by taking more of the objects weight.

Safe Work Practices – Electrical Safety

Electric shock is the effect produced on the body and particularly on the nervous system by an electrical current passing through the body. The effect depends on the size of the current which itself depends on the voltage and body resistance. Death can result from the normal voltage of 240 volts causing currents of greater than 30 milliamps to flow through the body for more than 40 milliseconds. Minor shocks may also cause injury as a result of involuntary muscle contraction.

Extension Leads

The requirement is that extension leads must be:

- Located where they are not likely to be damaged by anything including liquids
- Protected against damage, including damage by liquids
- Cords should not be on the floor level to prevent damage by furniture, pedestrian traffic or liquid spills

Before using electrical equipment:

Briefly check appliance each time you use them to protect yourself as well as colleagues and children. The checking should concentrate on three main areas : power outlets, wiring to appliances and extension cords.

Power Outlets

Do a visual check to ensure that:

- There are no cracks or physical damage
- There is no water penetration
- The socket is not loose.

Wiring to Appliances

Do a visual check to ensure that:

- There are no cut cables
- There are no frayed cables
- There is no damage to the plug for example burning or cuts
- There are no problems with the grommets (the plastic or rubber insert as the cable enters the appliance)
- There are no joins in the cable or damage repaired in a temporary fashion with for example electrical insulating tape.
- The internal coloured wires of cables are not visible at any point. The outer plastic sleeving must cover and protect the inner wires.

Extension Cords

Do a visual check to ensure that:

- No cords are on the floor to present tripping hazards
- No cords are in an area where they can be damaged by liquids, furniture or pedestrian.

Repairs

Electrical equipment should be sent to an authorised electrician for repair. Educators should not attempt to repair equipment.

Safe Work Practices – Hazardous Substances

Hazardous substances are chemicals that can harm your health. Things like acids or poisons are substances that can harm your health. Other substances may cause skin irritation – these are also hazardous substances.

To comply with Workplace Health and Safety Regulations

- Chemicals used within the centre need to be identified as hazardous substances
- An inventory of all hazardous substances should be listed in a Hazardous Substances Register and kept near where the chemicals are stored.
- Material Safety Data Sheets for each substance must be placed near where the substances are stored.
- Chemical should be stored in a locked area. If they are not placed in a locked cupboard the room they are stored in will need to be locked at all times.
- A “Dangerous Chemicals Stored Here” label should be placed on door of storage area.
- All labelling of chemicals should be correct.
- Educators should be aware of where Material Safety Data Sheets are stored and how to read them.

Material Safety Data Sheets

A material safety data sheet (MSDS) is a summary of information on a chemical product. An MSDS identifies health and physical hazards, exposure limits and necessary precautions. MSDS are drawn up by the manufacturer of a material, and are often written for non-hazardous as well as for hazardous substances. It contains much more information about the material than the label.

Labelling

- Containers of hazardous substances must be correctly labelled
- Labelling should have been done by the chemical supplier. Chemicals that are decanted, diluted etc also have to be labelled.
- Containers must remain correctly labelled until they no longer contain the hazardous substance
- Labels should indicate the significant hazards involved with a substance.
- Labels should take into account all hazards likely to occur during the use of a substance.

Storing Chemicals

Safe Practices:

- Keep chemicals to a minimum
- Place liquid chemicals below eye level.
- When storing chemicals on shelving ensure that shelving is compatible with or protected from the chemicals being stored.
- Do not overload shelves
- Repack leaking chemical immediately
- Store chemicals in a locked cupboard or room.

Safe Work Practices – Playground Safety

A playground should allow children to develop progressively and test their skills by providing a series of graduated challenges. The challenges presented should be appropriate for age-related abilities.

Safety Evaluation

Safety evaluation involves checking:

- The safety of each individual piece of playground equipment
- The layout of the entire play area
- The installation and maintenance of protective surfacing under and around all equipment
- The supervision provided by educators

Playground Injuries

The majority of injuries in the playground result from falls from equipment. These are primarily falls to the ground surface below the equipment rather than falls from one part of the equipment to another part.

Other injuries involve:

Impact by swings and other moving equipment

Colliding with stationary equipment

Contact with such hazards as protrusions, pinch points, sharp edges, hot surfaces and playground debris.

Fatal injuries that have been reported involved:

- Falls
- Entanglement of clothing on equipment such as slides
- Entanglement in ropes tied to or caught on equipment
- Head entrapment in openings
- Impact from equipment tip over or structural failure
- Impact by moving swings.

Supervision

Supervision is an important aspect of playground use. The playground environment is supposed to be challenging – given the age range of children who may access the playground this means some children will require assistance to use the equipment safely.

- Educators should always situate themselves so that they can see the majority of children within the playground.
- Equipment should be organised so that children are readily visible and easily supervised.
- Educators should provide continual supervision when the children are outdoors, never leave a child alone outdoors and frequently check where they are playing.
- Educators should actively involve themselves with the children rather than congregate and talk to each other.
- Adults should ensure the children are aware of safety rules and limits – the rules should be consistently applied by ALL educators.
- Educators and children should wear appropriate clothing for the outdoors including clothing, footwear and hats.

Maintenance of Equipment

All equipment should be inspected frequently for:

- Any potential hazards such as splinters, breaks etc
- For corrosion or deterioration from rot, insects or weathering.

All playground areas should be checked frequently for:

- Broken glass
- Dangerous items for example syringes
- Insects such as spiders

All pieces of playground equipment should be checked on a daily basis – while the playground is being set up it is easy to check each item for wear and tear and potential hazards.

The sandpit should be disinfected at the end of each day before being raked and covered

Informing Educators of Centre Policies Procedure

Rationale

In order for educators to be able to follow centre policies and procedures they must be familiar with the Policy and Procedure Manual.

Aim

To familiarise all educators with the Centre Policies and Procedures so that they follow the centre policies, which are based on the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 and the Guide to the National Quality Standard 2011 as well as the National Quality Framework. Following the policies ensures that educators are supporting the service to provide high quality care at all times.

Implementation

In order to familiarise educators with the Shooting Stars Early Learning Centre's Policy and Procedure Manual the following will occur:

- New educators will be given a Policy and Procedure Manual and asked to read it within 4 weeks of commencing their duties. They will be asked to sign a document to say they have read and understood the manual.
- Important policies and procedures such as positive behaviour guidance, safety and hygiene policies will be duplicated in the educator handbook – which all educators will be given a copy for their reference.
- A copy of the Policy and Procedure Manual will be placed in each room for use by the educators on a day-to-day basis. Copies will also be available in reception on the shelf near the parent notice board for the perusal by parents.
- New educators will be paired with an experienced educator – usually the Educational Leader - who using an induction checklist will ensure they are familiarised with policies and procedures such as safety, hygiene, chemical use, workplace health and safety as they relate to the everyday activities.
- Educators as well as parents will be involved in policy reviews – one policy will be discussed per month both in a written comment format and at the monthly educator meeting.
- If the Nominated Supervisor or Educational Leader feel a particular educator is not adhering to a policy that policy will be photo copied and the educator will receive one on one training in that particular policy or procedure.

New or amended policies will be printed and distributed to all educators and parents.

Evaluation and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually. Family and educator feedback will be considered in the review process. Changes in legislation, regulations and National Quality standards will be considered. Any changes to this policy will be communicated to families and educators verbally and in writing.

Associated forms and documentation

Educator Handbook

Policy and Procedure Manual

Policy Reviewed and Amended Date October 2013

Link to NQS

Element 4.2.1	Professional standards guide practice, interactions and relationships.
Element 4.2.2	Educators, co-ordinators and staff members work collaboratively and affirm, challenge, support and learn from each other to further develop their skills and improve practice and relationships.
Element 4.2.3	Interactions convey mutual respect, equity and recognition of each other's strengths and skills.
Element 7.1.1	Appropriate governance arrangements are in place to manage the service.
Element 7.1.2	The induction of educators, co-ordinators, staff members, including relief educators is comprehensive.
Element 7.1.5	Adults working with children and those engaged in management of the service or residing on the premises are fit and proper.
Element 7.2.2	The performance of educators, co-ordinators and staff members is evaluated and individual development plans are in place to support performance improvement.
Element 7.3.5	Service practices are based on effectively documented policies and procedures that are available at the service and reviewed regularly.

Educator Use of Phones Policy

Rationale:

Ensuring the protection and safety of children is one of the most important responsibilities of a child care service. Supervising children involves more than keeping each child within sight and/or hearing. It is also recognising that childcare professionals need to know the children they are responsible for, where children are and what they are doing at all times. Educators who are involved with mobile phone conversations, texts, web surfing or emails cannot possibly be effectively supervising the children in their care.

Aim:

To ensure educators are aware of their professional responsibilities in regard to supervision and the expectations of management in regard to when personal interactions on either the educator's personal mobile phone or the centre landline are acceptable.

Implementation:

Educators will:

Leave their: mobile phones in their bags while on duty in the rooms or playgrounds. They are not allowed on the person e.g. in a pocket of any educator.
Instruct their family to contact the centre phone in an emergency – therefore the mobile of the educator should not be necessary. Not use their mobile phones to text, talk or make internet inquiries while on duty in their room or the playground. Ask permission of the Nominated Supervisor, Educational Leader or Certified Supervisor to make a phone call using the centre phone. Keep incoming or outgoing calls to the centre phone to a minimum. It should be for emergencies only – not to chat or catch up. Ensure personal phone calls both incoming and outgoing are brief. Ensure their phone is on silent during the period the educator is on duty.

Evaluation and Review

This policy will be least annually. Family and educator feedback will be considered in the review process. Changes in legislation, regulations, QAIS and standards will be considered. Any changes to this policy will be communicated to families and educators verbally and in writing.

Associated forms and documentation

Educator Handbook

Policy Reviewed Date August 2024 October 2013

Link to NQS

Element 2.3.1	Children are adequately supervised at all times.
Element 2.3.2	Every reasonable precaution is taken to protect children from harm and any hazard likely to cause injury.
Element 4.1.1	Educator to child ratios and qualification requirements are maintained at all times
Element 4.2.1	Professional standards guide practice, interactions and relationships.
Element 7.1.2	The induction of educators, co-ordinators, staff members, including relief educators is comprehensive.

Monitoring of Educator Study Policy

Rationale:

Shooting Stars Learning Centre will encourage educators to undertake childcare specific study leading to a recognised Childcare Qualification in order to enhance the professionalism of the educators and comply with National and State Government standards.

Aim:

To ensure that educators who are enrolled in a course of study are completing units of study on a regular basis in order to complete their training in the time allocated under legislative requirements.

Educators will also be encouraged to participate in in-service opportunities both organised at the centre and by other organisations.

Implementation:

Educators will:

- Ensure they are following their training record plans as provided by the training organisations.
- Regularly complete their Educators Training Log with the Educational Leader.
- Notify both management and their training organisation if they are having difficulties completing the required study.
- Use allocated study time at the centre only for the purpose of completing their study tasks.
- Ensure their training record plans are left in the Nominated Supervisor's office at all times as required by their training organisation.

Management Will:

- Provide all assistance required to ensure educators are able to access training opportunities.
- Ensure educators are allocated study time to work on their assessment tasks.
- Mentor educators through the study process.
- Liaise frequently with the trainers assigned to the educators while completing their qualification.
- Provide additional in-service training opportunities both within the centre and inform educators of those opportunities being offered by professional organisations.

Evaluation and Review:

This policy will be reviewed annually. Family and educator feedback will be considered in the review process. Changes in legislation, regulations, QAIS and standards will be considered.

Any changes to this policy will be communicated to families and educators verbally and in writing.

