

Early Years Services – QA4.1 Staff Code of Conduct

TRIM Reference: D15/42585

Due for Review: 30 March 2026

Responsible Officer: Coordinator Early Years

Purpose

This policy outlines Surf Coast Shire Council's commitment to support the delivery of effective positive interaction between staff, educators, children and families to facilitate the implementation of an effective Early Years service.

Professional and collaborative relationships between management, educators and staff support continuous improvement, leading to improved learning experiences and outcomes for children.

Surf Coast Shire Early Years is committed to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. We seek to prevent harm of any kind impacting children and young people and have zero tolerance for racism, child abuse and inequality. Children and young people's rights, relationships, identity, and culture must be recognised and respected, their voices heard, and their concerns acted upon. We aim to foster a culturally safe, child safe and child friendly environment for all children and young people we have contact with, deliver services to, or are impacted by our work.

The Code of Conduct aims to protect children and reduce any opportunities for abuse or harm to occur. It also helps staff, contractors and volunteers by providing them with guidance on how to best support children and how to avoid or better manage difficult situations.

This *Code of Conduct* is to ensure that Surf Coast Shire Council Early Years Services staff, students and volunteers provide the highest quality of services to families and children through conducting themselves in a manner that is ethical, consistent, respectful, responsible and maintaining confidentiality at all times.

Policy Principles

Evidence of link to National Quality Standards: 4.2, 7.3.5

Evidence of link to Education & Care Services National Regulations: 168 (2) (i)

Victorian Children's Services Regulations 2020

Child Safe Standards: Standard 6, 8, 11

Scope

This policy applies to all Surf Coast Shire Council Early Years Services staff, students and volunteers.

Policy

The *National Convention of Rights of the Child 1989* and *The Early Childhood Australia (ECA) Code of Ethics* are supported by Surf Coast Shire Council Early Years Services.

Surf Coast Shire Council Early Years Services Code of Conduct is consistent with the broader *Surf Coast Shire Council Code of Conduct*

Surf Coast Shire Council Early Years Services will ensure that all Early Years Services staff, students and volunteers are aware of and adhere to both the *Surf Coast Shire Council Code of Conduct* and the *Child Safe Standards*.

Code of Practice

Surf Coast Shire Council Early Years Services will:

- Act with integrity and honesty.
- Use collaborative practices and effective open communication to ensure cooperative practices are in place.
- Maintain a family centered approach.
- Deliver services in a professional manner in line with current educational research and reform.
- Use inclusive practices and act in a way that is respectful to all stakeholders.
- Treat all information confidentially.
- Continuously develop innovative service delivery.

Code of Behaviour

Surf Coast Shire Council Early Years Services will:

- Adhere to the Surf Coast Shire Council Code of Conduct
- Adhere to The Early Childhood Australia (ECA) Code of Ethics.
- Adhere to the Child Safe Standards.
- Interact with children, families, the community, other educators and Surf Coast Shire Council staff in a polite and courteous manner.
- Ensure all Surf Coast Shire Council Early Years Services Policies and Procedures and Work Instructions are adhered to.
- Ensure confidential discussions and information is consistent with the Surf Coast Shire Council and Early Years Services policies and procedures; and responsive to the relevant legislative requirements.
- Volunteers and students are provided with the necessary induction and support.
- Use appropriate and inclusive language when speaking with children, families, other educators and staff.
- Actively seek to prevent harm of any kind impacting children and young people and have zero tolerance for racism, child abuse and inequality.
- Recognise and respect diversity and cultural difference. Culture provides a source of identity, a framework for interpreting the world and a basis for belonging; this will be reflected in the environment and program provided for children and their families.
- Provide a welcoming, inclusive and safe environment for all people associated with the service.
- Encourage open communication between all children, families, educators and staff.
- Refrain from bringing the service and Council into disrepute by public criticism of Council, fellow educators, staff and families.
- Act in accordance to the social media for Employee policy and refrain from commenting on social media which could bring the service and Council into disrepute by public criticism of Council, fellow educators, staff and families.
- Within the context of line management accountability, be impartial in reaching decisions and be prepared to accept the responsibility associated with that decision.
- Act in accordance with Council policy, Equal Opportunity legislation, Occupational Health and Safety legislation and the various legislation, standards and policies that apply to Surf Coast Shire Council Early Years Services.
- Observe the Surf Coast Shire Council lines of responsibility and accountability, and raise all concerns, issues, problems with the appropriate team member as soon as possible.

Definitions

Code of conduct

Together with a code of ethics, the code of conduct helps guide interactions between management, educators and staff, as well as informing the service decision-making processes relating to professional standards.

Code of ethics

Together with a code of conduct, a code of ethics helps guide interactions between management, educators and staff, as well as informing the service decision-making processes relating to professional standards, especially when there are conflicting obligations or responsibilities. The Guide to the NQF references ECA’s Code of Ethics, although compliance with the Code is not mandatory under the National Law and Regulations.

Related Procedure

Nil.

References

Related Surf Coast Shire Council and Early Years Services Policies

- D16/75844 Child Safe Organisation Policy
- D14/28683 Early Years Access and Inclusion Policy and Procedure
- D23/104577 Early Years – Child Safe Code of Conduct – Child Safe Standards
- HR24 Code of Conduct
- HR05 Equal Opportunity and Work Place Behaviours Policy
- HR07 Disciplinary Policy & Procedure
- HR21 Grievance Policy & Procedure
- HR 40 Digital & Social Media Policy
- MPR-006 Complaints Handling Policy & Procedure

Other References

- The Early Childhood Australia (ECA) Code of Ethics
- The National Convention of Rights of the Child 1989
- Education and Care Services National Law 2010
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
- ACECQA National; Quality Framework Resource Kit 2011
- Childcare Service Handbook (Department of Education)
- Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework
- Early Years Learning Framework for Australia
- My Time, Our Place.
- Victorian Children’s Services Regulations 2020
- Commission of Children and Young People: Child Safe Standards

Document History

Version	Document History	Approved by – Date
1	Approved	General Manager Culture and Community – 1 April 2014
2	Amended/Reviewed	Manager Aged and Family – 23 June 2017
3	Amended/Reviewed	Manager Community Strengthening – 18 January 2019
4	Amended/Reviewed	Manager Community Strengthening – 22 May 2020
5	Amended/Reviewed	Manager Community Strengthening – 31 August 2021
6	Amended/Reviewed	Manager Community Strengthening – 7 March 2023
7	Amended/Reviewed	Manager Community Strengthening – 30 September 2024