



Bacchus Marsh
Grammar

ELC POLICY

Early Learning Centre Relationships with Children Policy

Approved by the School Principal: June 2024

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Relationships with Children Policy

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1 NQS

QA5	5.1.1	Positive educator to child interactions - Responsive and meaningful interactions build trusting relationships which engage and support each child to feel secure, confident and included.
	5.1.2	Dignity and rights of the child - The dignity and rights of every child are maintained.
	5.2.1	Collaborative learning - Children are supported to collaborate, learn from and help each other.
	5.2.2	Self-regulation - Each child is supported to manage their own behaviour, respond appropriately to the behaviour of others and communicate effectively to resolve conflicts.

2 National Regulations

Regs	155	Interactions with children
	156	Relationships in groups

3 EYLF

LO1	Children feel safe, secure, and supported.
	Children develop their emerging autonomy, inter-dependence, resilience and sense of agency.
	Children develop knowledgeable and confident self-identities.
	Children learn to interact in relation to others with care, empathy and respect.
LO2	Children develop a sense of belonging to groups and communities and an understanding of the reciprocal rights and responsibilities necessary for active community participation.
	Children respond to diversity with respect.
	Children become aware of fairness.
	Children become socially responsible and show respect for the environment.

4 Aim

- 4.1.1 Our Service aims to ensure that all educators form positive relationships with children that make them feel safe and supported in the Service. Educators will encourage positive relationships between children and their peers as well as with educators and volunteers at the Service.

5 Related Policies

Additional Needs Policy
Continuity of Education and Care Policy
Enrolment Policy
Orientation for Children Policy
Physical Activity Promotion Policy

6 Implementation

6.1 Interactions with Children

Our Service's statement of philosophy will guide our interactions with children as follows:
(Philosophy is attached at the end of this policy)

- 6.1.1 In order to maintain positive interactions with children our service and educators will maintain the following:
- Our service will provide a relaxed and happy atmosphere for the children.
 - Our service will ensure mealtimes are relaxed and unhurried and educators take the time to sit and talk with children.
 - Our educators will encourage children to initiate conversations about their experiences inside and outside the service as well as what is happening around them, express their ideas and feelings, and seek assistance as they take on new challenges and try to do things for themselves.
 - Our educators will respond sensitively and appropriately to children's efforts to communicate and engage them in sustained conversations about their interests in a positive manner.
 - Our educators will talk with children in a two-sided manner. That is, encourage children to have their own opinions, ideas and comments. Educators should support children with this and let them know that their ideas are valued.
 - Our routines, as well as planned and spontaneous experiences will be organised to maximise opportunity for meaningful conversations between children and educators and the service will ensure that all children have equal opportunity to engage in one to one and small group conversations with educators.
 - Our educators will be knowledgeable in the communication strategies and non-verbal cues of children and staffing and grouping arrangements within the service will support the development of trusting relationships between educators, and children to allow them to feel secure in the service.
 - Our statement of philosophy and policy on interactions with children will be visible
 - Our educators will participate in children's play using children's cues to guide their level and type of involvement while always maintaining a positive approach when responding to children and offering assistance.
 - Our educators will model reasoning, prediction and reflection processes and language.
 - Our educators will collaborate with children about routines and experiences.
 - Our educators will use techniques such as sign language and other resources and tools to support children with additional needs.
 - Our educators will use their interactions with children to learn English and support the maintenance of home languages
 - Our educators and coordinators will use information from their observations of interactions with children to extend the children's thinking and learning.
 - Our educators will also support children to build secure attachments with educators to help them feel secure in the service. Some children suffer a form of separation anxiety when away from their families. Educators will reassure the child and work with the child's family in order to make the child feel safe and happy at the Service.
 - Our service will ensure that there are opportunities for children to experience professional interactions with educators.
 - Our nominated supervisor, educators and coordinators will learn more about the histories, cultures, languages, traditions, child rearing practices and lifestyle choices of families using the service.
 - Our educators will frequently talk with families to get an idea of the non-verbal forms of communication used by their children in order to convey messages such as hunger, needing the toilet, tiredness and emotions.
 - Our educators will allow time to talk to parents about their children. This allows educators to gain insight into their home life.
 - Our service will implement strategies to assist all children to develop a sense of belonging and confidence through positive interactions between the children and educators.
 - Our service's roster will be planned in a way that promotes continuity for children.
 - Our service will gather information from families in the enrolment form in order to be able to provide support for children during the settling in process.

