

**Policy created:** 2010

**Reviewed:** 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019,

2020, 2021.

**Monitoring, evaluation and reviews:** occurs annually, overseen by the principal.

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## **Discipline & Interactions with Children Policy**

### **Quality Areas 2, 4, 5 and 7**

Under the Education and Care Services National Regulations, an approved provider must ensure that policies and procedures are in place for interactions with children (regulation 168) and take reasonable steps to ensure those policies and procedures are followed (regulation 170).

#### **Policy Statement:**

Montessori East bases its pedagogical approach on the principles initially developed by Dr Maria Montessori. We believe the principles and standards are responsive to the varied and changing needs of the child. Here they develop an appreciation and commitment to serve the needs of a rapidly changing world where real environmental threats and opportunities are present. The high regard for the individual child is reflected in our practices and policies, with special focus on the inclusion of children with additional needs. As an authentic Montessori setting, we are committed to recognising the importance of respectful and positive relationships that children have with each other and with educators, and we encourage a child-centred approach that promotes self-expression, self-reliance and self-esteem, and maintains each child's dignity and rights. We are committed to meeting our regulatory requirements in relation to interactions with children.

#### **General background:**

The Education and Care Services National Regulations requires the approved provider to ensure our settings have policies and procedures in place in relation to interactions with children. We aim to ensure that all educators form positive relationships with children that make them feel safe and supported in the setting. Staff will encourage positive relationships between children and their peers as well as with educators and volunteers at our setting. Guided by Montessori philosophy, our mission is to provide a caring learning environment that nurtures every child's natural capacity for learning and supports the early development of academic, social, artistic, physical and life skills. When provided with a well-designed environment that offers meaningful opportunities for exploration, we believe that every child can learn the foundational academic, social, artistic, physical and life skills required for future success.

## Legislative requirements

Our policy is consistent with, and refers to, legislative requirements for dealing with infectious diseases under both Education and Care Services National Law and Education Act (1990) (NSW).

<b>Regulation</b>	<b>Description</b>
Regulation 73	Educational program that contributes to the following outcomes for each child: child will have a strong sense of identity; child will be connected with and contribute to their world; child will have a strong sense of wellbeing; child will be a confident and involved learner; child will be an effective communicator.
Regulation 84	All staff are aware of current child protection, their existence and application, and our obligations they may have under that law through annual training/confirming by signature they have read/understood current Child Protection Laws/their obligations under this law.
Regulation 115	Our settings premises are designed to facilitate supervision (including toilets) are designed/maintained to facilitate supervision of children at all times, having regard to the need to maintain their rights/dignity.
Regulation 117A	Placing a person who has consented in writing in day-to-day charge.
Regulation 118	Educational leader, in writing, is suitably qualified and experienced educator, co-ordinator or other individual to lead the development and implementation of educational programs in the setting.
Regulation 123	We adhere to educator to child ratios (centre-based services), e.g., for children from birth to 24 months of age - 1 educator to 4 children; children over 24 months - less than 36 months - 1:5; children aged 3 years or over (not including children over preschool age) - 1:11; children over preschool age -1:15. We have mixed age classes 1:11 is our base ratio. Additionally, each class has an early childhood teacher or a suitably qualified person who is counted for the purposes of this regulation. In emergencies (child protection, parent needs urgent health care) we are aware that as a centre-based service for a period of not more than 2 consecutive days we can care for an additional child on which the service operates.
Regulation 126	Centre-based services – general educator qualifications of at least 50% are required to meet the relevant educator to child ratios for the service must have, or be actively working towards, at least an approved diploma level education and care qualification; and all other educators who are required to meet the relevant educator to child ratios for the service must have, or be actively working towards, at least an approved certificate III level education and care qualification.

