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Participation of Volunteers and Students

Purpose

This policy will provide guidelines for the engagement and participation of volunteers and students at Ewing Kindergarten, while ensuring that children's health, safety and wellbeing is protected at all times.

Policy Statement

Values

Ewing Kindergarten is committed to:

- supporting connections with educational institutions to provide opportunities for students to undertake practicum placements as part of their studies
- building relationships with community members and providing suitable opportunities to engage volunteers to contribute to the programs and activities of the kindergarten
- ensuring the health, safety and wellbeing of each child at the kindergarten through consistent compliance with this policy and procedures when engaging volunteers and students.

Scope

This policy applies to the Approved Provider, Persons with Management or Control, Nominated Supervisor, Persons in day-to-day Charge, educators, staff, students, volunteers, parents/guardians, children and others attending the programs and activities of Ewing Kindergarten.

Background, Legislative Requirements and Guiding Documents

Background

Ewing Kindergarten values the participation of parents/guardians and other family members, and the voluntary contribution they make to the education and care of their own and other children. "In genuine partnerships families and educators value each other's knowledge and roles, communicate freely and respectfully and engage in shared decision making" (Early Years Learning Framework – refer to Sources). Ewing Kindergarten aims to provide a range of opportunities for family members, volunteers and students to participate in programs and activities while adhering to clear guidelines regarding appropriate interactions and communication with staff, and other adults and children at the kindergarten (refer to Code of Conduct Policy). The role that volunteers play in education and care services varies and can include working with groups of children, preparing materials, assisting with administrative tasks or working one-on-one with individual children. The kindergarten is responsible for ensuring that volunteers are suitable to work with children, and that children's health, safety and wellbeing is protected at all times. Volunteers should only be engaged to complement, not replace, the work of paid staff. Accordingly, kindergarten should not engage

volunteers to fill the place of an employee who is ill or on leave, or to fill a vacant budgeted position. Students may participate in programs and activities at the kindergarten from time to time including observing and experiencing the provision of kindergarten education. This will be encouraged and facilitated by Ewing Kindergarten wherever appropriate and possible. Volunteers must not be asked to perform tasks:

- that they are untrained, unqualified or too inexperienced to undertake
- that put the children or themselves in a vulnerable or potentially unsafe situation
- where there is a conflict of interest. Prior to participation at the kindergarten, a volunteer or student (aged 18 years or over) must be in possession of a Working with Children (WWC) Check.

Parents/guardians whose children usually attend the kindergarten are required to provide a current (volunteer or employee) WWC Check card. However, management and staff have the right to decline if and when they feel the person wishing to volunteer is not 'fit and proper.'

In line with Child Safe Standards and the Child Safe Environment and Wellbeing Policy, prior to engaging a volunteer or student an assessment should be undertaken of the nature of the responsibility to determine whether a position description is required and based on that whether an interview and referee checks are required.

Legislative Requirements

Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
- Child Safe Standards
- Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)
- Fair Work Act 2009
- National Quality Standard, Quality Area 4: Staffing Arrangements
- Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (Vic)
- Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic)
- Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics
- National Quality Framework AQCEQA
- Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF)
- Worker Screening Act 2020 (Vic)
- Worker Screening Regulation 2021 (Vic)

Strategies for Policy Implementation/ Procedures

The Approved Provider is responsible for:

- Developing guidelines for accepting applications from volunteers and students to work at the kindergarten in consultation with the Nominated Supervisor, ECT and educators and which are aligned with the Child Safe Environment and Wellbeing Policy.
- Accepting or rejecting a potential volunteer or student based on the circumstances of the kindergarten at the time, in consultation with the Nominated Supervisor

