

Acacia Indochinese Community Support Association Inc.

ACACIA CHILDREN'S CENTRES



Acacia's Student & Volunteer Handbook

July 2018

Acacia Children's Centre
13 Belgium Avenue
Richmond 3121
Tel: 9429 6150
acc@acacia.org.au

Acacia Fitzroy Crèche
187 Napier Street
Fitzroy 3056
Tel: 9419 1142
afc@acacia.org.au

Acacia Children's Centre - St Albans
159 Taylors Road
St Albans 3021
Tel: 9356 9731
accsta@acacia.org.au

www.acacia.org.au

Brief History of Acacia

Acacia Indochinese Community Support Association Inc., established in May 1982 at 13 Belgium Avenue, Richmond, is an ethno-specific (Vietnamese), not-for-profit charitable organisation, that aim to promote, deliver, support for the bilingual (English/Vietnamese) and multicultural quality education and care services as well as conducting a range of funded and unfunded classes and activities to meet the needs of children, families and the community.

As a community-based organisation, Acacia is managed by a Committee of Management consisting of parents who place their child(ren) at the centres and local community people.

From the outset, the organisation had only one childcare centre that aim to promote, deliver, support for the bilingual (English/Vietnamese) and multicultural quality education and care services. We proudly claim that Acacia is the first and the only one centre offering bilingual (English/Vietnamese) to preschool age children in Australia and worldwide.

In 1999, Acacia had developed and implemented its best management practice by offering the Fitzroy Crèche & Day Nursery an opportunity to be part of the Acacia child education and care services.

In 2007 Acacia had planned to expand its services to the Western suburbs of Melbourne by building a new children and community centre in St Albans. The St Albans centre building construction was completed in December 2014.

Currently, the three childcare centres operate at the following premises:

- **Acacia Children's Centre – Richmond at 13 Belgium Avenue, Richmond 3121,**
- **Acacia Fitzroy Crèche at 187 Napier Street, Fitzroy 3065 and**
- **Acacia Children's Centre - St Albans at 159 Taylors Road, St Albans 3021.**

Our qualified, dedicated and experienced educators and staff in early childhood are committed to the core values of respect, diversity, social justice and equity, and provide diverse early childhood programs which cater for preschool age children across the three centres.

To read more about Acacia please visit our website: www.acacia.org.au

Acacia's Vision and Mission

OUR VISION

Harmonious communities, thriving on differences, where families and educators strive to understand and learn from each other

OUR MISSION

Providing a high quality learning and supportive environment that fosters respect, confidence and belonging

Our Values

At Acacia we uphold the following values:

- **Compassion**
- **Honour**
- **Integrity**
- **Learning**
- **Diversity**

Acacia's Education & Care Services

Introduction

Acacia is an equal opportunity employer. All employees are treated on their merit, without regard to race, age, sex, marital status or any other factor not applicable to the position. Students and Volunteers are valued according to how well they perform their duties, and their ability and enthusiasm to maintain our standards of service.

All Acacia centres must adhere to the Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 and Education and Care Services National Regulations 2018 (National Law) and the National Quality Framework (NQF) and National Quality Standards (NQS).

Acacia's committee, educators and staff recognise that Australia's indigenous people are the oldest inhabitants of the vast Australian continent, and also acknowledge that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture is a heritage that needs to be maintained and passed on to the future generations.

Acacia's programs also reflect the full appreciation of Australia's multicultural society, enhancing the children's awareness of, and respect for, cultural differences and similarities. Our programs are designed to help children develop all areas for success now and in later years, and to equip them with the necessary tools to deal with life.

We believe that Acacia plays an integral part in servicing and belonging to our wider community, and a responsibility to respect and value diversity, social justice and equity.