Regulation 145	Staff records are kept and include information about nominated supervisors set out in regulation 146; information about staff members set out in regulation 147; and information about the educational leader set out in regulation 148; and information about volunteers set out in regulation 149(1).
Regulation 155	Interactions with children encourages children to express themselves and their opinions; and allows children to undertake experiences that develop self-reliance and self-esteem; and maintains at all times the dignity and rights of each child; and gives each child positive guidance and encouragement toward acceptable behaviour; and has regard to the family and cultural values, age, and physical and intellectual development and abilities of each child.
Regulation 156	Relationships in groups are ensured with opportunities to interact and develop respectful and positive relationships with each other and with staff members of, and volunteers, bearing in mind the size/composition of the groups.
Regulation 168	Our education settings have policies and procedures as detailed in 'Policies and Procedures Policy' (Policy Folder – office/Google Drive).
Regulation 170	Our setting takes reasonable steps to ensure that all staff and volunteers follow the policies and procedure. We manage this by annual training and our staff handbook.
Regulation 171	Our policies and procedures are kept available and accessible for the educational setting community and for inspection in the office, on Transparent Classroom and Google Drive.
Regulation 172	Our setting notifies parents within 14 days of change to policies or procedures relating to settings provisions, family ability to utilise setting, fees charged, fees collected. Additionally, our approved provider, if we consider that the notice period would pose a risk to the safety, health or wellbeing of any child enrolled at our settings, will ensure that parents of children enrolled at the service are notified as soon as practicable after making a change. We manage this by having notifications visible in the office and train staff annually regarding this requirement.

### **The principles that inform our policy include:**

- We see positive staff to child interactions as central to ensuring quality outcomes for children's education and care.
- We value the important role our educators and staff play in children's education and care. We equip them with the necessary knowledge and skills to enable them to interact positively with the children and promote relationships between children.

- Our educational program encourages children’s self-expression, promotes self-reliance, maintains their dignity and rights, gives positive guidance, and recognises their culture, values and abilities. We regularly reflect on and refine the program as needed in this regard.

## Key terms

We provide definitions of our key terms that may not be used every day to help with ease of access:

<b>Term</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
ACECQA – Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority	The independent national authority that works with all regulatory authorities to administer the National Quality Framework, including the provision of guidance, resources and services to support the sector to improve outcomes for children.
Approved Provider	Board – The Eastern Suburbs Montessori Association
Responsible Person (must have written consent)	Approved provider/person with management / control, nominated supervisor, a person in day-to-day charge and is present at a centre-based setting at all times. An approved provider does not have to appoint a person in day-to-day charge if a nominated supervisor/s is to be responsible person.
Nominated Supervisor (must have written consent)	Person nominated by the Approved Provider.
Educational Leader (must have written offer/consent)	Person/persons appointed by the Approved Provider
Dignity & rights of the child	Element 5.1.2 of the NQS (‘Dignity and rights of child’) aims to achieve the UN 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 Convention states that children have the right to be protected from being hurt and mistreated, physically or mentally.
Positive interactions between	Involves educators viewing each child as capable and staff and children competent, with a right to a voice, able to contribute to decisions that affect them. Enabling educators to focus their practices on children’s strengths and inclusion in group environment. Educators who are responsive to

children's thoughts/feelings are supporting them to develop a strong sense of wellbeing. By interacting positively/meaningfully with children, educators help each child to feel accepted and to develop a sense of attachment/trust. Children who are supported to understand themselves experience a sense of belonging that fosters self-esteem which contributes to development of identity, is critical to children's capacity to understand their own strengths, abilities, interests. When children feel safe, secure and supported, they develop confidence to explore and learn.

#### Relationships between children

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

#### Relationships between children and staff

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

### **Links to other policies**

Related policies and procedures include:

- Providing a child safe environment
- Enrolment and orientation
- Staffing
- Governance and management

## **Induction and ongoing training**

Induction training at our setting consists of school operations overview, human resources, salary, time keeping and sick leave procedures, record keeping, safety and accident prevention, leave entitlements/provisions, personal conduct and safety, professional development and training and introduction to the workplace.

Induction training is carried out as needed. To ensure and assist managers, coordinators, educators and other staff to fulfil their roles effectively our settings provide a checklist of all areas to be covered and who is in charge of that area (Staff Induction Checklist).

### **Sources**

ACECQA

Guide to the NQF (Standard 5.1, 5.1.1, 5.1.2, 5.2)

Early Years Learning Framework, p. 25, p. 20

Framework for School Age Care, p. 24, p. 19

National Law

National Regulations

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## **Discipline & Interactions with children Procedures**

Under the Education and Care Services National Regulations, an approved provider must ensure that policies and procedures are in place in relation to interactions with children (regulation 168) and take reasonable steps to ensure those policies and procedures are followed (regulation 170).

