



PENNANT HILLS WAR MEMORIAL CHILDREN'S CENTRE

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PENNANT HILLS WAR MEMORIAL CHILDREN'S CENTRE (PHWMCC) INTERACTIONS WITH CHILDREN POLICY

Introduction

A key objective of the National Quality Framework (NQF) is to ensure the safety, health and wellbeing of children attending education and care services.

An important aspect of children's 'belonging, being and becoming' involves them learning how their behaviours and actions affect themselves and others. A positive, strengths based approach to guiding children's behaviour can empower children to regulate their own behaviour and develop the skills needed to interact and negotiate complex social situations and relationships.

A positive atmosphere and the wellbeing of children within PHWMCC is promoted through attentive care and quality interactions with children. Emotional development and social relationships are enhanced through thoughtful and sophisticated approaches to conversation, discussion and promotion of children's language and communication.

Children who experience relationships that are built on respect, fairness, co-operation and empathy are given the opportunity to develop these qualities themselves. When children have positive experiences of interactions they develop an understanding of themselves as significant and respected, and feel a sense of belonging. Children's experience of positive caring relationships and interactions with others also plays a crucial role in healthy brain development; impacting children's learning, development and wellbeing.

Quality interactions increase children's knowledge and understanding of themselves and each other as unique individuals, and helps to develop the skills and understanding they need to interact positively with others.

Aim

Educators and staff at PHWMCC will:

- Be responsive to children's strengths, interests, abilities;
- Provide opportunities for children to become self-reliant and develop self-esteem;
- Uphold children's dignity, rights and agency;
- Provide positive guidance and support towards acceptable behaviour;
- Promote a safe, secure and nurturing environment;
- Be authentic and responsive;
- Be based in fairness, acceptance and empathy with respect for culture, rights, community and the individual as well as the rights of people with differing needs and capabilities.

Procedure

Children's Rights, Family and Cultural Values

Interactions within the preschool setting are greatly enhanced when children's rights and family and cultural values are given due consideration and respect. Administrative procedures, initial conversations, documentation and ongoing communication with children and families are a reference point for interactions and a foundation for authentic and respectful communication.

Listening

Educators and staff must use listening as a foundation for interactions. Listening is based on observation and in leaving spaces in conversations and communication, suspending judgement and in giving full attention to children as they communicate. Truly attending to children's communication promotes a strong culture of listening.

Children and Families

A culture of respectful interaction is promoted when children's attempts to communicate are valued. Turn taking and regulating children's conversations promotes active engagement. Respectful communication with families generates greater confidence in interaction.

Reflection and Consideration

Time is dedicated to reflecting upon interactions within children. Reflections should consider how to spend extended periods engaged in interactions with children that comprise communication and listening.

Role Modelling

Educators model positive interactions when they:

- Show care, empathy and respect for children, educators and staff and families.
- Learn and use effective communication strategies.

Principles for Behavioural Management

Staff respect individual children's needs and differences in age, ability and experience regarding issues surrounding behaviour management and they are willing and available to discuss individual family expectations with parents. There may be times when staff will need to negotiate management strategies with parents to suit the needs of individual children.

- Wherever possible children and educators will negotiate and determine boundaries and form agreements in relation to expectations for how we treat each other and our preschool
- Agreements will be reasonable considering the age, development and individual characteristics of the children.
- Agreements will be consistently reinforced and reflected on to evolve, along with children's developing skills and self-regulation competence
- Children will be encouraged to understand the boundaries, agreements and expectations and build their skills to interact with each other within these.
- It is the child's skill developments in relation to their behaviours that are praised or addressed. Children are never shamed.
- Educators acknowledge that they are there to support and teach skills that build children's self-control and regulation and always present a good example through positive role modelling, compassion and understanding.
- Treat all children with dignity and respect.
- Follow the *Code of Conduct* and the *ECA Code of Ethics* and the *United Nations Rights of the Child* when promoting positive behaviour.
- Not use practices which physically, verbally or emotionally hurt a child.

The Role of the Educators

In response to challenging behaviour, educators will:

- Remain calm and considered, and respectful of the child.

- Recognise the situation as an opportunity to help the child develop skills, including their language and communication, attention and working memory, emotion and self-regulation, cognitive flexibility and social thinking skills.
- Recognise certain reactions as understandable behaviour, and as a reflection of communication and social development.
- Acknowledge the child's intent with that behaviour.
- Clarify the preferred skills to be used and teach, role model and practice how to use them.
- Redirect the child or remove the child from the situation if necessary.
- Explain how certain behaviours result in consequences and then give children agency to make choices in their decision to continue or discontinue their behaviours.
- Explain to children how their behaviour made others feel.
- Remind children of appropriate behaviour.
- Actively listen to children's feelings and discuss the skills to use in the future.
- Support children to return to play.
- Support protective behaviours by providing strategies (e.g. "Stop, I don't like that.")
- Work in partnerships with families and any other agencies if required.
- If required, develop an individual behaviour guidance plan for children in collaboration with families and any support agencies.

