BEACONSFIELD KINDERGARTEN INC. INTERACTIONS WITH CHILDREN POLICY

Mandatory – Quality Area 5

PURPOSE

This policy will provide guidelines to ensure:

- the development of responsive, warm, trusting and respectful relationships with children that promote their wellbeing, self-esteem, sense of security and belonging at Beaconsfield Kindergarten
- each child at Beaconsfield Kindergarten is supported to learn and develop in a secure and empowering environment.

POLICY STATEMENT

Values

Beaconsfield Kindergarten Inc. is committed to:

- maintaining the dignity, agency and rights of each child at the service
- promoting fairness, respect and equity
- encouraging children to express themselves and their opinions, and to undertake experiences that develop self-reliance and self-esteem
- considering the health, safety and wellbeing of each child, and providing a safe, secure and welcoming environment in which they can develop and learn
- maintaining a duty of care (refer to *Definitions*) towards all children at Beaconsfield Kindergarten
- considering the diversity of individual children at the service, including family and cultural values, age, gender and the physical and intellectual development and abilities of each child
- building collaborative relationships with families to improve learning and development outcomes for children
- encouraging positive, respectful and warm relationships between children, families and educators/staff at the service.

Scope

This policy applies to the Approved Provider, Persons with Management or Control, Nominated Supervisor, Persons in day-to-day Charge, educators, staff, students on placement, volunteers, parents/guardians, children and others attending the programs and activities of Beaconsfield Kindergarten Inc., including during offsite excursions and activities.

RESPONSIBILITIES

RESPONSIBILITIES	Approved provider and persons with management or control	Nominated supervisor and persons in day-to-day charge	Early childhood teacher, educators and all other staff	Parents/guardians	Contractors, volunteers and students
R indicates legislation requirement, and sho Developing and implementing the <i>Interactions with Children</i>	ould not				
<i>Policy</i> in consultation with stakeholders, and ensuring that it reflects the philosophy, beliefs and values of the service	R	\checkmark	V	\checkmark	\checkmark
Ensuring all stakeholders have access to a copy of the <i>Interactions with Children Policy</i> and comply with its requirements	R	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark
Actively supporting and facilitating the participation and inclusion of Aboriginal children, young people, and their families.	R	V	\checkmark		\checkmark
Ensuring all staff are aware of the service's expectations regarding positive, respectful and appropriate behaviour, and acceptable responses and warm, trusting and reciprocal interactions when working with children and families (refer to Code of Conduct Policy)	R	V			
Ensuring children are adequately supervised (refer to Definitions) and that educator-to-child ratios are maintained at all times (refer to Supervision of Children Policy)	R	V	V		\checkmark
Ensuring the environment at the service is safe, secure, free from any hazards (National Law: Section 167) (refer to Child Safe Environment Policy, Occupational Health and Safety Policy and Supervision of Children Policy) and promotes the active participation of every child	R	R	V		V
Ensuring the size and composition of groups is considered to ensure all children are provided with the best opportunities for quality interactions and relationships with each other and with adults at the service (<i>Regulation 156(2)</i>). Smaller group sizes are considered optimal, to promote intentional teaching strategies and responsive engagement opportunities.	R	V	V		V
With the Educational Leader, developing and implementing educational programs that are delivered in accordance with an approved learning framework (<i>refer to Definitions</i>), are based on the developmental needs, interests and experiences of each child, and take into account the individual differences and strengths of each child (<i>refer to Inclusion and Equity Policy</i>)	R	R	V		V
With the Educational Leader, ensuring the educational program contributes to the development of children to have a strong sense of wellbeing and identity, and to be connected, confident, involved and effective learners and communicators (<i>Regulation</i> 73) (refer to Curriculum Development Policy)	R	\checkmark	1		\checkmark

