# RELIEF STAFF POLICY

Our Service aims to maintain continuity of education and care and abide by the Education and Care Services National Regulations and National Quality Standard by employing quality relief staff to replace permanent staff on a short-term basis when necessary. We ensure our Service meets or exceeds, the minimum educator to child ratios as mandated in National Law to ensure adequate supervision is maintained and educators provide quality education and care in a healthy and safe environment.

## NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD (NQS)

| QUALITY AREA 4: STAFFING ARRANGEMENTS | | |
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| 4.1 | Staffing arrangements | Staffing arrangements enhance children's learning and development. |
| 4.1.1 | Organisation of Educators | The organisation of educators across the Service supports children's learning and development. |
| 4.1.2 | Continuity of staff | Every effort is made for children to experience continuity of Educators at the Service. |
| **QUALITY AREA 7: GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP** | | |
| 7.1 | Governance | Governance supports the operation of a quality service that is child safe. |
| 7.1.1 | Service philosophy and purposes | A statement of philosophy guides all aspects of the service's operations. |
| 7.1.2 | Management Systems | Systems are in place to manage risk and enable the effective management and operation of a quality service that is child safe. |
| 7.1.3 | Roles and Responsibilities | Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and understood and support effective decision making and operation of the service. |
| 7.2.3 | Development of professionals | Educators, co-ordinations and staff members' performance is regularly evaluated, and individual plans are in place to support learning and development. |

| EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL LAW AND NATIONAL REGULATIONS | |
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| S. 3A | Paramount consideration |
| S. 5AA | Meaning of 'inappropriate conduct' in relation to a child |
| S.162A | Child Protection training<br>Offence relating to child protection training |
| S.165 | Offence to inadequately supervise children |
| S. 166A | Offence to subject child to inappropriate conduct |

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| S.167 | Offence relating to protection of children from harm and hazards |
| S. 174AA | Educators and other staff members of education and care service to notify certain information |
| S. 178 | Suspension of education and care by certain persons |
| S. 178A | Supervision of certain persons providing education and care |
| S. 188 | Offence to engage person to whom prohibition notice applies |
| S. 188A | False or misleading information about certain notices |
| 10 | Meaning of actively working towards a qualification |
| 82 | Environment to be free from tobacco, vaping devices, vaping substances, drugs and alcohol |
| 84 | Awareness of child protection law |
| 120 | Educators who are under the age of 18 to be supervised |
| 123 | Educator to child ratios – centre based services |
| 135 | Illness or absence of early childhood teacher or suitably qualified person |
| 136 | First aid qualifications |
| 145 | Staff Records |
| 149 | Volunteers and Students |
| 151 | Record of educators working directly with children |
| 155 | Interactions with children |
| 168 | Policies and Procedures |
| 170 | Policies and procedures are to be followed |
| 171 | Policies and procedures to be kept available |
| 172 | Notification of change to policies or procedures |
| 175 | Prescribed information to be notified to the Regulatory Authority |

## RELEVANT POLICIES

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| Code of Conduct Policy | Privacy and Confidentiality Policy |
| Child Protection Policy | Recruitment Policy |
| Child Safe Environment Policy | Respect for Children Policy |
| Dealing With Complaints Policy | Safe Use of Digital Technologies and Online Environments Policy |
| Enrolment Policy | Sleep and Rest Policy |
| Interactions with Children Families and Staff Policy | Staffing Arrangements Policy |
| Performance Management Policy | Tobacco, Drug, Alcohol-Free Policy |

## SCOPE

This policy applies to children, families, staff, management, approved provider, nominated supervisor students and visitors of the Service.

## PURPOSE

Our Service is committed to being a child safe Early Education and Care Service and embed the National Child Safe Principles (Child Safe Standards) into all aspects of our operations, practice, decision-making and culture. Our robust recruitment and screening processes for permanent and relief staff play a vital role in ensuring that child safety, wellbeing and best interests take priority over all other considerations including financial interests or other obligations of management. This policy supplements our *Staffing Arrangements Policy* and *Recruitment Policy*.

## IMPLEMENTATION

Our Service will comply with the required educator to child ratios, taking into consideration qualification requirements and experience, implement the required staffing requirements and ensure all staff adhere to our Code of Conduct. Potential relief staff will be required to attend an interview with management to ensure they are a '*fit and proper person'* and hold the required ACECQA approved qualifications for the particular roles within the Service or be defined as a 'suitably qualified person' for the position:

- approved early childhood teacher qualification or
- proof of *actively working towards* at least an approved early childhood teaching qualification AND has completed at least 50 per cent of the qualification or holds an approved early childhood education and care diploma (see: ACECQA qualifications checker)

- or an individual who is registered (accredited in New South Wales) as a primary or secondary school teacher in Australia AND holds an ACECQA approved early childhood education and care diploma (or higher approved qualification)
- current Working with Children Check (WWCC)/ and Police/Criminal Check
- mandatory Child Safe training (effective from 2026)
- any other required qualification- (CPR, First Aid, approved asthma management training, approved anaphylaxis management training, approved child protection training.)