- Ensuring that children being educated and cared for by the kindergarten are adequately supervised, and the legislated educator-to-child ratios are complied with at all times (Regulations 123, 355, 360) (refer to Supervision of Children Policy)
- Reading the Working with Children (WWC) Check of volunteers and students where required, and ensuring that the details are recorded and saved in the “Student Placement” folder.
- Ensuring that the student record contains the name, address and date of birth of volunteers and students attending the kindergarten (Regulations 145, 149(1))
- Keeping a record for each day on which each student or volunteer participates with the date and the hours of participation (Regulation 149(2))
- Ensuring that volunteers, students and parents/guardians are adequately supervised at all times, and that the health, safety and wellbeing of children at the kindergarten is protected
- Ensuring that volunteers, students and parents/guardians are not left with sole supervision of individual children or groups of children
- Ensuring volunteers and students on placement at the service are not affected by alcohol or drugs (including prescription medication) that would impair their capacity to supervise or provide education and care to children (*Regulation 83*) (*refer to Tobacco, Alcohol and other Drugs Policy*)
- Developing a range of strategies to enable and encourage the participation and involvement of parents/guardians at the kindergarten
- Providing volunteers, students and parents/guardians with access to all service policies and procedures, and a copy of the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
- Ensuring that volunteers, students and parents/guardians comply with the National Regulations and all kindergarten policies and procedures, including the Code of Conduct Policy, Child Safe Environment and Privacy and Confidentiality Policy while attending the kindergarten
- Informing volunteers, students and parents/guardians of the services emergency and evacuation procedures (Regulations 97, 168 (2)(e))
- Developing an induction checklist for volunteers and students attending the kindergarten in consultation with the Nominated Supervisor and educators.
- Ensuring that the student has completed online mandatory Reporting prior to the commencement of the placement.
- Ensuring that volunteers, students and parents/guardians are aware of how to comply with child protection law and Child Safe Standards obligations.
- Ensuring volunteers, students and parents/guardians can identify children with medical conditions, the child’s medical management plan and the location of the child’s medication (Regulations 90, 168(2)(d), 170, 171)
- Informing volunteers, students and parents/guardians of the services Dealing with Medical Conditions Policy (Regulations 90, 168(2)(d), 170, 171)
- Ensuring that the students are aware and follow the current Health advice by the Department (DE and DHHS).

The Nominated Supervisor is responsible for:

- Assisting the Approved Provider to develop guidelines for applications from volunteers and students to work at the kindergarten and which are aligned with the Child Safe Environment Policy
- Assisting the Approved Provider with decisions in relation to accepting/rejecting a potential volunteer or student based on the circumstances of the kindergarten at the time
- Ensuring that children being educated and cared for by the kindergarten are adequately supervised, and the legislated educator-to-child ratios are complied with at all times (Regulations 123, 355, 360) (refer to Supervision of Children Policy)

- Ensuring that, where required, the WWC Check has been read prior to the volunteer/student's commencement at the kindergarten, and that details are included on the student record
- Ensuring that volunteers, students and parents/guardians are adequately supervised at all times when participating at the kindergarten, and that the health, safety and wellbeing of children at the kindergarten is protected
- Ensuring that volunteers, students and parents/guardians are not left with sole supervision of individual children or groups of children
- Keeping a record for each day on which each student or volunteer participates with the date and the hours of participation (*Regulation 149(2)*)
- Ensuring strategies are in place to enable and encourage the participation and involvement of parents/guardians at the kindergarten
- Ensuring volunteers and students on placement at the service are not affected by alcohol or drugs (including prescription medication) that would impair their capacity to supervise or provide education and care to children (*Regulation 83*) (*refer to Tobacco, Alcohol and other Drugs Policy*)
- Providing volunteers, students and parents/guardians with access to all kindergarten policies and procedures, and a copy of the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
- Ensuring that volunteers, students and parents/guardians comply with the National Regulations and all kindergarten policies and procedures, including the Code of Conduct Policy, Child Safe Environment and Privacy and Confidentiality Policy while attending the kindergarten
- Assisting the Approved Provider to develop an induction checklist for volunteers and students at the kindergarten
- Ensuring that volunteers and students have completed the induction checklist
- Ensuring that volunteers, students and parents/guardians are aware of how to comply with child protection law and Child Safe Standards obligations.
- Ensuring volunteers, students and parents/guardians can identify children with medical conditions, the child's medical management plan and the location of the child's medication (Regulations 90, 168(2)(d), 170, 171)
- Informing volunteers, students and parents/guardians of the services Dealing with Medical Conditions Policy (Regulations 90, 168(2)(d), 170, 171)
- Informing volunteers, students and parents/guardians of the services emergency and evacuation procedures (*Regulations 97, 168 (2)(e)*)
- Completing any paperwork as part of the student's placement (as required)

