

PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT POLICY

Quality Areas: NQS 4 - Staffing Arrangements

Policy Owner: Safety and Compliance

A light blue speech bubble with a white outline, containing the text 'Why this is important' in a dark blue, handwritten-style font.

1.0 Introduction and Purpose:

Our *Professional Conduct Policy* explains how our *Code of Conduct* is applied in practice and reflects our values that underpin the behaviour and decision-making of all team members.

The policy supports a consistent, respectful, and professional approach and reflects our values, purpose, guiding principles, and relevant professional standards.

In all actions and interactions, the safety, rights, and best interests of children are the paramount consideration. This policy provides a clear framework to guide behaviour, promote respectful and ethical conduct, support open and constructive communication, and prevent and respond to inappropriate, discriminatory, or harmful behaviour.

2.0 Who does this policy apply to:

All Team Members, students and Volunteers

3.0 What is our policy:

Our centres and Support Offices are committed to maintaining the highest standards of ethical behaviour. We follow professional standards and documents to guide how we act, make decisions, and interact with others. These standards shape our teaching practices and inform how we approach relationships, responsibilities, and our role within the community.

Ethical behaviour is the foundation of all decisions and actions at our centres and support offices. It reflects respect and care for children, families, educators, team members, and the wider community. By valuing these relationships, we create a positive and supportive environment for everyone.

3.1 Code of Conduct

Our Code of Conduct is essential because it serves as a guiding framework that aligns our mindsets, relevant professional standards, and core guiding principles. It establishes a shared understanding of expected behaviour, fostering consistency, accountability, and integrity across the team. It brings together these documents and defines our expectations about our behaviours and ways of working.

For our work with children, this document is particularly important as it prioritizes the safety, wellbeing, and rights of children, ensuring that every decision and action reflects our commitment to their best interests.

All team members must have access to the Code of Conduct and are expected to adhere to its requirements. Where breaches occur, consequences may include performance management to ensure alignment with our values and to support professional growth and accountability.

3.2 Managing Conflicts of Interests – Team Members and their Families

We are committed to supporting family-friendly practices, recognizing the value of our team members using our centres for their children. However, transparency and fairness are essential in maintaining professional integrity. If a child or educator is in a centre with a family member, or if a member of management (e.g. Nominated Supervisor/Portfolio/Regional Manager) has a child in a centre they directly influence, this relationship must be declared to a one-up manager. Team members should not work directly with their own children daily (e.g., being assigned to their child's room) unless no alternative exists. During family grouping or in shared spaces, educators may



work with their own children, but a risk assessment must be in place to manage the arrangement appropriately.

If a Team Member directly supports a child from their extended family, this relationship must also be disclosed and approved by their direct manager. Additionally, any decisions impacting their family member that fall outside normal practice, policy, or involve a specific decision must be escalated and approved by their direct manager to ensure impartiality and fairness.

When recruiting, if an applicant is a family member, the individual with the relationship must exclude themselves from the recruitment process to avoid any conflict of interest. These measures are in place to uphold professionalism, ensure transparency, and maintain the integrity of our work environment.

Where a team members employment ends in termination, because of poor performance or where they are under investigation for serious misconduct, we reserve the right to review the placement of their child at the centre.

If a relationship between a child and a Team Member is found to affect the room or centre's culture or the experience of other children, the matter will be discussed with the Team Member to seek an informal resolution. If the issue persists and impacts the quality of care, the Team Member may be asked to transfer their child or family member to a nearby Guardian Centre to maintain a positive and high-quality experience for all children.

4.0 Responsibilities:

4.1 Approved Provider (Guardian) will:

1. Ensure that the *Code of Conduct* reflects current expectations of team members and is accessible, available and implemented
2. Ensure that all team members are made aware of their obligations within the *Code of Conduct* during induction and performance reviews
3. Our documents reflect and communicate information about our Code of Conduct, purpose, mindsets, guiding principles and expectations.

4.2 Centre Manager/Nominated Supervisors will:

1. Ensure a copy of all professional standards documents such as the Code of Ethics and Code of Conduct are accessible within the centre for educators/team members and families to access
2. Ensure all educators and team members are made aware of their ethical and legal obligations through induction, performance reviews, personal discussions, team members meeting activities
3. Provide opportunities for team members to critically reflect upon ethical practices and identify different ways of working Ensure that the Walking with Respect in a Space for Children and Walking with Professionalism poster is accessible and made available at the centre
4. Use the Code of Conduct and other professional standards documents to influence and guide the centre philosophy
5. Use professional standards to inform and reflect on conduct and use these standards to guide decisions
6. Ensure that the Code of Conduct is discussed and that team members know how these standards are implemented in day-to-day practice
7. Where a family member either works at the centre or has their child at the centre this will be noted on their file and a risk assessment will be documented and communicated to support transparency
8. Where a family member is the subject of a fact-find or investigation the direct manager will be notified to decide whether the Centre Manager can continue with the process or how this will be managed

4.3 Team members will:

1. Ensure that they understand and adhere to the *Code of Conduct*, Walking with Respect in a Space for Children and Walking with Professionalism documents

2. Ensure that they disclose any situations where there may be a conflict of interest such as where they have a close relationship with or are related to a child that is in their care at the centre. Where a risk assessment is developed to manage this situation the team member will know. Understand and implement any risk management strategies. Where they feel this is unworkable, they will raise this with their manager
3. Understand the legislation and statutory documents that apply to their role with children, families, and other team members in the centre
4. Understand and adhere to the *ECA Code of Ethics*, United Nations Conventions of the Rights of the Child, centre philosophy and other professional standards documents listed at the end of the policy
5. Respect privacy and confidentiality requirements as set out in the *Privacy Statement*
6. Ensure all record keeping is up to date and is professionally written
7. Understand how the *Code of Conduct* and professional standards documents influence the centre philosophy
8. Contribute to discussions about appropriate conduct and continuous improvement
9. Where an educator has their child at the centre or works with a team member, they will support the development and implementation of a risk assessment that documents how risks are managed on a day-to-day basis.

4.4 Families will:

1. Adhere to our confidentiality procedures
2. Provide constructive feedback in relation to educators' professional conduct, as necessary
3. Act in a respectful manner whenever they are at the centre or involved in the programs provided by the centre
4. Communicate with the Responsible Person regarding team members/educators' conduct in a calm manner away from children
5. Ensure that interactions and conduct is consistent with the Enrolment Form Terms and Conditions and Guardian Policies

5.0 Tools and Resources

<p>The most important documents I need are:</p> <p>Code of Conduct</p>	<p>Other supporting documents will include:</p> <p>The ECA Code of Ethics (2016) The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (1989) National Quality Standard (2018) Approved Learning Frameworks Employee Handbook Walking with Respect in a Space for Children Walking with Professionalism ECA Ethics in Action – A practical guide to implementing the Code of Ethics.</p>
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6.0 References

- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010
 Education and Care Services National Regulations 2018
 Guide to the National Quality Framework 2018

7.0 Links to the National Law and Regulations

- Section 166 Offence to use inappropriate discipline Regulation 155 Interactions with children
 Regulation 156 Relationships in groups
 Regulation 168 Education and care services must have policies and procedures



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