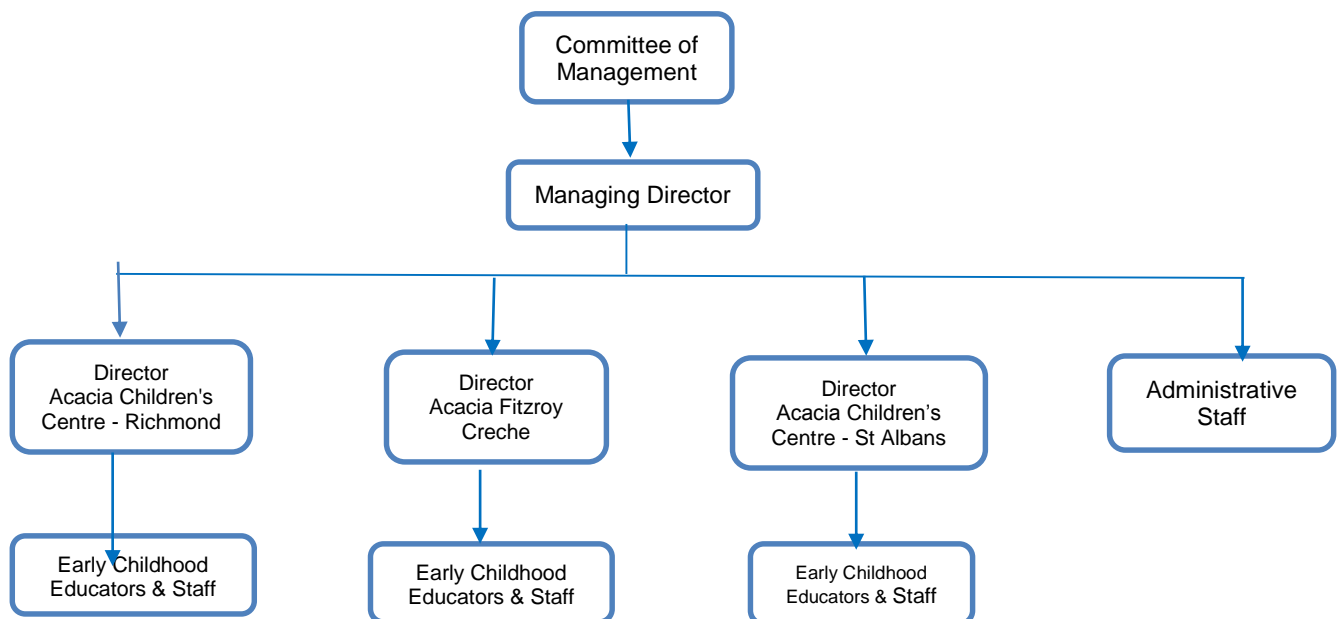
A copy of the centre's philosophy, Vision and Mission is allocated in the policy folder.

Management Committee

A voluntary management committee administers the children's centres and other activities of Acacia. All parents and local community people are eligible for election as a committee member by nomination at the Annual General Meeting. The committee meetings are held at the centre.

Organisation Structure

Below is Acacia Indochinese Community Support Association Inc. organisation structure



Before or on the day you commence, we require the following;

- Student Agreement from your school

- Current WWCC
- Photo and description notice
- Completed Student/Volunteer Information Record
- Induction Checklist

What to bring while on placement and Volunteering

- workbook and pen
- Appropriate Sunhat
- Warm coat
- Lunch

Note: We promote a healthy eating environment and encourage our educators/students and volunteers to have a small sized portion to eat with the children. Be mindful that the food prepared is for the children and to only have a small portion if serving food for yourself.

What We Expect From You

That you follow our organisation's code of conduct. The Code of Conduct (the Code) outlines the standard of behaviour expected of student's on placement at Acacia Children's Centres. It is designed to assist students to understand their responsibilities and obligations and provide guidance on expected behaviour in the workplace, or if faced with an ethical dilemma or conflict of interest while on placement/volunteering involving children, families, colleagues, students and the wider community. Refer to our student/volunteers code of conduct policy

That you support the philosophy/vision at all times

Acacia's vision, mission, values and philosophy is the foundation of our services and pedagogical practices. Please familiarise yourself with it. A copy of the organisation philosophy is up in each room or foyer.

That you follow policies and procedures at all times

Please make yourself familiar with Acacia's policy found in the policy handbook in the staff room or online. You are welcome to read them, but you may not photocopy these at any time.

That you contribute to quality

The National Quality standards [D1] are vital to the operations of Acacia. All student/volunteers are to actively and co-operatively participate in the system and assessment process. We ask that you participate in a reflective practice with your own pedagogical practices and the children's learning program.

That you guide children's behaviour positively

Behaviour guidance contributes to a healthy self-esteem and allows children to feel capable and competent, learn to express their feelings appropriately and to develop effective problem-solving skills.

