

INTERACTIONS WITH CHILDREN POLICY

Mandatory – Quality Area 5

Precious Gems Childcare Pty Ltd trading as "Kids Haven Childcare"

Quality Area 5.1	Respectful and equitable relationships are maintained with each child.
Quality Area 5.1.1	Responsive and meaningful interactions build trusting relationships which engage and support each child to feel secure, confident and included.
Quality Area 5.1.2	The dignity and rights of every child are maintained.
Quality Area 5.2	Each child is supported to build and maintain sensitive and responsive relationships.
Quality Area 5.2.1	Children are supported to collaborate, learn from and help each other.
National Law Section 165	Offence to inadequately supervise children
National Law Section 166	Offence to use inappropriate discipline
National Law Section 167	Offence relating to protection of children from harm and hazards
National Law Section 168	Offence relating to required programs
National Law Section 169	Offence relating to staffing arrangements
National Law Section 174	Offence to fail to notify certain information to Regulatory Authority
National Law Section 174(2)(b)	Notifying DET within 24 hours of becoming aware of a notifiable complaint or allegation regarding the safety, health and/or welfare of a child at the service
Regulation 73	Educational Programs
Regulation 74	Documenting of child assessments or evaluations for delivery of educational program
Regulation 155	Interactions with children
Regulation 156	Relationships in groups
Regulation 176(2)	Time to notify certain information to Regulatory Authority
	For the purposes of section 174(4) of the Law, a notice must be provided—
	(a) in the case of a notice under section 174(2)(a)—
	(i) in the case of the death of a child, as soon as practicable but within 24 hours of the death , or the time that the person becomes aware of the death; and
	(ii) in the case of any other serious incident, within 24 hours of the incident or the time that the person becomes aware of the incident;

Related Service policies

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| • <i>Child Safe Environment Policy</i> | <i>Code of Conduct Policy</i> |
| • <i>Complaints and Grievances Policy</i> | <i>Curriculum Development Policy</i> |
| • <i>Inclusion and Equity Policy</i> | <i>Occupational Health and Safety Policy</i> |
| • <i>Privacy and Confidentiality Policy</i> | <i>Supervision of Children Policy</i> |

PURPOSE

This policy will provide guidelines to ensure:

- the development of positive and respectful relationships with each child at Precious Gems Childcare
- each child at Precious Gems Childcare is supported to learn and develop in a secure and empowering environment.

POLICY STATEMENT

1. VALUES

Precious Gems Childcare is committed to:

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

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to the approved provider, persons with management or control, nominated supervisor, persons in day-to-day charge, early childhood teachers, educators, staff, students, volunteers, parents/guardians, children, and others attending the programs and activities of Kids Haven Childcare, including during offsite excursions and activities.

RESPONSIBILITIES

RESPONSIBILITIES	Approved provider and persons with management or control	Nominated supervisor and persons in day-to-day charge	Early childhood teacher, educators and all other staff	Parents/guardians	Contractors, volunteers and students
R indicates legislation requirement, and should not be deleted					
Developing and implementing the <i>Interactions with Children Policy</i> in consultation with stakeholders, and ensuring that it reflects the philosophy, beliefs and values of the service	R	?	?	?	?
Ensuring all stakeholders are provided with a copy of the <i>Interactions with Children Policy</i> and comply with its requirements	R	?	?	?	?
Ensuring all staff are aware of the service's expectations regarding positive, respectful and appropriate behaviour, and acceptable responses and warm, trusting and reciprocal interactions when working with children and families (<i>refer to Code of Conduct Policy</i>)	R	?			
Ensuring children are adequately supervised (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) and that educator-to-child ratios are maintained at all times (<i>refer to Supervision of Children Policy</i>)	R	?	?		?
Ensuring the environment at the service is safe, secure, free from any hazards (National Law: Section 167) (<i>refer to Child Safe</i>	R	R	?		?

<i>Environment Policy, Occupational Health and Safety Policy and Supervision of Children Policy</i>) and promotes the active participation of every child					
Ensuring the size and composition of groups is considered to ensure all children are provided with the best opportunities for quality interactions and relationships with each other and with adults at the service (Regulation 156(2)). Smaller group sizes are considered optimal, to promote intentional teaching strategies and responsive engagement opportunities.	R	?	?		?
Developing and implementing educational programs that are delivered in accordance with an approved learning framework (<i>refer to Definitions</i>), are based on the developmental needs, interests and experiences of each child, and take into account the individual differences and strengths of each child (<i>refer to Inclusion and Equity Policy</i>)	R	R	?		?
Ensuring the educational program contributes to the development of children to have a strong sense of wellbeing and identity, and to be connected, confident, involved and effective learners and communicators (Regulation 73) (<i>refer to Curriculum Development Policy</i>)	R	?	?		?
Ensuring that the service provides education and care to children in a way that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> encourages children to express themselves and their opinions allows children to undertake experiences that develop self-reliance and self-esteem maintains the dignity and the rights of each child at all times offers positive guidance and encouragement towards acceptable behaviour has regard to the cultural and family values, age, and the physical and intellectual development and abilities of each child being educated and cared for (Regulation 155) 	R	?	?		?
Ensure that Kids Haven Childcare provides children with opportunities to interact and develop positive relationships with each other, and with the staff and volunteers at the service (Regulation 156(1))	R	?	?		?
Recognising the importance of friendships and encourage support from peers, to help children and young people feel safe and be connected	?	?	?		?
Ensuring clear documentation of the assessment and evaluation of each child's: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> developmental needs, interests, experiences and program participation progress against the outcomes of the educational program (Regulation 74) (<i>refer to Curriculum Development Policy</i>) 	R	?	?		?
Ensuring that procedures are in place for effective daily communication with parents/guardians to share information about children's learning, development, interactions, behaviour and relationships	R	?	?		?

