Acorn Child Care Centres
Policies and Procedures

Acknowledgment of Medical Conditions Policy ................................................................. 97

2.8 Managing Infectious Diseases .................................................................................... 98

2.9 Immunisation for Children and Staff ........................................................................ 101

2.10 Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness ...................................................................... 105

2.10.1 Response Protocol to a Serious Incident .............................................................. 108

2.11 Administration of Medication ................................................................................. 109

2.11.1 Child Illness Authority to Administer Paracetamol ............................................. 114

2.12 Dental Health ........................................................................................................... 117

2.13 Headlice ................................................................................................................... 119

2.14 Clothing .................................................................................................................... 121

2.15 Death of a Child ........................................................................................................ 125

2.16 Tobacco, Drug and Alcohol - Centre ....................................................................... 127

2.17 Animals ..................................................................................................................... 129

2.18 Evacuation and Lockdown ...................................................................................... 132

2.19 Dangerous Products, Plants, Vermin and Objects .................................................... 136

2.20 Water Safety ............................................................................................................ 140

2.21 Safe Play Spaces ..................................................................................................... 143

2.22 Supervision .............................................................................................................. 145

2.23 Work Health and Safety Policy ................................................................................ 149

3 Child Protection and Risk Management ......................................................................... 153

3.1 Safeguarding Children and Young People ................................................................. 157

Acorn Child Care Procedure for Reporting Suspected Abuse ........................................ 160

Recruitment and Selection Process .................................................................................. 161

Minimum Referee Check Questions .................................................................................. 162

Minimum Interview Questions .......................................................................................... 163

Child Protection Risk Management Strategy in relation to Concerns of Abuse/Neglect ... 164

Mandatory Reporting Requirements .................................................................................. 164

Acknowledgment of Safe Guarding Children and Young People Policy ......................... 171

4 Staffing ......................................................................................................................... 172

4.1 Educator Performance and Ethics .............................................................................. 178

4.1.2 Acorn Code of Conduct ......................................................................................... 181

Acknowledgment of Acorn Code of Conduct ................................................................. 185
Mission and Values

Our mission is to provide outstanding care which nurtures and realises the potential within each child.

The values underlining our mission at Acorn Child Care Centres recognise and celebrate the intrinsic value of childhood, families and the world in which we live and are intentionally embedded in all we do.

These values include nurturing:

- An understanding of oneself and our connection with others.
- A joy in diversity.
- Creativity through playful exploration and discovery.
- Care, respect, dignity and love of others and the environment, by building caring relationships.
- Global awareness
- The important role of Educators

At Acorn we strive to inspire a natural love of creativity, exploration, investigation, knowledge building and learning through fostering supportive and caring relationships with children and their families. We also place utmost importance on nurturing children’s desire for belonging, awareness of themselves and an understanding of others.
Governance and Management

Background

The day-to-day operations of early education and care services must comply with all relevant legislation, standards and codes of practice. Services cannot achieve this without effective governance and management. Quality Area 7 of the Guide to the National Quality Standard contains the elements of effective leadership and management that result in a well-functioning, compliant service. Quality Area 7 also assists services in improving their skills in governance and management.

The terms ‘governance’ and ‘management’ have different meanings. ‘Governance’ refers to the service’s future direction and goals, and how it will achieve these. It also ensures the service meets its regulatory requirements and that members of its governing organisation follow that organisation’s constitution. ‘Management’ is about the service’s day-to-day operation, such as children having sufficient toys and resources, parents’ fees being up-to-date, and staff and educators following the service’s policies and procedures.

Policy statement

Acorn Child Care Centre is a proprietary limited company owned by Dr Martin and Mrs Jeanne Strahan, and Mr Doug Burns. The business activities are dealt with by the licensee Doug Burns CPA. The Centre is managed by an executive committee comprising the owners Martin Strahan, Jeanne Strahan, Doug Burns and the Centre Directors. Staff and parent input and concerns are considered at the monthly executive meetings to ensure high quality and inclusive centre practices and policies. The daily operations of the centres are managed by the Director who assists prospective families who have enquiries about the centre, orientates and enrol new families and assists.

This Policy outlines the way the Service ensures its practices comply with all relevant legislation, standards and codes of practice, and how it plans to continuously improve its leadership and management practices.

Strategies and practices

Approved Provider and Nominated Supervisor

- Acorn Child Care Centre is the Approved Provider of the Service, and holds the legal responsibility for operating the Service. QA 7.1.1

- The name and contact details of the Approved Provider are displayed in the foyer and included in the Service Handbook given to parents at enrolment. QA 7.1.1

- A Nominated Supervisor, approved as a suitable, fit and qualified person by the Regulatory Authority and appointed by the Approved Provider, is in charge of the day-to-day operations of the Service. Refer to the Service’s Staffing Policy. QA 7.1.5

- The Nominated Supervisor is also the Responsible Person whenever on the premises. Refer to the Service’s Staffing Policy. QA 7.3.2

- At any time the Nominated Supervisor is not on the premises, a substitute Responsible Person who is physically present is placed in charge of the Service’s day-to-day operations. Refer to the Service’s Staffing Policy. QA 4.2.1
Acorn Child Care Centres
Policies and Procedures

- The details of the Nominated Supervisor and the Responsible Person are clearly displayed in the main entrance of the Service. QA 7.1.1

- The Nominated Supervisor ensures that the Service’s staffing arrangements meet regulatory requirements at all times. Particular attention is given to the Responsible Person and Educational Leader. Refer to the Service’s Staffing Policy. QA 7.1.4

- Induction for staff, educators and parents is comprehensive so that all know the Service’s goals (plans for the future), how it will go about achieving these, and the policies and procedures which guide the Services’ day-to-day practices. QA 7.1.2, 7.2.2, 7.3.2

Information Displayed

- All information required by Regulation 173 of the Early Education and Care Services Regulations 2011 is displayed in the main entrance of the Service. QA 7.1.1

Philosophy, Policies and Procedures

- The Service has a written Philosophy which reflects the principles of the Education and Care National Regulations 2011, the Early Years Learning Framework 2009 and My Time, Our Place 2009. This Philosophy was developed by the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, staff, educators and parents and, as such, reflects their shared understanding of the role of the Service with children, families and the community. QA 7.2.1

- The Philosophy informs the Service’s policies and procedures as well as the decisions and day-to-day practices of the staff/educators. QA 7.2.1

- The Service maintains up-to-date policies and procedures on all topics required by Section 168 of the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011. The way these policies and procedures are communicated to parents, educators and staff, the process by which these policies and procedures are reviewed, and how changes are communicated to parents, educators and staff are detailed in the Service’s Policy and Procedure Review Policy. QA 7.3.5

Record Keeping

- The Service keeps records according to Sections 177-184 of the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011. Refer to the Service’s Privacy and Confidentiality Policy. QA 7.3.1

Privacy and Confidentiality

- The Service maintains the privacy and confidentiality of all records and information about individual children, families, parents, staff/educators, students and volunteers. Refer to the Service’s Privacy and Confidentiality Policy. QA 7.3.1
Continuous Improvement

- The Service is committed to continuous improvement. It has processes in place to evaluate the extent to which it meets or exceeds the National Quality Standard 2009. The findings of the evaluation are used to develop the Services Quality Improvement Plan (QIP). QA 7.2.1, 7.2.3

Grievances and Complaints

- The Service follows clear processes to ensure all grievances and complaints are addressed, investigated fairly and documented promptly. If relevant, changes are made to the Service’s Policies and Procedures. Refer to the Service’s Grievance and Complaint Policy. QA 7.3.4

Notifications

- The Approved Provider and Nominated Supervisor notify, within the stated time, the Regulatory Authority of circumstances and provide it with information as detailed in Regulations 174, 175 and 176 of the Early Education and Care National Regulations 2011. QA 7.3.3

Responsibilities of parents

- To be aware of the way the Service operates and to know the appropriate person to contact and how to contact them when they have any suggestions to improve the Service or any concerns about the Service’s practices.

Links to other policies

- Grievance and Complaint Policy
- Enrolment and Orientation Policy
- Privacy and Confidentiality Policy
- Staffing Policy
- Policy and Procedure Review Policy

Sources

- Early Years Learning Framework 2009
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
- Guide to the National Quality Standard 2011
- My Time, Our Place 2009
Further reading and useful websites


Date(s) reviewed: 16/03/206

Next review Date: 16/06/2017
Acorn Child Care Centre Philosophy

At Acorn we aim to provide the highest quality of education and care utilising professional, highly trained and qualified educators and facilities which reflect our commitment to caring for children. We believe that all children will achieve their highest potential in a nurturing and caring environment.

At Acorn our educators are trained to respect the dignity and individuality of each child, remembering at all times the trust which families have placed in our centre.

At Acorn we offer play based learning experiences, in which children will learn how to constructively interact with peers and adults. Children will be given many opportunities through play to confidently explore and construct ideas about the world around them encouraging lifelong learning. We aim to impart life-skills consistent with each child’s development and to extend their range of personal skills.

At Acorn we believe families are the most important influence in a child’s life, and are the primary source of information about their children. Therefore, we encourage parents to be actively involved in the centre, contribute ideas, and take an interest in their child’s development and growth. We believe that children gain a sense of who they are by cultivating positive feelings about their family, cultures, home language, personal identity and their heritage. Together we can achieve the highest level of care.

At Acorn we nurture global awareness by learning to cherish both our differences and our similarities to understand self and others.

At Acorn we encourage children to respect, care for and enjoy nature by building awareness of our responsibilities to our planet. We believe learning about sustainability starts with everyday practice. We encourage active participation in caring for the environment and promote sustainable practices through educating and working with children, families and the wider community.

At Acorn we believe when children feel connected with the community they live in, their sense of well being is enhanced.
1 Staff to Child Ratio

Background

Acorn Child Care Centre is governed by the Educational and Care Services National Regulations 2011 in relation to Staff to Child Ratios.

Policy Statement

Acorn Child Care Centre Branyan Street is licensed for 140 children and Acorn Child Care Centre Bargara Road is licensed for 152. The following minimum and maximum staff ratios for each group apply:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ages of children in group</th>
<th>Qualified Educator : child ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Birth to 24 months</td>
<td>1:4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 months to 36 months (Acorn Branyan Only)</td>
<td>1:5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Older than 24 months to younger than 36 months</td>
<td>1:5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 years to younger than 6 years</td>
<td>1:11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Age</td>
<td>1:15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The centres’ directors are in addition to the above staff. Other Groups and ratios are possible under our licence and may operate from time to time to meet specific requirements.

The Centres also provide Before/After School Care, Occasional Care and Vacation Care. Staff: Child ratios are maintained as required by the Education and Care Services National Regulations, 2014.

These ratios are determined by our licensed capacity and the Child Care Education and Care Services National Regulations, 2011. It is centre policy to ensure that we comply with the Education and Care Services National Regulations, 2011 at all times. QA 4.1.1, 7.1.1, 7.3.2

Date(s) reviewed: 01/01/2016

Next review Date: 01/01/2017
1.1 Hours of Operation

Background

To establish licensed hours.

Policy Statement

The centre is open 6.30am to 6.30pm Monday to Friday, 52 weeks per year. The centre is not open on recognised public holidays in Bundaberg. QA 7.1.1, 7.3.2

Parents Responsibilities

- To ensure the children are dropped off and collected from the centre within the operating care times.

Date(s) reviewed: 01/01/2016

Next review Date: 01/01/2017
1.2 Type of Care

Background

A variety of care is available to families at Acorn Child Care Centres to meet parent requirements.

Policy Statement

Long Day Care

Long Day Care caters specifically for working parents/guardians. Care is available for pre-school aged children between the hours of 6.30 am to 6.30 pm. The Centres provides all meals during this time. Attendance must be booked and charges apply on a daily basis whether the child attends or not, or attends for a part of the day only. QA 1.1.1, 1.1.5, 2.1.1, 2.3.1, 4.1.1, 6.1.2, 7.3.2, 7.3.5

Before & After School Care

The children in this program attend Acorn Child Care Centres because their parents/guardians are unable to deliver them to school or pick them up after school, usually because of work commitments. The Before School Care program allows the children to have breakfast at the Centres (before 7.30am) and then they participate in indoor or outdoor activities. They are driven to school in the Acorn Buses which leave the Centres at approximately 8.15 am. In the After School Care program, children are picked up from their respective schools by the Acorn buses and delivered to the Centres, arriving at approximately 3.20 - 3.45 pm. They have afternoon tea and then participate in programmed activities organised by our Outside of School Hours Care (OSHC) Coordinator. Supervision of homework may be available upon discussion with the OSHC Coordinator. Acorn has the right to refuse continuing care to a child whose behaviour is not appropriate, either on the buses or within the Centre. QA 1.1.1, 1.1.5, 2.1.1, 2.3.1, 4.1.1, 6.1.2, 7.3.2, 7.3.5

Procedures for transporting Outside of School Hours Care Children by Acorn bus

To comply with section 168(f) of the National Regulations the following procedures for transporting OSHC children by Acorn bus ensure that no child is:

- Left on a bus unattended
- Left behind and not collected
- Collected on the wrong day.
- records are current and accurate and consult them before collecting children.
- Ensure bus delivery and collection lists are checked against children
- physically on the bus.
- Check collection lists as children exit the bus.
- Perform a physical check of the bus before leaving and locking the bus, on any occasion when it has been used to transport children. This physical check should include a check behind and under all seats.
- Educators/staff must ensure that they are positioned to have adequate monitoring/supervision of children travelling on bus.
Note:- If for some extenuating circumstance, the Acorn Bus is going to be late dropping a child off at their allocated school of a morning or collecting a child from their allocated school of an afternoon, the OSHC Coordinator will contact the child’s parents firstly and then the relevant school to notify them as early as practically possible. QA 1.1.1, 1.1.5, 2.1.1, 2.3.1, 4.1.1, 6.1.2, 7.3.2, 7.3.5

Vacation Care

Vacation Care is offered each school holiday period. It is necessary to book a child into this care. Spaces are limited because the centres cannot exceed the licensed capacity. The children are in the care of a suitably qualified person who programs outdoor, indoor and craft activities and also excursions for the children. Our aim is to make the children’s holiday as enjoyable as possible. Charges are made on a daily basis. Enrolments to this program are restricted to children who have already attended their first day of school. QA 1.1.1, 1.1.5, 2.1.1, 2.3.1, 4.1.1, 6.1.2, 7.3.2, 7.3.5

Occasional Care

When numbers permit the Centres can provide occasional care. If there is a vacancy, or if a child with a permanent booking for a particular day does not attend (holidays, sickness etc.) someone else may take the place. Parents / guardians utilise occasional care for many different reasons: work, social outings, sport or just for a break. Charges are applied as a daily fee. Confirmation that a space is available must be obtained by the Centres’ Directors before attendance can be accepted. A full enrolment form identical to long day care children must be completed before a child can be accepted for Occasional Care. QA 1.1.1, 1.1.5, 2.1.1, 2.3.1, 4.1.1, 6.1.2, 7.3.2, 7.3.5

Responsibilities of parents

- To complete the Excursion Form – Parent Authorisation accurately, with specific attention to the accuracy of the contact details.
- To carefully consider the contents of the Excursion Risk Management Plan and to comment if required.
- To ensure all children’s bookings are current
- To ensure if your child does not require care for any reason, the office is contacted and advised

Links to other policies

- First Aid Policy
- Recruitment Policy
- Students, Volunteers and Visitors Policy
- Sun Protection Policy
- Tobacco, Drug and Alcohol Free Environment Policy
- Transportation Policy
- Water Policy
Sources

- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011.

Further reading and useful websites


Date(s) reviewed: 01/01/2016

Next review date:
1.3 Children with Special Needs

Policy Statement

The Director will accept the enrolment of children with special needs only after due consideration of the child’s actual needs and the Centres’ ability to provide necessary care and supervision without compromising the Centres’ duty of care to the other children. The requirements of children with additional needs have to be continually assessed and the ability of the Centres to provide continuing care and supervision through the various age groups must be taken into account. QA 2.1.1, 2.1.3, 2.3.1, 2.3.2, 2.3.3, 4.1.1, 7.1.2, 7.3.1, 7.3.5

Responsibilities of parents

- To inform the Service of any updates to their child’s Medical Management Plan.
- To ensure the child’s medication is brought to the Service every time the child attends the Service.

Links to other policies

- Administration of Medication Policy
- Educator Professionalism and Ethics Policy
- Enrolment and Orientation Policy
- Food Preparation, Storage and Handling Policy
- Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy
- Nutrition, Food and Beverage Policy
- Students, Volunteers and Visitors Policy

Sources

- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011.

Further reading and useful websites

Acorn Child Care Centres
Policies and Procedures

- Asthma Foundation. (n.d.). Asthma Friendly Early Childhood Education & Care


  24 November 2013

  24 November 2013

- Asthma Foundation Australia. Asthma First Aid.
  http://www.asthmafoundation.org.au/About_Asthma/Asthma_First_Aid.aspx?terms=asthma%20first%20aid accessed
  24 November 2013

- Australian Society for Clinical Immunology and Allergy (ASCIA) – http://www.allergy.org.au/

- Department of Health (Western Australia). Anaphylaxis Management Guidelines for Western Australian Child
  Care and Outside School Hours Care Service.
  November 2013

- Diabetes Australia. (2013). Diabetes Brochures and Booklets.

- Diabetes Australia – http://www.australiandiabetescouncil.com/

  24 November 2013

- National Asthma Foundation Council Australia – www.nationalasthma.org.au

  24 November 2013


  accessed 24 November 2013

  for Diabetes in Children and Adolescents. 3rd Ed.
Policy review

The Service encourages staff and parents to be actively involved in the annual review of each of its policies and procedures. In addition, the Service will accommodate any new legislative changes as they occur and any issues identified as part the Service’s commitment to quality improvement. The Service consults with relevant recognised authorities as part of the annual review to ensure the policy contents are consistent with current research and contemporary views on best practice.

Date(s) reviewed: 01/01/2016

Next review Date: 01/01/2017
1.4 Inclusion

Background

Children’s relationships and experiences in their first five years affect their learning and development throughout life. Adults working with children require commitment, knowledge and skills to support the children to form positive relationships with adults and other children, and to fully participate in the Service’s activities. For all children to be treated equitably and fairly, those with additional needs, as defined by the National Quality Standard 2011 (p. 202), may require specific considerations and some adaptations to the environment.

As stated, these first five years are critical in the formation of attitudes and behaviours. Assumptions developed during this time usually continue into adulthood, and can affect a person’s life choices and decisions. Creaser and Dau (1995) argue that adults working with children should understand the importance of supporting children to:

- construct a knowledgeable, confident self-identity (i.e. children are confident about who they are);
- develop comfortable, empathetic and just interaction with diversity (i.e. children are accepting of difference);
- develop critical thinking (i.e. children recognise injustice); and,
- learn how to stand up for oneself and others in the face of injustice (i.e. children act upon injustice).

Policy statement

This Policy outlines how the needs of all children who attend the Service are met fairly and inclusively, and how children are supported to fully participate in the program.

Strategies and practices

- The Service’s philosophy is based on a commitment to equality and fairness for all children, particularly their right to fully participate in every aspect of the program. The philosophy, together with its Inclusion Policy, is reviewed regularly as part of the Service’s self-assessment and quality improvement process. QA 4.2.1, 6.3.3, 7.2.1, 7.2.3, 7.3.5
- The Inclusion Policy is explained to all staff, educators, students and volunteers before they commence at the Service, and to all parents when they enrol their children. At that time, they are given the opportunity to ask any questions needed to clarify their understanding. QA 6.1.1, 7.1.2, 7.3.5
- The Service is committed to working with families to best meet the education and care needs of their children. This commitment is communicated to parents at enrolment, and reinforced throughout the time their children attend the Service. Refer to the Service’s Interactions with Families Policy. QA 6.1.1, 6.2.1
- The Service’s Enrolment Form requires parents to provide information about any additional needs their children may have. Parents are asked to update this information throughout the year and to pass on information from any professional support services accessed outside of the Service. Educators use this information to meet the education and care needs of the child. QA 5.1.2, 6.1.1
Parents are asked about their child’s knowledge, ideas, culture, abilities and interests at enrolment and throughout the time the child attends the Service. They are also asked about their child-rearing practices, lifestyle choices, culture, language and traditions. Educators use this information to help children feel secure, safe and confident, and to develop the program. Refer to the Service’s Educational Program Policy. QA 1.1.2, 1.1.4, 5.1.3, 6.1.1, 6.2.1

Parents are welcome at the Service at any time. In addition, parents are encouraged to be involved in decision-making and consultative roles within the Service. QA 6.1.2, 6.2.1

The Service’s physical environment and facilities are designed and, when necessary, adapted to ensure access and participation for every child in the service. QA 3.1.1, 3.1.3

Equipment and resources are selected to support and encourage the participation of all children. They reflect the lives of the children in the Service, their families and the cultural diversity of the broader community. Learning materials (e.g. books, puzzles, games, posters) support positive inclusion by providing children with accurate and appropriate information about their own and other cultures. They also depict people with additional needs as active and contributing members of communities. QA 1.1.5, 3.2.2, 6.3.3

Information gathered about children with additional needs is used to develop an individual support plan, in consultation with parents. When appropriate, and with parents’ knowledge and permission, this plan is shared with the child’s medical practitioners and/or professional support services. QA 1.1.4, 1.1.5, 5.1.2, 6.2.1

Educators plan the program based upon their observations of children’s play and the ideas, interests and opinions that the children share with them. When planning the program, educators reflect upon the effectiveness of their teaching strategies and the learning environments they provide. QA 1.2.1, 1.2.2, 1.2.3, 7.2.3

The Service works with families, external professionals and agencies (e.g. paediatricians, child welfare workers, early childhood intervention services, psychologists) to ensure that the learning environments are the optimum for each child with additional needs. The child’s input is also obtained in this process. Copies of any goals for the children, specific plans or instructions provided by these external professionals and agencies are kept at the Service and are incorporated into the child’s individual program. QA 1.1.5, 4.1.1, 5.1.2, 5.1.3, 6.3.1, 6.3.3

The Service provides parents with information about support and resources available in the community. Where appropriate, parents are assisted in making contact with the relevant professionals and agencies. QA 6.2.2, 6.3.1, 6.3.3

When a child with additional needs meets the pertinent criteria, the Service applies for the Australian Government funded Special Needs Subsidy Support (SNSS) available through the Inclusion Support Agency (ISA). If the application is successful, educators receive support from SNSS workers to assist in programming for the specific needs of that child. QA 5.1.3, 6.3.1, 6.3.3

The Service’s rosters ensure continuity of care so that the children are with educators who know them well and are interested in what they think, feel and do. Further, the educators promote the children’s wellbeing, self-esteem and sense of security by being responsive, warm, trusting and respectful. Refer to the Service’s Relationships with Children Policy. QA 5.1.1, 7.1.3
All educators attend professional development on inclusive practices. This professional development is based upon evaluation of the professional knowledge and skills of individual educators and the team. When appropriate, they receive training on how to meet the additional needs of any child in their care. QA 4.1.1, 4.2.2, 4.2.3, 7.2.2

Educators are encouraged to reflect, individually and as a team, on the way their own beliefs, attitudes, cultural background and attitudes to people may impact negatively upon their relationships with others, and educators’ ability to promote inclusion and participation of all children in the program. QA 1.1.5, 5.1.2

Educators consistently model equitable and fair treatment in their everyday interactions with other adults and children, and intentionally teach children to do the same. QA 5.2.2

Educators view children as competent and capable, and support the development of their autonomy, independence, competency, confidence and pride. QA 1.1.5

Educators share their time equitably with children, and listen to children’s interests and concerns. They ensure that they know the specific communication needs of every child so that they can communicate respectfully and meaningfully with them. QA 1.1.2, 1.2.2, 5.1.2, 5.2.1

Educators facilitate children’s relationships with one another and support them to work collaboratively together. They help children negotiate their rights in relation to the rights of others. They intentionally teach children that it is not acceptable to speak or act unfairly to others, and to stand up for those who are being treated unfairly. QA 1.1.6, 1.2.2, 3.2.1, 5.1.2, 5.2.1, 5.2.2, 5.2.3

The Service celebrates cultural traditions from around the world, especially those culture represented by the children, staff and educators. Parents and community members are encouraged to share particular aspects of their cultures and traditions (e.g. songs, dances, recipes, creative arts) and to bring into the Service items from their culture. Refer to the Service’s Interactions with Families Policy QA 6.1.2, 6.3.4

The Service shares information with the relevant local schools to help transition children with additional needs. QA 6.3.4

The Service follows the principles of Equal Employment Opportunity when recruiting staff.

**Responsibilities of parents**

- To provide complete and accurate details about any additional needs their children may have, to update this information throughout the year, and to communicate information from any professional support services accessed outside the Service.

- To provide educators with up-to-date information about their child’s knowledge, ideas, culture, abilities and interests, together with any child-rearing practices, lifestyle choices, culture, language and traditions that will help educators meet their child’s education and care needs.

**Links to other policies**

- Child Protection and Risk Management Policy
Acorn Child Care Centres
Policies and Procedures

- Educator Professionalism and Ethics Policy
- Educational Program Policy
- Enrolment and Orientation Policy
- Interactions with Families Policy
- Relationships with Children Policy
- Students, Volunteers and Visitors Policy
- Medical Conditions Policy

Sources
- Early Years Learning Framework 2009
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
- Guide to the National Quality Standard 2011
- My Time, Our Place 2009

Further reading and useful websites

Date(s) reviewed: 15/03/2016

Next review Date: 15/05/2016
1.5 Exclusion from Care

Background

Parents, staff and visitors to childcare Services need to cooperate to ensure anyone entering the Service is in good health so that the possibility of infections spreading to others is minimized, work together to encourage positive behaviors and ensure administrative practices are achieved.

Policy statement

The Centres reserves the right to refuse or withdraw children from care, temporarily or permanently, for the following reasons:

- Non-payment of fees (fees are to be paid in full each week). See Policy 1.7
- Inappropriate behaviour on the part of a child.
- Inappropriate behaviour on the part of a parent/guardian or representative.
- Children with contagious or communicable diseases.
- Children with additional needs for whom appropriate care, supervision or facilities are not available.
- Children who have not been immunised.
- Children who are visibly unwell or have a temperature over 38 deg. C.

QA 2.1.1, 2.1.3, 2.1.4, 7.3.1, 7.3.2, 7.3.5

Responsibilities of parents

- To ensure fees are paid weekly and up to date at all times
- To provide, if requested, a medical certificate verifying that the child who has been unwell has sufficiently recovered to return to the Service.
- To encourage appropriate behaviour with children
- To display appropriate behaviour when at the centre.
- To keep unwell children away from the Service.
- To remain away from the Service when they themselves are unwell.
- To arrange prompt collection of their unwell child if contacted by the Service.
- To inform the Service at any time their child has been exposed to an infectious disease.

Links to other policies

- Enrolment and Orientation Policy
- Immunisation for Children and Staff Policy
- Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy
Sources

- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011.
  
- Public Health Act 2005.
  

Further reading and useful websites

  

Date(s) reviewed: 01/01/2016

Next review Date: 01/01/2017
1.6 Privacy and Confidentiality

Background

Effective partnerships with all stakeholders are central to the provision of high quality education and care for children. These partnerships are based on trust and are demonstrated by open and honest communication that is respectful of, and sensitive to, cultural or other differences.

The communication needed in high quality childcare can only be achieved when stakeholders are convinced that the privacy and confidentiality of the information they provide are upheld.

The Centres are obliged to keep the following records:

- Enrolment form
- Developmental records
- Consent forms
- Medication records
- Account records
- Attendance records
- Childcare Benefit records
- Childcare Benefit claims
- Court Orders affecting child.
- Photos

Policy statement

This Policy outlines the Service’s practices in maintaining the privacy and confidentiality of all records and information about individual children, families, parents, staff/educators students and volunteers in the Service.

Strategies and practices

- The Service collects, stores, discloses, and disposes of all personal information according to the National Privacy Principles contained in the Privacy Act 1988 (Commonwealth) and all other relevant legislation. QA 7.1.1, 7.3.1
- The Service only collects personal information that is necessary to deliver high quality education and care to the children enrolled in the Service, for related activities, and to meet its regulatory responsibilities. QA 6.1.1, 7.1.1
- Anyone requested to provide personal information to the Service is informed of the following:
  - the information required;
  - why the information is required;
  - the legislation that requires the information to be collected;
Personal information about an individual is gathered directly from that person unless the Service has obtained the person’s prior consent (e.g. reference checks). If the information pertains to a child (e.g. inclusion support agency, speech therapist), prior written permission is obtained from the parent. QA 7.1.1

Collection of personal information will be lawful, fair and not unreasonably obtrusive. QA 7.1.1

Personal information is kept in a safe and secure place, retained for the period set out in the Regulations, and destroyed when no longer needed. Paper files are stored in locked cabinets and electronic data on computers protected by passwords. QA 7.3.1

The Service provides all staff/educators, students and volunteers with verbal and written information about privacy and confidentiality laws, and about their responsibilities in handling personal information. QA 4.2.1, 7.1.2

Staff/educators, students and volunteers are informed of this Privacy and Confidentiality Policy and are given the opportunity to clarify their understanding of the Policy before commencing at the Service. They are required to sign a Confidentiality Agreement to strictly adhere to the Policy. QA 7.1.2

Confidential information is exchanged between educators when required in the normal course of work at the Service to meet the education and care needs of children. However, educators are not otherwise permitted to divulge any information about a child to anyone other than the parent, nor about the child’s family to anyone, without the prior written approval of the parent. The exception to this is a demand under an Act or law. QA 4.2.1, 5.2.3, 7.1.1

Educators will maintain the privacy and confidentiality of other educators by not relating personal information about them to anyone either within or away from the Service. QA 4.2.1

Students/Volunteers are not permitted to remove any Service documents or to use information gained at the Service without the Nominated Supervisor’s written consent. They are not permitted to discuss children attending the Service, the families or the educators away from the Service (e.g. TAFE, training organisations), or to use their names in any assignments. QA 7.1.1, 7.3.1

The Service ensures the personal information collected, used or disclosed, is accurate, complete and up-to-date. Enrolment details are updated annually or whenever a change in circumstance occurs. Similarly, staff details are updated as changes occur. QA 7.3.1

Individuals can apply in writing to access the personal information they have provided to ensure its accuracy, completeness and currency. The Nominated Supervisor will arrange a suitable time for this access and will remain with the individual for the duration. (Access to information beyond that provided by the individual is subject to Freedom of Information processes.) QA 7.1.1
Educators are to ensure they document information about children’s learning and development accurately, inclusively, sensitively and respectfully. QA 1.2.1, 4.2.1

The Service provides a quiet area for confidential conversations (e.g. between parents and educators, the Nominated Supervisor and educators). QA 3.1.1

The name and contact details of the Approved Provider are displayed in the entrance of the Service and are contained in the Parent Handbook. QA 7.3.1

The Nominated Supervisor/Approved Provider adheres to the Service’s Complaint Policy when responding to complaints about privacy and confidentiality matters. Should any issue remain unresolved, the Nominated Supervisor/Approved Provider advises the complainant of their right to lodge an appeal with the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner, GPO Box 5218 Sydney 1042 or GPO Box 2999 Canberra ACT 2601, or to telephone the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner on 1300 363 992. QA 4.2.1, 7.3.4

Responsibilities of parents

To immediately raise any concerns about the Service’s management of privacy and confidentiality with the Nominated Supervisor/Approved Provider.

Links to other policies

- Educational Program Policy
- Enrolment and Orientation Policy
- Interactions with Families Policy
- Programming Policy
- Professionalism and Ethics Policy

Sources

- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011.
- Freedom of Information Act 1989 (Commonwealth)
- Guide to the National Quality Standard 2011
- Privacy Act 1988 (Commonwealth).

Further reading and useful websites

Acorn Child Care Centres
Policies and Procedures


Date(s) reviewed: 01/01/2016

Next review Date: 01/01/2017
Acorn Child Care Centres
Policies and Procedures

1.7 Social Media Policy

(To be read in conjunction with the IT, Email and Internet policy)

Policy overview

The Social Media Policy sets out Acorn Child Care’s expectations with regard to the use of social media.

As an employee at Acorn Child Care you are required to comply with the social media policy when engaging in activity on various social media outlets. The Social Media Policy is designed to provide guidance to employees around Acorn Child Care’s expectations with regard to the use of social media. The policy covers matters relating to social media including:

- Professional use of social media;
- Personal use of social media;
- Breach of policy; and
- Related areas.

For the purpose of this policy, Social Media may include, but is not limited to, the following:

- Social networking sites (e.g. Facebook, Myspace, LinkedIn, Bebo, Yammer);
- Video and photo sharing websites (e.g. Flickr, Youtube);
- Blogs, including corporate blogs and personal blogs;
- Blogs hosted by media outlets (e.g. ‘comments’ or ‘your say’ feature on theage.com.au);
- Micro-blogging (e.g. Twitter);
- Wikis and online collaborations (e.g. Wikipedia);
- Forums, discussion boards and groups (e.g. Google groups, Whirlpool);
- Video on demand and podcasting;
- Online multiplayer gaming platforms (e.g. World of Warcraft, Second life);
- Instant messaging (including e.g. SMS); and
- Geo-spatial tagging (e.g. Foursquare).

What do I need to do?

You need to carefully read through the Social Media Policy and then complete the associated quiz. All staff are required to comply with the Social Media Policy as amended and implemented from time to time, as well as and any new or amended policies that are introduced from time to time. Failure to comply may result in disciplinary action.

Policy and further information

To the extent that the contents of the Social Media Policy refers to obligations on Acorn Child Care, they are guidelines for management or summaries of applicable legislative requirements only and are not contractual terms, conditions or representations on which a staff member may rely. Your manager is available to assist with any queries you have relating to the policy which is detailed below.
Acorn Child Care Centres
Policies and Procedures

Scope
This Policy covers professional and personal use of social media where the social media engagement relates to Acorn Child Care, its products or services, its employees, its competitors and/or other related businesses or individuals.

This Policy applies to any use of social media through Acorn Child Care’s information technology property, the Acorn Child Care’s network or your personal property devices or personal networks.

Social media
As an education and care service we are extremely protective of our children, families and staff and the Acorn Child Care. Accordingly, our Social Media Policy may be perceived to be more onerous than the usual community standards. These rules are necessary to ensure the safety and comfort of employees, children and their families, and to ensure that Acorn Child Care operates in a professional and appropriate manner.

Employees must exercise extreme caution when using personal or work devices or computer equipment to access social media and online technology whether in the workplace or relating to external events or functions involving Acorn Child Care. It is a breach of confidentiality and privacy to make posts or comments about children, families and their families, and to ensure that Acorn Child Care operates in a professional and appropriate manner.

Acorn Child Care specifically requires that, unless you have the express permission, you: Do not video or photograph anyone, or post photos or personal details of other Acorn Child Care staff, children or families;

- Do not post photos or videos of Acorn Child Care staff, children or families on your personal Facebook page, or otherwise share photos or videos of staff, children or families through social media;
- Do not create an Acorn Child Care branded Facebook page, or other pages or content on social media that purport to represent Acorn Child Care, it’s staff, children or families;
- Do not post anything that could embarrass or damage the reputation of Acorn Child Care, your colleagues, children or families; or
- remove content if requested by Acorn Child Care to do so.

Professional use of social media
Social media offers the opportunity for people to gather in online communities of shared interest and create, share or consume content. It is understood that a significant portion of ongoing professional leaning is now offered through multimedia platforms that include social media sites. It is expected that staff will be accessing such professional learning using these sites but that staff who do so in work time or on work computers, do so with the permission of their Manager.

Employees must be authorised to act on behalf of Acorn Child Care before engaging in social media as a representative of Acorn Child Care. Employees must not comment as a representative of Acorn Child Care unless authorised to do so. All requests to act on behalf of Acorn Child Care in a social media context must be directed to Acorn Child Care. If authorised to act as a representative of Acorn Child Care, employees must not:

- Post or respond to material that is, or might be construed as offensive, obscene, fraudulent,
Acorn Child Care Centres
Policies and Procedures

- defamatory, threatening, harassing, bullying, discriminatory, hateful, racist, sexist, infringes
- copyright, constitutes a contempt of court, breaches a Court suppression order, or is otherwise unlawful;
- Use or disclose any confidential or secure information; or
- Make any comment or post any material that might otherwise cause damage to Acorn Child Care’s reputation or bring it into disrepute.

Personal use of social media

Acorn Child Care recognises that employees may choose to use social media in their personal capacity. This policy is not intended to discourage nor unduly limit employees using social media for personal expression or other online activities in their personal life. Employees should be aware of and understand the potential risks and damage to Acorn Child Care that can occur through their use of social media, even if their activity takes place outside working hours or on devices not owned by Acorn Child Care.

Unacceptable personal use of social media

If an individual can be identified as an employee of Acorn Child Care on Social Media, that employee must:

- Only disclose and discuss publicly available information;
- Ensure that all content published is accurate and not misleading and, complies with all relevant policies of Acorn Child Care;
- Expressly state on all postings (identifying them as an employee of Acorn Child Care) the stated views are their own and are not those of Acorn Child Care;
- Be polite and respectful to all people they interact with;
- Adhere to the Terms of Use of the relevant social media platform/website, as well as copyright, privacy, defamation, contempt of court, discrimination, harassment and other applicable laws;
- Notify their Manager if they become aware of unacceptable use of social media as described above.

Abusive, harassing, threatening or defaming postings which are in breach of this centre’s policies may result in disciplinary action being taken, even if such comments are made using private social networks outside of working hours. All staff and orders connected with the service does not constitute unlawful discrimination, bullying or harassment in any form.

Employees must not:

- Post or respond to material that is, or might be construed as offensive, obscene, fraudulent, defamatory, threatening, harassing, bullying, discriminatory, hateful, racist, sexist, infringes copyright, constitutes a contempt of court, breaches a Court suppression order, or is otherwise unlawful or inaccurate;
- Make any comment or post any material that might otherwise cause damage to Acorn Child Care’s reputation or bring it into disrepute;
- Imply that they are authorised to speak as a representative of Acorn Child Care, or give the impression that the views expressed are those of Acorn Child Care;
• Use an Acorn Child Care email address or any Acorn Child Care logos or insignia that may give the
impression of official support or endorsement of personal comments;
• use the identity or likeness of another employee, contractor or other member of Acorn Child Care;
• Use or disclose any confidential information or personal information obtained in the capacity as an
employee/contractor of Acorn Child Care; or
• Imply he/she is authorised to speak on behalf of Acorn Child Care, or give the impression that any views
expressed are those of Acorn Child Care.

Acceptable personal use of social media

When using social media in their personal capacity, employees are permitted to update their Facebook status and post
messages outside working hours including during a work break.

Staff are not permitted to access social media through Acorn Child Care’s information technology property or Acorn
Child Care’s network, unless the access is approved by their Manager. Staff are expected to act in a manner that does
not interfere with their work and is not inappropriate or excessive.

Consequences of Unacceptable Use of Social Media

Acorn Child Care will review any alleged breach of this policy on an individual basis. If the alleged breach is of a serious
nature, the person shall be given an opportunity to be heard in relation to the alleged breach.

If the alleged breach is clearly established, the breach may be treated as grounds for dismissal. In all other cases, the
person may be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with Acorn Child Care’s Counselling, Performance
Management and Disciplinary Policy. Acorn Child Care may request that any information contained on any social media
platform that is in breach of this policy be deleted.

Acorn Child Care may restrict an employee’s access to social media on Acorn Child Care’s IT systems or equipment if they
are found to have breached this policy or while Acorn Child Care investigates whether they have breached this policy.

Links to other policies

- Child Protection and Risk Management Policy
- Educator Professionalism and Ethics Policy
- Enrolment and Orientation Policy
- Photographs and Video Recording Policy
- Privacy and Confidentiality Policy
- Students, Volunteers and Visitors Policy

Sources

  accessed 23 January 2015
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
Acorn Child Care Centres
Policies and Procedures

- Guide to the National Quality Standard 2011

Further reading and useful websites


Date(s) reviewed: 13.1.2017

Next review Date: 13.1.2018
1.8 Confidentiality and Privacy Policy

Policy overview

The Confidentiality and Privacy Policy for Acorn Child Care sets out Acorn Child Care’s expectations regarding preserving the confidentiality and privacy of Acorn Child Care related information and its collection and to ensure that the information is only used for the purpose permitted in the policies and procedures.

This policy is a guide only and will not form part of your General Terms and Conditions of employment or confer contractual rights, on which a staff member may rely. This policy may be amended from time to time.

What do I need to do?

You need to read the policy carefully. You will receive some education on the policy and how it is implemented during your time here at Acorn Child Care.

Policy and further information

To the extent that the contents of the Confidentiality and Privacy Policy refers to obligations on Acorn Child Care, they are guidelines for management or summaries of applicable legislative requirements only and are not contractual terms, conditions or representations on which a staff member may rely. Your manager is available to assist with any queries you have relating to the policy which is detailed below.

Purpose and scope

During the period of your employment or engagement with Acorn Child Care or at any time thereafter, you are not to disclose to any unauthorised person, confidential information relating to Acorn Child Care, staff, children, families, clients or suppliers of Acorn Child Care. Confidential information includes:

- Information about our staff, children, families, suppliers including their identity, personal details,
- family and financial affairs (as applicable);
- Children’s profile documentation including health documents;
- Any documents marked as confidential that relates to staff members;
- Any document or information marked as confidential and any information received or developed by a staff member in the course of the employment or engagement which is not publicly available and
- relates to curriculum, processes, and techniques used by Acorn Child Care in the course of its business, or related agencies;
- Policies, procedures, forms and related guides;
- Contractual, technical and production information;
- Business and marketing plans;
- Notes and developments regarding confidential information;
- Any of Acorn Child Care's trade secrets, confidential dealings or operations;
- Any information (electronic, hard copy or otherwise) concerning Acorn Child Care and its related entities; and
- Other information designated as confidential by Acorn Child Care or agencies it engages or partners with for any child, family or staff related reason;
Acorn Child Care Centres
Policies and Procedures

- Turnover figures, information relating to suppliers and clients, any marketing information such as
- client and supplier lists, financial information and business plans;

All Acorn Child Care documentation is confidential. This includes child and family records, forms (blank or completed), policies and procedures, financial and other statements, and all other documents. These documents can only be taken from Acorn Child Care with the informed permission of the Manager. Staff agree to return any or all confidential information upon request by Acorn Child Care. This is not meant to impose an obligation on the employee with respect to maintaining confidence regarding any portion of the confidential information which:
- Is generally known or available by publication, commercial use or otherwise; Which you are required by law or by a government agency to disclose; or You have disclosed to Acorn Child Care’s legal advisers who agreed to keep the confidential information confidential;

- Breaches of confidential information are taken very seriously and Acorn Child Care will not tolerate any disregard by an employee for this policy, or for contractual obligations concerning confidential information.

Employee Privacy Policy
Purpose and scope

During the period of your employment or engagement with Acorn Child Care or at any time thereafter, you will be required to collect, store and use personal information of Acorn Child Care, staff, children, families, clients or suppliers of Acorn Child Care in accordance with this Employee Privacy Policy.

Information Collected

Acorn Child Care and its staff must only collect information for the purpose of providing Acorn Child Care services or as required under the laws, regulations and guidelines of the relevant Australian and state government agencies responsible for children, child protection or education and care programs. The relevant laws and regulations include, but are not limited to:

- Privacy Act 1988 (Cth) (“Privacy Act”);
- The National Quality Framework;
- Northern Territory of Australia Education and Care Services (National Uniform Legislation) ACT 2011;
- Education and Care Services National Law (WA) Act 2012;
- Office of the Information Commissioner NT; and
- Office of the Information Commissioner WA.

Sensitive Information

The information collected by Acorn Child Care may be sensitive information as defined in the Privacy Act and may include, but is not limited to, health or location information about an individual. Acorn Child Care and staff are not permitted to disclose sensitive information to anyone unless required to do so by law or at the clear and reasonable direction of the Manager.

How it is collected

Information must be collected in a fair, reasonable and lawful manner through:
verbal and written communication;
- direct observations;
- support agencies and government agencies; and/or
- third party organisations lawfully disclosing the information to Acorn Child Care.
- Staff may only collect, use and disclose personal information in accordance with this Employee Privacy Policy and only with the express written consent of the disclosing person.