The Education Act requires that policies related to the discipline of students be based on procedural fairness. It is the responsibility of the school to determine incidents that may require disciplinary action and how we may deal with these incidents.

We have specifically outlined our induction training and procedure so that the educators who are casually employed, new to a setting or moving between rooms, can refer to this document when they are unsure about their role and responsibilities at the setting. These documented steps and guidelines guide our practice and inform regulatory authorities of roles and responsibilities. Procedures directly refer to our 'interactions with children policy' located in our policy documents.

### **Procedures**

Implementing the 'interactions with children policy' includes specific step-by-step procedures including:

Our setting's statement of philosophy will guide our interactions with children as follows:

- We believe that every child is born with the desire to become independent and contribute positively to the community.
- Our vision is to promote a life-long love of learning in our children – providing them foundations from which they may realize their full potential and positively contribute to their family, community and wider world.
- We offer children an optimal early learning environment that specifically designed to:
  - Inspire children's natural love of learning
  - Maximise children's early development
  - Reinforce the importance of family and culture
  - Promote early literacy and numeracy skills
  - Encourage independence and self-discipline
  - Build positive social skills and connections.

In order to maintain positive interactions with children our setting and staff will maintain the following:

- Our setting provides a relaxed and happy atmosphere for the children.



- We ensure mealtimes are relaxed and unhurried and educators take the time to sit and talk with children.
- We encourage children to initiate conversations about their experiences inside and outside the setting as well as what is happening around them, express their ideas and feelings, share humour with the educators and seek assistance as they take on new challenges and try to do things for themselves.
- We respond sensitively and appropriately to children's efforts to communicate and engage them in sustained conversations about their interests in a positive manner.
- We talk with children in a two-sided manner. That is, encourage children to have their own opinions, ideas and comments. Staff should support children with this and let them know that their ideas are valued.
- Our routines, as well as planned and spontaneous experiences are organised to maximise opportunity for meaningful conversations between children, and staff will ensure that all children have equal opportunity to engage in one to one and small group conversations with educators.
- We participate in children's activities 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.
- We model reasoning, prediction and reflection processes and language.
- We collaborate with children about routines and experiences.
- We use techniques such as sign language, visual cues and other resources and tools to support children with additional needs.
- We use our interactions with children to support the maintenance of home languages and learning English as an additional language.
- We use information from their observations of interactions with children to extend the children's thinking and learning.
- We support children to build secure attachments with one and then extend to other educators.
- We learn more about the histories, cultures, languages, traditions, child rearing practices and lifestyle choices of our families.
- We allow time to talk to parents about their children. This allows educators to gain insight into their home life.
- We implement strategies to assist all children to develop a sense of belonging and confidence through positive interactions between the children and educators.





- Our roster will be planned in a way that promotes continuity for children.
- We 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 additional needs we will consult with our additional needs teacher as well as with other professionals/ 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 approach to equity and inclusion will be documented in our statement of philosophy.
- We 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 experiences that are planned for children in light of this information.

## **Group Relationships**

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

- We 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.
- We 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 multi age classrooms ensure that the children have many opportunities for peer scaffolding.
- Our educators will promote a sense of community in the school.
- We coordinate the staffing and grouping arrangements to support positive relationships between children.
- We support and promote children's interpersonal relationships and support inclusion of children from diverse backgrounds and capabilities in group play, projects and experiences
- We learn about children's shared interests and will use this information to plan further experiences that provide collaborative learning opportunities.
- We preempt potential conflicts or challenging behaviours by monitoring children's play and supporting interactions where there is conflict.

- We ensure that the program and routines of the Centre will include regular opportunities for children to engage in social play and group experiences.
- We ensure that food is being used appropriately and not as a reward or punishment.
- We 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 setting.

## **Behaviour Guidance**

### **Positive Behaviour**

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, remaining calm, gentle, patient, 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, 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.
- Ensuring curriculum is balanced between children's ideas and interests as well as teacher led lessons.
- 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, and contain photos of where resources belong.