Policy reviewed and updated date: October 2013

Links to NQS

Element 4.2.1	Professional standards guide practice, interactions and relationships.
Element 4.2.2	Educators, co-ordinators and staff members work collaboratively and affirm, challenge, support and learn from each other to further develop their skills and improve practice and relationships.
Element 4.2.3	Interactions convey mutual respect, equity and recognition of each other's strengths and skills.
Element 7.1.1	Appropriate governance arrangements are in place to manage the service.
Element 7.1.2	The induction of educators, co-ordinators, staff members, including relief educators is comprehensive.
Element 7.1.4	Provision is made to ensure a suitably qualified and experienced educator or co-ordinator leads the development of the curriculum and ensures the establishment of clear goals and expectations for teaching and learning.
Element 7.2.2	The performance of educators, co-ordinators and staff members is evaluated and individual development plans are in place to support performance improvement.

Section 5

Relationships with Children

Educator Child Interactions/Communication Policy

Rationale

Children base their views of themselves and the world on their daily experiences. One of the most important experiences adults can provide for children is to talk with and listen to them. (Early Childhood Australia.org.au)

The development of the whole child is closely linked to the quality of the relationships experienced with others. Consistently respectful and sensitive communication and interactions between educator and children help to secure and promote children's social and emotional wellbeing, which in turn supports the development of other skills and abilities.

Aim

All children especially infants need to form an attachment to their caregivers in order to foster their feelings of safety and security and allow them to feel free to learn and explore their environment.

Good communication helps children develop confidence, feelings of self-worth and good relationships with others. (Winning Ways to Talk With Young Children – University of Maine Bulletin # 4077)

Shooting Stars Early Learning Centre encourages the development of positive educator/children interactions in order to enhance the development of the child across the cognitive, language, social, emotional and physical areas. Children who feel emotionally supported and socially comfortable are more likely to develop a positive self-image and immerse themselves in the experiences offered within the care environment.

If children have a strong positive relationship with their caregivers, they will exhibit the following signs:

- *Children will demonstrate co-operation.
- *Children will share feelings with each other and their caregiver.
- *Children will show consideration for others feelings and property.
- *Children will take responsibility for their actions.
- *If educators have a strong positive relationship with the children in their care they will demonstrate:
 - *A positive attitude towards the group as well as the individuals
 - *A respect for the rights and feelings of the children at all times.
 - *The ability to foster the development of independence in the child.

Implementation

Educators Will

- Interact with children both individually and in a small group setting.
- Ensure they give attention to all children within their group.
- Assist children to choose experiences throughout the day either as an individual or in a small group setting.
- Ensure the atmosphere in the care environment is happy and relaxed.
- Show affection towards all the children in their care.
- Encourage the child's attempts at independence assisting when necessary.
- Listen sensitively to children and respond with genuine interest to their conversations.
- Liaise with families and other educators in developing an understanding of each child as an individual so that they can respond to their needs, strengths and interests on an individual basis.
- Ensure mealtimes with the children are a time for pleasant, social interactions.
- Respect a child's need for personal space and private reflective time.
- Maintain a positive manner when speaking around children.
- Use active listening and open ended questions as tools for expanding the knowledge and interests of the children.
- Ensure they maintain eye contact with children while speaking with them – drop down to their level.

Educator/Child Communication Procedure

Be as positive as possible when talking with children: Notice the good things children do and ignore things of relative unimportance. All too often in children's lives the negative behaviours are what get noticed and receive attention from adults. Children frequently hear "No", "Don't do that" etc. It is important for adults working with children to become aware of the importance of positive feedback rather than negative attention. Help children see the positive side of playing together and working together by giving praise and encouragement.

Teach listening skills to the children and avoid talking *at* them: To teach listening skills use a three-step process. **(A)** Say the name of the child and gain their attention then state the directive. Give them time to process that you are talking to them and what you want them to do. If they are absorbed in their activity they may not hear all of your directions. **(B)** After a short time (10-20 seconds) restate the entire directive again. **(C)** Restate the directions and add, "I'll help you." and physically assist them to do what is required. For example begin to put toys away or walk them into the bathroom to wash their hands. In any event give the directions only three times then assist with the activity. By using this method, the children will begin to understand that when the adults speak and give a direction, they will have to respond within a certain amount of time.

Be sure you know what you want the children to do and why: Make your requests reasonable for the children and not something that is too difficult for them to complete successfully. Understand the developmental levels of the children in your room, what is natural for them to do and what is typical behaviour for that age. Children want to please adults and will generally do what is asked of them if they understand what they are to do. When directions are incomplete or too complex, children can become confused and will not be able to complete the directions.

Give the children adequate information when giving instructions: This relates closely to routines throughout the day. Warn the children in advance of what will be occurring next in their day. For example when children are engaged in an activity and it will shortly be time to pack up give them a simple verbal warning such as "In five minutes it will be time to clean up". This will help the children to be ready for the change in activity.

Use language that is clear, simple and concise: Young children do not understand complex vocabulary, therefore, it is beneficial for adults to state directions as simply as possible which may mean breaking them up into step-by-step sections. Short sentences in succession assist children to understand the directions. Instead of saying "You need to put your shoes away so you can get ready to sit down for a snack" say "Put away your shoes. Come to the table for a snack."

Tell the children what to do rather than what not to do: Children most frequently are noticed when they are acting in ways that are inappropriate. When that happens if they are told "No", "Don't" or "Stop" or some other negative directive it doesn't really tell them much. When an adult simply says "No" the child does not receive any indication of what to do instead. Rather than simply say "No" tell the child what behaviour is acceptable for example "Use your walking feet inside please!" rather than "No running". This corrects the situation and gives the child a rule to remember and refer to in future situations thus fostering independence and self-discipline.

Avoid criticizing or attaching negative labels to children: Remember that it is the behaviour, not the child, which is acceptable or unacceptable. Rather than reprimanding or threatening children rely on restating the rules and telling them what is the acceptable behaviour or action is.

Avoid asking a question with a choice if no choice is intended: Frequently an adult will ask a question which supposedly gives children a choice such as "Do you want to clean up the toys now?" when the reality is that the children are expected to clean up the toys – there is no choice. A better way of stating your expectations would be "It is time to clean up the toys now."

Be as matter-of-fact as possible in giving directions to young children: Anxiety, stress, anger or fear can be detected in adults when they speak. Children can pick up the signals that something is amiss, which can frighten them and cause them to behave in an unacceptable manner. Adults need to keep their voice neutral even when they are under stress so as not to upset or alarm the children.

Communicating with Children of Different Ages

Infants - Birth to 12 Months

Infants communicate with coos, gurgles, grunts, facial expressions, cries, body movements like cuddling, back arching, eye movements and arm and leg movements.

To encourage infant communication staff members should:

- Respond quickly to the cues of the child e.g. crying, smiling etc
- Talk to the infant about what is happening e.g. “We are going to the change table to change your nappy.”
- Make eye contact as much as possible
- Get to know whether the child enjoys frequent interaction or prefers some solitary time. Knowing each child as an individual makes effective communication easier.

Toddlers – 12-36 months

Toddlers begin to communicate with one word sentences, two word sentences as their language skills increase and positive and negative emotional expressions and body movements.

To encourage toddler communication staff members should:

- Respond quickly and predictably to toddlers communicative efforts
- Expand on toddlers one and two word communication building sentences around their words and reflecting it back to them e.g. “Hot, that’s right your dinner is hot.”
- Give toddlers one direction at a time e.g. “Bring your shoes to me please.”
- Provide warnings before transitions e.g. “Five minutes until pack up time.”
- Label the emotions of toddlers as they experience them
- Talk toddlers through the routine sequences of their day e.g. “first we pack up the toys, then we wash our hands, then we have lunch.”
- With older toddlers explain why you are giving them a direction e.g. “We have to pack the blocks away so that we can have lunch”

Kinder – 3 to 6 years

Pre-schoolers begin to learn large numbers of words and talk in full sentences that are grammatically correct. Pre-schoolers like to talk about past experiences and experiment with pretend and fantasy play. They begin to recognise the connection between the spoken and written word. They will often talk to themselves when playing and working on activities.

To encourage preschool communication staff members should:

- Ask pre-schoolers questions about past events, probe for further details and provide them with new words to enhance their description of the experience.
- Encourage pre-schoolers to talk about their feelings both positive and negative and discuss the possible causes for their emotions
- Create opportunities for pre-schoolers to engage in fantasy and pretend play, either alone or with peers
- Provide opportunities for pre-schoolers to experience the connection between the spoken word and the written word e.g. label familiar parts of the environment, have the child tell you stories and write them down.

Resource: Communicating Effectively with Children from Early Childhood Australia.org.au

Evaluation and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually. Family and educator feedback will be considered in the review process. Changes in legislation, regulations, and NQS will be considered. Any changes to this policy will be communicated to families and educators verbally and in writing.

Associated Forms and Documentation

Meeting the Needs of Children Policy
Settling Upset Children Procedure
Centre Philosophy

Sources

Early Childhood Australia Website

Policy Updated Date August 2024

Links to NOS

Element 1.1.1	Curriculum decision making contributes to each child's learning and development outcomes in relation to their identity, connection with community, wellbeing, confidence as learners and effectiveness as communicators.
Element 1.1.5	Every child is supported to participate in the program.
Element 1.1.6	Each child's agency is promoted, enabling them to make choices and decisions and to influence events and their world.
Element 4.2.1	Professional standards guide practice, interactions and relationships.
Element 5.1.1	Interactions with each child are warm and responsive and build trusting relationships.
Element 5.1.2	Every child is able to engage with educators in meaningful, open interactions that support the acquisition of skills for life and learning.
Element 5.1.3	Each child is supported to feel secure, confident and included.
Element 5.2.1	Each child is supported to work with, learn from and help others through collaborative learning opportunities.
Element 5.2.2	Each child is supported to manage their own behaviour, respond appropriately to the behaviour of others and communicate effectively to resolve conflicts.
Element 5.2.3	The dignity and rights of every child are maintained at all times.
Element 6.2.1	The expertise of families is recognised and they share in decision making about their child's learning and wellbeing.
Element 7.2.1	A statement of philosophy is developed and guides all aspects of the services operations.

Meeting the Needs of Children Policy

Rationale

At Shooting Stars Early Learning Centre, we pride ourselves in treating children as individuals with their own needs, strengths and interests. We value getting to know each child and understand and value the importance of parental input in gaining the information we need in order to meet the needs of each child.

Aim

Educators aim to build a comprehensive knowledge of each child in their care through careful observations and good communication with the families of each child. In this way, they can understand and meet the needs of each child as an individual with individual needs, wants, strengths and interests.

Implementation

Educators will:

- Be sensitive and attentive to each child.
- Give support to children who are insecure or have difficulty communicating.
- Respond promptly to all children when they require care or assistance.
- Communicate on a positive level frequently with all the children in their care both on an individual basis and in a small group setting.
- Prepare children for transitions or routine changes throughout the day.
- Adapt their communication to meet the changing needs of each child.
- Actively seek information from families to enhance their knowledge of each child as an individual.
- Use active listening skills and open ended questions while conversing with the children in order to increase their knowledge about the child.

Parents will:

Communicate frequently with the educators in order to facilitate a genuine co-operative approach to the care of their child.

Evaluation and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually. Family and educator feedback will be considered in the review process. Changes in legislation, regulations, and NQS will be considered. Any changes to this policy will be communicated to families and educators verbally and in writing.

