

# Code of Conduct Policy (Parents/Guardians, Volunteers and Staff)

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Mandatory – Quality Area 4

## 1. Authorisation

This policy was adopted by the Hampton Community Kindergarten Inc Committee (the Committee), at its Committee meeting, on 22 May 2012.

## 2. Review Date

This policy has been reviewed in August 2014 and needs to be reviewed every two years, due for review May 2016.

## 3. Scope

*To whom does it apply and when?*

The policy applies to all

- staff
- children
- parents on duty and attending siblings
- visiting children
- students
- volunteers
- participants in the preschool program

The policy will apply at all times the preschool is open and during any preschool organised events

## 4. Background

HAMPTON COMMUNITY KINDERGARTEN provides an open, welcoming and safe environment. We believe that all parents/guardians and volunteers play a crucial and valuable role in the effective operation of the centre and in enriching the children's program. We acknowledge that without parents'/guardians' support, participation and contribution the Kindergarten could not operate.

The Committee has a legal responsibility to provide a safe and happy environment for all children and staff.

This may include, but is not limited to:

- *Children's Services Act 1996, Children, Youth and Families Act 2005, Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005, Disability Discrimination Act 1992, Equal Opportunity Act 1995, Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act 1986, Occupational Health and Safety Act 2005, Sex Discrimination Act 1984, Workplace Relations Act 1996*

The Committee needs to ensure:

".. that the children's service is operated in a way which ensures the safety of the children being cared for or educated and that their developmental needs are met " *Children's Services Act 1996* Section 18 (4).

The employer has an obligation to ensure a safe and discrimination free working environment for staff in accordance with relevant legislation.

The Committee needs to ensure all parents/guardians, volunteers, staff, students and any other persons involved in the centre, adhere to clear guidelines regarding appropriate interaction and communication with one another, and with children at the centre.

## 5. Policy values

*Guiding principles of this centre.*

This centre is a place of learning for young children and therefore the rights of the child will be considered first and foremost.

This centre is committed to:

- The wellbeing of each child having fundamental importance
- Providing a safe and secure environment
- Providing an open, welcoming environment where everyone's contribution is valued and respected
- Encouraging parents/guardians, volunteers and community members to support and participate in our centre's program.

### **Purpose**

This policy will outline guidelines to promote desirable and appropriate behaviour to ensure that all interaction with children and adults is respectful, honest, courteous, sensitive, tactful and considerate.

The Committee and staff have a duty of care to the children attending the centre. Employers have a responsibility to provide, as far as practicable, a safe workplace that is free from discrimination, bullying and/or harassment.

A code of conduct provides guidelines for desirable and appropriate behaviour of members, and reflects the values and beliefs of the centre. The code is designed to provide principles and practices to guide adult behaviour.

The *Code of Conduct Policy (Parents/Guardians and Volunteers)* will then provide a valuable resource for guiding decisions and behaviour of all persons involved both directly and indirectly in the centre.

### **Background and legislation**

This may include, but is not limited to:

- *Children's Services Act 1996, Children, Youth and Families Act 2005, Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005, Disability Discrimination Act 1992, Equal Opportunity Act 1995, Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act 1986, Occupational Health and Safety Act 2005, Sex Discrimination Act 1984, Workplace Relations Act 1996*

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## 6. Procedures

### General guidelines for interactions

- **Safety:** Comply with all policies and procedures of the centre. These are displayed at the centre. Be aware of emergency evacuation procedures.
- **Ethical conduct:** Always act in the best interests of children, their families and users of the centre.
- **Support:** Work in a cooperative and positive manner.
- **Communication:** Use courteous and acceptable verbal and nonverbal language. Refrain from the use of profane, insulting, harassing, degrading, aggressive or otherwise offensive language.
- **Respect:** Value the rights, religious beliefs and practices of individuals. Refrain from actions and behaviour that constitute harassment or discrimination.
- **Confidentiality:** Comply with the centre's *Privacy Policy*. Respect the confidential nature of information gained, or behaviour observed, whilst participating in the program, in relation to other children and adults.
- **Children's program:** If participating in the program seek guidance and direction from staff. If unsure ask staff for further information. Behaviour guidance of the children is the responsibility of staff, immediately refer any issues or concerns related to managing children's behaviour to staff.

## 7. Implementation Support

### The Committee is responsible for:

- Ensuring all parents/guardians, staff, volunteers, students and visitors can view a copy of this policy upon arrival, employment or enrolment.
- Collecting and filing the completed and signed agreements (Appendix 1).
- Implementing the standards of conduct as set out in this policy (Schedule 1).

### The staff is responsible for:

- Respecting the individual needs, cultural practices and beliefs of families in all interactions, both verbal and non-verbal
- Working with colleagues, Committee and parents/guardians to provide an environment that encourages positive interactions and supports constructive feedback
- Providing guidance to parents/guardians and volunteers through positive role modelling and, when appropriate, clear and respectful directions
- Ensuring practices and procedures are in place to ensure that parents/guardians on duty, or other adults participating in the program, are not placed in a situation where they are left alone with a child. For example, staff is responsible for assisting with toileting needs, nappy changing.

