

## RELATIONSHIP WITH CHILDREN POLICY

**National Quality Standard:** Quality Area 5 - Relationship with Children

**Policy Owner:** Quality and Curriculum

Why this is  
*important*

### 1.0 Introduction and Purpose:

We uphold the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and are committed to respecting the dignity and rights of every child, without discrimination. Children's safety, wellbeing, and rights are the paramount consideration in all decision-making, practice, and interactions. Consistent, respectful, and responsive relationships support children's wellbeing, sense of security, and confidence, and enable children to feel valued and capable.

As a Child Safe Organisation, we maintain zero tolerance for any form of child abuse or neglect. We recognise that safeguarding children requires strong partnerships with families and the establishment of trusting relationships with children. All interactions are guided by children's rights, child safety obligations, and our philosophy that children are strong, capable learners. Any concern that may impact a child's safety, wellbeing, or rights is taken seriously and responded to in accordance with legislative and organisational requirements.

### 2.0 Who does this policy apply to:

Team Members, Families, Children, Board members, Visitors, Students, Contractors, and Volunteers

### 3.0 What is our Policy:

Positive, respectful relationships are central to quality education and care and are embedded values of this policy. In line with the Guiding Principles of the National Quality Framework, we recognise children as successful, capable, and competent learners. All interactions are grounded in respect, equity, and inclusion and uphold children's rights, dignity, and wellbeing.

Approved Learning Frameworks identify secure, responsive relationships as essential to children's learning, development, and sense of belonging. These relationships guide pedagogical decision-making and daily practice, including curriculum planning, interactions, and routines. The Guardian Curriculum recognises children as active participants in their learning and in contributing to fair and respectful communities.

Relationships characterised by respect, fairness, cooperation, and empathy support children to develop confidence, identity, wellbeing, and a strong sense of belonging. These principles underpin this policy and guide expectations for practice and behaviour across Guardian.

#### 3.1 Children's Rights, Family and Cultural Values

Interactions within the centre are greatly enhanced when children's rights and family and cultural values are given due consideration and respect. Administrative procedures, initial conversations, documentation and ongoing communication with children and families are a reference point for interactions and a foundation for authentic and respectful communication.

#### 3.2 Listening

All team members **must use listening and observation as the foundation for meaningful interactions. Effective listening involves giving full attention to children as they communicate, verbally and non-verbally, and responding in ways that show their ideas and feelings are valued.**

A culture of respectful interaction is fostered when team members actively listen, respond thoughtfully, and take meaningful action in response to children's attempts to communicate. Supporting turn-taking and guiding children to regulate conversations promotes active engagement and inclusive participation. Respectful communication builds trust and strengthens positive, ongoing relationships with families.

### 3.3 Critical Reflection

Time is dedicated to critically reflecting upon interactions within children. Reflections should consider how team members spend extended periods engaged in interactions with children that include playing, observing, communicating and listening.

### 3.4 Role-Modelling

Team members model positive interactions when they:

- a. Show care, empathy and respect for children, families, team members and community members.
- b. Learn and use effective communication strategies.

### 3.5 Guiding Children's Behaviour

Our guiding children's behaviour practices are based on the following principles:

- a. All Team Members respect each child's age, abilities, experiences and family context. They communicate proactively with families and work in partnership to understand each child recognising how their development, medical conditions, personality, environment, wellbeing and relationships influence their behaviour. Behaviour support strategies may be adapted with families to meet individual needs.
- b. Team members do not use any behaviour strategies that are inconsistent with our Zero Tolerance of Any Abuse or Neglect guidance or the Child Harm Classification and Management Table. Even if suggested by a family or another team member, these strategies must not be used. Instead, teams collaborate with families to develop safe, supportive and child-focused Child Support Plans that form part of the educational program and daily practice.
- c. Expectations and strategies will be reasonable, consistent and grounded in a strengths-based understanding of each child.
  - i. Expectations and strategies to guide behaviour will be consistent across all Team Members and reflect the strategies in our Guiding Children's Behaviour Toolkit and Inclusion, Equity and Diversity Guidelines
  - ii. The focus is on guiding behaviour rather than criticising the child, using positive role modelling and secure, trusting relationships
- d. When a child's behaviour escalates or becomes unsafe, Team Members must use the "Five Things to Do strategies" from "Understanding, Preventing and Responding to Big Behaviours: A Practical Guide for Educators" to ensure a consistent, safe and supportive response. This includes prioritising safety, minimising verbal demands, providing space while remaining present, removing unsafe objects, and informing the Centre Manager or Responsible Person when appropriate
- e. Children are supported and encouraged to make appropriate choices through positive guidance, warm relationships and everyday opportunities to practise self-regulation, problem-solving and prosocial skills.

## 4.0 Responsibilities:

### 4.1 Approved Provider will:

1. Ensure all team members have access to a range of professional standards to guide their interactions with children. This includes the Guiding Children's Behaviour Toolkit and Child Support Plan
2. Ensure the educational program contributes to the development of children who have a strong sense of wellbeing and identity, and are connected, confident, involved, and effective learners and communicators.
3. Ensure that all team members are aware of the zero tolerance of child harm and neglect and that systems and processes are developed to ensure that children are protected.

### 4.2 Centre Manager / Nominated Supervisor will:

1. Role model alongside team members practice to promote interactions with children that are positive and respectful.
2. Ensure their philosophy depicts the value and importance of positive, strong, and respectful relationships which support a child's sense of belonging.
3. Establish practice expectations that ensure interactions with children are given priority and those interactions are authentic, just, and respect difference.