Associated Forms and Documentation

Enrolment forms

Communication with families Policy

Partnership with Parents Policy

Policy Updated Date August 2024

Links to NQS

Element 1.1.5	Every child is supported to participate in the program.
Element 4.2.1	Professional standards guide practice, interactions and relationships.
Element 5.1.1	Interactions with each child are warm and responsive and build trusting relationships.
Element 5.1.2	Every child is able to engage with educators in meaningful, open interactions that support the acquisition of skills for life and learning.
Element 5.1.3	Each child is supported to feel secure, confident and included.
Element 5.2.1	Each child is supported to work with, learn from and help others through collaborative learning opportunities.
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Element 7.2.1	A statement of philosophy is developed and guides all aspects of the services operations.

Settling Upset Children Procedure

- Find something to distract the child. Whether it be blowing bubbles, getting out something special to play with in the cupboard etc.
- Reassure the child that you understand their anxiety
- Use tactics such as sing a song and clap hands. Choose a song or make one up that you will use regularly so children respond when they hear it.
- Stay with the child until they are comfortable in their surroundings. Don't just give them a cuddle then put them down with nothing to do. Get the child interested in an activity.
- Some children are dropped off with a soiled nappy, due for a bottle, sleep etc. Think about the child and what their needs are
- If a child does not settle after a long (hour) time, inform the Director. We do not believe in leaving children very unsettled for long periods of time as it does nothing for the child's confidence and makes separation more difficult for the parent the next time around.
- Some parent's find it hard to know when to leave their child, staff may need to suggest that the parent gives the child a hug and kiss and say goodbye and leave. Encourage the parent to spend more time at the centre on pick up rather than arrival.
- If there are a few unsettled children who generally arrive at the same time, you may need to suggest for the future that they come a little earlier or later, thus giving you more opportunity to deal with their child.
- Encourage the parent to bring a favourite comfort item from home for the child.
- Reassure the parent that the centre will contact them if the child does not settle.
- Encourage the parent to phone during the day to check on the progress of their child.

Development of Positive Self-Esteem Procedure

It is important for children to develop a positive or high self-esteem. Positive self-esteem allows children:

- To feel proud of themselves and gives them the confidence to try new things.
- To stand up for themselves and what they believe in.
- Accept love and praise.
- The willingness to try something again even if they were not successful the first time.
- To make good decisions.
- To care about themselves, protect themselves, and keep themselves safe and healthy.

Infants

Infants begin building self-esteem as soon as they are born. A baby's self-esteem is built by having its basic needs met. An early childhood educator can enhance a baby's self-esteem by:

- Fulfilling an infant's needs for comfort, food, warmth or sleep. By responding to their cries and fulfilling their needs you help the child feel safe and secure.
- Ensuring the child feels love, attention and affection. For example during feeding time speak to them in soft loving tones, make it enjoyable and interactive.
- Using positive tones of voice while speaking to them. Even though they don't understand what is said they can pick up on your tone of voice.

Toddlers

Toddlers are beginning to take their first steps towards independence. They like to touch and taste everything. An early childhood educator can enhance a toddler's self-esteem by:

- Making their world a safe place where they can explore – a place where you don't need to stop them from touching things.
- Encouraging them to play with new things and sharing new experiences with them.
- Allowing them some independence such as taking off their own shoes.
- Encouraging them to help in simple activities such as cleaning up toys etc. Give them praise and encouragement when they do as they are asked.

Kinder

Children this age love to act like adults. An early childhood educator can foster self-esteem by:

- Teaching them new things, new skills, new concepts, new games etc.; they are eager to learn.
- Allowing the child to explore by doing – for example a pre-schooler gets satisfaction out of drawing a picture, they don't really care how it turns out.
- Encouraging children of this age to help others.
- Involving them in co-operative experiences, they like being part of a team.
- Praising their efforts and avoiding criticism. Give children specific praise – instead of just saying "Great job" say "You were very responsible today – you helped clean up at tidy time".
- Actively listening to what each child has to say – this reassures them that they are important and have something of value to impart.

Forming Attachments Procedure

Attachment is the pattern of relationship between an infant and caregiver which enables the infant to feel safe and free to learn and explore. A secure attachment in the first year of life has a positive effect on social, emotional and cognitive development.

Responding to Babies Cues

Responding to babies' cues not only helps to develop secure attachment but is also the beginnings of two-way communication.

To show that they need attention young babies will:

- Make eye contact
- Make little noises
- Cry
- Smile

It is important that the carer responds to these cues in ways which meet the child's needs because this says to the baby that they have been heard and responded to.

To form strong attachments which enable an infant to feel secure and comfortable staff will:

- Treat each child as an individual getting to know their likes, dislikes and cues so that they can respond accordingly.
- Introduce changes gently such as picking them up to change their nappy, tell the baby what they are doing.
- Be flexible and allow the needs of the child to structure the routine rather than expecting the child to fit in to a set routine.
- Copy the baby's noises – this is the beginning of conversation.
- Make eye contact with the children – infants like to look into the eyes of their carers.
- Respond to a child's cries.
- Provide comfort when a child is upset.
- Encourage babies to succeed e.g. placing a rattle where they can hit it and make a noise.

Positive Behaviour Guidance Policy

Rationale

Positive Behaviour Guidance practices are used to encourage children to engage in acceptable forms of behaviour by using strategies which build children's confidence and self-esteem and provide children with the support and guidance and opportunities they require to manage their own behaviour.

Aim

A proactive approach, rather than a reactive one, prepares childcare educators for disruptive behaviours and helps them create an atmosphere of positive and productive interactions between the children and adults in the classroom.

Positive behaviour guidance helps children learn routines, rules, and expectations while in the room. All educators working with children, if consistent in their approach, will benefit from learning the proactive methods of behaviour guidance. These methods include creating an environment that is child oriented; using communication methods that are clear, direct, and concise; helping with transitions between activities; and using reinforcements that children like.

The goal is to structure the classroom environment in such a way that young children can learn without the need for communicating with disruptive behaviours. Children want to please adults and do well, and so they need guidance and models of positive behaviour from the adults around them. Children learn through experience and example. It is up to the adults in the classroom to be the role models for children in a number of ways, and appropriate behaviour is one of the most important. All adults working with young children should be aware of their behaviours.

Modelling acceptable ways of interacting with others in the childcare environment is an important job of any adult working with young children. As the children observe and model these behaviours, they will be taught and reinforced.

Two of the biggest challenges children face are learning acceptable behaviour and being able to control their own behaviour. They need to be with educators who understand this and can help them learn these behaviours.

Behaviour Guidance is all the things you do and say to help children learn and demonstrate acceptable behaviour. The aim is for children to improve guiding and controlling their own behaviour and to rely less on carers to guide them. This takes a long time and means that a child needs to not only understand what is acceptable but also needs to develop the willpower and self-control to manage their own behaviour.

Positive guidance of behaviour is guiding children to recognise what is an appropriate thing to do and what is not, what is safe, what pleases other people and what angers and hurts other people. Positive guidance of behaviour should help children understand the difference between what acceptable behaviour is and what is not. When a child is re-directed, stopped or reprimanded, the reason for this action should be explained to the child. This will assist the child to make judgements about what he/she can and cannot do. Limits and orders given without explanation make a child dependent on other people for information about what to do.

Implementation

Educators Will

- Guide and manage behaviour in a positive way.
- Encourage children to empathise with other children.
- Encourage children to recognise and challenge unfair and inappropriate behaviour.
- Work with children to develop problem solving and conflict resolution skills.
- Liaise with families in developing effective behaviour management solutions to challenging behaviours.
- Encourage children to behave in a co-operative manner.
- Use positive language and tone when redirecting inappropriate behaviour.
- Ensure they are labelling the behaviour rather than the child.

- Provide an environment reflecting the qualities of consistency, harmony, affection, fairness, warmth, sensitivity, trust, respect and responsiveness.
- Assist children to learn about their own rights and the rights of others.
- Consider situations unique to each family when responding to and guiding a child’s behaviour.
- Offer encouragement and appreciation freely as recognition of appropriate behaviours.
- Model appropriate behaviour and form positive relationships with the children.
- Develop age and stage appropriate techniques for guiding behaviour.
- Ensure physical, verbal or emotional punishment is not used as a behaviour management technique. These techniques are not acceptable, permitted nor can they be justified as effective methods of behaviour management.

Parents Will

- Guide and manage behaviour in a positive way.
- Ensure physical, verbal or emotional punishment is not used as a behaviour management technique. These techniques are not acceptable, permitted nor can they be justified as effective methods of behaviour management
- Liaise with educators in developing effective behaviour management solutions to challenging behaviours.

Management Will

- Provide guidelines for educators to implement appropriate responses to children’s behavioural needs.
- Provide all new educators with Behaviour Management Handbook in order to inform them of Centre Policies and Procedures and to aid in professional development of this skill.
- Offer in-service workshops to assist educators in developing positive behaviour management techniques
- Make recommendations for suggested responses to particular behaviour problem issues.
- Provide parents with current information on positive behaviour guidance.
- Provide a variety of resources to support interactive play among children.

Evaluation and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually. Family and educator feedback will be considered in the review process. Changes in legislation, regulations, and NQS will be considered. Any changes to this policy will be communicated to families and educators verbally and in writing.

Sources

Early Childhood Module Series – Behaviour Guidance through Positive Programming
Guiding Children’s Behaviour in Positive Ways – NCAC FDQA fact sheet Volume 6

Policy Updated Date August 2024

Links to NQS

Element 1.1.1	Curriculum decision making contributes to each child’s learning and development outcomes in relation to their identity, connection with community, wellbeing, confidence as learners and effectiveness as communicators.
Element 1.1.2	Each child’s current knowledge, ideas, culture, abilities and interests are the foundation of the program.
Element 1.1.3	The program including routines is organised in ways that maximise opportunities for each child’s learning.
Element 2.3.1	Children are adequately supervised at all times.

Element 3.2.2	Resources, materials and equipment are sufficient in number, organised in ways that ensure appropriate and effective implementation of the program and allow for multiple uses.
Element 5.1.2	Every child is able to engage with educators in meaningful, open interactions that support the acquisition of skills for life and learning.
Element 5.1.3	Each child is supported to feel secure, confident and included.
Element 5.2.2	Each child is supported to manage their own behaviour, respond appropriately to the behaviour of others and communicate effectively to resolve conflicts.
Element 5.2.3	The dignity and rights of every child are maintained at all times.
Element 7.1.2	The induction of educators, co-coordinators, staff members, including relief educators is comprehensive.
Element 7.2.1	A statement of philosophy is developed and guides all aspects of the services operations.

Positive Behaviour Management Procedure

Educators need to be aware why children misbehave:

Children express how they feel through their actions and behaviour. Misbehaviour is a way of children expressing their feelings and needs. Children often misbehave if they are not coping with a situation. They may not have the social or problem solving skills, or emotional maturity to act in an appropriate way. Caregivers need to try to understand the child's feelings and methods of coping, and help the child deal with the situation.

Factors that influence and may cause inappropriate behaviour:

- Environment
- Educators
- Parents
- Child's diet
- Sleep patterns
- Illness
- Weather
- Cultural background
- Children not being able to express emotions and feelings appropriately
- Adult direction
- Family values
- Ethnic background

Educators have to provide a positive environment and ensure their own attitudes and reactions remain positive

Catch children doing well and let them know this. Give them useful information about their behaviour without judging their characters, "Good boy" is a judgement, saying "I like the way you cleaned up the blocks, it looks very neat and tidy now, well done" is more appropriate. Your job is not to control the children but to help guide them on the right path and have fun with them along the way. Don't get caught up with trying to control the children's every move to ensure that limited mess is made to make your day easier.

