

Etiquette & Professionalism Policy

SUB CATEGORY: Human Resources

POLICY GOAL

To ensure that all employees present themselves professionally and in a manner that is respectful and accepting of others at all times.

RATIONALE

Presenting a professional standard that calls staff to demonstrate the virtues of modesty, respect, service and unity of our centre. We believe that a great team is made up of many different people with many different personalities. As a collective we need to be inclusive and supportive of each other in our environment. This means the way we communicate, dress and express ourselves to our colleagues and all who enter our premises must remain professional at all times.

“Being ethical involves thinking about everyday actions and decision making, either individually or collectively, and responding with respect to all concerned. The Code of Ethics recognises that childhood professionals are in a unique position of trust and influence in their relationships with children, families, colleagues and the community, therefore professional accountability is vital.”¹

IMPLEMENTATION

Etiquette

It is always the small things that make things in the centre flow smoothly and it is what we can all do as individuals that makes our centre a nice place to be. When we are working as a team we need to remember the following: -

- Be polite and use manners, a please, thank you, hello & goodbyes are a minimum we can all agree to – make someone’s day!
- We need to respect each other’s viewpoints and take into consideration other people’s thoughts and ideas. We do not work alone, we are part of a team working together to achieve the best outcomes for the children and create a harmonious workplace which staff enjoy coming to work.
- Remember that we are not here to be best friends we are here to have a professional, working relationship and that our common goal is to work in a friendly team environment.
- Be responsible for your actions and if you have a question or query then speak directly with the person that is involved in your query. Follow the Grievance Procedure if others fall outside of the professional etiquette expected.
- Please refer to our Educator Code of Conduct Policy and the Code of Ethics (ECA 2016) and ensure you are doing your part to make our service a wonderful place to be.
- Gossip is damaging to a workplace and can hurt other people’s feelings and reputations. For these reasons, we do not permit gossiping and consider listening to another’s negative gossip as participating. We take a strong stance on this negative activity and will follow our Discipline and Procedures Policy to performance manage this issue.
- Be sure to come to work every day with an upbeat attitude and ready to work collaboratively with others for the benefit of children, families and your co-workers. If you are not able to present professionally and positively with the ability to fulfil your Role Accountability you should not be at work and may be asked to take the necessary leave.

¹ “Code of Ethics”, Early Childhood Australia (2016)

- Please approach your Nominated Supervisor if you believe that you cannot perform your role to the best of your ability for any particular reason. Nominated Supervisors and Approved Providers can provide details for services which may assist educators in need.
- All mobile phones are to be kept on silent and in a location other than children's learning spaces. These should only be accessed during break times. This includes other mobile devices such as smart phone and tablets.
- Absences of all kinds are to be phoned through in person as per the Employee Leave Policy, and not requested via text message, email or social media.
- All employees are responsible for ensuring all areas of our service are presented in a professional and caring way. Our environments are what we present to our children, families and visitors. All employees are to ensure that storerooms and work areas are kept clean and organised at all times in order to show parents and prospective parents that you are professional, organised and efficient. This also role models to children, if they see that your areas are not organised then they too will get the message that it is acceptable to leave their play areas in an untidy and disorganised state. This is also essential from a workplace health and safety perspective.
- All employees are asked to be respectful and caring with the centre equipment, resources and facilities. We share our workplace and equipment with others including children.

Uniform and Presentation

Our families and our children are our clients. As professionals, we need to present to families in a way that shows we are proud educators who dress professionally. What is worn in the workplace serves both to promote you as a professional educator and to protect you from elements in the workplace which may pose a potential hazard. Refer to the Workplace Health and Safety Policy for further information.

Where you are provided with items of clothing or accessories as a uniform you are asked to wear these when you are working at the service unless there is a special event approved by your Nominated Supervisor. The uniform, like all other items of clothing must be clean, without tears or rips and worn in a professional manner. Our uniform shows who we represent and often we are wearing this in public before and after our shifts. While every staff member is wearing any part of our service uniform, we ask that they present professionally in the public eye, this includes refraining from inappropriate behaviour whilst in uniform even when outside of your rostered shift and the service. It is inappropriate to drink, smoke, use obtrusive language or behave in conduct not becoming of a professional educator whilst you are identifiable as an employee or our service. For this reason, employees may choose to wear alternative clothing to and from the workplace, also refer to the Smoke-Free Environment Policy.

Our uniform allows parents/guardians, visitors and children to easily identify staff members and in the event of an emergency provides clear identification to emergency services personnel.

Uniform guidelines and procedures:

- Upon employment, uniform items will be provided or ordered by the Nominated Supervisor. Where possible a spare shirt will be provided for the interim, if there is not a spare shirt available then the employee should revert to the requirements listed below for items not supplied as uniform.
- Where a uniform is supplied, educators can purchase additional uniform items above those provided. The quantity provided will depend on the number of regular shifts the employee is to be rostered for.

- The Nominated Supervisor will be responsible for recommending when an educator's uniform has become worn and needs to be replaced. This would usually be after a period of at least 12mths, unusual wear and tear may become the responsibility of the employee to replace.
- Employees are responsible for replacement lost, stolen or damaged uniforms unless this occurs within the course of operation of the service.
- Uniforms purchased by employees remain their property and could be sold or given to other employees at the service upon departure of employment at their discretion.
- Uniforms provided by the service remain the property of the service and must be returned upon your employment departure.
- The service has a laundry on-site or off-site and provides a uniform washing service, ask your Nominated Supervisor for more information.
- In selecting appropriate size and fit, staff must ensure that bare skin or underwear does not show when lifting or bending. If necessary, staff can wear an undershirt in any corporate colour.
- In extenuating circumstances when the uniform can not be worn the below guidelines relating to required clothing not provided must be met as a temporary measure. This should reflect the current uniform style and corporate colours. This would also be the case for expecting mother's.
- Continual failure to wear the uniform items provided may result in disciplinary action.
- Where a name badge is provided this must be worn at all times. Employees will be required to pay for the replacement cost of any lost badges. Worn badges will be replaced at no cost at discretion of the Nominated Supervisor.