- Ensuring activities are of interest to children e.g. are visual, auditory and tactile.
- 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 acknowledging their feelings.
- 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.
- Allowing children to have uninterrupted play where they can continue their engagement in learning as they explore and improvise, and not interrupting a child who is actively engaged in an activity, or forcing a child to share when they are engaged with a resource. Simple strategies may be reducing unnecessary transitions.
- 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. e.g., 'sharing' may not be understood as taking turns.

### **Inappropriate Behaviour**

Staff understand that inappropriate behaviour is a child's way of saying they need support. Staff will reflect after gathering observation notes on the reasons for the child's behaviour and develop

strategies or a plan with the Management Team which can be implemented by all educators to ensure consistent responses to the child's behaviour at the setting.

Children's behaviour may be inappropriate for a variety of reasons. Some of these include:

- insecure attachment to educators or families
- new baby at home
- emotional immaturity
- insufficient language skills to express their needs and wishes
- used to gaining attention from negative behaviour
- condition on number of resources and equipment
- a diagnosed or undiagnosed spectrum disorder

Depending on the reason for the behaviour, some strategies for dealing with inappropriate behaviour may include:

- ignoring negative behaviour and praising positive behaviour (while ensuring the safety of all children), ensuring all body language is consistent with actions/words,
- building strong social bonds through a focus on attachment theory and Circle of Security approaches,
- using keywords with signing, 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 helping them to reflect on their actions by sport casting: e.g. "Tommy, I see that you want to play with the spade that Ella had" Ella, you look sad because Tommy took your spade" "Can you two come up with a plan",
- talking with children about the consequences of their actions, our rules and why we have them,
- adjusting the menu and the time that certain foods like fruit which are high in natural sugar are provided,
- providing sufficient opportunities for exercise including running which can calm anxious or agitated children through the production of certain brain chemicals,
- 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 child's position to try and understand where the behaviour came from (rather than yelling at the end result of the behaviour),
- documenting incidents of inappropriate behaviour and when they are occurring and developing a behaviour plan with parents and if relevant other professionals.

**We will not isolate, intimidate or subject children to corporal punishment to guide behaviour.**

**Parents will:**

- work in partnership with educators where concerns are raised about the behaviour of their child,
- 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,
- 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.

## **Inclusion**

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 we will abide by the following practices:

- we promote and value cultural diversity and equity for all children, families and educators from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds,
- we recognise that children and adults from all cultures have similar needs and that each person is unique and valuable,
- we develop a positive self-concept for each child and adult in the group by exploring the cultural backgrounds of each family and child,
- we endeavour to provide a foundation that instil in each child a sense of self identity, dignity and tolerance for all people,
- we 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 Centre,
- we explore family compositions, customs and lifestyles of children and families in many cultures,
- we assist, in partnership with parents, extended family and community in exploring their own "roots" as they involve children in our culturally diverse environments,



- we provide support for fostered or adopted children to develop a sense of heritage and belonging,
- we avoid common stereotypes and recognise individual differences within a cultural or ethnic group,
- we assist wherever possible families who are new to Australia with a transition to a new and different culture,
- we become aware of their own beliefs, attitudes, cultural backgrounds, their relationship with the larger society and their attitudes to people,
- we acknowledge that they too have been influenced by their own background prejudices and their points of view,
- we accept that all children can learn and that differences in lifestyles and languages does not mean ignorance,
- we broaden their own cultural and ethnic group awareness and help children to understand themselves in relation to their family, community and other cultures,
- we are actively involved in the development of appropriate resources, support and implement an anti-bias, cross cultural program throughout the Centre 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,
- we are actively involved with children, showing respect, sharing ideas and experiences and asking questions,
- we 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 daily program/be made available to families,
- we reflect on the setting's philosophy and ensure that practices and attitude concur with the philosophy,
- we work with families to encourage positive attitudes to diversity/anti-bias ethos
- we ensure that casual workers or visitors to the setting are aware of these practices and respect these values,
- children listen to CD's and practice singing songs in different languages,
- children learn words and phrases in a language not native to children in their group,
- children talk to other children using the words from their culture,