- When children have special needs our service will consult with other professionals or support agencies that work with children to gather information that will guide our interactions with these children. This information will be recorded in the child's file.
- Our service's approach to equity and inclusion will be documented in our statement of philosophy.
- Our service will ensure that educators document the knowledge gained about children, through their interactions, in the child's file for reference for other educators and will continually review the experiences that are planned for children in light of this information.

6.2 Group Relationships

6.2.1 In order to encourage respectful and positive relationships between children and their peers and educators our service will adhere to the following practices:

- Our service will encourage children to participate in enjoyable interactions with their peers, respond positively to ideas, negotiate roles and relationships, contribute to shared play, and develop friendships.
- Our educators will engage children in ongoing group projects that involve research, planning, problem solving and shared decision making.
- Our educators will model strategies for children to initiate interactions and participate in group play and social activities and assist them when they have trouble understanding or communicating with each other.
- Our service will ensure that the children have many opportunities for peer scaffolding.
- Our educators will promote a sense of community in the service.
- Our service will coordinate the staffing and grouping arrangements to support positive relationships between children.
- Our educators will support and promote children's interpersonal relationships and support the inclusion of children from diverse backgrounds and capabilities in group play, projects and experiences.
- Our educators will learn about children's shared interests and will use this information to plan further experiences that provide collaborative learning opportunities.
- Our educators will pre-empt potential conflicts or challenging behaviours by monitoring children's play and supporting interactions where there is conflict.
- Our service will ensure that the program and routines of the service will include regular opportunities for children to engage in social play and group experiences.
- Our service will ensure that food is being used appropriately and not as a reward or punishment.
- Our service will ensure that corporal punishment is not used as part of behaviour guidance or any other aspect of our interactions with children. Corporal punishment is never to be used in our service.

6.3 Behaviour Guidance

Positive Behaviour

6.3.1 Educators, staff and volunteers will model positive behaviour and guide children's behaviour in ways that promote their self-esteem by:

- encouraging children to be cooperative and helpful, to express their feelings and responses to others' behaviour confidently and constructively, and to respectfully guide the behaviour of other children when it is disrespectful or unfair
- supporting children to explore different identities and points of view, to negotiate their rights and the rights of others in a positive, respectful way and to communicate effectively when resolving disagreements
- discussing emotions and issues of inclusion and exclusion, fairness and bias
- encouraging children to listen to other children's ideas, consider alternate behaviour and co-operate to solve problems

- using positive language, gestures, facial expressions and tone of voice when redirecting or discussing children's behaviour with them, and remaining calm, gentle, patient and reassuring even when children strongly express distress, frustration or anger
- using their knowledge of children's personalities and friendships to help them manage their own behaviour and develop empathy
- using information from families about their children's social skills and relationship preferences to engage children in experiences that support their social development
- intervening sensitively when children have difficulty resolving a disagreement, and helping them remove themselves from situations where they are experiencing frustration, anger or fear
- interacting with children and teaching them how to play in different ways: movement play, object play (understanding and solving problems), imaginative play (emotional resilience, creativity and empathy), social play (friendship and belonging, rough and tumble play, celebrations and ritual play), storytelling (my world, myself and where I fit in), creative play (new behaviours and thoughts) role play
- promoting children's agency by allowing them to be as independent as possible, to try things they see for themselves and experience the consequences of their choices while considering the risk and benefit to others. This may include teaching children how to use things
- ensuring the curriculum has a balance between children's ideas and interests and intentional teaching.
- setting up rooms and environments to foster positive behaviour e.g. room is interesting but not cluttered, defined and obstacle free walkways, resources are attractively displayed. The environment may include mirrors to help children focus and provide interest, contains photos of where resources belong
- ensuring activities are of interest to children e.g. using the 5 senses
- supporting children with strategies to deal with their raw emotions e.g. anger, fear, panic and being patient when children revert to old behaviour if they are stressed, tired, hungry etc. This includes listening empathetically to children when they express their emotions and reassuring them that it is normal to experience positive and negative emotions
- ensuring children's basic needs are met e.g. they aren't hungry or tired
- supporting children who appear to be insecurely attached by sensitively building relationships with the child and family
- providing explicit instruction for routines and learning
- understanding that children's comprehension of vocabulary concepts or instructions may require support such as visuals, key word signing, two step instructions or allowing time for a child to process the instruction or information. This may be as simple as waiting three seconds after speaking to the child so they can process what has been said
- understanding that children may not be able to interpret or understand some words. For example, 'sharing' may not be understood as taking turns.