Educators should anticipate and prevent problems

The environment should be – orderly with well-defined spaces, filled with appropriate activities and materials, scheduled to be geared to the needs of the children with well organised routines and transitions. A child with difficult behaviours also can help improve the program. A highly active child may be the first (or the only one) to let you know that your activity is boring. A child who cries often may be demonstrating that you may not have enough inviting things to do or that your routines are not meeting the needs of the child

Rules/Expectations

Remind children of rules ahead of time: "Please walk when we get inside the room". Let your expectations be known immediately before the event. Use clear and positive tones to make the children feel comfortable to follow command. Speak to the children the way you like to be spoken to. Promote co-operation when situations arise in the room. Ask a child to help another child who has broken a rule: "Rhys, please tell Michael about the rule about not running inside and give him ideas about how to remember it". This reminds both children about the rule but allow the children to co-operate together.

Managing large group gatherings

Young children who are not ready for group experiences will tell you by wiggling, getting up, lying down or walking away. When they do, they are giving you valuable feedback – something, the activity or the timing, is not appropriate to the needs of the group – shorten group times appropriately to prevent behaviour management issues. With younger groups provide smaller group activities rather than trying to have whole group activities and stop when the children appear restless.

Voice Control

All educators with good control of their group have mastered the art of voice control. If you speak in a moderate voice most of the time, the very few times that you do raise your voice slightly or lower it, you will immediately have a big impact on the children. Children are just like us and deserve to be spoken to like human beings and not yelled at. Keep a positive and stable tone and the children will feel safe and respected. Single directions to children are also a powerful mechanism for gaining attention.

Tips for effective discipline

- Anticipate trouble
- Give gentle reminders
- Distract to a positive model
- Inject humour
- Offer choices
- Give praise and compliments
- Offer encouragement
- Clarify messages
- Overlook small annoyances
- Deliberately ignore provocations
- Reconsider the situation
- Give hugs and caring continuously

How to handle misbehaviour

- Ignoring – don't ignore the child just the behaviour
- Redirecting – involves helping the child find an alternative activity
- Time out/cooling off – hurtful behaviour or an angry outburst can sometimes be helped by a cooling off period.
- Allowing consequences – while we help children to be responsible when we allow them to experience the consequences of their choices.
- Positive reinforcement – What is positive reinforcement? It's a fancy term for something you already do. Every time you give a child thumbs up for a job well done, a sticker for good work, a few minutes of special time alone with you; you are giving positive reinforcement.

Educators need to teach and model the correct behaviour

- If a child snatches a toy, hits another child, crashes his bike into another child's or does some similar problematic behaviour, assume that the child does not know the correct behaviour.
- Keep telling and showing the child the appropriate behaviour even if you have told them several times
- Young children need repetition to learn and they do not carry information from one situation to another very easily.
- They may know not to crash their bike into the fence, but do not realise that crashing their bikes into another bike is not ok
- At the same time remind him/her of the rules and give consequences to the behaviour. Make the consequences relevant i.e. if you throw sand at your friends you will have to leave the sandpit, if you crash your bike into another you will have to hop off the bike.

Educators must use logical consequences to address inappropriate behaviour

- Will only work if acted upon straight away
- Ensure “punishment fits the crime”
- Ensure children are aware of the consequences ahead of time- by doing this the child will choose the outcome. E.g. “sand will hurt our eyes, if you throw sand again you will chose to leave the sandpit”
- If a child misuses a piece of equipment, the logical consequence is that she/he helps to fix it if possible, and then not get to use that piece of equipment for a period of time
- The logical consequence of tripping another child is to help the hurt child get up and comfort her
- Logical consequences will only be successful if carried out immediately
- Remember a rule is only as good as it is followed
- There is no point of acting on a problem if you do not do something then and there.

Reaction

- Whatever approach you take, react calmly to negative behaviours
- Many young children with difficult behaviours are used to getting a big response from adults as a result of their behaviours.
- They thrive on attention, excitement, anger and chaos they can create

Reaction: Stay Calm

- If they see that you will react the same way you will experience difficulty getting them to reduce the behaviours
- If they see you are not reacting strongly, they might step up the behaviours at first, but eventually they will give them up.

Follow through – consistency

- Follow through with the consequence every time
- Follow up with the child after the incident – ensure your interactions and expectations are age appropriate

Focus on the positive

- In order to prevent behaviour problems in your room, work on three major areas:
- The physical environment
- Your routines and program
- Your own attitudes, actions and reactions

Your own attitudes and reactions

- Your job is not to control the children but help guide them on the right path and have fun with them along the way
- Do not get caught up with trying to control the children’s every move to ensure that limited mess is made to make your day easier

Be Positive

- Catch the children doing well and let them know that they are doing well

- Give them useful information about their behaviour without judging their characters. “Good girl” is a judgement. Saying “You tidied up the puzzles so quickly it makes our room look neat and it will be easy to play with the puzzles tomorrow” assists them to learn the positive behaviour.

Conclusion

Do we want children to do as they are told by adults or do we want them to learn what appropriate behaviour is?

Do we want children to behave because an adult is around or to develop their skills to control their own behaviour in any setting?

Understanding children’s development and providing careful guidance of their behaviour can lead them toward developing self-management, self-confidence and problem solving skills. Only then is discipline an effective life guide.

Maintaining Home Language While Learning English Policy

Rationale

Maintaining children's home languages allows them to:

- Communicate and express themselves, freely and in increasingly complex ways. This helps children nurture relationships with family and friends in their home country for a continued sense of belonging
- Develop and maintain a positive, cultural identity in which children know that their home language is valued and important.
- Transfer linguistic strengths, general skills and knowledge from their home languages to the language being learned, thus promoting proficiency in two languages and fostering bilingualism.

Aim

Shooting Stars Early Learning Centre aims to assist and support families to maintain their home language while their child learns English by encouraging parents to realize that their first language and culture is something to be proud of and children who are bilingual have many developmental advantages; for example Individuals who are bilingual switch between two different language systems so their brains are very active and flexible in the learning environment.

Implementation

Educators Will

- Help parents understand that children can learn more than one language at the same time. In fact, children will have an easier time learning English if they have a strong foundation in their first language.
- All families have a rich heritage to pass on to their children. Stories, chants, rhymes, poems, sayings, and songs are an important part of each family's culture. Encourage them to share these with educators and the other children in the service.
- Encourage families to read and tell stories in their home language. Explain that telling stories and reading in their home language teaches children words and ideas they will easily transfer into English.
- Provide opportunities for families to visit your room and talk about their language, traditions, culture, and heritage.
- Constantly be on the lookout for ways children can share their heritage regularly in the program
- Post signs in the languages of all the children in the class.
- Have books available in all families' languages.
- Invite families to share a story or read a book in their home language.
- Look for every chance to help children feel good about their home language.
- Actions speak louder than words. You send strong messages by the way you use or don't use children's home languages. Positive messages promote children's strong identity and self-esteem.
- Share your view that each family's language and culture is a source of pride and strength. Remind them how home language supports their children's growth in many ways.
- Explain to parents that young children can learn two or more languages at the same time. They learn quickly when they have lots of experiences with adults who speak with and listen to them.

Parents Will

- Be encouraged to share their language and culture with the educators and children in the program
- Be asked to teach the educators the words they will need to know in the child's first language in order to be able to effectively communicate about routines.
- Be provided with information to support and encourage them to continue using their first language and to be proud of their language and culture.

Management Will

- Library programs, cultural festivals, speakers, and concerts are great places for families to meet others who speak their home language.
- Invite families to share this kind of information with one another by providing a family bulletin board or flyer so they can exchange information.
- Talk with families about encouraging their children to continue using their home language. Long-term relationships depend on language. Communication gets even more important as children get older and they need strong family support to continue speaking their home language.
- Provide families with copies of the information sheets from the National Centre for Cultural and Linguistic Responsiveness.
- Help families understand the benefits of using their language. When they have the confidence to continue using their language at home, they will make it a priority.
- Encourage families to share their culture. Sharing their language and culture teaches their children to feel good about who they are, and teaches the other children more about their children's culture.
- Assist families who need their child's documentation or centre documentation to be translated into their first language.

Evaluation and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually. Family and educator feedback will be considered in the review process. Changes in legislation, regulations, and NQS will be considered. Any changes to this policy will be communicated to families and educators verbally and in writing.

Associated Forms and Documentation

Educator Child Interactions/Communication Policy
Communication with families Policy
Partnership with Parents Policy
Enrolment forms

Sources

National Centre for Cultural and Linguistic Responsiveness:

<http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/ta-system/cultural-linguistic/center/home-language.html>

Language at Home and in the Community information sheet

The Benefits of Being Bilingual information sheet

The Gift of Language information sheet

Policy Created Date

October 2013

Links to NQS

Element 1.1.1	Curriculum decision making contributes to each child's learning and development outcomes in relation to their identity, connection with community, wellbeing, confidence as learners and effectiveness as communicators.
Element 1.1.2	Each child's current knowledge, ideas, culture, abilities and interests are the foundation of the program.
Element 1.1.3	The program including routines is organised in ways that maximise opportunities for each child's learning.
Element 1.1.4	The documentation about each child's program and progress is available to families.
Element 1.1.5	Every child is supported to participate in the program.
Element 5.1.1	Interactions with each child are warm and responsive and build trusting relationships.
Element 5.1.2	Every child is able to engage with educators in meaningful, open interactions that support the acquisition of skills for life and learning.

Element 5.1.3	Each child is supported to feel secure, confident and included.
Element 6.1.2	Families have opportunities to be involved in the service and contribute to service decisions
Element 6.1.3	Current information about the service is available to families
Element 6.2.1	The expertise of families is recognised and they share in decision making about their child's learning and wellbeing.
Element 6.2.2	Current information is available to families about community services and resources to support parenting and family wellbeing.
Element 7.2.1	A statement of philosophy is developed and guides all aspects of the services operations.

Section 6

Collaborative Partnerships with Families and Communities

Enrolment and Orientation Policy

Rationale

For parents and children starting child care for the first time separation anxiety is common. For many children, child care is their first experience of extended separation from their parents and for many parents the guilt they have about leaving their child can make the first few days of child care an emotional time. A little preparation can go a long way towards decreasing the anxiety felt by both children and parents as your family becomes accustomed to the new arrangement. (Care for Kids website)

Aim

Our enrolment and orientation process is designed to ease the transition into the care environment through ensuring the family is familiar and comfortable with the educators and the learning environment before the child actually starts care.

Our aim is to ensure

- equal access for all children using Priority of Access guidelines
- meeting the needs of the local community
- all families are welcomed and receive an effective orientation into the service.

Implementation

Before commencing their child's early learning experience at Shooting Stars Early Learning Centre parents are encouraged to attend an interview and tour of the centre with the Nominated Supervisor, Educational Leader or a Senior Educator. This way the family can meet everyone and make the child familiar with the whole new experience and to make the transition into care a comfortable one.

The parents can then ask the educator any questions they may have, and go over any concerns prior to their child commencing. At this meeting, parents will be issued with all the necessary paperwork, which will need to be completed prior to the child's commencement at the Centre. This is a legislative requirement from the Office for Early Childhood Education and Care.

Educators Will

Follow the enrolment and orientation process.

The orientation process must include:

- The person conducting the orientation to introduce themselves to the parent/s.
- Visiting the room the child will be attending. The parents should be introduced to the room educators. The following information will be explained while in the room:
 - Educator: child ratios for that room
 - Maximum group size
 - Age of children attending the room
 - Where the program is situated
 - Where the daily routine is displayed
 - Where the children's bags are kept
 - The process with placing the child's lunch in the fridge
 - Where the communication pockets are.
- Visit the playground the child will be accessing and a brief tour of the other rooms. Explain the daily routine for the start and finish of the day i.e. what room they start in and what room they finish in each day.
- Introduce the family to all educators that are in the areas visited during orientation.
- Showing parents the sign in books at the front counter, medication folder and incident folder in each room. Explaining the procedure for each. Show them where the centre license and accreditation information is.
- Show the parents the fees box and explain the payment options and expectations.
- Showing parents where they can access helpful information.
- Handing the family the enrolment package, offering to give them a quote for their attendance based on their CCB percentage.
- Suggest that they bring their child in for a couple of play sessions before they actually start attending.
- Give families an access code for the front door.