- children are encouraged to become independent wherever possible and be actively involved with their peers,
- children explore with foods from other cultures (e.g. have family members from different home cultures come in and cook, to have “food tasting” parties),
- we encourage children to bring in real objects and artefacts used by their families that may be historical or typical of that child’s/family’s cultural group including food,
- we help children to develop ease with and have a respect for physical, racial, religious and cultural differences,
- we encourage children to develop autonomy, independence, competency, confidence and pride,
- we provide all children with accurate and appropriate material that provides information about their own and other’s disabilities and cultures,
- we will not isolate a child for any reason other than illness, accident or a pre-arranged appointment with parental consent.

## **Procedural Fairness**

Procedural fairness is a basic right of all when dealing with authorities. Procedural fairness, as defined in the Registered and Accredited Individual Non-government Schools (NSW) Manual, refers to what is sometimes described as the ‘hearing rule’ and the ‘right to an unbiased decision’. Where the offending behaviour is of such a nature that it may result in suspension, expulsion, or exclusion (see Manual, page 33, for definitions) the student will be:

- Informed of the alleged infringement
- Informed as to who will make the decision on the penalty
- Informed of the procedures to be followed which will include an opportunity to have a parent or guardian present when responding to the allegation; and
- Afforded a right of review or appeal.

Montessori East will not act to prevent a student’s admission to any other school, however in extreme circumstances the principal may make a submission to an appropriate authority recommending exclusion from other schools. (refer to Registered and Accredited Individual Non-government Schools (NSW) Manual, Section 3.7.1)

## **Review Procedure**

The Principal will reach a preliminary decision in relation to the allegation and any penalty to be imposed and advise the student (and parent/s) of the view. The student (and parents) would be advised that if they wish this preliminary decision to be reviewed they may make application for a review to the Principal and submit any information they want to be considered during the review process. The Principal will then either confirm the preliminary decision as final or amend the preliminary decision based on the additional information provided.

## **Supporting Children through Difficult Situations**

When a child, family, educator or the setting 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 people 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 activity
- Losing interest in activities
- Loss of self-confidence
- Regressing to "babyish" activities

We 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 people (for example, all children if the event has affected the whole setting or the children that have been affected) and letting everyone have their say including children,
- Talking to the children about how people react to stressful or traumatic situations and that the feelings they are feeling are normal.

### **Coping Mechanisms**

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.
- Allowing the children plenty of time to work in their environment 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
- Limiting stimulants like chocolate, lollies etc.

It is important to remember how we respond to the stressful or traumatic event that will affect the 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.

We wish to help in whatever way we can if any family has undergone a tragedy. Talk to educators (or confidentially to the Leadership Team) and we will endeavour to work with families and children to support all parties through the situation.

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.

## **Bullying**

In order to overcome bullying, we will be aware of the following information and maintain the following practices:

We 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 educators in the setting to effectively respond to children who bully.

We 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.

We will implement the following strategies to overcome bullying -

- We will practice all-encompassing and socially inclusive care
- Daily programs recognise, value, reflect the social/cultural diversity of our community
- We role model and actively encourage appropriate behaviours
- We form a close relationship with family members in order to work cooperatively to overcome instances of bullying
- We empower children by giving them responsibilities that will make them feel valued
- We help children deal with their anger. This includes offering alternative dispute resolution techniques that are socially acceptable
- We seek the support of professionals when it is necessary
- We respond promptly to children's aggressive or bullying behaviour.

## **Biting**

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. Some reasons a child may bite are:

- Infants – Experimental, Sensory Pleasure, Teething
- Toddlers – Frustration, fatigue, attention seeking, confined spaces
- Older Children – Aggression, deliberate
- 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
- We 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 victim's skin is broken, Leadership Team 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
- We complete an incident report for any occasion where a child bites and submit to the Leadership Team
- Observe the child and note the triggers.
- 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.

## **Roles and responsibilities**

Legal responsibility of approved providers to ensure systems are in place to minimise risk and ensure health and safety procedures are implemented by the responsible people in services. Ultimate responsibility lies with the approved provider to ensure our settings are meeting the requirements under the Education and Care Services National Law.