Other educators are responsible for:

- Assisting the Approved Provider and Nominated Supervisor to develop guidelines for applications from volunteers and students to participate at the kindergarten and are aligned with the Child Safe Environment Policy
- Ensuring that children being educated and cared for by the kindergarten are adequately supervised, and the legislated educator-to-child ratios are complied with at all times (refer to Supervision of Children Policy)
- Providing volunteers, students and parents/guardians with access to all kindergarten policies and procedures, and a copy of the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
- Ensuring that volunteers, students and parents/guardians comply with the National Regulations and all kindergarten policies and procedures, including the Code of Conduct Policy, Child Safe Environment and Privacy and Confidentiality Policy while attending the kindergarten

- Ensuring that volunteers, students and parents/guardians are adequately supervised at all times, and that the safety, health and wellbeing of children at the kindergarten is protected
- Ensuring that volunteers, students and parents/guardians are not left with sole supervision of individual children or groups of children
- Enabling parents/guardians of children attending the kindergarten access the kindergarten premises at any time the child is being educated and cared for except where this poses a risk to the safety of children and/or staff
- Encouraging the participation and involvement of parents/guardians at the kindergarten
- Assisting the Approved Provider and Nominated Supervisor to develop an induction checklist for volunteers and students at the kindergarten
- Assisting volunteers and students to understand the requirements of this policy and the expectations of the kindergarten.
- Ensuring that volunteers, students and parents/guardians are aware of how to comply with child protection law and Child Safe Standards obligations.
- Ensuring volunteers, students and parents/guardians can identify children with medical conditions, the child's medical management plan and the location of the child's medication (Regulations 90, 168(2)(d), 170, 171)
- Informing volunteers, students and parents/guardians of the services Dealing with Medical Conditions Policy (Regulations 90, 168(2)(d), 170, 171)

Volunteers and Students, while at the kindergarten, are responsible for:

- Ensuring they have provided all details required to complete the student record
- Undertaking a WWC Check and presenting a current WWC Check card or other notification, as applicable.
- Understanding and acknowledging the requirement for confidentiality of all information relating to educators and families within the kindergarten (refer to Privacy and Confidentiality Policy)
- Complying with the requirements of the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011, Education and Care Services National Law (Regulation 185) and with all service policies and procedures, including the Code of Conduct Policy, Child Safe Environment and Wellbeing Policy, Interactions with Children and Privacy and Confidentiality Policy while attending the service
- Undertaking the induction process and completing the induction checklist prior to commencement at the kindergarten.
- Following the directions of staff at the kindergarten at all times to ensure that the health, safety and wellbeing of children are protected.
- Completing online Mandatory reporting prior to the commencement of their placement.
- Following the current advice by the Department (DE and DHHS, e.g. wearing of mask, vaccination requirements etc.)
- Not attending placement in case of an infectious illness and informing the director as soon as practically possible regarding their absence. Students are also responsible to keep track of their absences and make-up days, as approved by the Director.

Parents and Guardians are responsible for:

- Providing information for the staff record as required
- Complying with the requirements of the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 and with all kindergarten policies and procedures, including the Code of Conduct Policy, Child Safe Environment and Privacy and Confidentiality Policy while attending the kindergarten

- Always following the directions of staff at the kindergarten to ensure that the health, safety and wellbeing of children are protected.