- Explain that the centre is open from 6:30am to 6:30 pm Monday to Friday and is only closed for gazetted public holidays throughout the year.

On enrolment and commencement in the room the room educator should:

- Allocate the child a locker and a communication pocket and show the family where this is.
- Talk about the room routine – when the child will eat, have a rest etc.
- Talk to the family about the meal routine in the room eg for morning tea fruit or yoghurt is preferred then afternoon tea is labelled and placed in a basket in the fridge. Whether your room prefers drink bottles for water or uses cups.
- Familiarize the family with the medication procedure; show them where the forms are kept and how to store their child's medication
- Show the family where the program, day book and communication book or sheets are kept
- Ask the family for a scrap book or display book for their art experiences and child profile.
- Commence building a good relationship with the family and encourage the parent to share information to assist in the developing of the child profile and the room program.

Parents Will

Be given an enrolment package containing an enrolment form and a Parent Handbook. Parents are encouraged to read all paperwork given to them thoroughly and keep it in a safe place to refer to it later. A fully completed Enrolment Form must be provided for all children enrolled at the service. Families will be asked to update their details and emergency contact details at least annually. The enrolment record must contain the following information:

- full name, date of birth and address of the child
- name, address and contact details for: each known parent/guardian/person with parental responsibilities, any emergency contact, any authorised nominee, any person who is authorised to consent to administration of medication, any person who is authorised to give permission to an educator to remove the child from the education and care service premises
- details of any court orders, parenting orders or parenting plans
- gender of the child
- language used in the child's home
- cultural background of the child and parents
- any special considerations for the child, such as any cultural, religious or dietary requirements of additional needs
- authorisation to seek medical treatment for the child and/or ambulance transportation
- name, address and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner or medical service
- child's Medicare number (if available)
- details of any specific healthcare needs of the child, including any medical condition, allergies or a diagnosis that the child is at risk of anaphylaxis
- any medical management plan, anaphylaxis management plan or risk minimisation plan for the child
- any dietary requirements of the child
- immunisation status of the child
- CRN numbers for parent and child
- The immunisation history must be provided on enrolment, copied and kept on file. Families are asked to provide the immunisation history to the centre each time it is updated.

During the orientation process the parents will have the opportunity to look at and discuss

- Room programs
- Policies and procedures
- Parental involvement
- Items provided by the service
- Discuss the healthy food policy
- The sun safety policy

Management Will

- Ensure enrolment information is kept in a confidential file and that access is limited to educators, the family and regulatory authority officers.
- Update the enrolment package and parent handbook as required.
- Provide a full parent handbook on enrolment – this is too lengthy to give to families who are just enquiring about care – the enrolment handbook contains a simplified version of this information.
- Enquire as to whether parents/guardians would like any material translated into a different language.

Enrolment and Orientation Procedures

Purpose

To ensure that all new families are welcomed to Shooting Stars Early Learning Centre in a manner that meets the latest regulatory requirements and best practices, ensuring a smooth transition for children and their families. Additionally, to ensure that all necessary information is collected and securely stored in compliance with current data protection laws.

Enrolment Procedures

1. **Initial Enquiry:**
 - Provide prospective families with detailed information about the centre, including fees, programs, policies, and the enrolment process.
 - Offer a tour of the centre to familiarize families with the environment and introduce them to educators and staff.
2. **Enrolment Form:**
 - Provide families with an enrolment form to collect necessary information such as child's name, date of birth, medical details, health information, routines, and emergency contact details.
 - Ensure the form includes sections for parents to provide CRN numbers for Child Care Subsidy (CCS) purposes.
3. **Documentation:**
 - Collect copies of the child's birth certificate, immunization records, and any court orders (if applicable).
 - Ensure all documentation is complete and signed by the parents or guardians.
4. **Health and Medical Information:**
 - Obtain detailed medical information, including allergies, dietary requirements, and any medical conditions.
 - Request a medical management plan for children with specific health needs.
5. **Orientation Session:**
 - Schedule an orientation session where families can spend time in the centre with their child.
 - Discuss the child's routine, sleep and rest needs, dietary preferences, and any other specific requirements with the parents.
 - Introduce the child to their primary educator and familiarize them with the daily routine.
6. **Parent Handbook:**
 - Provide a Parent Handbook that includes important policies, procedures, and contact information.
 - Ensure parents understand key policies such as the Health and Safety Policy, Confidentiality Expectations, and Fee Policy.

Orientation Procedures

1. **Welcome Pack:**
 - Provide a welcome pack to new families, including information about the centre's philosophy, curriculum, and daily schedule.
 - Include any necessary forms and a checklist of items to bring to the centre.
2. **Initial Meeting:**
 - Arrange a meeting between the family and the child's primary educator to discuss the child's interests, strengths, and areas for development.
 - Review the child's personal profile, including medical information, routines, and comfort items.

3. Transition Visits:

- Offer transition visits where the child can gradually become accustomed to the new environment, starting with short visits and gradually increasing in duration.
- Ensure the child feels comfortable and secure before starting full-time attendance.

4. Communication:

- Establish clear lines of communication between the centre and the family, including preferred methods of contact and regular updates on the child's progress.
- Encourage parents to share any concerns or feedback during the transition period.

Data Protection and Privacy

1. Secure Storage:

- Store all collected information securely, ensuring it is only accessible to authorized personnel.
- Use locked cabinets for physical documents and secure, password-protected systems for digital records.

2. Data Protection Compliance:

- Ensure all practices comply with current data protection laws, including the Privacy Act and National Privacy Principles.
- Regularly review and update data protection policies to reflect any changes in legislation.

3. Confidentiality:

- Maintain strict confidentiality of all personal information collected.
- Ensure that information is only shared with individuals involved in the direct care of the child or as required by law.

Evaluation and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually. Family and educator feedback will be considered in the review process. Changes in legislation, regulations, and NQS will be considered. Any changes to this policy will be communicated to families and educators verbally and in writing.

Associated Forms and Documentation

Enrolment Package

Parent Handbook

Acceptance or Refusal of Authorisations Policy

Communication with Families Policy

Policy Reviewed Date August 2024 October 2013

Link to NQS

Element 1.1.4	The documentation about each child's program and progress is available to families.
Element 2.2.1	Healthy eating is promoted and food and drinks provided by the service are nutritious and appropriate to each child.
Element 4.2.1	Professional standards guide practice, interactions and relationships.
Element 5.1.1	Interactions with each child are warm and responsive and build trusting relationships.
Element 5.1.2	Every child is able to engage with educators in meaningful, open interactions that support the acquisition of skills for life and learning.
Element 5.1.3	Each child is supported to feel secure, confident and included.
Element 6.1.1	There is an effective enrolment and orientation process for families
Element 6.1.2	Families have opportunities to be involved in the service and contribute to service decisions
Element 6.1.3	Current information about the service is available to families
Element 6.2.1	The expertise of families is recognised and they share in decision making about their child's learning and wellbeing.
Element 6.2.2	Current information is available to families about community services and resources to support parenting and family wellbeing.
Element 7.2.1	A statement of philosophy is developed and guides all aspects of the services operations.

Element 7.3.1	Records and information are stored appropriately to ensure confidentiality, are available from the service and are maintained in accordance with legislative requirements.
Element 7.3.2	Administrative systems are established and maintained to ensure the effective operation of the service.

Parent Complaints/Grievance Policy

Rationale

Shooting Stars Early Learning Centre aims to foster positive relations between all management, parents and educators. Every parent has the right to a positive and sympathetic response to his or her concerns. Solutions are sought to resolve all disputes, issues, concerns that impact, or affect the day-to-day well-being of the centre in a fair, prompt and positive manner. It is not ethical to involve other parents or educators in an individual concern, and it is not ethical to have that concern affect parent relationships. It is also not appropriate to involve outside agencies before seeing the Nominated Supervisor or other management team members with your concerns. The management team will try all avenues to solve the problems at Centre level.

Aim

Every parent is provided with clear written guidelines detailing grievance procedures. All confidential conversations/discussions with parents will take place in a quiet area away from children, other parents and educators who are not involved.

Implementation

A grievance procedure is the process by which solutions are sought to resolve disputes in a fair, equitable and prompt manner. Grievances should be resolved as informally and quickly as possible by the parties involved. When the persons directly involved cannot resolve grievances informally, a formal grievance process is implemented. Not all disputes can be handled in one particular format and judgement needs to be made on what particular style is appropriate to suit each individual dispute. Follow the Centre Structure Table to identify appropriate person to address complaint/grievance to.

Educators Will follow the complaints handling procedure

Complaints Handling Procedure

When a parent approaches an educator with a generalised complaint the educator should refer the parent to the management team or a senior educator.

- Not discuss the parent complaint with anyone other than management or the senior educator.
- Remain professional while dealing with parent complaints. Follow the policy and the centre confidentiality policy.
- The management team member or senior educator needs to listen to the parent complaint, write down as much information as possible and give the parent an idea of what can be done to resolve the situation.
- The senior educator should pass the information to the management team.
- The management team member should then discuss the issue with the particular educator/s involved. Notes should be taken of that discussion.
- The management team member should then contact the parent and let them know what was achieved or changed etc. to resolve the issue.

Parents Will

Procedure for dealing with a complaint, issue or conflict:

- The parent should initially discuss the problem with the relevant educator concerned
- If the parent still feels further action is necessary after discussion with the relevant educator they should take the matter up with a Senior Educator.
- If the parent is still unhappy, or the initial complaint is with the Senior Educator the parent take the matter to the centre management team or the Nominated Supervisor.
 - Or
- The parent can make an appointment to discuss the matter with the management team and/or educators involved. If this does not resolve the issue then –
- The parent can ring the Department of Early Childhood Education and Care.

VICTORIA

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development

Address:
 GPO Box 4367
 MELBOURNE, VIC
 3001

Website:
www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/regulation

Email:
licensed.childrens.services@edumail.vic.gov.au

Phone:
 1300 307 415

Management Will

- Speak with the parent in a private area taking notes of the complaint/grievance and verifying all information.
- Reassure the parent that the grievance procedure will be followed as promptly as possible and inform them of the next step in the process.
- Speak with the educator/s involved in a private area documenting the conversation as fully as possible.
- Check all policies and procedures that are linked to the grievance and follow policy.
- If the educator has failed to follow a centre policy or procedure set another meeting to go through the policy with them detailing their lack of compliance. Provide them with a copy of the documentation. Discuss centre requirements to remedy the situation and provide a time frame for compliance.
- Contact the parent and let them know what has been implemented to address their grievance.

Evaluation and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually. Family and educator feedback will be considered in the review process. Changes in legislation, regulations, and NQS will be considered. Any changes to this policy will be communicated to families and educators verbally and in writing.

Associated Forms and Documentation

Governance and Management Policy
 Confidentiality Expectations
 Notifying the regulatory authority Policy
 Procedure for Resolving Poor Work Performance and Unacceptable Behaviour

Policy Created Date October 2013

Link to NQS

Element 4.2.1	Professional standards guide practice, interactions and relationships.
Element 4.2.2	Educators, co-ordinators and staff members work collaboratively and affirm, challenge, support and learn from each other to further develop their skills and improve practice and relationships.
Element 4.2.3	Interactions convey mutual respect, equity and recognition of each other’s strengths and skills.
Element 6.1.2	Families have opportunities to be involved in the service and contribute to service decisions

Element 6.2.1	The expertise of families is recognised and they share in decision making about their child's learning and wellbeing.
Element 7.2.2	The performance of educators, co-ordinators and staff members is evaluated and individual development plans are in place to support performance improvement.
Element 7.3.3	The Regulatory Authority is notified of any relevant changes to the operation of the service, of serious incidents and of any complaints which allege a breach of legislation.
Element 7.3.4	Processes are in place to ensure that all grievances and complaints are addressed, investigated fairly and documented in a timely manner.
Element 7.3.5	Service practices are based on effectively documented policies and procedures that are available at the service and reviewed regularly.

