



Policy and Procedures Family Code of Conduct

Purpose

This policy has been developed under the CHILD values framework to assist to maintain an environment of respect throughout Acacia's Centres. All members of the organisation have a right to an environment free from harassment and to converse comfortably in a positive and co-operative manner. Furthermore, this policy provides behavioural expectations around the conduct of all parents, carers and family members connected to our Centres.

C- Compassion:

Members of Acacia understand the importance of building and maintaining positive relationships with each other, and therefore follow Acacia's code of conduct, and policies and procedures.

H- Honour:

Members of Acacia understand and respect each person's own personal beliefs and values and that we all want to the best for each child.

I - Integrity:

Members of Acacia adhere to laws and regulations that protect the safety and well-being of all participants. All members demonstrate honesty and trust when interacting with other members of Acacia or the local community.

L- Learning:

Acacia has a learning culture where we all listen to and respect each other and collaborate to learn from each other.

D- Diversity:

Members of Acacia respect the diversity of all individuals and understand that discrimination, and all forms of harassment are unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

We are committed to resolving difficulties in a constructive manner, through an open and positive dialogue. However, we understand that everyday misunderstandings can cause frustrations and have a negative impact on our relationships. Where issues arise, or misconceptions take place, please speak to your child's educator or Director or refer to the concerns and complaints policy.

This code aims to clarify the types of behaviour that will not be tolerated and seeks parental agreement to these expectations.

The code of conduct also sets out the actions Acacia can take should this code be ignored or where breaches occur.



Responsibilities for managing director nominated supervisor, certified leaders, we will:

- Work collaboratively to create an environment where respectful and safe conduct is expected of everyone.
- Behave in a manner consistent with the standards of our profession and meet core responsibilities to provide inclusive, safe and orderly environments.
- Plan, implement and monitor arrangements to ensure the care, safety, security and general wellbeing of all children in attendance at the Centre is protected.
- Identify and support students who are or may be at risk.
- Do our best to ensure every child achieves their personal and learning potential.
- Work with parents to understand their child's needs and, where necessary, adapt the learning environment accordingly.
- Respond appropriately when inclusive, safe or orderly behaviour is not demonstrated and implement appropriate interventions and sanctions when required.
- Make known to parents the complaints procedures.
- Ask any person who is acting in an offensive or disorderly way to leave the Centre grounds.
- Communicate to families using various methods such as verbal, newsletters, email, school stream app and notice boards about:
 - If the child is injured and the injury requires medical attention (communication will be immediately via phone and/or in person);
 - If the child has a sign or symptom requiring exclusion from care;
 - If the child has been involved in any situation that placed the child at risk;
 - If any situation renders the Centre unsafe;
 - If a less serious injury or incident takes place, the parents will be notified at the time of pick up;
 - If there are any changes to any policies or procedures;
 - If there is a change in educator working with your child on day-to-day basis;
 - If there is an outbreak of any communicable disease.

As educators and staff, we will:

- Model positive behaviour to students consistent with the standards of our profession.
- Give copies of the room welcoming pack upon commencing at the Centre or graduation into a new room, which explains the rooms routines and expectations on families.
- Proactively engage with parents about children's learning and development outcomes.
- Communicate the educational program and any upcoming events or excursions
- Work with parents/guardians to understand the needs of each child and, where necessary, adapt the learning environment accordingly.
- Work collaboratively with parents to improve learning and wellbeing outcomes for children with additional needs.
- Communicate with the Director in the event we anticipate or face any tension or challenging behaviours from parents.
- Treat all members of our community with respect.
- Not discuss information of a confidential nature regarding any other child or family.



As parents, we will:

- Model positive behaviour to all children.
- Take an interest in our child's Centre and learning.
- Work with the Centre to achieve the best outcomes for our child.

- Work collaboratively with Educators to resolve any behavioural issues our child may have.
- Communicate constructively with the Centre and use accepted processes and protocols when raising concerns.
- Support Educators and staff to maintain a safe learning environment for all children.
- Follow the Acacia's concerns and complaints policy and procedure if there is a complaint.
- Treat all leaders, educators, staff, children, students, volunteers and other members of the Acacia community with respect.
- Be involved in the Centre's events.
- Use positive language towards children.
- Communicate positively with Educators (i.e. always speak in respectful tones and use positive language).
- Display respect for all people while at the Centre and not use raised voices or threatening language.
- Report any observed hazard in the building or playground that may cause injury.
- Respect the Centre's property, and other people's property, privacy and confidentiality.
- Come to the Centre unaffected by drugs or alcohol.
- Read the parent noticeboard, newsletters and flyers, and discuss relevant issues with your children when appropriate.
- Follow Acacia's absence and cancellation policy and procedure.
- Understand that the curriculum is play based.
- Accept cultural differences, differing needs and differing personalities.