 Ensuring that the service provides education and care to children in a way that: encourages children to express themselves and their opinions allows children to undertake experiences that develop self-reliance and self-esteem maintains the dignity and the rights of each child at all times offers positive guidance and encouragement towards acceptable behaviour has regard to the cultural and family values, age, and the physical and intellectual development and abilities of each child being educated and cared for (<i>Regulation</i> 155) 	R	V	V		V
Facilitating children's ability to express their culture, enjoy their cultural rights and are encouraged and actively supported	R	\checkmark	\checkmark		\checkmark
Providing opportunities that promotes a culture that facilitates children's participation and is responsive to their input	R	V			
Ensuring children are informed about all of their rights, including to safety information, compliant handling process and participation	R	V	V		\checkmark
Ensuring that Beaconsfield Kindergarten provides children with opportunities to interact and develop positive relationships with each other, and with the staff and volunteers at the service (<i>Regulation 156(1)</i>)	R	V	V		V
Recognising the importance of friendships and encouraging support from peers, to help children and young people feel safe and be connected	\checkmark	V	V	V	\checkmark
 Ensuring clear documentation of the assessment and evaluation of each child's: developmental needs, interests, experiences and program participation progress against the outcomes of the educational program (<i>Regulation 74</i>) (<i>refer to Curriculum Development Policy</i>) 	R	V	V		V
Ensuring that procedures are in place for effective daily communication with parents/guardians to share information about children's learning, development, interactions, behaviour and relationships	R	V	V		V
Supporting ECT/educators/staff to access resources and gain appropriate training, knowledge and skills for the implementation of this policy, including promoting social, emotional and mental health and wellbeing	\checkmark	\checkmark	V		
Ensuring that staff members at Beaconsfield Kindergarten who work with children are aware that it is an offence to subject a child to any form of corporal punishment, or any discipline that is unreasonable or excessive in the circumstances (National Law: Section 166)	R	R	R	V	V
Promoting collaborative relationships between children/families, educators, staff and other professionals (including program support groups) to improve the quality of children's education and care experiences	\checkmark	V	V	\checkmark	\checkmark

Ensuring all educators and staff, including volunteers and students, have undertaken current child protection legislation training, including for the mandatory reporting requirements and obligations	R	R	V		V
Ensuring notifications of serious incidents (refer to Definitions) are made to the regulatory authority (DE) (refer to Definition) through the NQA IT System (refer to Definitions) as soon as is practicable but not later than 24 hours after the occurrence (National Law: Section 174(2)(a), Regulations 176 (2)(a))	R	V			
Notifying DE within 24 hours of becoming aware of a notifiable complaint (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) or allegation regarding the safety, health and/or welfare of a child at the service (<i>National Law: Section 174(2)(b), Regulations 176 (2)(a)</i>)	R	V			
Informing the Approved Provider of any notifiable complaint or serious incidents at the service		\checkmark	\checkmark		\checkmark
Referring notifiable complaints, grievances or complaints that are unable to be resolved appropriately and in a timely manner to the Executive Committee of Management of Beaconsfield Kindergarten (which also acts as a Complaints Sub-committee) (refer to Compliments and Complaints and Policy)	\checkmark	V	\checkmark		
Ensuring that where the service has been notified of a court order prohibiting an adult from contacting an enrolled child, such contact does not occur while the child is on the service premises	R	R	\checkmark		V
Ensuring all staff, volunteers and contractors use positive and respectful strategies to assist children to manage their own behaviour, and to respond appropriately to conflict and the behaviour of others	R	V	V		V
Developing links with and referral pathways to services and/or program support groups (<i>refer to definitions</i>) to support children experiencing social, emotional and behavioural difficulties and their families	\checkmark	V	V		V
Ensuring that there is a behaviour guidance plan (refer to Definitions) developed for a child if educators are concerned that the child's behaviour may put the child themselves, other children, educators/staff and/or others at risk	\checkmark	V	V	V	
Ensuring that parents/guardians and program support groups (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) (as appropriate) are consulted if an individual behaviour guidance plan has not resolved the challenging behaviour	\checkmark	V	\checkmark	V	
Working collaboratively with educators/staff and program support groups (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) to develop or review an individual behaviour guidance plan for their child, where appropriate	\checkmark	V	\checkmark	V	V
Setting clear timelines for review and evaluation of the behaviour guidance plan	\checkmark	V	\checkmark		
Providing information, ideas and practical strategies to families, educators and staff on a regular basis to promote and support health and wellbeing in the service and at home	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark		