Challenging Behaviour

- 6.3.2 Educators and staff understand that challenging behaviour is a child's way of saying they need support. Educators will reflect on the reasons for the child's behaviour and develop strategies or a plan with the Nominated Supervisor which can be implemented by all educators to ensure consistent responses to the child's behaviour at the service.
- 6.3.3 Children's behaviour may be challenging for a variety of reasons. Some of these include:
- insecure attachment to educators or families
 - emotional immaturity
 - insufficient language skills to express their needs and wishes
 - gaining attention from challenging behaviour
 - condition or number of toys, resources and equipment
 - a diagnosed or undiagnosed spectrum disorder.

- 6.3.4 Depending on the reason for the behaviour, some strategies for dealing with challenging behaviour may include:
- working with the child around challenging behaviour and acknowledge and celebrate the positive behaviour (while ensuring the safety of all children), and ensuring all body language is consistent with actions and words
 - building strong social bonds and trustful relationships.
 - using key words with signing and objects or visuals to help children with communication difficulties
 - using minimal steps in directions then allowing time for a child to understand e.g. 3-5 seconds
 - using terminology that children understand such as 'my turn' 'your turn' rather than assuming children understand e.g. children may not understand what it means to "share" or that saying "sorry" does not mean they can repeat the behaviour
 - allowing children to develop their reasoning and emotional knowledge by helping them to reflect on their actions e.g. "Tommy, what are you doing?" "I saw you" "What were you about to do with ...?"
 - not telling a child to do something but asking the child a question e.g. "What do we have to do so we can have lunch," rather than "pack up"
 - talking with children about the consequences of their actions, our rules and why we have them
 - providing sufficient opportunities for physical activities to calm anxious or agitated children.
 - intentionally teaching behaviours like walking inside, never assuming children know how to do things or behave, and reaffirming those and other positive behaviours
 - using empathy and putting themselves in the child's position to try and understand where the behaviour came from (rather than yelling at the end result of the behaviour)
 - documenting incidences of inappropriate behaviour and when they are occurring and developing a behaviour plan with parents and if relevant other professionals.
- 6.3.5 Educators will not isolate, intimidate or subject children to corporal punishment to guide behaviour.
- 6.3.6 Parents will:
- 6.3.6.1 work in partnership with educators where concerns are raised about the behaviour of their child
- 6.3.6.2 consent in writing where educators believe liaising with relevant professionals to support the learning and development of their child and apply for funding to do this where necessary
- 6.3.6.3 agree to work with educators to minimise risk where the child's behaviour is a danger to children and educators. This may include seeking professional support from, for example a paediatrician, speech pathologist or family support services, or reducing the hours of care until the child's behaviour is supported and risk to others is minimised.
- 6.3.7 If parents do not comply with these requirements, the Nominated Supervisor may suspend or terminate the child's enrolment after providing two weeks' notice. The Nominated Supervisor may, however, suspend or terminate a child's enrolment without providing two weeks' notice if he or she believes the child's behaviour poses an unacceptable risk to the welfare and safety of other children and educators.