Guidance approach to dealing with behaviours is always empowering and respectful to the child. Guidance helps the child to learn to direct his or her own behaviour so that it is eventually based on self-control and the understanding of other people's needs, rights and feelings.

Acacia's Behaviour Guidance Policy has been developed to ensure a positive approach to guiding children's behaviour, ensuring an environment that is consistent, supportive and safe for all.

Medical conditions such as food allergies, anaphylaxis, asthma, diabetes

Please make yourself familiar to the medical notice board which informs you of every child's medical condition and to the location of the emergency first aid equipment.

If you wish to eat food that contains an allergy in your meal breaks, please wash your hand before entering the room. Before serving any food to children you must be confident that you know every child allergy and dietary restrictions. In the best interest of your health please inform the director of any medical conditions that you personally have, this will be kept in confidential.

For further information, please refer to Acacia's policies **Early Childhood Australia (ECA) Code of Ethics**

All student/volunteers are expected to adhere to the ECA Code of Ethics. The document incorporates statements relating to children, families, colleagues, community and society, and ourselves as professionals. You will find a copy of this in the induction folder and are asked to familiarise yourself with it.

That you uphold the Rights of the Child

Acacia respects the rights of children as enshrined in the 1991 United Nation Convention on the Rights of the Child, and commits to advocating for these rights. We uphold the rights of the child in our daily practice, routines, experiences and events.

You will find a copy of this in the induction folder and are asked to familiarise yourself with it.

Supervision

All Volunteers/Students are responsible for ensuring that children are adequately supervised at all times the children are in the centre. This includes when the children are indoors or outdoors on the premises, as well as when they are on an excursion or routine outing away from the premises.

All areas available to children in our service must be supervised. All Volunteers/Students must be alert to and aware of what is going on around them. Volunteers/Students must be alert to the potential for accidents, injuries and other harmful incidents throughout the whole centre, not just within their own immediate area. Activities with higher risk of incidents (such as water play, climbing, wood work, crossing roads) require students and volunteers to be more aware. If these activities cannot be supervised adequately the activity must be stopped.

student/volunteers must be supervised by the educators at Acacia whilst working with children and are never to be left alone with children.

Adequate supervision requires teamwork and constant communication among all Staff/Student/volunteers members. For further information, please refer to the supervision of children policy.

Use of Telephone (Mobile Phone Policy)

Personal mobile phones should not be used during work hours (except for breaks), including the sending and receiving of text messages unless required for an emergency. Your mobile phone should be left in your bag. If you need to have your phone on you during the day because of an emergency please let the centre Director know.

Privacy & Social Media

Social networking through the use of internet and other electronic social media tools is prohibited by Acacia Volunteers/Students during working times. This includes but is not limited to: use of Facebook, LinkedIn, blogging, wikis and other online social media vehicles.

Volunteers/Students who use social media sites during non-working time are to be respectful at all times, our organisation as well as its employees, customers, and competitors. Remember that you are ultimately responsible for your online behaviour and should avoid content or actions that are defamatory, pornographic, proprietary, harassing, disrespectful, libellous or threatening. You can be sued by management, employees, competitors or any other individuals affected by such content.

It is a breach of confidentiality and privacy to make posts or comments about children, families, staff or management from Acacia on social media site. It is also inappropriate to post pictures of children, families, staff or management from Acacia on social media sites.

Photos

Acacia respects children's right to be play and learn in an environment where they are not subjected to photos being taken of them. If you need to take a photo this needs to be done with the permission of the family first then the child (age appropriate). The photo's purpose should only be to capture the learning or activity that has taken place. Ensure children's faces are not seen in photos.

Photos must only be taken on our device and then we will email these photos to you or place them on your USB.

Communication

Educators at Acacia are here to support student however during their hours of work, not during their lunch/tea breaks.

Effective communication is crucial in the developing of trust and respect between individual staff members and students and volunteers to provide information and gather feedback about children, participants and programs offered, and to help to avoid misunderstanding and conflict.

Teamwork and effective communication between staff members and student/volunteers is critical to the efficient operation of a children education and care centre. Acacia is committed to ensuring that all work in a positive environment with maximum communication and collaboration.

Staff, students and volunteers are required to talk with each other in a friendly and courteous manner, listen to each other, work effectively as a team, discuss different backgrounds/ cultural expectations and share knowledge and experience.