### The parents/guardians are responsible for:

- Abiding by the standards of conduct as set out in this policy.

- Reading the *Code of Conduct Policy* and signing the agreement letter when deemed necessary (Appendix 1).

## 8. Procedure for dealing with a breach in the code of conduct:

On notification of a potential breach of the code the Committee will activate the *Complaints Policy*. The sub-committee will recommend a course of action to the Committee which may include, but is not limited to:

- A first and final warning meeting/letter being issued to inform the relevant person/s of the outcome of the investigation and that another breach of the code of conduct may result in the suspension or withdrawal of the child from the program
- A restraining order (via the legal system) being sought against the relevant person. Success in obtaining a restraining order will then prevent this person from attending the centre to deliver or collect children or to participate in the program
- The withdrawal or suspension of a child's place in the program due to the parents/guardians serious breach of the code of conduct. This action will only be taken if no other alternatives are deemed appropriate by the sub-committee/Committee/board.

### Emergency situations

In an emergency situation, where it is believed that staff, children or parents/guardians are at immediate risk (for example violence has been threatened or perpetrated) the staff members and/or Committee involved need to be able to act quickly and decisively. The Committee/board, the primary nominee and all nominees are authorised to contact the local police to advise them of the current situation.

The executive Committee is delegated the authority to determine suitable actions, which may include, but is not limited to:

- Applying immediately for a restraining order (via the legal system)
- Suspending the relevant person/s from attending the centre until the Committee has investigated and decided on an appropriate course of action. If required, notify the parents/guardians that alternate arrangements will need to be organised for the delivery/collection of their child to ensure that the suspended person does not attend the centre.
- Suspension of a child's place in the program due to the suspended person still attending the centre after they have been advised not to.

## 9. Related documents

### Centre policies

- Complaints, Delivery and Collection of Children , Behaviour Guidance , Privacy

## 10. Evaluation

In order to assess whether the policy has achieved the values and purposes the Committee will:

- Monitor compliance with the expectations and procedures set out in the policy

- Take into consideration feedback on the policy from staff, parents/guardians and Committee members
- Assess whether a satisfactory resolution has been achieved in relation to issues arising from this policy.

## 11. Criteria

### Standards of Conduct

Behavioural practices to follow

#### In relation to children:

- Be a positive role model at all times
- Always speak in an encouraging and positive manner
- Listen actively to children and offer empathy, support and guidance where needed
- Regard all children equally and with respect and dignity
- Physical contact with children other than your own should be avoided unless directed by staff or if the safety of a child is compromised (this should be reported immediately to staff)
- Inform children if physical contact is required for an activity and ask them if they are happy to proceed
- All interactions with children should be undertaken in full view of other adults
- Never do things of a personal nature for a child that they can do themselves, for example, assisting them in going to the toilet or changing their clothes.

#### In relation to other adults (including staff):

- Use respectful, encouraging and accepting language.
- Respect the rights of others as individuals.
- Give encouraging and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.
- Accept staff decisions and follow their directions at all times. Speak with the staff member outside of a set session if you have a problem complying with any directions.
- Be aware of routines and guidelines for children's play within the centre, abide by them and seek advice when unsure.
- Be aware of emergency evacuation procedures.
- Discipline of children is the responsibility of staff and therefore any matters or concerns related to managing children's behaviour should be referred to staff immediately.
- Avoid approaching staff to discuss a child during a session. Seek an alternative time when a staff member is free from contact duties with children.
- Refrain from public criticism of children and adults at the centre.
- Any issues or grievances should be raised as outlined in the *Complaints Policy*.
- Under NO circumstance should a child, parents/guardians or member of staff be approached directly in a confrontational manner.

- Smoking is prohibited on the centre property at all times.

### **In general**

- The centre and staff are responsible for the children that are enrolled and signed in, that is those children attending the children's program.
- Parents/guardians, and other persons attending with children not enrolled in the program, are responsible for supervision of their children at all times. This is particularly important, for example, during outdoor time as the climbing equipment may be set-up for four to five year-olds and could be hazardous for younger siblings participating in the program.
- Adults are responsible for all children who accompany them, including when they are on duty, drop off and pickup time, ensuring their child does not inhibit or disrupt the program in any way
- Staff may ask parents/guardians to remove children not enrolled and signed into the program if they are disturbing the program.
- Parents/guardians will also be responsible for children's behaviour when attending other activities and the child is not signed into the program, for example working bees, family nights.

## CODE OF CONDUCT

### Acknowledgement of receipt

I hereby acknowledge that on ..... [date] I received a copy of the *Code of Conduct Policy (Parents/Guardians and Volunteers)* for the Hampton Community Kindergarten

I have read this policy, I understand its contents and I agree to abide by the principles, and practices and consequences set out within.

I understand that the Committee will deal with any breach of this policy and any serious breach could lead to the withdrawal of my child(ren)'s place at the kindergarten or withdrawal of my volunteer time at the centre.

I understand that a signed copy of this statement of commitment will be kept on file while my child(ren) remain at the centre; or while I am involved with the centre, and will be disposed of at the end of this time.

_____	_____	_____
Signature	Name (please print)	Date

_____	_____	_____
Witness signature	Name (please print)	Date