

BEACONSFIELD KINDERGARTEN INC.

CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY

Mandatory – Quality Area 4

PURPOSE

This policy will provide guidelines to:

- establish a standard of behaviour for the Approved Provider (if an individual), Person with Management or Control, Nominated Supervisor, Persons in Day-to-Day Charge, educators, all staff, contractors, volunteers, students on placement, parents/guardians and visitors at Beaconsfield Kindergarten that reflects the philosophy, beliefs, objectives and values of the service
- create and maintain a child safe environment that reflects the philosophy, beliefs, objectives and values of Beaconsfield Kindergarten
- promote desirable and appropriate behaviour
- promote interactions at the service which are respectful, honest, courteous, sensitive, tactful and considerate.

POLICY STATEMENT

1. VALUES

Beaconsfield Kindergarten:

- respects the rights of the child and values diversity
- acknowledges the vulnerability of Aboriginal children, children from a culturally and linguistically diverse background and children with a disability and has zero tolerance of discrimination
- maintains a duty of care (refer to *Definitions*) towards all children at the service
- is committed to the safety and wellbeing of each child at the service
- is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all staff at the service
- provides a safe and secure environment for all at the service
- provides an open, welcoming environment in which everyone's contribution is valued and respected
- is committed to communicating openly and honestly
- is committed to continually learning how to be inclusive and respectful of cultural needs
- encourages volunteers, students, parents/guardians and visitors to support and participate in the program and activities of the service.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to the Approved Provider, Persons with Management or Control, Nominated Supervisors, Persons in day-to-day Charge, educators, staff, students on placement, volunteers, parents/guardians, children and others attending the programs and activities of Beaconsfield Kindergarten.

3. BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATION

Background

Codes of conduct establish standards of behaviour to be followed and define how individuals are expected to behave towards each other, towards the children in their care, and towards other organisations and individuals in the community.

The Approved Provider and Nominated Supervisor have a duty of care to the children attending the service and must ensure "that every reasonable precaution is taken to protect children being educated

and cared for by the service from harm and from any hazard likely to cause injury” (National Law: Section 167).

The *National Quality Standard* requires that staff are respectful and ethical and that ‘professional standards guide practice, interactions and relationships’ (*National Quality Standard*).

Employers also have a legal responsibility to provide, as far as is practicable, a safe workplace that is free from discrimination, bullying and harassment.

Child Safe Standard 3 requires services to develop and review codes of conduct that establish clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children including:

- how to respond to risks adults may pose to children or that children may pose to each other
- how to ensure the cultural safety of Aboriginal children and culturally and linguistically diverse children
- how to be inclusive of all children, including children with a disability.

A code of conduct should be informed by the service’s philosophy, beliefs and values, and based on ethical principles of mutual respect, equity and fairness. Consideration should be given to the Victorian Teaching Profession *Code of Conduct and the Code of Ethics* and to the Early Childhood Australia’s *Code of Ethics* in developing the code of conduct.

The Approved Provider must ensure that the Nominated Supervisor, all educators, staff, contractors, students on placement, parents/guardians, volunteers, children and others attending the programs and activities at Beaconsfield Kindergarten adhere to the expectations outlined in the Code of Conduct when communicating to and interacting with:

- children at the service and their parents and family members
- each other
- others in the community.

Legislation and standards

Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

- *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* (Vic)
- Child Safe Standards (Vic)
- *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* (Vic)
- *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* (Vic)
- *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Cth)
- *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010*: Sections 166, 167, 174
- *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011*: Regulations 155, 156, 157, 175
- *Equal Opportunity Act 2010* (Vic)
- *Fair Work Act 2009* (Cth)
- Fair Work Regulations 2009 (Cth)
- *National Quality Standard*, including Quality Area 4: Staffing arrangements
- *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004*
- *Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2007*
- *Racial Discrimination Act 1975*
- *Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001* (Vic)
- *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* (Cth)
- Victorian Institute of Teaching *The Victorian Teaching Profession Code of Conduct*
- Victorian Institute of Teaching *The Victorian Teaching Profession Code of Ethics*

The most current amendments to listed legislation can be found at:

- Victorian Legislation – Victorian Law Today: <http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au>
- Commonwealth Legislation – Federal Register of Legislation: <https://www.legislation.gov.au/>

4. DEFINITIONS

The terms defined in this section relate specifically to this policy. For commonly used terms e.g. Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, Regulatory Authority etc. refer to the *General Definitions* section of this manual.

Assault: An incident where a person causes injury, pain, discomfort or damage to another person. It also includes insult or deprivation of liberty. Assault can be physical or verbal.