Consulting with, and seeking advice from, DE if a suitable and mutually agreeable behaviour guidance plan cannot be developed	R	\checkmark	\checkmark		
Investigating the availability of extra assistance, such as Kindergarten Inclusion Support <i>(refer to Definitions)</i> or training, by contacting the regional Preschool Field Officer <i>(refer to Definitions)</i> , specialist children's services officers from DE or other agencies working with the child	R	V	V		
Ensuring that additional resources are sourced, if required, to implement a behaviour guidance plan	R	\checkmark			
Ensuring that educators/staff at the service are provided with appropriate training to guide the actions and their responses to a		\checkmark			
child/children with challenging behaviour					
Informing educators/staff of concerns, events or incidents that may impact on their child's behaviour at the service (e.g. moving house, relationship issues, a new sibling)				\checkmark	\checkmark
Maintaining confidentiality (<i>refer to Privacy and Confidentiality Policy</i>)	R	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark

BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATION

Background

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child is founded on respect for the dignity and worth of each individual, regardless of race, colour, gender, language, religion, opinions, wealth, birth status or ability. When children experience nurturing and respectful reciprocal relationships with educators, they develop an understanding of themselves as competent, capable and respected. Relationships are the foundation for the construction of identity, and help shape children's thinking about who they are, how they belong and what influences them [*Early Years Learning Framework*, p. 20; *Framework for School Age Care*, p. 19]

'Constructive everyday interactions and shared learning opportunities form the basis of equitable, respectful and reciprocal relationships between educators and children. Educators who are actively engaged in children's learning and share decision-making with them use their everyday interactions during play, routines and ongoing projects to stimulate children's thinking and to enrich their learning. These relationships provide a solid foundation from which to guide and support children as they develop the self-confidence and skills to manage their own behaviour, make decisions and relate positively and effectively to others.' (*Guide to National Quality Framework* – refer to Sources)

Child Safe Standard 3 requires services to have strategies to empower children about their rights, ensure children can participate in decisions affecting them and take children's opinions seriously. When children feel respected and valued, they are much more likely to speak up about issues of safety and wellbeing. Enabling and promoting empowerment and the participation of children within a service has multiple benefits in addition to enhancing the safety of children, including demonstrating a commitment to upholding the rights of children, including demonstrating a commitment to upholding that what the service is doing is what children want and building the communication and leadership skills of children.

In developing an *Interactions with Children Policy*, early childhood education and care services must review and reflect on the philosophy, beliefs and values of the service, particularly with regard to the relationships with children. The development of this policy should also be informed by the service's *Code of Conduct Policy*.

Legislation and standards

Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

- Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic)
- Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)
- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)
- Child Wellbeing and Safety Amendment (Child Safe Standards) Act 2015 (Vic)
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)
- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
- Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)

National Quality Standard, Quality Area 5: Relationships with Children

The most current amendments to listed legislation can be found at:

- Victorian Legislation Victorian Law Today: <u>www.legislation.vic.gov.au</u>
- Commonwealth Legislation Federal Register of Legislation: <u>www.legislation.gov.au</u>

DEFINITIONS

The terms defined in this section relate specifically to this policy. For commonly used terms e.g. Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, notifiable complaints, Serious incidents, Duty of care, etc. refer to the *General Definitions* section of this manual.

Adequate supervision: entails all children (individuals and groups) in all areas of the service being in sight and/or hearing of an educator at all times including during toileting, sleep, rest and transition routines. Services are required to comply with the legislative requirements for educator-to-child ratios at all times. Supervision contributes to protecting children from hazards that may emerge in play, including hazards created by the equipment used.