### Approved provider:

- We ensure that obligations under the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations are met
- We ensure that we provide children with opportunities to interact and develop respectful relationships with each other and with educators, staff and volunteers, having regard to the size and the composition of the groups in which children are being educated and cared for (regulation 156)
- We ensure we meet minimum educator and staff requirements, such as qualifications and educator to child ratios
- We ensure that we provide education and care to children in a way that:
  - encourages the children to express themselves and their opinions
  - allows the children to undertake experiences that develop self-reliance and self-esteem
  - maintains at all times the dignity and rights of each child



- gives each child positive guidance and encouragement toward acceptable behaviour
- has regard to the family and cultural values, age, and physical and intellectual development and abilities of each child (regulation 155)
- We ensure all educators and staff have undertaken current child protection legislation training, including for the mandatory reporting requirements and obligations in their jurisdiction
- We ensure that no child is subjected to any form of corporal punishment, or any discipline that is unreasonable or inappropriate in the circumstances, educators, staff and volunteers follow the Interactions with children policy and procedures
- We take reasonable steps to ensure that nominated supervisors, staff and volunteers follow the Interactions with children policy and procedures
- We ensure that copies of the policy and procedures are readily accessible to nominated supervisors, educators and staff, and available for inspection
- We notify families at least 14 days before changing the policy or procedures if the changes will:
  - affect the fees charged or the way they are collected or
  - significantly impact the service's education and care of children or
  - significantly impact the family's ability to utilise the setting.

#### Nominated Supervisor

- We implement the Interactions with children policy and procedures
- We devise methods to lead the development and implementation of quality practices across our setting that ensure requirements of regulations 155 and 156 are met
- We support staff to promote quality practice approaches to interactions with children
- We ensure minimum educator and staff requirements are met, such as qualifications and educator to child ratios
- We ensure all educators and staff have undertaken current child protection legislation training, including for mandatory reporting requirements/obligations in the jurisdiction
- We ensure that no child is subjected to any form of corporal punishment, or any discipline that is unreasonable in the circumstances

#### Educators

- We contribute to the development of, and implement, quality practices that ensure that the requirements of regulations 155 and 156 are met
- We promote quality practice approaches to interactions with children
- We are aware of current child protection legislation, including the mandatory reporting requirements and obligations
- We monitor/maintain staff to child ratios to ensure adequate supervision of children
- We support children in line with the strategies in the ACECQA Relationships with children information sheet: [acecqa.gov.au/media/22966](http://acecqa.gov.au/media/22966)

### **Educator and child interactions**

Act: 165, 166, 168, 169 Regs: 73, 84, 115, 117A, 118, 123, 123A, 124, 126, 127, 145, 155–156, 168–172 QAs: 1.2, 4.1.1, 7.1.1, 7.1.3, 7.2.

Related Policies: Providing a child safe environment / Staffing / Governance and management



- We have the strongest designed and implemented Montessori educational program and daily practices that effectively:
  - encourage the children to express themselves and their opinions
  - allow the children to undertake experiences that develop self-reliance and self-esteem
  - maintain each child's dignity and rights at all times
  - give each child positive guidance and encouragement toward acceptable behaviour
  - have regard to the family and cultural values, age, and physical and intellectual development and abilities of each child
  - provide children with opportunities to interact and develop respectful relationships with each other and with educators, staff and volunteers (having regard to the size and the composition of the groups of children).
- Montessori's holistic approach equates to absolutely everything promote quality interactions with children.
- We support staff to implement the educational program and promote quality practice approaches to interactions with children through Montessori training
- We make sure our policy and procedures are available for all to access on Google drive and in the office.
- At staff meetings we hold regular reflective sessions with educators and staff on the planning cycle, educational program and practices.
- We provide educators with time off the floor for reflection and programming.
- We provide opportunities for children and families to contribute to programming and planning.
- We provide staff induction training, standalone training sessions, and regular updates and reviews at team meetings.
- We ensure those aspects of the Interactions with children policy and procedures relating to interactions with children are met, including:
  - meeting educator to child ratio and qualification requirements
  - monitoring staffing and supervision requirements and practices
  - implementing and monitoring of behaviour guidance to promote safe, positive play and children's agency
  - keeping up-to-date with current legislation in relation to child protection, including obligations under mandatory reporting guidelines, e.g. who must report, what to report, when to report and how to report ensuring all educators and staff know how to identify if a child or young person is, or may be, at risk and how to respond appropriately
  - actions to take if you reasonably believe or receive an allegation that abuse of a child has occurred or is occurring while the child is being educated and cared for by us.
- We implement Montessori practices you will put in place among educators and staff to ensure that all children will be treated with dignity and respect, and relationships are positive and engaging.
- We respect and encourage families' views and expectations regarding positive interactions with children.