Behaviour that will not be tolerated:

- Disruptive behaviour which interferes or threatens to interfere with any of the Centre operation or activities anywhere on the Centre premises.
- Any inappropriate behaviour on the Centre premises.
- Using loud or offensive language or displaying temper including sexist and racist remarks.
- Threatening in any way, a member of staff, visitor, fellow parent/guardian or child.
- Damaging or destroying Centre property.
- Sending abusive or threatening emails or text/voicemail/phone messages or other written communications (including social media) to anyone within the Acacia community.
- Defamatory, offensive or derogatory comments regarding the service or any of the pupils/parents/staff/management at the service on Facebook or other social media sites.
- The use of physical, verbal or written aggression towards another adult or child. This includes physical punishment of your own child on the Centre's premises.
- Approaching someone else's child in order to discuss or chastise them because of the actions of this child towards their own child. (Such an approach to a child may be seen to be an assault on that child and may have legal consequences).
- Smoking, taking illegal drugs or the consumption of alcohol on Centre premises. (Alcohol may only be consumed during authorised events).
- Dogs being brought on to the school premises (other than guide or aid dogs).



In interacting with any children in the Centre, parents will:

- Not use any physical punishments (smacking, hitting etc.)
- Ensure that physical contact is non-intimate - appropriate physical contact could include holding hands, hugging (only if child initiated), assistance with climbing equipment, touching an arm.
- No parent/guardian should be alone with a child other than their own.
- Parents/guardians should not get involved in dressing/undressing children other than their own.
- Kinder age children are beginning to understand personal boundaries and parents/guardians should not have children other than their own on their lap. Children may be encouraged to sit next to adults if closer contact is initiated.
- In baby and toddler ages it is not acceptable for parents/guardians to pick up children other than their own. However, it is acceptable to sit on the floor at children's level and interact, including nursing babies or toddlers.
- If a parent/guardian observes a child needing assistance it is recommended that they alert an educator - they should avoid lifting or picking up children but may approach the child on the child's level to offer comfort.
- Interactions with children should not be boisterous. Parents/guardians should avoid over exciting children which can lead to unsafe behaviour.

Issues of conduct with the use of Social Media

Most people take part in online activities and social media. It's fun, interesting and keeps us connected.

Acacia has a Facebook page which allows parents to receive and respond to messages about learning experiences and events. We encourage you to positively participate if you wish.

Within these spaces however we ask that you use common sense when discussing Acacia life online.

'Think before you post'; we ask that social media, whether public or private, should not be used to fuel campaigns and voice complaints against the Service, staff, educators, parents or children.

We take very seriously inappropriate use of social media by a parent to publicly humiliate or criticise another parent, member of staff or child.

Online activity which we consider inappropriate:

- Identifying or posting images/videos of children;
- Abusive or personal comments about staff, management, children or other parents;
- Bringing the service in disrepute;
- Posting defamatory or libelous comments;
- Emails circulated or sent directly with abusive or personal comments about staff or children;
- Using social media to publicly challenge Acacia policies or discuss issues about individual children or members of staff;
- Threatening behaviour, such as verbally intimidating staff, or using bad language.



Dealing with Concerns

If parents/guardians have any concerns about their child in relation to the Centre they should:

1. Initially contact their child's room educator
2. If the concern remains they should contact the Director
3. If still unresolved, the centre governors through the complaints procedure

Parents/guardians should not use social media as a medium to air any concerns or grievances.

Protective Behaviours refers to the set of skills which children are taught to enable them to be safe and includes an understanding in older children about the privacy of their own body, respect for personal boundaries and recognition and articulation of their feelings of discomfort when personal boundaries are compromised. We are therefore teaching children not to be overly familiar with adults not known to them.

The guidelines outlined in this policy apply to all parents/guardians and seek to establish appropriate ways of interacting with children to ensure children are treated with respect and that children's safety is protected. We require that within the centre boundary, parents treat all children (including their own) with respect.

Acacia is also responsible for the safety of adults and these guidelines incorporate aspects which safeguard parents/guardians from possible injury through interactions with children. (For example, if a parent picked up another child they could sustain a back injury).

If parents observe any behaviours or incidents involving children which cause them concern they should speak to a staff member. They should not try to redirect or discipline children.

Consequences for failing to uphold the Code of Conduct with unreasonable behaviours

Behaviours that are considered inappropriate and occur on Centre grounds and that do not uphold the principles of this policy include when a person:

- is rude, aggressive or harasses others;
- sends rude, confronting or threatening letters, emails or text messages;
- is manipulative or threatening;
- speaks in an aggressive tone, either in person or over the telephone;
- makes sexist, racist or derogatory comments;
- inappropriately uses social media as a forum to raise concerns/make complaints against the service;
- is physically intimidating, e.g. standing very close.



Directors are responsible for determining what constitutes reasonable and unreasonable behaviour. Unreasonable behaviour and/or failure to uphold the principles of this Policy may lead to further investigation and the implementation of appropriate consequences. This may include:

- utilising mediation and counselling services;
- alternative communication strategies being applied;
- formal notice preventing entry onto Centre premises or attendance at Centre's activities. Written notice will follow any verbal notice given.
- an intervention order being sought;
- informing the police which may result in a charge of trespass or assault.

Any person not complying with a staff member request to cease inappropriate behaviour will be asked to leave the Centre. Police will be called if these requests are ignored.

References

Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority,

- *National Quality Framework Resource Kit, October 2011*

Early Childhood Strategy Division DET and Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority

- *Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework, November 2009*

Royal Children's Hospital Safety Centre, Melbourne

- *Child Safety Handbook edition 5: Protective Behaviours for Children, Page 83, 2009*

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