

CODE OF CONDUCT –

PARENTS/GUARDIANS, FAMILIES AND VISITORS

QUALITY AREA 6 – COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS WITH FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES



PURPOSE

This policy will clearly:

- establish the expected standards of behaviour for parents/guardians, families and visitors
 - create and maintain a child safe environment that reflects the philosophy, beliefs, objectives, and values of Sparkways
 - articulate desirable and appropriate behaviour
 - promote interactions at the service and online which are respectful, honest, courteous, sensitive, tactful, and considerate.
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POLICY STATEMENT

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Sparkways:

- respects the rights of the child and values diversity
- values the contribution of Aboriginal children, children from a culturally and linguistically diverse background and children with a disability
- has zero tolerance of discrimination
- maintains a duty of care (*refer to Definitions*) towards all children at the service
- is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all staff and the members of our service's community
- provides a safe and secure environment for all at the service
- provides an open, welcoming environment in which everyone's contribution is valued and respected
- is committed to communicating openly and honestly
- is committed to continually learning how to be inclusive and respectful of cultural needs
- encourages relationships that are based on the principles of mutual respect, equity and fairness.
- encourages both adults and children to identify and raise concerns through the appropriate channels to maintain a culture of reporting and pro-actively responding to concerns
- encourages volunteers, students, parents/guardians and visitors to support and participate in the program and activities of the service

SCOPE

This policy applies to parents/guardians, family members and visitors attending the programs and activities of Sparkways, including during offsite excursions and activities.



RESPONSIBILITIES

Parents/Guardians, Families and Visitors:

Reading the Code of Conduct

Abiding by the Parents/Guardians, Families and Visitors Code of Conduct

Complying with all policies of the service

Parents/Guardians:

Signing the Parents/Guardians, Families and Visitors Code of Conduct (*Refer to Attachments 1 and 2*)



BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATION

BACKGROUND

Codes of conduct establish standards of behaviour to be followed and define how individuals are expected to behave towards each other, towards the children in their care, and towards other organisations and individuals in the community.

The approved provider, nominated supervisor, early childhood teachers, educators and all other staff have a duty of care to the children attending the service and must ensure 'that every reasonable precaution is taken to protect children being educated and cared for by the service from harm and from any hazard likely to cause injury' (*National Law: Section 167*).

The *National Quality Standard* requires that all staff be respectful and ethical and that 'professional standards guide practice, interactions and relationships' (*National Quality Standard: 4.2 and 4.2.2*).

Employers also have a legal responsibility to provide, as far as is practicable, a safe workplace that is free from discrimination, bullying and harassment.

Child Safe Standards requires services to ensure the Code of Conduct provides guidelines for staff and volunteers on expected behavioural standards and responsibilities, and breaches to the Code of Conduct are acted upon and reported.

A Code of Conduct should be informed by the service's philosophy, beliefs and values, and based on ethical principles of mutual respect, equity and fairness. Consideration should be given to the Victorian Teaching Profession *Code of Conduct and the Code of Ethics* and to the Early Childhood Australia's *Code of Ethics* in developing the code of conduct.

The approved provider must ensure that the nominated supervisor, early childhood teachers, educators, other staff, contractors, volunteers, students on placement, parents/guardians, children and others attending the programs and activities of Sparkways adhere to the expectations outlined in the Code of Conduct when communicating to and interacting with:

- children at the service and their parents and family members
- each other
- others in the community

LEGISLATION AND STANDARDS

Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

- Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic)
- Child Safe Standards (Vic)
- Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)
- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)
- Early Childhood Australia's Code of Ethics (2016)
- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010: Sections 166, 167, 173, 174
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011: Regulations 83, 155, 156, 157, 168, 170, 171, 174, 175, 176
- Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)
- Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth)
- Fair Work Regulations 2009 (Cth)
- National Quality Standard, Quality Area 4: Staffing Arrangements
- Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004
- Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2007
- Racial Discrimination Act 1975
- Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001 (Vic)
- Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)
- Victorian Institute of Teaching the Victorian Teaching Profession Code of Conduct
- Victorian Institute of Teaching the Victorian Teaching Profession Code of Ethics

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

Victorian Legislation – Victorian Law Today: www.legislation.vic.gov.au

Commonwealth Legislation – Federal Register of Legislation: www.legislation.gov.au



DEFINITIONS

The terms defined in this section relate specifically to this policy. For regularly used terms e.g. Approved provider, Nominated supervisor, Notifiable complaints, Serious incidents, Duty of care, etc. refer to the Definitions file of the Sparkways policy catalogue.

Behaviour: the way in which one acts or conducts oneself, especially towards others.

Bullying: Repeated verbal, physical, social or psychological behaviour that is harmful and involves the misuse of power by an individual or group towards one or more persons. Bullying occurs when one or more people deliberately and repeatedly upset or hurt another person, damage their property, reputation or social acceptance.

Ethical conduct: Behaviour which reflects values or a code of conduct.

Harassment: When someone is demeaning, derogatory or intimidating towards another person. Harassment includes:

- racial taunts
- taunts about sexual orientation or gender identity
- sexual harassment: unwelcome physical, verbal or written behaviour of a sexual nature
- repeated insulting remarks

Investigator: A person/staff member assigned or organisation engaged with the responsibility of investigating suspected breaches of the Code of Conduct by the Approved provider

Physical attack: the direct or indirect application of force by a person to the body of, or to clothing or equipment worn by another person, where that application creates a risk to health and safety.

Respect: Demonstrating regard for the rights of individuals, for different values and points of views.