How it is stored

Information is stored in the child’s room area and in Acorn Child Care’s administration. These areas are locked at the end of each day. The material/records are either hard copy in files or in electronic format on computers that have individual passwords and business security measures. Staff must ensure that all personal information is stored securely and in accordance with this Employee Privacy Policy or any other Acorn Child Care policy. Staff information is stored securely in Acorn Child Care’s administration.

How it is used

Information gathered can only be used and disclosed for the purposes that it was provided. Information is generally used for the purposes of:

- supporting the child’s enrolment process;
- developing plans and programs for each child;
- supporting families in their parenting;
- supporting staff in their employment and professional development;
- completing tasks required by the Australian and state governments; and
- supporting a multi-disciplinary team approach.

How it may be disclosed professionally

Information should only be disclosed at the direction of the Manager or in accordance with the Privacy Act or any other relevant law.

Data quality, Request for access and concerns

Staff and parents are entitled to access their own personal and private information at a suitable time and on written request. Staff and parents may request to correct or update information held by Acorn Child Care or may lodge a complaint with the Manager.

If Staff or a parent has any questions or concerns about the way in which Acorn Child Care handles collected information, then that person can contact the Acorn Child Care manager. Acorn Child Care will deal with requests, complaints and concerns promptly and in a manner consistent with this Employee Privacy Policy or any other Acorn Child Care policy.

Time required to keep information

Acorn Child Care will maintain information for the period of time as required by law. If the law does not require certain information be maintained, Acorn Child Care will follow recommended guidelines for the periods of time that certain
information is usually maintained. Any information that is no longer required to be kept by Acorn Child Care will be securely destroyed.

Inactive records are stored securely until they have been kept for the required legal amount of time prior to being securely destroyed.

**Visiting media, students, or observers**

To safeguard and respect the privacy of the families in Acorn Child Care, visiting media, students, or observers must meet with the Manager, provide photo identification and discuss their proposed visit in full detail.

The Manager will decide whether the proposal can proceed, basing the decision on the policies of Acorn Child Care and where relevant, the related legislation. Information gathered in Acorn Child Care is confidential and cannot be used without the informed and express consent of the Manager who will always consult with the relevant parents.

Parents wishing to video or photograph children in any manner in their group can do so only after the Team Leader in the room has the express permission of the relevant parents. Information about matters relating to children or families (including sensitive information) may not be relayed to anyone (directly or indirectly) other than to the parents of the child it relates to unless written permission is given by the parent.

**Staff**

Staff must adhere to the Employee Privacy Policy, any other privacy policy and confidentiality principles in regards to other staff, children and families at Acorn Child Care. All staff and students are required to sign a confidentiality agreement to this effect prior to beginning employment at Acorn Child Care.

Staff will adhere to the specific confidentiality measures in regards to child protection issues (Child Protection (Child Safety or similar) Policy). Information about staff will only be accessed by relevant management personnel or the relevant Australian and state government agencies responsible for children, child protection or education and care programs.

Any documentation written by staff about children must be accurate, timely and free from negative comments or bias. All documentation must be dated and contain the author’s name. If staff are aware or become aware of any errors in any documentation, the staff member must immediately correct the error and inform the Manager.

Any visual images taken by staff of enrolled children in Acorn Child Care must not be used for any purpose other than the purpose for which the parent was originally advised and provided their consent, unless further written consent is obtained.

**Privacy relating to external parties**

**Complaints**

All complaints about a breach of privacy will be investigated by an appropriately qualified representative in accordance with our complaint handling process (which is available in hard copy on request).

We will endeavour to resolve complaint as quickly as possible and, in any event, within 28 days. The complainant will be notified of the outcome of the investigation, including how we propose to resolve the complaint and what, if any, corrective measures we will implement. If the complainant is not satisfied with our handling of the complaint, the
complainant may lodge a complaint with the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC). For more information about doing so, visit http://www.oaic.gov.au/privacy/making-a-privacy-complaint.

The appointment of a Privacy Officer

The Privacy Officer within the service will be the Nominated Supervisor.

Parents

Staff must ensure that parents respect the privacy of staff and other families at Acorn Child Care. Should parents be unsure or concerned about any privacy issue, they should be encouraged to discuss their concerns with the Manager.

Reviewed 13.1.2017

New reviewed 13.1.2018
1.9 Fees

Background

Early childhood education and care services must comply with the Early Education and Care National Regulations 2011 and the National Quality Standard 2011 in the way they manage the collection of fees, and inform parents about this process including any pending changes to the fees.

Policy statement

This Policy details the Service’s procedures in relation to fees, methods of payment and associated provisions.

Strategies and practices

- The Service’s Fee Policy is explained to parents at enrolment, and the necessary paperwork relating to fees is discussed and completed. QA 7.3.5
- The Service ensures that, wherever possible, parents of children enrolled at the Service are notified at least 1 month in advance of any change that will affect the fees charged or the way in which fees are collected. Such notice will be prominently displayed at receptions and parents will be notified in writing. QA 7.3.5
- A one off administration fee of $40 per family is required when enrolling at Acorn. This fee is non-refundable. QA 7.3.5
- The Service requires full two weeks written notice of an intention to change the days or the number of days required or to withdraw a child from the Service. The two weeks’ notice begins from the close of business on the day the Service receives the written advice. QA 7.3.5
- A late fee of $1 per minute for each minute per child will be charged for any child collected later than the Service’s closing time. QA 7.3.5

Fee Schedule

- The current fee schedule is as follows: QA 7.3.5

  - Birth to Kindergarten $89 per day
  - Kindergarten $83 per day
  - Before School Care $27 mornings
  - After School Care $32 afternoons
  - Vacation Care $83 per day
Payment of Child Care Fees

- It is anticipated that all families utilising the Acorn Child Care Centres facility pay fees using the integrated direct debit method. A direct debit authority will be signed by all families at enrolment. Fees for the current week will be charged on Monday and this will appear on emailed statements delivered to families on Monday afternoon. Direct debit will go to Acorns bank for deduction on Tuesday mid-morning and deduct fees from parent’s bank account on Wednesday or Thursday depending on the Parent bank. Parents can choose to have the direct debit amounts deducted from their bank or credit card accounts.

- Fees are to be kept up to date at all times. Q7.3.2, 7.3.5

- Parents/guardians should check their statements carefully each week and refer any problems immediately to the Director. If something is wrong, it is an indication that data has been incorrectly entered into the computer and the error will therefore continue until corrected. Parents are responsible for checking the CCB/CCR and JET which appears on their statement.

- If an overpayment is made, no change will be given but the excess will be credited to the family’s account. QA 7.3.5

- Please note that all bookings must be paid for regardless of attendance. Q7.3.2

- When you decide to leave Acorn Child Care Centres, you are required to give two weeks written notice. You must attend your last day of care or cessation care fees are applied to your account. Cessation of care fees are the full daily rate with no Centrelink benefits. These fees will be applied from the last day of attendance to your last day of booked care.

Overdue Fees

- Fee reminders are communicated to any family one or more weeks late in the payment of fees. If the fees are not paid within the following week or an arrangement not entered into, the child’s place at the Service is at risk. QA 7.3.5

- Debt collection fees will be charged to the defaulters account.

- If you have exited the centre with an overdue account. Acorn will endeavour to recover fees using an external party. Collection fees charged by the external party (Prushka) are 35% plus GST for amounts over $1000 and under 6 months old; 45% plus GST for amounts over $1000 over 6 months old; 25% plus GST for amounts over $1000 and under 6 months old; 35% plus GST for amounts over $1000 and over 6 months old.

Child Care Management System (CCMS)

- The Centres applies the guidelines of the Commonwealth Government in the administration of Child Care Benefit.

- The Centres requires the following information for each child who attends and the parent/guardian under whose name Child Care Benefit is registered – Date of Birth and CRN

- Parents are advised to contact the Family Assistance Office directly to determine their eligibility for CCB before the child commences at the Service. QA 6.3.1
Parents/guardians must understand that the Centres do not control or administer the amount of CCB which each child receives. Any discussion on this matter should be directed to the Centrelink Office.

Absences allowed by CCMS include 42 days per financial year comprising of 12 public holidays and 30 days of absence. Families exceeding the allowable 42 days will not be entitled to CCB reductions unless a doctor’s certificate is provided following an absence.

The Director can assist with advising parents/guardians about CCMS but further information may be found at Centrelink on the corner of Tantitha and Woongarra Streets, Bundaberg. The Family Assistance Office can be contacted by phone on 13 61 50. Q 6.3.1

Responsibilities of parents

- To ensure fees are kept up-to-date.
- To keep the Service informed of any changes in attendance (e.g. family holidays, other absences)
- To respond promptly to communications from the Family Assistance Office to maintain CCB eligibility.
- To ensure the centre has a current email address.

Links to other policies

- Enrolment and Orientation Policy
- Interactions with Families Policy
- Direct Debit Form

Sources

- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011

Further reading and useful websites


Date(s) reviewed: 13/12/2016 Next review Date: 13/12/2017
1.10 Enrolment and Orientation

Background

For many children and their families, commencing child care is their first experience of separation. It is an experience that can be daunting and should be managed so that the process is as smooth as possible for all involved, especially the child.

The experiences of families and their children during the enrolment and orientation processes strongly influence the quality of their future relationships with the Service.

Policy statement

This Policy outlines the way the Service welcomes parents and their children, informs them about the Service’s policies and procedures, and gathers the information necessary to ensure the safety, education and care of the children.

Strategies and practices

The Centre, as part of its obligations to the Commonwealth Government, gives priority of access to care according to the guidelines provided by the Commonwealth. These priorities are as follows:

- **First Priority** – a child at risk of serious abuse or neglect.
- **Second Priority** – A child whose parent/s satisfies the work/training/study test under section 14 of *A New Tax System*
- **Third Priority** – Any other child. Q7.3.2

Waiting List

- The Centre maintains waiting lists for parents seeking care for their children. Parents who wish to be included on the waiting list need to complete an application form and pay the $40.00 Administration Fee. Once this has been completed the information will immediately be keyed into the centre’s computer system.
- The Centre cannot guarantee that a child will be enrolled at a particular time. This depends upon vacancies applicable at that time and upon priority of access rules which may apply. Parents/guardians will be notified when a child can be accepted into care.
- An administration fee of $40 is payable per child per enrolment. This fee is non-refundable regardless of whether a position becomes available. The administration fee is not applied to future child care costs. Q7.3.2

Pre-enrolment

- The Service follows the Australian Government’s “Priority of Access Guidelines” for allocating childcare places. Once these Guidelines are met, the Service prioritises siblings of children who are already attending. QA 7.3.2
- During the initial contact, parents are provided with basic information about the Service, its programs, routines, meals, fees, operation, opening and closing times, policies and procedures and documentation required before
Acorn Child Care Centres
Policies and Procedures

commencing at the Service. Parents are also at this time provided a tour of the centre. Possible start dates are discussed. Parents are also invited to ask any questions they may have. They are given a copy of the Parent Handbook to keep and provided with a USB with all current policies and procedures for their perusal, along with their enrollment pack. QA 6.1.1, 7.3.5

- The Nominated Supervisor ascertains if the child has any special education and care requirements (e.g. medical, English as a second language) so that these needs can be met by the Service from the child’s first day of attendance. Parents are asked to complete the Family and Child Information Summary. QA 2.1.1, 5.1.3, 6.1.1

- Parents are given a reminder to contact the Family Assistance Office to have their eligibility for Child Care Benefit assessed, if their child has not previously attended care. This information is required prior to formal enrolment. QA 6.2.2

- The Nominated Supervisor informs parents that every child and family responds differently to starting childcare, especially if it is the first time that children and families have been separated for any lengthy period. They are also told that, at enrolment time, educators and parents will plan to ensure the child settles in as smoothly and as quickly as possible. QA 6.1.1

Enrolment

- Once parents decide to enrol their child into care or for the waiting list, they complete an enrolment form prior to their child commencing at the Service. The enrolment form contains the following details:
  - Full name, date of birth and address of the child
  - Name, address and contact details of: each known parent of the child; any person who is to be notified of an emergency involving the child if neither parent of the child can be immediately contacted; and, any person who is an authorised nominee.
  - The name of any person who is authorised to consent to medical treatment of, or to authorise administration of medication to, the child; and, any person who is authorised to authorise an educator to take the child outside the education and care service premises.
  - Details of any court orders, parenting orders or parenting plans provided to the approved provider relating to powers, duties, responsibilities or authorities of any person in relation to the child or access to the child.
  - Details of any other court orders provided to the approved provider relating to the child's residence or the child's contact with a parent or other person.
  - Gender of the child.
  - Language used in the child's home
  - Cultural background of the child and, if applicable, of the child's parents.
  - Any special considerations for the child, such as any cultural, religious or dietary requirements or additional needs.
Parents are asked to sign an agreement on the enrolment form authorising the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor or an educator to: seek medical treatment for the child from a registered medical practitioner, hospital or ambulance service; arrange transportation of the child by an ambulance service; and, if relevant, take the child on regular outings. Refer to the Service’s Excursion Policy. QA 6.1.1

- Parents are to provide the following health information.
  - Name, address and telephone number of the child’s registered medical practitioner or medical service and the child’s Medicare details.
  - Details of any specific healthcare needs or known medical conditions such as allergies, asthma, diagnosed as at risk of anaphylaxis.
  - Any Medical Management Plan or Risk Minimisation Plan to be followed with respect to a specific healthcare need or medical condition (e.g. asthma, allergy, anaphylaxis).
  - Details of any dietary restrictions for the child.
  - Immunisation status of the child. Refer to the Service’s Immunisation of Children and Staff Policy. QA 2.1.1, 2.1.4, 2.2.1, 2.3.3, 6.2.1
  - Birth Certificate

- The full completion of an enrolment form is necessary before a child can be accepted into or put on the waiting list for any type of care.

- Parents are provided with written information about fee structure, parents are to provide direct debit details and these are entered into the system as the fee payment option for Acorn QA 6.1.3

- The Service’s Policies and Procedures are discussed, and parents’ attention drawn to specific policies (e.g. Sun Protection, Nutrition, Food and Beverages, Handwashing) and aspects of those policies that require their support and cooperation (e.g. ensuring current contact information, providing a hat, labelling of all clothes and other personal items). Parents are then shown where they can readily access these Policies and Procedures, the Parent Library and other resources. QA 6.1.3, 2.1.3, 7.3.5

- The Nominated Supervisor then speaks to the parents about the various ways the Service communicates with them (e.g. face-to-face, notice boards, emails, newsletters, Facebook and Educa) and ways that parents can converse with the Service (e.g. face-to-face, suggestion box, email, communication forms, text message and surveys). The information provided by the Service is intended to be easily understood by all parents, including those for whom English is a second language. QA 6.1.3

- Parents are also asked the most suitable way to exchange information about their child’s specific needs so that the educators can work with the parents to meet those needs. QA 6.2.1

- At this time, the Nominated Supervisor, the educators in the child’s room and the parents devise an orientation plan to help the child settle during the transition from home to the Service (particularly during the initial settling in period), and how best to maintain continuity between home and the Service. Some children may need to visit the Service a number of times before feeling sufficiently secure to be left by their parents. Others can be left
after the first visit. Others again may need to build from a short visit to a full day. The plan is flexible and can be altered at any time. It is crucial that the child feels secure, and that positive interactions are established between all parties – child, parents and educators. QA 6.1.1

- Once the child commences at the Service, parents are contacted at any time the child becomes overly distressed. Parents are also informed about their child’s day when they collect the child, and are welcome to telephone the Service throughout the day for updates. QA 6.1.1

- At the end of the enrolment and orientation, parents are asked to complete an Enrolment and Orientation Checklist which provides feedback on how to improve these processes and ensure all areas are covered. QA 7.2.3

**Transitioning to a New Room**

- Children are transitioned to the next age group when they are developmentally ready to move to the next age group and a vacancy occurs. When educators identify that a child is ready to begin transition, and a vacancy is imminent, they contact parents to discuss the desirability of the move and to obtain their input. QA 6.1.2, 6.2.1, 6.3.2

- Once all parties have agreed that the move is in the child’s best interests, a letter is composed formalising the agreement. It details the day and date of the move, the names of the educators in the new room and any other relevant information. Parents are also asked to complete the Service’s “Child’s Routine and Update to Routine Form.” QA 6.2.1, 6.3.2

- Before children are officially moved to a new room, their current educators talk to them about the impending move and the children then visit the next age group a number of times. The frequency depends on individual children. QA 1.1.6, 5.1.2, 5.1.3

- Immediately prior to the child’s official move, parents are encouraged to visit the child’s new room and to meet the educators to ensure that they are aware of such matters as room routine, location of lockers, and sign-in and sign-out sheets. QA 5.1.3

**Transition to school**

Attending school for the first time is a major change for the child and the family. The Service recognises that parents play a vital role in the success of the transition, and supports and works with parents to prepare children for school entry.

- Wherever possible, the Service provides families with information about the schools within the local community.

- The Service provides information to parents about children’s readiness for school.

- Educators speak to children about starting school and ensure that the information they provide to children is positive and accurate.

- The Service coordinates the transition statements to be completed by the educator and provides these to the parents to provide to the child’s school. QA 1.1.4, 6.2.2, 6.3.2
Additional safe practices for babies

- To be diligent in obtaining from parents upon enrolment all relevant information about their child, especially details on immunisation and medical conditions, together with dietary needs, and current sleep patterns, bottle times and other care routines.

Responsibilities of parents

- To provide the Service with information about their family and their child’s needs and interests.
- To provide all of the required documentation.
- To read and discuss Service policies and procedures.

Links to other policies

- Administration of Medication Policy
- Educational Program Policy
- Excursion Policy
- Food Preparation, Storage and Handling
- Immunisation for Children and Staff Policy
- Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness
- Interactions with Families Policy
- Managing Infectious Diseases Policy
- Medical Conditions Policy
- Nutrition, Food and Beverages Policy
- Relationships with Children Policy
- Privacy and Confidentiality Policy
- Sleep and Rest Policy
- Sun Protection Policy

Sources

- Early Years Learning Framework 2009
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
- Boyle, L. (2009). *NCAC Factsheet: Settling your child into care*

Further reading and useful websites


Date(s) reviewed: 13.1.17

Next review Date: 13.1.2018
1.11 Grievance and Complaints

Background

Feedback from families, educators, staff and the wider community is fundamental in creating a Service that meets regulations, meets the needs of enrolled children and their families, and continues to improve the quality of education and care it provides to children.

It is inevitable that feedback will include differing opinions, occasionally resulting in complaints.

Policy statement

This Policy details the Service’s procedures for receiving and managing informal and formal complaints. Parents and staff therefore can lodge a legitimate grievance in the knowledge that it will be managed diligently and confidentially.

Strategies and practices

- The Service’s processes for airing concerns/complaints are communicated to families at enrolment. QA 6.1.1, 7.3.4, 7.3.5
- Details of the Service’s email address and telephone, the email address of the Approved Provider, and the full contact details of the Regulatory Authority are in the Centre Handbook and also displayed in the entrance of the Service. QA 7.1.1
- The Service prioritises open, respectful and confidential exchange of information between the Service and its families. Parents are provided with many avenues for verbal and written communication about the Service’s operations. Parents are informed when any of their feedback has led to improvements in the way the Service operates. Refer to the Service’s Interacting with Families Policy. QA 6.1.3, 7.1.2
- The Nominated Supervisor models respect and a problem-solving approach to the receipt of grievances and complaints, and engenders this across the Service. QA 4.2.1
- Educators and staff receive information on ways to receive parents’ concerns/complaints and to value the opportunity this feedback affords the Service for quality improvement. QA 6.1.2, 7.1.3
- Staff/educators, students and volunteers are informed of the Service’s Privacy and Confidentiality Policy before commencing at the Service and are required to sign a Confidentiality Agreement to strictly adhere to that Policy. QA 7.1.1
- At all times the parents’ right to air a grievance will be respected and no discrimination will be applied to either the family or child/ren as the result of the grievance. QA 7.3.4
- Parents are encouraged to raise informally with the child’s primary educator or the Nominated Supervisor any concerns they have about the daily care of their child. QAQ 7.3.4
- Formal complaints can be raised verbally with the Nominated Supervisor who will document the complaint clearly and objectively on the Service’s Grievance and Complaint Form. If the grievance is about the Nominated Supervisor, the matter can be directed to the Approved Provider. QA 7.3.4
The Service maintains a register of written complaints and actions taken in response through its Grievance and Complaint Register. The register is reviewed regularly (e.g. nature, recurrence, outcome) to determine if the actions taken are consistent with the Service’s Quality Improvement Plan and if changes to the Service’s Policies are required. Each review is documented on the Grievance and Complaint Analysis Sheet. QA 7.3.4

Procedure for formal written complaint

- Complaints are to be submitted in writing using the Service’s Grievance and Complaint Form. Information requested on the form includes the:
  - Name of the person making the complaint
  - Details of the complaint
  - Details of any witnesses. QA 7.3.4

- The complaint will be dealt with in the strictest confidence. The Nominated Supervisor/Approved Provider or delegated staff member involved in investigating the complaint will ensure that information is restricted only to those who genuinely need to be notified in order to deal with the complaint. If information specific to the complaint needs to be disclosed to others during its resolution, the complainant will be informed prior to this occurring. QA 7.3.1, 7.3.4

- The complaint will be entered into the Service’s Grievance and Complaint Register. QA 7.3.4

- The Nominated Supervisor/Approved Provider will investigate the complaint in an equitable, transparent and fair manner, and document the findings. Investigations involve consulting with the relevant stakeholders (including any person who may be the subject of the complaint) and reviewing documentation such as attendance records, accident reports and the Service’s Policies. QA 7.3.4

- Actions to address the complaint will be determined, and the complainant notified in writing of those actions. QA 7.3.4

- Should the complaint made to the Service concern a breach of regulations, the Regulatory Authority will be notified within 24 hours of the complaint being lodged. QA 7.3.3.

- When an issue cannot be resolved at the Service, the complainant can contact the Office of Early Childhood Education and Care. QA 7.3.3

- The same processes as those set out above apply to educators and staff in submitting formal complaints about any aspect of the Service’s operations. However, staff grievances are dealt with under its Staff Grievance and Complaint processes. QA 4.2.1, 7.3.4

Responsibilities of parents

- To raise issues and concerns in a timely manner using the processes outlined in this Policy.

Links to other policies

- Educators Professional and Ethics Policy
Acorn Child Care Centres
Policies and Procedures

- Enrolment and Orientation Policy
- Interactions with Families Policy
- Policy and Procedures Review Policy

Sources, further reading and useful websites

- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011.

Date(s) reviewed: 13/12/2016
13.1.2017

Next review Date: 13.1.2018
1.12 Environmental Sustainability

Background

Like many other countries, Australia recognises that environmental sustainability is essential to social, economic and political sustainability. Research has shown that the earlier children are given opportunities to connect with nature, learn about the environment and our impact upon it, and to develop the skills to care for it, the more likely they will be environmentally responsible as adults.

As part of this recognition, the National Quality Standard 2011 requires services to embed sustainable practices into their operations, and to include its ideas, ideals, concepts and actions into the program.

Policy statement

This Policy describes how the Service embeds sustainability into its practices, routines and educational program so that children develop understanding and respect for the environment and its finite resources. In addition, it outlines how the Service encourages educators, children and families to care and advocate for the environment throughout their lives.

Strategies and practices

- The Service seeks to provide a physical environment that includes natural features such as plants, trees, edible gardens, sand, rocks, mud and water, and to allow children unhurried time in that environment. QA 3.1.1
- Sustainability is embedded in the Service’s everyday routines and practices. These include:
  - Recycling, and use of recycled resources
  - Energy efficiency
  - Water conservation
  - Purchasing
  - Worm farm/Composting. QA 3.3.1
- Reuse and recycle containers are set up throughout the Service. Educators role model using the containers and discuss the reasons for them with the children. They encourage the children to use these recycled materials and bring reusable items from home. QA 3.3.1, 3.3.2
- The Service accesses reversed cycle outlets for craft materials where available. QA 3.3.1
- The Service practices energy conservation
  - air conditioning, lights and other electrical equipment are turned off when a room is not in use
  - computers, printers and photocopiers are turned off at the end of the day. QA 3.3.1, 3.3.2
- Water conservation is embedded in the Service’s practices
  - only the amount of water required to undertake programmed water play is used
  - water used in water play is emptied onto gardens
Acorn Child Care Centres
Policies and Procedures

- Water play is discontinued during water restrictions, and the reasons explained to the children
- Educators encourage children to turn taps off to avoid wastage
- Water conservation posters are displayed in bathrooms.
  
  Refer to the Service’s Water Safety Policy. QA 3.3.2

- When purchasing equipment and supplies, the Service chooses items that are as eco-friendly as practicable. Preferred items are:
  
  - Made from natural materials and fibres (e.g. wood, cotton, cardboard, metals)
  - Locally or Australian made
  - Made from renewable, reused, or recycled materials
  - Repairable
  - Durable, and able to washed or wiped clean. QA 3.3.1

- The Service has a worm farm. Any scraps suitable for the worm farm or compost are provided by the kitchen. Educators discuss with the children the foods that worms can or cannot eat. The children are involved in maintaining the worm farm, and in using the worm casts in the garden. QA 3.3.2

- Educators intentionally teach children about caring for the environment (e.g. energy efficiency, water saving), and involve them in planned experiences that develop life skills such as growing and preparing food, waste reduction and recycling. QA 3.3.2

- Educators remain alert to teachable moments (e.g. noisily feeding birds, rainbows, sun showers, cloud patterns) to share the awe and wonder of the natural world with children. QA 3.3.2

- The Service regularly shares information and ideas about sustainable practices with families via notice boards, newsletters, educator-parent meetings, website, Facebook, Educa and face-to-face conversations to ensure a consistent message between the home and Service. In addition, the Service actively seeks ideas and resources on sustainability from families. QA 3.3.1

- Environmental issues are a regular item on the team meeting agenda, and resources from recognised authorities introduced and discussed. QA 3.3.1

Responsibilities of parents

- To continue the Service’s sustainability message at home.

- To contribute ideas and resources.

Links to other policies

- Educational Program Policy

- Water Safety Policy
Sources, Further reading and useful websites

- Early Years Learning Framework 2009.
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011

**Date(s) reviewed: 13/12/2016**

**Next review Date: 13/12/2017**
1.13 Determining the Responsible Person in Charge

Background

Legislation sets out specific requirements for the staffing arrangements for approved centre-based services. These requirements cover the number of staff, their qualifications and experience.

 Particularly noteworthy are the requirements for the Responsible Person. A Responsible Person must be on the premises at all times the service is educating and caring for children. The Responsible Person can be (a) the Approved Provider if this is an individual or, if the Approved Provider is an organisation or company, then someone with management and control of the service, (b) the Nominated Supervisor of the service or (c) an Educator with a Supervisor’s Certificate and who has been placed in day-to-day charge of the service.

Policy statement

This Policy outlines the steps the Service takes to ensure it complies with regulatory staffing requirements at all times. In particular, it details how the Service ensures a Responsible Person is on the premises at all times, and how the identity of that person is made known to staff, parents and visitors.

Strategies and practices

- The Approved Provider of the Service has appointed a Nominated Supervisor to ensure: the Service’s operations meet the regulatory requirements at all times; consistency and continuity in practice; and, high quality care and education are provided to the children. QA 7.1.4

- The Nominated Supervisor is also the Responsible Person whenever on the premises. QA 7.3.2

- The Nominated Supervisor develops rosters in accordance with the availability of Responsible Persons, service operation and attendance patterns of the children. QA 7.3.2

- At any time the Nominated Supervisor is not on the premises, a Responsible Person who is physically present is placed in charge of the Service’s day-to-day operations only (i.e. the Responsible Person does not assume all of the responsibilities of the Nominated Supervisor). This acceptance of the additional responsibilities by the replacement is a standing arrangement agreed to in writing by the replacement, and details are maintained in the staff file. QA 4.2.1

- Whenever leaving the premises, the Nominated Supervisor informs the substitute Responsible Person, and displays the person’s name at reception. On return, the Nominated Supervisor informs the substitute and removes the sign. QA 7.3.1, 7.3.2

- The details of the Responsible Person at any given time are clearly displayed in the main entrance of the Service. QA 7.1.1

- The Approved Provider ensures that:
  - Nominated Supervisors and Certified Supervisors have a clear understanding of the role of the Responsible Person
  - The Responsible Person is appropriately skilled and qualified
The Responsible Person is physically present at the Service. A substitute for the Responsible Person will be present where a Waiver is in place. QA 4.2.1, 4.2.2, 4.2.3, 7.2.1

- The Service’s Policies and Procedures are clear and delineate its practices. QA 7.3.5
- Before commencing at the Service, all educators, staff, students and volunteers are given an orientation wherein they are made purposefully aware of the Service’s Policies and Procedures, and of their responsibilities under them. QA 7.1.2

Responsibilities of parents
- To be aware of who is the Responsible Person at that time they are in the Service.

Links to other policies
- Child Protection and Risk Management Policy
- Educator Professionalism and Ethics Policy
- Students, Volunteers and Visitors Policy
- Staffing
- Governance and Management

Sources
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011.

Further reading and useful websites
Acorn Child Care Centres
Policies and Procedures

- Education and Early Childhood Services Registration and Standards Board of South Australia http://www.eecsrsb.sa.gov.au/

Date(s) reviewed: 15/03/2016

Next review Date: 15/05/2016
1.14 Delivery and Collection of Children

Background

Services and parents have a shared responsibility to ensure the safety and wellbeing of each enrolled child entering and leaving the premises.

During the times when parents are delivering and collecting their children, educators and parents’ attention is momentarily diverted from the children by other tasks such as exchanging information and completing attendance records. When children arrive, educators also have the task of greeting and settling them. When children leave, educators must ensure that the children are returned into the care of an authorised person.

Policy statement

This Policy outlines the Service’s requirement for the delivery and collection of children to ensure that the safety, security and wellbeing of the children entrusted to its care are given the highest priority.

Strategies and practices

Delivery

- The person who delivers a child to the Service completes the Attendance Record on the iPad by logging into the system, when the iPad is not working, by manually completing the sign in record with date, child’s name, time and signature. Once the majority of children have arrived in each room, an educator will check that all children have been signed in. If a child is present but not signed in, the educator signs for that child, noting the time, because in the event of an emergency evacuation or lock down, the Attendance Records are used to account for all children in the Service. QA 2.3.2, 6.3.2, 7.3.1

- If the family is to receive Child Care Benefit, the parents are required to be the signatory on all occasions or to initial any past instance where they were not.

- The person delivering the child is to place the child into the care of an educator and this action be acknowledged before leaving the Service. QA 2.3.2

- Children who are absent for the day will be marked on the Attendance Record as “absent” by the Nominated Supervisor. Parents in receipt of Child Care Benefit are to confirm the entry.

- Educators mark a roll in their rooms each day to confirm a child’s attendance. Extra children whom attend for a day a manually written in. This roll is used at the end of the week to check the system entries for a child’s attendance are correct and any discrepancies are corrected. QA 2.3.1

Collection

- Parents complete an update of information form each year. Details of authorised nominees are included on the form and parents are asked to inform the Service immediately of any change. QA 2.3.2
Acorn Child Care Centres
Policies and Procedures

- Children will only be given into the care of: a parent of the child; an authorised nominee detailed in the child's enrolment record; or, to a person with written authorisation by a parent or authorised nominee detailed in the child's enrolment record to collect the child from the Service. QA 2.3.1, 2.3.2, 6.3.2

- Children are not given into the care of a parent who is prohibited by a court order from having contact with the child however, in the event of risk staff will not enter into a physical confrontation in the event of a child pick-up but will urgently contact police, parent/guardian or child welfare bodies in suspicious circumstances. Staff will always act in what they believe to be the best interests of the child. QA 2.3.1, 2.3.2, 6.3.2

- Children cannot be released to a minor (under 18 years of age). Such a person cannot be nominated as the “Emergency Contact”.

- Even when authority is given, centre staff may use discretion in refusing to release a child when circumstances are such that they feel a child may be at risk.

- No child is released into the care of any person not known to the educators without photo identification. QA 2.3.1, 2.3.2, 6.3.2

- The person who collects the child from the Service completes the Attendance Record on the iPad or manually on the form provided at the front reception is iPad is not working. Children are signed out using the same Attendance Record that was used to sign them in earlier that day. QA 2.3.2, 6.3.2

- At the end of the day, educators check that all children have been signed out. If a child has not been signed out, and an educator(s) is aware that the child has left the Service safely, parents will be reminded, when the child next attends, that they must sign their child out. QA 2.3.1, 2.3.2

- If it is discovered that a child is not in the Service, not signed out, and educators are unsure of their departure, the family will be contacted immediately to confirm the child’s whereabouts. If the child is not in their care, the Service will seek immediate advice from the Police and contact the Regulatory Authority as soon as possible. QA 2.1.4, 7.3.3

- At the end of each day, educators must check all beds and the premises including outdoors and indoors to ensure that no child remains on the premises after the Service closes. QA 2.3.1

- Parents must give prior notice where the person collecting the child is someone other than an authorised nominee (e.g. in an emergency situation). The person nominated by the parent must be able to produce some form of photo identification. QA 6.3.2

- In the event of an emergency (e.g. illness of a parent, car breakdown), it may be necessary for the parent to notify the Service that a person other than an authorised nominee will collect the child. If this occurs, the Service requires photo identification of that person before releasing the child. Reference to the photo identification will be made in the Attendance Record. QA 6.3.2

- Parents are to advise the Nominated Supervisor or the educators in their child’s room on any occasion an authorised nominee will be collecting the child. If this does not occur, and educators cannot contact the parent to confirm the arrangement, the child will not be released into the care of that nominee. QA 6.3.2
If the person collecting the child appears to be intoxicated, or under the influence of drugs, and educators consider that person unfit to take responsibility for the child, the educators are to draw it to the person’s attention and attempt to persuade the person to contact someone else to collect the child. Wherever possible, the discussion is to occur without the child being present. If the person insists on taking the child, educators are to immediately contact the police and provide them with the person’s name and vehicle registration number. QA 2.3.2

Children may be escorted from the premises in the event of an emergency, and for excursions where parents have given prior written permission. QA 2.3.2, 6.3.2

When a child remains uncollected at the centre past closing time, the following steps will be followed by centre staff:

- An attempt will be made to contact the parents/guardian at closing time.
- If a child is still remaining at the centre 30 minutes after closing time and no contact with parent(s) or an emergency contact has been established, the child/ren will be relocated to the local police station and the local child welfare agency notified.

A late fee of $1.00 for every 1 minute or part thereof will be charged. This fee is not eligible for Child Care Benefit.

Additional safe practices for babies

- To ensure that the critical information required to meet the baby’s needs on any given day is obtained from the person bringing the baby to the Service.
- To communicate to the person collecting the child any critical information required to ensure the baby’s continued wellbeing and needs can be met.

Responsibilities of parents

- To complete the Attendance Record when delivering and collecting their child/ren.
- To ensure the details of authorised nominees on the enrolment form are complete, correct and current.
- To inform the authorised nominee(s) of the Service’s requirements (e.g. photo ID) when they collect a child.
- To inform the Service in the event of a family member contracting a communicable disease.

Links to other policies

- Enrolment and Orientation Policy
- Evacuation and Lockdown Policy
- Excursion Policy
Acorn Child Care Centres
Policies and Procedures

Sources

- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011.

Date(s) reviewed: 15/03/2016

Next review Date: 15/04/2017
Acorn Child Care Centres
Policies and Procedures

1.15 Policy and Procedure Review

Background

Services are required to have policies and procedures so that children receive consistent high quality education and care. Policies and procedures provide parents with clear information and guidelines about what to expect from the Service and what the Service expects of them. They also guide the practices of Service staff, and provide a record of accountability.

Policy statement

This Policy details how the Service maintains written policies and procedures that clearly and consistently communicate the Service’s methods of operation and, at all times, reflect all federal, state and local governments’ regulatory requirements and currently accepted best practice.

Strategies and practices

- The policies and procedures detail the Service’s methods of operation, its practices and inter-relationships with all who have an interest in the Service. They are considered to be living documents and, as such, are reviewed regularly. QA 7.3.5
- The Nominated Supervisor discusses the policies and procedures with parents at enrolment and with staff during their orientation, and all are given the opportunity to ask questions about the contents. QA 7.3.5
- Parents and educators are shown where the Service’s policies and procedures are stored and how to access them. QA 7.3.5
- The Service’s policies and procedures are reviewed annually, and they are also reviewed to accommodate any legislative changes as they occur and whenever any Service issues are identified. QA 7.2.3, 7.3.5
- All relevant stakeholders – parents, staff/educators, management/approved provider, students, volunteers, community members and health professionals – are given the opportunity to contribute to the review process. QA 7.2.3, 7.3.5
- Parents are provided with a variety of avenues to contribute ideas and suggestions to policies and procedures in general or on specific issues. In addition to the Policy Feedback Form distributed when policies are reviewed, these avenues include:
  - face-to-face
  - parent meetings
  - emails
  - suggestion boxes
  - providing parents with a copy of the policy and an explanation of the type of comments sought
  - involving parents in the Quality Improvement Plan
  - the grievance and complaints analysis process
Policies and procedures are a regular agenda item at team meetings. They are discussed as part of preparing the Quality Improvement Plan. Educators are encouraged to contribute ideas after any training and attending conferences. They are informed of any changes to policies, procedures or forms. QA 7.3.5

Parents are advised in writing whenever their ideas and suggestions result in a change in the Service’s practices and in its policies and procedures. QA 7.3.5

Parents of children enrolled in the Service are notified at least 14 days in advance of any changes to a policy or procedure that may impact significantly on the education and care received by their child, on the family’s ability to utilise the Service, or on the fees or the way fees are collected. QA 7.3.5

The Service consults with appropriate authorities to ensure the policy contents are consistent with current research and contemporary views on best practice. QA 6.3.1

The Sources, Further Reading and Useful Websites sections of the policy are updated as part of the review of each policy, and any accompanying forms and procedures are reviewed at that time. The review date is noted on the policy. QA 7.2.3

Responsibilities of parents

- To contribute their ideas and suggestions to policy reviews.

Links to other policies

- Educator Professionalism and Ethics Policy
- Enrolment and Orientation Policy
- Interactions with Families
- Students, Volunteers and Visitors Policy

Sources, Further reading and useful websites

- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011.
Acorn Child Care Centres
Policies and Procedures


Date(s) reviewed: 16/03/2016

Next review Date: 16/06/2017
Acorn Child Care Centres
Policies and Procedures

2 Cleaning

Background

The appearance, maintenance and tidiness of the centre are indicative of the importance and value we place on children. Every effort is made to ensure that the centre is kept clean and tidy and that all toys, equipment, resources and playground equipment are put away when finished with. Passage ways and thoroughfares are kept free of any obstruction which could pose a health and safety threat to children, staff, parents or visitors.

Policy statement

The Service ensures the premises, furniture and equipment are safe, clean and well maintained.

Cleaning tasks are scheduled and the procedures are those recommended by recognised authorities and according to regulations. Safe natural and effective cleaning products are used wherever possible. Educators model safe and healthy hygiene practices and routines to the children, and involve the children in maintaining a clean environment.

Strategies and practices

Basic steps for effective routine cleaning

- Use detergent and warm water. Follow the manufacturer’s instructions on how much detergent to use.
- Vigorously rub the surface to physically remove germs.
- Rinse the surface with clean water.
- Dry the surface.

Disinfectants are only necessary if a surface is known to be contaminated with potentially infectious material. Remember, if the surface is not clean, the disinfectants cannot kill germs, so you should always clean first, then (if required) disinfect.

QA 3.1.2 Source page 52 Staying Healthy 5th Edition

- The centre chooses cleaning products which are the least dangerous to children and yet still meet the cleaning and hygienic outcomes required.
- Educators ensure the areas used by children are safe and clean throughout the day (e.g. clean spillages as they occur, sweep floors, wash tables before and after meals). QA 3.1.2
- Children are intentionally taught effective hygiene routines. QA 2.1.3
- Educators in each room follow a Room Task Schedule which lists cleaning tasks (e.g. washing dress ups, soft toys, cushion covers, soft toys, furniture) to ensure the building, furniture and resources used by children are regularly cleaned. QA 3.1.2
- Nappy change areas are cleaned after each change, and at the end of the day. Bathrooms are cleaned at scheduled intervals throughout the day, and at other times when necessary. Refer to the Hygiene Guidelines – General (2. Toilets). QA 3.1.2
Rubbish bins are emptied at regular intervals throughout the day, or at any other time the bins are full or unpleasant, and plastic liners replaced. Refer to the Hygiene Guidelines – General (3. Rubbish Bins). QA 3.1.2

Containers are provided at mealtimes for uneaten food, and these food scraps cleared away promptly. Refer to the Service’s Environmental Sustainability Policy. QA 3.3.1, 3.3.2

Wherever possible, the Service purchases materials, equipment, toys and other products which are washable and easy to maintain. QA 3.1.2

Gloves are worn when cleaning. QA 2.1.3

To prevent cross-contamination between work areas, educators use the Wash Cloth Colour Chart to select the appropriate cloth. In addition, cleaning implements such as gloves and scourers are confined to specific areas. The coloured wash cloths are washed or replaced frequently. QA 2.1.3

Each section of the centre has its own cleaning equipment and supplies (e.g. buckets, mops, cleaning cloths). Cleaning items are air dried and stored in places inaccessible to children. Any item used to clear away blood or body fluids is cleaned immediately and air dried. Refer to the Service’s Hygiene Guidelines – General (5. Mops). QA 3.1.2

Rest mats/beds are sprayed and wiped at the end of each rest period. Cots are cleaned after each child’s use. The children’s linen is laundered each week, or as required. Refer to the Hygiene Guidelines – General (1. Beds and Cots). QA 3.1.2

Soiled items of clothing are sent home for washing and are placed in sealed containers inaccessible to children. Refer to the Hygiene Guidelines – General (8. Laundry). QA 3.1.2

Toys are washed regularly. Mouthed toys are placed in a labeled container with a lid, and cleaned according the Hygiene Guidelines – General (11. Soft Toys and Cushion Covers). QA 3.1.2

The sandpit is covered when not in use and raked over each morning and evening to remove any dangerous or foreign matter. In the event of sand being soiled by urine, faeces, food or other materials during the day, children are removed from the sand pit and the contaminated sand addressed. Refer to Hygiene Guidelines – General (7. Sandpit). QA 3.1.2

It is staff responsibility to:

- Empty bins.
- Clean all toilet surfaces with disinfectant.
- Vacuum all carpeted floors.
- Sweep all outside paths and verandas.
- Clean windows – as necessary.
- Dust sills, bench tops and skirting boards.
- Remove spider webs.
Acorn Child Care Centres
Policies and Procedures

- Clean staff areas
- Mop all linoleum flooring with detergent
- Clean down all bench tops with detergent

In addition to these points, the following maintenance schedule is observed:

- 6 monthly - fire extinguishers checked by external agency
- 6 monthly – Bus checked by Queensland Transport
- 4 monthly – Grease trap pumped out
- 6 monthly – emergency lighting check

Storage of Chemicals and Cleaners

- All bulk chemicals are stored in their original containers in cupboards which are not accessible to children. Access to this room is restricted to staff. Warning notices are displayed.
- The centre has data sheets concerning all chemicals on premises.
- All other chemicals and hazardous substances are clearly labelled and are stored in a safe manner out of children’s reach.
- Chemicals are purchased from a supplier who provides details of the composition of all substances and details of emergency action to be undertaken in the event of accidental spillage, splashing or consumption.
- Emergency action documents are kept in the Laundry, director’s office and at location of chemical storage. (Source - Workplace Health & Safety Regulation (1997) Part 13 (Hazardous Substances) sections 87 to 114)

Additional safe practices for babies

- To ensure that a child does not have access to a toy that has been mouthed by another.

Responsibilities of parents

- To take home their child’s soiled clothing.

Links to other policies

- Environmental Sustainability Policy
- Food Preparation, Storage and Handling Policy
- Managing Infectious Diseases Policy
- Nappy Change and Toileting Policy
- Sleep and Rest Policy
Sources

- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011.
  