Bullying: Repeated verbal, physical, social or psychological behaviour that is harmful and involves the misuse of power by an individual or group towards one or more persons. Bullying occurs when one or more people deliberately and repeatedly upset or hurt another person, damage their property, reputation or social acceptance.

Duty of care: A common law concept that refers to the responsibilities of organisations to provide people with an adequate level of protection against harm and all reasonable foreseeable risk of injury.

Ethical conduct: Behaviour which reflects values or a code of conduct.

Harassment: Includes, but is not limited to, unwanted, unwelcome behaviour that is offensive, embarrassing, intimidating or humiliating. Harassment includes:

- racial taunts
- taunts about sexual orientation or gender identity
- sexual harassment: unwelcome physical, verbal or written behaviour of a sexual nature
- repeated insulting remarks.

Investigator: A person/staff member assigned or organization engaged with the responsibility of investigating suspected breaches of the Code of Conduct by the Approved Provider.

Notifiable complaint: A complaint that alleges a breach of the Education and Care Services National Act or Regulation, or alleges that the health, safety or wellbeing of a child at the service may have been compromised. Any complaint of this nature must be reported by the Approved Provider to the secretary of DET within 24 hours of the complaint being made (Section 174(2)(b), Regulation 176(2)(b)). Written reports to DET must include:

- details of the event or incident
- the name of the person who initially made the complaint
- if appropriate, the name of the child concerned and the condition of the child, including a medical or incident report (where relevant)
- contact details of a nominated member of the Grievances Subcommittee/investigator
- any other relevant information.

Written notification of complaints must be submitted via the National Quality Agenda IT system (NQAITs): <http://www.acecqa.gov.au/national-quality-agenda-it-system>. If the Approved Provider is unsure whether the matter is a notifiable complaint, it is good practice to contact DET for confirmation.

Respect: Demonstrating regard for the rights of individuals, for different values and points of views.

Serious incident: A serious incident is defined as (regulation 12):

- the death of a child -
 - while being cared for by an education and care service; or
 - following an incident while being educated and cared for by an education and care 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 (examples include broken limbs or anaphylaxis reaction) attention of a registered medical practitioner; or
 - for which the child attended, or ought reasonably to have attended a hospital.

- any incident where the attendance by emergency services at the education and care service premises was sought, or ought reasonably to have been sought
- any circumstances where a child being educated and cared for by an education and care service appears to be missing or cannot be accounted for;
 - appears to have been taken or removed from the education and care services premises in a manner that contravenes National Regulations;
 - is mistakenly locked in or locked out of the education and care service premises or any part of the premises.

The Regulatory Authority must be notified of a serious incident (section 174(2)(a)) **in writing in the case of:**

- the death of a child, as soon as practicable but within 24 hours of the death, or the time that the person becomes aware of the death
- any other serious incident, within 24 hours of the incident or the time that the person becomes aware of the incident

Written notification of serious incidents must be submitted via the ACECQA portal using the appropriate forms at <https://www.acecqa.gov.au/resources/applications>.

Support: Work in a co-operative and positive manner.

Unreasonable behaviour: Means behaviour that a reasonable person, having regard to all of the circumstances, would expect to victimise, humiliate, undermine or threaten.

Workplace bullying: Is repeated, unreasonable behaviour directed towards an employee, or group of employees, that creates a risk to health or safety.

5. SOURCES AND RELATED POLICIES

Sources

- Early Childhood Australia, *Code of Ethics*: www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au
- United Nations, *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights*: <http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/>
- United Nations, *Convention on The Rights of the Child*: <http://www.unicef.org/crc/>
- Victoria Legal Aid: www.legalaid.vic.gov.au
- Victorian Institute of Teaching – The Victorian Teaching Profession Code of Conduct and Code of Ethics: <http://www.vit.vic.edu.au>

Related policies

- *Child Safe Environment Policy*
- *Complaints and Grievances Policy*
- *Delivery and Collection of Children Policy*
- *Interactions with Children Policy*
- *Occupational Health and Safety Policy*
- *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy*
- *Relaxation and Sleep Policy*
- *Staff Grievances Policy*
- *Staff Health and Wellbeing Policy*
- *Staffing Policy*

RESPONSIBILITIES

The Approved Provider and Persons with Management or Control are responsible for:

- providing a safe environment for staff, contractors, volunteers, students on placement, parents/guardians, children and others attending the programs and activities of Beaconsfield Kindergarten
- providing guidance through leadership and by being a positive role model
- developing and updating/reviewing the Code of Conduct (refer to Attachment 1) for Beaconsfield Kindergarten in collaboration with the Nominated Supervisor, educators, staff, parents/guardians and others involved with the service
- ensuring that all educators, staff, volunteers and students are provided with an electronic copy of this policy on employment, engagement or enrolment at the service and that the current codes of conduct are publicly displayed and promoted to everyone including contractors and visitors
- ensuring that all parents/guardians and visitors have access to a printed copy of this policy
- ensuring that all staff complete and sign the *Code of Conduct Acknowledgement* (refer to Attachment 2) and that these are filed with individual staff records
- ensuring that the Code of Conduct is regularly discussed at staff meetings to reinforce expectations
- developing a culture of accountability within the service for complying with the Code of Conduct and being prepared to respond when behavioural expectations are not adhered to
- ensuring that all children being educated and cared for at Beaconsfield Kindergarten are protected from harm and any hazard likely to cause injury (National Law: Section 167) and that the children know who to speak to about any concerns and that their concerns are followed-up
- working with the Nominated Supervisor, staff, students, volunteers, parents/guardians and others at the service to provide an environment that encourages positive interactions, supports constructive feedback and holds one another to the Code of Conduct
- ensuring that parents/guardians of a child attending the service can enter the service premises at any time that the child is being educated and cared for, except where this may pose a risk to the safety of children or staff, or conflict with any duty of care of the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor or educators under the Law (Regulation 157)
- ensuring that contractors, volunteers, parent/guardians, students or visitors at the service are not placed in a situation where they are left alone with a child
- respecting individual abilities, needs, cultural practices and beliefs in all interactions, both verbal and non-verbal
- notifying DET in writing within 24 hours of a serious incident (refer to *Definitions*) or of a notifiable complaint (refer to *Definitions*) at the service (National Law: Sections 174(2)(b) and 174(4), National Regulations: Regulations 175(2)(c) and 176(2)(b)) via the NQAITS
- referring notifiable complaints (refer to *Definitions*), grievances or complaints that are unable to be resolved appropriately and in a timely manner to the Grievances Subcommittee/investigator (refer to *Complaints and Grievances Policy*)
- activating the *Complaints and Grievances Policy* on notification of a breach of the *Code of Conduct Policy*
- taking appropriate disciplinary or legal action, or reviewing the terms of employment in the event of misconduct or a serious breach of the *Code of Conduct Policy*
- contacting Police in an emergency situation where it is believed that there is an immediate risk, such as when violence has been threatened or perpetrated or where sexual abuse or grooming is suspected as outlined in the *Child Safe Environment Policy*.

The Nominated Supervisor is responsible for:

- ensuring that the children educated and cared for at Beaconsfield Kindergarten are protected from harm and from any hazard likely to cause injury (National Law: Section 167)
- providing guidance through their leadership and by being a positive role model

- assisting the Approved Provider to develop a Code of Conduct for staff and parents/guardians, students, contractors, volunteers and visitors (refer to Attachment 1)
- ensuring that all educators, staff, volunteers and students are provided with an electronic copy of this policy on employment, enrolment or arrival at the service
- ensuring that all parents/guardians and visitors have access to a printed copy of this policy
- completing and signing the *Code of Conduct Acknowledgement* (refer to Attachment 2)
- adhering to the Code of Conduct at all times
- informing the Approved Provider in the event of a serious incident (refer to *Definitions*), of a notifiable complaint (refer to *Definitions*) or of a breach of the *Code of Conduct Policy*
- contacting Police in an emergency situation where it is believed that there is an immediate risk such as when violence has been threatened or perpetrated, or where sexual abuse or grooming is suspected as outlined in the *Child Safe Environment Policy*
- working with the Approved Provider, educators, staff, students, volunteers, parents/guardians and others at the service to provide an environment that encourages positive interactions, supports constructive feedback and holds one another to the Code of Conduct
- ensuring that parents/guardians of a child attending the service can enter the service premises at any time that the child is being educated and cared for, except where this may pose a risk to the safety of children or staff, or conflict with any duty of care of the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor or educators under the Law (Regulation 157)
- developing practices and procedures to ensure that parents/guardians on duty, or other adults participating in the program, are not placed in a situation where they are left alone with a child
- respecting individual abilities, needs, cultural practices and beliefs in all interactions, both verbal and non-verbal
- understanding and accepting that serious breaches of this code will be deemed misconduct and may lead to disciplinary or legal action, or a review of their employment.