Communication with Families Policy

Rationale

To enable the educators at the centre to provide the highest quality of care, it is imperative that parents and educators are able to communicate openly and with respect. Parents should feel comfortable in discussing any concerns they may have.

Aim

To provide open communication links between educators and parents, and to encourage parents to actively use these links in order to ensure continuity of care between the centre and the home.

Implementation

There will be a variety of communication methods available to facilitate communication between families and educators including written and verbal communication, technology and photos. Families will be encouraged to speak with educators about their preferred method of communication and each room and educator will develop their own method that best suits their families.

Educators Will

- *Encourage parents to request an interview time to allow for uninterrupted discussion regarding their child's developmental level, progress and accomplishments, plus time for sharing and queries, concerns, suggestions, expectations and child rearing practices.
- *Complete their daily communication sheets – "What we did today", "Day Sheets" will be used by the room educators to inform parents about their child's day.
- *When parents are not collecting their child personally each day an individual communication book can be offered to ensure effective communication between the room educators and the family.
- *Encourage parents to phone through the day to check on their child.
- *Be welcoming and hospitable to families who wish to be involved in the program and take advantage of our open door policy.

Parents Will

- Be encouraged to communicate regularly with their child's educator about their child's progress and to offer information that can be used within the program.
- Be encouraged to use the suggestion box to voice concerns, queries or suggestions regarding the administration of the centre, policies and programs. This is situated in reception.
- Place general messages for management or educators in the communication book at reception.
- Complete forms and information requested by educators and management.

Management Will

- Keep families informed about centre news through regular newsletters, conversations, notice board announcements, telephone calls and memos.
- Encourage parents to phone through the day to check on their newly enrolled child. Reassure families that we will not allow a very distressed child to remain distressed without notifying them if our usual settling techniques are unsuccessful.
- Check the communication book each day and pass messages on to educators.
- Use technology as a further tool for communication with families e.g. Facebook page and sending photos of their children participating in the program via mobile phone.

Evaluation and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually. Family and educator feedback will be considered in the review process. Changes in legislation, regulations, and NQS will be considered. Any changes to this policy will be communicated to families and educators verbally and in writing.

Associated Forms and Documentation

Enrolment forms
Communication books
Day sheets

Policy Updated Date August 2024

Link to NOS

Element 1.1.4	The documentation about each child's program and progress is available to families.
Element 4.2.1	Professional standards guide practice, interactions and relationships.
Element 4.2.2	Educators, co-ordinators and staff members work collaboratively and affirm, challenge, support and learn from each other to further develop their skills and improve practice and relationships.
Element 4.2.3	Interactions convey mutual respect, equity and recognition of each other's strengths and skills.
Element 6.1.2	Families have opportunities to be involved in the service and contribute to service decisions
Element 6.1.3	Current information about the service is available to families
Element 6.2.1	The expertise of families is recognised and they share in decision making about their child's learning and wellbeing.
Element 6.2.2	Current information is available to families about community services and resources to support parenting and family wellbeing.
Element 7.2.1	A statement of philosophy is developed and guides all aspects of the services operations.
Element 7.3.2	Administrative systems are established and maintained to ensure the effective operation of the service.

Partnership with Parents Policy

Rationale

Children are spending increasingly large amounts of time within a care environment outside the home. In order to provide a high quality care environment it is important for parents and child care service educators to work cooperatively and collaboratively to provide the best outcomes for children. The relationship between the centre and the family is important to help promote understanding, ensure continuity of care and enhance the family feeling of belonging. The commitment of parents is essential in the functioning of the Centre.

Aim

Shooting Stars Early Learning Centre aims to:

- Communicate regularly with families to share information about each child's health and development.
- Strengthen the partnership between educators and families.
- Increase the opportunities where educators and families can communicate and share information.
- Encourage the active participation of families within the service.
- Enhance the collaborative nature of relationships between parents and educators.

Implementation

The partnership between parents and the centre is characterised by the following:

- Mutual respect
- Trust
- Open communication
- Common goals
- Equality
- Shared decision making
- Sensitivity
- Team-work
- Relaying of helpful information about the child

To foster a partnership with parent's educators will:

- Begin with an attitude of respect for parents
- Ask parents for information about how they care for their child, what their routine at home is etc. so that the centre can work in conjunction with the family to maintain common practises.
- Involve parents whenever possible in making decisions about the child's experiences.
- Talk with parents. Establish a pattern of conversation and exchange of information at arrival and departure.
- Keep in mind that parents are not just parents; they have many roles – workers, spouses, relatives - show an interest in their lives.
- Accept individual differences in parents and their relationship with their children.
- Accept that some parents may not be able to give a lot to the centre at particular points in their lives.
- Know the limits of your own competence. Be ready to refer parents with problems to someone with more knowledge.

To ensure educator/parent relationships are collaborative educators will:

- Share their program including observations, program and reflections with families and encourage feedback and suggestions from the parents.
- Recognise that parents bring real expertise about the child, the situation and what would work best in their family.
- Believe that the best interest of the child will be achieved when the knowledge and skills of the parent and the professional are shared.
- Believe that there are many different ways to achieve the same positive results. The "right way" is the way which suits best the child's needs and the family's values and goals.

- Understand that the cause of child behaviour problems are multi-faceted and often involve factors that are beyond the parents' control e.g. child's temperament, disability, social and family factors. They should believe that although the parent is not to blame they are always part of the solution.
- Respect the problem solving capacity of the parent and endeavours to empower the parent further through suggestions, resources and strategies aimed at achieving realistic goals for the child.
- Act as a resource for the parent; sharing information, ideas and knowledge; but let the parents decide what they will do with such assistance.
- Respect the parents' values and beliefs. Refrains from giving personal opinions.
- Actively seek parent opinions, ideas and contributions.
- Encourages parents to voice reservations, doubts and concerns and to express their opinions. Does not take parent questions personally or respond in the defensive.

Guidelines for parents to consider are:

- Educators will always try to give parents individual attention as much as possible however they can be very busy at times and may be unable to attend to a parent immediately. If parents arrive at busy times of the day and cannot spend as much time speaking with educators as they require they are welcome to use alternate methods of communication e.g. ask the educator to contact them via phone during rest time or leave a message in the communication book.
- Educators need to know as much about your child as possible in order to provide the best care. Parents should let the educators know if their child has been ill or unsettled while at home.
- Educators are a valuable source of information about your child and about childhood development in general.
- The centre wants to receive your feedback – it is a way of continuing to improve the level of service offered.
- Your input is always appreciated. Any assistance offered will be gratefully accepted.
- You may have skills, knowledge or a talent which could enhance the program offered to the children.

Management will:

- Produce regular newsletters informing parents about the centre.
- Allow opportunities for information exchange and settling in times.
- Ensure educators are hired with the necessary skills and qualifications for their position and an interest and enthusiasm for working with both children and parents.
- Value the opinions, feedback and input from families.
- Seek feedback, responses and opinions from the parents about the centre building, resources, program, policies and procedures through written feedback or conversations.

Evaluation and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually. Family and educator feedback will be considered in the review process. Changes in legislation, regulations, and NQS will be considered. Any changes to this policy will be communicated to families and educators verbally and in writing.

Sources

Putting Children First Issue 17 March 2006

Navigating common pitfalls in parenting conversations – developing the partnership Childcare and Children's Health Vol 8 No 6 February 2006

Exploring the Nature of Parent – Professional Partnerships Childcare and Children's Health Volume 8 No 1 March 2005

Associated forms and documentation

Enrolment Forms

Policy Review Documentation

Parent input forms

Newsletters

Grievance Policy

Policy Updated Date August 2024

Link to NOS

Element 1.1.4	The documentation about each child's program and progress is available to families.
Element 4.2.1	Professional standards guide practice, interactions and relationships.
Element 4.2.2	Educators, co-ordinators and staff members work collaboratively and affirm, challenge, support and learn from each other to further develop their skills and improve practice and relationships.
Element 4.2.3	Interactions convey mutual respect, equity and recognition of each other's strengths and skills.
Element 6.1.2	Families have opportunities to be involved in the service and contribute to service decisions
Element 6.1.3	Current information about the service is available to families
Element 6.2.1	The expertise of families is recognised and they share in decision making about their child's learning and wellbeing.
Element 6.2.2	Current information is available to families about community services and resources to support parenting and family wellbeing.
Element 7.2.1	A statement of philosophy is developed and guides all aspects of the services operations.
Element 7.3.2	Administrative systems are established and maintained to ensure the effective operation of the service.

Section 7

Leadership and service Management

Governance and Management Policy

Rationale

Shooting Stars Early Learning Centre understands it has legal responsibilities associated with operating an early childhood education service. The approved provider has legal responsibility to comply with Education and Care Services National Laws (Victoria) Act 2011, National Quality Standards, National quality Framework and Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011. We are required to account for Government funds and ensure the fitness and propriety of the provider including Nominated Supervisor, Certified Supervisors and Educators employed within the service.

Aim

Shooting Stars Early Learning Centre will provide a quality education and care service and will operate according to all legal requirements. It will make every effort to reflect the special nature of the community and will encourage family input and take into account family, children and educators needs in the operation of the service. The approved provider will ensure that decisions are made in the best interest of the stakeholders within the service.

Implementation

- The approved provider will ensure that the organisation is properly set up and operates in accordance with all relevant legislation.
- Families will be actively encouraged to participate in the management of the service through participation in the parent committee; providing feedback to management; and involvement in social and community events.
- The approved provider acknowledges responsibility to the regulatory authority for ensuring that the service complies with conditions of approval including ensuring the presence of Nominated Supervisor and Certified Supervisors; ensuring the safety and maintenance of the premises; minimum number of educators and their qualifications and that educators and other persons who have contact with the children are fit and proper.
- Ratios of Educators to children are adhered to at all times.
- Policies and procedures will be regularly reviewed and updated to ensure compliance with regulations and to use latest information from recognised authorities.
- Families and educators will be informed of grievance procedure to ensure any issues they raise are dealt with in a professional manner.

Confidentiality Expectations

Rationale

In order to provide families with the highest standard of service Shooting Stars Early Learning Centre is required to collect personal information from them about their children and themselves before and during the course of a child's enrolment in the service. We are committed to protecting their privacy and we abide by the National Privacy Principles contained within the Privacy Act. Privacy of their personal information is important to us and we conduct our business with respect and integrity.

Aim

Basic details are usually collected directly from families such as names, address, phone contacts but it is also necessary for educators to collect details regarding child's name, date of birth, medical details, health, routines, likes and dislikes which make up a personal profile. In addition, we are required to hold information regarding your child's Child Care Benefit entitlements.

All this information is vital in assisting us to provide the best possible individual care for the child and for processing payments. Some of the information we collect is to satisfy the services legal obligations under the relevant childcare legislation and some to assist in the NQS Assessment Process. Naturally, much of this information is of a personal nature and some of it might be regarded as "sensitive" and not the sort of information that you would wish to have unnecessarily disclosed to others.