The interview process will include management checking references to ensure the applicant is a 'fit and proper person' and verifying their WWCC.

All prospective applicants (including agency relief staff) must declare they are fit and proper to engage in employment working directly with children (including any negative notices such as a show cause notice, suspension notice, supervision notice, disciplinary notice/order or prohibition notice under National Law). Any negative findings identified through these recruitment checks will be considered during the recruitment and selection process. Prospective applicants with relevant prohibition or disciplinary actions may be deemed unsuitable and will not be engaged to work within the Service.

Agencies providing casual and relief staff must follow regulatory directions at all times. The approved provider will verify agency compliance before accepting casual and/or relief staff.

Relief staff are advised it is an offence to provide false or misleading information in relation to their identity, qualifications, clearances, or any matter relevant to their suitability to work with children. Relief staff will be placed on the casual list and invited to the Service for an orientation prior to commencing any work.

## ORIENTATION

Relief staff members are required to undergo a full induction and orientation into the Service to ensure they have a clear understanding of:

- putting children first in all considerations and practices to ensure child safety, welfare and wellbeing
- Child Safe Standards [Vic]

- the Service's policies and procedures
- Code of Conduct
- Child Protection-including obligations as a mandatory reporter, when a report must be made and how to make a report
- child safe behaviour expectations in all interactions with children
- safe sleep procedures
- sign in and out processes
- emergency evacuation procedure
- Service amenities
- children's medical and/or dietary requirements and conditions
- the Service's program and routine
- their roles and responsibilities (including mandatory reporting and reportable conduct scheme)
- supervision requirements
- privacy and confidentiality requirements [Vic]
- Child Information Sharing Schemes [Vic]
- behaviour guidance strategies implemented
- Work, Health and Safety
- complaints procedures.

## RELIEF STAFF INDUCTION PACK

Relief staff will be issued with an induction pack prior to commencing employment, which will contain:

- Staff Handbook
- Service philosophy
- position description
- employment contract
- Code of Conduct
- copy of the Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics
- employee details form
- employee Information form
- employee immunisation record.

## SERVICE REQUIREMENTS

Prior to relief staff commencing at the Service, management must be provided with the following information:

- preferred name
- full street address (home)
- mobile phone number (personal)
- proof of minimum educational qualification/training
- evidence of completed professional training in
    - CPR - approved cardio-pulmonary resuscitation training
    - First Aid certificate
    - approved emergency asthma management training
    - approved emergency anaphylaxis management training
    - approved Child Safety/Protection training (mandatory from January 2026)
- WWCC clearance number and date of expiry;  and date of expiry or Criminal History/Police Check- number and date of expiry or proof of current teacher registration; identifying number and expiry date of registration
- banking details for direct deposit wage payment
- signed employment contract and position description
- completed Tax File Declaration form
- superannuation details
- emergency contact details
- medical conditions notification
- immunisation status
- recruitment agency trading name (if applicable).

## EMPLOYMENT COMMENCEMENT

- It is recommended that relief staff arrive 10 minutes prior to their shift to ensure they have adequate time to place their belongings in an allocated locker, read any staff communication, sign on, and be up to date with important information that is relevant and necessary for the day
- Relief staff members are to follow the directions of the educational leader/lead educator
    - personal electronic devices or personal storage devices, that can take images or videos, are not used by educators, staff, visitors or volunteers when working directly with children

    - staff and educators only use electronic devices supplied and registered with the Service for taking images or videos of children enrolled at the Service

- Under the guidance of their lead educator, relief staff members are to introduce themselves to families, explain their position within the Service, inform parents who they are replacing and how long they expect to be placed at the Service
- All relief staff members are to abide by confidentiality and privacy legislation in regard to staff, management, children and families within their care. They are to treat any information shared with them professionally and sensitively.
- In conjunction with all permanent staff members, relief staff are requested to be mindful of the time taken for breaks and return promptly to minimise any disruption to the set routine and/or ratio requirements
- It is advised that all staff members, whether relief or permanent, look after their health and keep their immunisations up to date
- The Service will aim to maintain a register of relief staff members that are familiar to the families and children, and familiar with the policies and program to ensure consistency for children, families, and the Service
- The approved provider will keep accurate and up to date information about all relief staff engaged by the Service (including agency staff), (see *Staffing Arrangements Policy* for details on required records). This information will be collected and maintained digitally within the National Educator Register from 2026.

## INAPPROPRIATE CONDUCT

The approved provider will ensure all relief staff receive a thorough induction and orientation, including training on the Service's policies, procedures and expected standards of conduct. Relief staff are required to notify the approved provider within 24 hours of any changes to their WWCC status, teacher registration or fit and proper status (including any negative notices such as a show cause notice, suspension notice, supervision notice, disciplinary notice/order or prohibition notice).

