

Lady Gowrie Community Kindergartens

INTERACTIONS WITH CHILDREN POLICY

CONSIDERATIONS:

NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARDS	1.2, 5.1, 5.2, 7.1 7.2
NATIONAL LAW ACT & NATIONAL REGULATIONS	Law sections: 166, 167, 168 Regulations: 73, 84, 155, 156, 168, 170
OTHER	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child Child Safe Organisations Act 2024

POLICY STATEMENT:

To ensure that all children experience positive interactions and develop relationships that are nurturing, respectful and reciprocal. That all children are provided with consistent emotional support that contributes to the development of a strong sense of wellbeing. To ensure that all children are encouraged to participate fully in activities and that their input is respected.

The Early Years Learning Framework V 2.0 informs educators practice and ways in which they acknowledge and support each child's belonging, being and becoming. In relation to interactions with children, EYLF V 2.0 also shares the following

- *“Educators who are attuned to children’s thoughts and feelings, support their learning, development and wellbeing.*
- *Educators who prioritise nurturing relationships through culturally safe and responsive interactions, provide children with consistent emotional support.*
- *When educators create environments in which all children experience mutually enjoyable, caring and respectful relationships with people and the environment, children respond in positive ways.”*

“As relationships develop through all kinds of interactions, including routine times, warm, friendly, patient and responsive interactions will contribute to a partnership with children that promotes a strong relationship over time.” (2007: Gonzalez-Mena and Eyer, page 4-5).

Under the Child Safe Organisations Act 2024, the Child Safe Standards and Universal Principle aim to create environments that prioritise the safety and wellbeing of children and create environments that make Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people feel culturally safe. Standard 2 Voice of Children states that fundamental to safeguarding children's safety is empowering children, informing them of their rights and involving them in decision-making. Respecting children's agency and fostering an environment where children's voices are heard and actively shape outcomes that affect them is paramount.

RELEVANT FORMS/MATERIAL:

- The Kindergarten Handbook
- The Kindergarten Service Philosophy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Staff Induction

- Lady Gowrie Community Kindergartens Behaviour Guidance Policy
- Lady Gowrie Community Kindergartens Child Protection – Prevention and Considerations Policy
- Lady Gowrie Community Kindergartens Child Protection – Response and Reporting Process Policy
- Lady Gowrie Community Kindergarten Child Safe Environment Policy
- Lady Gowrie Community Kindergartens Family and Community Participation Policy
- Lady Gowrie Community Kindergarten Governance Policy
- Lady Gowrie Community Kindergartens Inclusion and Anti-Bias Policy
- Lady Gowrie Community Kindergartens Access, Orientation and Communication Policy – Families and Children
- Lady Gowrie Community Kindergartens Safety and Supervision Policy
- Lady Gowrie Community Kindergartens Staff Qualifications, Monitoring Procedures and Professional Development Policy
- Lady Gowrie Community Kindergartens Student and Volunteer Policy
- Risk Assessment Physical Environment
- Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics
- Circle of Security
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

SOURCES:

- Hunter Institute of Mental Health. (2014). Connections: A resource for early childhood educators about children's wellbeing. Canberra. ACT: Australian Government Department of Education.
 - Gonzalez-Mena, J. & Eyer, D. W. (2007). Infants, Toddlers and Caregivers: A curriculum of respectful, responsive care and education. McGraw-Hill Higher Education.
 - Be You www.beyou.edu.au
 - Be You – Planning for Wellbeing: mine, yours, ours.
 - Government of South Australia, Department of Education and Children's Services (2008). Reflect, Respect, Relate.
 - Burman, Lisa (2008). Are You Listening – Fostering conversations that help young children learn, Redleaf Press.
 - University of Missouri Extension. Communicating Effectively with Children.
 - Centre on the Developing Child, Harvard University (2004). Young Children Develop in an Environment of Relationships.
 - Dolby, R. (2007). The Circle of Security: Roadmap to building supportive relationships. Early Childhood Australia.
 - The State of Queensland (Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority), (2018). Queensland Kindergarten Learning Guideline (QKLG). Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority: South Brisbane.
 - The State of Queensland (Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority), (2024). Queensland Kindergarten Learning Guideline (QKLG). Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority: South Brisbane.
 - Australian Government, Department of Education and Training, (2022). Belonging, Being and Becoming, The Early Years Learning Framework V2.0 For Australia. Commonwealth of Australia.
 - ACECQA and Queensland Government, Department of Education Early Childhood Education and Care, Interactions with children policy guidelines.
 - ACECQA and Queensland Government, Department of Education Early Childhood Education and Care, Inappropriate discipline information sheet
 - Education and Care Services National Law Act (Queensland).
 - Education and Care Services National Regulations.
- (Accessed 2024)
- Queensland Statement of Shared Commitment: Every interaction counts. 2025

REVIEWED: August 2024

Date to be Reviewed: February 2026

(Child safeguarding review undertaken November 2025)