- Guide to the National Quality Standard 2011
  

Further reading and useful websites

- The Royal Children's Hospital (RCH) – http://www.rch.org.au
- Workplace Health and Safety (Queensland)
  
  http://www.deir.qld.gov.au/workplace/#.Uo60LCF-_IU

Date(s) reviewed: 13/12/2016

Next review Date: 13/12/2017
2.1 Handwashing

Background

The most effective method of hand hygiene is using soap and water. Washing hands with soap and running water loosens, dilutes and flushes off dirt and germs. Soap alone cannot remove dirt or kill germs—it is the combination of running water, rubbing hands and the detergent in the soap that helps loosen the dirt, remove the germs and rinse them off skin. Handwashing is the most significant way to reduce the spread of communicable diseases and minimise cross infection.

Policy statement

This Policy details the Service’s approach to handwashing.

Strategies and practices

- The Service has suitably sized handwashing facilities located throughout the building. Liquid soap/foam and paper towels are provided at each. QA 3.1.1
- Educators model good handwashing procedures at appropriate times to the children. In addition, they intentionally teach and encourage the children to use the correct handwashing procedure. Children who can stand at a sink but not wash their hands independently are assisted to do so. QA 2.1.3
- The Handwashing Poster – NHMRC is displayed in nappy change areas and food preparation and eating areas throughout the Service. QA 2.1.3
- All staff, students, volunteers and children should wash their hands:
  - On arrival at the Service. (Alternatively, antibacterial hand gel may be used);
  - When entering the kitchen
  - Before and after eating, or feeding a child;
  - Before and after handling food;
  - Before and after giving medication and providing medical procedures or first aid;
  - Before and after changing a nappy;
  - After using the toilet or helping a child use a toilet;
  - After cleaning up blood, faeces or vomit;
  - After wiping a nose (Alternatively, antibacterial hand gel may be used);
  - After touching pets and other animals;
  - After playing outside;
  - Before and after using gloves and when changing gloves;
After cleaning, gardening and handling garbage; and,
Before going home. (Alternatively, antibacterial hand gel may be used). QA 2.1.3

Effective handwashing procedures:

- Wet hands with running water;
- Apply liquid soap and spread over hands.
- Rub hands together while counting to ten slowly;
- Wash hands all over, including backs of hands, wrists, between fingers, under fingernails;
- Rinse hands thoroughly under clean, running water while counting to ten slowly;
- Turn tap off using a clean piece of paper towel;
- Pat hands dry hands using another clean piece of paper towel, or use the air dryer.

Washing and rinsing your hands should take about as long as singing Happy Birthday twice. QA 2.1.3

Additional safe practices for babies

- Babies need their hands washed as often and as thoroughly as older children. If the baby is unable to stand at a hand basin, wash their hands with either pre-moistened towelette or a wet disposable cloth, and then pat dry with paper towel. QA 2.1.3

Responsibilities of parents

- To wash their hands when they arrive at the Service and leave, and to help their child to do the same.

Links to other policies

- Administration of Medication Policy
- Food Preparation, Storage and Handling
- Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy
- Managing Infectious Diseases
- Nappy Change and Toileting Policy
- Nutrition, Food and Beverages Policy
- Supervision Policy

Sources, Further reading and useful websites

- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011.
Acorn Child Care Centres
Policies and Procedures


Date(s) reviewed: 13/12/2016

Next review Date: 13/12/2017
2.2 Food Preparation, Storage and Handlings

Background

Contaminated food can result in nasty experiences such as diarrhoea, vomiting, cramps and fever. These experiences can be particularly serious for young children whose health systems are still developing, and in extreme cases can be fatal.

In Australia, early childhood education and care services are expected to implement practices which meet Food Standards Australia New Zealand and other relevant federal, state and territory and council regulations in the way food and drinks are prepared, stored, handled and served.

The only food consumed at the centre is prepared in the kitchen. The highest level of hygiene is encouraged in these areas of the centre. Only staff with a current certificate of food handling prepare meals.

Policy statement

This Policy details how the Service ensures that its staff prepare, store, handle and serve food and drinks safely and hygienically, and in accordance with all relevant regulations and standards. The Service provides staff and parents with up-to-date information on safe food practices, and intentionally teaches children these practices.

Strategies and practices

Knowledge

- The Service aligns its food preparation, storage and hygiene practices with the requirements of Food Standards Australia New Zealand, and updates them – and its policies and procedures – annually and whenever new information is released. QA 2.1.3

- Educators are provided with professional development and training opportunities in food preparation, storage and hygiene practices which are also an agenda item at team meetings. All staff are expected to systematically and consistently implement the Service’s Policies and Procedures relating to food. QA 2.1.3

- Educators are considered to be role models and, when eating with the children, are expected to uphold good personal nutrition. QA 2.2.1

- The Service provides families with information about food safety at enrolment and through a variety of means such as the Parent Handbook, notice boards, newsletters, educator-parent meetings and the website. QA 2.1.3

- Educators intentionally teach children the importance of food safety and hygiene practices during both planned and spontaneous experiences. QA 2.1.3

Food Handling

- Before preparing, handling and serving food, staff wash their hands in accordance with the procedures in the Handwashing Poster – NHMRC, and then put on disposable gloves. QA 2.1.3

- Staff maintain a high level of personal hygiene (e.g. hair tied back, blue band aids on cuts before putting gloves on, no hand jewellery except wedding rings). QA 2.1.3
Acorn Child Care Centres
Policies and Procedures

- Food is always served using tongs and gloves. Where possible, food is served in individual plates or bowls. QA 2.1.3
- Leftovers are always discarded – never reheated. Food prepared at the Service is refrigerated in sealed containers as soon as it is made, and thawed and/or reheated once only. QA 2.1.3
- Tables are washed with Useall, and dried before and after being used for meals. QA 2.1.3

Children and Eating

- Educators ensure that children wash hands using appropriate hand washing techniques before eating and drinking. QA 2.1.3
- Educators intentionally teach children to turn away from food when they cough or sneeze, and to follow up with washing hands. QA 2.1.3
- Children are required to sit down when eating. QA 2.3.1
- Children are discouraged from sharing food. QA 2.1.4
- Children are provided with their own drinking and eating utensils at mealtimes. Educators ensure that children do not use drinking or eating utensils which have been dropped on the floor or used by another child. They remind children that sharing during meals can spread germs that could make them or other children sick. QA 2.1.4
- Children are encouraged to wash face and hands after eating. QA 2.1.3

Cooking experiences

- Educators check that each child and the other educators involved wash their hands before taking part in children’s cooking experiences. QA 2.1.3
- Educators and children follow other food safety and hygiene practices (e.g. tie back long hair), and cover prepared food until served. QA 2.1.3

Kitchen Practices

- The designated food preparation area in the kitchen is used for that purpose only, and is cleaned before and after use. The rubbish bins are emptied at the end of the day. The kitchen floor is swept as and when required, and mopped daily. QA 2.1.3, 3.1.1
- To prevent cross-contamination between work areas, staff use the Wash Cloths Colour Chart to select the appropriate cloth. In addition, cleaning implements such as gloves and scourers are confined to specific areas. The coloured wash cloths are washed and replaced frequently. QA 2.1.3
- All plates, bowls, crockery and any other food utensils used by children and in the preparation of food are washed in the dishwasher. QA 2.1.3
If the dishwasher is not in service, all plates, bowls, crockery and any other food utensils used by children and in the preparation of food are washed in water as hot as possible with detergent, rinsed in clean hot water and allowed to air dry. If drying is still required, a clean tea towel is used, and the tea towel replaced after use. QA 2.1.3

Children’s food utensils and crockery are stored in a cupboard with easy access to ensure hygienic handling. QA 2.1.3

Plastic plates, bowls and cups with deep scratches are replaced. QA 2.1.3

**Kitchen Hygiene**

The following cleaning routines are to be maintained

**As Necessary**

- Dishwasher checked and emptied.
- The kitchen is treated for insects and vermin as necessary or annually.

**Daily**

- All preparation surfaces are washed with detergent.
- Rubbish and compost bins are emptied when full and at the end of each day.
- Microwave oven is cleaned.
- Oven and stove tops are cleaned.

**Weekly**

- The following surfaces are washed with detergent – shelves, bench tops, cupboard fronts, interior cupboard surfaces, drawers, Pantry & Store.
- Inside and top of fridge is cleaned.

**3-Monthly**

- Range hood is cleaned.
- Defrost Freezer

**Food storage**

**Shelf Items**

- Staff inspect all food items when first brought into the Service to ensure they are all in good order and well within their use-by period. QA 2.1.3, 2.2.1
Acorn Child Care Centres
Policies and Procedures

- All items are labelled with the date of entry to the Service so that the first in, first out (FIFO) rule can be easily followed. Any food removed from its original packaging is stored in an air-tight container labelled with the contents, the use-by date, and the date of storage. QA 2.1.3, 2.2.1

- All items are stored on shelves that are well-ventilated, pest-free and out of direct sunlight. QA 3.1.1

- Food areas, cupboards and appliances are cleaned thoroughly and regularly. QA 3.1.2

Refrigerator and Freezer Items

- The operating temperatures of the refrigerators and freezers are checked twice daily with a thermometer and the results recorded on the Temperature Control Log – Daily. Foods are stored at the correct temperature depending on the product. Cold foods need to be stored at less than 5 degrees (C) and frozen foods at minus 18 degrees (C). QA 2.1.3, 2.2.1

- Refrigerators and freezers are cleaned regularly, and seals checked for signs of mould. QA 3.1.2

- Appropriate storage containers and wraps are used (e.g. freezer safe containers, moisture-proof wrap such as foil and freezer bags). When wraps are used, food is completely covered. QA 2.1.3, 2.2.1

- Any food removed from its original packaging is stored in an air-tight container labelled with the use-by date, the contents, and the date it was stored. QA 2.1.3, 2.2.1

- Staff inspect all food items to be refrigerated when the items are first brought into the Service to ensure they are all in good order and well within their use-by period. Any food removed from its original packaging is stored in an air-tight container labelled with the contents, the use-by date, and the date of storage. QA 2.1.3, 2.2.1

- Raw and cooked foods are stored separately to avoid cross-contamination. Raw foods are stored on shelves below cooked foods so that juices do not drip and contaminate the cooked food. QA 2.1.3, 2.2.1

- Fruit is refrigerated over the weekends.

- Hot food, once prepared, is kept in the oven or on the stove (above 60°C) until it is time to be served. The food is then left covered until it is sufficiently cool for children to eat. Educators check the food’s temperature before giving it to the child by removing a small piece of food with a spoon and testing the temperature on the inside of the wrist, and then discarding the food tested. All food is served within two hours of being cooked. QA 2.1.3, 2.2.1

- Foods are thawed overnight in the fridge or in the microwave – never on a bench top. QA 2.1.3, 2.2.1

- Spoiled food is disposed of immediately into bins.

Food Transport

- Transported on a sturdy trolley

- Foods will be covered at all times during transport.
Foods will be maintained at a temperature which meets the correct food temperature criteria.

Expressed Breast Milk/Formula Bottles

- Children’s bottles containing EBM or formula are stored at the rear of the body of the refrigerator and not in the doors. QA 2.1.2, 2.2.1
- Bottle contents are thawed and/or heated according to the Service's Expressed Breast Milk (EBM) and Formula – Storing and Heating Procedure. QA 2.1.3, 2.2.1
- The temperature of the milk is tested before giving it to the child. Educators test the temperature by shaking the bottle and sprinkling a few drops onto the inside of the wrist. The temperature should match body temperature. QA 2.3.2
- The educator responsible for feeding a particular child checks that the name on the bottle being used is the name of the child to be fed. QA 2.3.2
- Any milk not consumed is discarded. QA 2.1.3, 2.2.1
- Children are not allowed to walk around with bottles, and babies are never left unattended to feed with bottles ‘propped-up’ to them. QA 2.3.1
- The amount a child drinks is recorded in the child’s individual daily report, and this record made available to parents at the end of each day. QA 2.3.1
- Dummies or bottles are never shared. QA 2.1.3
- Bottles, teats and teat covers are rinsed well in cold running water as soon as possible after the completion of the feed and left to air dry. It is recommended that parents wash these items thoroughly at home. QA 2.1.3

Additional safe practices for babies

- To ensure that staff take every precaution in following health and safety procedures when storing and preparing babies’ breast milk or formula.

Responsibilities of parents

- To correctly prepare and deliver bottles of EBM/formula for their child to the Service in accordance with safe food guidelines (available from the Service).
- To read the child’s individual Communication Book at the end of each day.

Links to other policies

- Educational Program
- Enrolment and Orientation Policy
- Handwashing Policy
- Interactions with Children Policy
Acorn Child Care Centres
Policies and Procedures

- Nutrition, Food and Beverages Policy
- Medical Conditions Policy

Sources, further reading and useful websites

- Early Years Learning Framework 2009.
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011.
- Australian Breastfeeding Association – [https://www.breastfeeding.asn.au/](https://www.breastfeeding.asn.au/)

Date(s) reviewed: 14/03/2016

Next review Date: 14/03/2017
2.3 Nappy Change and Toileting

Background

The immune systems of babies and young children are still developing. In early education and care services where nappy change and toileting take place on shared facilities, children can be at risk of exposure to infection and cross-infection if correct hygiene principles are not followed diligently at all times. Nappy change and toileting times are also moments where educators have the opportunity to develop children’s self-esteem and to deepen relationships with the children.

Policy statement

This Policy recognises the importance of: correct hygiene principles in minimising the spread of disease during nappy changing and toileting; close co-operation with parents to ensure that toilet training and toileting are positive experiences for the children equally at home and at the Service; and, a calm, positive and affirming response to toileting accidents.

Strategies and practices

- Children’s need for privacy during toileting, dressing and undressing times are respected at all times. QA 2.1.2
- Educators use nappy changing as an opportunity for one-on-one interaction (e.g. talking, singing) with the child. QA 1.1.1, 1.1.3
- Educators respond to toileting accidents calmly and positively, and encourage children in their efforts to become independent. QA 2.1.2
- Educators consult with the parents to obtain information on each child’s toilet training readiness and routine at home and implement these routines to ensure consistency between home and the Service. These details are documented in the child’s individual developmental file. QA 2.1.2
- Parents are asked to provide sufficient nappies for infants and underwear for toddlers each day. QA 2.1.2
- Nappy rash cream is provided by the centre and used on children as required.
- The Nappy Change Procedure and the Toileting Procedure are displayed in the nappy-change and toilet areas, respectively. QA 2.1.3
- Educators follow the correct Nappy Change Procedure and the Toileting Procedure. QA 4.2.1
- Educators change children’s nappies at least every two hours unless the child is asleep.
- The Handwashing Poster – NHMRC is displayed in relevant areas of the Service, such as bathrooms, nappy change areas and food preparation and serving areas. QA 2.1.3
- Educators model correct handwashing procedures to children, and intentionally teach them these procedures. They remind children to wash their hands every time after toileting. QA 2.1.3
- Educators show/remind children how to flush the toilet. QA 2.1.3
Older children can access the toilet at will. Educators are alert to the signs of younger children needing toileting. QA 2.1.2

- Infant nappy changes are recorded on the Nappy Change Chart – Infants and toddlers changes are recorded on the Nappy Change Chart – Toddlers. This information is made available to parents each day, and the charts are filed for future reference. QA 2.1.2
- Educators ensure infants and toddlers in nappies always wear clothing over the nappies to minimise any risk of spreading infection. QA 2.1.3
- Educators regularly check that the toilet areas are clean, toilets are flushed and ensure that the dispensers have sufficient toilet paper and soap. QA 2.1.3
- Educators receive training in correct nappy changing and toileting procedures, and the topic is an agenda item in team meetings yearly. QA 7.2.2
- Toilets and bathrooms are cleaned thoroughly each evening by staff. QA 3.1.2
- Bathroom floors are mopped daily with a disinfectant-cleaner or as required. QA 3.1.2
- Changing mats are cleaned with disinfectant after each use. QA 3.1.2
- Staff wear gloves when assisting children with toileting. QA 2.1.3

Additional safe practices for babies
- Babies are never left unattended on the change table, and the educator keeps one hand on the baby at all times the baby is on the table. QA 2.3.1

Responsibilities of parents
- To supply the Service with sufficient nappies/underwear each day for their infant or toddler.
- To note that cloth nappies are not used at the centre.
- To provide the Service with information about their child’s toilet training readiness and routine at home to educators to ensure consistency between home and the Service.

Links to other policies
- Enrolment and Orientation Policy
- Handwashing Policy
- Interactions with Families Policy

Sources, Further reading and useful websites
Acorn Child Care Centres
Policies and Procedures

- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011.
  accessed 24 November 2013
  accessed 24 November 2013
  accessed 24 November 2013
  accessed 24 November 2013
- NCAC. *A matter of respect: Recognising young children’s right to privacy.*
  accessed 24 November 2013
- The Royal Children’s Hospital – http://www.rch.org.au/home/

Date(s) reviewed: 13/12/2016

Next review Date: 13/12/2017
2.4 Nutrition, Food and Beverage Service Provided

Background

Good nutrition is essential to healthy living and enables children to be active participants in play and leisure. Education and care settings provide many opportunities for children to experience a range of healthy foods and to learn about food choices from educators and other children (Early Years Learning Framework, page 30; Framework for School Age Care, page 30).

Policy statement

This Policy details the Service’s approach to mealtimes when the food and beverages consumed by children while at the Service are provided by the Service. It also describes the way educators use mealtimes for a happy and social occasion, and for developing lifelong healthy food choices.

Kitchen Management

Breakfast

• All breakfast serving ends at 7.30 am. Parents who wish their children to have food at Acorn prior to morning tea time must arrive at the centre prior to 7.30 am.

Morning teas

• Fruit only, with the “very occasional” addition of dried fruit (i.e. sultanas)
• Kitchen to supply a minimum of four reasonable sized portions of four different fruits for each child.
• Each room to have an additional 25% for children who wish to eat more and also for staff. This to be monitored and adjustments made as there may be a supply variation for different rooms and days of the week. (i.e. more required by room “A” on a Tuesday than a Friday).
• All leftovers are to be returned to the kitchen by each room separately so that room amounts can be monitored and adjusted accordingly.

Food Storage

• Small portions of fruit, vegetables, etc. left over while cooking (i.e. piece of apple, piece of onion), not to be stored but rather used in some way in that day’s cooking or disposed of. For example, a recipe calling for a portion of onion, either use the remaining portion of the onion or dispose of it…Don’t store it.

Cleanliness

• When the main chef leaves the kitchen unattended by leaving the premises, it must be left clean and presentable which means that all benches are cleared and wiped down. Prospective clientele are consistently being shown through the centre and therefore the kitchen must at all times represent the Acorn standard.

Balanced Nutritional Meals

• In keeping with good nutrition, all meals to have a balance of food types. (I.E instead of pasta, potatoes and bread for one meal, substitute another vegetable for the potato.)
The Service’s Nutrition, Food and Beverage Policy is explained to parents at enrolment. QA 2.2.1

At enrolment, parents provide the Service with details of their child’s food and drink allergies and of any cultural preferences in food. The enrolment form has provision for parents to provide the Service with details of any special dietary requirements (e.g. allergies, culture, religion, food preferences). Parents are asked to update this information when any changes occur. QA 2.2.1

The Service serves all of the children’s food and drink requirements over the day – with the exception of babies’ bottles. The food and drink are nutritious, appropriate to each child. The Service asks that parents do not bring food into the centre. QA 2.2.1

The daily menu accurately describes the food for each day and is displayed prominently for parents. QA 2.2.1

The Service maintains a list and photographs of children with special food requirements for health or medical reasons (e.g. allergies, intolerances). This information is displayed in the food preparation areas and strategically throughout the Service. Relief staff are informed of these dietary requirements when they begin their shift. QA 2.1.1, 2.3.2

Meals served to children with dietary requirements/restrictions and allergies/intolerances are served on separate plates. QA 2.3.2

Food is presented attractively. Pureed vegetables and fruit will be offered to younger children (0-2 years).

The healthy eating message is promoted and positively reinforced amongst families through notice boards, newsletters, educator-parent meetings, the website and up-to-date materials from recognised authorities. QA 2.2.1

Educators promote healthy eating in children by including the topic in routines and in other intentional teaching such as role-modelling, discussions, songs, stories, games, using different cultural meal settings, and cooking experiences. QA 2.2.1

Meal times are relaxed, pleasant and unhurried. Educators sit and eat with the children, maintaining good personal nutrition, and talk with them on topics of interest, including, but not limited to, healthy food and nutrition. QA 2.2.1, 5.1.2

Developmentally appropriate eating utensils and furniture are provided for each child. Children, including toddlers, are encouraged to be independent and develop social skills at meal times. QA 2.2.1

Food is never used to reward or punish children. QA 2.2.1

Children are encouraged to eat, but they are not required to taste new foods, to eat food they do not like or to eat more than they want. No child is to be ever force fed. QA 2.2.1

Water bottles are readily accessible to children at all times, and educators encourage children to drink water at frequent intervals. Water bottles are refilled by the staff during the day, when required, from the kitchen or kitchenettes. QA 2.2.1
Acorn Child Care Centres
Policies and Procedures

- Staff follow all regulatory requirements for preparing and serving food. These include handwashing, wearing gloves, using tongs to handle food, ensuring children do not share utensils or use those that have been dropped. (Refer to the Service’s Food Preparation, Storage and Handling Policy). QA 2.1.3

- Parents are informed of their child’s food and beverage intake in the Daily Feedback Sheet. Educators discuss face-to-face with parents any concerns about a child who has not eaten well. QA 2.2.1

- The centre’s emphasis on fresh fruit & vegetables and reliance on foods without added sugar ensures that children’s teeth are kept healthy.

  (Source – Oral Health – Bundaberg District Health Service, 1998)

  (Source – Awabakal Dental Kit, Newcastle, 2005.)

- Acorn Child Care provides nuts and nut products in some of the snacks and meals prepared. A variety of nuts are served in different meals which include Walnuts, Cashews, Almonds, Pecan, Brazilian and Peanuts. Other nuts may be included in meals at the cook’s discretion. Some nuts are served in the way of pieces, chunks or slithers to children over the age of 3. Under the age of 3 the nuts are included in the meal as a puree form. If your child does have a nut allergy, this needs to be brought to the attention of the Director and an action plan from a doctor is required. All staff will be made aware of the child’s condition. There is evidence that children are exposed to nuts early in life are less likely to develop a nut allergy. QA 6.1.1

- Babies are fed individually by educators. QA 2.2.1

- Birthdays are an important part of a child’s life, and educators and children are encouraged to celebrate them at the Service. Parents are welcome to bring a cake to share. QA 2.2.1

- The Service provides staff with appropriate training in safe food handling. They are provided with current information on nutrition for young children, with special regard to cultural preferences. QA 2.1.3

- Parents are invited at any time to make suggestions regarding the existing menu and to provide the centre with specific nutritional requirements of their children. The centre management will decide if any particular diet is beyond the scope of our centre’s resources. QA 6.1.2

- There may be times when parents are advised by their doctor to embark on a process of dietary elimination to combat a possible allergy. The centre is not prepared to involve itself in this process due to the extra resources required and the potential risk of a severe allergy or anaphylactic shock. Static allergies such as lactose, peanut or gluten intolerances will be provided for by the kitchen.

Additional safe practices for babies

- Educators follow the Service’s written Expressed Breast Milk (EBM) and Formula – Storing and Heating Procedure when storing and heating babies’ bottles. QA 2.1.3, 2.2.1

Responsibilities of parents

- To provide the Service with details of their child’s known food allergies at enrolment, and to inform the Service immediately any changes occur.
Acorn Child Care Centres
Policies and Procedures

- To discuss their child’s food allergies, if any, with them (older children) and to ensure they understand the importance of not sharing food.
- To not bring food or drinks other than water into the centre unless it is a cake for a child’s birthday.

Links to other policies

- Enrolment and Orientation Policy
- Excursion Policy
- Injuries, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy
- Medical Conditions Policy
- Student, Volunteers and Visitors Policy

Sources

- Early Years Learning Framework 2009.
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011.

Further reading and useful websites

Acorn Child Care Centres
Policies and Procedures


Date(s) reviewed: 13/12/2016

Next review Date: 13/12/2017
2.5 Sleep and Rest

Background

Children are active little people – constantly learning, playing, watching and interacting with others. It is crucial for their sense of well-being, healthy growth and development to have time away from busy surroundings to rest, to reflect and to imagine. At Acorn Child Care Centres, sleep and rest are regarded as fundamental needs for children. Sleep and rest provision is catered for in each room and all children are expected to partake in this as part of the daily routine.

We understand that adequate sleep/rest is important for children’s overall development and contributes to their wellbeing. Having adequate time to sleep or rest during the day, allows the children to rejuvenate their bodies and minds.

Policy Statement

This Policy sets out how the Service provides regular sleep and rest periods which follow the safe sleeping recommendations of the recognised authority, the National SIDS Council of Australia (SIDS and Kids), and takes into consideration the ages, development and needs of individual children and their families.

Strategies and practices

- Educators speak with parents about their child’s particular needs (e.g. sleep patterns and habits, need for a comforter) and family values and parenting beliefs, cultural or otherwise, associated with sleep/rest, and consider these when determining sleep/rest needs. QA 2.1.2
- Infants sleep on demand. Toddlers and older children have a scheduled sleep/rest period shortly after lunch. In addition, educators are alert to any indication that a child might need sleep/rest outside of routine. Quiet areas for children to rest or be alone are always available. QA 2.1.2
- If a family’s beliefs and practices are in conflict with SIDS and Kids, then the Service will only endorse an alternative practice after written advice has been received from a medical practitioner. QA 2.1.2
- The Service’s sleep/rest strategies and practices are outlined in the Centre Handbook and in enrolment forms and newsletters. Information from SIDS and Kids on safe sleeping practices is displayed on the noticeboards, together with other useful information on sleeping (at the Service or at home). QA 2.3.2
- All children are placed on their back when being settled for a rest. Children who turn onto their side or stomach during sleep are left undisturbed. QA 2.1.2
- All children rest with faces uncovered. QA 2.1.2
- Staff ratios are maintained according to the Education and Care Services National Regulations during sleep/rest periods. QA 4.1.1
- Educators constantly monitor the children (e.g. breathing patterns) and sleep/rest environment (e.g. room temperature). QA 2.1.2, 2.3.1
- Students or volunteers involved are supervised at all times.
Sleep/rest areas are kept well-ventilated, uncluttered and appropriately lit and, as with all other areas of the Service, are smoke-free. QA 2.3.1

Educators ensure children are dressed suitably for the room temperature. Some items of clothing may need to be removed for safety reasons (e.g. tops with hoods and cords that may cause choking). Educators are respectful and sensitive to cultural differences in attitudes to dressing, and encourage children to be independent in dressing at these times. QA 2.1.2, 2.3.2

Comforters from home will be given to children who need them to settle. However, toys with ribbons, removable parts or parts that can be looped over a child’s head cannot be used because of the Service adherence to the SIDS and Kids guidelines. QA 2.3.2

Rest periods (excludes babies rooms) are between 12-2.30pm. All children are encouraged to have a rest on their beds. If a child does not fall asleep after a suitable time they will be provided with quiet activities. After 2pm curtains will be opened in the room and lights turned on. Children still asleep will be left to wake by themselves.

To help children relax for sleep/rest, educators dim the lights, play calming music, use quiet soothing voices and, sometimes, use guided relaxation techniques. QA 2.1.2

Children where age appropriate help educators in setting up the sleep/rest area and the quiet activities for children who do not sleep.

The Service supplies bed sets for cots and mattresses. Each bed set consists of a fitted bottom sheet and a loose top sheet. Bed linen is washed weekly for full-time children or after each child’s use by children who attend less frequently. QA 2.1.3

The children’s beds are cleaned/sprayed daily with a non-rinse disinfectant daily before being stored. Linen is washed at the end of the child’s week. QA 2.1.3

Beds are positioned so that educators may walk between them to gain easy access to every bed from all four sides. QA 2.3.1

Every child’s sleep pattern for the day (e.g. time the child went to sleep and woke up) is recorded on the Routine Communication Sheet. QA 2.1.2

Educators receive regular first-aid training in resuscitation, and are aware of SIDS and Kids guidelines. QA 2.1.4, 4.1.1

Additional safe resting practices for babies

SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome) is the sudden, unexpected death of a baby during sleep. Babies under twelve months are considered to be at greater risk of SIDS than children over twelve months. The Service closely follows the recommendations for safe sleeping practices from SIDS and Kids.

All children are placed on their back when first being settled for sleep/rest. QA 2.1.2
Should a child need to sleep on their stomach or side for sound medical reasons, the Service will only endorse this alternative practice upon receiving a letter from the child’s Doctor stating the need for this alternative sleeping practice. QA 2.1.2

All children rest with faces uncovered. Hooded tops, bibs and shoes are removed before children are put to rest. QA 2.1.2

Children are placed with their feet at the bottom of their cot or mattress, and bedclothes are tucked in securely. QA 2.1.2

If parents ask for their infant to be ‘wrapped’ as a means of settling for sleep, educators ensure that a lightweight wrap is used, the baby is not wrapped too tightly, and that the wrap is kept away from the face. QA 2.1.2

Quilts, doonas, duvets, pillows, cot bumpers or lambskins are not used in cots. Other materials such blankets spare sheets are not draped over the sides or ends of cots to block light or children’s view of each other. QA 2.1.2, 2.3.2

Snugly rugs/blankets and soft toys are not recommended for use for children under the age of 12 months. If a parent wishes their child to have a security item they must supply a letter of request and why the item meets their child’s needs.QA 2.1.2, 2.3.2

Mobiles or toys with stretch elastic cords are not used within reach of cots. QA 2.1.2, 2.3.2

Cots are positioned well away from dangling electrical and curtain /blind cords, heaters, fans and other electrical appliances, and power points. QA 2.1.2, 2.3.2

Cots are set up at least 30cm apart as well as 30cm from any other furniture.

After a child is placed in a cot, the cot side is pulled up and securely locked, and the educator makes a final check before leaving the cot. QA 2.1.2

The viewing window to the cot room is kept clear of obstruction, and educators check sleeping infants every 10 minutes, and initial the Sleep and Rest Register. QA 2.3.1

All cots in the Service meet the Australian Standard, are assembled according to manufacturer’s instructions, and are maintained in good condition. QA 2.1.2

Cot mattresses meet the manufacturer’s size recommendations and fit the cot base with no more than a 25mm gap between the mattress and the sides of the cot. QA 2.1.2

No child is placed in a cot if the child has the ability to climb out. QA 2.3.2

Cot mattresses and cots are sprayed and wiped useall and paper towel/once only use chux at the end of a full time child’s week, or after each instance a part-time child has used the cot. QA 2.1.3

The Service supplies a sheet set consisting of a fitted bottom sheet and a flat top sheet for each child. Each child’s sheet set is stored in a labelled draw-string bag when not in use. All bed linen is laundered at least weekly. QA 2.1.3
The sleep/rest area, as are all other areas of the Service, is smoke-free. QA 2.3.2

The temperature of the room is monitored to ensure children’s comfort. QA 3.2.1

Each child is always put to bed in the same cot.

No child is to wear teething or any other necklaces while sleeping.

No child is to be placed in a cot and given a bottle.

Additional safe resting practices for a child who is unwell

- Consistent with the Service’s Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness and Supervision Policies, children who are unwell are constantly monitored until collected by their parent(s). QA 2.1.4

Responsibilities of parents

- Upon enrolment, to discuss with educators their child’s particular needs (e.g. sleep patterns and habits, need for a comforter) and family values and parenting beliefs, cultural or otherwise, associated with sleep/rest. Update this information in the event of change (e.g. a child becoming anxious about sleep/rest at the Service).

- To provide any comforters necessary.

- To read the Daily Feedback Sheet

Links to other policies

- Evacuation and Lock Down Policy
- Enrolment and Orientation Policy
- Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy
- Interactions with Families
- Tobacco, Drug and Alcohol Policy

Sources, further reading and useful websites

- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011.
- NCAC. (2011). Factsheet: Safe sleep and rest in child care


2.6 Sun Protection

Background

Australia has the highest incidence of skin cancer in the world. Of all new incidents of cancer diagnosed in Australia each year, 80 per cent are skin cancers. Given that children in childcare attend during peak ultraviolet radiation (UVR) times and that they spend much of their day outdoors, childcare has a major role in minimising children’s UVR exposure. Further, childcare provides the ideal opportunity to instil in children long-term positive SunSmart habits.

Policy statement

The Service takes every reasonable precaution to protect children and staff from the harmful effects of exposure to the sun while they are at the Service or at any event organised by the Service. Acorn provides a centre hat for each child attending the centre. The hat is kept at the centre. Sunscreen is provided for parents to apply to their children upon drop off at the centre each day.

The Sun Protection Policy is consistent with the Cancer Council’s SunSmart recommendations for outdoor environments, clothing, sunscreen, scheduling of activities, and ongoing education for the children, families and staff at the Service.

Strategies and practices

- The Sun Protection Policy is explained to parents when they enroll their child in the Service, and their attention is specifically drawn to their responsibilities under this Policy. QA 6.1.1, 7.3.5

- The sun safety message is promoted and positively reinforced amongst families through notice boards, newsletters, educator-parent meetings, the website and Facebook and providing them with up-to-date SunSmart materials. QA2.1.2

- Educators promote sun safety awareness in children by including it in daily routines and intentional teaching such as role-modeling, discussions, songs, stories, games, and SunSmart resources (for older children). QA 2.3.2

- The Service’s outdoor playground is adequately shaded. The built and natural shade features are continuously evaluated for effectiveness and, if required, additional shade structures are built and trees planted. QA 3.1.1

- Children play outdoors at the discretion of the educators who take into account the weather and are guided by the routines and children’s interests. QA 2.3.2

- Between 10am and after 2pm, educators set up activities in the shade, wherever possible, and actively encourage children to play in the shade. At times when the weather becomes too hot, educators move play to protected and shady areas, such as verandahs, or inside. QA 2.3.2

- Between 10am and 2pm, planned outdoor activities and events are minimised, and are encouraged only in the shade. QA 2.3.2

- Wherever possible, excursions to outdoor areas occur before 10am and after 2pm. Refer to the Service’s Excursion Policy. QA 2.3.2

- All staff model positive SunSmart behavior to the children by:
Acorn Child Care Centres
Policies and Procedures

- wearing a hat and appropriate clothing for all outdoor activities
- using SPF 30+ broad-spectrum, water resistant sunscreen
- seeking shade whenever possible
- are able to wear sunglasses that meet the Australian Standard (AS/NZS1067:2003). QA 2.1.4, 4.2.1

- The Service supplies 30+ broad-spectrum waterproof sunscreen for children and staff. The sunscreen is available in each room and in the outdoor play area. Parents are advised upon enrolment about the use and brand of sunscreen, and receive a reminder annually. Parents are required to notify the Service in writing if their child is allergic to sunscreen, and to supply an alternative clearly labeled with the child’s name. QA 2.1.1, 2.3.2

- Educators ensure that all children wear a hat that provides sun protection for the face, neck and ears when outside. QA 2.1.1

- Educators ensure children wear clothes with adequate protection from UVR when playing outdoors. Any child who does not have suitable clothing is expected to wear clothing from the Service’s set of spares kept for the purpose, or to play in the shade. Also if the spare clothes supply is exhausted, the children without suitable clothing will be required to play indoors or in shaded areas. The Cancer Council recommends loose fitting clothes with collars and sleeves, closely woven natural fibre fabric, and of a dark colour. QA 2.1.1, 2.3.2

- Water is offered to children frequently throughout the day regardless of whether they are indoors or outdoors. QA 2.2.1

- Parents are asked to liberally apply a 30+ broad-spectrum water resistant sunscreen to all exposed areas of their children’s skin on arrival at the Service. QA 2.1.1, 2.3.2

- Educators liberally apply broad spectrum sunscreen with an SPF of 30+ to all exposed areas of children’s skin 15-20 minutes before the children go outside, and initial the Sunscreen Application Chart to that effect. QA 2.1.1, 2.3.2

- Educators reapply sunscreen every two hours if children are outdoors for a prolonged period, or more frequently if the children are perspiring or involved with water play. Older children apply their own sunscreen under supervision. QA 2.1.1, 2.3.2

- If parents supply their child with sunglasses that are wrap-around and/or are close fitting (that meet AS 1067-EPF 10 is best), educators will ensure children wear them during outdoor play. QA 2.1.1, 2.3.2

- Educators are kept up-to-date with SunSmart recommendations. QA 7.2.2

Additional safe resting practices for babies

- Babies under the age of 12 months are kept out of direct sunlight as a matter of course. However, when outdoors, a small amount of sunscreen is applied only to those exposed areas not already covered by clothing or hats. QA 2.3.2

- Educators monitor fluid intake of babies and document it in each child’s Daily Communication Chart. QA
Responsibilities of parents

- To apply sunscreen to their child on arrival at the Service.
- To ensure their child collects and returns their centre hat each day upon arrival and departure.

To dress their child in SunSmart clothing, including spares, each time the child attends the Service.

- To model positive SunSmart behaviour to the children when at the Service.
- To notify the Service in writing if their child is allergic to sunscreen, and to supply an alternative sunscreen clearly labeled with the child’s name.

Links to other policies

- Clothing Policy
- Educational Program Policy
- Enrolment and Orientation Policy
- Excursion Policy

Sources, Further reading and useful websites

- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011.

Date(s) reviewed: 13/12/2016

Next review date: 13/12/2017
2.7 Medical Conditions

Background

Childcare legislation recognises that children with existing medical conditions attend early education and care services. In order to uphold the safety and wellbeing of these children at all times, it requires educators to be trained to respond appropriately to conditions such as asthma, anaphylaxis and diabetes. Legislation also requires that educators must know the precise response expected of them for each individual child as detailed in a current Medical Management Plan for that child provided by the child’s parent(s).

Policy Statement

This Policy details how the Service ensures its educators are trained to respond appropriately to conditions such as asthma, anaphylaxis and diabetes. It also details how educators know the precise response expected of them for each individual child as detailed by the child’s doctor.

Strategies and practices

 At enrolment, parents are required to complete an enrolment form for their child. The form includes provision for parents to detail any medical conditions or specific health care need their child experiences (e.g. asthma, diagnosed risk of anaphylaxis, diabetes, epilepsy). In addition, the Nominated Supervisor purposefully directs parents’ attention to this section of the enrolment form, and stresses the need for accurate and complete information for the Service to effectively meet the child’s medical needs. Refer to the Service’s Enrolment and Orientation Policy. QA 2.1.1, 2.3.2

 Parents are asked to provide the Service with any Medical Management Plan from the child’s doctor. The Plan should include a photograph of the child, details of the actions to take in the event of an attack (including administering medication), written permission for the Service to implement the Plan as required, and the contact details of the doctor who signed the Plan. QA 2.1.1, 2.3.2

 The Service uses the Medical Management Plan provided to develop, in collaboration with the parents, a Medical Conditions Risk Minimisation and Communications Plan for their child. The Medical Conditions Risk Minimisation and Communications Plan identifies the possible risks to the child’s specific condition or health care need while at the Service (e.g. exposure to known allergens) so that those risks can be minimised. Further it ensures communication processes are in place so that, at all times, Service educators have the complete, correct and up-to-date information necessary to meet the child’s health needs. The Service is guided by templates from recognised authorities such as Anaphylaxis Australia, Asthma Australia, and the Australian Society for Clinical Immunology and Allergy when developing the Medical Conditions Risk Minimisation and Communications Plan. QA 2.1.1

 The Service requires parents to provide any updates to their child’s Medical Management Plan (e.g. at any time the child has been reassessed by the doctor, the child’s medication has been altered or discontinued, new photograph), and at other times when the Nominated Supervisor requests updates as agreed in the Medical Conditions Risk Minimisation and Communications Plan. QA 2.1.1
A copy of the Medical Management Plan and the Medical Conditions Risk Minimisation and Communications Plan is filed with the child’s enrolment form. A copy of the Medical Management Plan is also kept where the child’s medication is stored. QA 2.1.1, 2.3.3

With parental consent, copies of each child’s Medical Management Plan are displayed in strategic places throughout the Service, including food preparation and eating areas. With the child’s right to privacy in mind, the plans are not accessible to visitors or other families. A copy of the Medical Management Plan is taken on any excursion the child attends. QA 2.1.1, 2.3.3

All medical details held by the Service are kept confidential. Refer to the Service’s Privacy and Confidentiality Policy. QA 2.1.1

The Service takes every precaution to ensure that no child who has been prescribed medication in relation to a specific health care need, allergy or relevant medical condition attends the Service without that medication. QA 2.1.1

The Nominated Supervisor communicates the specific health needs of each child to all staff/educators including the whereabouts of copies of the Medical Management Plan and any medication for the child. They are given the opportunity to ask questions to clarify that they fully understand the child’s medical needs and their responsibilities attending to those needs. The Nominated Supervisor ensures that any updates are promptly conveyed to all staff/educators. QA 2.1.1, 2.3.2

The Nominated Supervisor provides all students and volunteers with an orientation before they commence at the Service. The orientation includes information about specific health care needs, where Medical Management Plans are displayed and where the children’s medication is kept. The Nominated Supervisor stresses the importance of alerting Service educators immediately of any concern regarding the health and wellbeing of any child. QA 2.1.1, 2.3.3

The Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy has made available an information poster Anaphylaxis Action Plan (General) – ASCIA. Copies of this poster are displayed in strategic positions throughout the Service including the indoor and outdoor play spaces. QA 2.3.3

The Asthma Foundation has made available an information poster Asthma First Aid. Copies of this poster are displayed in strategic positions throughout the Service including the indoor and outdoor play spaces. QA 2.3.3

The contact numbers of emergency Service are displayed beside all telephone outlets in the Service. QA 2.3.3

All EpiPens and asthma medication are stored readily accessible to all staff (including relief staff), but inaccessible to children. Refer to the Service’s Administration of Medication Policy. QA 2.1.1, 2.3.2

First Aid kits are located where educators can readily access them in an emergency. Refer to the Service’s Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy. QA 2.1.4

The Service ensures its practices in handling and preparing food and beverages consumed by children at the Service prioritise the medical needs of children with known allergies. The Service is not a nut free zone. Refer to the Service’s Nutrition, Food and Beverage Policy and its Food Preparation, Storage and Handling Policy. QA 2.2.1, 2.3.1, 2.3.2
Acorn Child Care Centres
Policies and Procedures

- The Service accesses information and resources on medical conditions and their management from recognised authorities, and provides this information to parents, educators, students and volunteers. QA 2.1.1

- Health and safety are regular items on team meeting agendas. The topics of common allergies and medical conditions experienced by young children and how to identify and respond to them are regularly discussed during these meetings. QA 2.1.1

- The Service reviews its health and safety practices regularly as part of its Quality Improvement Plan. Refer to the Service’s Educator Professionalism and Ethics Policy. QA 2.1.3

- The Service maintains an up-to-date record of the First Aid and CPR status of all educators, together with their anaphylaxis and asthma management training, in its Staff Summary Sheet. The required number of educators with these qualifications and positioned near children meet regulatory requirements at all times, including on excursions. QA 2.1.4, 4.1.1

- Educators intentionally teach young children about health and safety. This includes making children aware that they and/or their friends may need to take special care about some matters (e.g. the type of food they eat, the brand of sunscreen they use). QA 2.1.4

- In the event of an incident relating to a child under a Medical Management Plan, that Plan must be followed explicitly. An Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Record is to be completed. QA 2.1.4, 7.3.1, 7.3.5

- At this time, the Service has no children who administer their own medication. However, should a specific need arise the Service’s practices will be adjusted to meet that need. QA 2.1.1

Responsibilities of parents

- To inform the Service of any updates to their child’s Medical Management Plan.

- To ensure the child’s medication is brought to the Service every time the child attends the Service.

Links to other policies

- Administration of Medication Policy
- Educator Professionalism and Ethics Policy
- Enrolment and Orientation Policy
- Food Preparation, Storage and Handling Policy
- Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy
- Nutrition, Food and Beverage Policy
- Students, Volunteers and Visitors Policy

Sources, Further reading and useful websites
Acorn Child Care Centres
Policies and Procedures


- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011.