7 Inclusion

- 7.1.1 Australia is a pluralistic society regardless of specific regional variations in cultural profiles. In order to reduce bias and ensure that no child is excluded our service will abide by the following practices:
- Our service will promote and value cultural diversity and equity for all children, families and educators from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds;
 - Our service will recognise that children and adults from all cultures have similar needs and that each individual is unique and valuable;
 - Our service will develop a positive self-concept for each child and adult in the group by exploring the cultural backgrounds of each family and child;

- Our service will endeavour to provide a foundation that instills in each child a sense of self identity, dignity and tolerance for all individuals;
- Our service will increase the knowledge and understanding each child has about his or her own cultural ethnic heritage in partnership with their family, educators and community and other children in the Service;
- Our service will explore family compositions, customs and lifestyles of children and families in many cultures;
- Our service will assist, in partnership with parents, extended family and the community in exploring their own “roots” as they involve children in the culturally diverse environment of the Service;
- Our service will provide support for fostered or adopted children to develop a sense of heritage and belonging;
- Our service will avoid common stereotypes and recognise individual differences within a cultural or ethnic group;
- Our service will assist wherever possible families who are new to Australia with a transition to a new and different culture.
- Our educators will become aware of their own beliefs, attitudes, cultural backgrounds, their relationship with the larger society and their attitudes to individuals;
- Our educators will acknowledge that they too have been influenced by their own background prejudices and their points of view;
- Our educators will accept that all children can learn and that differences in lifestyles and languages does not mean ignorance;
- Our educators will broaden their own cultural and ethnic group awareness and help children to understand themselves in relation to their family, community and other cultures;
- Our educators will be actively involved in the development of appropriate resources, support and implement an anti-bias, cross cultural program throughout the Service environment which is reflective of all families/children and the diversity present in Australian society and network with community agencies involved with cross cultural issues wherever possible;
- Our educators will be actively involved with children, showing respect, sharing ideas and experiences and asking questions.
- Our educators will access and make available resources and information supporting the delivery of anti-bias concepts in the program and attend regular training courses as required. Such resources will be integrated into the daily program and be made available to families.
- Our educators will reflect on the service’s philosophy and ensure that practices and attitude concur with the philosophy.
- Our educators will work with families to encourage positive attitudes to diversity and an ant-bias ethos.
- Our educators will ensure that casual workers or visitors to the service are aware of these practices and respect these values.
- Children will be supported to listen to and practice singing songs in different languages;
- Children will be supported to learn words and phrases in a language not native to children in their group;
- Children will be supported to talk to other children using words from their culture;
- Children will be supported to be encouraged to become independent wherever possible and be actively involved with their peers.
- Children will be supported to explore with foods from other cultures
- Our service will encourage children to bring in real objects and artifacts used by their families that may be historical or typical of that child’s/family’s cultural group including food;
- Our service will help children to develop ease with and have a respect for physical, racial, religious and cultural differences.
- Our service will encourage children to develop autonomy, independence, competency, confidence and pride.

- Our service will provide all children with accurate and appropriate material that provides information about their own and other's disabilities and cultures.
- Our service will not isolate a child for any reason other than illness, accident or a prearranged appointment with parental consent.

8 Supporting Children through Difficult Situations

- 8.1.1 When a child, family, educator or the service as a whole experiences a stressful or traumatic situation such as a bushfire, car accident, sudden illness or death, crime or violent situation it is important to provide appropriate support so they can recover from the ordeal. A child's reaction to a stressful or traumatic situation will depend on factors such as their age, stage of development and impact of the event on individuals around them. A child may react in ways that you don't expect and sometimes will act normally at first but be wary of a delayed reaction. Some reactions include:
- Physical symptoms such as stomach aches and headaches.
 - Being anxious or clingy.
 - Suffering from separation anxiety.
 - Having sleeping problems or nightmares.
 - Re-living the experience through drawing or play.
 - Losing interest in activities.
 - Loss of self-confidence.
 - Regressing to "babyish" activities.
- 8.1.2 Our educators will talk with a child about the event to bring any issues out into the open. The ways our educators will approach this are:
- Reassuring the child that they are safe, but only if they really are.
 - Talking to the child about what happened in a way that they will understand and without going into frightening or graphic detail. Our educators will not leave out important information though, as children will fill in the gaps.
 - Ensuring the child hasn't jumped to conclusions. Some children will think they are to blame in a tragic event; our educators will make sure they know this isn't so.
 - Talking about the event with appropriate individuals (for example, all children if the event has affected the whole service or the children that have been affected) and letting everyone have their say including children.
 - Talking to the children about how individuals react to stressful or traumatic situations and that the feelings they are feelings are normal.