Where a uniform, or part of a uniform is not provided educators must present themselves in a professional manner. Clothing including footwear and headwear must comply with suitable WHS legislation to minimise risks.

Specifically:

- Shirts must provide protection from the sun and have the following elements;
 - Collar or high neck such as a skivvy,
 - sleeves to cover shoulders or long sleeve shirts,
 - close weave fabric such a cotton, polyester/cotton and linen
 - is dark in colour to absorb UV radiation
 - covers as much skin as possible and is long enough to cover torso and not reveal skin at the waist.
- Hats which are;
 - broad-brimmed and provide good protection for the face, nose, neck and ears, which are common sites for skin cancers (caps and visors do not provide adequate protection and are not acceptable options)
 - made with closely woven fabric – if you can see through it, UV radiation will get through.
- Footwear:
 - Educators must wear suitable closed-in flat shoes while working at all times except in specific situations such as when they are involved in sand or water play when bare-feet might be more appropriate.
 - Shoes should have a tread that will reduce the risk of slipping
 - Shoes removed for sand/water/messy play must be immediately put back on prior to walking around the playground or centre
 - The following footwear are not acceptable options as they do not offer the necessary support or coverage to minimise risks in the workplace: crocs, thongs, sandals or any type of shoe where the heel or toe of the foot isn't enclosed and covered. These are not considered safe in our early childhood setting.

- o In winter Educators are asked to wear a **plain** jumper or long-sleeved shirt under their uniform to keep warm, where items are not provided. At all times these additional items must present a professional appearance in the workplace.
- Long pants, shorts and skirts:
 - o Where these are not provided as part of a uniform employees are free to purchase a coordinating bottom part of the uniform which is comfortable and appropriate for the requirements of their position. These should be a single block colour in the service's corporate colours to match the uniform supplied. Your Nominated Supervisor will advise of specific colours.
 - o Suitable options would include:
 - Pants (full length or ¾ length) – loose fitting
 - Long shorts that come to at least the knee
 - Skorts
 - Skirt – knee length or longer
 - o Unacceptable clothing includes:
 - leggings, bike pants, tights and any other tight fitting garments
 - track pants
 - denim of any colour
 - Sports wear/Active wear
 - Items with rips or tears, even if considered fashionable
- Grooming:
 - o Obtrusive, excessive jewellery that might catch and cause injury to a child or themselves must not be worn. Excessive jewellery hinders effective handwashing and must be avoided. Some jewellery pieces may also pose a choking hazard.
 - o Hair should be tied back where possible so it doesn't get caught up in day to day duties with children, especially babies and does not pose a hazard to food handling practises.
 - o Educators should ensure that bodily odours and perfumes are not intrusive to others.
 - o Nails should not appear to present a safety risk to a child by being excessively long or sharp.
 - o Facial piercings are to be removed or covered if they cannot be removed, these may be torn by a child or may pose a choking hazard if displaced.
 - o Tongue rings are to be removed if they impede with your speech in anyway.

It is acknowledged that individuals may make certain lifestyle choices in their personal lives. While our service does not judge an individual's personal choices, such choices may not fit with health and safety standards in a workplace. Many parents also have perceptions about the professional standards and presentation they expect from the educators of their child and first impressions can have a powerful impact.

CONCLUSION: As we all want to be a part of a professional organisation that stands out from the rest we want to ensure that all of our educators are fulfilling the same requirements.

COMMUNICATION AND CONSULTATION

- Nominated Supervisors must ensure all educators are advised of this policy prior to commencing employment.
- Educators will have access to this policy at all times.

- Educators will be provided with opportunities to be involved in the review of this policy.

RELATED FORMS AND DOCUMENTS

- Early Childhood Code of Ethics and Code of Conduct Policy
- Grievance Resolution Policy
- Employee Leave Policy
- Induction Checklist
- Annual Induction Refresher
- Smoke-Free Environment Policy
- Discipline and Procedures Policy
- Workplace Health and Safety Policy

SCOPE AND ENFORCEMENT

The failure of any person to comply with this policy in its entirety may lead to;

- Performance management of an employee which may lead to termination

RECOGNISED AUTHORITIES AND DOCUMENTS WHICH GUIDE POLICY

- “Skin Cancer and Outdoor Work – A Work Health and Safety Guide” Cancer Council (accessed on-line April 2020)
<https://www.cancercouncil.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Skin-cancer-and-outdoor-work-booklet-Oct2018-v2.pdf>
- “Code of Ethics”, Early Childhood Australia (2016)

DATE CREATED: December 2015

REVIEW DETAILS:

Review Date	Details of Changes
April 2016	No changes made
May 2017	Updated Code of Ethics to 2016 and included quote in rationale. Updated sources. Minor changes to content which do not affect the previous intent.
May 2018	Updated sources and minor changes to wording which do not affect the overall procedures and expectations. Included in Implementation: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Please approach your Nominated Supervisor if you believe that you cannot perform your role to the best of your ability for any particular reason. Nominated Supervisors and Approved Providers can provide details for services which may assist educators in need.
May 2019	No changes made
April 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Expanded a reference to a mobile phone to include; “other mobile devices such as smart phone and tablets.”• Some jewellery pieces may also pose a choking hazard.• In relation to nails, added that nails should not be excessively sharp• Amended facial piercing to “Facial piercings are to be removed or covered if they cannot be removed, these may be torn by a child or may pose a choking hazard if displaced.