- Allergy and Anaphylaxis Australia – http://www.allergyfacts.org.au/


- Australian Society for Clinical Immunology and Allergy (ASCIA) – http://www.allergy.org.au/


- Diabetes Australia – http://www.australiandiabetescouncil.com/


- National Asthma Foundation Council Australia – www.nationalasthma.org.au
Acorn Child Care Centres
Policies and Procedures

  accessed 24 November 2013


  accessed 24 November 2013

  for Diabetes in Children and Adolescents. 3rd Ed.

  accessed 24 November 2013

Date(s) reviewed: 14/03/2016

Next review Date: 14/03/2017
Acorn Child Care Centres
Policies and Procedures

Acknowledgment of Medical Conditions Policy

I, ______________________________________ (full name) have read and understand the Medical Conditions Policy and agree to abide by its provisions. I am aware of the responsibilities of the Medical Conditions and the regulations. I acknowledge that yearly training will be expected as part of my contract and will be undertaken by myself as provided by the employee.

Signed  

Date  

Witness  

Name  

Position  

Date  

A copy of this declaration will be kept on your staff file.
2.8 Managing Infectious Diseases

Background

Parents, staff and visitors to childcare Services need to cooperate to ensure anyone entering the Service is in good health so that the possibility of infections spreading to others is minimised.

Policy statement

The Policy details the Service’s practices for managing unwell children and adults at the Service to minimise the spread of infection to others.

Strategies and practices

- The Managing Infectious Diseases Policy is explained to parents when they enrol their child in the Service, and their attention is specifically drawn to their responsibilities under the Policy. QA 2.1.4

- Educators are informed of the symptoms of excludable illnesses and disease and of infection control through staff meetings and professional development, and are provided with educational materials. They are alert to the signs of illness in children and respond accordingly. The signs include:
  - severe, persistent or prolonged coughing
  - breathing difficulties (e.g. noisy, wheezy)
  - yellowish skin or eyes
  - irritated eyes, eye lining red, pus from eyes
  - unusual spots or rashes
  - vomiting and/or diarrhoea
  - temperature over 38 degrees Celsius
  - behaviour exhibited that is not ‘normal’ for the child (e.g. sleeping, being unable to participate in the daily activities as usual). QA 2.1.4

- The Service’s roster ensures sufficient educators with first aid qualifications are on site at all times children are present. QA 2.1.4

- All instances of illnesses and infectious diseases (children and staff) are recorded in the Illness and Infectious Disease Register so that they may be tracked and any spread minimised. The Register is kept in the Directors office. QA 2.1.4

- Educators intentionally teach children health and safety practices to prevent the spread of contagious diseases. QA 2.1.4
Acorn Child Care Centres
Policies and Procedures

- The Service strictly adheres to the National Health and Medical Research Council’s recommended minimum exclusion periods for infectious conditions. The Queensland Government – Time Out Poster detailing these periods is displayed prominently in the foyer and in other areas of the Service. QA 2.1.4

- If an outbreak of an infectious disease occurs in the Service, parents are informed verbally and by notices displayed throughout the Service. Information given to parents will include the nature of the illness, symptoms, incubation and infectious periods and the Service’s exclusion requirements for the illness. QA 2.1.4, 7.3.1

- Where an outbreak is a vaccine preventable disease, the Service will notify the relevant health authority, and will follow that authority’s recommended guidelines and directives. Children and staff who are not immunised may be excluded from the Service for the duration of the outbreak. Refer to the Service’s Immunisation for Children and Staff Policy. QA 2.1.1, 2.1.4

- In the case of serious ill health or hospitalisation, the child or staff member may be asked to provide a medical certificate verifying that they are sufficiently recovered to return to the Service. However, the Nominated Supervisor has the final say on whether the child or a staff member may return. QA 2.1.4

- Parents are asked not to bring any unwell child into the Service, and not to enter the Service if they are unwell themselves. The Nominated Supervisor can refuse entry to any child or adult (including a staff member) who comes to the Service clearly unwell. QA 2.1.4

- Should a child become unwell during the day, the parents or authorised person are contacted immediately to collect the child. The parent will be asked to sign the Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Record. QA 2.1.4, 7.3.1

- Staff who become ill during the day are sent home and replaced. QA 7.3.1

- To ensure the safety of other children, staff and visitors, parents are asked to inform the Service if their child has been exposed to any infectious disease. QA 2.1.4

Additional safe practices for babies

- To take extra care to adhere to all health and safety procedures (e.g. nappy change, bottle preparation) at the first sign of any outbreak of illness in the Service.

Responsibilities of parents

- To keep the Service informed of their child’s current immunisation status.

- To provide, if requested, a medical certificate verifying that the child who has been unwell has sufficiently recovered to return to the Service.

- To keep unwell children away from the Service.

- To remain away from the Service when they themselves are unwell.

- To arrange prompt collection of their unwell child if contacted by the Service.

- To inform the Service at any time their child has been exposed to an infectious disease.
Acorn Child Care Centres
Policies and Procedures

Links to other policies

- Enrolment and Orientation Policy
- Immunisation for Children and Staff Policy
- Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy

Sources, Further reading and useful websites

- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011.
  
n_0.pdf](http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/_files_nhmrc/publications/attachments/ch55_staying_healthy_childcare_5th_editio
n_0.pdf) accessed 24 November 2013
- Public Health Act 2005.
  
  
  

Date(s) reviewed: 13/12/16

Next review Date: 13/12/17
2.9 Immunisation for Children and Staff

Background

Children who attend childcare Services are in close contact with a large number of other children for lengthy periods and are at increased risk of catching and transmitting illnesses and diseases. Some of these are preventable through immunisation. Educators are also at risk, particularly during pregnancy.

Vaccination is recognised as the most effective way to prevent the spread of most infectious diseases. In Australia, vaccination is optional. However, the Federal Government encourages parents to vaccinate their children by providing a free vaccination program, and by offering financial incentives to those whose children complete the program. At Acorn all children in care are required to be immunised.

In addition, good personal and environmental hygiene practices help protect children against illness and communicable diseases.

Policy statement

The Service supports the National Immunisation Program (NIP) which is currently recommended by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) and promoted by the Commonwealth Government. The Service also supports the protection of children and educators through immunisation, and provides families and staff with information on immunisation and vaccine preventable illnesses and diseases.

The spread of vaccine preventable diseases within the Service is minimised through: monitoring immunisation records; complying with recommended exclusion guidelines and timeframes for children and staff; and, routine personal and environmental health and hygiene practices.

Strategies and practices

- The Immunisation for Children and Staff Policy is explained to parents when they enrol their child in the Service, and their attention is specifically drawn to their responsibilities under the Policy. Extracts from this Policy are included in the Family Handbook given to all parents. QA 2.1.4
- Parents are required to provide documentation of their child's immunisation status before their child commences at the Service, and evidence of each vaccination thereafter. For young children this will usually occur at 6, 12 and 18 months of age. The preferred form of documentation is a copy of the child’s Immunisation History Statement from the Australian Childhood Immunisation Register. QA 2.1.4
- Staff are required to complete a Staff Immunisation Form detailing their immunisation status before they commence at the Service, review the form annually, and update it whenever a change in status occurs. QA 2.1.4
- The Service routinely minimises the spread of illness and disease by promoting handwashing and other hygiene practices, and maintaining clean and hygienic environments. QA 2.1.3, 3.1.2
- In the event of an outbreak of a vaccine preventable disease, the Service will notify the relevant health authority, and will follow its recommended guidelines and directives. Children who are not immunised due to their age may be excluded from the Service for the duration of the outbreak. In addition, staff who are not immunised may be excluded from work. QA 2.1.1, 2.3.3
Acorn Child Care Centres
Policies and Procedures

- As soon as practicable after the outbreak of a vaccine preventable disease at the Service, staff will notify parents or authorised emergency contacts when they collect their children, and send a note sent home with the child. Information sheets will be distributed to families. Parents of unimmunised children will be contacted directly and also provided with written notice detailing the specific period their child will be excluded from the Service. Signs will be displayed prominently throughout the Service informing families of the outbreak. QA 2.1.4

- If a child becomes unwell or is suspected of symptoms of an excludable infectious illness, the child’s parents are contacted immediately to collect their child. Wherever possible, the child is separated from the main group of children and one educator nominated to care for the child to reduce the risk of cross infection. QA 2.1.4

- In the case of serious ill health or hospitalisation, the child or staff member is to provide a medical certificate from their doctor verifying that they are sufficiently recovered to return to the Service. However, the Nominated Supervisor has the final say on whether the child or a staff member may return to the Service. QA 2.1.1

- The Service maintains an Illness and Infectious Disease Register with the date, time, name and age of the child, symptoms, room/group, action taken, and diagnosis. QA 7.3.1

- The Service encourages staff to discuss with their doctor the topic of immunisation and the additional risks of contracting a vaccine preventable illness or disease inherent in their close, regular contact with the children. The Service also recommends that staff who may be considering pregnancy apply for screening for immunity for infections which carry risks of miscarriage or damage to the foetus (e.g. rubella, chicken pox, cytomegalovirus). QA 2.1.4

- The National Immunisation Schedule is displayed on notice boards throughout the Service. Factsheets other resource materials on specific vaccine preventable diseases are available and, if required, can be obtained in a variety of languages. QA 2.1.4

- Educators are informed of the symptoms of excludable illnesses and disease and infection control through staff meetings and professional development, and are provided with educational materials. QA 2.1.4

Additional safe practices for babies

- To ensure accurate immunisation records are maintained and consistently updated in line with the immunisation schedule for babies.

Responsibilities of parents

- To provide documentation of their child’s immunisation status before the child commences at the Service, and update this as changes occur.

- To inform the Service if a communicable disease occurs in the family because the child may become a carrier.

Links to other policies

- Enrolment and Orientation Policy
- Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy
- Interactions with Families Policy
Sources

- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011.

Further reading and useful websites

Acorn Child Care Centres
Policies and Procedures

Date(s) reviewed: 14/03/2016

Next review Date: 14/03/2017
2.10 Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness

Background

The safety of children at the service is the ultimate priority.

To comply with the Education and Care National Regulations 2011 and the National Quality Standard 2011, services need well-considered and documented processes so that staff and educators can respond to children’s injuries competently and calmly and in a way that ensures that children are kept safe and/or risk of further harm reduced.

Policy statement

This Policy details how the Service ensures that staff and educators possess the qualifications, knowledge, skills and training to respond to children who are unwell or have been injured, and how it communicates with parents to ensure staff and educators can best respond to their children’s identified medical needs.

To this end, the Service recognises the importance of competent First Aid in the management of injuries and illness, especially among young children. The staff are qualified in First Aid and CPR, and trained to deal with asthma and anaphylaxis. Information about children’s known medical conditions is readily accessible, as is any medication required to manage those conditions.

Strategies and practices

- The Service maintains an up-to-date record of the First Aid and CPR status of all educators, together with their anaphylaxis and asthma management training, in its Staff Summary Sheet. The required number of educators with these qualifications and positioned near children meets regulatory requirements at all times, including on excursions. QA 2.1.4

- First Aid kits are located so that educators can readily access them in an emergency. They are clearly labelled, and kept out of the reach of children. A portable First Aid kit is available for excursions. The Service maintains a First Aid – List of Items as recommended by an approved First Aid training provider. The contents of all First Aid kits are cleaned, expiry dates checked, and replenished at least once per month. Yearly the kits are checked and restocked by St Johns. QA 2.1.4

- CPR posters from recognised authorities are displayed in strategic positions throughout the Service including the indoor and outdoor play spaces. QA 2.3.3

- The Service maintains records of the name, address and telephone number of each child’s parents, persons authorised by the parents to consent to medical treatment or ambulance transportation for the child, and the family doctor. The records are reviewed yearly and updated as per parent communications. Parents are required to inform the Service of any changes to these contact details. QA 2.3.3

- The Service maintains Medical Management Plans for children with identified medical conditions. These plans are updated when a change occurs. With parental consent, copies of each child’s Medical Management Plan are displayed in strategic places throughout the Service, including food preparation and eating areas. With the child’s right to privacy in mind, the Plans are not accessible to visitors or other families. The Plans are strictly adhered to in any emergency. Refer to the Service’s Medical Conditions Policy. QA 2.1.1, 2.3.3
In the event of a child displaying early symptoms of a childhood illness, the child will be separated from other children, First Aid administered as appropriate, the child made comfortable and their condition closely monitored. Parents will be notified and asked to collect their child as soon as possible to obtain medical attention. QA 2.1.4

Should a child become exposed to bodily fluids such as another’s saliva or blood (e.g. through a bite), the parents will be contacted to collect their child and obtain medical advice. QA 2.1.4

In the event of an injury to a child, educators are to follow the Service’s Injured Child – Management Procedure. The educator is to complete an Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Record. Parents are asked to sign the Record (as proof of disclosure of information). QA 2.1.1, 2.3.3

In the event of an injury to a child’s head or face. The educator is to complete an Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Record, and notify the Director and then the parents immediately. The notification time is to be noted on the Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Record. Parents are asked to sign the Record (as proof of disclosure of information). QA 2.1.1, 2.3.3

In the event of an incident with a child relating to that child’s identified medical condition, that child’s Medical Management Plan must be followed explicitly. An Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Record is to be completed, signed by the parents. QA 2.1.1, 2.3.3

In the event of a child not breathing, educators are to follow the Non-Responsive Child/Person Procedure. QA 2.3.3

Staff are to inform the Nominated Supervisor as soon as possible if they have an accident or are injured at work. The staff member will be asked to complete a staff incident report form for the Service’s records. If the staff member seeks medical advice, this information should be added to the records. The staff member is also required to notify the Nominated Supervisor of any application for WorkCover, and to keep the Nominated Supervisor informed of any progress. QA 7.3.2

If a child arrives at the center and has had an Incident or Injury at home. The guardian is asked to fill in an Incident / Injury on intake form prior to dropping off at the center. If the guardian has already left the center and bruise is found the Educators are to inform the Nominated Supervisor and ring the Parent/Guardian and ask them about the incident. The Parent/Guardian is to sign the form when picking up in the afternoon.

Additional safe practices for babies

To ensure staff are regularly reminded about and trained in the specialised responses to any emergency involving a baby.

Responsibilities of parents

To ensure their own contact details and those of any persons authorised by the parents to consent to medical treatment or ambulance transportation details are accurate, complete and up-to-date.
Acorn Child Care Centres
Policies and Procedures

Links to other policies
- Death of a Child Policy
- Enrolment and Orientation Policy
- Excursion Policy
- Handwashing Policy
- Management of Infectious Diseases Policy
- Medical Conditions Policy

Sources, Further reading and useful websites
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011.

Date(s) reviewed: 14/03/2016

Next review Date: 14/03/2017
2.10.1 Response Protocol to a Serious Incident

Definition

A serious incident is defined to be an injury to a child or an illness whilst in care at the centre which does not require the services of an ambulance but does require the attention of a doctor. When an ambulance is required the situation is defined to be an emergency and is not covered under this protocol.

Immediate steps to be followed

1. Staff to apply first aid
2. Parent to be notified and requested to take their child to the doctor
3. A staff member assigned to monitor the child until the parent arrives
4. If the situation changes the monitoring staff should recontact the parent

After the child has been collected from the centre

1. Staff to complete incident form
2. Approved Provider to be informed and sign incident form
3. Lodgement of incident form to department via portal
4. Management to contact parents within 48 hours to check on the health/recovery of the child, offer any required support answers to any questions.
5. In consultation with the centre’s insurer - arrange to reimburse any medical costs if the injury was sustained at the centre.
6. Provide reversal of centre day costs if injury was sustained at centre and child goes home early in the day and to provide answers to any questions asked by parents.
7. Management will continue to monitor the child’s recovery and where a child is unable to attend the centre due to an injury sustained at the centre arrange for further reversals of booked days until the child reattends.

Date(s) reviewed: 14/03/2016

Next review Date: 14/03/2017
2.11 Administration of Medication

Background

The National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) recommends that children who are physically unwell be excluded from early childhood education and care services to minimise disease outbreaks. It also details the exclusion periods which apply for children with particular infectious diseases.

An unwell child – able to play quietly with toys at home with one or two siblings – may find it difficult to interact with other children, share toys, take part in routines and cope with the noise level in a childcare Service. In most instances, for a child who is unwell, the best place to recover is at home.

However, it is reasonable that, from time to time, children may require basic medical treatment or need to be given medication while they are in care. In addition, children with certain medical conditions (e.g. asthma, allergies, diabetes) may need scheduled or unscheduled administration of medication.

Policy statement

The Service maintains close and regular communication with parents and takes an informed and responsible team approach to administering medication to children, and documenting that process. In addition, the Service has clear guidelines for managing medical conditions such as asthma, diabetes, anaphylaxis and other specific health care needs.

The Service is unable to accommodate children who require a care regime or medical procedures that educators are not trained to deliver.

Strategies and practices

- Parents complete an *Enrolment Form* prior to their child commencing at the Service. The Form requires parents to provide details of their child’s known medical conditions or specific health care needs (e.g. asthma, diabetes, anaphylaxis). Where a child has a known medical condition or requires specific health care, the parent must provide the Service with a copy of the Medical Management Plan which has been completed in consultation with the family doctor before the child may commence at the Service. QA 2.1.1

- Any child whose doctor has prescribed medication for a specific health care need, allergy or relevant medical condition, cannot attend the Service without that medication. Refer to the Service’s *Medical Conditions Policy*. QA 2.1.1

- The Nominated Supervisor informs all staff and volunteers of the Medical Management Plan for any child in the Service, and the whereabouts of that Plan. At that time, the Nominated Supervisor clarifies the nature of the medical condition and how it is to be managed. With parental consent, copies of each child’s Medical Management Plan which includes a photograph of the child are displayed in strategic locations throughout the Service. With the child’s right to privacy in mind, the Plans are not accessible to visitors or other families. QA 2.1.1

- If a child requires long-term and regular medication, the parent must complete the *Medication Form – Authority to Administer (Long-Term)*. QA 2.1.1
Acorn Child Care Centres
Policies and Procedures

- Educators intentionally teach children that medication is sometimes required to support health, and even to maintain life. At the same time, they teach the children about the dangers of touching or using medications and/or equipment meant for others. QA 2.3.2

- Children are encouraged not to share food. QA 2.3.1

- All cooking activities – handling, preparation, consumption of food – take into account children’s individual needs and known allergies. QA 2.2.1

- Families of children with medical conditions or specific health care needs are provided with a copy of this Administration of Medication Policy. QA 2.3.2

- Medication is only administered if it has been prescribed by a registered medical practitioner, is in the original container, bearing the original label and instructions and before the expiry or use by date. QA 2.1.1

- Before any medication – other than those listed in Medical Management Plans – is administered, the parent or person named in the enrolment form as authorised to consent to administration of medication must complete the Service’s Medication Form – Authority to Administer (Short-Term). The details on the Form must be the same as those on the label on the medication, and the person completing the Form must print and sign their name on the Form. Details to be provided on the Form include:
  - child’s name
  - name of the medication to be administered;
  - time and date the medication was last administered
  - time and date, or the circumstances under which, the medication should be next administered
  - dosage to be administered
  - manner in which the medication is to be administered. QA 2.1.1

- Educators administer medication according to the “Five Rights” (i.e. right patient, right time, right medication, right dose, right manner). Before medication is given to a child, an educator member, other than the one administering the medication, verifies the accuracy of each of these Five Rights. After giving the medication, the educator who administered the medication enters the following details on the Authorisation to Administer Medication Form – date, time, medication administered, dosage, the manner in which the medication was administered, name of the educator who administered it and the name of the educator who verified. The Form is then signed by both educators. QA 2.1.1

- Whenever medication is administered, educators continuously monitor the well-being of the child concerned. QA 2.1.4

- Educators wash their hands immediately before and after administering medications, and wear gloves when applying creams. QA 2.1.3

- Parents are to hand medications directly to an educator. Medication of any kind is never to be left in a child’s bag. QA 2.1.1, 2.3.2
Medication is stored securely away from children, and according to the instructions on the label. Medication that does not need to be refrigerated is stored in a locked cupboard inaccessible to children. Medication that needs refrigeration is stored in the refrigerator in a locked container. Asthma medication and EpiPens are stored in a location accessible to educators but inaccessible to children. QA 2.3.2

Medication may be administered to a child without authorisation in the case of anaphylaxis or asthma emergency. When medication has been administered, the Nominated Supervisor ensures that the child’s parent(s) and emergency services are notified as soon as practicable. If the child is under a Medical Management Plan, the parent will also be advised to consult their doctor with a view to updating that Plan. QA 2.1.1, 2.1.4

The Service’s rosters ensure sufficient educators with current first-aid and CPR qualifications and trained in asthma and anaphylaxis management are at the Service at all times children are in care. Refer to the Service’s Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy. QA 2.1.4

Educators are not asked to provide special care or medical procedures for which they are not trained.

If a child develops a temperature of 38 degrees Celsius or above while at the Service, the Parent/Authorised Emergency Contact is contacted for permission to administer paracetamol. If the child shows other symptoms of being unwell the child will be sent home until well. If the child only has a temperature and no other symptoms of illness the child will be monitored for the temperature to return to normal. If a child has a temperature for a consecutive three days a doctor’s clearance will be requested before returning to the centre to rule out any illness. Refer to Policy 2.11.1– Authority to Administer Paracetamol. The Parent/Authorised Emergency Contact is to sign the Illness Record and Medication Form – Authority to Administer (Short-Term) when the child is collected. QA 2.1.1, 2.1.4

An over-the-counter, naturopathic or herbal preparation requires a letter from a registered medical practitioner before it can be administered. QA 2.1.1

The Service at this time has no children who administer their own medication. However, should a specific need arise, the Service is prepared to review its practices to meet that need. QA 2.1.1, 2.1.4

**Additional safe practices for babies**

Medication is not added to babies' formula or breast milk bottles because any baby who does not finish the bottle may not receive the correct dose.

**Responsibilities of parents**

- To keep the Service informed of any changes to their child’s medical condition.
- To ensure the Medical Management Plan for their child is reviewed every three months, and to inform the Nominated Supervisor of any change in their child’s medical condition and/or in the Plan in the interim.
- To ensure that sufficient medication for their child’s specific health care need, allergy or relevant medical condition is at the Service whenever the child is in attendance.
To complete the appropriate Authorisation to Administer Medication Form.

To ensure any medication brought to the Service has been prescribed by a registered medical practitioner is in the original container, bearing the original label and instructions and before the expiry or use by date.

To hand medications directly to an educator. Medication of any kind is never to be left in a child’s bag, or with any person other than an educator or the Nominated Supervisor.

To collect their unwell child promptly when called to do so, and to sign the required forms at that time.

Links to other policies

- Enrolment and Orientation Policy
- Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy
- Handwashing Policy
- Managing Infectious Diseases Policy
- Medical Conditions Policy

Sources, Further reading and useful websites

- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011.
Acorn Child Care Centres
Policies and Procedures


Date(s) reviewed: 13/12/2016
Next review Date: 13/12/2017
2.11.1 Child Illness Authority to Administer Paracetamol

Background

The National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) recommends that children who are physically unwell be excluded from early childhood education and care services to minimise disease outbreaks. It also details the exclusion periods which apply for children with particular infectious diseases.

An unwell child – able to play quietly with toys at home with one or two siblings – may find it difficult to interact with other children, share toys, take part in routines and cope with the noise level in a childcare Service. In most instances, for a child who is unwell, the best place to recover is at home.

Policy statement

The Service maintains close and regular communication with parents and takes an informed and responsible team approach to administering medication to children, and documenting that process. In addition, the Service has clear guidelines for managing specific health care needs.

Strategies and practices

At the time of enrolment, parents are asked to sign an authorisation on the enrolment form for staff to administer the prescribed dose of Paracetamol to their child should they have a temperature of 38.0ºc or more. QA2.1.1

Temperature (Elevated)

Is classed as any Child who has a temperature (as measured under the arm) of 38 degrees or over and this is witnessed by a second staff member. QA 2.1.1

Implementation

- For low grade temperatures up to and including 38.1º staff will attempt to bring the temperature down by natural methods before administering Paracetamol. These methods include tepid sponging, removal of excess clothing, providing the child cool fluids to consume. The parent will be contacted and informed the child has a low grade temperature and of current first aid methods being applied to bring down the temperature. If after a 15-minute period the temperature has not gone down, then the parent will be contacted and updated of the circumstances a and Paracetamol administered,

- For temperatures under 38.5ºc the parent will be contacted to verify that Paracetamol can be administered to the child. The child will be monitored after Paracetamol has been administered. If the child’s temperature does not return to normal, then the parent/guardian will be asked to collect the child immediately. If the child is displaying other symptoms of illness such as a rash, watering eyes, discharge from the nose, coughing, lethargy the parent will be asked to collect the child when the initial phone call to administer Paracetamol is made.

- For temperatures of 38.5ºc and above the parent will be contacted to verify that Paracetamol can be administered and the parent will be asked to collect the child or arrange the collection of the child.

- If the parent cannot be contacted but it is indicated on the enrolment form that the child can have Paracetamol, then ONE dose can be administered with the Directors Authorisation. The Director is to continue to try and contact primary caregivers/emergency contacts to inform them that Paracetamol has been administered. QA 2.1.1, 2.1.3, 2.1.4, 2.3.1, 2.3.2, 7.3.1
Acorn Child Care Centres
Policies and Procedures

- Staff will continue to monitor and record child’s temperature every 15 minutes for a one hour period until an authorised person arrives to collect the child. QA 2.3.1
- If an elevated temperature has occurred and the parent has been asked to collect the child, the child must stay away from the centre for the remainder of the day. QA 2.1.4
- Under no circumstances will Paracetamol be administered without parent authority either written or verbally over the phone. QA 2.3.3, 7.3.1
- If children require Paracetamol before 11am in the morning the parent must be contacted to ensure the child has not previously been administered Paracetamol in the home environment before attending the centre to ensure the child is not at risk of being overdosed. QA 2.3.2
- Only one dose of Paracetamol will be administered to a child in a day.
- If a parent requires administration of Paracetamol or Nurofen for teething discomfort, or any other medical condition this needs to be in writing from their Doctor. Under no circumstances other than a temperature will Paracetamol be administered to a child without a written letter from a Doctor. QA 2.3.3, 7.3.1

Additional safe practices for babies

- Medication is not added to babies' formula or breast milk bottles because any baby who does not finish the bottle may not receive the correct dose.

Responsibilities of parents

- To keep the Service informed of any changes to their child’s medical condition.
- To complete the appropriate Authorisation to Administer Medication Form.
- To ensure any medication brought to the Service has been prescribed by a registered medical practitioner is in the original container, bearing the original label and instructions and before the expiry or use by date.
- To hand medications directly to an educator. Medication of any kind is never to be left in a child’s bag, or with any person other than an educator or the Nominated Supervisor.
- To collect their unwell child promptly when called to do so, and to sign the required forms at that time.

Links to other policies

- Enrolment and Orientation Policy
- Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy
- Handwashing Policy
- Managing Infectious Diseases Policy
- Medical Conditions Policy
Sources, Further reading and useful websites

- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011.
  
  n_0.pdf accessed 21 November 2013
  accessed 21 November 2013
- Anaphylaxis Australia – www.allergyfacts.org.au
- Asthma Foundation – www.asthmafoundation.org.au
- Diabètes Queensland – www.diabetesqueensland.org.au

Date(s) reviewed: 14/03/2016

Next review Date: 14/03/2017
2.12 Dental Health

Background

Healthy teeth and gums are necessary for general good health. They play an important part in the digestion of food, correct speech and self-confidence through enhancing our appearance. Keeping healthy primary (baby) teeth until they fall out naturally is crucial in maintaining the space for permanent (adult) teeth.

Given the number of children who attend childcare and the length of time they spend in care, childcare plays a significant role in the prevention of teeth and gum diseases in young children, and in the development of healthy teeth and gums. Further, childcare provides the ideal opportunity to instil in children long-term oral health habits.

Policy statement

The Service promotes good dental habits, and is also committed to minimising any risk to children’s dental health from food and drink consumed at the Service. The Service follows recommendations from the recognised dental health authorities, and provides this information to families.

Strategies and practices

- The Dental Health Policy is provided to parents when they enrol their child in the Service, and their attention is specifically drawn to their responsibilities under this Policy. The Dental Health Policy is also included in the Parent Handbook given to all parents. QA 2.1.3

- The oral health message is promoted amongst families through notice boards, newsletters, verbal communication, pamphlets and dental health educational materials, and the celebration of Dental Awareness Month. Due consideration is given to home languages. QA 2.1.3

- Children are given water when thirsty. QA 2.2.1

- Educators use opportunities that arise during children’s play and at meal and snack times to talk to the children about dental health issues. The Service resources include plastic ‘healthy food,’ and toys and dolls with teeth. When appropriate to children’s interest and the program, educators intentionality teach children about looking after their teeth through activities such as: action songs and rhymes; books puzzles and games; food preparation; and, cooking experiences. QA 2.1.3

- To ensure that children receive early positive experiences, the Service arranges for dentists and appropriate allied dental health professionals to visit the Service to talk to the children about dental hygiene. QA 2.1.3

Additional safe practices for babies (0-2yrs)

- Mothers are encouraged and supported to breastfeed.

- Only milk or water is used in baby bottles.

- Fluids may be introduced in a cup from 6 months of age.

- Educators do not put children to sleep with milk or formula in their bottles. Educators remove a child’s bottle as soon as feeding is completed.
Responsibilities of parents

- To provide each day a drink container for their child only containing water.
- We ask that parents do not bring food into the centre except celebration occasions.

Links to other policies

- Food Preparation, Storage and Handling Policy
- Nutrition, Food and Beverage Policy

Sources, Further reading and useful websites

- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011.

Date(s) reviewed: 15/03/2016

Next review Date: 15/04/2017
2.13 Headlice

Background

In childcare Services, children have close contact with each other and this provides the opportunity for head lice to be transferred from head to head. Head Lice continue to cause concern and frustration for some parents, teachers and children.

Whilst parents have primary responsibility for the detection and treatment of head lice, the Service will work in a cooperative and collaborative manner to assist all families to manage head lice effectively.

Policy statement

This Policy outlines the roles, responsibilities and expectations of the Service and parents to assist with a consistent and coordinated approach to treating and controlling head lice.

Strategies and practices

- At enrolment, parents are provided with information about the Service’s Head Lice Policy, and with up-to-date and accurate information on the detection, treatment and control of head lice. QA 2.1.3
- Information and brochures are available at the Service for parents and staff QA 2.1.3
- Children do not share hats or bedding at the Service. QA 2.1.3
- Parents of children with long hair are asked to tie the hair back before coming to the Service. QA 2.3.2
- Parents are asked to check children’s hair regularly for head lice. Parents are expected to ensure that their child does not attend the Service with untreated head lice. Parents are asked to notify the childcare Service if their child is found to have live lice and when appropriate treatment was commenced. QA 2.1.4
- Parents of a child found to have head lice while at the Service are contacted immediately to come and collect their child. The child can only be accepted back into the Service after appropriate treatment has started and the child no longer has live head lice. QA 2.1.4
- The Service provides all parents with a Head Lice Notification, via notification posters in the foyer, when an outbreak of head lice has occurred in the Service. Individual children/families are not identified. All parents are provided with factual information, and are asked to check their own child’s head daily once head lice have been detected in the Service. QA 2.1.4
- After a case of head lice has been detected in the Service, all items such as hats, bedding and dress-up clothes which may have been used by the child are washed in hot soapy water and dried. QA 2.1.3

Responsibilities of parents

- To tie back their child’s long hair.
- To check children’s hair regularly for head lice and advise the Service if head lice are detected.
- To collect their child in the event of head lice being detected in the child’s hair, and to treat the hair accordingly.
Acorn Child Care Centres
Policies and Procedures

Links to other policies

- Enrolment and Orientation Policy
- Managing Infectious Diseases Policy

Sources, further reading and useful websites

- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011.

Date(s) reviewed: 15/03/2016

Next review Date: 15/03/2017
2.14 Clothing

Background

The clothing children wear while at the Service influences the quality of their experiences and their learning because clothes can affect their health, safety, comfort, level of independence and ability to play. These issues apply to the clothes children wear to the Service, the spare clothes they bring, spares provided by the Service, and to dress-up clothes.

Policy statement

The Policy provides families with information about suitable clothing for their child to wear while at the Service. It is consistent with recommendations from recognised authorities such as SunSmart, SIDS and Kids and Kidsafe. The Policy also takes into account the range of activities children are involved in at the Service, the weather, and the need to encourage children’s independence and self-help skills.

Family preferences and values, cultural or otherwise, with regard to clothing are respected and accommodated without compromising children’s safety while at the Service.

Strategies and practices

- The *Clothing Policy* is provided to parents when they enroll their child in the Service, and their attention is specifically drawn to their responsibilities under this Policy. The *Clothing Policy* is also included in the Family Handbook given to all parents. QA 2.1.2

- The Service informs families about suitable clothing for their children while at the Service for safe indoor and outdoor play, sun safety, safe sleep and rest. This information is provided through newsletters, notice boards and with special emphasis during change of seasons and unusual weather. QA 2.1.2

- Educators include in the program planned and spontaneous discussions and experiences about appropriate clothing for weather, seasons, and different types of activities. QA 2.1.2

- Educators ensure children are dressed appropriately throughout the day. This includes the possibility that some adjustments may need to be made during the day through changes in weather and in the activities children are involved in (e.g. active play, messy play, sleep and rest). QA 2.1.2

- Children do not remain in wet clothes.

- Educators, students and volunteers are considered to be role models for children and are expected to meet the Service’s dress requirements when at the Service. QA 2.1.4

- Parents are asked to label every item of their child’s clothing (including spares) brought to the Service.
When dressing their child for a day at the Service, parents are also asked to consider:

**Sun protection**

Refer to the Service’s *Sun Protection – Hat – Policy.*

**Active play**

- Children need to wear clothes that are non-restrictive, durable and can be easily laundered so that they can participate freely in all of the activities available at the Service. Such items as: long skirts; hooded jumpers with cords; hats with cords and toggles; and, rubber thongs and other loose footwear are not suitable because they pose safety risks when children are climbing, running and riding bikes. QA 2.1.2

**Weather conditions**

- Parents are asked to dress their children according to weather conditions and temperatures and to provide a supply of clothing in their child's bag for possible changes in the weather through the day. QA 2.1.2

**Art and craft activities / messy activities**

- Parents are asked to dress their child in clothing that allows participation in messy activities, and can be easily laundered. Good or ‘special’ clothes are not suitable because children can become distressed if these become marked. QA 2.1.2

- Children participating in art and craft, clay or water play, cooking or any other form of messy play will be encouraged to wear one of the Service’s protective smocks or aprons. QA 2.1.2

**Independence and self-help skills**

- Educators encourage children’s self-help skills (e.g. taking off and putting on shoes and socks, removing clothing, pulling up clothing after toileting). Routines and ‘dressing times’ are unhurried and considered to be opportunities for interaction and conversation with children and developing self-help skills. QA 1.1.3

- In order to facilitate children’s self-help and independence, parents are asked to dress children in:
  - clothes they can undo easily and remove quickly for toileting. Clothes with elastic waists are preferred to overalls and to trousers with zips and buttons.
  - shoes that are easiest to put on, such as those with velcro clips. QA 1.1.3

**Protective behaviours and practices**

- Children under the age of three years old are offered assistance when dressing or undressing.

- Children over the age of three are encouraged to dress/undress themselves. Assistance is provided when necessary.

- Children who are capable of dressing/undressing are given the option of privacy. QA 2.1.2
Acorn Child Care Centres
Policies and Procedures

Excursions
- The Service provides parents with information about suitable clothing for any planned excursion, and parents are asked to dress their child accordingly, and also to pack spare clothing suitable for the excursion. QA 2.1.2

Footwear
- Children are to wear non-slip shoes or sandals that are flexible and provide a good grip. QA 2.1.2
- Children may remove their shoes for outside play, weather permitting.

Sleep and rest
- Refer to the Service’s Sleep and Rest Policy.

Spare clothing
- Parents are asked to provide spare clothing for their child. Older children require at least one change of clothes. Younger children require several changes of clothes because accidents are more frequent. Children who are toilet training also need a sufficient number of underpants or training pants. QA 2.1.2
- The Service has a supply of spare clothing, consistent with its Clothing Policy, to be used when needed. If a child needs to use these clothes, parents are asked to launder and return them as soon as possible. QA 2.1.2

Soiled clothing
- Soiled clothing is placed in a plastic bag which is stored in a container out of the reach of children. Parents are asked to collect any soiled clothing at the end of each day. QA 2.1.3, 3.1.1

Kindergarten Uniforms
- Each child attending the Kindergarten program is provided with allocated polo shirts. It is asked that the children wear these shirts as often as they are able. This will support their transition into school uniform the following year. Families are able to purchase more from the Director. QA 1.1.3

Additional requirements for babies
- Parents are asked to supply sufficient disposable nappies or Eco nappies for their child to use while at the Service. QA 2.1.2
- Parents are encouraged to dress toddlers in clothes which allow easy nappy changes. QA 2.1.2

Responsibilities of parents
- To dress their child in accordance with this Policy.
- To provide spare clothing for their child. Older children require at least one change of clothes. Younger children require several changes of clothes because accidents are more frequent. Children who are toilet training also need a sufficient number of underpants or training pants.
- To label every item of their child’s clothing (including spares) brought to the Service.
Acorn Child Care Centres
Policies and Procedures

Links to other policies

- Educator Professionalism, Ethics and Reflection
- Enrolment and Orientation Policy
- Excursion Policy
- Sun Protection Policy

Sources, Further reading and useful websites

- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011.

Date(s) reviewed: 15/03/2016

Next review Date: 15/03/2017
2.15 Death of a Child

Background

The death of any child can have a profound effect on those who have known that child. It is an unfortunate event that occurs rarely in early education and care services, but services need to be prepared so that they respond in a way that upholds the dignity of the child, and the wellbeing of those affected.

Policy statement

This Policy is to be followed in the event of the death or serious injury to a child at the Service. It is intended to:

encourage staff to respond in a calm, professional and planned manner which prioritises the needs and dignity of the child and the family;
minimise possible distress to other children, staff and bystanders;
ensure all relevant people and authorities are advised in a timely manner and in accordance with the law;
and, ensure all required documentation is completed and stored confidentially.

Strategies and practices

In the event of a child who is not breathing being found in the Service:

- The staff member finding the child will strictly follow the Non-Responsive Child/Person - Procedure, QA 2.3.3, 7.3.5
- The Nominated Supervisor will call the parents of the child, calmly advise that the child has been taken to hospital by ambulance, and arrange to meet them at the hospital. QA 2.1.1, 6.1.2
- The Nominated Supervisor – or a staff member delegated – will accompany the child in the ambulance and remain with the child until the parent(s) arrives. QA 2.3.1, 2.3.2
- Medical staff will advise parents of the child’s condition. In the event of a death, staff may not give this information to parents because only a medical professional can pronounce a death. QA 6.3.1
- If the child has been transported via ambulance to hospital, the immediate Service environment is not to be cleaned or otherwise disturbed until the Nominated Supervisor gives the clearance. The police and other relevant authorities may need to undertake a detailed investigation. QA 2.3.3
- The Nominated Supervisor will notify the Approved Provider of any death or serious injury. Either the Approved Provider or Nominated Supervisor will notify the Regulatory Authority as soon as practicable but within 24 hours of the pronouncement of death, and submit the Reporting of Serious Injury or Death Form. QA 7.3.2, 7.3.3
- If death has been pronounced, the Nominated Supervisor will notify the police of a death in the Service, and follow police instructions. The Nominated Supervisor will also notify Workplace Health and Safety, as well as the Service’s insurance company. QA 7.3.2, 7.3.3
- The Approved Provider or, if delegated, the Nominated Supervisor are the only persons to comment on the incident. No other staff member is to provide information about the incident to the family concerned, to other families, or to the media. In addition, no staff member is to make public comment or admit liability for the incident. QA 4.2.1., 5.2.3
Acorn Child Care Centres
Policies and Procedures

- The Service’s Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Record will be completed as soon as practicable after the event. All staff directly involved will prepare and sign statements listing the sequence of events and actions taken. All documentation including copies of forms will be filed in accordance with the Service’s Privacy and Confidentiality Policy. QA 7.3.1, 7.3.2
- The Service will support the family with sympathy and in every reasonable way. QA 6.2.2
- In the event of a death at the Service, the Service will provide staff with immediate debriefing and counselling from a suitably qualified professional. QA 7.3.2

Additional safe practices for babies
- No additional practices required.

Responsibilities of parents
- N/A

Links to other policies
- Evacuation and Lockdown Policy
- Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy
- Medical Conditions Policy
- Privacy and Confidentiality Policy

Sources, Further reading and useful websites
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011.
- St John (2013). Factsheets.

Date(s) reviewed: 15/03/2016
Next review Date: 15/03/2017
2.16 Tobacco, Drug and Alcohol - Centre

Background

Cigarette smoke contains toxins and chemicals known to be detrimental to health. Because children generally breathe much more quickly than adults and their immune and respiratory systems are still developing, they are more at risk of such illnesses as asthma, chest and sensory infections, and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). In addition, children may not know nor have the physical ability to move away from cigarette smoke.

Research has also proven that drugs and alcohol impair judgment and awareness.

Adults are always to be role models for children in child care.

Policy statement

The Service provides a healthy and safe environment for children, employees, families and other visitors while on the premises (i.e. the building, grounds and car parks).

Strategies and practices

- Staff, parents and any other visitors to the Service are not permitted to smoke on or adjacent to the premises, in parking areas surrounding the building or within view of the children. QA 2.3.2
- ‘No Smoking’ signs are displayed in the entrance and or foyer area. QA 2.3.2
- No alcohol or any unlawful substance is consumed in any part of the premises at any time when children are at the Service. QA 2.3.2
- Prescription medications such as asthma preventatives and treatment, and paracetamol are acceptable, but will be managed in accordance with the Service’s Administration of Medication Policy. QA 2.1.1, 2.3.2
- As part of their duty of care to ensure a healthy and safe environment for children, the educators inform the Nominated Supervisor immediately of anyone on the premises that they suspect is affected by alcohol or drugs. QA 2.3.1, 2.3.2, 4.2.2
- The educators represent the Service in the community and, as such, are aware of the importance of not smoking and consuming alcohol while wearing the Service’s uniform out-of-hours.
- Any staff member who attends work under the influence of alcohol or drugs is relieved from duties immediately, and risks disciplinary action which may result in dismissal. QA 7.1.5

Responsibilities of parents

- To refrain from smoking, and from bringing alcohol or prohibited drugs onto or near the premises or within sight of children.
- To refrain from entering the premises while under the effects of alcohol or prohibited drugs.
Acorn Child Care Centres
Policies and Procedures

Links to other policies

- Administration of Medication Policy
- Educator Professionalism, Ethics and Reflection Policy
- Enrolment and Orientation Policy
- Excursion Policy
- Students, Volunteers and Visitors Policy

Sources, Further reading and useful websites

- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011.

Date(s) Reviewed: 15/03/2016

Next Review Date: 15/03/2017
2.17 Animals

Background

Contact with animals and caring for them increase children’s awareness of the interdependence of creatures, humans and the physical environment, and is beneficial to the children.

Policy statement

This Policy sets out the clear guidelines needed to ensure the safety of the children and the wellbeing of animals kept at or brought into the Service.