Coping Mechanisms

- 8.1.3 Some strategies that our educators will use to help children cope in these situations are:
- Giving children a sense of control of their environment and life. Letting the child make minor decisions, such as what to eat for lunch, what to wear or what toy to play with will make the child feel more in control.
 - Allowing the children plenty of time to play and to do physical exercise; this will help the child burn off stress chemicals and allow for more sleep.
 - Helping the children physically relax with story times and cuddles.
- 8.1.4 It is important to remember how you respond to the stressful, or traumatic event will affect your child's response. Children look to their families and educators to find ways to deal with a situation they probably don't understand. Children need their family members (and other adults who are close to them) to help them understand the situation and their emotions and also offer comfort and support. If adults are distressed about a situation, it is important for them to seek help for themselves.
- 8.1.5 At the service, we wish to help in whatever way we can if your family has undergone a tragedy. Talk to educators (or confidentially to the Nominated Supervisor) and we will endeavour to work with families and children to support all parties through the situation.

- 8.1.6 Should it be required, educators will liaise with appropriate authorities, such as the Department of Education and Children's Services, and follow any recommendations made by these authorities.

9 Bullying

- 9.1.1 In order to overcome bullying in our service, our educators will be aware of the following information and maintain the following practices:
- 9.1.1.1 Our educators will be aware of the following characteristics in children who bully -
- Children of all backgrounds can bully
 - Preconceived notions of children who bully should be avoided
 - The child who bullies may also be the victim of bullying
 - The child who bullies will often think that they are innocent, and that the child being bullied is somehow deserving of this negative experience.
 - Recent research demonstrates that aggressive behaviour and bullying inclinations begin in some children as early as two years old, which highlights the importance of children's services educators in effectively responding to children who bully.
- 9.1.1.2 Our educators will be aware of the following characteristics of victims of bullying -
- Children of all backgrounds can fall victim to bullying
 - Preconceived notions of children who fall victim to bullying should be avoided
 - Boys are victims of bullying more than girls.
 - Victims may have low self-esteem, lack of confidence, lack social skills or be viewed as unpopular.
 - It is important to remember that victims are often sensitive and easily hurt, and feel incapable of preventing such negative experiences.
- 9.1.1.3 Our educators will implement the following strategies to overcome bullying -
- Our educators will practice all-encompassing and socially inclusive care.
 - Daily programs will recognise, value and reflect the social and cultural diversity of our community.
 - Our educators will role model and actively encourage appropriate behaviours.
 - Our educators will form a close relationship with family members in order to work cooperatively to overcome instances of bullying.
 - Our educators will empower children by giving them responsibilities that will make them feel valued.
 - Our educators will help children deal with their anger. This includes offering alternative dispute resolution techniques that are socially acceptable.
 - Our educators will seek the support of children's services professionals when it is necessary.
 - Our educators will respond promptly to children's aggressive or bullying behaviour.

10 Biting

- 10.1.1 All individuals involved in the care of a child need to recognise that at times, some children, for a variety of reasons, attempt to bite other children.
- 10.1.2 Some reasons a child may bite are:
- Infants – Experimental, Sensory Pleasure, Teething
 - Toddlers – Frustration, fatigue, attention seeking, confined spaces.
 - Older Children – Aggression, deliberate, frustrated, reactive response.
- 10.1.3 In the event of a biting incident, educators will abide by the following procedure:
- Check for broken skin.
 - Clean all bites, regardless of whether the skin is broken or not.
 - Apply a cold compress to the bitten area

- Our educators will contact the families of the child who has bitten and the child that has been bitten as soon as possible. Families are then responsible for any follow up medical treatment.
- If the biter is a known infectious disease carrier, or can be seen to have facial herpes and the victim's skin is broken, the Nominated Supervisor or Authorised Supervisor will convey this information to the family.
- Should the behaviour continue, our educators will work in conjunction with families and, if necessary, external agencies, to develop a Behaviour Guidance plan for the child who is biting.
- Our educators will complete an incident report for any occasion where a child bites and submit to the Nominated Supervisor.
- Monitor the behaviour of the child who has bitten and use distraction techniques to prevent the child reaching the point where the child feels the need to bite.