4. Ensure their team has funding and a *Child Support Plan* in place for all children who need them, and all team members know about and have access to the Guiding Children's Behaviour Toolkit and Child Support Plan package on the Guardian Way
5. Ensure when a child has a diagnosis or behaviours that increase risk, team members will communicate with the family and work in partnership to develop and implement a Child Support Plan with individualised strategies.
6. Ensure that the enrolment process is undertaken, and enrolment forms are reviewed to identify those children with specific learning needs, diagnosis and medical conditions and ensure that a Child Support Plan is developed and implemented to support the child at the centre.
7. Ensure the team roster supports continuity for children and families.
8. Share the team roster and any changes to the roster with families.
9. Ensure all team members are aware of the centre's expectations regarding positive, respectful, and appropriate behaviour, and acceptable responses and reactions when working with children and families.
10. Consider the size and composition of groups to ensure all children are provided with the best opportunities for quality interactions and relationships with each other and with adults at the centre.
11. Develop and implement educational programs, in accordance with an approved learning framework, that are based on each child's current knowledge, strengths, ideas, culture, abilities and interests and experiences, and consider the individual differences of each child.
12. Ensure that team members provide an educational program that encourages children to express themselves and their opinions and supports children to undertake experiences that develop self-reliance and self-esteem.
13. Ensure the educational program and *Children's Rhythm of the Day and Educator Roles and Responsibilities* maximise opportunities for meaningful conversations and interactions between children and team members and ensure that all children have equal and equitable opportunity to engage in one to one and small group conversations with team members.

#### 4.3 Team Members will:

1. Know each child by using observations, family input, medical information and Child Support Plans to understand each child as an individual. Consider how their development, health, personality, relationships and environment influence their behaviour, and respond to their strengths, interests, ideas, culture and abilities
2. Engaging in Play and Supporting Communication by engaging in play using children's cues to guide their involvement and use Guardian Visual Supports to support communication and positive behaviour
3. Ensure that routines such as toileting, nappy change and rest times are used for positive one to one interaction with children and a time that they can get to know more about the child
4. Uphold children's rights, dignity and agency by listening actively, invite children's views (including babies), and create meaningful opportunities for choice and independence while ensuring their rights and dignity are upheld
5. Guide behaviour positively and consistently by using Guardian's Guiding Children's Behaviour Toolkit and Inclusion, Diversity and Equity resources, and develop Child Support Plans when needed. Model warm, positive interactions and support children's communication and self-regulation skills
6. Create predictable, supportive environments and routines by providing a calm, well-organised spaces and consistent routines. Use everyday moments as opportunities for connection and reassurance, respond positively to children's exploration, and support them to return to play when ready
7. Consistently and respectfully respond to unsafe behaviour when behaviour escalates, prioritise safety, stay calm, reduce verbal demands, provide space, and use visual supports or simple choices. Responses must follow the *Five Things to Do* strategies from *Understanding, Preventing and Responding to Big Behaviours*. No child is ever subjected to corporal punishment or unreasonable discipline
8. Support each child to develop skills and understanding by helping children learn to interact positively with each other, understand their responsibilities, work collaboratively and build healthy relationships
9. Provide environments that promote positive interaction by offering opportunities for children to engage respectfully with others, develop prosocial behaviours and participate in a supportive learning community

10. Partner with families by working in genuine partnership with families, reflect family and cultural values in programs, maintain home languages where possible, and collaborate to create Child Support Plans when required
11. Collaborate with specialists and work in partnership with families and relevant professionals (e.g., medical professionals, allied health and Inclusion Agencies) and implement shared recommendations to support inclusion
12. Work together and reflect; collaborate across the centre, maintain mutually respectful relationships, and reflect on practice to continually improve responses
13. Meet obligations and build capability by following policy and the Code of Conduct, identify learning needs, access training or coaching (internal and external), and apply new knowledge in practice
14. Take responsibility for knowing each child by reading and discussing all relevant information so they can respond consistently and meet their needs
15. Use observations and conversations to inform program planning, create and implement Child Support Plans and review progress and impact regularly

**4.4 Families and Communities will:**

1. Read and comply with this policy.
2. Engage in proactive, regular, and transparent communication with team members about their child, including sharing beliefs, histories, cultures, languages, traditions, child-rearing practices,
3. Work collaboratively with team members and other professionals to ensure all required documentation for their child’s enrolment is current and complete. This may include the development or review of their child’s Enrolment Form, Medical Management Plan, Child Support Plan or an Inclusion Support Plan.
4. Ensure behaviour guidance requests for their child align with our Zero Tolerance of Abuse and Neglect principles and the Child Harm Classification and Management Table.
5. Inform the Centre Manager, Responsible Person, or team members of any events, changes, or concerns that may impact their child’s behaviour at the centre, including concerns about their child’s behaviour or the behaviour of other children.
6. Understand that team members are mandatory reporters and obligated under the child protection legislation to notify of any circumstances that place children in significant harm in accordance with the Child Protection and Mandatory Reporting Policy.

**5.0 Tools and Resources**

<p><b>The most important documents I need are:</b>          Child Safe Standards          Child Support Plan          Guiding Children’s Behaviour Toolkit          Guide to the National Quality Standard          Early Years Learning Framework 2.0</p>	<p><b>Other supporting documents will include:</b>          Image of the Child Guidelines          The Guardian Curriculum</p>
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**6.0 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.

**7.0 References**

- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011



Guide to the National Quality Framework 2018

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