All staff are responsible for:

- assisting the Approved Provider to develop a Code of Conduct (refer to Attachment 1)
- completing and signing the *Code of Conduct Acknowledgement* (refer to Attachment 2)
- adhering to the Code of Conduct (refer to Attachment 1) at all times
- providing guidance to students, volunteers, parents/guardians and visitors through positive role modelling and, when appropriate, clear and respectful directions
- working with the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, educators, staff, students, volunteers, parents/guardians and others at the service to provide an environment that encourages positive interactions, supports constructive feedback and holds one another to the codes of conduct
- ensuring that parents/guardians on duty, or other adults participating in the program, are not placed in a situation where they are left alone with a child
- informing the Approved Provider in the event of a serious incident (refer to *Definitions*), of a notifiable complaint (refer to *Definitions*) or of a breach of the *Code of Conduct Policy*
- contacting Police in an emergency situation where it is believed that there is an immediate risk such as when violence has been threatened or perpetrated or where sexual abuse or grooming is suspected as outlined in the *Child Safe Policy*.
- respecting individual abilities, needs, cultural practices and beliefs in all interactions, both verbal and non-verbal
- understanding and accepting that serious breaches of this code will be deemed misconduct and may lead to disciplinary or legal action, or a review of their engagement.

Parents/guardians are responsible for:

- reading the *Code of Conduct Policy*
- abiding by the law

- complying with all policies of the service.

Students, contractors, volunteers and visitors while at the service, are responsible for following this policy and its procedures.

EVALUATION

In order to assess whether the values and purposes of the policy have been achieved, the Approved Provider will:

- regularly seek feedback from everyone affected by the policy regarding its effectiveness
- monitor the implementation, compliance, complaints and incidents in relation to this policy
- assess whether a satisfactory resolution has been achieved in relation to issues arising from this policy
- keep the policy up to date with current legislation, research, policy and best practice
- revise the policy and procedures as part of the service's policy review cycle, or as required
- notify parents/guardians at least 14 days before making any changes to this policy or its procedures.

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1: Beaconsfield Kindergarten Code of Conduct
- Attachment 2: Code of Conduct Acknowledgement
- Attachment 3: Staff Dress Code

AUTHORISATION

This policy was adopted by the Approved Provider of Beaconsfield Kindergarten on 17th March, 2014.

REVIEW DATE: 24/07/2018

REVIEW FREQUENCY: Annual

NEXT REVIEW DUE: July 2019

ATTACHMENT 1

Beaconsfield Kindergarten Code of Conduct

The Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, educators and all staff at Beaconsfield Kindergarten are responsible for promoting the safety and wellbeing of children and their families by:

- welcoming all children and their families and being inclusive
- treating everyone with respect, including listening to and valuing their ideas and opinions
- contributing to a culture of child safety
- adhering to the *Child Safe Environment Policy* and all other policies
- taking all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse
- respecting the privacy of children and their families, and only disclosing information to people who have a need to know as required under the *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy*
- reporting and acting on any breaches of this Code of Conduct, complaints or concerns.

Professional responsibilities

The Approved Provider, Persons with Management or Control, Nominated Supervisor, educators and all staff demonstrate our commitment to our professional responsibilities by:

- undertaking duties in a competent, timely and responsible way
- ensuring our knowledge and expertise is up to date and relevant to our roles
- being aware of the role of other professionals and agencies and working collaboratively and within the limits of our professional expertise
- understanding and complying with legal obligations in relation to:
 - discrimination, harassment and vilification
 - negligence
 - grooming
 - disclosure of child sexual abuse
 - protection of a child from child sexual abuse
 - mandatory reporting
 - privacy and confidentiality
 - occupational health and safety
 - raising any complaints or grievances in accordance with the *Complaints and Grievances Policy*
 - maintaining teacher registration and Working with Children Checks as applicable.
- raising any complaints or grievances in accordance with the *Complaints and Grievances Policy* and the *Staff Grievances Policy*.

Relationships with children

In their relationships with children, the Approved Provider (if an individual), Persons with Management or Control, Nominated Supervisor, educators and all staff will demonstrate their commitment to high-quality education and care for children by:

- being a positive role model at all times
- encouraging children to express themselves and their opinions
- allowing children to undertake experiences that develop self-reliance and self-esteem
- maintaining a safe environment for children
- respecting the rights of all children

- contributing to a service environment that is free from discrimination, bullying and harassment
- speaking to children in an encouraging and positive manner
- listening actively to children and offering empathy and support
- giving each child positive guidance and encouraging appropriate behaviour
- regarding all children equally, and with respect and dignity
- respecting individual difference including age, physical and intellectual development, and catering for the abilities of each child at the service
- having regard to each child's cultural values and supporting them to express their culture
- providing opportunities for children to interact and develop respectful and positive relationships with each other, and with other staff members and volunteers at the service
- informing children if physical contact is required for any purpose, asking them if they are comfortable with this interaction and complying with the *Interactions with Children Policy*
- working with children in an open and transparent way by informing other staff about the work being done with children
- encouraging and assisting children to undertake activities of a personal nature for themselves e.g. toileting and changing clothes
- respecting the confidential nature of information gained about each child while participating in the program.