IMPLEMENTATION	
BACKGROUND INFORMATION	Positive interactions and supportive relationships form the basis of quality education and care services for young children. When interactions and relationships are respectful, nurturing and reciprocal these shape the foundation for learning in the setting. Through providing such quality interactions and building supportive relationships with all children, a strong sense of wellbeing and belonging is promoted. In turn, when children are able to develop a sense of trust in the adults around them this establishes an environment for them to grow and learn in. Service teams and individual staff members should proactively plan for positive interactions with children. This may include: • Staff remaining current with information on child development relating to wellbeing and behaviours children may demonstrate when stressed. • Staff being aware of possible educators' stress responses and ways to minimise these and manage their own wellbeing through reflective practice. • Supporting staff to understand child safeguarding and their Duty of Care with children and how professional conversations with colleagues can support the service team to have a shared understanding and take action if interactions which are not safe, supportive and responsive are observed. • Staff reflecting on how the environment, learning experiences, resources, rhythm of the program day, staffing arrangements and the overall program is supportive of positive interactions with children. • Consideration of further professional readings or professional development which may support the individual or service team in relation to their interactions with children. • Staff having access to professional readings, professional development or professional conversations in relation to supporting their wellbeing. Resources (such as considerations for what a person may include in their wellbeing plan), are available from Be You and other providers. The role of an early childhood professional is diverse and staff actively planning for and managing their wellbeing is encouraged as this may then support their interactions with others.
RESPONSIBILITIES	The Approved Provider in collaboration with the Nominated Supervisor, Service Manager and Educational Leader at the Service, must take reasonable steps to ensure that the service provides education and care to children in relation to the following: Interactions with children should typically: • Encourage children to express themselves and their opinions. • Allow children to undertake experiences that develop self-reliance and self-esteem. • Maintain at all times the safety, dignity and rights of each child. • Give each child positive guidance and encouragement toward acceptable behavior.

	• Create an environment that promotes and enables children's participation and is welcoming, culturally safe and inclusive for all children and their families. • Have regard to the age, physical and intellectual development and abilities of each child in the Service and the right to practice culture. Relationships in groups aim to ensure that: • Children are provided with opportunities to interact and develop respectful and positive relationships with each other and with staff members and volunteers at the Service. • Take into account the appropriateness of the size and composition of groups in which children are being educated and cared for by the Service. Please refer to related policies/procedures that are listed in the Relevant Forms/Materials section on page one of this policy, to further support your practice and understanding in building rich reciprocal relationships with children and families.
SERVICE MANAGER / NOMINATED SUPERVISOR AND EDUCATIONAL LEADER WHAT YOU SHOULD DO	The Service commitment to supporting all staff in relation to positive and responsive interactions, which protect children and uphold the dignity of each individual child at all times, is shown through: • The Service Philosophy and the Lady Gowrie Community Kindergartens Interactions with Children Policy and Lady Gowrie Community Kindergartens Behaviour Guidance Policy, being read and discussed as part of the induction process for staff, students and volunteers. • Interactions with children, including child safeguarding and cultural safety, are discussed with staff during the staff appraisal process and update of staff professional development plans. • The provision of child safeguarding and cultural safety training for everyone and professional readings and professional development, to further review and reflect on interactions with children. • Opportunities to discuss child safeguarding and cultural safety and reflect on key documents in relation to interactions with children including United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, Service Philosophy, Code of Ethics and Service Policies and Procedures. • The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and Queensland Statement of Shared Commitment: Every interaction counts being displayed at the Service and all staff confident to discuss how the program and service practice relates to this.
INAPPROPRIATE INTERACTION OR DISCIPLINE WHAT YOU SHOULD DO	It is an offence under the National Law to subject a child being educated and cared for by an Approved Service to any form of corporal punishment or any discipline that is unreasonable in the circumstances. (Section 166- 1 67) Approved Providers, Nominated Supervisors, staff members and volunteers must ensure that no child being educated and cared for by the Service is subject to any form of corporal punishment or any discipline that is unreasonable in the circumstances. Other types of inappropriate interactions include: a) engaging in any unlawful activity with or in relation to a child b) engaging in any activity that is likely to physically, sexually or emotionally harm

	a child c) using personal phones, tablets, or cameras for any purpose related to the collection of photographic or video imagery of children d) unlawfully discriminating against any child or their family members e) being alone with a child unnecessarily f) arranging personal contact, including online contact, with children for a purpose unrelated to the Service's activities g) disclosing personal or sensitive information about a child including images of a child, unless the child and their parent or legal guardian consent or unless required to do so by the Service's policy and procedure on reporting h) using inappropriate language in the presence of children or showing or providing children with access to inappropriate images or material i) working with children while under the influence of alcohol or prohibited drugs j) ignoring or disregarding any suspected or disclosed child harm or abuse. All staff have a duty of care to both children and colleagues to recognise and act in the instance they observe or hear an interaction which is inappropriate or not safe. • In a professional and respectful way, the staff member will step in and offer to support the child, in the instance that the interaction or discipline is taking place at that moment. This can be for example with a statement such as "I'm observing / hearing that (name of child) is needing support to...., I am able to assist them with this." • Where the interaction has concluded, the staff member can note with the colleague in a professional and respectful way, "The interaction on this occasion was not supportive of (choose one document) the Service Philosophy / Policy / Rights of the Child / Code of Ethics / Circle of Security, at a suitable time today we will revisit ways in which we can ensure interactions are always responsive and supportive." • In both circumstances outlined above, the staff member should advise the Responsible Person that an inappropriate interaction or discipline has been observed or heard. The Responsible Person is to then advise the Service Manager / Nominated Supervisor. In consultation with the Nominated Supervisor or Executive Committee the Responsible Person will assess, if it is appropriate for both the staff member and the children that the staff member continues to work directly with children for the remainder of their shift. The Service Manager/Nominated Supervisor will assess if the inappropriate interaction or inappropriate discipline, reflects a circumstance which must be notified to the Regulatory Authority and if so, undertake this notification within the required timeframe for complaints (within 24 hrs. of the complaint or incident). In the instance of a notification to the Regulatory Authority, the Executive Committee must be informed and advised prior to the notification and Lady Gowrie Qld as the Service's Central Governing Body advised. The Service Manager/Nominated Supervisor and Executive Committee will discuss and implement the relevant professional support or performance management process as required, reflective of the incident and staff member's history.
--	--