Strategies and practices

- At enrolment, parents are asked to inform the Service if their child has any allergy to animals. All staff are notified and details of the allergy are displayed throughout the Service. Animals are kept inaccessible to children with pet allergies. QA 2.1.1
- Children are supervised at all times whilst handling animals at the Service. QA 2.3.1, 2.3.2
- Due to the high risk of disease transmission for children under 5 years, reptiles and amphibians are not brought into the Service by other than qualified Rangers. Children are discouraged from handling these creatures or their containers. QA 2.3.2
- Any animal or pet kept at the Service is given food and water regularly and its enclosure is kept clean. QA 2.1.3, 3.1.2
- Pet food is stored in a place inaccessible to children, as is any equipment needed to care for it. QA 2.3.2
- All pet cages and containers are secured so as not to be a hazard. QA 2.3.2
- Educators intentionally teach children to respect all animals and how to handle and care for them. Educators also teach children that not all animals are friendly, and to always check with an animal’s owner before petting the animal. QA 2.3.2
- Animals and pets are kept away from:
  - Infants and toddlers
  - Where any child eats or sleeps
  - Food preparation areas
  - Children’s toilet and hand washing facilities
  - Children’s hand washing sinks
  - Other areas that cannot be cleaned and sanitised readily (e.g. carpets)
  - Sandpits. QA 3.1.2
Acorn Child Care Centres
Policies and Procedures

- All persons including children wash their hands immediately after they have touched an animal, and children are taught the reasoning for this. QA 2.1.3, 2.3.2
- In the event of a child being scratched or bitten by an animal and the skin penetrated, the wound will be cleansed with soap and water immediately and appropriate antiseptic applied. An Incident, Injury Trauma and Illness Report will be completed, and the parent contacted and advised to take the child to a medical practitioner. QA 2.1.4
- Children’s pets can only be brought into the Service with prior permission from the Nominated Supervisor. The owner remains responsible for the pet at all times it is in the Service. QA 2.3.2
- Any pet brought to the Service other than for an approved visit must be tethered outside the Service and out of the reach of children. QA 2.3.2

Additional safe practices for babies
- Birds in the parrot family (e.g. parakeets, cockatiels) are kept away from infants and toddlers. QA 2.3.2

Responsibilities of parents
- To obtain prior permission from the Nominated Supervisor before bring any pet to the Service. The owner remains responsible for the pet at all times it is in the Service.
- To tether outside the Service and out of the reach of children any pet brought to the Service for other than an approved visit.

Links to other policies
- Handwashing Policy
- Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy
- Medical Conditions Policy
- Supervision Policy

Sources, Further reading and useful websites
- Early Years Learning Framework 2009.
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011.
- My Time, Our Place 2009.
Acorn Child Care Centres
Policies and Procedures


Date(s) reviewed: 15/03/2016

Next review Date: 15/03/2017
2.18 Evacuation and Lockdown

Background

Early childhood services must ensure the safety and wellbeing of the children at all times they are at the service. They must also ensure the safety and wellbeing of staff and anyone else on the premises. To achieve these ends, services need a clear plan for the management of emergency situations so that educators are best equipped to respond calmly and effectively.

Policy statement

The Service has procedures to follow in the event of any emergency necessitating evacuation. These procedures comply with regulatory requirements and are consistent with recommendations by recognised authorities. They are designed to ensure the swift, safe and calm evacuation of all children, staff, families and visitors. Evacuations are rehearsed regularly so that educators and children are confident in knowing what to do.

The Service has lockdown procedures in response to any critical incident or foreseeable threat of harm to staff, children or visitors. Such an event could be:

- A hostage situation;
- A siege;
- Violent, intoxicated and/or drug affected persons;
- Dangerous animals;
- Unidentified external disturbance; or,
- Severe storm.

Strategies and practices

Evacuation

- Families are informed of the Service’s emergency procedures at enrolment and orientation and throughout the year. They are also provided with educational materials (e.g. fire safety). QA 2.3.3, 6.1.1
- The Service’s Evacuation and Lockdown Policy and evacuation procedures are based on risk assessment that identified the potential emergencies relevant to the Service. QA 2.3.3
- Emergency evacuation plans are prominently displayed throughout the Service. These plans consist of a floor plan of the Service and indicate the reader’s location, the nearest exit, the route to that exit, and assembly areas. QA 2.3.3
- All exit signs are clearly visible and escape routes and emergency exits kept clear at all times. QA 2.3.3
- The Service has the required number of fire extinguishers and fire blankets together with other emergency equipment throughout the Service. Fire extinguishers are tested and tagged, and all other equipment checked as recommended. All checks are documented. QA 2.3.3
Acorn Child Care Centres
Policies and Procedures

- All fire equipment is appropriately sign-posted and kept immediately accessible at all times. QA 2.3.3
- The Service maintains up-to-date emergency contact details for every child and a compact copy of these is taken to the assembly point. QA 2.3.3
- The contact numbers of emergency services are displayed beside all telephone outlets in the Service. QA 2.3.3
- All educators are trained in the use of fire extinguishers, fire blankets and other emergency fire equipment every 2 years and know where these items are located. QA 2.3.3
- The Service’s security alarm system is appropriately maintained according to the installer’s instructions. QA 2.3.3
- The Nominated Supervisor ensures that all staff know the Service’s Policy and Procedures for emergency evacuations and that they know their roles and responsibilities. These roles and responsibilities are posted beside the emergency evacuation plans displayed throughout the Service. Students, and volunteers are told about emergency procedures during orientation and to follow directions from educators at these times. QA 2.3.3
- Evacuation procedures are rehearsed every three months. Rehearsal occurs at different times on different days of the week. Everyone in the Service at the time, including visitors, is expected to participate. The Nominated Supervisor sends out advance notice of each rehearsal (including the date and approximate time) to all staff to encourage their understanding and cooperation. It also ensures that staff recognise a genuine alarm activation when it occurs. QA2.3.3
- Parents are informed that an evacuation rehearsal has occurred via notice in the centre or on educa. QA 2.3.3
- The Responsible Person present at the time oversees the rehearsals and is responsible for completing the Evacuation and Lockdown Report (in conjunction with other staff members), and for implementing any improvements identified in that Report. QA 2.3.3
- In the event of a power failure, the Service has a discrete telephone with its own line as a back-up. The Service also has a mobile phone. QA 2.3.3
- Educators intentionally teach children about fire safety (e.g. through discussions, songs, games, role-play, fire brigade visits). Parents are provided with educational material about fire safety in the home and encouraged to work in partnership with educators by continuing the fire safety message at home. QA 2.3.3, 6.3.1
- The Regulatory Authority and any other government health and safety authority concerned are notified of any incident requiring evacuation at the Service. QA 7.3.3
- A sign indicating that fire drill is in process will be placed on the front door.
- One staff member will meet fire brigade and give details of fire and whether all staff and children have been accounted for.
- After any incident requiring evacuation of the Service, counseling/debriefing is available to anyone affected. Children are likely to role-play the event afterwards so any debriefing will include preparing educators to respond appropriately. QA 2.1.1
Lockdown

- The Service has a signal – distinct from the evacuation signal – to alert staff of the need for lockdown. The signal has been chosen taking into account the need for discretion that could accompany such an event (e.g. a parent acting against a court order). QA 2.3.3

Initial notification

- The witness to the event alerts the Nominated Supervisor immediately.
- The Nominated Supervisor determines whether or not lockdown is appropriate.
- If yes, the Nominated Supervisor activates the lockdown signal.
- Dial 000 for police/emergency services assistance, and follows the operator’s instructions.
- Staff follow all directions of the Nominated Supervisor explicitly. QA 2.3.3

During lockdown

- All educators and children inside are to remain in their rooms and those outside are to go inside immediately and follow lockdown procedures. QA 2.3.3
- Educators are to lock all doors and windows (draw curtains/blinds) and ensure children are kept secure (e.g. under tables). QA 2.3.3
- Educators check the marked rolls and ensure that all signed-in children are present, and as soon as it is safe to do so, inform the Nominated Supervisor of the names of any children unaccounted for. QA 2.3.3
- Phone lines are to be kept open for use in contacting emergency services only. In case of a medical emergency, notify the Nominated Supervisor. QA 2.3.3
- Educators without children are to lock all external doors and windows (e.g. front door, laundry). QA 2.3.3
- Everyone is to remain in lockdown until the Nominated Supervisor announces the “All Clear.” QA 2.3.3

After lockdown

- The Nominated Supervisor notifies parents as soon as possible after the lockdown has ended. QA 2.1.4
- The lockdown will be documented, and the Service’s response reviewed. QA 7.2.3

Additional safe practices for babies

- The Service has a labelled evacuation cot. QA 2.3

Responsibilities of parents

- To ensure all contact details for parents and those of the authorised nominees are complete, accurate and up-to-date.
Links to other policies

- Administration of Medication Policy
- Enrolment and Orientation Policy
- Incident, Injury and Trauma and Illness Policy
- Medical Conditions Policy
- Supervision Policy

Sources, Further reading and useful websites

- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011.

Date(s) reviewed: 13/12/2016

Next review Date: 13/12/2016
2.19 Dangerous Products, Plants, Vermin and Objects

Background

The Early Years Learning Framework, as well as My Time, Our Place and the various state and kindergarten guidelines emphasise the importance of the physical environment in children’s learning. According to these documents, children’s capacity to understand and respect the social and natural environments is fostered in those environments where children can explore and make choices, including those that challenge their physical capabilities. Further, their competence, confidence and independence are supported.

Young children, however, have limited understanding of the potential dangers of certain products, plants and objects in the environment and must rely on adults to ensure the environment is safe for them.

Policy statement

This Policy outlines the precautions the Service takes to ensure potentially dangerous products, plants and objects are inaccessible to children, and the plans it has in place in the unlikely event of a child having contact with one of these items.

Strategies and practices

- During their orientation, all staff are made aware of the need to strictly adhere to the contents of this Policy, and the Policy is discussed during team meetings, at staff appraisals and as and when required. QA 2.3.1, 2.3.2

- The Service maintains an up-to-date list of all chemicals and cleaning agents used in the Service. Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS), together with any additional first-aid instructions required, are maintained for each item, and kept wherever potentially hazardous materials are stored in the Service. The MSDS are filed in a way that staff can readily retrieve the information in an emergency. In such emergency, staff follow the procedures detailed on the particular MSDS. In addition, staff seek advice from the Poisons Information Service whose number is posted beside the Service telephone. QA 2.3.2, 2.3.3

- All potentially hazardous materials are kept in locked child-proof cupboards and, wherever possible, beyond the reach of children, when not being used. Only frequently used items are stored in the rooms that children access. QA 2.3.2

- All bulk chemicals are stored in their original containers in cupboards which are not accessible to children. Access to this room is restricted to staff. Warning notices are displayed.

- Clear warning signs are displayed wherever potentially hazardous materials are stored. As part of the program, educators discuss with the children various safety issues relating to hazardous materials, poisonous plants and other dangers such as vermin. QA 2.3.2

- Wherever possible, hazardous products are kept in their original labelled container. When decanted, the alternative container is clearly labelled with the product name as written on the supplier’s label. Staff check all labels regularly for legibility. QA 2.3.2

- When using any hazardous products, all staff follow the instructions on the labels. Staff members who cannot understand the instructions seek guidance from other staff. QA 2.3.2
Acorn Child Care Centres
Policies and Procedures

- Hazardous products and chemicals are disposed of in strict accordance with the instructions on the labels. QA 2.3.2
- Staff conduct daily safety checks of the building and outdoor play areas for foreign objects, vermin, sharps, possible harmful plants or damaged equipment. Refer to the Service’s Safe Play Spaces Policy. QA 3.1.2
- The Service is treated by a pest controller licensed by the relevant state health authority, when necessary. The Service maintains a record of the chemicals used by the pest controller and the frequency of use. QA 3.1.2
- The Service maintains a record of the products used by the cleaners and the frequency of use. QA 2.3.2
- The Service’s Administration of Medication Policy contains guidelines for parents when bringing medications into the Service, and for the staff handling and storing these medications. QA 2.1.1, 2.3.2
- Any item brought into the Service is checked by educators to ensure it does not pose any danger to children, and any identified risk discussed with the family to ensure they are aware of the danger and why the item cannot be left at the Service. QA 2.3.2
- Safety plugs are fitted to all low power points. Electrical appliances are inaccessible to children. All electrical appliances are appropriately ‘tested and tagged’ annually. QA 2.3.2
- The Service minimises the use of plastic bags, and these are stored inaccessible to children. When used for soiled clothing, the bags are kept out of reach of children. QA 2.3.2
- The centre is aware of the Education and Care Services National Regulations, 2011 which requires that any child care centre “must not have any plants accessible to children that are poisonous or otherwise pose an unacceptable danger to the children”. As such there are no plants at the centre which are considered poisonous or harmful to children. Any new plants or trees are considered for their suitability at a child care centre.
- Poisonous and hazardous plants are identified and action taken in accordance with advice from the Poisons Information Service (Telephone 13 11 26). Educators intentionally teach children of the danger posed by these plants. QA 2.3.3
- In the event of a sharp/dangerous object such as razor or knife blade or broken glass being found at the Service, the item is disposed of safely wrapped into an external bin at the centre. QA 2.2.3
- In the event of a hypodermic needle being found at the Service
  - Educators:
    - Do not attempt to pick up the syringe
    - Remove children from the area and keep them away until the needle has been removed
    - Notify the Nominated Supervisor immediately
  - The Nominated Supervisor will:
    - Call the sharps hotline to find out how and where to safely dispose of the syringe
Acorn Child Care Centres
Policies and Procedures

- Act according to advice from the hotline. QA 2.3.3, 6.3.4

- In the event of vermin being found at the Services:
  - Educators:
    - Do not attempt to pick up or kill the vermin
    - Remove the children from the area and keep them away until the vermin has been removed
    - Notify the Nominated Supervisor immediately
  - The Nominated Supervisor will:
    - Call the contracted pest controller on the emergency list displayed beside the telephone
    - Act according to advice from the pest controller. QA 2.3.3, 6.3.4

- In the event of a snake being found at the Service
  - Educators:
    - Do not attempt to pick up or kill the snake
    - Remove the children from the area and keep them away until the snake has been removed, or the Nominated Supervisor gives direction to the contrary
    - Notify the Nominated Supervisor immediately
  - The Nominated Supervisor will:
    - Call the relevant herpetologist/wildlife authority on the emergency list displayed beside the telephone
    - Act according to the advice from that authority. QA 2.3.3, 6.3.4

Responsibilities of parents

- To follow the Service's Administration of Medication Policy at all times. In particular, to ensure medication is never left in children’s bags but handed directly to educators.
- To refer to educators all play items being brought into the Service.

Links to other policies

- Administration of Medication
- Cleaning Policy
- Safe Play Spaces Policy
- Supervision Policy

Sources, Further reading and useful websites
Acorn Child Care Centres
Policies and Procedures

- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
- Guide to the National Quality Standard 2011
- Snake Catchers by Areas Queensland. (2013).
- Environment and Resource Management.

**Date(s) Reviewed:** 15/03/2016

**Next Review Date:** 15/04/2017
2.20 Water Safety

Background

Children’s access to clean water for drinking and for washing their hands is important for their health and wellbeing. In addition, access to water play affords children the opportunity for open-ended, exploratory and sensory play which contributes to their development and learning. It also develops environmental awareness.

However, children can drown in as little as 5cm of water. Accordingly, their access to water requires effective management and the highest level of supervision.

Policy statement

This Policy outlines the Service’s approach to water safety so that children remain unharmed and healthy and applies at the Service and during excursions. Safety and supervision of children are the highest priority when children have access to water. The Policy covers hot water, drinking water, hygiene practices with water, and water play. It also includes safe storage of equipment used for water play.

Strategies and practices

- At enrolment, the Service’s Water Safety Policy is explained to parents. QA 6.1.1, 7.3.5
- Families are provided with water safety information including water safety in the home and the availability of learn-to-swim programs in the local community. QA 6.1.3
- Children are closely supervised at all times they are involved in water play or are near water. They are never left alone near water. QA 2.3.1, 2.3.2
- Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) posters are displayed prominently throughout the Service, and where water play is set up. QA 2.3.3
- Educators intentionally teach children about staying safe in and around water. QA 2.3.2
- Educators receive continuing professional development in water safety, and specific water safety issues are discussed in team meetings. QA 7.2.2
- Children have ready access to clean drinking water at all times, and are regularly offered water throughout the day. QA 2.1.1
- The water in troughs and containers used for water play is kept at safe levels for children, and at weights that educators can move or secure according to WHS guidelines for safe lifting. QA 2.1.3
- Children are discouraged from drinking any water used in the play activities. QA 2.1.3, 2.3.2
- All water troughs and containers are emptied and hygienically cleaned at the end of each water play activity, allowed to dry thoroughly to prevent the build-up of potentially harmful bacteria such as mould, and then stored in an area inaccessible to children. QA 2.3.2, 3.1.2
- Educators and children wash and dry their hands after each water play activity to reduce the risk of cross-infection. QA 2.1.3
Acorn Child Care Centres
Policies and Procedures

- Buckets used for cleaning are kept out of children’s reach, emptied immediately after each use and stored in an area inaccessible to children. QA 2.3.2

- The Service’s fences and gates meet regulatory requirements, and educators ensure that items that could be used to scale the fence are kept away from the fence. QA 3.1.1

- The Nominated Supervisor completes an Excursion Risk Management Plan prior to every excursion. As part of the risk assessment, particular attention is focused upon water safety whenever the excursion is near a body of water, and upon supervision implications. QA 2.3.2

- Water for pets is changed regularly, and is inaccessible to children unless accompanied by an educator. QA 2.3.2, 3.1.2

- Parents are asked to provide a spare set of clothing for their child in the event that the child engages in water play and becomes uncomfortably wet. QA 2.1.2

- Water conservation is embedded in the Service’s practices
  - only the amount of water required to undertake programmed water play is used
  - water used in water play is emptied onto gardens
  - water play is discontinued during water restrictions, and the reasons explained to the children
  - educators encourage children to turn taps off to avoid wastage
  - water conservation posters are displayed in bathrooms. QA 3.3.1, 3.3.2

- Educators model and intentionally teach children water conservation, and provide parents with information to continue the Service’s conservation message at home. Refer to the Service’s Environmental Sustainability Policy. QA 3.3.1, 3.3.2

- Adults consume hot drinks in areas not accessed by children, including excursions. QA 2.3.2

- The temperature of hot water accessible to children is maintained at 38 Celsius or below in accordance with the AS 3500.4. Thermostatic valves are tested and serviced annually by a plumber, and this action recorded. QA 2.3.2, 3.1.1

Additional safe practices for babies

- To ensure that babies and toddlers are never left unattended in the bath.

Responsibilities of parents

- To provide a spare set of clothing for their child in the event that the child engages in water play and becomes uncomfortably wet.

- To continue the Service’s water conservation message at home.
Acorn Child Care Centres
Policies and Procedures

Links to other policies

- Animal Policy
- Enrolment and Orientation Policy
- Educational Program Policy
- Environmental Sustainability Policy
- Excursion Policy
- Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy
- Supervision Policy

Sources

- Community Childcare Cooperative. (2010). *Water safety: Sample policy*  
- Early Years Learning Framework 2009.
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011.

Further reading and useful websites

- Childcare Queensland. (2011). *Kids alive do the five* and *Childcare Lesson Plans*  

Date(s) reviewed: 15/03/2016
Next review Date: 15/05/2017
2.21 Safe Play Spaces

Background

Children have the right to be safe. The physical environment plays a critical role in keeping children safe, particularly as they are often unable to identify risks and dangers for themselves. In early education and care services, the buildings, furniture and equipment must meet initial service approval requirements and, after that, be kept safe, clean and well-maintained so that unintentional injuries to children and adults in the service are minimised.

Policy statement

This Policy outlines the roles and responsibilities of the Approved Provider, staff and educators in maintaining a safe and suitable physical environment for children and adults at the Service.

Strategies and practices

- The Service’s building, facilities, furniture and equipment meet licensing requirements and those of all relevant national and state regulatory bodies, local council, and the Building Code of Australia. QA 3.1.1
- Play equipment has been installed strictly according to manufacturers’ recommendations. All fixed equipment meets the Australian/New Zealand Safety Standards, and is well maintained. QA 2.3.2, 3.1.2
- All toys meet Australian Safety Standards, and are age appropriate, well maintained and have non-toxic finishes. QA 2.3.2, 3.1.2
- The Service employs a handyman to repair equipment when necessary. A Maintenance Book is used to record the details of repairs. No item is used after repair until the Nominated Supervisor has checked and approved the repair. QA 2.3.2, 3.1.2
- Educators complete a Open and Close Checklist, twice daily, before the Service opens and closes to ensure the environment is safe for children. Each Friday afternoon the lists are taken to the main office to be filed. QA 2.3.2, 3.1.2
- Should any matter requiring immediate attention be identified during the educators’ checks, educators complete a Hazard Report Form and place it the designated place for the Nominated Supervisor’s immediate attention. QA 3.1.2
- The Service is safe, clean and well maintained. Refer to the Service’s Cleaning Policy. QA 3.1.2
- The Nominated Supervisor conducts a comprehensive Service safety audit every six months, and documents it. This audit covers all play areas, approaches to the Service, outdoor environments, kitchen, laundry and other utility areas, fences and general maintenance items. Any items requiring attention are recorded in the Maintenance Book, and the audit document filed. QA 3.1.2

Additional safe practices for babies

- All equipment (e.g. cots, high chairs, prams) used by babies is regularly cleaned and serviced. QA 2.3.2
Responsibilities of parents

- To ensure their children do not drop items along pathways, halls and entry areas when entering or leaving the Service.
- To ensure that they close the gates and doors securely behind them as they move into and out of the building and rooms.
- To drive slowly and carefully in and around the driveways and car park areas as children may be moving through those spaces with parents.

Links to other policies

- Cleaning Policy
- Dangerous Products, Plants, Vermin and Objects Policy
- Supervision Policy

Sources

- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011.

Further reading and useful websites


Date(s) reviewed: 15/03/2016

Next review Date: 15/05/2017
2.22 Supervision

Background

Effective supervision is critical to the safety and wellbeing of children while they are being educated and cared for at early education and care services, including while on planned excursions. The requirements of effective supervision are detailed in the Early Education and Care National Regulations 2011 and the Guide to the National Quality Standard 2011. They address matters such as the number of educators, their qualifications and experience, their level of involvement with the children, regular checks of the physical environment and risk analysis, and the need for communication between team members.

Policy statement

This Policy details how the Service ensures children are effectively supervised at all times.

Strategies and practices

- The design and layout of the Service, including the entrance, perimeter fence and gates, have been approved under the Building Code of Australia and meet all other regulatory requirements. They enable visual supervision of children at all times without compromising the children’s dignity and rights. QA 3.1.1

- Educators conduct daily safety checks of the building, equipment and general environment, and take any corrective actions necessary (e.g. remove unsafe item) and/or inform the Nominated Supervisor of any matter requiring attention so that a risk assessment can be undertaken). Refer to the Service’s Safe Play Spaces Policy. QA 2.3.2

- All educators employed at the Service possess qualifications which meet or exceed the regulations (e.g. academic, first aid, CPR, asthma and anaphylaxis, working with children check). QA 2.1.4, 4.2.1, 7.1.5

- Educator-to-child ratios comply with regulatory requirements at all times. Educators under 18 years are always supervised. Students and volunteers are never alone with an individual child or group of children. Similarly, a carer working with a child under the Inclusion Support Funding Agreement is not given responsibility for other children. QA 4.1.1

- Children are effectively supervised at all times. The supervision takes into account the number of children, their ages and abilities, the group composition and dynamics, the area of play, and the activity (e.g. water play). Educators are actively involved in children’s play so are able to anticipate hazardous situations and to respond to children who become distressed for any reason. Educators inform other team members if they need to leave the area for any reason (e.g. collect a resource, go to the bathroom). Educators’ rest pauses are taken when it is safe to do so. QA 2.3.1, 4.2.2

- Playtimes:
  - Staff will position themselves in areas of the room or playground which allow for maximum supervision.
  - Age appropriate activities should be placed in areas which maximise supervision and utilise shade (outside).
Acorn Child Care Centres  
**Policies and Procedures**

- When outside staff will position themselves in areas of high activity with at least one staff member a wandering supervisor.

  - **Bathrooms:**
    - Staff will communicate verbally to ensure that all toileting times are fully supervised so that children toilet and hand wash effectively and that the bathroom is used for its intended purpose only.

  - **Mealtimes:**
    - Staff will utilise the servery window to the kitchen to maximise supervision of mealtimes.

  - During staff meetings, educators discuss each other’s experience, knowledge and skills, and the need to support one another to ensure that children are effectively supervised especially during shift changes. Additional educators are employed if the Nominated Supervisor deems it necessary for effective supervision. QA 2.3.1, 4.2.2

  - The Service has systems which ensure that all children are accounted for at all times. However, in the unlikely event that a child cannot be accounted for, the Nominated Supervisor is notified immediately. Refer to the Service’s **Delivery and Collection of Children Policy**. QA 2.3.2

  - Any excursions or routine outing is conducted according to the Service’s **Excursion Policy**. A detailed assessment, including a visit to the proposed site, is conducted and documented, and the result communicated to parents before seeking written parental permission. Only those children who have written permission are included in the excursion. Educator-to-child ratios are maintained, and include educators with current first-aid and CPR qualifications, and asthma and anaphylaxis training. QA 2.3.1, 2.3.2, 4.1.1

  - On arrival each day, parents are asked to communicate any information about their child that will assist the educators to ensure their child’s wellbeing and to support consistency between the child’s experiences at home and at the Service. For the same reasons, parents collecting their child are encouraged to ask educators about their child’s day. QA 6.1.2, 6.1.3, 6.2.1

  - Every child in care in the Service is signed in on arrival, and signed out on departure, using the Kiosk facility on the iPads. If the iPads are not functioning children are signed in/out manually on the form provided. Educators check this sheet once the majority of children have arrived and note any children who are present but not signed in and mark any children in non-attendance absent. QA 2.3.2

  - In the event of an emergency evacuation or lockdown, the Kiosk and rolls are used to ensure all children at the Service are accounted for. Refer to the Service’s **Evacuation and Lockdown Policy**. QA 2.3.2, 2.3.3

  - A child is only released into the care of a parent or an authorised nominee listed in the enrolment form, or to an adult who has been given written authorisation by the parent or authorised nominee. Photo ID is necessary. In the event of an adult without photo ID seeking to collect a child, the Nominated Supervisor will contact the child’s parents to confirm the person’s identity (e.g. by asking the parent who is collecting their child today, and asking them to describe the person). Educators have access to the details of all people authorised to collect children. These details are updated every six months or at any time a parent provides new information. QA 2.3.2

  - A child is never released to anyone under the age of 18. QA 2.3.2
Families need to provide the Service with a copy of any court orders, parenting orders and parenting plans relating to their child or to access to the child. These are kept on the child’s file, and immediately accessible. QA 2.3.2

All visitors are to complete the Students, Volunteers and Visitors Sign-in Sheet. Details to be provided are the date, printed name, company, time in and time out, and to sign. Refer to the Service’s Students, Volunteers and Visitors Policy. QA 2.3.2

Sleeping children are supervised in accordance with the Service’s Sleep and Rest Policy. Sleeping children are always within sight and hearing distance of an educator. The viewing window to the cot room is kept clear of obstruction. Educators enter the sleep room every 10 minutes to closely check each sleeping infant’s breathing and colour, and initial the Sleep and Rest Register. Unwell children are checked more frequently. QA 2.1.2, 2.3.1

Educators follow the Service’s Nappy Change Procedure when changing nappies. Physical contact is always maintained when a child is on the change table. Refer to the Service’s Nappy Change and Toileting Policy. QA 2.3.1, 2.3.2

At the end of each day, educators check all beds and the premises including outdoors and indoors to ensure that no child remains on the premises after the Service closes. In the unlikely event of a child being mistakenly locked in the Service, the Regulatory Authority would be notified within 24 hours. QA 2.3.1

Additional safe practices for babies

- To be vigilant in regularly checking sleeping babies, and in recording the times babies were checked.
- To ensure students adhere to the Service’s policies concerning babies.

Responsibilities of parents

- To sign their child/ren into Kiosk on arrival and.
- To ensure the name and contact details of the authorised nominee(s) listed in the enrolment are current.
- To provide the Service with a copy of any court orders, parenting orders and parenting plans relating to their child or to access to the child.

Links to other policies

- Delivery and Collection of Children Policy
- Educator Professionalism and Ethics Policy
- Evacuation and Lockdown Policy
- Excursion Policy
- Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy
- Interactions with Children Policy
Acorn Child Care Centres
Policies and Procedures

- Nappy Change and Toileting Policy
- Safe Child Spaces Policy
- Sleep and Rest Policy
- Staffing Policy
- Students, Volunteers and Visitors Policy

Sources

- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011.

Further reading and useful websites


Date(s) reviewed:

Next review Date:
2.23 Work Health and Safety Policy

Background

Services have responsibility to protect the health and safety of each individual at all times. A service’s health and safety policies and practices affect an individual’s physical and psychological health and safety.

The Workplace Health and Safety Policy is important not only for children, families and educators but related to every person who enters the service’s premises or uses the service equipment.

Federal, state and territory governments have their own Workplace Health and Safety legislation and regulations, which govern the standards of health and safety in the workplace. Therefore, services must comply with the relevant Workplace Health and Safety.

Policy statement


Strategies and practices

- The services Workplace Health and Safety policy applies to all hazardous chemicals, events, situations, tasks and buildings, equipment, methods, materials, substances, products and vehicles used for transporting children.

- It is understood that there is a shared legal responsibility and accountability between and a commitment by, all persons to implement the services policy, procedures and practices.

- The service has a workplace health and safety officer who handles all workplace health and safety issues, concerns or communication.

- All new staff of the service are orientated with the Workplace Health and Safety policy and procedures during their orientation process.

- All staff are trained in chemical handling and material safety data sheets are kept for all chemical substances in the service.

- The service uses risk management strategies to eliminate or minimise risks from occurring or controlling risks when they arise.

- At the service risks are identified by considering, what is the risk, what is the nature of the risk, what is the history of the risk, probability of the risk occurring in normal conditions, probability of risk occurring in abnormal conditions, history of incidents and emergencies relating to the risk.
Acorn Child Care Centres  
Policies and Procedures

At the service once risks have been identified and assessed they are controlled, minimised or eliminated using the step by step hierarchy to controlling risks. (see risk minimisation plan).

- The Service’s building, facilities, furniture and equipment meet licensing requirements and those of all relevant national and state regulatory bodies, local council, and the Building Code of Australia. QA 3.1.1

- Play equipment has been installed strictly according to manufacturers’ recommendations. All fixed equipment meets the Australian/New Zealand Safety Standards, and is well maintained. QA 2.3.2, 3.1.2

- All toys meet Australian Safety Standards, and are age appropriate, well maintained and have non-toxic finishes. QA 2.3.2, 3.1.2

- The Service employs a handyman to repair equipment when necessary. A Maintenance Book is used to record the details of repairs. No item is used after repair until the Nominated Supervisor has checked and approved the repair. QA 2.3.2, 3.1.2

- Educators complete a Open and Close Checklist, twice daily, before the Service opens and closes to ensure the environment is safe for children. Each Friday afternoon the lists are taken to the main office to be filed. QA 2.3.2, 3.1.2

- Should any matter requiring immediate attention be identified during the educators’ checks, educators complete a Hazard Report Form and place it the designated place for the Nominated Supervisor’s immediate attention. QA 3.1.2

- The Service is safe, clean and well maintained. Refer to the Service’s Cleaning Policy. QA 3.1.2

- The Nominated Supervisor ensures a comprehensive Service safety audit is conducted every three months, and documents it. This audit covers all play areas, approaches to the Service, outdoor environments, kitchen, laundry and other utility areas, fences and general maintenance items. Any items requiring attention are recorded in the Maintenance Book, and the audit document filed. QA 3.1.2

- The Nominated Supervisor ensures an emergency and evacuation drill is conducted every three months, and records the process.

- Every two years, the Service engages an external expert to conduct a compliance and safety audit of every aspect of the Service’s building and facilities. QA 2.3.2, 3.1.2
Additional safe practices for babies

- All equipment (e.g. cots, high chairs, prams) used by babies is regularly cleaned and serviced and meets Australian Standards. QA 2.3.2

Responsibilities of parents

- To ensure their children do not drop items along pathways, halls and entry areas when entering or leaving the Service.
- To ensure that they close the gates and doors securely behind them as they move into and out of the building and rooms.
- To drive slowly and carefully in and around the driveways and car park areas as children may be moving through those spaces with parents

Links to other policies

- Cleaning Policy
- Safe play spaces Policy
- Dangerous Products, Plants, Vermin and Objects Policy
- Supervision Policy

Sources

- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011.
- AS/NZS Occupational health and safety systems
- Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004
- Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2007

Further reading and useful websites

- Safework Australia- http://www.worksafeqld.gov.au

Policy review

The Service encourages staff and parents to be actively involved in the annual review of each of its policies and procedures. In addition, the Service will accommodate any new legislative changes as they occur and any issues identified as part the
Acorn Child Care Centres
Policies and Procedures

Service’s commitment to quality improvement. The Service consults with relevant recognised authorities as part of the annual review to ensure the policy contents are consistent with current research and contemporary views on best practice.

Date(s) reviewed: 12/05/2016

Next review Date: 15/05/2017
3 Child Protection and Risk Management

Background

Child abuse and neglect consist of an act of commission or omission that endangers or impairs a child's physical or emotional health and development.

Given the high number of children in early childhood education and care services, it is highly likely that staff will encounter a child they suspect has experienced harm or neglect. It is also possible that staff may encounter a child they suspect has been harmed by a person at the Service.

In Queensland, legislation requires staff to report suspected harm to a child by a person in the Service. While staff are not mandated to report suspected harm to children that occurs to the child while the child is not at the Service, they are encouraged to uphold the wellbeing and safety of children at all times by seeking immediate support from appropriate staff within the Service and/or from the Department of Child Safety/Police.

Policy statement

The Service seeks to create a safe and supportive environment for the children who attend the Service and for their families. To this end, the Service ensures that processes are in place to identify harm or suspected harm to a child and that the Service’s response is lawful, professional and immediate. The Policy is informed by the Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian’s Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy Tool (n.d.).

Strategies and practices

- The Service is committed to providing a safe and supportive environment for children where adults treat them with understanding, dignity and respect at all times, and listen to their concerns. The Service’s Statement of Commitment is displayed in the foyer. QA 4.2.1, 5.2.3

- The Service has developed and implemented its own Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy for interactions with children. The Code applies to staff, educators, students, volunteers and visitors to the Service, and each is given a copy of the Code. QA 2.3.4

- This Policy is explained to all staff, educators, students and volunteers before they commence at the Service. At that time, they are given the opportunity to ask any questions needed to clarify their understanding. They are then asked to sign the Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy. The original signed is kept on the staff file and a signed copy is returned to the staff member. QA 2.3.4, 7.1.2

- Child protection and child safety information is displayed on notice boards, and brochures are made available to parents, staff and other interested parties. QA 2.3.4

- The Service has clear procedures for recruiting, selecting and screening suitably qualified and experienced staff. No one commences at the Service without producing a current Blue Card or evidence that an application for the card is currently being processed. Staff who have not applied through the Service, but through another organisation, must complete an Authorisation to Confirm a Valid Card/Application. The Nominated Supervisor maintains a Staff Summary Sheet which clearly indicates the expiry dates of Blue Cards for all staff members. Staff are informed that it is an offence not to notify the Service of any change in the criminal history or police
information they have previously provided to the Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian in obtaining their card. QA 4.2.1, 7.1.5, 7.3.2

- The Nominated Supervisor interviews all students and volunteers before agreeing to their placement at the Service, and records their Blue Card details. Students and volunteers are informed that it is an offence not to notify the Service of any change in the criminal history or police information they have previously provided to the Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian in obtaining their card. QA 2.3.4, 7.1.2, 7.1.5

- The Service provides educators with ongoing professional development in child protection, and the topic is regularly discussed in team meetings. Each year, Child Safety Officers from the Department of Communities (Child Safety Services) and/or Police Officers are invited to speak at team meetings on issues relating to child protection. Information provided includes Abuse – Types and Indicators. Training needs are documented in a Training and Study Record – Educator, and monitored. QA 2.3.4, 7.2.2

- Any suspicion of harm to a child occurring at the Service is to be immediately reported to the Nominated Supervisor. If the Nominated Supervisor is the subject of the complaint, the report may be made to the Approved Provider or directly to the Regulatory Authority. The Nominated Supervisor/Approved Provider will report the incident to the Regulatory Authority. Reasonable grounds for suspecting harm include:
  - You witness the harm
  - A child tells you they have been harmed by someone at the Service
  - Someone else (e.g. another child, staff member, parent, outside person) tells you that a child has been harmed by a person at the Service. QA 2.3.4

- The Service has developed Harm – Guidelines for Handling Disclosure to help staff, educators, students and volunteers, when faced with a disclosure from a child, to respond professionally and in the best interests of the child. Any disclosure of harm must be immediately reported to the Nominated Supervisor who will ensure that correct procedures are followed. QA 2.3.4

- Staff who suspect that a child may be experiencing harm or neglect when not at the Service are to follow the Harm – Guidelines for Handling a Suspicion. These Guidelines include immediately informing the Nominated Supervisor, completing an Expression of Concern Form, and maintaining confidentiality as detailed in the Service’s Confidentiality Agreement. QA 2.3.4

- Educators intentionally teach children Protective Behaviours, after informing parents. QA 2.3.4

- The Service involves staff, educators and parents when compiling the Risk Management Plan for High Risk Activity or Special Event. QA 2.3.4

- Any breach of this Child Protection and Risk Management Policy – action or inaction – will be investigated according to the Breach Management Plan. QA 2.3.4

- The Service’s Child Protection and Risk Management Strategy Policy is reviewed at least annually. As part of the annual review, a Child Protection and Risk Management Strategy – Survey is distributed to staff, educators and parents for their contributions. QA 7.2.3
Additional safe practices for babies

- No additional practices required.

Responsibilities of parents

- To report any suspicion of harm to a child occurring at the Service to the Nominated Supervisor immediately.

Links to other policies

- Educator Professionalism and Ethics Policy
- Privacy and Confidentiality Policy
- Relationships with Children Policy
- Staffing Policy
- Students, Volunteers and Visitors Policy

Sources

- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011.
- Guide to the National Quality Standard 2011
Further reading and useful websites


**Date(s) reviewed:** 15/03/2016

**Next review Date:** 15/04/2017
3.1 Safeguarding Children and Young People

Statement of Commitment

Acorn fundamentally believes that all children have the right to a life that is free from harm. Acorn is committed to providing outstanding care which nurtures and realises the potential within each child in an environment that is free from any type of abuse.

All educators at our service are aware of the obligations under the law in regards to the welfare of children and al all times up hold their obligation. In addition to this, Acorn provides yearly training to all educators on child protection issues to ensure that, in an event a child has suffered abuse; the service can act quickly in the best interests of the child. Acorn Child Care Centre has policies and procedures in place to effectively address the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people who attend our centre.

Code of Conduct in relation to Child Protection

Our service upholds the following code of conduct in relation to employers, educators, volunteers, students, families and children:

For Employers:

- Ensure that all employees are:
- Clear about their roles and responsibilities regarding child protection.
- Aware of their obligations to immediately report suspected abuse to the Director.
- Aware of the indicators when a child may be at risk of harm or significant harm.
- Provided training and development in the recognition and reporting of abuse and harm.
- Provided with the reporting procedures and professional standards for care and protection work.
- Able to provide relevant information to conduct a Working with Children Check. This applies to everyone that will be involved with service operations.
- Aware and up to date on all policies that are currently being reviewed on a regular basis. And further that, and any changes that have been made to these policies are communicated to staff and are acknowledged by staff.
- Have access to relevant acts, regulations, standards and other resources in order for them to complete their obligations.

For Educators:

- Report any situation where they suspect a child is at risk of significant harm to the Director immediately.
- Promote the welfare, safety and wellbeing of children at the service.
- Have an awareness of referral agencies for families where concerns of harm do not meet the significant harm threshold.
- Be aware of obligations as per the Mandatory Reporter Guide.
- Assist in supporting children and families when liaising with relevant government agencies.
- Be aware they must refrain from developing close personal relationships with children out of the carer/child relationship.
- Be aware that abusive, derogatory or offensive language is not acceptable at any times.
- Individual or groups of children are not permitted to be withdrawn into areas where they are not visible by other staff members, or taken into rooms that can be locked.
Acorn Child Care Centres
Policies and Procedures

- Students and volunteers are to be directed to ensure that they are never alone with children in a direct, un-supervised capacity.
- While there is a child on the premises of the service, there is to be a minimum of two staff on the premises. It is the responsibility of the Director to ensure that rosters meet this requirement and it is the responsibility of all staff to ensure this requirement is upheld.
- Parents should be made aware that it may be necessary to physically restrain an out of control child who may be compromising the safety of him/herself, other children or staff, or to isolate the child from other children for short periods of time.
- Up-to-date developmental records on all children are to be kept. Relevant conversations with parents that may relate to a child’s behaviour change (e.g. parents separating, new baby in the family, moving house etc.) are to be noted in the developmental record.
- Staff should ensure they are aware of the individual’s child stage of development and particular needs and plan the curriculum accordingly.
- Staff should work with parents to develop and record appropriate procedures for managing toilet practices and behaviour management.

For Families:

- Treat all children at the service equally and respectfully.
- Report any suspicions to the most senior person on duty when at the service.
- Respect the rights, dignity and worth of every person, regardless of their abilities, gender, religion or cultural background.
- Respect the decision of employees and teach children to do likewise.
- Focus on encouraging children’s efforts and learning.
- Support all efforts to remove any form of abuse in the service and encourage a safe and supportive service environment.

For Children:

- Children are encouraged and instructed to:
  - Respect other children and adults at the service.
  - Cooperate and will follow our classroom rules.
  - Listen to educators’ instructions and follow them.
  - Control their temper and talk to an educator if they are feeling upset.
  - Have a say in what activities they are involved in.
  - Speak to an educator if they are worried or concerned about something.
  - Not bully other children.
  - Tell an educator if they see a child bullying another child.

Conduct which is considered unacceptable:

- Engaging in rough play
- Cuddle, Kiss, hug or touch children in an inappropriate and/or culturally insensitive manner
- Make negative, violent or sexually suggestive comments to a child, even as a joke
Discipline children by way of: emotional abuse, physical abuse, verbal abuse, favouritism, swearing or reference to cultural/ethical differences.
Acorn Child Care Procedure for Reporting Suspected Abuse

**Observation/Suspicion of Abuse Occurs**
All concerns should be acted upon immediately. It is not up to an individual or an organisation to decide whether abuse has taken place or not.

**Staff member notifies Director**
Director is to ensure the allegations have been recorded. Allegations are recorded on the Acorn Child Care Concern Report. The Director will assess the report and clarify the details to ensure the allegations are clear and concise.

**Appropriate Authorities are contacted and notified**
Child Safety – Central Queensland Division
1300 703 762
Department of Early Childhood – Maryborough
07 4122 0814
Qld Police Services
000

If an allegation is made against another staff member.

Staff member will be stood down from their position immediately on full pay.

Investigation of allegation occurs by the Director and is reported to the appropriate authorities.

Reinstatement only occurs after all allegations have been dismissed or cleared to the satisfaction of the Director and any Authorities.

If allegations have been confirmed, the staff member will be dismissed from their position immediately.
## Recruitment and Selection Process

| Identify the need to fulfil a position | Identify the role  
Establish the requirements for the roll  
Identify minimum education requirements |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| Advertising the Position             | Include a clear statement about the service and their safe work practices.  
Include details about the service  
Provide a brief description about the position and working conditions, contact name and contact details |
| Selection Process                     | Review applicants received  
Check the references of applicants we are interested in interviewing |
| Interview Process                     | Check Blue Card  
2hr on the floor trial supervised by a qualified educator  
Feedback from the Educator is given to Director  
Interview with Directors of both centres and Centre Owner  
Testing  
Final interview which entails job offer, description, policies and procedures and expectations of staff, grievance procedure and probation period. |
| Acceptance of Position                | Signing of Contact  
Signing of Job Description  
Signing of Policies and Procedure Agreement  
Signing of Code of Conduct  
Issue of Uniforms (or purchasing arranged)  
Issue of relevant staff forms for completion  
Issue of Blue Card Authorisation Form for completion to confirm current blue card.  
Or Issue of Blue Card Application for Paid Employee |
| Induction                             | Staff Orientation  
(form completed)  
JP signed copies of Qualifications are provided to centre  
Staff forms are provided to centre |
### Minimum Referee Check Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name of the Referee</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Are you related to the applicant?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Is the applicant a personal friend?</td>
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<tr>
<td>What capacity was the applicant employed with your company and how long were they employed?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>What duties did they perform?</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why did they resign from the position?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Would you employee this person again?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you directly supervised the applicant working with the children?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To your knowledge has the applicant ever acted inappropriately around young people or children?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How would you describe the applicant’s presentation and attitude each day for work?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>What are the applicant’s strengths?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What would you say are the applicant’s weaknesses?</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is there anything else you would like to add about the applicant?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Questions:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Minimum Interview Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Applicants name</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tell us a little bit about yourself</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do you know about Acorn?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why did you apply for this position?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are your qualifications?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>What do you feel this position involves?</td>
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<tr>
<td>When working with children how do you ensure the safety of the children is being upheld?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>What would you do if you saw a staff member mistreating a child in their care?</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you have a criminal history?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Are you aware of Child Protection and your duties in relation to this?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other questions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Acorn Child Care Centres
Policies and Procedures

Child Protection Risk Management Strategy in relation to Concerns of Abuse/Neglect

Mandatory Reporting Requirements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jurisdiction</th>
<th>Who is mandated to notify</th>
<th>What is to be notified</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Qld</td>
<td>Doctors, nurses</td>
<td>Aware of or reasonably suspects a child has, is or is likely to suffer harm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Officers employed to implement the Act 1999: all staff of residential care services</td>
<td>Reasonable suspicion of abuse or neglect to a child in residential care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Educational staff (teaching and non-teaching staff in government and non-government schools)</td>
<td>Aware of or reasonably suspects sexual abuse of a child under 18 by an employee of the school</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Definition of Abuse / Neglect

"Abuse or neglect" means –

(a) sexual abuse; or

(b) physical or emotional injury or other abuse, or neglect, to the extent that:

(i) the injured, abused or neglected person has suffered, or is likely to suffer, physical or psychological harm detrimental to the person's wellbeing; or

(ii) the injured, abused or neglected person's physical or psychological development is in jeopardy.