Adequate supervision refers to constant, active and diligent supervision of every child at the service. Adequate supervision requires that educators are always in a position to observe each child, respond to individual needs and immediately intervene if necessary. Variables affecting supervision levels include:

- number, age and abilities of children
- number and positioning of educators
- current activity of each child
- areas in which the children are engaged in an activity (visibility and accessibility)
- developmental profile of each child and of the group of children
- experience, knowledge and skill of each educator
- need for educators to move between areas (effective communication strategies).

Behaviour guidance: A means of assisting children in positive and effective ways to gain understanding and learn skills that will help them to learn to manage their own behaviour.

Behaviour guidance plan: A plan that documents strategies to assist an educator in guiding a child with diagnosed behavioural difficulties or challenging behaviours to self-manage his/her behaviour. The plan is developed by the Early Childhood Teacher in consultation with the Nominated Supervisor, Educational Leader, educators, parents/guardians and families, and other professional support agencies as applicable.

Challenging behaviour: Behaviour 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 relationship with others
- presents as shy, withdrawn or excessively passive in a way that is inhibiting the child's learning and/or development
- is inappropriate relative to the child's developmental age and background.

Dignity and rights of the child: Element 5.1.2 of the National Quality Standard ('Dignity and rights of the child') aims to achieve the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, a universally agreed set of non-negotiable standards and obligations founded on respect for the dignity and worth of each child, regardless of race, colour, gender, language, religion, opinions, origins, wealth, birth status or ability. Article 19 of the Convention states that children have the right to be protected from being hurt and mistreated, physically, or mentally.

Kindergarten Inclusion Support Program: Supports funded kindergartens to plan and implement a program that is responsive to individual abilities, interests and needs of children with a disability, developmental delay or complex medical needs.

Mental health: In early childhood, a child's mental health is understood as a child's ability to 'experience, regulate and express emotions; form close and secure interpersonal relationships; and explore the environment and learn – all in the context of family, community and cultural expectations for young children. Infant mental health is synonymous with healthy social and emotional development.' <u>https://beyou.edu.au/</u>

Notifiable complaint: The Regulatory Authority is required to be notified of a complaint that alleges:

- a serious incident has occurred or is occurring while a child is being educated and cared for by a service
- the National Law and/or National Regulations have been contravened.

Complaints of this nature must be reported by the Approved Provider to the Regulatory Authority within 24 hours of the complaint being made (Section 174(2)(b), Regulation 176(2)(b)). If the Approved Provider is unsure whether the matter is a notifiable complaint, it is good practice to contact DoE for confirmation.

Notification of complaints must be submitted within 24 hours through either the NQA IT System portal: <u>http://www.acecqa.gov.au</u> or where this is not possible, the Regulatory Authority must be contacted directly.

Positive interactions between educators and children: Involves educators viewing each child as capable and competent, with a right to a voice, and able to contribute to decisions that affect them. This enables educators to focus their practices on children's strengths and inclusion in the group environment. Educators who are responsive to children's thoughts and feelings are supporting them to develop a strong sense of wellbeing. By interacting positively and meaningfully with children, educators help each child to feel accepted and to develop a sense of attachment and trust. Children who are supported to understand themselves experience a sense of belonging that fosters self-esteem which contributes to the development of identity and is critical to children's capacity to understand their own strengths, abilities, and interests. When children feel safe, secure and supported, they develop confidence to explore and learn.

Program Support Groups (PSG): A program support group brings together key people to support the inclusion of children with disability or developmental delay, or complex medical needs, from the time of enrolment at kindergarten until they move to school. The group may include:

- the early childhood teacher
- the child's parent/carer(s)

- · early childhood intervention professionals
- a preschool field officer
- medical practitioners, therapists or other allied health professionals
- a support person if the child's parent/carer(s) chooses to use one.

Preschool Field Officer (PSFO) Program: The role of the PSFO Program is to support the access and participation of children with additional needs in their kindergarten program. For more information visit: <u>http://www.education.vic.gov.au</u>

Relationships between children: When educators create supportive environments in which children experience mutually enjoyable, caring and respectful relationships, children respond accordingly. Positive relationships provide children with the confidence and agency to explore and learn about their world. As their relationships become more complex and far-reaching over time, children's interactions with others also help them to extend their knowledge, thinking and ability to apply what they already know in new and unfamiliar contexts. Developing effective relationships with others is a key part of children's social development and these relationships also provide a base for children's learning.