## Supporting child to child interactions

**Act:** 165, 168, 169 **Regs:** 73, 115, 155, 156, 168–172 **QAs** 2.2.1, 2.2.3, 4.1.1, 5.2, 7.1.1, 7.1.3, 7.2.2

Related Policies: Providing a child safe environment / Staffing / Governance and management

- We hold regular reflective sessions with educators and staff on the planning cycle, educational program and practices and how each stage promotes quality interactions between children so we have the strongest designed and implemented Montessori educational program and daily practices that effectively:
  - supporting children to become effective communicators through utilising all our experiences
  - provide time for children to engage in uninterrupted play experiences with their peers through our uninterrupted work periods.
  - facilitate opportunities for children to learn from and help each other; share their knowledge, skills and experiences; and respond positively to ideas and suggestions from others through our mixed age groups.
  - encourage the children to express themselves and their opinions
- Mixed age groups develop peer relationships for children who are new
- We ensure appropriate supervision so that children are safe in their interactions with other children.
- We share information, formally and informally, about children as they transition between environments, to support them in building relationships with other children.
- We assess/evaluate social skill development as part of our observations of children.
- We support children of all ages to develop peer learning groups and support their progress through different stages of play and learning and provide opportunities for children to contribute to programming, planning and leading experiences
- We encourage families' views and expectations about positive interactions between children through formal and informal channels.
- Our setting's philosophy guides our staff to support children in self-regulation or responding to the behaviour of others.
- We support children to identify their emotions and the emotions of others, and how their own actions affect others. This includes children with diagnosed additional needs (e.g., ASD or ADD).
- We work with and support families who have different expectations about guiding children's behaviour informally through chatting, through parent education events and Montessori literature.
- We provide educators with time off the floor for reflection on group dynamics and children learning from one another.
- We develop relationships with specialist agencies, such as a relevant Inclusion Support Agency.
- We provide staff training to support children whose additional needs can impact on their relationships with others.
- We ensure staff are equipped to support children who are struggling to build social skills through regular staff meeting discussions and training.

## **Sources**

ACECQA – Guide to the National Quality Framework [acecqa.gov.au/nqf/about/guide](http://acecqa.gov.au/nqf/about/guide) ACECQA – Inappropriate discipline information sheet [acecqa.gov.au/media/29626](http://acecqa.gov.au/media/29626) ACECQA – Opening a new service [acecqa.gov.au/resources/opening-a-new-service](http://acecqa.gov.au/resources/opening-a-new-service) ACECQA – Relationships with children information sheet [acecqa.gov.au/media/22966](http://acecqa.gov.au/media/22966) ACECQA – Supporting agency: Involving children in decision-making information sheet [acecqa.gov.au/media/22936](http://acecqa.gov.au/media/22936) ACECQA – Supporting children to regulate their own behaviour information sheet [acecqa.gov.au/media/22971](http://acecqa.gov.au/media/22971) Commonwealth of Australia – Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) [acecqa.gov.au/media/24251](http://acecqa.gov.au/media/24251) Commonwealth of Australia – My Time, Our Place: Framework for School Age Care [acecqa.gov.au/media/24641](http://acecqa.gov.au/media/24641) Starting Blocks – Developing children’s positive behaviour in child care [startingblocks.gov.au/other-resources/factsheets/developing-childrens-positive-behaviour-in-childcare](http://startingblocks.gov.au/other-resources/factsheets/developing-childrens-positive-behaviour-in-childcare) UNICEF – United Nations Convention on the rights of the child [unicef.org/child-rights-convention](http://unicef.org/child-rights-convention)