Suspicion of harm

You can suspect harm if:

- You are concerned by significant changes in behaviour or the presence of new unexplained and suspicious injuries.

Disclosure of harm

A disclosure of harm occurs when someone, including a child, tells you about harm that has happened or is likely to happen.

Disclosures of harm may start with:

- “I think I saw . . . . . ”
- “Somebody told me that . . . . . ”
Procedures for receiving a disclosure of harm

When receiving a disclosure of harm:

- Remain calm and find a private place to talk.
- Don’t promise that you’ll keep a secret; tell them they have done the right thing in telling you but that you’ll need to tell someone who can help keep them safe.
- Only ask enough questions to confirm the need to report the matter; probing questions could cause distress, confusion and interfere with any later enquiries.
- Do not attempt to conduct your own investigation or mediate an outcome between the parties involved.

Reporting guidelines for disclosures or suspicions of harm

- Following are the actions our organisation will take immediately following a disclosure or suspicion of harm.
- Documenting a suspicion of harm
- If you or others have concerns about the safety of a child, record your concerns in a non-judgmental and accurate manner as soon as possible. If a parent explains a noticeable mark on a child, record your own observations as well as accurate details of the conversation. If you see unsafe or harmful actions towards a child in your care, intervene immediately, provided it is safe to do so. If it is unsafe, call the police for assistance.

Documenting a disclosure of harm

Complete an Acorn Child Care Concern Report form or record the details as soon as possible so that they are accurately captured. Include:

- Time, date and place of the disclosure
- ‘Word for word’ what happened and what was said, including anything you said and any actions that have been taken.
- Date of report and signature.

If you need to take notes as the person is telling you, explain that you are taking a record in case any later enquiry occurs.

Reporting the disclosure or suspicion of harm to authorities

The service will not conduct its own enquiries in relation to the disclosure or suspicion of harm or try to come to an agreement between the parties involved. The person who receives a disclosure or suspects harm is to contact the Director who will follow the Procedure for Reporting Suspected Abuse.

Report the matter to:

Child Safety – Central Queensland – 1300 703 762 or Call 000 FOR EMERGENCIES
Our service recognises the *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* which states the following:

A mandatory reporter who forms the belief on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection must report to the Director that belief and the reasonable grounds for it as soon as practicable:

(a) after forming the belief; and

(b) after each occasion on which he or she becomes aware of any further reasonable grounds for the belief.

A belief is a belief on reasonable grounds if a reasonable person practising the profession or carrying out the duties of the office, position or employment, as the case requires, would have formed the belief on those grounds.

**Actions following a disclosure of harm**

- Support and counselling will be offered to all parties involved.
- If the person responding to the allegation of harm is a member of the organisation, they will be stood down immediately from their position with full pay, whilst investigations take place.

**Procedures to minimise harm to children and young people**

Our organisation works to minimise harm to children and young people by acting in a manner that supports their interests and wellbeing, by:

- Making sure that children know that it is their right to feel safe at all times.
- Teaching them about acceptable and unacceptable behaviour in general.
- Letting them know who is and who is not an employee in the organisation.
- Allowing them to be a part of decision-making processes.
- Making sure they are safe by monitoring their activities and ensuring their environment meets all safety requirements.
- Taking anything a child or young person says seriously and following up their concerns.
- Letting them know there is no secret too awful, no story too terrible, that they can’t share with someone they trust.
- Teaching them about appropriate and inappropriate contact in a manner appropriate to their age and level of understanding.
- Teaching children and young people to say ‘no’ to anything that makes them feel unsafe.
- Encouraging them to tell educators of any suspicious activities or people.
- Listening to children and young people and letting them know that educators are available for them if they have any concerns.

**How can abuse and neglect be recognised?**

Behavioural or physical signs which assist in recognising child abuse are known as indicators. A single indicator can be as important an indicator as the presence of several indicators. A child’s behaviour is likely to be affected if he/she is under stress. There can be many causes of stress, including child abuse, and it is important to find out specifically what is causing the stress.
General indicators of abuse and neglect

- Marked delay between injury and seeking medical assistance.
- History of injury.
- The child gives some indication that the injury did not occur as stated.
- The child tells you someone hurt him/her.
- The child tells you about someone he/she knows who has been hurt.
- Someone (relative, friend, acquaintance, sibling) tells you that the child may have been abused.

Physical Abuse

Physical indicators include:

- Bruises, burns, sprains, dislocations, bites, cuts, welts.
- Bruising or marks that may show the shape of an object.
- Fractured bones, especially in an infant where a fracture is unlikely to occur accidentally.
- Poisoning.
- Internal injuries.
- Explanations are not consistent with the injury.

Possible behavioural indicators include:

- Showing wariness or distrust of adults.
- Wearing long sleeved clothes on hot days (to hide bruising or other injury).
- Demonstrating fear of parents and of going home.
- Becoming fearful when other children cry or shout.
- Being excessively friendly to strangers.
- Being very passive and compliant.

Indicators of physical abuse in parents and caregivers include:

- Direct admissions from parents about fear of hurting their children.
- Family history of violence.
- History of their own maltreatment as a child.
- Repeated visits for medical assistance.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse is not usually identified through physical indicators. Often the first sign is when a child tells someone they trust that they have been sexually abused. However the presence of sexually transmitted diseases, pregnancy, or vaginal or anal bleeding or discharge may indicate sexual abuse.

One or more of these behavioural and physical indicators may be present:

- Child telling someone that sexual abuse has occurred.
- Complaining of headaches or stomach pains.
- Experiencing problems with schoolwork.
- Displaying sexual behaviour or knowledge which is unusual for the child's age.
Acorn Child Care Centres
Policies and Procedures

- Showing behaviour such as frequent rocking, sucking and biting.
- Experiencing difficulties in sleeping.
- Having difficulties in relating to adults and peers.
- Self destructive behaviour.
- Regression in development achievements.
- Child being in contact with a suspected or known perpetrator of sexual assault.
- Bleeding from the vagina or anus.
- Injuries such as tears to the genitalia.

**Indicators of sexual abuse in parents, caregivers or anyone else associated with the child:**

- Exposing the child to sexual behaviours of others.
- Suspected or charged with child sexual abuse.
- Inappropriate jealousy regarding age appropriate development of independence from the family.
- Coercing the child to engage in sexual behaviour with other children.
- Verbal threats of sexual abuse.
- Exposing the child to pornography.

**Emotional Abuse**

There are few physical indicators, although emotional abuse may cause delays in emotional, mental, or even physical development.

**Possible behavioural indicators include:**

- Displaying low self esteem.
- Tending to be withdrawn, passive, tearful.
- Inability to value others.
- Lack of trust in people and expectations.
- Displaying aggressive or demanding behaviour.
- Being highly anxious.
- Showing delayed speech.
- Acting like a much younger child (e.g. soiling or wetting pants).
- Displaying difficulties in relating to adults and peers.

**Indicators of emotional abuse in parents and caregivers:**

- Constant criticism, belittling, teasing of a child or ignoring or withholding praise and affection
- Excessive or unreasonable demands
- Persistent hostility, severe verbal abuse, rejection and scape-goating
- Belief that a particular child is bad or ‘evil’
- Using inappropriate physical or social isolation as punishment
- Exposure to domestic violence
Neglect

Physical indicators include:

- Frequent hunger
- Malnutrition
- Poor hygiene
- Inappropriate clothing (e.g. summer clothes in winter)
- Left unsupervised for long periods
- Medical needs not attended to
- Abandoned by parents

Possible behavioural indicators include:

- Stealing food
- Often being tired, falling asleep
- Abusing alcohol or drugs
- Displaying aggressive behaviour
- Not getting on well with peers
- Extreme longing for adult affection
- Acute separation anxiety
- Self-comforting behaviours (e.g. rocking, sucking)
- Delay in developmental milestones
- Untreated physical problems

Indicators of neglect in parents and caregivers:

- Failure to provide adequate food, shelter, clothing, medical attention, hygiene or leaving the child inappropriately without supervision
- Inability to respond emotionally to the child
- Child abandonment
- Depriving or withholding physical contact
- Failure to provide psychological nurturing
- Treating one child differently to others

The presence of indicators such as those described may alert us to the possibility that a child is being abused. It is important that anyone who has concerns that a child or young person is in need of protection contacts a local Child Protection Service for assistance and advice.

Child Protection Risk Management Strategy: Managing Breaches

This plan outlines the steps to be taken following a breach of the child and youth risk management strategy in order to address the breach in a fair and supportive manner.
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**Policies and Procedures**

**Definition**

A breach is any action or inaction by any member of the organisation, including children and young people, that fails to comply with any part of the strategy. This includes any breach in relation to:

- Statement of commitment to the safety and wellbeing of children and the protection of children from harm.
- Code of conduct for interacting with children and young people.
- Procedures for recruiting, selecting, training and managing paid employees and volunteers.
- Policies and procedures for handling disclosures or suspicions of harm, including reporting guidelines.
- Policies and procedures for implementing and reviewing the children and youth risk management strategy and maintaining an employee register.
- Risk management plans for high risk activities and special events.
- Strategies for communication and support.

**Processes to manage a breach of the child and youth risk management strategy**

Breaches will be managed in a fair, unbiased and supportive manner. The following will occur:

- An Acorn Child Care Centre Investigation of Concerns/Complaint form will be completed.
- All people concerned will be advised of the process.
- All people concerned will be able to provide their version of events.
- The details of the breach, including the versions of all parties and the outcome will be recorded.
- Matters discussed in relation to the breach will be kept confidential and an appropriate outcome will be decided.

**Suitable outcomes for breaches**

Depending on the nature of the breach, outcomes may include:

- Emphasising the relevant component of the child and youth risk management strategy, for example, the code of conduct.
- Providing closer supervision.
- Further education and training.
- Mediating between those involved in the incident (where appropriate).
- Disciplinary procedures if necessary.
- Reviewing current policies and procedures and developing new policies and procedures if necessary.

**Date(s) reviewed:** 15/03/2016

**Next review Date:** 15/04/2017
I, ________________________________ (full name) have read and understand the Safe Guarding Children and Young People Policy and agree to abide by its provisions. I am aware of the responsibilities in relation to Child Protection and the regulations. I acknowledge that yearly training will be expected as part of my contract and will be undertaken by myself as provided by the employee.

Signed

______________________________

Date

______________________________

Witness

______________________________

Name

______________________________

Position

______________________________

Date

______________________________

A copy of this declaration will be kept on your staff file.
Acorn Child Care Centres
Policies and Procedures

4 Staffing

Background

Legislation sets out specific requirements for the staffing arrangements for approved centre-based services. These requirements cover the number of staff, their qualifications and experience.

Particularly noteworthy are the requirements for the Responsible Person. A Responsible Person must be on the premises at all times the service is educating and caring for children. The Responsible Person can be (a) the Approved Provider if this is an individual or, if the Approved Provider is an organisation or company, then someone with management and control of the service, (b) the Nominated Supervisor of the service or (c) an Educator with a Supervisor’s Certificate and who has been placed in day-to-day charge of the service.

Policy statement

This Policy outlines the steps the Service takes to ensure it complies with regulatory staffing requirements at all times. In particular, it details how the Service ensures a Responsible Person is on the premises at all times, and how the identity of that person is made known to staff, parents and visitors.

Strategies and practices

- All employees of Acorn Child Care Centre must comply with the requirements of the Education and Care Services National Regulations, 2011, whereby staff must:
  - Hold appropriate qualifications.
  - Be of good character
  - Have no criminal convictions
  - Hold a current first aid certificate
  - Hold a current Blue Care or are currently being processed by the Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian.

- Appointed staff must give certified copies of their qualifications and other required certificates to the director.

- Acorn Child Care Centre is an equal opportunity employer.

- Permanent staff will first work a 6-month probationary period. The employer may then confirm a permanent position.

- Permanent fulltime, permanent part-time and casual staff are all employed under the state “Child Care Industry” award. A copy of the award is available in the staff room and may be copied as needed.

- The Approved Provider of the Service has appointed a Nominated Supervisor to ensure: the Service’s operations meet the regulatory requirements at all times; consistency and continuity in practice; and, high quality care and education are provided to the children. QA 7.1.4

- The Nominated Supervisor is also the Responsible Person whenever on the premises. QA 7.3.2
The Nominated Supervisor develops rosters in accordance with the availability of Responsible Persons, service operation and attendance patterns of the children. QA 7.3.2

At any time the Nominated Supervisor is not on the premises, a Responsible Person who is physically present is placed in charge of the Service’s day-to-day operations only (i.e. the Responsible Person does not assume all of the responsibilities of the Nominated Supervisor). This acceptance of the additional responsibilities by the replacement is a standing arrangement agreed to in writing by the replacement, and details are maintained in the staff file. QA 4.2.1

Whenever leaving the premises, the Nominated Supervisor informs the substitute Responsible Person, and displays the person’s name at reception. On return, the Nominated Supervisor informs the substitute and removes the sign. QA 7.3.1, 7.3.2

The details of the Responsible Person at any given time are clearly displayed in the main entrance of the Service. QA 7.1.1

The Approved Provider ensures that:

- Nominated Supervisors and Certified Supervisors have a clear understanding of the role of the Responsible Person
- The Responsible Person is appropriately skilled and qualified
- The Responsible Person is physically present at the Service. A substitute for the Responsible Person will be present where a Waiver is in place. QA 4.2.1, 4.2.2, 4.2.3, 7.2.1

The Service has an Educational Leader who oversees the development and implementation of the Service’s educational program. QA 7.1.4

The Service’s Policies and Procedures are clear and delineate its practices. QA 7.3.5

Before commencing at the Service, all educators, staff, students and volunteers are given an orientation wherein they are made purposefully aware of the Service’s Policies and Procedures, and of their responsibilities under them. QA 7.1.2

All educators, staff, students and volunteers sign the Service’s Confidentiality Agreement and Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy and Agreement to Comply with Centre Policies Form.

The Service is cognizant of the requirements – including transitional and saving provisions – for staffing in the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 and meets or exceeds these at all times it provides education and care to children. These provisions include:

- Educator-to-child ratios
- Educator formal qualifications
- First Aid, anaphylaxis and Emergency Asthma Management
- Rest periods
Acorn Child Care Centres
Policies and Procedures

- Educators’ rest pauses and short absences
- The Early Childhood Teacher
  - The Early Childhood Teacher’s rest pauses and short absences (including those during rest periods). QA 7.1.4

- The Service is aware of the need for heightened supervision above and beyond the educator-to-child ratios during certain activities (e.g. water play, babies sleeping, nappy change and toileting, mealtimes, unknown persons in the Service), and this is accepted by Service educators as standard practice. Refer to the Service’s Supervision Policy. QA 2.3.1

- Educators under 18 years and students and volunteers are never alone with children. Refer to the Service’s Students, Volunteers and Visitors Policy. QA 2.3.1

- The Service maintains a relief educators list and, wherever possible, engages educators on this list to replace absentees. QA 4.1.1, 7.1.3

- All group leaders will receive approximately two hours per week of paid time for the purpose of working on their group program. This time will be allocated by the centre director and will be convenient to both the centre and group leader.

- The centre is required to keep observations and portfolios for individual children in care. Acorn is currently utilising online programming for records to be maintained and updated electronically. Individual portfolios are available online for families to access once written consent has been given. Acorn’s educational programs for children are guided by the Early Years Learning Framework and the Queensland Kindergarten Learning guidelines.

- Acorn has two specific programs, the kindergarten program and a full music immersion program.

- The Service conducts regular team meetings where educators become familiar with each other’s strengths and weaknesses and learn how to work best as a team to achieve quality education and care outcomes for children. Refer to the Service’s Educator Professionalism and Ethics Policy. QA 4.2.2, 4.2.3, 7.2.3

- Acorn recognises the benefits of staff training and is committed to providing opportunities for training and development to all staff. It is desirable that Acorn be recognised as a pro-training company with training being one of the advantages of employment at our centre.

- Amount to be spent on staff training. It is the intention of Acorn to spend the equivalent of 1% of wage costs for the purpose of staff training.

- Breadth of Training Opportunities. The directors and administration will actively investigate training opportunities and resources and will also consider training events brought to their attention by staff. Directors are encouraged to establish a training diary which allows for a training plan amongst staff for the coming 12 months.
Acorn Child Care Centres
Policies and Procedures

- **Distribution of Training Expenditure.** Acorn intends to provide training opportunities equally amongst all staff. It will be the role of centre directors to ensure all staff have equal access to training - bearing in mind that at times certain training opportunities will provide benefit to staff in a specific role.

- **Staff Contribution to Training.** There will be times when high cost training events would unfairly advantage the few who are able to attend. At such times staff may be required to share the training costs. All staff who have attended training will be requested to submit a one-page report summarising the key points learned and changes they will make as a result of the training.

- **Method of Accounting for Training.** The cost of training will include direct attendance fees, travel and accommodation (where it is paid by Acorn), the wages received by a staff member while attending a training session and any resource purchased to facilitate staff training.

- **Reporting of Training Expenditure.** The amount of training spent as a % of wage costs will be tabled at the Acorn Executive Meeting.

- The Nominated Supervisor ensures all educators are familiar with current child protection law and its application to their work at the Service, and acutely aware of their responsibilities under this legislation. Refer to the Service’s *Child Protection and Risk Management Policy*. QA 2.3.4

- The Nominated Supervisor maintains a **Staff Summary Sheet** (e.g. educational and other qualifications, and currency)

- All educators use the timesheet of the Wage Lock system to record their arrival and departure times, and their lunch breaks. They use the Rest Pause Sheet displayed in the indoor play space to record their rest pauses. QA 7.3.2

- The Service expects its educators to be diligent and attentive to the children and the children’s wellbeing at all times. As team members, they are also expected to be supportive of their colleagues and of students and volunteers. QA 2.3.1, 4.2.2, 4.2.3

**Additional safe practices for babies**

- To prioritise continuity and consistency when rostering educators working with babies.

**Responsibilities of parents**

- To be aware of who is the Responsible Person at that time they are in the Service.

**Links to other policies**

- Child Protection and Risk Management Policy
- Educator Professionalism and Ethics Policy
- Students, Volunteers and Visitors Policy
- Supervision Policy
Sources

- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011.

Further reading and useful websites

- Education and Early Childhood Services Registration and Standards Board of South Australia http://www.eecsrsb.sa.gov.au/
The Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian (Queensland) –

Date(s) reviewed: 15/03/2016
Next review Date: 15/05/2017
4.1 Educator Performance and Ethics

Background

Research findings support the claim that educators largely determine the quality of education and care provided to children enrolled in early education and care services. The National Quality Framework requires educators have a positive working with children check, be suitably experienced and hold the appropriate formal educational qualifications. They also need additional qualifications in first aid, CPR, asthma management and anaphylaxis training.

Educators are expected to comply with all relevant regulatory requirements, standards and guidelines, the service’s policies and procedures, relate well to children, parents, other team members, multi-disciplinary professionals who support children enrolled at the service, and members of the community. Above all, they are expected to be professional and ethical and to maintain confidentiality.

Policy statement

This Policy details how the service ensures it complies with regulatory requirements at all times and that its educators possess the formal and informal attributes to deliver high quality education and care to children.

Strategies and practices

The Service meets regulatory requirements for educators at all times (e.g. educator-to-child ratios, qualifications, working with children check, first aid). QA 4.1.1

- The Nominated Supervisor maintains a Staff Summary Sheet which details the qualifications and training (e.g. anaphylaxis, asthma, working with children check), and their currency, of all educators employed at the Service. These details are entered onto the Sheet when educators present certified documents. QA 4.1.1, 7.1.4, 7.2.2

- All educators undergo a comprehensive Educator Orientation. During these orientations, the Nominated Supervisor explains the Service’s philosophy, policies and procedures and position descriptions. Further, the Nominated Supervisor explains the expectation that they work within these parameters at all times. QA 7.1.2

- The Nominated Supervisor ensures that all educators are clear about their obligations through continuing personal discussions, team meetings and activities, and opportunities for guided reflection. QA 7.3.2

- Educators are required to adhere to the ECA Code of Ethics. As well as the Acorn Code of Conduct. The ECA Code is displayed in the Service staff room. The Code details educators’ responsibilities for professional and ethical conduct in regard to:
  - Children
  - Families
  - Colleagues
  - Communities
  - Students
  - Employers
When making decisions, the Nominated Supervisor models professional and ethical decision-making and accountability. The Nominated Supervisor considers:

- All relevant legislation
- The Service’s Policies and Procedures
- ECA Code of Ethics
- Outcomes for children, educators, families, Approved Provider and any other party who may be affected. QA 4.2.1

The Service supports educators studying for formal qualifications. Progress towards the completion of the qualification is recorded on a Training and Study Record – Educator. This Record is updated at the end of each semester. QA 7.2.2

Educators reflect upon their practice and upon the Service’s progress towards meeting the National Quality Standard. They undertake this reflection individually and with colleagues. The reflection is guided by the EYLF’s 168 questions and their answers are recorded in their professional diary or on forms such as Reflective Diary – Educator (Weekly), and Weekly Report for Nominated Supervisor - Educator, and on the provision made in the Team Meeting Agenda. QA 4.2.2, 7.3.2

Educators maintain the highest level of confidentiality and sign a Confidentiality Agreement to this effect. Refer to the Service’s Privacy and Confidentiality Policy. QA 7.3.1

The Service has a designated Educational Leader who oversees the program and facilitates collaboration between all educators. Refer to the Service’s Educational Program Policy. QA 7.1.4

Educators are expected to maintain or contribute to the programming and documentation for individual and groups of children. Refer to the Service’s Educational Program Policy. QA 1.2.1

Educators are expected to complete all required Service documentation promptly and accurately. QA 7.1.1

The Service prioritises respectful communications – verbal and written – among all parties concerned with the Service. Because age is not barrier to human rights, children are afforded the same respect as others. QA 4.2.3

The Service has a Staff Grievance Process, and educators are asked to use this process to communicate their concerns or complaints. QA 4.2.3

The Service provides educators with a range of professional development and training opportunities to extend their knowledge and to challenge and extend their thinking. However, educators are also expected to independently seek ways to build their professional knowledge and skills. QA 7.2.3

The Nominated Supervisor conducts annual appraisals for each educator and bases further training upon the outcomes of these appraisals. QA 7.2.2
The Service holds regular team meetings. Educators are expected to attend these meetings or to show cause. Occasionally, they are asked to prepare by reading background information on agenda items, and to sign the Team Reading Tracking Form to that effect. During meetings, educators are asked to contribute respectfully and to listen to the contributions of others. QA 4.2.2, 7.2.2

Educators and staff members share tasks and responsibilities and remain alert to opportunities to assist each other. They collaborate effectively – and draw upon each other’s diverse skills, knowledge and strengths – in joint projects such as policy reviews and constructing the Service’s Quality Improvement Plan. QA 4.2.2, 4.2.3.

During their time at the Service, students and volunteers are supported by educators who also ensure that the students and volunteers are not alone with children at any time. Refer to the Service’s Students, Volunteers and Visitors Policy. QA 4.2.3

Links to other policies

- Educational Program Policy
- Relationships with Children Policy
- Interactions with Families Policy
- Policy and Procedure Review
- Privacy and Confidentiality Policy
- Students, Volunteers and Visitors Policy

Sources

- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011.

Further reading and useful websites


Date(s) reviewed: 14/03/2016

Next review Date: 14/05/2017
Our Mission: To provide outstanding childcare that nurtures and realizes the potential within each child.

Our Values:

Respect – We value respect for it is the basic value that each person at every age needs to work, thrive and grow... Respect nurtures and allows personal growth at all ages.

Trust – We value trust in the workplace. Trust is essential to a productive, safe and inviting environment in which both children and staff are able to thrive and grow.

Wisdom – We value wisdom because its deliberate use allows us to grow to our full potential. Wisdom makes knowledge effective and leads to accountable words and actions.

Diligence – We value diligence to provide us with the ability to achieve. Working hard to do the right thing the right way which contributes to an ever higher standard of a nurturing environment.

Positive

Attitude – We value a positive attitude as the person who sends out positive thoughts activates the world around them positively and brings about positive results.

Integrity - We value integrity as it reflects an adherence to moral and ethical principles producing a soundness of moral character of which honesty is a core attribute. Integrity nurtures the growth of respect, trust, wisdom, diligence and a positive attitude in the workplace.

From these values we expect all staff members at all times, to be able to:

- Carry out duties in a professional, responsible and conscientious manner
- Foster comradeship among Acorn staff members.
- Behave in a manner free from harassment and intimidation or overbearing, bullying or physically/emotionally threatening behaviour.
- Be alert to the sensitivities of others and refrain from behaviour which may cause offence.
- Respect the personal beliefs held by others.
- Maintain a standard of conduct free from negative discrimination.
Behave in a way that upholds Acorn’s values, integrity and good reputation.

Respond to direction from those in authority in a respectful, cooperative manner.

Adopt professional communication free from offence

Treat all contacts with fairness

Demonstrate professional and courteous behaviour and attitude in all dealings with customers and other staff of Acorn

A Non-exhaustive list of examples of acceptable and nonacceptable behaviour

Meet expected Standard

Punctual

Efficient use of resources

Produce quality outcomes

Be safe

Accepting final decision with grace

Problem solving

Constructive communication

Respect others views

Adaptable to change

Active listening

Include all people

Supportive

Polite and courteous

Approachable

Humble

Helpful

Cooperative

Confront/stop rumor mill

Take ownership of your role and responsibility
Acorn Child Care Centres
Policies and Procedures

Admit mistakes/errors
Accept differences
Kind but firm
Acknowledge needs and feeling of others
Honesty
Reflective
Understanding consequences of words, actions and behaviours

Below expected standard
No care attitude
Talking behind others back
Ignoring
Gossiping and allowing gossip
Aggression
Speaking over the top of someone else
Involving others in conflict
Abdicating responsibility
Humiliating
Finger pointing
Blaming
Tardiness
Laziness
Avoidance of work
Distracting others
Ignoring requests
Resource wasting
Resisting change
Undermining final decisions
Acorn Child Care Centres
Policies and Procedures

Deceitful behaviour

Destructive Criticism

Procrastination—“Paralysis by Analysis”

Recalcitrance (Resistance, defiance, noncooperation, insubordination, rebellious)

Date(s) reviewed: 14/03/2016

Next review Date: 14/05/2017
I, ________________________________ (full name) have read and understand the Acorn Code of Conduct and agree to abide by its provisions. I am aware of the responsibilities in relation to The Code of Conduct.

Signed

______________________________________________

Date

______________________________________________

Witness

______________________________________________

Name

______________________________________________

Position

______________________________________________

Date

______________________________________________

A copy of this declaration will be kept on your staff file.
Policy statement

This Policy sets out the clear guidelines to ensure a professional standard of dress is worn at all times.

Strategies and practices

- The centre has a uniform which staff are expected to wear at all times.
- Staff must wear the complete uniform, and maintain the uniform in a clean and presentable condition.
- The uniform consists of a shirt, vest and jumper / jacket which have been embroidered with the Acorn logo and navy pants, shorts or skirts.
- Pant hemlines are to be off the ground and non-tattered and the length or skirts and shorts should be appropriate as not be offensive.
- All staff will wear their Acorn centre name tag at all times whilst on duty.
- Staff are provided a centre hat which is to be worn at all times whilst outside in the yards.
- 100% of the cost of purchasing a reasonable number of uniform pieces will be reimbursed by the centre. This does not include shoes which must be enclosed navy or black.
- No skin is to be showing between uniform tops and bottoms. Should a singlet be required to maintain midriff modesty, navy or black are the only acceptable colours.
- Button closures on uniform tops are to be neat and effective.
- To present an acceptable professional image within a conservative community, no staff member is to have oral or visible body piercing apart from one set of earrings. Other jewellery is limited to one ring or wedding set and a watch. No bangles or necklaces are to be worn.
- Any visible tattoos are to be covered.
- Hair which is longer than shoulder length is required to be tied back to give a more professional look.
- Shoes to be clean and polished. QA 7.1

Links to other policies

- Educator Professionalism and Ethics Policy
- Acorn Code of Conduct

Sources


Date(s) reviewed: 15/03/2016

Next review Date: 15/03/2017
4.2.1 Dress Code Policy

Purpose and scope

This policy applies to all employees and includes casual and temporary workers who may be employed at {site.name}’s premises from time to time.

General dress standards

Employees are expected to exercise common-sense in their choice of clothing and general appearance in order to project a professional image to clients and an image that is unlikely to cause offence.

Staff are expected at all times to present a professional image to colleagues, parents and the public in line with {site.name}’s culture and values. Educators are to wear {site.name} identification at all times.

All staff must model appropriate behaviour and Sun Smart practices. Therefore, staff must wear a wide brimmed hat and a shirt which covers shoulders and neck at all times when outdoors. Staff must also apply sunscreen for when they are outdoors.

As a guide, staff must ensure:

- Hair is tidy.
- Your clothing is in good repair and ironed.
- Clothing and accessories must be appropriate, meet job requirements and professional image.
- Clothing must not contain messages or images that are likely to offend.
- Footwear must be either navy blue or black closed in shoes that provide support, and appropriate grip.
- Jewellery is limited to one set of earrings, one watch and one ring set.
- All tattoos must be covered at all times.
- The centre has a uniform which staff are expected to wear at all times.
- Staff must wear complete uniform, and maintain the uniform in a clean and presentable condition.
- The uniform consists of a shirt, vest and jumper / jacket which have been embroidered with the Acorn logo and navy pants, shorts or skirts. Scarf is optional.
- Pant hemlines are to be off the ground and non-tattered and the length of skirts adn shorts should be appropriate as to be offensive.
- All staff will wear their Acorn centre name tag at all times whilst on duty.
- Staff are provided a centre hat which is to be worn at all times whilst outside in the yards.
- 100% of the cost of purchasing a reasonable number of uniform pieces will be reimbursed by the centre. This does not include shoes which must which must be enclosed navy or black.
Acorn Child Care Centres
Policies and Procedures

- No skin is to be showing between uniform tops and bottoms. Should a singlet be required to maintain midriff modesty, navy or black are the only acceptable colours.

- Button closures on uniform tops are to be neat and effective

- To present an acceptable professional image within a conservative community, no staff member is to have oral or visible body piercing apart from one set of earrings. Jewellery is limited to one ring or wedding set and a watch. No bangles or necklaces are to be worn.

- Any visible tattoos are to be covered.

- Hair which is longer than shoulder length is required to be tied back to give a more professional look.

- Shoes are to be clean and polished.

Uniforms and other specific dress requirements

Where employees have been provided with a uniform, they are expected to wear that uniform at all times during work hours and when representing {site.name}. Employees are required to maintain their uniforms in good condition and repair.

{site.name} may provide additional specific direction for individuals or groups of individuals as it deems necessary to maintain {site.name}'s professional image and the health and safety of the workplace and all employees. Any such directions will be discrete and may be provided in writing or verbally from management.

At the cessation of your employment you must return any uniform provided to you by {site.name}. Failure to return your uniform may result in the cost of the items being deducted from any monies outstanding to you on termination.

Employees should consider the appropriateness of their attire at all times in the context of health and safety and ensure that all items of clothing and jewellery are secure on their person if they are likely to be around any machinery or contaminable products.

Specific clothing precautions must be maintained according to procedures for food preparation.

Any employee who does not meet the standards of this policy will be required to take corrective action.
4.3 Staff Appraisal

Policy Overview

Regular performance reviews help create a work environment that promotes personal success, along with collaboration. Individual employees need the reinforcement of knowing that their contributions are valued by management.

Purpose and scope

The goal of the performance review is to provide administrators and staff with feedback on their performance and accomplishments for the previous year. As a result of this process, staff should have an understanding of their job responsibilities and Manager’s performance expectations. Also, through this process specific action plans can be created which allow the employee to achieve established performance goals.

Performance reviews are undertaken based on the following principles:

- That staff performing at their best are happiest and develop a high level of job satisfaction, which in turn contributes to a strong sense of wellbeing.
- Staff who are performing at their best make the strongest contribution to ensuring that the best interests of the children at Acorn Child Care are being met.
- Employer support is an important ingredient to successful performance in the workplace as is active staff participation in their role.

This policy is a guide only and will not form part of your General Terms and Conditions of employment or confer contractual rights, on which a staff member may rely. This policy may be amended from time to time.

Performance Review Policy

Managers should provide guidance, coaching, and feedback to their staff throughout the year on job duties and responsibilities, performance goals and expectations, appraising the performance and future development opportunities.

- Periodically the Manager should summarise these discussions in writing during a performance review. The discussion can include:
  - Documentation or notes of previous discussions;
  - Last year’s performance review (if applicable);
  - Performance expectations and job description;
  - Goals and objectives for the previous year;
  - Feedback from other staff;

Any other information relevant to the staff member’s performance; Compare the employee’s actual performance to established expectations and the position description;

Determine strengths and weaknesses and how these can be utilised or developed.
Performance Review Meeting

Managers will meet with staff individually to conduct the performance review discussion. This should be a two-way conversation starting with the discussion of the position description and ending with the employee’s comments. This meeting should also include:

- Discussion of expectations for the upcoming year;
- Joint determination of any development plan/goal;
- Employee question/feedback;
- Identify specific goals for the employee to work towards in the coming 12 months.

After the Meeting

The meeting should be documented in writing and signed by both parties. The development outcomes resulting from the review should be monitored and reviewed through formal/informal methods throughout the year before the next formal annual review occurs.
4.4 Counselling and Discipline Policy

Policy overview

{employee.site.name} has implemented a Counselling and Discipline Policy. The policy takes effect immediately.

What is the policy?

The Counselling and Discipline Policy sets out the guidelines for dealing with performance or behavioural issues in the workplace.

What do I need to do?

You need to carefully read through the Counselling and Discipline Policy to make yourself familiar with the contents of the policy.

Employees are expected to adhere to the Counselling and Discipline Policy. Failure to comply with the policy may lead to disciplinary action which may lead to termination of employment.

Policy and further information

To the extent that the contents of the Counselling and Discipline Policy refers to obligations on {employee.site.name}, they are guidelines for management or summaries of applicable legislative requirements only and are not contractual terms, conditions or representations on which a staff member may rely.

Your manager is available to assist with any queries you have relating to the policy which is detailed below.

Counselling and Discipline Policy

Process

{employee.site.name} may, at its discretion, take some or all of the steps below when faced with performance or behavioural issues:

- Informal counselling
- Formal disciplinary procedure
- Disciplinary action
- Verbal and written warnings;
- Performance improvement plans; and
- Dismissal.
Informal counselling

Informal counselling is appropriate to prevent minor incidents from becoming major incidents and/or allow Supervisors to identify the first indication of poor performance prior to it escalating into a critical performance issue.

When conducting an informal counselling session, {employee.site.name} aims to:

- Ensure that the meeting is held in a non-confrontational environment;
- Ensure that the performance issue, evidence highlighting the performance issue(s), and the period of the performance issue(s) are clearly stated and understood by the employee;
- Ensure that the employee has a reasonable opportunity to respond to the issue(s) identified by {employee.site.name};
- Reiterate our required performance and behavioural standards, and gain a verbal commitment from the employee that they understand and will continue to meet our performance and behavioural standards;
- Agree with the employee on tangible performance and behavioural measures, attaching a realistic timeframe for review;
- Inform the employee that further instances of similar performance and/or behaviours will lead to a formal assessment of their continuing employment and may result in disciplinary action being taken; and
- Keep a log of the counselling session details in a diary or the employee’s file.

Formal disciplinary procedure

Failure by employees to meet the performance and/or behaviour standards will result in {employee.site.name} initiating the formal disciplinary procedure. The objective of the formal disciplinary procedure is to:

- Put our concerns regarding the employee’s poor performance or misconduct to the employee;
- Provide the employee with an opportunity to respond to those concerns;
- Consider the employee’s response and decide whether the alleged poor performance or unacceptable behaviour concerns are substantiated;
- If the alleged poor performance or unacceptable behaviour is substantiated:
  - A first and final written warning may be issued (and for poor performance a performance improvement plan implemented);
  - Summary dismissal may result (e.g: gross incompetence/wilful neglect, or serious misconduct).

Performance improvement plan (for poor performance) – see above

The objective of a performance improvement plan is to improve the employee’s performance by setting goals and closely monitoring on-going performance:
• Develop and record a realistic action plan to improve the employee’s performance;

• Develop and record realistic measures to the action plan that will effectively evaluate the employee’s performance;

• Communicate with the employee and record the consequences that the employee will face if the agreed action plan measures are not achieved and performance does meet the required standards;

• Set a timetable for review (preferably not more than 4 weeks). {employee.site.name} aims to ensure that the timetable gives the employee a reasonable opportunity to meet the action plan requirements;

• Issue the employee with a written warning if appropriate;

• Monitor and review performance according to the timetable;

• At the end of the review period, decide whether to:
  - Allow the employee to resume working in the normal way;
  - Extend the performance improvement plan; or
  - Dismiss the employee (with or without notice).

Disciplinary action

Disciplinary action may include:

• Verbal Warnings;

• Written Warnings;

• Dismissal on notice;

• Dismissal with pay instead of notice; or

• Dismissal without notice (serious misconduct).

Dismissal must always be accompanied by a letter setting out the grounds for the dismissal and the amount of notice or pay instead of notice provided (if any).

Reviewed 13.1.2017

New review 13.1.2018
4.5 Intellectual Property Policy

Policy overview

Acorn Child Care has implemented an Intellectual Property Policy. This policy takes effect immediately. You will need to review the Intellectual Property Policy and make yourself familiar with the contents of the policy.

What is an Intellectual Property Policy?

The Intellectual Property Policy for Acorn Child Care sets out the business’s expectations re preserving Acorn Child Care intellectual property and to ensure that the intellectual property is only used for the purpose permitted in these policies and procedures.

Why do we need an Intellectual Property Policy?

We need an Intellectual Property Policy because as a business we have clear behavioural standards and expectations for all of our employees and we require them to be adhered to. We believe that by detailing these expectations in an Intellectual Property Policy our people can understand the expectations that we have of them and that this will lead to us servicing our clients better by being a more effective business.

What happens if I do not comply with the Intellectual Property Policy?

Employees who do not comply with the Intellectual Property Policy may be subject to disciplinary action.

What do I need to do?

You need to read the Intellectual Property Policy carefully. Employees are expected to adhere to the Intellectual Property Policy. You are expected to comply with this policy as amended and implemented from time to time. Failure to comply with the policy may lead to disciplinary action.

Policy and further information

To the extent that the contents of the Intellectual Property Policy refers to obligations on Acorn Child Care, they are guidelines for management or summaries of applicable legislative requirements only and are not contractual terms, conditions or representations on which a staff member may rely.

Your manager is available to assist with any queries you have relating to the policy which is detailed below.

Intellectual Property Policy

All intellectual property created during and in the course of your employment or engagement with Acorn Child Care, whether during or outside ordinary working hours, is the property of Acorn Child Care. This includes:

- all inventions, discoveries and novel designs whether or not registrable as designs or patents
- including any invention of or development or improvements to equipment, technology, methods or techniques made by you solely or jointly with others at any time during and arising out of your employment with Acorn Child Care (Inventions);
- the entire copyright throughout the world in all literary works, art works and other works (Works);
- and
Acorn Child Care Centres
Policies and Procedures

- any business name, brand name or trade mark (whether registered or not) (Marks).
- In relation to any Invention or Work in which you have a moral right, you consent to Acorn Child Care doing, or omitting to do, any act or omission which, but for this consent, would constitute an infringement on your moral rights including reproducing, publishing, performing, transmitting,
- exhibiting or adapting the Invention or Work altering or in any way changing or using the Invention or Work:
- with or without attribution of authorship;
- with or without any other materials comprising copyright;
- with or without any other text, data, sounds or images;
- with no title, the same title or any other title;
- in any medium or context;
- in any way that Acorn Child Care sees fit.
- You must disclose to Acorn Child Care all Inventions, Works and Marks created during your employment with Acorn Child Care.
- You must both during and after your employment or engagement with Acorn Child Care do all such acts and sign all such documents as Acorn Child Care may reasonably request to secure to Acorn Child Care ownership or registration rights in the Inventions, Works and Marks.

You agree that any invention, discovery, novel design, copyright in any literary work, art work and other copyright work created by you during and in the course of your employment or engagement with Acorn Child Care is the property of Acorn Child Care.

Breaches of policy

The consequences of a breach of this policy will vary depending on the type and seriousness of the breach and will be at the discretion of Acorn Child Care. Depending on the circumstances, Acorn Child Care may take disciplinary action against you up to and including termination of employment.
IT, Internet and Email Policy
(To be read in conjunction with the Social Media Policy and Telephone Policy)

Policy overview
This policy sets out clear guidelines and boundaries regarding the use of email, internet, computer software and hardware.

Acorn Child Care provides electronic facilities to support our business and the provision of services to both staff and clients. You are required to use the electronic facilities provided, such as email and internet, in a sensible manner.

What do I need to do?
You need to read the policy carefully. You will receive some education on the policy and how it is implemented during your time here at Acorn Child Care. Your Manager is available to assist with any queries you may have relating to the policy.

Policy and further information
To the extent that the contents of the IT, Internet and Email Policy refers to obligations on Acorn Child Care, they are guidelines for management or summaries of applicable legislative requirements only and are not contractual terms, conditions or representations on which a staff member may rely.

Your manager is available to assist with any queries you have relating to the policy.

IT, Internet and Email Policy

Purpose and scope
This policy outlines the acceptable uses of email and internet within Acorn Child Care and is applicable to all employees and contractors, as well as any other persons having access to Acorn Child Care’s IT hardware and software.

The primary purpose for which access to email and the internet is provided by Acorn Child Care to its staff is to assist them in carrying out their duties.

Approved uses
The computer and telecommunications system belongs to Acorn Child Care and may only be used for authorised business purposes. Acorn Child Care allows staff to use its resources for limited personal use on the understanding that this use conforms to this policy.

Email, internet and telecommunications usage
Personal texting, emails, internet usage, Facebook and other social media are to be kept to a minimum as per the relevant policies. It is essential that staff also read and comply with the Social Media policy. Personal texting, email and internet use that interferes with the performance of your duties is prohibited.
Excessive amounts of time spent on personal texting, emails and personal internet use is also prohibited. If you are working in a children’s room, you are not permitted to use your phone for personal reasons, phones must be kept in staff room. Except in the course of a person’s duties or with the express permission of the Manager, the email access provided may not be used for:

- Personal commercial purposes;
- Sending unsolicited bulk emails;
- Disseminating confidential information of Acorn Child Care;
- Knowingly causing interference with or disruption to any network, information, service, equipment or any employee;
- Disseminating personal contact information Acorn Child Care’s children, families or employees without their written consent; and knowingly causing any other person to view content which could breach any laws. All devices should be password protected. Passwords are allocated by Acorn Child Care’s IT Administrator, and you are required to provide details to Acorn Child Care’s IT Administrator or Manager upon request. You must keep your passwords private and confidential and not share passwords with others. You should ensure your computer is locked or logged off at the end of each day or when leaving your computer.