11 Sources

National Quality Standard
Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
Early Years Learning Framework

12 Authorisation

ELC Document Name	Relationships with Children Policy	
Name of Reviewer: Approved Provider	Principal Andrew Neal	Signature:
Name of Reviewer: Nominated Supervisor	Kerry Osborn	Signature:
Date Revised	June 2024	

13 History

Date	Amendment
June 2023	1. Reviewed
May 2024	2. Reviewed – not changes
June 2024	3. 6.3 Behaviour Guidance reviewed – no changes

14 Appendix A: Philosophy



Philosophy

The values of Bacchus Marsh Grammar are an integral part of the Bacchus Marsh Grammar Early Learning Centre. The children at the Early Learning Centre will be empowered to learn and grow in a calm, inviting and stimulating environment. We do not draw on any particular theoretical approaches but believe incorporating a range of evidence-based theories provide the best outcomes for high quality early education.

Curriculum/ Framework

The Early Childhood Programs are designed and implemented by highly qualified Early Years Teachers and educators. Our curriculum is authentic and tailored to each child's immediate community, whilst also ensuring global community awareness is evident and embedded. Based on the Early Years Learning Framework our Curriculum enhances each child's, literacy, numeracy, ICT, cultural awareness, STEAM knowledge, creativity, and movement skills.

Our diverse curriculum will build on the strengths and interests of individual children and the group as a whole. This will be achieved through high expectations, intentional teaching, project work, questioning, discussions, and open-ended authentic experiences where children will become curious and inquisitive learners.

Wellbeing

The children will be supported to become aware and connected to their own social and emotional wellbeing. Children will be exposed to a creative environment to build skills to enable them to problem solve not only independently but collaboratively. All teachers and educators will place a strong emphasis on embedding personal qualities such as integrity, empathy, and respect for others which will assist the children and their ongoing learning journey.

Environment

The environment in which children learn is not only aesthetically appealing and inviting but is designed to ensure children are engaged, challenged and individual learning styles are supported by evidence-based research which is visible throughout the space. The environment will support all children to become confident learners who are able to direct their own learning and take considered risks through a range of experiences and opportunities. Teachers and educators will ensure that sustainable living practices are encouraged and implemented.

Cultural Competence

We are a child-safe organisation and have zero tolerance for child abuse. Implementing the Child Safe Standards, we work at every level to create culturally safe environments and protect children from abuse and harm. Our Early Learning Centre incorporates our children's, families', educator's and communities' cultural diversities and perspectives to guide an inclusive learning curriculum which also pays respect to the Wurundjeri people as the traditional owners of the land.

15 Appendix B: Child Safety Commitment Statement

Bacchus Marsh Grammar Early Learning Centre is committed to the safety and well-being of all children and young people. We understand our responsibilities and statutory duty of care to comply with both the Victorian Child Safe Standards and the Reportable Conduct Scheme to build our capacity as an organisation to prevent and respond to allegations of child abuse.

Our Service is committed to implementing and abiding by our Child Safe Policy based on Child Safe Standards in Victoria (2022), accentuating our zero tolerance for child abuse and raising awareness about the importance of child safety in our Service and the community. We are dedicated to protecting children from abuse and neglect and promoting a child-safe environment, maintaining children's well-being.

We adhere to our comprehensive Child Protection Policy, following our mandatory reporting responsibilities to protect children from physical, sexual, emotional, and psychological abuse and neglect.

We are dedicated to promoting cultural safety for Aboriginal children, cultural safety for children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and providing a safe environment for children with a disability. We are committed to ongoing professional development for employees to maintain their ability to distinguish and respond to situations of abuse and neglect, ensuring employees are responsive to their responsibilities in keeping children safe.

We work in collaboration with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and have confidence in educating children about their right to be safe. At Bacchus Marsh Grammar Early Learning Centre, we know that children learn best when they feel safe and are safe. We believe in teaching children what to do if they feel unsafe and encouraging them to express their views and thoughts on matters that directly affect them. As educators, we listen to and empower children to act on any concerns they or others may raise, which is reflected in our policies and procedures for keeping children safe.