Relationships between educators and children: When children experience nurturing and respectful reciprocal relationships with educators, they develop an understanding of themselves as competent, capable and respected. Consistent emotional support contributes to children developing a strong sense of wellbeing and belonging. Relationships are the foundation for the construction of identity, and help shape children's thinking about who they are, how they belong and what influences them.

SOURCES AND RELATED POLICIES

Sources

- Belonging, Being & Becoming The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia: www.acecqa.gov.au
- Child Safe Standards: <u>www.ccyp.vic.gov.au</u>
- Early Childhood Australia (ECA) Code of Ethics (2006): http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/
- Guide to the National Quality Framework, ACECQA: <u>www.acecqa.gov.au</u>
- Kids Matter, an Australian mental health and well-being initiative set in primary schools and early childhood education and care services: <u>https://beyou.edu.au/</u>
- The Kindergarten Funding Guide (DE): <u>http://www.education.vic.gov.au</u>
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child: www.unicef.org
- Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework: http://www.education.vic.gov.au
- Victorian Inclusion Agency (VIA): ww.viac.com.au

Service policies

- Child Safe Environment Policy
- Code of Conduct Policy
- Compliments and Complaints Policy
- Curriculum Development Policy
- Inclusion and Equity Policy
- Occupational Health and Safety Policy
- Privacy and Confidentiality Policy
- Supervision of Children Policy

EVALUATION

In order to assess whether the values and purposes of the policy have been achieved, the Approved Provider will:

- · regularly seek feedback from everyone affected by the policy regarding its effectiveness
- monitor the implementation, compliance, complaints and incidents in relation to this policy
- keep the policy up to date with current legislation, research, policy and best practice
- revise the policy and procedures as part of the service's policy review cycle, or as required
- notify parents/guardians at least 14 days before making any changes to this policy or its procedures, unless a lesser period is necessary due to risk (*Regulation 172 (2)*).

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ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1: A simplified version of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- Attachment 2: Template for the development of a behaviour guidance plan (from KIS application)

AUTHORISATION

This policy was adopted by the Approved Provider of Beaconsfield Kindergarten Inc. on 17th March 2014.

REVIEW DATE: 7/10/2024

REVIEW FREQUENCY: Yearly

NEXT REVIEW DUE: October 2025

A SIMPLIFIED VERSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD.

Article Children have the right to privacy. The law should protect them from attacks against their way of life, their good name, their family and

Children have the right to reliable information

from the media. Mass media such as television, radio and newspapers should provide information that children can understand and should not promote materials

Article Both parents share responsibility for bringing up their children and should always consider what is best for each child. Governments should help parents by providing services to support them, especially if both parents work.

Article Governments should ensure that children are properly cared for and protect them from violence, abuse and neglect by their parents, or anyone else who looks after them.

Article Children who cannot be looked after by their own family must be looked after properly by people who respect their religion, culture and language.

Ariside When children are adopted the first concern must be what is best for them. The same rules should apply whether children are adopted in the country of their birth or if they are taken to

Article Children who come into a country as refugees should have the same rights as children who are born in that country.

Article Children who have any kind of disability should receive special care and support so that they can live a full and independent life.

Article Children have the right to good quality health care, clean water, nutritious food and a clean water, nutritious food and a clean care, clean water, health, and the state of the st

their situation reviewed regularly.

26 for the children of families in need.

Children who are looked after by their local authority rather than their parents should have

The Government should provide extra money

Children have the right to a standard of living that is good enough to meet their physical and

mental needs. The government should help families who cannot afford to provide this.

Discipline in schools should respect children's human dignity. Primary education should be

free. Wealthier countries should help poorer countries achieve this.

Children have the right to an education.

live in another country.

achieve this.

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28

that could harm children.

their home.

