



## CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY

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Mandatory – Quality Area 4

### PURPOSE

This policy will provide guidelines to enable Shine Bright EYM to:

- establish the expected standards of behaviour for the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, staff, contractors, volunteers, students on placement, parents/guardians and visitors
- create and maintain a child safe environment that reflects the philosophy, beliefs, objectives and values of Shine Bright EYM
- promote desirable and appropriate behaviour
- promote interactions at the service which are respectful, honest, courteous, sensitive, tactful and considerate.

### POLICY STATEMENT

#### 1. VALUES

Shine Bright EYM:

- 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 educational program and activities of the service.

#### 2. SCOPE

This policy applies to the Approved Provider, Persons with Management or Control, Nominated Supervisor, staff, contractors, volunteers, students on placement, parents/guardians and visitors attending the programs and activities of Shine Bright EYM.

#### 3. BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATION

##### Background

A Code of Conduct establishes a standard 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, Nominated Supervisor and staff have a duty of care to the children attending their services 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*: 4.2 and 4.2.2).

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, staff, contractors, volunteers, students on placement, parents/guardians, children and others attending the programs and activities of Shine Bright EYM 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, 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.

**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. Workplace bullying is characterised by persistent and repeated negative behaviour directed at an employee that creates a risk to health and safety (refer to Workplace Bullying policy & procedure, Quality Area 4).

**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:** When someone is demeaning, derogatory or intimidating towards another person. 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 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 (Shine Bright EYM) to the secretary of DET within 24 hours of the complaint being made (Section 174(2)(b), Regulation 176(2)(b)). If the Nominated Supervisor is unsure whether the matter is a notifiable complaint, it is good practice to contact a Shine Bright EYM Early Years Advisor for confirmation. Shine Bright EYM will submit written reports to DET which 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)
- 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 Approved Provider to the ACECQA portal using the appropriate forms at <http://acecqa.gov.au/notifications>.

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

## 5. SOURCES AND RELATED POLICIES

### Sources

- Early Childhood Australia, *Code of Ethics*: : <http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/our-publications/eca-code-ethics/>
- 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](http://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>

### Service policies

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

## PROCEDURES

**The Approved Provider is responsible for:**

- providing a safe environment for staff, parents/guardians, children, contractors, volunteers, students on placement, and others attending the programs and activities of Shine Bright EYM
- providing guidance through leadership and by being a positive role model

- developing and updating/ reviewing Codes of Conduct for Shine Bright EYM in collaboration with the Nominated Supervisor, staff, children parents/guardians, children and others involved with the service (refer to Attachments 1)
- ensuring that staff, volunteers, students and parents/guardians have access to a copy of this policy via the Shine Bright EYM website at all times and especially 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 staff complete and sign the *Code of Conduct Acknowledgement*
- ensuring that the Codes of Conduct are regularly discussed at staff meetings to reinforce expectations
- developing a culture of accountability within the service for complying with the Code(s) of
- Conduct and being prepared to respond when behavioural expectations are not adhered to
- ensuring that all children being educated and cared for at Shine Bright EYM 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 codes 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 parent/guardians, contractors, volunteers, 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
- notify 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*) and complaints that are unable to be resolved appropriately and in a timely manner to an Early Years Advisor (refer to *Complaints Policy*)
- activating the *Complaints 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 Shine Bright EYM 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, parents/guardians, students, contractors, volunteers and visitors (refer to Attachments 1)
- adhering to the Code of Conduct for staff 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*
- 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, 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 Parent Advisory Group members and parents as required, sign the Code of conduct (refer to Attachment 2)
- 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 parent/guardians, students, contractors, volunteers 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
- understanding and accepting that serious breaches of this Code of Conduct 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 professional standards for staff (refer to Attachment 1)
- completing and signing the *Code of Conduct Acknowledgement* (refer to Attachment 2)
- adhering to the professional standards (refer to Attachment 1) at all times
- providing guidance to parents/guardians and volunteers through positive role modelling and, when appropriate, clear and respectful directions
- working with the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, staff, students, volunteers, parents/guardians and others at the service to provide an environment that encourages positive interactions and supports constructive feedback
- ensuring that parents/guardians, students, contractors, volunteers and visitors at the service 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*
- 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*.
- 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 of Conduct will be deemed misconduct and may lead to disciplinary or legal action, or a review of their employment/engagement.

#### **Parents/guardians are responsible for:**

- reading the *Code of Conduct*
- abiding by the Code of Conduct at all times, not abiding by the Code of Conduct may result in your child's enrolment at the service being withdrawn.

**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 Code of Conduct have been achieved, the Approved Provider will:

- regularly seek feedback from everyone affected by the Code of Conduct regarding its effectiveness
- monitor the implementation, compliance, complaints and incidents in relation to this Code of Conduct
- assess whether a satisfactory resolution has been achieved in relation to issues arising from this Code of Conduct

- keep the Code of Conduct up to date with current legislation, research, policy and best practice
- revise the Code of Conduct 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 Code of Conduct or its procedures.

### **Attachments**

- Attachment 1: [Professional standards for staff](#)
- Attachment 2: [Code of Conduct Acknowledgement](#)
- Attachment 3: [Code of Conduct for parents/guardians, students, contractors and volunteers](#)
- Attachment 4: [Code of Conduct Acknowledgement for parents/guardians, students, contractors and volunteers](#)

### **AUTHORISATION**

This policy was adopted by the Approved Provider Shine Bright EYM in October 2021

**Review date:** 2024