

Professional Standards and Ethical Conduct

QUALITY AREA 4: STAFFING ARRANGEMENTS

Policy Statement

Nimbin Preschool is committed to a code of professional conduct, upholding ethical principles and professional standards that guide decision-making and practice at our school.

This includes a system of ethical inquiry to provide a basis for reflection on how to relate to and contribute to the education and care community in which we actively participate. Our preschool will uphold the highest standards in ethical conduct in accordance with the ECA Code of Ethics (2016) The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), Disability Discrimination Act (1992), Australian Human Rights Commission, National Principles for Child Safe Organisations (2019 implemented in Oct 2023) and the National Quality Framework and our philosophy, policies and procedures.

Goals / What are we going to do?

Our school uses these frameworks, codes and conventions as a basis for evaluating professional conduct, and as a reference tool for the thought processes that inform pedagogy, including actions and reactions towards professional conduct, relationships, views, influence and position within communities and society. Ethical conduct guides the behaviour and decisions within our school and is underpinned by respect for, and the valuing of children, families, educators and staff, and the extended service community.

How will it be done?

The professional conduct of our team, in relation to one another, the children and their families, the community, and the Education and Care Services sector is based on the following set of expected standards of professional conduct:

- administer an approved education and care service in compliance with the National Quality Framework;
- operate within a family and child centred context;
- engage in reflective, ethical, and sustainable decision making.
- Uphold the principles of social justice

Early Childhood Australia's (ECA) Code of Ethics (2016)

Early Childhood Australia's Code of Ethics (2016) is integral to our school as it guides the ethical principles and professional standards of conduct towards children, families, colleagues, communities, students, employers, educators, and the conduct of research. Our school accepts professional ownership of ECA's Code of Ethics (2016) and formally acknowledges that the ECA's Code of Ethics (2016) provides us with:

- A basis for critical reflection about our ethical responsibilities;
- A guide for professional behaviour;
- Principles to inform individual and collective decision-making.

These standards of professional conduct are supported by, and should be read in conjunction with:

- National Quality Framework document suite as made available through the Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA);
- Statement of Philosophy;
- Operational policies and procedures, which provide a framework for accountable and responsible professional practice.
- Child Safe Standards; listening to and responding positively to all children’s feedback, concerns and needs

Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Authority / Responsibility For
Approved Provider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the service operates in line with the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations 2011 at all times.
Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure all Educators and staff are made aware of their obligations through personal discussions, staff meeting activities and opportunities to critically reflect upon ethical practice.
Nominated Supervisor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the service operates in line with the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations 2011 at all times.
Director	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure all educators and staff are made aware of their obligations through personal discussions, staff meeting activities and opportunities to critically reflect upon ethical practice. • Ensure decision making processes are clear and transparent. • There is a copy of the ECA Code of Ethics displayed in the bathroom and in the staff handbook • Ensure that educators understand their obligations under the Disability Discrimination Act 1992. • Ensure that there are times when all educators can participate in staff meetings to discuss and reflect on the practices within the service in relation to continuing improvement. (see meeting minutes)
Early Childhood Educators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educators and staff will be familiar with the legislation and statutory documents that apply to their role with children, families and other staff in the centre.
Responsible Persons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educators and staff will be familiar with the ECA Code of Ethics and service philosophy and abide with all principles • Maintain their knowledge of the broad legislation and conventions that apply to their role with children, families and their team. • Demonstrate an ongoing engagement with the principles outlined in The Early Years Learning Frameworks (EYLF 2.0) and the ethical requirements in the National Quality Standards. • Use team meetings to critically reflect on practices in relation to continuing improvement. • Engage respectfully and collaboratively within the team. • Ensure a professional relationship is maintained with all educators while demonstrating integrity, honesty and mutual respect.

Role	Authority / Responsibility For
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recognise and value diversity and knowledge amongst team members.• Sign the Code of Conduct acknowledgment form that supports their role in the provision of a child safe environment. (this may be found in the services Induction Pack/Employee Handbook etc)
Families	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Respect confidentiality at all times.• Give feedback in relation to educators' professional conduct to the Nominated Supervisor or Approved Provider as necessary.• Act in a professional and respectful manner whenever you are involved in the curriculum• Communicate to the Responsible Person, educator or staff member any individual requests regarding staff/educators' code of conduct• Families to become familiar with the services policies and procedures to ensure behaviour that aligns with positive role modelling, effective communication and respect. (Child Safe Standards)

Mentoring, Evaluation and Review

This policy will be monitored to ensure compliance with legislative requirements and unless deemed necessary through the identification of practice gaps, the service will review this Policy every 18 months.

Families and staff are essential stakeholders in the policy review process and will be given opportunity and encouragement to be actively involved.

In accordance with R. 172 of the *Education and Care Services National Regulations*, the service will ensure that families of children enrolled at the service are notified at least 14 days before making any change to a policy or procedure that may have significant impact on the provision of education and care to any child enrolled at the service; a family's ability to utilise the service; the fees charged or the way in which fees are collected.

Related Legislation

- Education and Care National Law Act 2010
- Education and Care National Regulations: 168 (2)(i)(i)
- Family Law Act 1975
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992.

Related Guidelines, Standards, Frameworks

- National Quality Standard, Quality Area 4: Staffing Arrangements – Elements 4.1.1, 4.1.2 and 4.2.2
- National Quality Standard, Quality Area 5: Relationships with Children
- National Quality Standard, Quality Area 6: Collaborative Partnerships with Families and Communities.

Sources / Useful Resources

- Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) – www.acecqa.gov.au
- Early Childhood Australia – www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au
- Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics 2016
- Australian Government - Department of Education – www.education.gov.au/early-childhood

Professional Standards and Ethical Conduct – Policy and Procedure

- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Australian Human Rights Commission, National Principles for Child Safe Organisations - <https://childsafe.humanrights.gov.au/tools-resources/links-resources>

Role Authority / Responsibility For

Katie reviewed ; added child safe standards in some areas nov 23

Susie reviewed and added elements regarding Disability Discrimination Act 1992. – november 25

Next review date:

May 2027

Procedure checklist