Educators are expected to follow very strict confidentiality rules and guidelines at all times to protect the privacy and confidentiality of the information we have collected. At Shooting Stars Early Learning Centre we aim:

- For educators to ensure confidentiality and security of children's records. Educators must be vigilant in ensuring that families only read their child's portfolios
- For management to respect and maintain confidentiality and privacy of families personal information
- For parents to have access to their child's individual development records and personal information
- For educators to ensure that the details we keep about families are accurate, complete and up to date

Implementation

Educators will:

- Store information collected from families securely, accessible only to educators.
- Not disclose information about families to anyone other than those involved in the child's care.
- Provide parents access to information held about themselves and their child upon request.
- Keep enrolment forms in a secure area.
- Ensure details about families are accurate, complete, and up to date.
- Not discuss personal information disclosed by families with anyone other than those directly caring for the child.
- Store child progress records to prevent unauthorized access.
- Keep confidential any information given to staff in confidence by parents.
- Ensure no information about the child or the parent is given to a third party without their consent.
- Refuse to confirm or deny the attendance or non-attendance of a child when asked by an unauthorized person.

Parents will:

- Provide basic details on enrolment for the purpose of enrolment and developing a personal profile for the child

- Inform the centre of their CRN number and the CRN number of the child so that the information can be submitted to CCMS prior to enrolment.
- Be encouraged to provide information about their child to be included in the Child's Portfolio and used for programming purposes.
- Look only at their child's portfolio to maintain confidentiality, they will not attempt to access information about other children/families.
- Advise educators if they do not wish for information to be placed in their child's portfolio

Management will:

- Maintain families Child Care Benefit entitlement information in a confidential manner
- Ensure only relevant educators have access to this information
- Ensure parents/guardians have access to information held by the centre
- Take reasonable steps to ensure that all times the details we keep about families are accurate, complete and up to date
- Take reasonable steps to protect any personal information from misuse or loss and from unauthorised access or disclosure

Evaluation and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually. Family and educator feedback will be considered in the review process. Changes in legislation, regulations, and NQS will be considered. Any changes to this policy will be communicated to families and educators verbally and in writing.

Associated Forms and Documentation

Grievance Policy
 Educator Code of Conduct
 Professionalism Policy
 Determining a responsible person policy

Policy Updated Date August 2024

Link to NQS

Element 1.1.4	The documentation about each child's program and progress is available to families.
Element 4.2.1	Professional standards guide practice, interactions and relationships.
Element 6.1.2	Families have opportunities to be involved in the service and contribute to service decisions
Element 6.1.3	Current information about the service is available to families
Element 7.1.1	Appropriate governance arrangements are in place to manage the service.
Element 7.1.4	Provision is made to ensure a suitably qualified and experienced educator or co-ordinator leads the development of the curriculum and ensures the establishment of clear goals and expectations for teaching and learning.
Element 7.1.5	Adults working with children and those engaged in management of the service or residing on the premises are fit and proper.
Element 7.3.1	Records and information are stored appropriately to ensure confidentiality, are available from the service and are maintained in accordance with legislative requirements.
Element 7.3.2	Administrative systems are established and maintained to ensure the effective operation of the service.
Element 7.3.3	The Regulatory Authority is notified of any relevant changes to the operation of the service, of serious incidents and of any complaints which allege a breach of legislation.
Element 7.3.4	Processes are in place to ensure that all grievances and complaints are addressed, investigated fairly and documented in a timely manner.
Element 7.3.5	Service practices are based on effectively documented policies and procedures that are available at the service and reviewed regularly.

Notifying the Regulatory Authority Policy

Rationale

The approved provider has a legal responsibility to comply with the Education and Care Services National Law (Victoria) Act 2011, National Quality Standards, National Quality Framework, and Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011. There are identifiable instances when it is expected that the regulatory authority be notified of incidents categorized by the National Regulations as serious incidents or changes which will affect the ability of the service to comply with the legislation and regulations. *Aim*

The aim of this policy is to identify in what circumstances the regulatory authority needs to be notified and to clarify the roles of service personnel in the notification process.

Aim

The aim of this policy is to identify the circumstances under which the regulatory authority needs to be notified and to clarify the roles of service personnel in the notification process.

Implementation

Notification Process:

The approved provider will use the forms generated by ACECQA to notify the regulatory authority in the following incidents. The form will be downloaded and completed from the website as required, ensuring they are always up to date.

VIC

Contact Information:

- **Regulatory Authority:** VIC Department of Education and Early Childhood Development
- **Address:** GPO Box 4367, MELBOURNE, VIC 3001
- **Website:** www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/regulation
- **Email:** licensed.childrens.services@edumail.vic.gov.au
- **Phone:** 1300 307 415
- **Fax:** (03) 9651 3586

CS05 Notification of Change of Circumstances of a Certified Supervisor

This form need to be completed and submitted under the following circumstances:

- Suspension or cancellation of a working with children card or teacher registration.
- Disciplinary proceedings under an education law of a participating jurisdiction.
- Change of name or mailing address.
- Change to fitness and propriety requirements.
- Change to qualification, experience, and management capability requirements.
- Change to the history of the person's compliance with the matters listed in section 109 of the National Law.

NL01 Notification of Complaints, non-serious incidents and additional children in an emergency

This form needs to be completed and submitted under the following circumstances:

- Complaints alleging that the safety, health, or wellbeing of a child was or is being compromised.

- Complaints alleging that the Law has been breached.
- Incident that requires/required the Approved Provider to close, or reduce the number of children attending the service for a period.
- A circumstance that poses a significant risk to the health, safety or wellbeing of a child attending the service
- The attendance at an approved centre-based education and care service of any additional child or children being educated and cared for in an emergency (e.g., a child determined to be in need of protection under a child protection order, the parent of a child needs urgent health care that prevents them from caring for a child, etc.).

NS02 Notification of change to Nominated Supervisor

- This form needs to be completed and submitted under the following circumstances:
- There is to be a change to the person holding the Nominated Supervisor role
- An NL01 form needs to accompany this form
 - There is to be a change to the person holding the Nominated Supervisor role.
 - An NL01 form needs to accompany this form.
 - This notice must be provided to the Regulatory Authority:
 - At least 7 days before the new certified supervisor is to commence work as the nominated supervisor; or
 - If that period is not possible in the circumstances, as soon as practicable and not more than 14 days after the certified supervisor commences work as the nominated supervisor.

PA05 Notification of Surrender of Provider Approval

- An Approved Provider may surrender their Provider Approval. Under the Law, you are obliged to notify the parents of children enrolled at the education and care services you operate at least 14 days before the surrender is intended to take effect.
- If the Provider Approval is surrendered, the Approval is cancelled on the date specified in the notification. Where a Provider Approval is cancelled, any Service Approval held by the Provider is also taken to be surrendered. A cancelled Service Approval cannot be transferred to another Approved Provider.

SA04 Notification of Transfer of Service Approval

A service approval may be transferred from one approved provider to another. The transferring and receiving approval providers must jointly notify the regulatory authority

SA07 Notification of Surrender of Service Approval

An Approved Provider may surrender their Service Approval. Under the Law, you are obliged to notify the parents of children enrolled at the education and care service to which the Approval relates, and any associated children's service of the intention to surrender the Service Approval, at least 14 days before the surrender is intended to take effect.

SA12 Notification of change of information about the approved service

The regulatory authority needs to be notified of the following changes:

- Changes to hours and days of operation of service
- Change to Approved Service contact details
- Proposed changes to the centre based service premises (e.g. refurbishment)
- Nominated Supervisor - no longer employed by the service
- Nominated Supervisor - withdrawn consent to the Nomination
- Service has not commenced operation within 6 months of grant of Service Approval

SI01 Notification of a Serious Incident

An Approved Provider must notify the Regulatory Authority of any serious incident meaning an incident or class of incidents prescribed by the National Regulations as a serious incident at the approved education and care service.

The regulatory authority will be notified in the following circumstances:

- The death of a child while being educated and cared for by the service, or following an incident while being cared for by the service.
- Any incident involving serious injury or trauma to, or illness of, a child while being educated and cared for by an education and care service which a reasonable person would consider required urgent medical attention from a registered medical practitioner (e.g., whooping cough, broken limb, anaphylaxis reaction) or for which the child attended, or ought reasonably to have attended, a hospital.
- Attendance of emergency services at the education and care service premises was sought, or ought reasonably to have been sought.
- A child was missing from the service or was not able to be accounted for.
- A child was taken or removed from the service in a manner that contravenes the National Regulations.
- A child was mistakenly locked in or locked out of the service premises or any part of the premises.

Evaluation and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually. Family and educator feedback will be considered in the review process. Changes in legislation, regulations, and NQS will be considered. Any changes to this policy will be communicated to families and educators verbally and in writing.

Associated Forms and Documentation

CS05 Notification of Change of Circumstances of a Certified Supervisor

NL01 Notification of Complaints, non-serious incidents and additional children in an emergency

NS02 Notification of change to Nominated Supervisor

PA05 Notification of Surrender of Provider Approval

SA04 Notification of Transfer of Service Approval

SA07 Notification of Surrender of Service Approval

SA12 Notification of change of information about the approved service

Policy Updated Date August 2024

Link to NQS

Element 2.3.2	Every reasonable precaution is taken to protect children from harm and any hazard likely to cause injury.
Element 2.3.3	Plans to effectively manage incidents and emergencies are developed in consultation with relevant authorities, practised and implemented.
Element 4.1.1	Educator to child ratios and qualification requirements are maintained at all times
Element 7.1.1	Appropriate governance arrangements are in place to manage the service.
Element 7.1.5	Adults working with children and those engaged in management of the service or residing on the premises are fit and proper.
Element 7.3.3	The Regulatory Authority is notified of any relevant changes to the operation of the service, of serious incidents and of any complaints which allege a breach of legislation.
Element 7.3.4	Processes are in place to ensure that all grievances and complaints are addressed, investigated fairly and documented in a timely manner.
Element 7.3.5	Service practices are based on effectively documented policies and procedures that are available at the service and reviewed regularly.

Acceptance and Refusal of Authorisations Policy

Rationale

By law Education and Care Services are required to obtain appropriate authorisation from parents or guardians in relation to certain matters. These matters include the administration of medication, transportation of children by an ambulance service, collection of children from the service and excursions. This policy outlines authorisation requirements for preschools and actions to be taken where an authorisation submitted by parents or guardians is incomplete and therefore could lead to refusal to enact the authorisation.

Aim

We will ensure that we only act in accordance with correct authorisation as described in the Education and Care Services National Regulations, 2011.

Implementation

Where activities require authorisation, either to comply with national regulations, or to comply with our service policies, our service requires that the authorisation is provided in writing and is dated.

These activities include:

- Administration of medication.
- Administration of medical treatment, dental treatment, general first aid products and ambulance transportation.
- Excursions.
- Taking of photographs by people who aren't educators.
- Water based activities.
- Enrolment of children including naming of authorised nominees and persons authorised to consent to medical treatment.
- Permission to give the child an initial dose of paracetamol for fever.
- Written nomination of adults who are allowed to collect the child from the service.

The format of written authorisations required under the national law must comply with the regulations.
3.3

Our service does not accept verbal authorisations in any circumstances except in situations requiring:

- Emergency administration of medication, including emergencies involving anaphylaxis or asthma.

94 Exception to authorisation requirement—anaphylaxis or asthma emergency

- (1) Despite regulation 93, medication may be administered to a child without an authorisation in case of an anaphylaxis or asthma emergency.
- (2) If medication is administered under this regulation, the approved provider or nominated supervisor of the education and care service or family day care educator must ensure that the following are notified as soon as practicable—
 - (a) a parent of the child;
 - (b) emergency services.