Sexual harassment: includes offensive gestures, leering, staring or suggestive comments about a person's physical appearance, inappropriate physical contact, unwanted invitations of a sexual manner, sexually orientated jokes, sending of obscene letters, notes, telephone texts or emails.

Support: Work in a co-operative and positive manner.

Threat: a statement or behaviour that causes a person to believe they are in danger of being physically attacked.

Unreasonable behaviour: includes actions of individuals or a group and may involve using a system of work as a means of victimising, humiliating, undermining, or threatening.

Verbal harassment: includes name-calling, offensive language, putting people down.



SOURCES AND RELATED POLICIES

SOURCES

- Early Childhood Australia, *Code of Ethics*: www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/our-publications/eca-code-ethics/
- United Nations, *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights*: www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/
- United Nations, *Convention on The Rights of the Child*: www.unicef.org/crc/
- Victoria Legal Aid: www.legalaid.vic.gov.au
- Victorian Institute of Teaching – *The Victorian Teaching Profession Code of Conduct and Code of Ethics*: www.vit.vic.edu.au
- Commission for Children and Young People: www.ccyp.vic.gov.au

RELATED POLICIES

- Child Safe Environment and Wellbeing
 - Code of Conduct - Staff
 - Compliments and Complaints
 - Delivery and Collection of Children
 - Inclusion and Equity
 - Information Communication Technology
 - Interactions with Children
 - Occupational Health and Safety
 - Privacy and Confidentiality
 - Relaxation and Sleep
 - Staffing
 - Tobacco, Alcohol and other Drugs
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EVALUATION

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

- seek feedback from people affected by the policy regarding its effectiveness
 - monitor the implementation, compliance, complaints and incidents in relation to this policy
 - assess whether a satisfactory resolution has been achieved in relation to issues arising from 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
 - notifying all stakeholders affected by this policy at least 14 days before making any significant changes to this policy or its procedures, unless a lesser period is necessary due to risk (*Regulation 172 (2)*).
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ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1: Code of Conduct for Parents/Guardians, Families and Visitors
 - Attachment 2: Parents/Guardians and Families Acknowledgement
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AUTHORISATION

This policy was confirmed by Sparkways on 25/03/2024

REVIEW DUE: March 2025

ATTACHMENT 1 – CODE OF CONDUCT FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS, FAMILIES AND VISITORS

I commit to contributing to creating an environment at Sparkways that:

- respects the rights of the child and values diversity
- acknowledges the vulnerability of Aboriginal children, children from a culturally and linguistically diverse background and children with a disability and has zero tolerance of discrimination
- maintains a duty of care (*refer to Definitions*) towards all children at the service
- is committed to the safety and wellbeing of each child at the service
- is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all staff at the service
- provides a safe and secure environment for all at the service
- provides an open, welcoming environment in which everyone's contribution is valued and respected
- is committed to communicating openly and honestly
- is committed to continually learning how to be inclusive and respectful of cultural needs
- encourages parents/guardians, families, volunteers, students and community members to support and participate in the program and activities of the service

Relationships with children

In my relationships with children, I commit to:

- being a positive role model at all times
- encouraging children to express themselves and their opinions
- allowing children to undertake experiences that develop self-reliance and self-esteem
- maintaining a safe environment for children
- speaking to children and in the vicinity of children, in a respectful, encouraging and positive manner
- giving each child positive guidance and encouraging appropriate behaviour
- regarding all children equally, and with respect and dignity
- having regard to each child's cultural values
- respecting individual difference including age, physical and intellectual development, and catering for the abilities of each child at the service
- not providing toileting/bathroom/changeroom assistance to any child/children other than my own. I understand this is Sparkways policy and an important part of the organisation's Child Safe practices.
- being mindful about the presence of children when taking phone calls, and moving the phone call away from children when appropriate
- limiting photographs, films and other recordings at the service to that of my own child/children. Photographs, films and other recordings of children at the service are protected by privacy law.
- Adhering to privacy law regarding photographs, films and other recordings of children at the service.

Relationships with the Approved Provider, Persons with Management and Control, Nominated Supervisor, Staff and others

In my relationships with the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, staff, parents/guardians, volunteers and visitors I commit to:

- reading and abiding by the *Code of Conduct policy*
- developing relationships based on mutual respect
- working in partnership in a courteous, respectful and encouraging manner
- valuing the input of others
- sharing our expertise and knowledge in a considered manner
- respecting the rights of others as individuals
- giving encouraging and constructive feedback, and respecting the value of different professional approaches
- respecting the privacy of children and their families and only disclosing information to people who have a need to know as required under the *Privacy and Confidentiality policy*
- following the directions of staff at all times
- treating the early childhood environment and all those present with respect
- raising any concerns, including concerns about safety, as soon as possible with staff to ensure that they can be resolved efficiently
- raising any complaints or grievances in accordance with the *Compliments and Complaints Policy*

ATTACHMENT 2 – CODE OF CONDUCT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS, FAMILIES AND VISITORS

I hereby acknowledge I have received a copy of the *Code of Conduct policy* for Sparkways

I have read the policy and I understand its contents.

I commit to abiding by the *Code of Conduct* and fulfilling my responsibilities as outlined in this policy whilst I and/or my child are attending Sparkways

I understand that a breach of the Code of Conduct may lead to limitations being placed on my attendance at the service.

• Signature	• •
• Name	• •
• Date	• •
•	
• Witness Signature	• •
• Witness Name	• •
• Date	• •

Thank you for your contribution to making Sparkways a safe, respectful, , welcoming and friendly environment