17

Article	Everyone under 18 years of age has all the rights in this Convention.
Article 2	The Convention applies to everyone whatever their race, religion, abilities, whatever they think or say, whatever type of family they come from.
Article 3	All organisations concerned with children should work towards what is best for each child.
Article 4	Governments should make these rights available to children.
Article 5	Governments should respect the rights and responsibilities of families to guide their children so that, as they grow up, they learn to use their rights properly.
Article 6	Children have the right to live a full life. Governments should ensure that children survive and develop healthily.
Article 7	Children have the right to a legally registered name and nationality. Children also have the right to know their parents and, as far as possible, to be cared for by them.
Article 8	Governments should respect a child's right to a name, a nationality and family ties.
Article 9	Children should not be separated from their parents unless it is for their own good. For example, if a parent is mistreating or neglecting a child. Children whose parents have separated have the right to stay in contact with both parents, unless this might harm the child.
Article 10	Families who live in different countries should be allowed to move between those countries so that parents and children can stay in contact, or get back together as a family.
Article 11	Governments should take steps to stop children being taken out of their own country illegally.
Article 12	Children have the right to say what they think should happen when adults are making decisions that affect them and to have their opinions taken into account.
Article 13	Children have the right to get and to share information, as long as the information is not damaging to them or to others.
Article 14	Children have the right to think and believe what they want and to practise their religion, as long as they are not stopping other people from enjoying their rights. Parents should guide children on these matters.
Article 15	Children have the right to meet with other children and young people and to join groups and organisations, as long as this does not stop other people from enjoying their rights.



Article 29	Education should develop each child's personality and talents to the full. It should encourage children to respect their parents, their cultures and other cultures.
Article 30	Children have the right to learn and use the language and customs of their families, whether or not these are shared by the majority of the people in the country where they live, as long as this does not harm others.
Article 31	Children have the right to relax, play and to join in a wide range of leisure activities.
Article 32	Governments should protect children from work that is dangerous or that might harm their health or education.
Article 33	Governments should provide ways of protecting children from dangerous drugs.
Article 34	Governments should protect children from sexual abuse.
Article 35	Governments should make sure that children are not abducted or sold.
Article 36	Children should be protected from any activities that could harm their development.
Article 37	Children who break the law should not be treated cruelly. They should not be put in a prison with adults and should be able to keep in contact with their family.
Article 38	Governments should not allow children under 15 to join the army. Children in war zones should receive special protection.
Article 39	Children who have been neglected or abused should receive special help to restore their self-respect.
Article 40	Children who are accused of breaking the law should receive legal help. Prison sentences for children should only be used for the most serious offences.
Article	If the laws of a particular country protects
41	children better than the articles of the Convention, then those laws should override the Convention.
Article	Governments should make the Convention known to all parents and children.
	convention on the Rights of the Child has icles in all. Articles 43-54 are about how

54 articles in all. Articles 43-54 are about how adults and governments should work together to make sure that all children get all their rights. **Go to www.unicef.org/crc**

to read all the articles.



ATTACHMENT 2 Template for the development of a behaviour guidance plan

Behaviour

Does the child exhibit behaviours that are a significant risk of serious injury to self or others?	Yes 🗆	No 🗆
If yes, complete table below.		

Behaviour / Concern	When and where does the behaviour occur and are there any triggers?	Frequency and duration of behaviour e.g. 3 times a session for up to 30 minutes	Strategies to guide the child's behaviour

From where was this evidence collected? (If child hasn't attended a kindergarten program before, please explain who contributed to this information)

Any other relevant information?

Kindergarten Inclusion Support Plan

What would we like the child to gain from the kindergarten program?	VEYLDF Learning and Development Outcome	How do we go about this?	Who do we need to involve?	Outcomes
Describe goals that are specific, measurable and realistic for the child.	List the Learning and Development Outcomes each goal will draw from.	What strategies and intentional teaching practices will be implemented? What modifications or adjustments will be made the program, activities or environment to support this?	E.g. kindergarten staff, early intervention staff, family etc.	Complete at the next PSG meeting. Document adjustments you have made and progress towards achieving the goal. Update goals as appropriate to support progress.