Communication with Families

Volunteers/Students are expected to introduce themselves to families and engage in positive communication with families.

If students needs observe children for their school assessment they need to work with the educators from the room to evaluate which children will be available.

Student are expected to ask for permission from the parents for any written consent form their school work.

Students cannot take photos of children that they have not received consent to.

.Any concerns or queries from students and volunteers should be brought to the attention of the Director as soon as possible. In doing this, discussion and action can take place immediately. Conversations between the Director and any staff member will be kept in strict confidence.

Relationships within the Team

Relationships within the team should be based on mutual respect. Employees are expected to develop respectful working relationships with all team members, based upon the common goal of delivering a quality program to children and families.

Use of Office Equipment & Acacia's Property

Volunteers/Students may use office equipment such as computers and photocopiers in a limited manner with approval from the Director or educators at Acacia. Please be mindful at Acacia we an environmental friendly service that are looking at diverse ways to reduce our paper and ink usage.

Confidentiality Policy

Acacia will maintain private and confidential files for Volunteers/Students. These records are securely stored and maintained according to the policy.

Students and volunteers are to maintain children's information and documentation according to our confidentiality policies at all times.

No information on program or staff or children and families, can be used without written permission.

Child Protection

Acacia has an extensive Child Protection Policy in place as we follow the child safe standards.

All Volunteers/Students are to complete the current child protection modules or training annually. Once completed a copy of the certificate must be kept on staff file. Please become familiar with child safe standards to ensure you follow correct procedures (refer to the child protection policy).

Mandatory Reporting

Educators and staff have an ethical and moral duty to make a notification to Child Protection or/and police if they believe, based on reasonable grounds, that a child is in need of protection because the child has suffer, significant harm as a result of physical injury or sexual abuse and the child parents have not protected the child from such a harm. Identity of a notifier/reporter will remain confidential under the Act.

The responsibility for investigating an allegation of child abuse rests solely with Child Protection and/or Victoria Police. Educators and staff must not investigate an allegation or a concern. They should only enquire sufficiently to form a belief that may then require further action.

Orientation / Induction

You will have an induction process with the nominated supervisor on your first day or prior. Orientation in each room will be completed by the room leader who will guide and support you for the initial probation period.

Your Director is an experienced employee who will give you opportunities to learn whilst on placement. If you have any problems or difficulty in performing your work properly or if you have a question about any job duties, please talk this with your Nominated Supervisor.

Attendance Records

All students must be punctual. All Volunteers/Students **must** sign in and out every day as required by the National Law. This is a legal requirement. The attendance record is also used in the case of the evacuation procedures and therefore needs to be filled out when you are on the premises. Please do not sign in or out for other student members.

Tea & Meal Breaks

Meal and tea breaks will be discussed with your mentor teacher and on the hours you will present on your placement.

It is advised that when on a placement that is over 6 hours, to take a 30min lunch break and a 20 min tea break.. You are able to store your lunch in our staff fridge. Food (cakes etc.) that has been left on the staff table is for the intention to share with their fellow staff members only. Please ask if you can also have any of these foods.

Absences and lateness

Working with children makes you vulnerable to some of the illnesses that sweep through the Center. You can help yourself by staying healthy by eating properly, sleeping properly, and washing your hands frequently during the course of the day.

If you are ill, please call the Center directly to report an absence.

All Volunteers/Students are expected to be “on the floor” at the time that they are scheduled to begin to work. If you are running late call the centre to advise approximately of your arrival time.

Students will be required to make up any absences they miss. Please be sure these arrangements are made with your mentor educator.

Occupational Health & Safety

Acacia has the legal responsibility to protect the health and safety of each participants at all times. Our health and safety practices affect your physical and psychological health and safety. We have a duty of care to provide all people with a safe and healthy environment.

Students have a legal responsibility and a duty to take the care of their own health and safety and of others affected by their actions at work.

It is the responsibility of all students to follow the Centre’s OHS procedures and assist by identifying manual handling hazards and risks.

Incident and hazard reporting

All students that sustain an injury must fill out an incident report and report it to the Nominated Supervisor or the responsible person placed in charge. Any hazards seen whilst on the premises must be recorded in the hazard incident report and given to the director. This is found in the staff room.