161 Authorisations to be kept in enrolment record

- (1) The **authorisations** to be kept in the enrolment record for each child enrolled at an education and care service are—
 - (a) an authorisation, signed by a parent or a person named in the enrolment record as authorised to consent to the medical treatment of the child, for the approved provider, nominated supervisor or an educator to seek—
 - (i) medical treatment for the child from a registered medical practitioner, hospital or ambulance service; and
 - (ii) transportation of the child by an ambulance service; and
 - (b) if relevant, an authorisation given under regulation 102 for the education and care service to take the child on regular outings.

Educators Will

- Follow the centre medication policy at all times
- Contact families prior to administering paracetamol if possible, if this is not possible check that there is a signed authorisation in the child's enrolment form.
- Ensure they check the label of medication before administering it to the child.

Parents Will

- Complete a medication form each time their child requires medication ensuring all details are completed.
- Store their child's medication in the locked medication box in the room fridge.
- Provide medication that has a chemist label with their child's name, dosage required etc. as per our medication policy
- Inform educators that their child requires medication.
- Inform the service in writing if a previously unauthorised adult is to collect the child from the service

Management Will

- Ensure all authorisation forms should be filed with the child's enrolment details.

Evaluation and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually. Family and educator feedback will be considered in the review process. Changes in legislation, regulations, and NQS will be considered. Any changes to this policy will be communicated to families and educators verbally and in writing.

Associated Forms and Documentation

Medication Policy

Enrolment Form

Medication Forms

Sources

www.acequa.gov.au

Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011.

Policy Updated Date August 2024

Link to NQS

Element 2.1.1	Each child's health needs are supported.
Element 2.3.2	Every reasonable precaution is taken to protect children from harm and any hazard likely to cause injury.
Element 2.3.3	Plans to effectively manage incidents and emergencies are developed in consultation with relevant authorities, practised and implemented.
Element 7.1.1	Appropriate governance arrangements are in place to manage the service.
Element 7.3.1	Records and information are stored appropriately to ensure confidentiality, are available from the service and are maintained in accordance with legislative requirements.
Element 7.3.2	Administrative systems are established and maintained to ensure the effective operation of the service.

Fee Policy

Rationale

In order for our service to provide the highest quality child care for families it is essential that we must remain financially viable. At the same time we strive to ensure our fees are reasonable for all families and whilst we encourage families to make use of the governments' fee subsidy programs, it is imperative that all families continue to pay their child care gap fees by the due date

Aim

To inform families of the fee structure of the service and fee subsidy entitlements available to them.

Implementation

Fee subsidy entitlements available to families via the Department of Human Services:

If you choose to receive child care benefit and / or the child care rebate as a fee reduction, your Weekly fee (also known as the "Gap Fee") will be calculated according to your child care benefit Percentage; this is applied for through and determined by the Family Assistance Office.

Child Care Benefit (CCB)

Child Care Benefit is available to subsidise your fees. Your CRN number and your child's CRN number are required prior to commencing care so that we can link you to our service via our regular internet linkage with the CCMS network. Please contact the Family Assistance Office on 136150 if you do not know what your family CRN numbers are.

Immunisation is linked to the CCB scheme – failure to maintain the immunisation schedule may see your CCB cancelled until the immunisation is current.

Child Care Rebate (CCR)

Child Care rebate covers up to 50% of out of pocket child care fees up to a maximum amount per year.

Child Care Rebate is not income tested. You may be eligible for Child Care Rebate if:

- you use a service approved for Child Care Benefit, and
- you are eligible for Child Care Benefit, even if you earn too much to receive payment, and
- you and your partner meet the 'work, training, study test' or are exempt from it

The maximum amount of Child Care Rebate you may receive per child, per financial year, depends on which year it's for and on your out of pocket expenses. From July 2011, the Child Care Rebate maximum amount is \$7,500 per child per year. The maximum rebate amount will remain unchanged until 30 June 2014.

There are four ways to receive your Child Care Rebate.

- directly to your approved child care service, fortnightly
- directly to your bank account, fortnightly
- directly to your bank account, quarterly

The payment method you choose for Child Care Rebate will be applied for the entire financial year. A new payment method cannot be applied until the start of the next financial year unless exceptional circumstances apply.

Jobs, Education and Training Child Care Fee Assistance (JET)

Helps with the cost of approved child care for eligible parents undertaking activities such as job search, work, study, training or undertaking rehabilitation to enter, or re-enter the workforce as part of an Employment Pathway Plan (also known as a Participation Plan or Individual Participation Plan)

To find out if you are eligible for JET funding contact the Department of Human Services.

IF YOU ARE ELIGIBLE FOR JET FUNDING YOU WILL RECEIVE A LETTER CONFIRMING YOUR ELIGIBILITY, THE PERIOD OF ELIGIBILITY AND THE HOURS OF FUNDING ALLOCATED PER WEEK. WE REQUIRE A COPY OF THIS LETTER TO APPLY THE FUNDING TO YOUR ACCOUNT – IT IS NOT AUTOMATIC THROUGH THE CCMS PROCESS.

Allowable Absences

Each family is entitled to forty-two (42) allowable absence days per financial year under the Child Care Benefit Scheme. An allowable absence is defined as:

- Sick day
- Holiday
- RDO (Rostered Day Off)
- Occasional absence

Once the 42 allowable absence days have been used, full fees become payable. However, if your child is sick and you provide a medical certificate for the period of sickness, or if you have a letter from your employer for your RDO, this period is not included as an allowable absence but is classed as an approved absence and is charged at regular rates. Public holidays are also approved absences and do not count towards the 42 allowable absences

Fee Information

Attendance Fees

- *It is expected that each family will maintain their account in a zero or credit balance. Failure to do so may jeopardise your child's enrolment.*
- *Accounts will be issued on a weekly basis.*

Methods of Payment

Fees may be paid by the following methods:

- Cash
- EFTPOS
- Internet Banking

Child Care Subsidy (CCS) and Financial Assistance

Communication of Financial Assistance

- Ensure the fee policy reflects any changes in government subsidies or fee structures introduced in 2024.
- Clearly communicate the implications of the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) and any other relevant financial assistance programs.
- Families should be informed about how the CCS can reduce the out-of-pocket costs of childcare and the importance of maintaining up-to-date information with Centrelink to ensure they receive the correct subsidy.
- Families are encouraged to speak with the Nominated Supervisor or administrative staff if they have any questions or need assistance with understanding their fee statements or subsidy entitlements

Fees are to be paid for all days the child is enrolled including Public Holidays and absent days.

Late Pickup Fees

- The centre is staffed until 6.30 pm every weeknight. Late fees of \$1 per minute will be charged if your child has not been collected by this time.
- This fee recognises the additional costs for two educators required by Regulations to wait with your child until they are collected.
- Please phone the centre in advance if a late pickup is likely to occur so that staff can make appropriate arrangements for their own personal and family commitments.
- Parents are expected to pay the late fee no later than 2 days after they incur the fee.

Parents will be expected to pay the late fee no later than 2 days after they incur the fee.

What is Included in the Fees?

The fee applied to your child's care at Shooting Stars Early Learning Centre includes the provision of:

- Disposable nappies
- All bedding and linen

- Sunscreen
- Tissues
- Toilet paper
- Nappy cream
- Meals: breakfast up to 8:30am, morning tea, lunch, afternoon tea, and a late snack after 5:00pm

Holidays

Families taking annual leave will be required to pay their normal rate of fees to maintain their position within the centre.

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Public Holidays/Sick Days

Public holidays and sick days are paid for at the usual gap fee rate and there are no makeup days for these.

Statements:

Weekly statements will be available to parents. These statements will show clearly how much a family is charged for their child care place(s), any monies paid to the service, CCB / CCR and how much the family owes / or is in credit to the service.

Sources

<http://www.humanservices.gov.au>

Evaluation and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually. Family and educator feedback will be considered in the review process. Changes in legislation, regulations, and NQS will be considered. Any changes to this policy will be communicated to families and educators verbally and in writing.

Associated Forms and Documentation

Parent handbook

Policy Updated Date August 2024

Link to NQS

Element 7.3.1	Records and information are stored appropriately to ensure confidentiality, are available from the service and are maintained in accordance with legislative requirements.
Element 7.3.2	Administrative systems are established and maintained to ensure the effective operation of the service.
Element 7.3.5	Service practices are based on effectively documented policies and procedures that are available at the service and reviewed regularly.

Record Keeping Policy

Rationale

One of the responsibilities of operators of child-care centres is the maintenance of accurate and up-to-date records. Procedures also need to be reviewed and implemented changes to ensure that the service is able to meet the requirements of government and statutory bodies.

Aim

Implementation

The Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) have published a Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations. This guide contains a table of records and documents required to be kept by services in accordance with Regulation 183, which includes who's responsibility, times frames to be kept, and the reference to the National Law for the following types of records: evidence of public liability insurance; a quality improvement plan; child assessments; incident, injury, trauma and illness records; medication records; child attendances; child enrolments; death of a child while being educated and cared for by the service; record of services' compliance history; and record for responsible person in day-to-day charge. Additional records for centre-based services tabled in the guide include: staff records, record of access to early childhood teachers; record of educators working directly with children; and records of volunteers and students.

Children's Records

- Enrolment Forms – kept in folders in alphabetical order while enrolment is current; archived off-site when enrolment ends. These folders are accessible to educators but not families.
- Child Profile – kept by individual room educators during the year. Produced for families when requested. Archived off-site when year is completed.
- Medication forms – stored in folder in child's room throughout the year – each child has their own coversheet. Archived off-site when year is completed.
- Accident/Incident forms - stored in folder in child's room until signed – each child has their own coversheet. Archived off-site each quarter. Kept until child turns 21.
- Court orders are held in child's file in area where only educators can access them.
- Attendance records – in room folders at front desk. Archived off-site each financial year in quarter folders.

Educators Records

- Educator employment documents are kept in a filing cabinet while employed by the service. On leaving the service these documents will be archived off-site.
- Copies of qualifications, working with children card, first aid certification, certified supervisor certificate etc. are kept in a locked filing cabinet while employed by the service then archived off-site.
- Educator attendance records are kept on file at the service and archived each financial year.
- Any correspondence either to or from the educator is kept with their file.
- Written warnings are confidential and are kept on the employees file.

Students/Volunteers Records

- Student/volunteer records are kept in a filing cabinet during period of attendance then archived off-site on completion.
- The student/volunteer will sign in the visitors' book each day of attendance.

Management Will

Ensure documentation is kept in a confidential manner and is not accessible to anyone other than those who are required to see it.

Evaluation and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually. Family and educator feedback will be considered in the review process. Changes in legislation, regulations, and NQS will be considered. Any changes to this policy will be communicated to families and educators verbally and in writing.

Associated Forms and Documentation

Enrolment forms
Accident/incident forms
Medication forms
Educator employment records
Visitor sign in book

Sources

ACECQA; Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services
National Regulations
Resource Sheet – Record Keeping Requirements; Gowrie Victoria 2012

Policy Updated Date August 2024

Link to NOS

Element 4.1.1	Educator to child ratios and qualification requirements are maintained at all times
Element 4.2.1	Professional standards guide practice, interactions and relationships.
Element 4.2.2	Educators, co-ordinators and staff members work collaboratively and affirm, challenge, support and learn from each other to further develop their skills and improve practice and relationships.
Element 4.2.3	Interactions convey mutual respect, equity and recognition of each other's strengths and skills.
Element 7.3.1	Records and information are stored appropriately to ensure confidentiality, are available from the service and are maintained in accordance with legislative requirements.
Element 7.3.2	Administrative systems are established and maintained to ensure the effective operation of the service.
Element 7.3.3	The Regulatory Authority is notified of any relevant changes to the operation of the service, of serious incidents and of any complaints which allege a breach of legislation.