Any relief staff who receive a negative notice will be immediately removed from duties and must not engage in any work or contact with children at the Service until a review of the notice has been conducted. The approved provider will notify the regulatory authority of any changes to a relief staff member's WWCC/Vulnerable Person Check within 24 hours.

Agencies providing relief/casual staff must meet regulatory responsibilities and share or provide information in relation to changes to WWCC status or a person's clearance to work with children.

The approved provider will maintain appropriate documentation regarding inappropriate conduct (including any allegations or incidents of sexual offences or sexual misconduct) in accordance with the *Performance Management Policy and Child Protection Policy* and provide notification to the regulatory authority within the required timeframe as required.

## SERVICE DRESS CODE

Relief staff must ensure they maintain a professional image at all times. Staff are to be clean and tidy at all times with no offensive or controversial clothing to be worn.

### Pants/Shorts

- tailored black, navy or jean pants are to be worn [adjust to your service requirements]
- track pants and thin leggings are unacceptable to wear at our Service
- shorts may be worn at an acceptable length, which is considered to be two inches above the knee. Clothing shorter than this is not considered to be acceptable.

### Tops

- in maintaining the professional image of our Service, staff need to consider the suitability of tops when deciding what to wear
- T-shirts must cover the shoulders
- singlets, midriffs and strapless tops are inappropriate and therefore will not be accepted in the work environment. If it is deemed that a staff member's top is too revealing or inappropriate for wearing around children and families, they will be asked to return home to change. The staff member will not be paid for the time taken to remedy the clothing situation.

### Footwear

- educators and kitchen staff must wear enclosed shoes at all times
- enclosed shoes are preferred for all other staff
- thongs are not appropriate dress and are considered dangerous footwear in the workplace.

### Sun Safety

- all staff are required to wear a hat when participating in outdoor activities (as an example to children, for your own protection, and to comply with legislation)
- staff will be required to wear a wide brimmed hat (no caps)
- staff will be provided with sunscreen for use

- staff may wear sunglasses in the outdoor environment
- enclosed shoes are to remain on at all times.

## ALCOHOL, TOBACCO, VAPING AND OTHER DRUGS

- staff members are not permitted to consume alcohol, use tobacco or vape, or use other drugs whilst on the premises of the Service. (Reg: 82)
- staff are not to offer or supply alcohol, tobacco or other drugs to any person at the Service
- staff who are under the influence of alcohol or drugs will not be allowed to remain on the Service premises
- any breach of these conditions will result in disciplinary action
- staff who use prescription medication are asked to discuss the possible side effects of these drugs with management to ensure that the staff member and children remain safe at all times.
- relief staff are not permitted to administer prescription medication to children unless approved by management
- staff must not carry or use vaping substances or vaping devices on the Service premises while education and care is provided to children.

## CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT/REFLECTION

Our *Relief Staff Policy* will be reviewed on an annual basis or earlier if there are changes to legislation, ACECQA guidance or any incident related to our policy. Feedback will be requested from children, families, staff, educators and management and notification of any change to policies will be made to families within 14 days.

## CHILD CARE CENTRE DESKTOP - RELATED RESOURCES

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| Code of Conduct Staff Acknowledgement | Induction Checklist |
| Employee Details Form | Policy Acknowledgement Form |
| Employment Application | Relief Staff Availability Form |
| Individual Staff Record | Staff Handbook |

## SOURCES

Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2025). *Guide to the National Quality Framework*
Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2023). *Embedding the National Child Safe Principles*

Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2024). *National Model Code for Early Childhood Education and Care.*
Children (Education and Care Services) National Law (NSW) (For NSW Services only)
Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010.
Education and Care Services National Regulations. (Amended 2025)
Fair Work: https://www.fairwork.gov.au/starting-employment/types-of-employees
*Western Australian Legislation Education and Care Services National Law (WA) Act 2012 (For WA Services only)*
*Western Australian Legislation Education and Care Services National Regulations (WA) Act 2012 (For WA Services only)*

## REVIEW

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|---|---|---|---|
| POLICY REVIEWED BY | [NAME] Amy Flockhart | [POSITION] office admin | [DATE] 22/07/2026 |
| POLICY REVIEWED | DECEMBER 2025 | NEXT REVIEW DATE | DECEMBER 2026 |
| VERSION NUMBER | V13.12.25 | | |
| MODIFICATIONS | • annual policy review<br>• added section re: inappropriate conduct<br>• added information about recruitment agency staff<br>• added legislation changes for child safety- National Model Code<br>• added reference to new mandatory policy- *Safe Use of Digital Technologies and Online Environments Policy*<br>• additional information added to strengthen vaping ban<br>• added Child Care Centre Desktop related resources<br>• sources checked and repaired as required | | |

| POLICY REVIEWED | PREVIOUS MODIFICATIONS | NEXT REVIEW DATE |
|---|---|---|
| DECEMBER 2024 | • annual policy maintenance<br>• sources checked for currency and updated as required | DECEMBER 2025 |