For further information please refer our policies:

Alcohol & Drug Use

Any use of alcohol or illicit drugs is prohibited including; the use of such substances prior to attendance. Students suspected of breaching this requirement may have their placement suspended.

- Please refer to the Centre’s Alcohol and Drug Policy.

Smoking on Acacia's Premises.

Smoking is prohibited inside and around the centres' building (within 4 meters of entrance), in the playground, on excursion and whenever you are with or in sight of the children. This smoke free policy will apply to all educators, staff, volunteers, parents, students and visitors.

Dress code

Students are expected to maintain the professional image of the organisation.

- Dress must be appropriate for practical manner. Dress should be conducive to active participation with children, parents, colleagues, and other professionals. (eg:- No bare midriffs, no low cut tops, no exposed parts of the buttocks)
- Clothing and accessories are appropriate, and meet job requirements and professional capacity; Clothing should be weather appropriate (warm jackets for winter, Sunsmart attire for summer) Sunsmart attire including wide brim hats and covered shoulders for outdoor activity.
- Jewellery and body piercing must not pose a Workplace Health and Safety risk
- Hair must be kept clean and tidy. Long hair is to be tied back when in contact with the children and/or food.
- Footwear must be safe, in good repair and comfortable without attachments that may cause injury. Enclosed (full coverage over back of the heel and toes) low heeled footwear should be worn at all times No thongs or slip on, shoes are permitted to be worn at any time.)
- Finger nails should be kept trimmed to a safe length. No fake nails or nail polish to be worn (including clear).
- Personal hygiene should include daily showering or bathing and the use of deodorant or antiperspirant
- Due to Asthma triggers, please be aware of the effects of personal smoking habits and passive smoking.
- Educators and staff are asked not to wear body/hair oil or perfume to work, as it may trigger allergies in other staff or children

Food Handling

To ensure Acacia Children Centre's premises are operated safely and food is handled appropriately, all children's meals, snacks and milk products is given by our educators. It is advised that you do not serve children any food. If your placement is in the 0-2 room you are able to feed an infant their bottle. To gain an understanding and experience it is advised that you only supervise the educator who is preparing the bottle.

Parking

Acacia Children's centres do not have the capacity to provide onsite car parking. We do provide a place where you can park your bike but do not accept responsibility if stolen.

Student Placement Assessments

While on placement it is vital to be organised and utilise your time and the educators who are supporting you. If you require one on one time with the centre director or mentor ensure you give sufficient time and schedule a day and time that suits the centre. This meeting can be cancelled and is up to the discretion of the mentor and director. It is your responsibility to ensure all tasks required to complete assessments are complete by the completion of your placement hours. Educators are not qualified to complete your placement assessments, this needs to be completed by your teacher.

Workplace Harassment & Discrimination

Workplace harassment and discrimination occurs when a person is discriminated against or harassed because of their race, sex, colour, descent or national or ethnic origin etc..., As defined under the *Racial Discrimination Act 1975* or because of their sex, marital status, pregnancy as defined under the *Sex*

Discrimination Act 1984, and other grounds under the *Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1996*. Workplace harassment is defined as:

- any form of behaviour (including comments, jokes, and innuendo) which is unwelcome;
- unwanted or uninvited and/or repeated behaviour that makes a person feel humiliated, intimidated or offended;
- harassment can take many forms and may include physical contact, verbal comments, inappropriate communication (including but not limited to email and text messages)

It is the responsibility of all students to not participate in discriminatory or harassing behaviour within the workplace. Management/Supervisors are accountable for ensuring professional standards of conduct are observed at all times and to take immediate preventative action when required.

Feedback or Concern & Complaint Procedures

Acacia believes that disputes or concerns and complaints are best handled through an open, transparent and immediate procedure. The following procedure is to be applied when a Student or volunteer is concerned about any aspect of Acacia's services:

- Speak to the person in-charge of the room, activity or program i.e. early childhood educator, tutor.
- If the matter is unresolved, it can be discussed with the Director
- If you are still not satisfied, please speak to the Managing Director.
- In the case that the matter remains unresolved, take your concern to the Management Committee. If the matter is urgent, please ask to speak to the Committee's President. It can also be presented in writing to the Committee of Management.
- If the matter is still unresolved you can take the complaint to external organisations or agencies.

Educators and staff should refer to the Centre's

- *Grievance Policy and Procedures*