Relationships with parents/guardians and families

In their relationships with parents/guardians and families, the Approved Provider (if an individual), Persons with Management or Control, Nominated Supervisor, educators and all staff will demonstrate their commitment to collaboration by:

- being respectful of, and courteous towards, parents/guardians and families at all times
- working collaboratively with parents/guardians and families
- considering the perspective of parents/guardians and families when making decisions that impact on the education and care of their child
- communicating with parents/guardians and families in a timely and sensitive manner
- responding to concerns expressed by parents/guardians and families in a timely and appropriate manner
- respecting the cultural context of each child and their family
- respecting the privacy of information provided by parents/guardians and families, and keeping this information confidential, as required under the *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy*.

Relationships with employer and colleagues at the service

In their relationships with colleagues, the Approved Provider (if an individual), Persons with Management or Control, Nominated Supervisor, educators and all staff will demonstrate collegiality by:

- developing relationships based on mutual respect, equity and fairness
- working in partnership in a courteous, respectful and encouraging manner
- valuing the input of their peers
- sharing expertise and knowledge in appropriate forums, and in a considered manner
- respecting the rights of others as individuals
- giving encouraging and constructive feedback, and respecting the value of different professional approaches.
- being prepared to have difficult conversations and use constructive processes to address differences of opinion
- encouraging others to act in accordance with this Code of Conduct and taking action when they observe behaviours which are outside of the Code of Conduct.

ATTACHMENT 2
Code of Conduct Acknowledgement



I hereby acknowledge that on _____(date), I received a copy of the *Code of Conduct Policy* for Beaconsfield Kindergarten.

I have read this policy, I understand its contents and I agree to abide by the principles, practices and consequences set out within.

I understand that the Approved Provider will address any breach of this policy, and that any *serious* breach could lead to legal or disciplinary action.

I understand that a signed copy of this acknowledgement will be kept on my staff record while I am working at the service, and will be disposed of when my employment has ceased.

Signature

Name (please print)

Date

Witness signature

Name (please print)

Date

ATTACHMENT 3

Staff Dress Code

A dress code for kindergarten staff, including educators, relievers, students, volunteers and office staff, helps to promote a positive and professional image to families and others in the community. A dress code can also help to minimise health and safety risks to educators and other staff in the delivery of the kindergarten program. In their daily work, educators are involved in a variety of activities including being outside in a range of weather conditions, safeguarding the health and safety of children, responding quickly to children's actions, and attending meetings with families and other professionals. It is important that educators and staff observe the dress code in the delivery of the kindergarten program, and also dress appropriately in other duties that they carry out in their work capacity.

All staff, including educators, relievers, students, volunteers and office staff, will always present themselves in clothing and footwear that is neat, clean, respectful and in good condition.

- Footwear should be appropriate to enable educators to move safely and quickly should the need arise. Footwear such as thongs is not considered to be suitable or safe for educators in their roles. It is recommended that staff wear close-toed shoes that afford their feet some protection.
- Skirts, dresses and shorts need to be of reasonable length to allow for bending, moving freely and sitting comfortably on the floor with children.
- Medium to long shorts in good condition are acceptable; however, shorts made of t-shirt or tracksuit fabric are not suitable. Shorts that bare most of the legs are also not acceptable professional attire.
- Jeans and trousers need to be presentable and in good condition. Jeans should not have excessive rips or tears. Tracksuit bottoms and trousers made of tracksuit material are not acceptable professional attire.
- Tights/leggings may be worn under skirts or dresses but are not appropriate as an outer garment alone.
- T-shirts, tops, shirts and blouses need to be neat and appropriate to allow educators to work and move comfortably. It is not appropriate for any staff member to wear low cut, cleavage or midriff baring, or singlet style tops. Shoulders should be covered for sun safety and to model appropriate skin coverage in hot weather to children.
- Inappropriate or suggestive words, pictures or graphic images on clothing may not be worn.
- Educators are required to be positive role models for children and families and wear a hat outdoors between the beginning of September and end of April, or whenever the UV Index level is at 3 or above, according to Beaconsfield Kindergarten's *Sun Protection Policy*.

Educators are exempt from the above dress code on special occasions such as pyjama day, Olympic Games day, etc.

If educators, relievers, students, volunteers or office staff have any queries related to appropriateness of dress, they may direct questions to the Centre Manager.