

Best Practice – Quality Area 1 (and 6)

PURPOSE

This policy will provide guidelines to:

- Ensure all adults and children at Goulburn Region Preschool Association Inc. are treated equitably and with respect, regardless of their background, ethnicity, culture, language, beliefs, gender, age, socioeconomic status, level of ability, additional needs, family structure or lifestyle.
- Promote inclusive practices and ensure the successful participation of all children at Goulburn Region Preschool Association Inc.
- Promote inclusive practices in line with the Child Safe Standards, with a specific focus on establishing a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children are respected and valued.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following GRPSA policies:

- *Positive Relationships, Interactions and Behaviour Support Policy)*
- *Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy*
- *Code of Conduct Policy*
- *Complaints and Grievances Policy*
- *Educational Program and Practice Policy*
- *Occupational Health and Safety Policy*
- *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy*
- *Supervision of Children Policy*

POLICY STATEMENT

1. VALUES

Goulburn Region Preschool Association Inc. is committed to:

- Acknowledging and respecting the rights of all children to be provided with and participate in a quality early childhood education and care program.
- Creating an environment that supports, reflects and promotes equitable and inclusive behaviours and practices.
- Creating a sense of belonging for all children, families and staff, where diverse identities, backgrounds, experiences, skills and interests are respected, valued and given opportunities to be expressed/developed.
- Ensuring that programs are reflective of, and responsive to, the values and cultural beliefs of families using the service, and of those within the local community and broader society.
- Working to ensure children are not discriminated against on the basis of background, ethnicity, culture, language, beliefs, gender, age, socioeconomic status, level of ability or additional needs, family structure or lifestyle.

- Ensuring that no employee, prospective employee, parent/guardian, child, volunteer or student at the service is discriminated against on the basis of having or being suspected of having an infectious disease or blood-borne virus (BBV – refer to *Definitions*).
- Complying with the Child Safe Standards in their entirety and promoting these practices widely amongst staff, volunteers, families and the wider community.
- Upholding the values and principles of Early Childhood Australia (ECA) and Early Childhood Intervention Australia's (ECIA) *Position Statement on the Inclusion of Children with a Disability in Early Childhood Education and Care* (refer to *Sources*).
- Providing all children with the opportunity to access programs at the service, and recognising that all families are unique and that children learn in different ways and at different rates.
- Consistently updating and supporting the knowledge, skills, practices and attitudes of staff to encourage and ensure inclusion and equity.
- Complying with current legislation including the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*, *Equal Opportunity Act 2010*, *Disability Act 2006* and *Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001*.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisors, educators, staff, students on placement, volunteers, parents/guardians, children and others attending the programs and activities of Goulburn Region Preschool Association Inc.

3. PROCEDURES

The Approved Provider is responsible for:

- Ensuring that services programs are available and accessible to families from a variety of backgrounds (refer to *Educational Program and Practice Policy*).
- Encouraging collaborative, family-serviced practice (refer to *Definitions*) at the service.
- Providing families with information about the role of inclusive practice in achieving positive outcomes for all children, the key values underpinning inclusive practice and the support options available for children attending Goulburn Region Preschool Association Inc.
- Working with individual families to determine the needs of their child and facilitating the inclusion of both the child and the family into the service.
- Ensuring that educational programs are delivered in accordance with an approved learning framework, are based on the developmental needs, interests and experiences of each child, and take into account the individual differences of each child (*Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework Practice Guide*): *Equity and Diversity*
- Ensuring that the enrolment process is fair and equitable, and facilitates access for all children (refer to *Enrolment and Orientation Policy*).
- Tailoring the orientation process to meet the individual needs of children and families (refer to *Enrolment and Orientation Policy*).
- Considering barriers to participation in service programs and activities, and developing strategies to overcome these.
- Considering options to provide appropriate physical infrastructure, staffing and resources to facilitate the inclusion of all children at the service.
- Ensuring that staff have access to appropriate and accredited professional development activities that promote a positive understanding of diversity, inclusion and equity, and provide skills to assist in implementing this policy (refer to *Staffing Policy*).