**Internet policy**

The purpose of this policy is to provide a framework to ensure that the expectations and rules relating to the use of internet within Acorn Child Care are clear. Authorised staff are encouraged to make use of the internet as part of their professional activities. Attention must be paid to ensuring that published information has relevance to normal professional activities before material is released in Acorn Child Care name. Where personal views are expressed, a disclaimer stating that this is the case should be clearly added to all correspondence.

The availability and variety of information on the internet means that it can be used to obtain material reasonably considered to be offensive. The use of the internet to access and/or distribute any kind of offensive material, or material that is not work-related, may result in an individual being subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

Acorn Child Care will not tolerate the use of the internet at work for unofficial or inappropriate purposes, including:

- Accessing websites which put Acorn Child Care at risk of viruses, compromising copyright or intellectual property rights;
- Using social media in breach of Acorn Child Care social media policy; Connecting, posting or downloading any information unrelated to their employment and, in particular, pornographic or other offensive material; and Engaging in computer hacking and other related activities, or attempting to disable or compromise the security of information contained on Acorn Child Care computers.

You are reminded that these activities may constitute a criminal offence as well as a breach of Acorn Child Care policies.

**Social media**

Please refer to the Social Media Policy.

**Email**
The use of the work email system (work email) is encouraged as its appropriate use facilitates efficiency. Used correctly, it is a facility that is of assistance to Acorn Child Care. However, inappropriate use can cause a number of problems, including distractions, time wasting and legal issues. The IT, Internet and Email Policy sets out Acorn Child Care position on the appropriate use of work email.

Unauthorised or inappropriate use of work email may result in disciplinary action up to and including summary dismissal.

Contents of emails

Email from a Acorn Child Care email address is considered correspondence from Acorn Child Care. It has the same legal implications for both the sender and Acorn Child Care as correspondence on letterhead, and should be treated accordingly. You and/or Acorn Child Care may be liable for what you say in an email message and therefore, good judgement, common sense and careful discretion are required. Work email is available for communication and matters directly concerned with the legitimate business of Acorn Child Care. Employees using work email should: Comply with Acorn Child Care communication standards; Only send emails to those to whom they are relevant; Not use email as a substitute for face-to-face communication or telephone contact where appropriate; Not send inflammatory emails (i.e. emails that are rude or abusive); Be aware that hasty messages sent without proper consideration can cause upset, concern or misunderstanding; If the email is confidential, ensure that the necessary steps are taken to protect confidentiality; and Be aware that offers or contracts transmitted by email may be legally binding on Acorn Child Care. Acorn Child Care will not tolerate the use of work email for unofficial or inappropriate purposes, including: Any messages that could constitute bullying, harassment or discrimination;

Personal use (e.g. social invitations, personal messages, jokes, cartoons, chain letters or other private matters);

- On-line gambling;
- Accessing or transmitting pornography;
- Social media for personal non-work related purposes;
- Transmitting copyright information and/or any software available to the user; or
- Posting confidential information about other employees, Acorn Child Care or its customers or suppliers.

All electronic mail must be sent with a clear and correct identity as to who is sending the message. The use of email to send or forward messages which are defamatory, obscene or otherwise inappropriate will be treated as misconduct under the appropriate disciplinary procedure. In serious cases this could be regarded as serious misconduct and lead to dismissal. If an employee receives an obscene or defamatory email, whether unwittingly or otherwise and from whatever source, he/she must not forward it to any other address. Email content that may seem harmless to you may be offensive to someone else. You should be aware, therefore, that in determining whether an email falls within any of the categories listed above, or is generally inappropriate, Acorn Child Care may consider the response and sensitivities of the recipient of an email, irrespective of the intention of the sender.

Cc-ing
Employees should exercise care not to copy emails automatically to all those copied in to the original message to which they are replying. Doing so may result in disclosure of confidential information to the wrong person.

**Attachments**

Employees should not attach any files that may contain a virus to emails, as Acorn Child Care could be liable to the recipient for loss suffered. Acorn Child Care has virus-checking in place but, if in doubt, employees should check with their Manager. Employees should exercise care when receiving emails with attachments from third parties, particularly unidentified third parties, as these may contain viruses.

**Housekeeping**

Please delete old or unnecessary email messages and save, print or archive only those email messages you need to keep. Emails relating to children should be retained in that child’s file. Retention of messages fills up large amounts of storage space on the network server and can slow down performance. You should maintain as few messages as possible in your mailbox folders.

**Absence from the office**

It is important that all emails, particularly those from clients, are addressed promptly. While you are on leave you should ensure that your ‘Out of Office’ rule is switched on to alert those sending you emails that you are on leave and are not currently receiving emails. This automated message should always provide an alternate contact. An example of a suggested format appears below: “I am on leave and will be returning to work on [insert date here]. If your email or enquiry is urgent, please contact [insert alternate contact name here] on [insert relevant number here].”

**Email subscriptions**

Unless directly relevant to Acorn Child Care’s business, users are not entitled to subscribe via Acorn Child Care email address to MSN or other live chat programs.

**Personal use of the internet**

Acorn Child Care understands that employees may on occasion need to use the Internet for personal purposes. Employees may access the Internet at work for personal purposes provided that personal use is kept to a minimum and does not affect the employee's productivity and that it is deemed appropriate content for a service to access. Employees are permitted to use Internet for personal purposes but should be aware that such personal usage will be subject to this policy and your Manager’s permission. Personal use of the internet may be monitored and may be restricted.

**Unacceptable use of email and internet**

The laws relating to written communication also apply to email and other electronic messages including postings to websites, social networking/media and blogs. These include laws relating to defamation, libel, copywrite, obscenity, fraudulent misrepresentation, freedom of information and wrongful discrimination. Sending, receiving, displaying, printing or otherwise disseminating material that is fraudulent, harassing, illegal, embarrassing, sexually explicit, obscene, intimidating or defamatory is strictly prohibited.

**Consequences of unacceptable use of email and internet**
Acorn Child Care Centres
Policies and Procedures

Acorn Child Care will review any alleged breach of this policy on an individual basis. If the alleged breach is of a serious nature, the person shall be given an opportunity to be heard in relation to the alleged breach. If the alleged breach is clearly established, the breach may be treated as grounds for dismissal. In all other cases, the alleged breach will be treated in accordance with Acorn Child Care's disciplinary policy.

Copying data from Acorn Child Care's network

Information on Acorn Child Care's network is Acorn Child Care's property and, in many cases, may be information that is confidential to Acorn Child Care and which must be protected and which should not be disseminated. If an employee needs to copy data from Acorn Child Care's network for any reason and by any method, the employee must obtain their Manager's prior approval. Failure to obtain prior approval will be considered very serious and may result in disciplinary action.

Virus protection

In order to prevent the introduction of virus contamination into the software system, the following rules must be observed:

- Unauthorised software including public domain software, magazine cover disks/CDs or internet downloads must not be used; and
- All software must be virus checked using standard testing procedures before being used.
- All laptops and tablets must have Acorn's own virus protection on the computer prior to it being connected to Acorn's internet.

Software

Only software approved by Acorn Child Care may be run on Acorn Child Care’s computers, in accordance with the relevant licence. In the case of software not purchased by Acorn Child Care from commercial suppliers (i.e.: shareware, freeware etc.) verification must be completed by the Manager prior to use, to maximise protection from viruses and compliance with copyright. No software is to be used until cleared by the Manager. Under no circumstances may Acorn Child Care owned software be copied except by the Manager in accordance with the provisions of the software licence. Importantly, the following steps apply: The introduction of new software must first of all be checked and authorised by management before general use will be permitted; Only software that is used for business applications may be used on Acorn Child Care computer equipment; and No software may be brought onto or taken from Acorn Child Care premises without prior authorisation.

Hardware

Only Acorn Child Care owned hardware is to be attached to or used within the service computer network, unless verified by the Manager. These provisions are designed to protect Acorn Child Care hardware and software from damage due to viruses or system incompatibility. Importantly, the following rules apply:

- Only authorised staff are permitted access to Acorn Child Care computer equipment;
- Unauthorised access to computing facilities may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal; and
- Unauthorised copying and/or removal of computer equipment and/or software may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.
Firewall restrictions on access

A firewall restricting electronic access into and out of Acorn Child Care is in place for the protection of Acorn Child Care’s internal computers. Wherever it has been possible to do so, the firewall will restrict ability to visit some web sites and operate certain software programs. Should an employee require access to any item that is restricted, they should speak to their Manager. Staff are not permitted to act in a manner that breaches the protection of this firewall.

General

The terms and conduct described in this policy are not intended to be exhaustive, nor do they anticipate every possible use of Acorn Child Care’s electronic facilities. Employees are encouraged to act with caution and take into account the underlying principles intended by this policy. If an employee is unsure of the appropriate action relating to use of any electronic facilities, they should contact their Manager in the first instance.

What happens if someone breaches this policy?

The consequences of a breach of this policy will vary depending on the type and seriousness of the breach and will be at the discretion of Acorn Child Care. Depending on the circumstances, Acorn Child Care may take disciplinary action against employees up to and including termination of employment.

Monitoring

Any and all data created, stored or transmitted upon Acorn Child Care systems or produced by our staff remain Acorn Child Care property at all times. Acorn Child Care expressly reserves the right to monitor and review any data upon the systems, including your usage and history, on an intermittent basis without notice. In addition to this, Acorn Child Care has the right to protect its business interests and confidentiality. This includes the right to survey, audit and/or monitor its systems, including but not limited to:

- Monitoring sites users visit on the internet;
- Monitoring time spent on the internet;
- Reviewing material downloaded or uploaded; and
- Reviewing emails sent and received.

Information reports will be available to Acorn Child Care which can subsequently be used for matters such as system performance and availability, system capacity planning, cost re-distribution and the identification of areas for personal development. For the avoidance of doubt, we reserve the right to monitor all internet and email activity by you for the purposes of ensuring compliance with Acorn Child Care policies and procedures and for ensuring compliance with the relevant regulatory requirements and you hereby consent to such monitoring. Information acquired through such monitoring may be used as evidence in disciplinary proceedings.

Reviewed 13.1.2017

Next review 13.1.2018
4.6 Professional References from Acorn

Background

This policy sets out the Acorn’s obligations in dealing with requests for references for current or former employees in relation to job applications.

Policy statement

Acorn maintains a policy of not providing references to prospective employers. However, Acorn will in some circumstances provide references for employees and ex-employees. This is up to the discretion of the Director. At any time, a professional reference in relation to a staff member’s position at Acorn is required by an outside party, this may only be provided by the Director, Licensee or Owner of the Company. No other staff member is authorised to provide this information on the Centres behalf.

Strategies and practices

References will be provided only to appropriate parties. Before providing a reference, the Director should verify the identity of the person requesting the reference. If in doubt about the identity of the person requesting the reference, the Director should ask for the request in writing. The Director should not give out any information to parties who do not have a legitimate “need to know”.

In considering whether to give a reference, and in determining the content of any such reference, referees must not discriminate on any grounds covered in Acorn’s Discrimination Policy.

When providing references, referees shall

- take reasonable care;
- provide information which is as far as possible true, accurate and fair, and which does not give a misleading impression;
- express opinions as opinions rather than statements of fact; and
- limit the information given to the employee’s job-related performance.

A staff member may act as a personal referee for any individual. On no account should a personal reference be written on Acorn’s letterhead or in any way suggest that Acorn endorses the reference. When providing the personal reference, it is recommended that you verbally state it is a personal reference only.

Should anyone be in doubt as to whether they are authorised to provide any form of reference, then they should consult with the Director immediately to obtain the correct advice before taking any further action.

Sources

- Freedom of Information Act 1989 (Commonwealth)
- Privacy Act 1988 (Commonwealth).
4.7 Staff Leave

Policy overview

This policy outlines the leave provisions that employees are entitled to during their course of employment and is intended to be a summary of the leave entitlements under the *Fair Work Act 2009* and under any applicable State/Territory legislation. Some policies do not apply to employees covered by an enterprise agreement only and will contain express indication if they apply selectively. Otherwise, all other policies apply to all staff of Acorn Child Care. Where there is a difference between the policy and legislation, then the legislation will prevail to the extent of any inconsistency. Entitlements may also be modified by an industrial instrument, such as an enterprise agreement, or an individual contract of employment, but cannot be reduced or inferior to the entitlements available under applicable legislation. The purpose of this policy is to inform employees of their various entitlements to leave and the procedures for accessing that leave.

What do I need to do?

You need to read the policy carefully. You may receive training on the policy and how it is implemented during your time here at Acorn Child Care.

What types of leave does this policy cover?

- Annual leave
- Personal / Carer's leave
- Compassionate leave
- Parental leave
- Long Service leave
- Community Service leave
- Study Leave

Policy and further information

To the extent that the contents of the Leave Policy refers to obligations on Acorn Child Care, they are guidelines for management or summaries of applicable legislative requirements only and are not contractual terms, conditions or representations on which a staff member may rely.

Your manager is available to assist with any queries you have relating to the policy which is detailed below.

Purpose and scope

As you are an important part of the Acorn Child Care team, your attendance is fundamental to you fulfilling your workplace obligations. It is policy that employees should not be absent from work without approved leave. Absence from work without approved leave may lead to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. In the event that you wish to take leave, make sure you complete the ‘leave application form’ in the Resource Centre. All leave must be approved by your manager.

Annual leave
Acorn Child Care Centres
Policies and Procedures

Permanent employees are entitled to paid annual leave. Acorn Child Care is committed to the principle that annual leave is intended for rest, recreation and a break from work. For personal health, safety and productivity reasons, all employees need to take annual leave each year, in order to provide a real break from work. Acorn Child Care is committed to managing annual leave by creating an environment where leave may be readily taken in periods, which as far as possible suit the employee’s circumstances. There may, however, be times that for operational reasons Acorn Child Care cannot accommodate the request for annual leave to be taken and in those instances, leave will need to be taken at another time.

Annual leave entitlement

Employees will receive annual leave in accordance with the National Employment Standards and any applicable modern award or enterprise agreement, unless otherwise stated in their General Terms and Conditions of Employment. The minimum entitlement will generally be 20 days of paid annual leave (for most full time employees) for each year of service, calculated on a pro-rata basis. Annual leave accrues progressively during the year and is cumulative. Annual leave is to be taken in accordance with the Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth) and any applicable modern award or enterprise agreement. You may be directed to take annual leave in accordance with the Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth) and any applicable modern award or enterprise agreement.

Annual leave payment in advance

Annual leave is ordinarily paid at the normal pay interval at the time leave is taken. In accordance with any applicable modern award or enterprise agreement, employees with their Manager’s approval, may request payment in advance of accrued annual leave. Such arrangements will be in accordance with statutory requirements. Examples may include:

- Where annual leave is taken in conjunction with an approved period of Long Service Leave; or
- Financial hardship which would otherwise prevent the taking of leave.
- If an employee’s employment is terminated for any reason, Acorn Child Care will pay out an employee’s untaken accrued annual leave entitlements.

Annual leave in advance

An employee and Acorn Child Care may agree in writing to the employee taking a period of paid annual leave before the employee has accrued an entitlement to the leave. This is subject to completing a "Form – Annual Leave in Advance Application", which is available in the Resource Centre and submit it to your Manager. This must be submitted on each occasion of seeking leave in advance. If the employee is under 18 years, then the employee’s parent or guardian must sign the form on the employee's behalf. If on termination the employee has not accrued the entitlement to all of a period of paid annual leave already taken, then Acorn Child Care may deduct from any money due on termination an amount equal to the amount that was paid to the employee. Such arrangements will be in accordance with statutory requirements.

Cashing out of annual leave

An employee and Acorn Child Care may agree in writing to the cashing out of a particular amount of accrued paid annual leave by the employee. This is subject to completing a "Form – Cashing out Annual Leave Application", which is available in the Resource Centre and submit it to your Manager. This must be submitted on each occasion of cashing out
Acorn Child Care Centres
Policies and Procedures

leave. If the employee is under 18 years, then the employee’s parent or guardian must sign the form on the employee’s behalf. A request to cash out annual leave may only be granted by Acorn Child Care if:

- The employee’s remaining accrued entitlement to paid annual leave is not less than 4 weeks (all employees); and
- The maximum amount of accrued paid annual leave that may be cashed out in any period of 12 months is 2 weeks (Award covered employees only).
- The payment to be made to the employee will be at the rate that would have been payable had the employee taken the leave at the time the payment is made.
- Such arrangements will be in accordance with statutory requirements.

Excessive leave accrual

If an employee has accrued more than 8 weeks’ paid annual leave (or 10 weeks’ if classified as a shiftworker) Acorn Child Care may direct the employee in writing to take one or more periods of paid annual leave. This will only occur once Acorn Child Care and the employee have conferred with each other and genuinely tried to reach an agreement on how to reduce or eliminate the excessive leave accrual.

The following shall apply:

- Following a direction to take paid leave, the employee shall not have less than 6 weeks paid leave accrued (unless the employee genuinely agrees to do so);
- The leave taken must be more than one week in length;
- Acorn Child Care will provide at least 8 weeks’ notice (and no more than 12 months’ notice) as to when leave is to be taken.

Personal/Carer’s leave

Employees will receive personal leave in accordance with the National Employment Standards and any applicable modern award or enterprise agreement.

Paid personal/carer’s leave

Employees are entitled to 10 days’ paid personal/carer’s leave for each year of service, calculated on a pro-rata basis, when absent from work due to personal illness or injury (sick leave) or for the purpose of providing care or support to a member of the employee’s immediate family or household who is sick and requires your care or support because of a personal illness or injury or because of an unexpected emergency affecting the member (carer’s leave).

An immediate family member includes:

Your spouse, de facto partner, child, foster/kinship care child, parent, grandparent, grandchild or sibling of the employee; or Your spouse or de facto partner’s child, foster/kinship care child, parent, grandparent, grandchild or sibling. Paid personal/carer’s leave will accumulate from year to year but will not be paid out on termination of employment. To be paid personal/carer’s leave, the employee must notify their manager a minimum of 1 hour before their shift on the day of leave that he or she will be absent due to personal/carer’s leave and the approximate period of that absence. It is unacceptable to leave messages, send emails or send text messages to colleagues. The employee is also required to produce a medical certificate or a statutory declaration in relation to the period of absence for absences.
that exceed two days. Further, the manager is permitted to request provision of a medical certificate for any period of
paid personal leave. If the employee does not provide such evidence, Acorn Child Care reserves the right to treat the
period of absence as unauthorised leave without pay, or by agreement of the employee and the employee’s manager as
annual leave.

Service requirement

To be eligible for unpaid parental leave, an employee must, immediately before the due date of birth or the expected
placement date of adoption of the child:

- For a permanent employee: have completed at least 12 months of continuous Service;
- For a casual employee: have been employed by us on a regular and systematic basis for at least 12 months and
  have a reasonable expectation of on-going employment on the same basis.
- Additional eligibility rules apply in respect of adoption-related leave.

Return to work guarantee

At the end of their unpaid parental leave, an employee is entitled: To return to their pre-parental leave position; or If
that position no longer exists - an available position for which the employee is qualified and suited that is nearest in
status and pay to the employee's pre-parental leave position.

Period of leave

Unpaid parental leave must be taken in a single continuous period (not broken periods) and can be taken by only one
parent at a time - subject to specific exceptions about concurrent leave (which is currently 8 weeks’ unpaid leave)
around the time of the child's birth or placement for the secondary carer. Concurrent leave reduces the total available
period of unpaid parental leave.

Commencement of unpaid parental leave

Unpaid parental leave starts:

- For a pregnant employee, up to 6 weeks before the expected date of birth of her child, but no later than the
date of the child’s birth;
- For an employee other than the pregnant employee, unpaid parental leave starts on the child's date of birth;
- For adoption leave, on the day of placement of the child;
- Immediately following the period of unpaid parental leave taken by the employee’s spouse under
  one of the options above, if one or both employees are employed by either the Company or another
  business; or
- If the employee’s spouse or de facto partner is not an employee of Acorn Child Care or any other
  business, anytime within 12 months of the date of birth or day of placement of the child.

Notice and evidence requirements

An employee must give at least 10 weeks' written notice before starting unpaid parental leave or, if that is not
practicable, provide notice as soon as practicable (which may be a time after the leave has started). For example, it may
not be practical for an employee to give the requisite notice in relation to the premature birth of a child, but valid notice
could still be given as soon as practicable after the child's birth. The notice must specify the intended start and end dates of the leave. An employee must confirm the intended start and end dates of the leave (or advise of any changes) at least 4 weeks before the intended start date, unless it is not practicable to do so.

An employer may require an employee who has given notice of the taking of unpaid parental leave to provide evidence of:

- The child’s actual or expected date of birth; or
- The day or expected day of placement for adoption and that the child is or will be under 16 years of age as at that date.
- The evidence must be sufficient to satisfy a reasonable person and, in the case of birth-related leave,
  - We may require that this be a medical certificate.
- Separate notice and evidence requirements apply in relation to special maternity leave and unpaid
- Pre-adoption leave (see below).

Unpaid special maternity leave
An eligible pregnant employee may also take unpaid special maternity leave in certain circumstances for example if the employee is not fit to work because of a pregnancy-related illness. This leave does not reduce the amount of unpaid parental leave available to the employee.

Fitness for work – pregnant employees
If a pregnant employee continues to work within six weeks before the estimated date of birth, an employer may ask the employee to provide a medical certificate, stating: Whether the employee is fit for work; and If they are fit for work, whether it is inadvisable for the employee to continue working in her present position during a stated period because of any of the risk factors specified below.

- The risk factors include any illness or risks arising out of the employee's pregnancy, or hazards of any type connected with the employee’s position.
- If the employee fails to provide the certificate within seven days, or if the certificate states that the employee is not fit for work, an employer may require an employee to start unpaid parental leave immediately.

Interaction with paid leave
Subject to certain exceptions, an employee may take paid leave at the same time the employee is taking unpaid parental leave. The period of unpaid parental leave runs concurrently with the period of paid leave taken by the employee. The requirements for taking the other form of leave would still apply - e.g. the service agreeing to the employee taking paid annual leave. An employee is not eligible to take paid personal/carer's leave while taking unpaid parental leave.

Long Service leave
Employees are entitled to long Service leave under the applicable State/Territory legislation.

Community Service leave
Employees are entitled to Community Service leave in accordance with the Fair Work Act 2009, and any other applicable legislation in the State in which they work.

**Breaches of policy**

The consequences of a breach of this policy will vary depending on the type and seriousness of the breach and will be at the discretion of Acorn Child Care but may involve disciplinary action up to and including termination.

**Links to other policies**

- Educator Professionalism and Ethics Policy
- Acorn Code of Ethics

**Sources**

- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011.
- Childrens Services and Educations Services Award

**Further reading and useful websites**


Date(s) reviewed: 15/03/2016, 13/01/2017

next review Date: 01/2018
4.8 Performance Development Policy

Policy overview

The Policy sets out the guidelines for the resolution of performance related issues in the workplace.

What do I need to do?

You need to read the policy carefully. You will receive some education on the policy and how it is implemented during your time here at Acorn Child Care.

Policy and further information

To the extent that the contents of the Performance Development Policy refers to obligations on Acorn Child Care, they are guidelines for management or summaries of applicable legislative requirements only and are not contractual terms, conditions or representations on which a staff member may rely. Your manager is available to assist with any queries you have relating to the policy.

Performance Development Policy

Counselling and resolution of performance issues

Where performance issues or concerns are identified Acorn Child Care may, at its discretion, take some or all of the steps below:

- Informal counselling.
- Formal performance management procedure.
- Disciplinary action.
- Verbal and written warnings.
- Performance improvement plans.
- Dismissal.

Informal counselling

Informal counselling is appropriate to prevent minor issues or incidents from becoming major incidents. It allows Managers to identify the early indications of reduced performance and investigate the causes. When conducting an informal counselling session, Acorn Child Care aims to: Ensure that the meeting is held in a supportive environment;

- Ensure that the performance issue, evidence highlighting the issue(s), and the period of the issue(s) are clearly stated and understood by the staff member;
- Ensure that the staff member has a reasonable opportunity to respond to the issue(s) identified by Acorn Child Care;
- Investigate the likely causes, be they unclear understanding of requirements, knowledge issues, team issues, personal issues or other causes;
- Reiterate our required performance and plan for improvement with the staff member, ensuring that the staff member has adequate opportunity to reflect and provide input and then attaching a
Acorn Child Care Centres
Policies and Procedures

- realistic timeframe for review;
- Inform the staff member that further instances of similar performance or failure to improve will lead
- further investigation and possibly to a formal assessment of their role may impact on their
- continuing employment; and
- Keep a log of the counselling session details in a diary or the staff member’s file.

**Formal disciplinary management procedure**

Disciplinary action can occur at any stage of employment, either before, during or after the informal counselling referred
above. The type of disciplinary action will be affected by the misconduct involved, and the nature of disciplinary
action may include:

- Verbal or written warnings;
- Suspension, or demotion; and/or
- Termination of employment, with or without notice.
- Termination of employment will generally occur after the issues relating to performance have been
- raised with the employee, but this does not always need to occur (for example, if the conduct is
- serious, or the concern is known to the employee, or it is not possible or necessary to raise it with him
- or her).

Failure by a staff member to meet the required standards of conduct will result in Acorn Child Care initiating a formal
disciplinary management procedure. The objective of the procedure is to:

- Put the concerns regarding the performance to the staff member;
- Provide the staff member with an opportunity to respond to those concerns;
- Consider the staff member’s response and decide whether the alleged misconduct is
- substantiated.
- If the alleged misconduct is substantiated:
  - A first and final written warning may be issued;
  - Termination with notice; and/or
  - Summary dismissal may result (e.g.: harm to a child/wilful neglect, or other serious misconduct).

**Performance improvement Plan**

The objective of a performance improvement plan is to improve the staff member’s performance by setting goals and to
allow for close monitoring of on-going performance:

- Develop and record realistic measures to the action plan that will allow for improvement and for
  effective evaluation of the staff member’s performance
- Communicate with the staff member and record the consequences that the staff member will face if
  the agreed action plan measures are not achieved
- Set a timetable for review that is appropriate to the circumstances
- Ensure that the timetable and the accompanying support measures gives the staff member a
  reasonable opportunity to meet the action plan requirements
- Issue the staff member with a written warning if appropriate
Acorn Child Care Centres
Policies and Procedures

At the end of the review period, decide whether to:

- Allow the staff member to resume working in the normal way
- Extend the performance improvement plan
- Dismiss the staff member (with or without notice).

Warnings

Written or verbal warnings may be issued as a part of the above procedures. Where they are issued, they may outline what the employee is required to do, the applicable time periods, and what consequences may be involved for the employee if the performance standards are not achieved.

However, it is important to note that Acorn Child Care is not obliged to issue written warnings, or any number of them (whether as a first and final warning, or two or three warnings) before a disciplinary response occurs.

Dismissal must always be accompanied by a letter setting out the grounds for the dismissal and the amount of notice or pay instead of notice provided (if any) as well as any relevant information as required by law.

Reviewed: 13.1.2018

Next review: 13.1.2019
Acorn Child Care Centres
Policies and Procedures

4.9 Learning and Development Policy

Policy overview

We recognise that an important part of valuing our staff is to ensure that we encourage and support staff development that enhances the skills of the individual staff member, and contributes to the quality of education and care for the children.

We seek to develop a learning community within Acorn Child Care and will provide opportunities for ongoing professional learning and development through formal courses and informal professional engagement.

What do I need to do?

You need to read the policy carefully. You will receive some education on the policy and how it is implemented during your time here at Acorn Child Care.

Policy and further information

To the extent that the contents of the Learning and Development Policy refers to obligations on Acorn Child Care, they are guidelines for management or summaries of applicable legislative requirements only and are not contractual terms, conditions or representations on which a staff member may rely. Your manager is available to assist with any queries you have relating to the policy.

Purpose and scope

It is an expectation of your employment with us that you will undertake all relevant training and development required to maintain your current knowledge, develop as the professional knowledge requirements of Acorn Child Care grow and to maintain any professional registration that you hold. Further, as an employee, you are encouraged to identify relevant learning opportunities in conjunction with your Manager during the regular performance review process.

Your Manager is responsible for ensuring that identified professional development opportunities are relevant to your role and the needs of Acorn Child Care. This policy outlines the financial and non-financial assistance that we may provide to eligible employees in pursuit of professional development opportunities.

Identification of learning needs

The identification of learning needs will be done through the staff member’s regular performance review and supervision discussions with their Manager. Learning needs will come from discussions about talents and skills, interests, career aspirations and gaps in knowledge or skills.

Service provided training

Acorn Child Care will offer ‘in-house’ training and short courses from time to time. These opportunities will be categorised as mandatory or recommended. You must complete all mandatory courses, unless you receive exemption from your Manager.

Conferences and seminars

Professional bodies, industry groups and other organisations regularly conduct conferences and seminars which offer benefit to education and care service staff.
From time to time we will sponsor employees to attend such events which are relevant to their role. If you are interested in attending such an event and having it supported by Acorn Child Care you should speak to your Manager. Whether Acorn Child Care will pay is at the discretion of Manager. The decision will be made after considering the relevance to your role, cost and impacts in Acorn Child Care and whether there is a budget allocation available.

**Further education related to requirements for the role**

The Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations require certain roles to have staff with the qualification or actively working toward that qualification. Should you be working toward the qualification, as your employer, the Manager is required to meet and discuss with you the progress you are making and may request to see copies of academic transcripts that give details of your progress.

As this is a regulatory requirement, it may be that your Manager requires a report of progress on a regular basis, failure to provide those reports or failure to make active progress may impact on your ability to retain your enrolment or remain employed at Acorn Child Care. Should you have difficulty with making progress, discuss your issues with your Manager at the earliest opportunity to assess if Acorn Child Care can offer any support.

Many courses that relate to the roles in an education and care service require external or internal practicum placements. Should your course require this, please see your Manager at the earliest opportunity. Ideally 3 months’ notice is requested to assist with budgeting and planning, however a minimum 4 weeks will be required. Outside this period Acorn Child Care cannot guarantee leave for the placement.

**Approvals**

Staff applying for an external learning and development activity, must seek approval from their Manager. Staff who are unable to attend an external learning and development activity they have enrolled in, must ensure they either cancel and seek reimbursement or arrange with their manager for someone to take their place.

**Recovery of financial assistance**

Staff who obtain financial assistance for non-mandated further study that they have opted for, will be required to reimburse Acorn Child Care if they resign within 12 months of completing the course. The amount of financial assistance required to be reimbursed to Acorn Child Care will be deducted from the employee’s final pay.

**Further education not related to requirements for the role**

If you are interested in attending further education and obtaining leave and financial contribution to fees from Acorn Child Care you should speak to your Director who will present each case to Acorn Child Care administration on a case by case basis.

Reviewed: 13.1.2018

Next review: 13.1.2019
4.10 Respect Policy

Policy overview

This policy relates to the expectation of respect in the workplace. It sets out to establish Acorn Child Care’s expectations in terms of behaviour and to indicate what is not appropriate.

This policy specifically relates to respect and ensuring that the workplace is free from discrimination, harassment, victimisation and bullying as well as acts which do not adhere to the Code of Conduct.

Policy and further information

To the extent that the contents of the Code of Conduct refers to obligations on Acorn Child Care, they are guidelines for management or summaries of applicable legislative requirements only and are not contractual terms, conditions or representations on which a staff member may rely. Your Manager is available to assist with any queries you have relating to the policy.

Purpose and scope

As an approved education and care service, Acorn Child Care is protective of its children, families and staff and Acorn Child Care itself. This policy reflects that level of concern.

Introduction

Acorn Child Care is committed to providing a safe and friendly workplace free from unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and bullying. We also seek to create a work environment which promotes good working relationships and where people are not subjected to unacceptable behaviour that makes them uncomfortable or causes harm. This policy is not limited to the workplace or work hours, but extends to all places and functions that are work related. For example, work or parent meetings, work lunches, conferences, work organised Christmas parties and external functions. Staff members should comply with this policy at all work related functions. This policy also applies when staff members go to other workplaces in connection with their work or are in a place representing work or with work colleagues.

Discrimination

What is unlawful discrimination?

Discrimination is treating, or proposing to treat, someone unfavourably because of a personal characteristic protected by the law, such as sex, age, race or disability. Discrimination and harassment are not only unacceptable but unlawful under State or Territory Equal Opportunity legislation and under Federal Legislation including:

- Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth);
- Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth);
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth);
- Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act 1986 (Cth);
- Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth);
- Anti-Discrimination Act 1996 (NT); and
- Equal Opportunity Act 1984 (WA);
Discrimination can occur:

**Directly**, when a person or group is treated less favourably than another person or group in a similar situation because of a personal characteristic protected by law (see list below). *For example, a worker is harassed and humiliated because of their race, or a worker is refused promotion because they are ‘too old’.*

**Indirectly**, when an unreasonable requirement, condition or practice is imposed that has, or is likely to have, the effect of disadvantaging people with a personal characteristic protected by law (see list below).

*For example, redundancy is decided based on people who have had a workers’ compensation claim rather than on operational needs.*

**Protected personal characteristics under Federal discrimination law include:**

A disability, disease or injury, impairment, including work-related injury;

- Parental status or status as a Carer, for example, because they are responsible for caring for children or other family members;
- Race, colour, descent, national origin, or ethnic background;
- Age, whether young or old, or because of age in general;
- Sex;
- Industrial activity, including being a member of an industrial organisation like a trade union or taking part in industrial activity, or deciding not to join a union;
- Religious belief or activity;
- Pregnancy and breastfeeding;
- Sexual orientation, intersex status or gender identity, including gay, lesbian, bisexual, transsexual, transgender, and heterosexual;
- Marital status, whether married, divorced, unmarried or in a de facto relationship or same sex relationship;
- Political opinion, affiliation or activity;
- Social origin or nationality;
- Medical record;
- Irrelevant criminal records; and
- An association with someone who has, or is assumed to have, one of these characteristics, such as being the parent of a child with a disability.

There may be further attributes under State or Territory equal opportunity legislation where you are based.

It is against the law to treat someone unfavourably because you assume they have a personal characteristic or may have it at some time in the future. Acorn Child Care will not tolerate discrimination in the workplace.

**Bullying**

Workplace bullying is repeated unreasonable behaviour directed toward a staff member, or group of staff members that creates a risk to health and safety. It is behaviour that offends, humiliates, intimidates or undermines a person. Bullying
Acorn Child Care Centres
Policies and Procedures

can take many forms, including jokes, teasing, nicknames, emails, pictures, text messages, social isolation or ignoring people, or unfair work practices.

If someone is being bullied because of a personal characteristic protected by equal opportunity law, this can also be a form of discrimination. Behaviours that may constitute bullying include:

- Sarcasm and other forms of demeaning language;
- Being subjected to actual or threatened violence abuse or shouting;
- Coercion;
- Isolation and being excluded from workplace and related activities;
- Inappropriate blaming;
- Ganging up;
- Constant unconstructive criticism;
- Deliberately withholding information or equipment that a person needs to do their job or access their entitlements; and
- Unreasonable refusal of requests for leave, training or other workplace benefits.

Bullying is unacceptable. Acorn Child Care will not tolerate bullying in the workplace. Reasonable management actions performed in a reasonable manner are not bullying, examples include:

- Setting performance goals, standards and deadlines;
- Allocating work to a staff member;
- Transferring an employee;
- Deciding not to select a staff member for promotion;
- Informing a staff member about unsatisfactory work performance;
- Informing a staff member about inappropriate behaviour;
- Implementing organisational changes;
- Performance management processes;
- Constructive feedback; and
- Downsizing.

Victimisation

Victimisation is subjecting or threatening to subject someone to a detriment because they have asserted their rights under equal opportunity law, made a complaint, helped someone else make a complaint, or refused to do something because it would be discrimination, sexual harassment or victimisation. Victimisation is against the law.

It is also victimisation to threaten someone (such as a witness) who may be involved in investigating an equal opportunity concern or complaint. Victimisation is a very serious breach of this policy and is likely (depending on the severity and circumstances) to result in formal discipline against the perpetrator, which may result in termination of employment.

Acorn Child Care has a zero tolerance approach to victimisation. It is unacceptable for staff at Acorn Child Care to talk with other staff members, clients or suppliers about any complaint of discrimination or harassment.

Harassment
Harassment is a form of discrimination. Harassment is unwelcome conduct towards a person with a protected attribute or characteristic that a reasonable person would expect to offend, humiliate or intimidate.

The law also has specific provisions relating to sexual harassment, racial hatred and disability harassment. Vilification involves using speech, images or writing in public to incite hatred towards, serious contempt for, or severe ridicule of a person’s race, HIV/AIDS status, transgender status or sexuality. Vilification can constitute a crime and will not be tolerated. Acorn Child Care will not tolerate harassment in any circumstances.

Sexual harassment

Sexual harassment is a specific and serious form of harassment. It is unwelcome conduct or behaviour of a sexual nature, that makes a person feel offended, humiliated or intimidated. Unwelcome conduct means that the subject did not invite the conduct. Sexual harassment can be physical, spoken or written. It can include words or statements, which are transmitted by post, phone, fax, text message, video, e-mail, computer servers, screensavers, or otherwise displayed in the workplace. The intention of the perpetrator, and the gender and/or sexual orientation of the perpetrator or victim are irrelevant. Examples can include:

- Comments about a person’s private life or the way they look;
- Sexually suggestive behaviour, such as leering or staring;
- Brushing up against someone, touching, fondling or hugging;
- Sexually suggestive comments or jokes;
- Displaying offensive screen savers, photos, calendars or objects;
- Repeated unwanted requests to go out;
- Requests for sex;
- Sexually explicit posts on social networking sites;
- Insults or taunts of a sexual nature;
- Intrusive questions or statements about a person’s private life;
- Sending sexually explicit emails or text messages;
- Inappropriate advances on social networking sites;
- Accessing sexually explicit internet sites; and
- Behaviour that may also be considered to be an offence under criminal law, such as physical assault, indecent exposure, sexual assault, stalking or obscene communications.

In the area of employment, sexual harassment is unlawful whether committed by or against:

- Employers or prospective employers;
- Employees;
- Contractors;
- Suppliers;
- Clients; and
- Members of industrial organisations and qualifying bodies.

A single incident is enough to constitute sexual harassment – it doesn’t have to be repeated. Just because someone does not object to inappropriate behaviour in the workplace at the time, it does not mean that they are consenting to the behaviour.
Sexual harassment is covered in the workplace when it happens at work, at work-related events, between people sharing the same workplace, or between colleagues outside of work. Sexual harassment does not have to be directed at a particular individual to be unlawful. Behaviour which creates a hostile working environment for other workplace participants can also be unlawful.

All incidents of sexual harassment – no matter how large or small or who is involved – require managers to respond quickly and appropriately. Acorn Child Care recognises that comments and behaviour that do not offend one person can offend another. This policy requires all staff and volunteers to respect other people’s limits.

Harassment of any type is unacceptable. Acorn Child Care will not tolerate sexual harassment in the workplace.

Prevention

Acorn Child Care aims to prevent discrimination, bullying, harassment or victimisation in the workplace through:

- Creating a working environment which is free from bullying, unlawful discrimination and harassment, sexual harassment and victimisation and where all staff members are treated with dignity, courtesy and respect;
- Implementing training and awareness raising programs to ensure that all staff members know their rights and responsibilities;
- Providing an effective procedure for complaints based on the principles of fairness;
- Treating all complaints in a sensitive, fair, timely and confidential manner, subject to the rights of others involved;
- Providing protection from any victimisation or reprisals;
- Encouraging the reporting of behaviour which breaches the discrimination and harassment policies;
- Promoting appropriate standards of conduct at all times.

Resolving issues

Acorn Child Care strongly encourages any staff member who believes they have been discriminated against, bullied, harassed or victimised to take appropriate action:

Let the perpetrator(s) know that their actions are inappropriate and you would like them to stop immediately. This should be done in an assertive and clear manner.

If you are unable to tell the perpetrator(s) to stop, or they continue to behave in an inappropriate manner, you should report their behaviour immediately to one of the following: Your immediate Manager; and/or

- Senior management.
- Any report of unlawful discrimination and harassment, bullying, sexual harassment or victimisation will be taken very seriously and dealt with promptly, confidentially (subject to the rights of others involved), and with due severity.

Staff who do not feel safe or confident to take such action may seek assistance from their Manager or their union.
False or vexatious allegations of bullying, unlawful discrimination and harassment, sexual harassment, or victimisation will also not be tolerated and if found to have occurred, will result in disciplinary action against the person making the false or vexatious complaint.

**Investigations**

All complaints will be taken seriously. In certain circumstances, complaints may be referred to external investigators, including our legal advisers, to investigate.

All staff members are required to fully co-operate with the investigator. A failure or refusal to fully cooperate may constitute misconduct and may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. The investigation and its outcome will, where possible, be kept confidential unless we determine otherwise.

**Employee support**

Staff are entitled to a certain amount of free, professional counselling, as needs arise as perceived by directors and at the discretion of administration.

**Staff member responsibility**

If discrimination, bullying, harassment, sexual harassment or victimisation goes unchallenged by staff members, not only does it provide the perpetrator with a camouflage within which to hide and thrive; it also denigrates our core values.

If any staff member witnesses any form of discrimination, bullying, harassment or victimisation they are required to report the matter to the appropriate Manager.

Any staff member that is found perpetrating, encouraging, or camouflaging any form of discrimination, bullying, harassment or victimisation will face disciplinary action, which may result in dismissal.

**Further information**

Further information on bullying can be obtained by visiting the website of the Fair Work Commission or the OHS Regulator in the State or Territory in which you work. Further information on unlawful discrimination and harassment can be obtained by visiting the website of Fair Work Commission, the Australian Human Rights Commission, or the appropriate equal opportunity body in the State or Territory in which you work.

Reviewed: 13.1.2018

Next review: 13.1.2019
4.11 Students, Volunteers and Visitors

Background

Students from universities, TAFEs and RTOs need to spend time working in childcare Services in order to complete the practicum requirements of their courses. Accommodating these students is important because they are the next generation of professionals in early childhood education and care. Students benefit Services by introducing current information and new ideas, inducing educators to question their own practices and beliefs about teaching and learning. The institutions benefit through the students’ recounts of their practical experience.

Members of the local community and services such as the fire brigade, police and ambulance may also contribute to the Service’s program, and the same applies to volunteers.

However, because the safety of children is paramount, much legislation surrounds the acceptance of students, volunteers and visitors into Services.

Policy statement

This Policy sets out the specific conditions under which the Service accommodates students, volunteers and visitors so that the safety, education and care of children are never compromised.

Strategies and practices

Acorn Child Care Centre is committed to giving opportunities to work experience students and volunteers and seeks to present childcare as vocationally satisfying. Where students and volunteers do not have the requisite training and qualifications to work in a child care centre the following provisions will apply:

- The student/volunteer will not form part of the formal care team.
- The student/volunteer is given no responsibility for care of children.
- The director is satisfied that normal care and supervision is not compromised.
- For the benefit of child programs each student/volunteer’s visit will be for a minimum of two hours.
- The student/volunteer will not be left alone with children at any time.
- Students who are involved with the centre for more than 1 day will be provided with the centre policy.