Roles and Responsibilities

Approved Provider

- Ensure that the Nominated Supervisor and Responsible Persons have completed child protection training required in NSW. Staff records must be kept that include evidence of the approved training completed by the staff member.
- Ensure that nominated supervisors, staff members, volunteers and students at the service who work with children are advised of the current child protection laws, and any obligations that they have under those laws.
- Ensure all staff have access to relevant professional development.
- Ensure the educational program contributes to the development of children who have a strong sense of wellbeing and identity, and are connected, confident, involved and effective learners and communicators.
- Ensure that the Nominated Supervisor and all staff members at the preschool 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.
- Inform the Regulatory Authority in writing, within 24 hours of receiving a notifiable complaint.
- Inform the Regulatory Authority within 24 hours of a serious incident occurring at the preschool.
Inform the Regulatory Authority in writing, within 7 days of any incident or allegation of sexual or physical abuse of child when in attendance at the service.

Nominated Supervisor

- Maintain up to date recognised child protection training.
- Ensure that all staff complete child protection training.
- Guide professional development and practice to promote interactions with children that are positive and respectful.
- Establish practice guidelines that ensure interactions with children are given priority and those interactions are authentic, just and respect difference.
- Ensure all staff are aware of the preschool's expectations regarding positive, respectful and appropriate behaviour, and acceptable responses and reactions when working with children and families.
- Consider the size and composition of groups to ensure all children are provided with the best opportunities for quality interactions and relationships with each other and with adults at the preschool.

- Develop and implement educational programs, in accordance with an approved learning framework, that are based on the developmental needs, interests and experiences of each child, and take into account the individual differences of each child.
- Ensure that staff provide education and care to children in a way that encourages children to express themselves and their opinions and allows children to undertake experiences that develop self-reliance and self-esteem.
- Under section 166 of the *Education and Care National Law*, a staff member, Nominated Supervisor and Approved Provider may receive a penalty of up to \$10,000 (up to \$50,000 in the case of Approved Provider) for subjecting a child to any form of corporal punishment or any discipline that is unreasonable in the circumstances.

Educators and staff

- Act in accordance with the obligations outlined in this policy.
- Acknowledge children’s complex relationships and sensitively intervene in ways that promote consideration and alternative perspectives, and social inclusion.
- Acknowledge each child’s uniqueness in positive ways.
- Respect children’s agency and encourage them to express themselves and their views, opinions, thoughts and feelings.
- Encourage children to make choices and decisions.
- Encourage children to express themselves and show an interest and participate in what the child is doing.
- Maintain the dignity and rights of each child at all times.
- Have regard to the cultural and family values, age and the individual development and abilities of each child being educated and cared for.
- Offer positive guidance and encouragement towards acceptable behaviour.
- Ensure that routine times are used for positive interactions with children.
- Genuinely seek children’s input, respect their ideas and take their suggestions on board.
- Respond to children’s communication in a just and consistent manner.
- Respond sensitively to children’s attempts to initiate interactions and conversations.
- Support children’s secure attachment through consistent and warm nurturing relationships.

Families

- Comply with this policy.
- Engage in open communication with educators about their child.
- Inform educators of events or incidents that may impact on the child’s behaviour at the preschool.
- Inform educators of any concerns regarding their child’s behaviour or the impact of others children’s behaviour.
- Work collaboratively with educators to promote the best learning outcomes for their child. This may at times require an individual plan for behaviour guidance.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

This policy will be monitored to ensure compliance with legislative requirements and unless deemed necessary through the identification of practice gaps, the preschool will review this policy every three years.

Families and staff are essential stakeholders in the policy review process and will be given opportunity and encouragement to be actively involved.

In accordance with R. 172 of the *Education and Care Services National Regulations*, the preschool will ensure that families of children at the preschool are notified at least 14 days before making any change to a policy or procedure that may have significant impact on the provision of education and care to any child enrolled at the preschool; a family’s ability to utilise the preschool; the fees charged or the way in which fees are collected.

Definitions

Regulatory Authority:	Early Childhood Education and Care Directorate
Approved Provider:	Pennant Hills War Memorial Children's Centre Management Committee
Nominated Supervisor:	Director of Pennant Hills War Memorial Children's Centre
Responsible Person:	Nominated Supervisor or an Educator who has been placed in day-to-day charge of the Preschool
Early Childhood Educators:	Teachers and Child Care Workers

Related Legislation

Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010: Sections 162A, 166,167, 172, 174, 176
Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011: Regulations 12, 73, 74, 84, 147, 155, 156, 157, 168(2)(l), 172, 175 (2)(d)(e), 176(2)(b)
Children's and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998
Commission for Children and Young People Act 1998
Disability Discrimination Act (1992) (Cth)

Related Guidelines, Standards, Frameworks

National Quality Standards Quality Area 2 Children's Health and Safety 2.1.1, 2.2.1
Quality Area 5 Relationships with Children – Standards 5.1, 5.2
Quality Area 7 Governance and Leadership – Standard 7.1.2

Sources

Community Early Learning Australia – Interactions with Children Sample Policy
ACECQA Inappropriate Discipline Fact Sheet
Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia V2.0

Relevant Documents

PHWMCC Interactions Between Children Procedure

Policy Reviewed:

September 2023

Next Review Date:

September 2026