- Ensuring that staff are aware of the Child Safe Standards and the organisations expectations regarding the implementation of the standards in their entirety.
- Ensuring that the Nominated Supervisors, educators and all staff are aware of the service's expectations regarding positive, respectful and appropriate behaviour when working with children and families (refer to *Code of Conduct Policy* and *Positive Relationships, Interactions and Behaviour Support Policy*)
- considering any issues regarding fees that may be a barrier to families enrolling at Goulburn Region Preschool Association Inc., and removing these barriers wherever possible (refer to *Fees Policy*).
- Providing service information in various community languages wherever possible.
- Using language services to assist with communication where required, considering the employment of a multilingual worker/s to meet the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) families.
- Working with the Nominated Supervisors and educators to ensure appropriate program planning and resourcing for children with additional needs.
- Accessing Kindergarten Inclusion Support Agencies (refer to *Definitions*) and Kindergarten Inclusion Support Packages for children with disabilities, complex medical needs and/or developmental concerns, where required.
- Where practicable, accessing resources, support and professional development to facilitate inclusion of children with additional needs who are ineligible for specific support packages.
- Working with specialised services and professionals (e.g. Early Childhood Intervention Services and inclusion support agencies) to provide support and services for families and children experiencing severe disabilities, complex medical needs and/or developmental concerns.
- Ensuring that all eligible three-year-old Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children known to Child Protection and refugee or asylum seeker background are supported to access the Early Start Kindergarten program (refer to *Definitions*).
- Accessing support from DEs Koorie Engagement Support Officers (refer to *Definitions*) or the Koorie Preschool Assistants program (refer to *Definitions*), where required.
- Implementing appropriate programs and practices to support vulnerable children and families, including working co-operatively with relevant services and/or professionals (e.g. Child FIRST), where required (refer to *Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy*)
- Ensuring that services programs are inclusive of children with medical conditions, including anaphylaxis, asthma, diabetes and epilepsy (refer to *Dealing with Medical Conditions Policy, Anaphylaxis Policy, Asthma Policy, Diabetes Policy* and *Epilepsy Policy*).
- Ensuring that no employee, prospective employee, parent/guardian, child, volunteer or student at the service is discriminated against on the basis of having or being suspected of having an infectious disease, blood-borne virus (BBV – refer to *Definitions*), illness or medical condition.
- Ensuring that any behaviour or circumstances that may constitute discrimination or prejudice are dealt with in an appropriate manner (refer to *Complaints and Grievances Policy*).
- Ensuring that all policies of Goulburn Region Preschool Association Inc., including the *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy*, are adhered to at all times.

All Early Childhood Staff are responsible for:

- Being aware of the service's expectations regarding positive, respectful and appropriate behaviour when working with children and families (refer to *Code of Conduct Policy* and *Positive Relationships, Interactions and Behaviour Support Policy*)

- Identifying children who may be disadvantaged, have additional needs, or be at risk of discrimination/exclusion, and being aware of the support/resources required to ensure that these children are included in service programs.
- Being aware of the Child Safe Standards and implementing these in their daily practice.
- Consulting with families and liaising with the Approved Provider to access support/resources for individual children, where required.
- Ensuring that parents/guardians are consulted, kept informed and provide written consent, where individualised programs, action, support or intervention are planned and provided for their child (e.g. the Preschool Field Officer Program and Kindergarten Inclusion Support Packages – refer to *Definitions*).
- Developing an educational program that is reflective of the service's values, beliefs and philosophy, and embraces the principles of fairness, equity, diversity and inclusion (*Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework Practice Guide*).
- Ensuring that the program provides opportunities for all children to participate and interact with one another.
- Using language services to assist with communication, where required.
- Working with the Approved Provider and educators to ensure appropriate program planning and resourcing for children with additional needs
- Using family-centred practice (refer to *Definitions*) and working collaboratively with staff, parents/guardians, specialist services and other professionals to implement the program at the service and provide individualised support for children, where required.
- Responding to the needs and concerns of parents/guardians, and providing support and guidance, where appropriate.
- Providing information to families about the support available to assist children, including:
 - Early Start Kindergarten
 - Koorie Early Childhood Education Program
 - Kindergarten Inclusion Support Services
 - Language services
- Providing support and guidance to educators/staff, where required.
- Ensuring that services programs are inclusive of children with medical conditions, including anaphylaxis, asthma, diabetes and epilepsy (refer to *Dealing with Medical Conditions Policy*, *Anaphylaxis Policy*, *Asthma Policy*, *Diabetes Policy* and *Epilepsy Policy*).
- Ensuring that individualised programs incorporate opportunities for regular review and evaluation, in consultation with all people involved in the child's education and care.
- Providing opportunities for families to contribute to the program and opportunity to participate in decisions affecting their child.
- Notifying the Approved Provider of any behaviour or circumstances that may constitute discrimination or prejudice.
- Advising the Approved Provider if they become aware of discrimination against anyone at the service on the basis of having or being suspected of having an infectious disease, blood-borne virus, illness or medical condition.
- Adhering to the policies of Goulburn Region Preschool Association Inc., including the *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy*, at all times.
- Understanding and respecting different cultural child-rearing and social practices.
- Meeting any specialised medical and nutritional needs of children on a day-to-day basis (refer to *Dealing with Medical Conditions Policy* and *Nutrition and Active Play Policy*).

- Critically reflecting on practice to ensure that interactions and programs embrace an approach in which children and families feel valued and respected, and that their contributions are welcomed.

Parents/guardians are responsible for:

- Adhering to the policies of Goulburn Region Preschool Association Inc., including this *Inclusion and Equity Policy* and the *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy*, at all times.
- Communicating with the service to ensure awareness of their child's specific needs, including cultural considerations, family background, health and wellbeing requirements.
- Raising any issues or concerns regarding their child's participation in the program.
- Being involved in, keeping fully informed about, and providing written consent for any individualised intervention or support proposed/provided for their child.
- Responding to requests from educators for written permission to arrange for an assessment or collect reports on their child.

Volunteers, students and SCOPE additional assistants while at the service, are responsible for following this policy and its procedures.

EVALUATION

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

- 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 service's policy review cycle, or as required.
- Notify parents/guardians at least 14 days before making any changes to this policy or its procedures.

ATTACHMENTS

Nil

AUTHORISATION

This policy was adopted by the Approved Provider of Goulburn Region Preschool Association Inc. on 12th November 2012

Reviewed and Approved: 24th September 2016

Reviewed and Approved: 8th April 2019

Reviewed: August 2021

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REVIEW DATE: NOVEMBER 2028