- Students and volunteers are required to follow the Service’s Policies and Procedures at all times. The Policies and Procedures are readily accessible, and students and volunteers are to ask the Nominated Supervisor or their appointed mentor if they are not clear on any matter. QA 7.3.5

- The Nominated Supervisor interviews all students and volunteers before they commence at the Service, and completes an induction covering all items in the Student and Volunteer Induction Checklist. The induction places special emphasis on confidentiality, health and safety, and respectful relationships with others. It concludes with a walk through the Service and an introduction to all available staff. QA 7.1.2

- Students and volunteers sign that they have received an induction, understand what is required of them, have been given the opportunity to clarify and discuss all the information provided, and that they agree to adhere to the Service’s Policies and Procedures at all times. In addition they are required to sign a Confidentiality Agreement and a Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy. Refer to the Service’s Privacy and Confidentiality Policy and to its Child Protection and Risk Management Policy. QA 2.3.4
Acorn Child Care Centres
Policies and Procedures

- Students and volunteers do not commence at the Service until they have provided all required documentation including:
  - Current Working with Children Card – either “V” for volunteer or “P” for paid;
  - Immunisation status;
  - A written statement on what is expected of them by their university, school or training organisation; and,
  - A poster for display which has their name, photograph, brief background including any special interests, course of study, and the period they will be at the Service. QA 7.3.1

- Students and volunteers are assigned a mentor for the duration of their attendance at the Service. The mentor meets with them each visit to ensure they are fulfilling their course requirements, and provides them with professional support and feedback. QA 4.2.2, 7.2.2

- Students and volunteers must inform their mentor or the Nominated Supervisor of any incident, injury, trauma and illness that they may have witnessed over the course of the day before leaving the Service. QA 2.3.3

- From time to time, the Service may need to reschedule the attendance of students and volunteers at the Service. In addition, students may be required to work a range of shifts to gain insight into the daily workings of the Service and to meet their course requirements. QA 4.2.3

- As part of maintaining a safe and secure environment for children, educators closely supervise students and volunteers while imparting relevant skills and knowledge. QA 2.3.2

- All students, volunteers and visitors are to complete the Visitors Sign-in Sheet. Details to be provided in the book are the date, printed name, time in and time out, and signature. QA 2.3.2, 7.3.1

- Students and volunteers are to remain within sight and sound of an educator at all times – including excursions – when in the presence of children (i.e. they are not to be left alone with a child). QA 2.3.2

- The placement of students or visitors at the Service will be terminated if they do not adhere to the Service’s Policies and Procedures or for conduct deemed by the Nominated Supervisor/Approved Provider as inappropriate. QA 4.2.1, 7.2.2

Visitors

- Visitors can only enter the Service with the permission of the Nominated Supervisor, and are accompanied by a staff member at all times they are in the Service. QA 2.3.2

- Visitors are asked to contact the Service prior to their visit. The Nominated Supervisor will arrange the day, date, time and duration of the visit. QA 2.3.2

- As part of maintaining a safe and secure environment for children, educators question anyone in the Service who is not known to them to ascertain who they are and why they are in the Service. The educator or another staff member stays with the visitor until that person leaves the Service. QA 2.3.2
Additional safe practices for babies

- To ensure students understand and adhere to the Service’s Policies and Procedures with particular reference to the care of babies.

Responsibilities of parents

- To understand the role of students and volunteers in the Service, as detailed in the Service’s Policies and Procedures.
- To direct questions and communications about their children to staff other than students and volunteers.

Links to other policies

- Child Protection and Risk Management Policy
- Excursion Policy
- Incidents, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy
- Medical Conditions Policy
- Privacy and Confidentiality Policy
- Supervision Policy
- Tobacco, Drug and Alcohol Free Environment Policy

Sources

- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011.

Further reading and useful websites


Date(s) reviewed: 15/03/2017

Next review Date: 15/05/2017
4.12 Workplace bullying policy

This policy covers victimising, humiliating, intimidating and threatening behaviours.

Background

ACORN values an environment in which not only the families in our care, but also all employees can thrive and grow to their full potential. Acorn recognises the right of all employees or anyone else in the workplace (I.E. parents), to be in an environment free from harassment, bullying, unlawful discrimination and any other demeaning behaviours. Such behaviours may cause the loss of trained and talented workers, loss of clientele, reduced productivity and morale, and create legal risks.

Equally it is the obligation and responsibility of every employee to ensure that the workplace is free from harassment, bullying, and discrimination or any other demeaning behaviours.

Our Commitment

ACORN is committed to providing a safe and healthy workplace free from bullying.

Staff are protected by this policy whether they feel bullied by a supervisor, another staff member, client, contractor or member of the public.

ACORN will treat reports of workplace bullying seriously. We will respond promptly, impartially and confidentially.

This policy will be made available to all workers including contractors. New employees will be given a copy of this policy at their induction. Directors will remind staff of the policy from time to time.

Expected Workplace Behaviours

Under work health and safety laws staff and other people at our workplace must take reasonable care that they do not adversely affect the health and safety of others.

ACORN expects people to:

- behave in a responsible and professional manner
- treat others in the workplace with courtesy and respect
- listen and respond appropriately to the views and concerns of others
- be fair and honest in their dealings with others.
Please refer to *Acorn Child Care Centres Code of Conduct*, for further examples of expected behaviours.

This policy applies to behaviours that occur:

- in connection with work, even if it occurs outside normal working hours
- during work activities, for example when dealing with clients
- at work-related events, for example at conferences and work-related social functions
- on social media where staff interact with colleagues or clients and their actions may affect them either directly or indirectly.

What Is Workplace Bullying?

Workplace bullying is defined as repeated and unreasonable behaviour directed towards a staff member or a group of staff members that creates a risk to health and safety.

Repeated behaviour refers to the persistent nature of the behaviour and can refer to a range of behaviours over time.

Unreasonable behaviour means behaviour that a reasonable person, having considered the circumstances, would see as unreasonable, including behaviour that is victimising, humiliating, intimidating or threatening.

Single incidents of unreasonable behaviour can also present a risk to health and safety and will not be tolerated.

What Is Not Workplace Bullying?

Reasonable management action taken by managers or supervisors to direct and control the way work is carried out is not considered to be workplace bullying if the action is taken in a reasonable and lawful way.

What Can You Do?

If you feel you are being bullied and are not comfortable dealing with the problem yourself, or your attempts to do so have not been successful, you should raise the issue either with your Director, or other manager within Acorn.

If you witness unreasonable behaviour you should bring the matter to the attention of your director or manager as a matter of urgency.
How Will Acorn Respond?

If workplace bullying or unreasonable behaviour is reported or observed we will usually take the following steps depending on the nature of the allegation:

1. The responsible supervisor or manager will speak to the parties involved as soon as possible, gather information and seek a resolution to satisfactorily address the issue for all parties.

2. If issues cannot be resolved or the unreasonable behaviour is considered to be of a serious nature, an impartial person will be appointed to investigate. Both sides will be able to state their case and relevant information will be collected and considered before a decision is made.

3. All complaints and reports will be treated in the strictest of confidence. Only those people directly involved in the complaint or in resolving it will have access to the information.

4. There will be no victimisation of the person making the report or helping to resolve it, therefore, in some cases where there is concern for the safety of those reporting a case of bullying, they will not be identified to the alleged perpetrator. Complaints made maliciously or in bad faith will result in disciplinary action.

Consequences of Breaching This Policy

Appropriate disciplinary action will be taken against a person who is found to have breached this policy. These measures will depend on the nature and circumstance of each breach and could include:

- a verbal or written apology
- one or more parties agreeing to participate in counselling or training
- a verbal or written reprimand
- transfer, demotion or dismissal of the person engaging in the unreasonable behaviour.

If Unreasonable Behaviour Has Not Been Substantiated

If the investigation finds unreasonable behaviour has not occurred or cannot be substantiated, ACORN may still take appropriate action to address any workplace issues leading to the report.

Reviewed: 13.1.2018

Next review: 13.1.2019
4.13 Performance Review and Management

Background

One of the ways educators achieve job satisfaction and improve the quality of their work with children is through the feedback and guidance received from peers and leaders. Positive, constructive feedback and guidance gives professionals a clear idea of what they are doing well and where they can improve practice.

When feedback and guidance in the workplace is formalised and targeted, it is often referred to as “performance review and management”. Effective performance review and management supports and lifts the standards of practice of educators which in turn improves the quality of care for children and their families.

Policy statement

Acorn understands that an appropriate performance management and review system will recognise educator’s skills and confirm they are fulfilling their duties; and identify their training and development needs.

The outcomes of effective performance review and management are improved performance, communication, workplace practices, and attitudes towards the job role, improved self esteem and team spirit created because educators are open to feedback and supported in their role. Fewer conflicts arise as issues are addressed and managed in an ongoing manner. In addition to these benefits educators feel valued and appreciated as their skills are recognised and they are supported to further develop their professional expertise.

Strategies and practices

- To manage performance, it is useful to use an appropriate review and management process that allows for goal setting, self-reflection and action planning. It is important to build on the positive performance of the educator and show an awareness of, and clearly address negative performance issues.

- Educators are made aware of the performance and review process during orientation and the service expectations around code of conduct and job descriptions.

- Performance management is to discuss issues around not meeting job description, policies, practice and Acorn Code of Conduct. This is to be conducted as individual issues arise and set goals and outcomes to meet required expectations. (This step is to be done prior to any written warnings are issued)

- Performance review is conducted twice a year on a set schedule to give opportunity for reflection, feedback and goal setting to improve and continue educator performance.

- Performance reviews and management are conducted in a confidential environment between the educator and the Director.

- Allow reflection, review and discussion of past performance with input from both parties.

- Recognise the contributions made by the employee through genuine praise and positive reinforcement.

- Address any performance problems clearly and constructively and set outcomes and goals in achieving allocated job description.

- Be put in writing and agreed upon by both parties.
Identify the date for the next performance review.

**Educators and managers can contribute positively to a performance review or management by**

- Positive communication strategies are used and a non-threatening atmosphere is created for discussion with the educator.
- Listening to the thoughts, feelings and ideas of others.
- Positively and clearly expressing their own feelings and ideas, even when these conflict with those of the other party.
- Expressing views in a polite and constructive manner.
- Accepting that performance can be improved by willingness to take the lead as well as by following the lead of others.

**Links to other policies**

- Educator Professionalism and Ethics Policy
- Staffing
- Students, Volunteers and Visitors Policy
- Acorn Code of Conduct
- Privacy and Confidentiality

**Sources**

- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011.
- Putting the ‘people’ into performance management and appraisals, extract from putting people first magazine NCAC

**Further reading and useful websites**

4.13 WorkCover and Return to Work Policy

Policy overview

Our workplace understands and accepts the responsibility to establish injury management systems, policies and return to work programs in accordance with the relevant workers’ compensation and injury management legislation and codes of practice in this State. Acorn Child Care has implemented a WorkCover and Return to Work Policy.

What is the policy?

The WorkCover and Return to Work Policy sets out the guidelines for dealing with claims for worker’s compensation made by employees who suffer a work-related injury and for facilitating a return to work following an employee’s absence due to work-related injury. This policy is a guide only and will not form part of your General Terms and Conditions of employment or confer contractual rights, on which a staff member may rely. This policy may be amended from time to time.

Some important points to consider

- All employees are required to comply with the WorkCover and Return to Work Policy as amended and implemented from time to time, as well as any new or amended policies that are introduced from time to time. Failure to comply may result in disciplinary action.
- In accordance with workers’ compensation legislation, Acorn Child Care aims to facilitate wherever possible a return to work following an employee’s absence due to work-related injury.

Injured workers involved in a Return to Work (RTW) process will need to provide consent for Acorn Child Care to speak with treating medical practitioners. This consent can be given using the “medical information disclosure consent” form found in the Resource Centre. We ask that all injured employees co-operate with the return to work process.

What do I need to do?

You need to carefully read through the WorkCover and Return to Work Policy to make yourself familiar with the contents of the policy and with Company guidelines. You will receive some education on the policy and how it is implemented during your time at Acorn Child Care. Your manager is available to assist with any queries you may have relating to the policy. If you are an injured worker returning to work then please discuss the matter with your manager.

To the extent that the contents of the policies refers to obligations on Acorn Child Care, they are guidelines for management or summaries of applicable legislative requirements only and are not contractual terms, conditions or representations on which a staff member may rely.

WorkCover

Acorn Child Care recognises that all employees are entitled to workers' compensation if they suffer a work-related injury. All parties are to be made aware of the need for timely reporting and compliance with medical and insurance requirements in order to prevent a negative impact on the claim decision process. Delays in reporting or submitting the paperwork may result in a denial of the claim.

All employees will be afforded timely processing of all workers’ compensation claims by this organisation and in conjunction with this policy will be supported to complete their claim forms where required.
Acorn Child Care Centres
Policies and Procedures

Management aims to:

- Ensure that they have a current knowledge of applicable Occupational Health and Safety and Workers Compensation legislation.
- Make provision for the injury management and vocational rehabilitation of all employees who have sustained a compensable work related illness, injury or disability.
- Support the employee’s return to work, where it is reasonably practicable to do so.
- Begin compensation payments, without delay, once approval from the insurer has been granted.
- No payments will commence without prior approval from the insurer.

Employees will:

- Be responsible for reporting injuries without delay.
- Provide all relevant documentation necessary to complete the claim as soon as practicable.
- Maintain regular contact with their doctor and Acorn Child Care to enable the overall efficient management of their claim.
- Retain copies of all forms, medical certificates and information provided, for future reference.
- Application of procedure

Acorn Child Care employees are entitled to workers’ compensation in accordance with applicable legislation, if they are injured in the course of their employment. Any claims for compensation will be forwarded to Acorn Child Care’s WorkCover Agent.

Procedure

The following procedure must be followed:

If an employee is injured and wishes to lodge a claim for compensation, claim forms can be obtained from Director.

In order for a claim to be accepted, a WorkCover Certificate of Capacity must be provided by a medical practitioner who saw the employee after the injury.

The employee’s claim form, Certificate of Capacity and Incident Report Form must be returned to Director as soon as possible.

Any medical expenses that relate to a WorkCover claim should also be provided to Director.

Employees requiring time off work must provide a certificate. No wages will be paid for lost time until Director has received approval from the WorkCover Agent.

Once the claim has been accepted, relevant payments and reimbursements (including of medical expenses) will be made. It is therefore extremely important that all paper work is completed immediately to ensure that employees are paid promptly.

Return to work

In accordance with workers’ compensation legislation, Acorn Child Care aims to facilitate wherever possible a return to work following an employee’s absence due to work-related injury.
Definitions

Injury Management (IM) Program: This is a coordinated and managed program that integrates all aspects of injury management including treatment, rehabilitation, retraining, claims management and employment practices.

Injury Management (IM) Plan: An IM Plan is a plan for coordinating and managing those aspects of injury management that concern the treatment, rehabilitation and retraining of an injured worker, for the purpose of achieving a timely, safe and durable return to work for a particular worker. The IM Plan is developed by the insurer.

Return to Work (RTW) Program: An employer must establish a RTW Program with respect to policies and procedures for the rehabilitation (and, if necessary, vocational re-education) of any injured workers of the employer. An employer’s Return to Work Program must not be inconsistent with the Injury Management Program of the employer’s insurer and is of no effect to the extent of any such inconsistency.

Return to Work (RTW) Plan: When an injured employee returns to work on suitable duties with restrictions, the supervisor/Return to Work Coordinator/Injury Management Coordinator or Rehabilitation Provider must write a RTW Plan. This plan must be regularly monitored and reviewed by all parties. Physical restrictions, suitable duties, hours worked, supervision arrangements, and treatment times and dates must be clearly outlined in the RTW Plan.

Return to work (RTW) planning

The priority of all RTW planning is early, safe return to suitable duties following a work related injury or illness. Acorn Child Care, in consultation with the injured employee, nominated treating doctor, and the insurer, will work on individual return to work strategies and plans for each injured employee with the aim of getting the person back to work as soon as possible.

Acorn Child Care will:

Make suitable duties available to injured workers who are certified fit for suitable duties and where it is reasonably practical to do so;

- Refer an injured employee to a rehabilitation provider if required;
- Notify the insurer if unable to provide suitable duties;
- Cooperate with the insurer in providing retraining to an injured worker who is unable to return to their pre-injury job.

As an injured employee you must:

Cooperate with worksite changes designed to assist the return to work of you or fellow employees;

- Participate in the establishment of the IM Plan and RTW Plan;
- Nominate a treating doctor who will agree to participate in the development of the RTW Plan;
- Authorise the treating doctor to provide relevant information to the insurer or the employer for the purposes of the IM and RTW Plan;
- Make all reasonable efforts to return to work on pre-injury duties, as soon as possible, having regard to the injury.
Employees should ensure that they cooperate with the RTW process as insurance companies may suspend weekly benefits if an injured employee unreasonably refuses to cooperate with the RTW process.

Finding suitable duties

Employees injured at work are, where it is reasonable to do so, brought back to work on suitable duties as part of their rehabilitation with the aim of returning them to pre-injury duties. The aim is to have a gradual return to work with regular upgrades towards the overall goal which is a return to pre-injury duties. Suitable duties for partially incapacitated workers should be meaningful, productive and consistent with remaining capabilities.

The following will be considered when determining suitable duties:

- The nature of the employee’s pre-injury duties;
- Details of physical restrictions given by the treating doctor (shown on the medical certificate);
- The employee’s skills and experience.
- Where suitable duties can be provided, they will be:
  - Time limited;
  - Reviewed on a regular basis;
  - Upgraded, where possible, on a regular basis.

Each case will be treated on an individual basis to strive for the best outcome for the Company and the employee.

Involving a rehabilitation provider

When the injured worker is not likely to resume pre-injury duties or cannot do so without alteration to the workplace or work practices, a nominated Rehabilitation Provider may be engaged to assist in the return to work process.

Return to work not to disadvantage injured employee

Each state workers compensation body sets guidelines for how an injured employee must not be disadvantaged while participating in a return to work process following a work related injury.

This includes but is not limited to, injured employees accessing their sick leave as per their contractual or enterprise agreement entitlements (if a valid medical certificate is provided). If the medical condition is subsequently accepted as a compensable workplace injury, the sick leave will be reinstated in accordance with applicable legislation.

All monies that the injured employee is entitled to under the workers compensation legislation will be passed on to that employee as soon as practicable after notification from the insurer.

Confidentiality

A confidential return to work file for each injured employee will be established, maintained and stored in a locked filing cabinet on site. Access will be restricted to those who have direct responsibility in the rehabilitation process. At the beginning of the return to work process the “Consent to disclose medical information” form shall be completed and signed by all involved with the rehabilitation process.

What happens if someone breaches this policy?
The consequences of a breach of this policy will vary depending on the type and seriousness of the breach and will be at the discretion of Acorn Child Care. Depending on the circumstances, the following may take place, including but not limited to disciplinary action including counselling, a formal written warning or the termination of employment.

Reviewed: 13.1.2018

Next review: 13.1.2019
Acorn Child Care Centres
Policies and Procedures

5 Education Program and Practice

Background

“All children experience learning that is engaging and builds success for life” (Belonging, Being and Becoming, The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia)

The Australian Early Years Learning Framework informs and underpins the educational program and practice in our centers. The Australian Early Years Learning Framework principles and learning outcomes informs educators approach to children’s learning, including intentional teaching, decision making and an ongoing cycle of observation.

Policy statement

This Policy sets out the Service’s expectations for educators’ documenting and guiding children’s learning. At Acorn the educational program and practice developed by educators recognises children’s agency from birth and demonstrates a commitment to listening to and respecting children (the pedagogy of listening).

Acorn is committed to social inclusion and participation of every child and their family within our early learning centres. Our educational programs and practices value and respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, identities and connections to community and country. We recognise the important role families have in children’s childhoods and in supporting a child to identify with and make meaning of themselves and their world.

Strategies and practices

- The Service’s wide variety of resources, materials and equipment meets the needs (e.g. age, development, culture) and interests of the children, and supports children’s learning and harmonious play. QA 3.1.1, 3.2.2

- The educational program is based on the knowledge, ideas, culture, abilities and interests of each child as communicated to educators by their parents, observed by educators and contributed to by the children. Refer to the Service’s Interactions with Families Policy. In addition, each child’s learning and development are assessed as part of the programming cycle of planning, documentation and evaluation and reflective practices. QA 1.1.2, 5.1.3, 5.2.1, 6.1.2, 6.2.1, 7.3.5

- Educators engage in ongoing critical reflection of children’s engagement in the learning environment and of their own interaction with children to support their play so as to better understand the individual child as a learner.

- Both indoor and outdoor environments are used to engage children in learning and play.

- The Service has an Educational Leader who oversees the development and implementation of the Service’s educational program. QA 7.1.4

- All group leaders will receive approximately two hours per week of paid time for the purpose of working on their group program. This time will be allocated by the centre director and will be convenient to both the centre and group leader

- The centre is required to keep observations and portfolios for individual children in care. Acorn is currently utilising online programming for records to be maintained and updated electronically. Individual portfolios are
Acorn Child Care Centres
Policies and Procedures

available online for families to access once written consent has been given. Acorn’s educational programs for children are guided by the Early Years Learning Framework, My Time Our Place and the Queensland Kindergarten Learning guidelines.

- Acorn has three specific programs OSHC, kindergarten program and a full music immersion program.

- The Service conducts regular team meetings where educators become familiar with each other’s strengths and weaknesses and learn how to work best as a team to achieve quality education and care outcomes for children. Refer to the Service’s Educator Professionalism and Ethics Policy. QA 4.2.2, 4.2.3, 7.2.3

- Acorn recognises the benefits of staff training and is committed to providing opportunities for training and development to all staff. It is desirable that Acorn be recognised as a pro-training company with training being one of the advantages of employment at our centre.

- Educators devote time to babies, one-on-one, and are attuned to them. QA 1.1.1, 5.1.1

- The Service is committed to working in partnerships with parents to best meet the education and care needs of their children. Refer to the Service’s Interactions with Families Policy. The communication between home and the Service is especially important when guiding children’s learning and including family input into the daily program. QA 5.2.2, 6.1.2, 6.2.1, 6.3.3, 7.2.1

- The program has extended periods of uninterrupted play which accommodate child-initiated, educator-initiated and co-constructed activities. This blend provides children the opportunities to make choices, contribute their own ideas, thoughts and feelings – and to develop social competence. Children then know that they are valued as capable and competent. QA 1.1.3, 5.1.1

- Routines are unhurried, largely social occasions. Refer to the Service’s Educational Program Policy. QA 1.1.1, 1.1.3, 5.2.3

- Educators collaborate with the children to construct simple rules (expressed in a positive way), and discuss with them how these rules help everyone feel safe and secure. QA 2.1.2, 2.3.2, 5.2.2

- Educators intentionally teach children to play and to complete projects together, and to resolve social conflicts that arise from time to time. QA 5.2.2, 5.2.1, 5.2.3

- Educators encourage children’s efforts, rather than praise the child. QA 5.1.3

Responsibilities

- This policy is to be implemented by educators, early childhood teachers, educational leader, and centre directors.

Links to other policies
Policies and Procedures

- Staffing Policy
- Educator Professionalism and Ethics Policy
- Enrolment and Orientation Policy
- Interactions with Families Policy
- Relationships with Children Policy
- Philosophy

Sources

- Belonging, Being, Becoming, The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia (2009)
- My Time our Place, Framework for School Age Care in Australia (2011)
- Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority, Queensland Kindergarten Learning Guidelines
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011.

Further reading and useful websites


Date(s) reviewed: 12/05/2016

Next review Date: 16/05/2017
5.1 Photographs and Video Recording

Background

Educators use photographs and videos to document and demonstrate children’s learning, as well as to share celebrations and activities that occur at the service. However, they need to be ethical and comply with federal and state privacy and human rights legislation in the manner they obtain, store, use and share these images.

If a child is younger than 18 years of age, parental consent must be obtained and information provided to them on how and for what purpose the photograph or video will be used. Whenever possible, the child’s consent should also be obtained.

Policy statement

This Policy sets out the way the Service uses photographs and videos of children taken at the Service. It ensures that no child or family is compromised in any way at any time. Photographs and videos are generally used to document the program, to communicate a child’s learning to parents and as an intentional teaching tool to revisit learning.

Strategies and practices

- When a child starts at the Service, parents are asked to agree in writing to their child being photographed and videoed by educators but not by students or relief staff. QA 7.3.5

- The Service uses the images for child development profiles, portfolios, Service displays, and to share information about Service activities such as special occasions, birthdays and excursions. The Service also uses them to create a slide-show of the day’s events for children and their parents. From time to time, where relevant to the observation and after careful consideration, a child’s photograph may also be included in another child’s profile. QA 1.1.4, 5.1.2, 7.1.1

- Only Service cameras or tablets and iPads are used, and these items are kept secure at the Service. No private cameras, mobile phones or other devices are used. QA 2.3.2, 7.1.1

- The Service will respect the wishes of any parent who does not wish their child to be photographed and ensure that this does not occur while the child is in attendance at the Service. QA 4.2.1

- The Service does not allow any party other than Service staff to video children. QA 4.2.1, 5.2.3

- Parents or family members visiting the Service with the intention of taking photographs may only photograph their own child unless they have provided the Nominated Supervisor with written permission from the parents of any other participating child. QA 4.2.1

- Where a parent has given permission for their child to be photographed at the Service by anyone other than Service staff, the Service does not accept responsibility for the distribution or use of any photograph taken. QA 4.2.1

- If the Service wishes to take photographs of a child for promotional purposes, the parents will be approached personally. The photographs will only be taken after written permission has been obtained from them. QA 6.2.1
Responsibilities of parents

- To only photograph their own child unless the Service has been provided with written permission from the parent(s) of other children to be photographed.
- Not to video any child at the Service using a camera or mobile phone.

Links to other policies

- Child Protection and Risk Management Policy
- Educational Program
- Educator Professionalism and Ethics Policy
- Enrolment and Orientation Policy
- Interactions with Families Policy
- Privacy and Confidentiality Policy
- Students, Volunteers and Visitors Policy

Sources

- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011.

Further reading and useful websites

- Australian National Data Service (ANDS) – Ethics, consent and data sharing

Date(s) reviewed: 16/03/2016

Next review Date: 16/05/2017
6 Relationships with Children

Background

“In the process of learning the complex life skills of cooperation, conflict resolution, acceptable expression of strong feelings, children, like all of us, make mistakes” (Gartrell, 1997).

However, young children are likely to make far more mistakes than adults because their abilities to think and reason are in the early stages of development, their life experience is limited and they have had little exchange with other children.

Educators can effectively help children to learn social skills by providing them with supportive physical and social environments to learn and practise their social skills. When children make a mistake, educators are best to treat the children with respect and empathy as they guide and encourage them to recognise, manage and learn from the mistake, and to express their emotions in positive, non-threatening and productive ways.

Policy statement

This Policy sets out the Service’s expectations for educators’ relationships with young children and to facilitate the children’s friendships with each other. It also details the approach to children who have difficulty relating to others and following guidelines that uphold the safety, dignity and rights of other children.

Strategies and practices

- The Service’s wide variety of resources, materials and equipment meets the needs (e.g. age, development, culture) and interests of the children, and supports children’s learning and harmonious play. Refer to the Service’s Educational Program Policy. QA 3.1.1, 3.2.2

- The educational program is based on the knowledge, ideas, culture, abilities and interests of each child as communicated to educators by their parents, observed by educators and contributed to by the children. Refer to the Service’s Interactions with Families Policy. In addition, each child’s learning and development are assessed as part of the programming cycle of planning, documentation and evaluation. QA 1.1.2, 5.1.3, 5.2.1, 6.1.2, 6.2.1, 7.3.5

- The Service’s expectation that educators relate to children in accordance with this Policy and the Service’s Educator Professionalism and Ethics Policy is emphasised during their induction. QA 7.1.2

- The Service’s rosters ensure continuity of care so that the children are with educators who know them well and are interested in what they think, feel and do. Further, the educators promote the children’s wellbeing, self-esteem and sense of security by being responsive, warm, trusting and respectful. QA 5.1.1, 7.1.3

- Educators devote time to babies, one-on-one, and are attuned to them. QA 1.1.1, 5.1.1

- Educators consistently model positive social skills in their everyday interactions with other adults and children. QA 5.2.2

- The Service provides educators with professional development in relating with children and in positive behaviour guidance. QA 5.2.2, 7.2.2
The Service is committed to working in partnerships with parents to best meet the education and care needs of their children. Refer to the Service’s Interactions with Families Policy. The communication between home and the Service is especially important when children experience difficulty relating to others, and ensures that each party is aware of what is occurring in the child’s day. QA 5.2.2, 6.1.2, 6.2.1, 6.3.3, 7.2.1

- The program has extended periods of uninterrupted play which accommodate child-initiated, educator-initiated and co-constructed activities. This blend provides children the opportunities to make choices, contribute their own ideas, thoughts and feelings – and to develop social competence. Children then know that they are valued as capable and competent. QA 1.1.3, 5.1.1

- Routines are unhurried, largely social occasions. Refer to the Service’s Educational Program Policy. QA 1.1.1, 1.1.3, 5.2.3

- Educators collaborate with the children to construct simple rules (expressed in a positive way), and discuss with them how these rules help everyone feel safe and secure. QA 2.1.2, 2.3.2, 5.2.2

- Educators intentionally teach children to play and to complete projects together, and to resolve social conflicts that arise from time to time. QA 5.2.2, 5.2.1, 5.2.3

- Educators encourage children’s efforts, rather than praise the child. QA 5.1.3

- Educators intentionally teach children protective behaviours. QA 1.2.2, 2.3.4

When responding to children who have difficulty relating to others or following guidelines, educators:

- Take a positive approach to guiding children’s behaviour. They accept children’s behavioural mistakes as a natural part of acquiring social skills, and view any mistake as a teaching/learning opportunity – rather than as a distraction. QA 5.2.2

- Draw upon strategies that do not diminish the child in the eyes of others and, at the same time, do not negatively affect onlooking children. Strategies could include: redirection, reminders of the rules (without censure), suggesting alternatives, offering choices and encouraging children to think about how others might feel (empathy). QA 5.2.3

- Question aspects of the environment that might contribute to the behaviour
  - Is adequate and safe playing space available?
  - Do the resources, materials and equipment meet the children’s needs?
  - Can children choose freely from the resources, materials and equipment?
  - Has sufficient personal play space been provided?
  - Is a quiet play space available?
  - Is an active play space available? QA 3.1.1, 1.1.6

- Consider other influences on the child
Specific circumstances
Specific times of day
Developmental issues
Prior experiences, particularly those within their family.

- Adopt a problem-solving approach which involves the children in deciding what to do in the situation. QA 5.2.2

When managing children with recurrent difficulty relating to others or following guidelines, educators:

- Maintain written records of dates, times, circumstances and possible causes of the incidents. QA 1.2.1, 7.3.1
- Discuss with the parents any concerns about their child’s behaviour. Collaborate with them in constructing a behaviour guidance plan to help the child acquire the social skills necessary to play and learn happily with others. When practicable, have the child contribute to the plan. QA 5.2.2, 6.2.1, 6.3.3
- Refer parents to an external support agency, when appropriate, and work collaboratively with that agency to ensure a consistent approach. QA 5.2.2, 6.3.1, 6.3.3

Additional safe practices for babies

- To prioritise continuity and consistency of the educators in the babies’ room(s) in the Service roster to promote the establishment and/or continuity of relationships between educators, children and parents.

Responsibilities of parents

- To inform the Service of any changes in their child’s education and care needs.
- To contribute to the program.
- To provide the Service with up-to-date information on their child and on any external circumstances affecting the child.
- To collaborate with educators in establishing any behaviour guidance plan required.
- To seek professional help for their child when recommended by the Service.

Links to other policies

- Additional Needs Policy
- Educator Professionalism and Ethics Policy
- Enrolment and Orientation Policy
- Educational Program
- Interactions with Families Policy
- Staffing Policy
Sources

- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011.

Further reading and useful websites


Date(s) reviewed: 16/03/2016

Next review Date: 16/05/2017
6.1 Interactions with Families

Background

As outlined in the National Quality Standard, the Early Years Learning Framework and in My Time, Our Place, the education and care needs of children cannot be met without effective partnerships between the Service and its families. Regular and clear communications are vital in developing and maintaining effective partnerships.

Policy statement

This Policy outlines the Service’s commitment to partnerships between the Service and families and the many avenues of communication in place to sustain these partnerships.

Strategies and practices

- The Service is committed to working in partnerships with families to best meet the education and care needs of the children. This commitment is communicated to parents at enrolment and during orientation, as is the belief that effective partnerships can only be achieved when information is exchanged regularly and in simple terms. QA 6.1.1, 6.2.1
- The Service’s enrolment and orientation processes are designed to be the beginning of the partnership. Parents are asked to provide as much information as possible about their child and the family background (e.g. cultural, religious, food preferences), and are provided with detailed verbal and written information about the Service and its practices. Refer to the Service’s Enrolment and Orientation Policy. QA 2.1.1, 6.1.1
- During enrolment and orientation, parents are asked about their preferred way of receiving information from the Service and how best for them to communicate with the Service. QA 6.1.2
- The Service uses many avenues to exchange information with families. These include:
  - Face to face
  - Monthly newsletter
  - Notice boards
  - Parent-educator meetings
  - Suggestion box
  - Surveys and questionnaires
  - Emails
  - Text messages
  - Facebook
  - Educa
  - Website. QA 6.1.2, 6.1.3
Acorn Child Care Centres
Policies and Procedures

- Information about community resources and support agencies in the local community is provided to parents to support parenting and family wellbeing. QA 6.2.2, 6.3.1, 6.3.4
- The Service accesses translation services for non-English speaking families. QA 6.2.2
- The Service uses a wide variety of means for parents to contribute to the program, and document how their contributions have been used in the program. Refer to the Service’s Educational Program Policy. The means include:
  - Family and Child Information Summary
  - Communication and Needs Survey
  - Interest / Favourite Activity Form
  - Catching Family Input
  - Educa. QA 1.1.2, 1.1.4, 6.1.2, 6.2.1
- Parents are encouraged to raise any concerns they may have about any aspect of the Service’s operations. Refer to the Service’s Grievance and Complaints Policy. QA 7.3.4
- Information about children’s wellbeing is routinely communicated to parents (e.g. illness or injuries, food and nutrition intake, sleep/rest times, nappy changes). QA 2.1.2
- The Service’s Policies and Procedures are reviewed annually. Parents are actively encouraged to be part of the review and to suggest any changes they consider necessary. They are provided with written feedback when their contributions are included. QA 6.1.2, 7.3.5
- Wherever possible, proposed changes to the Service’s operations are communicated to families some weeks prior to the implementation so that families have an opportunity to comment on and adjust to the change. QA 6.1.3, 7.3.5
- Information from parents about their child remains confidential. (Refer to the Service’s Privacy and Confidentiality Policy). QA 7.3.1
- Parents are welcome at the Service at any time. In addition, the Service actively seeks their involvement in its daily activities
  - To share aspects of their culture and talents
  - Joining in with excursions and trips away from the centre
  - Volunteering to assist in one of the groups
  - Completing a parent suggestion form
  - Attending parent nights
  - Bringing in items of interest such as farm and baby animals
Acorn Child Care Centres
Policies and Procedures

- Open communication with your child’s group leader.
- To prepare and assist in craft activities. QA 6.1.2

- Educators meet regularly to assess the Service’s progress towards meeting the requirements of the National Quality Standard, and to work on the necessary documentation. Parents are invited to many of these meetings, and minutes of these meetings are made available to parents who were absent. QA 7.2.3

Additional safe practices for babies

- To ensure each baby’s needs and requirements are fully communicated to educators each day because babies undergo rapid growth and development (e.g. teething), and their responses to certain foods and medications are as yet unknown.
- To accurately communicate information about their baby’s last bottle, sleep time, medication etc.

Responsibilities of parents

- To inform the Service of their preferred way to receive information from the Service, and to provide any information about their child and family that supports educators meeting the child’s educational and care needs.
- To raise their concerns in a timely manner and to work with the Service to overcome them.
- To contribute information and ideas to the Service’s Quality Improvement Plan whenever possible.
- To complete surveys and questionnaires wherever possible.

Links to other policies

- Educational Program Policy
- Enrolment and Orientation Policy
- Grievance and Complaints Policy
- Nutrition, Food and Beverages Policy
- Professionalism and Ethics Policy

Sources

- Early Years Learning Framework 2009.
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011.
Further reading and useful websites


Date(s) reviewed: 16/03/2016

Next review Date: 16/05/2017
6.2 Community Engagement

Background

“Children learn about themselves and construct their own identity within the context of their families and communities” (DEEWR, 2009 p20)

When children feel connected with the community they live in, their sense of wellbeing is enhanced. Services play an important role in encouraging children to feel part of their community and in supporting families by providing access to community resources. By developing links, sharing information and working collaboratively with others in the community, services have an opportunity to better meet the needs of children and their families. This can improve outcomes for children such as health, learning, safety and lifestyle.

Policy statement

This Policy outlines the Service’s commitment to community engagement. Acorn will provide regular information about, and ongoing opportunities of parents and the community to participate and have input into the services provided at the service. The service will liaise with resource and service providers’ within the community to determine which networks exist that may connect children and families with the community. Participation in appropriate community projects and events is viewed as a positive contribution to the education and care program.

Strategies and practices

- Information about community resources and support agencies in the local community is provided to parents to support parenting and family wellbeing.
- The nominated supervisor and educators will actively promote the positive aspects of the service to families and the local community.
- The service provides opportunities for students, volunteers and people seeking work experience in education and care services is seen as a community service and means promoting quality education and care within the community.
- The service holds current information on relevant community resources and makes these available to families.
- The service will invite community members to visit the service to share their social and cultural heritage with the children, families and educator of the service.
- Educators will reflect cultural values and diversity of the broader community including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives.
- Connections with local community are built through a range of strategies including; Partnerships with families (see interactions with families policy), Involvement in community meetings, committees and networks, liaison with other childcare services, local businesses, schools, health services and organisations working with families in the community, participation in community events and inviting community to participate in social events of the service.
- The Service accesses translation services for non-English speaking families.
Acorn Child Care Centres
Policies and Procedures

Links to other policies

- Educational Program and Practice Policy
- Interactions with Families Policy

Sources

- Early Years Learning Framework 2009.
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011.
- NQSPLP- Community Engagement No.47 2012
- NCAC Putting Children First, Ask a Child Care Adviser- Building Links with your community 2007

Further reading and useful websites


Date(s) reviewed: 12/05/2016

Next review Date: 16/05/2017
6.3 Behaviour Guidance

Background

“In the process of learning the complex life skills of cooperation, conflict resolution, acceptable expression of strong feelings, children, like all of us, make mistakes” (Gartrell, 1997).

However, young children are likely to make far more mistakes than adults because their abilities to think and reason are in the early stages of development, their life experience is limited and they have had little exchange with other children.

Educators can effectively help children to learn social skills by providing them with supportive physical and social environments to learn and practise their social skills. When children make a mistake, educators are best to treat the children with respect and empathy as they guide and encourage them to recognise, manage and learn from the mistake, and to express their emotions in positive, non-threatening and productive ways.

Policy statement

This Policy sets out the Service’s expectations for educators’ to use appropriate strategies to guide children to recognise, manage and reflect on their behaviours and express their emotions in a positive, non-threatening and productive way.

All children will be supported to learning and develop in a secure and empowering environment.

Strategies and practices

- The Service’s wide variety of resources, materials and equipment meets the needs (e.g. age, development, culture) and interests of the children, and supports children’s learning and harmonious play. Refer to the Service’s Educational Program Policy. QA 3.1.1, 3.2.2

- The educational program is based on the knowledge, ideas, culture, abilities and interests of each child as communicated to educators by their parents, observed by educators and contributed to by the children. Refer to the Service’s Interactions with Families Policy. In addition, each child’s learning and development are assessed as part of the programming cycle of planning, documentation and evaluation. QA 1.1.2, 5.1.3, 5.2.1, 6.1.2, 6.2.1, 7.3.5

- The Service’s expectation that educators relate to children in accordance with this Policy and the Service’s Educator Professionalism and Ethics Policy is emphasised during their induction. QA 7.1.2

- The Service’s rosters ensure continuity of care so that the children are with educators who know them well and are interested in what they think, feel and do. Further, the educators promote the children’s wellbeing, self-esteem and sense of security by being responsive, warm, trusting and respectful. QA 5.1.1, 7.1.3

- Educators devote time to babies, one-on-one, and are attuned to them. QA 1.1.1, 5.1.1

- Educators consistently model positive social skills in their everyday interactions with other adults and children. QA 5.2.2
Helping children learn the consequences of their behaviour and thus develop an understanding of how their actions affect others. QA 5.2.2

The Service provides educators with professional development in relating with children and in positive behaviour guidance. QA 5.2.2, 7.2.2

The Service is committed to working in partnerships with parents to best meet the education and care needs of their children. Refer to the Service’s Interactions with Families Policy. The communication between home and the Service is especially important when children experience difficulty relating to others, and ensures that each party is aware of what is occurring in the child’s day. Collaboratively discuss and guide difficult behaviours. QA 5.2.2, 6.1.2, 6.2.1, 6.3.3, 7.2.1

The program has extended periods of uninterrupted play which accommodate child-initiated, educator-initiated and co-constructed activities. This blend provides children the opportunities to make choices, contribute their own ideas, thoughts and feelings – and to develop social competence. Children then know that they are valued as capable and competent. QA 1.1.3, 5.1.1

Routines are unhurried, largely social occasions. Refer to the Service’s Educational Program Policy. QA 1.1.1, 1.1.3, 5.2.3

Educators collaborate with the children to construct simple rules (expressed in a positive way), and discuss with them how these rules help everyone feel safe and secure. QA 2.1.2, 2.3.2, 5.2.2

Educators intentionally teach children to play and to complete projects together, and to resolve social conflicts that arise from time to time. QA 5.2.2, 5.2.1, 5.2.3

Educators encourage children’s efforts, rather than praise the child. QA 5.1.3

Educators intentionally teach children protective behaviours. QA 1.2.2, 2.3.4

When responding to children who have difficulty relating to others or following guidelines, educators:

- Take a positive approach to guiding children’s behaviour. They accept children’s behavioural mistakes as a natural part of acquiring social skills, and view any mistake as a teaching/learning opportunity – rather than as a distraction. QA 5.2.2

- Draw upon strategies that do not diminish the child in the eyes of others and, at the same time, do not negatively affect onlooking children. Strategies could include: redirection, reminders of the rules (without censure), suggesting alternatives, offering choices and encouraging children to think about how others might feel (empathy). QA 5.2.3

- Question aspects of the environment that might contribute to the behaviour
  - Is adequate and safe playing space available?
  - Do the resources, materials and equipment meet the children’s needs?
  - Can children choose freely from the resources, materials and equipment?
Acorn Child Care Centres
Policies and Procedures

- Has sufficient personal play space been provided?
- Is a quiet play space available?
- Is an active play space available? QA 3.1.1, 1.1.6

- Consider other influences on the child
  - Specific circumstances
  - Specific times of day
  - Developmental issues
  - Prior experiences, particularly those within their family.

- Adopt a problem-solving approach which involves the children in deciding what to do in the situation. QA 5.2.2

When managing children with recurrent difficulty relating to others or following guidelines, and displaying challenging behaviours educators will:

**Challenging behavior is behavior that; disrupts others or causes disputes between children. Infringes on the rights of others. Causes harm or risk to the child, other children, adults or living things. Is destructive to the environment and or equipment. Inhibits the child’s learning and relationships with others.**

- Maintain written records of dates, times, circumstances and possible causes of the incidents or behaviour. (For incidents that harm others complete an Acorn Injury and Trauma Record for children involved) QA 1.2.1, 7.3.1

- Discuss with the parents any concerns about their child’s behaviour. Collaborate with them in constructing a behaviour guidance plan to help the child acquire the social skills necessary to play and learn happily with others. Discuss with parents the service expectations, guidelines and limitations in guiding children’s behavior. When practical, have the child contribute to the plan. QA 5.2.2, 6.2.1, 6.3.3

- Refer parents to an external support agency, when appropriate, and work collaboratively with that agency to ensure a consistent approach. QA 5.2.2, 6.3.1, 6.3.3

- If all behaviour guidance strategies have been exhausted and the child is demonstrating aggressive behaviour causing physical or emotional harm or distress to any child or staff member the nominated supervisor will meet with the family to inform them that their child will be required to have some time away from the service while outside professional experts are consulted.

**Responsibilities of parents**

- To inform the Service of any changes in their child’s education and care needs.

- To contribute to the program.
To provide the Service with up-to-date information on their child and on any external circumstances affecting the child.

To collaborate with educators in establishing any behaviour guidance plan required.

To follow relevant behavior guidance strategies at home.

To seek professional help for their child when recommended by the Service.

Links to other policies

- Additional Needs Policy
- Educator Professionalism and Ethics Policy
- Enrolment and Orientation Policy
- Educational Program
- Interactions with Families Policy
- Staffing Policy

Sources

- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011.

Further reading and useful websites


Date(s) reviewed: 11/05/2016

Next review Date: 11/05/2017