Supporting ECT/educators/staff to access resources and gain appropriate training, knowledge and skills for the implementation of this policy, including promoting social, emotional and mental health and wellbeing	?	?			
Ensuring that staff members at Kids Haven Childcare who work with children are aware that it is an offence to subject a child to any form of corporal punishment, or any discipline that is unreasonable or excessive in the circumstances (<i>National Law: Section 166</i>)	R	R	R	?	?
Promoting collaborative relationships between children/families and program support groups (if required) (<i>refer to Definitions</i>), to improve the quality of children's education and care experiences	?	?	?	?	?
Ensuring notifications of serious incidents (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) are made to the regulatory authority (DET) (<i>refer to Definition</i>) through the NQA IT System (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) as soon as is practicable but not later than 24 hours after the occurrence (<i>National Law: Section 174(2)(a), Regulations 176 (2)(a)</i>)	R	?			
Notifying DET within 24 hours of becoming aware of a notifiable complaint (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) or allegation regarding the safety, health and/or welfare of a child at the service (<i>National Law: Section 174(2)(b), Regulations 176 (2)(a)</i>)	R	?			
Ensuring that where the service has been notified of a court order prohibiting an adult from contacting an enrolled child, such contact does not occur while the child is on the service premises	R	R	?		?
Ensuring all staff, volunteers and contractors use positive and respectful strategies to assist children to manage their own behaviour, and to respond appropriately to conflict and the behaviour of others	R	?	?		?
Developing links with and referral pathways to services and/or program support groups (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) to support children experiencing social, emotional and behavioural difficulties and their families	?	?	?		?
Ensuring that there is a behaviour guidance plan (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) developed for a child if educators are concerned that the child's behaviour may put the child themselves, other children, educators/staff and/or others at risk	?	?	?	?	
Ensuring that parents/guardians and program support groups (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) (as appropriate) are consulted if an individual behaviour guidance plan has not resolved the challenging behaviour	?	?	?	?	
Working collaboratively with educators/staff and program support groups (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) to develop or review an individual behaviour guidance plan for their child, where appropriate.	?	?	?	?	?
Setting clear timelines for review and evaluation of the behaviour guidance plan.	?	?	?		
Providing information, ideas and practical strategies to families, educators and staff on a regular basis to promote and support health and wellbeing in the service and at home	?	?	?		

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

3. DEFINITIONS

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

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

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

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

Behaviour guidance plan: A plan that documents strategies to assist an educator in guiding a child with diagnosed behavioural difficulties or challenging behaviours to self-manage their behaviour. The plan is developed in consultation with the nominated supervisor, early childhood teachers, educators, parents/guardians and families, and other professional support agencies as applicable.

Challenging behaviour: behaviour that can be described as:

- infringes on the rights of others
- disrupts others or causes disputes between children
- causes harm or risk to the child, other children, adults or living things
- is destructive to the environment and/or equipment
- inhibits the child's learning and relationship with others
- a child presenting as shy, withdrawn or excessively passive in a way which is inhibiting their learning and/or development
- is inappropriate relative to the child's developmental age and background.

Inclusion Support Program (ISP): is a key component of the Government's Child Care Safety Net. The program provides support for eligible mainstream Early Childhood Education and Care services to build their capacity and capability to include children with additional needs, alongside their typically developing peers, so all children have genuine opportunities to access, participate and achieve positive learning outcomes. For more information visit: www.dese.gov.au

Kindergarten Inclusion Support Program (KIS): Supports funded kindergartens to plan and implement a program that is responsive to the individual abilities, interests and needs of children with a disability, developmental delay or complex medical needs. Long Day Care services can apply for the KIS program for their Victorian Government-funded kindergarten programs.

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

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

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

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

EVALUATION

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

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

AUTHORISATION

This policy was adopted by the Approved Provider of Precious Gems Childcare on 1ST December 2022.

REVIEW DATE: 01/01/2024