Attachments:

- Attachment 1: Student/Volunteer Induction Checklist

Evaluation

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

- check staff records on a regular basis to ensure details of students, volunteers and where appropriate parents/guardians are maintained in line with all legislative requirements as outlined in the policy
- 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 kindergarten'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.

Definitions

The terms defined in this section relate specifically to this policy.

- **Child-related work:** In relation to the WWC Check (*refer to Definitions*), child-related work includes work with children which may involve physical contact, face-to-face contact, oral, written or electronic communication.
- **Conflict of interest:** (In relation to this policy) refers to an interest that may affect, or may appear reasonably likely to affect, the judgement or conduct of the volunteer, or may impair their independence or loyalty to the service. A conflict of interest can arise from avoiding personal losses as well as gaining personal advantage, whether financial or otherwise, and may not only involve the volunteer, but also their relatives, friends or business associates
- **Student:** A person undertaking a practicum placement as part of a recognised early childhood qualification. This student will be supported by an educational institution in the completion of their placement.
- **Volunteer:** A person or parent (who's child attends the service) who willingly undertakes defined activities to support the education and care programs at a service in an unpaid or honorary capacity. These activities may include child-related work (*refer to Definitions*), administrative tasks, or preparing materials or food.

Related Policies and Procedures

- Child Safe Environment Policy
- Code of Conduct Policy
- Complaints and Grievances Policy

- Delivery and Collection of Children Policy
- Determining Responsible Person Policy
- Inclusion and Equity Policy
- Interactions with Children Policy
- Occupational Health and Safety Policy
- Privacy and Confidentiality Policy
- Staffing Policy
- Supervision of Children Policy

References and Further Sources

- Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA): www.acecqa.gov.au
- The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia: Belonging, Being, Becoming: www.acecqa.gov.au
- A Guide for Creating a Child Safe Organisation (The Commission for Children and Young People) www.cryp.vic.gov.au
- Working with Children Check; www.service.vic.gov.au

Attachments

Attachment 1: Student/Volunteer Induction checklist



ATTACHMENT 1: Student/Volunteer Induction Checklist

To be completed by all students prior to commencement of placement

Personal Details

Student Name: _____ Date: _____

General

- Service Tour (Kitchen, Kinder Rooms, Bathrooms, planning room upstairs)

Administration

- Working with children check sighted and verified by Director
- Completed student/Volunteer record
- Contact details of the Centre provided
- Absence procedure: to send an email to the director
- Bio and photo to display

Job Specific

- Introduction to Team and Mentor during placement
- Sign-in and Sign-out register explained
- Location of Emergency Evacuation Points and Lockdown Procedure
- Code of Conduct explained
- Location of the Policy Manual
- Participation of Volunteers and Students policy handout
- Privacy and Confidentiality Policy handout
- Child safety and wellbeing and child protection including how to respond to concerns (Child Safe Environment and Wellbeing Policy)
- Occupational Health and Safety Policy Handout
- Dealing with medical conditions (Dealing with Medical Conditions Policy, Asthma Policy, Anaphylaxis and Allergic Reactions Policy, Diabetes Policy, Epilepsy and Seizures Policy and Administration of Medication Policy)
- Mandatory Reporting completed
- Location of the Medical Bags
- We have a child/ren in this centre who has anaphylaxis (if applicable)
- We have a child/ren in this centre who has court order (if applicable)

Student

- *I am aware of the non-smoking policy of the service and not be affected by alcohol or drugs (including prescription medication) that would impair my capacity to complete my tasks (Tobacco, E-Cigarettes, Alcohol, and other Drugs Policy)*
- *The expectations of my placement/engagement, my role and responsibilities (including attending to the requirements of children with additional needs) have been clearly explained to me by my supervisor*
- *I am aware that I am expected to participate in general tasks, including maintaining the environment in a clean, safe and tidy condition*

Signature _____ Date / /

Director –

- *I certify the above-mentioned student has completed the induction for placement*

Signature of Director _____ Date / /

Name _____