

POLICY NO 23: INCLUSION

Key Policy Contact Person: Manager, Our Village Family Childcare

POLICY STATEMENT:

All children will have equal access to Our Village Family Childcare (OVFC) without discrimination due to disability, religion, cultural background, social/economic status, or family ties. OVFC will provide an inclusive and welcoming environment for all children, parents/guardians, Educators, staff, and visitors. Whilst attending education and care, children will be respected for the individuals they are and provided with experiences and care that meets their learning and cultural needs.

CRITICAL INFORMATION:

- The enrolment process is fair and equitable which facilitates access for all children as per the services Enrolment and Orientation processes.
- Children’s rights are advocated for, including their right to be safe and their right to access quality early childhood education.

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PURPOSE:

Children’s services legislation requires that services provide programs that are based on the developmental needs, interests, and experiences of each child and that are designed to consider the individual differences of these children while enhancing each child’s development. Within OVFC there are opportunities for all children and families to participate in the family day care service. All Children, parents/guardian, Educators, staff, and visitors are treated equally, and any family’s experiences vulnerability are supported by the service.

SCOPE/RESPONSIBILITIES:

This document applies to all Educators, Families, Coordination Unit Staff, Volunteers and Students of OVFC.

STATEMENT OF DIVERSITY

Sunbury and Cobaw Community Health is committed to improving the health of our community and being accessible to all, including people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities, those from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background, people with a disability, Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Intersex and Queer (LGBTIQA+) people and other socially vulnerable groups and supporting their communities across the lifespan from birth to older age.

DEFINITIONS:

Inclusion	To be heard - To feel a sense of belonging - To have free and safe access to engage daily in social interactions with peers and adults - To be in an environment that accommodate a development of independence at a pace that is right for them (Early Years Learning Framework, ACECQA, 2009)
Vulnerability	A broad term that can include (but is not limited to) families and children experiencing disability, a medical condition, a developmental or behaviour concern, an emotional need (resulting from trauma, abuse or grief), culturally and linguistically diverse families, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families, diverse family structures, financial hardship, family displacement (due to war or refugee status), isolation, family violence, children at risk of abuse and neglect, mental illness, family separation or divorce.

PROCEDURES:

The Coordination Unit staff and Educators will actively promote the Victorian Early Years Learning Framework and the National Early Years Learning Framework – “Being, Belonging, becoming” to ensure:

- Children have a strong sense of identity.
- Children are connected with and contribute to their world.
- Children have a strong sense of wellbeing.
- Children are confident and involved learners.
- Children are effective communicators.

The Coordination Unit promotes an inclusive and welcoming environment by ensuring where:

- The enrolment process is fair and equitable which facilitates access for all children as per the services Enrolment and Orientation processes.
- Children’s rights are advocated for, including their right to be safe and their right to access quality early childhood education.

- A sense of belonging is created for all children, families, Educators and Staff by valuing and respecting diverse identities, backgrounds, experiences, skills, and interests and providing opportunities for them to be represented at the service e.g., through the educational program and displays.
- Educators are encouraged to access professional development to promote a positive understanding of diversity, inclusion, fairness, and equity.

The Coordination unit Staff and the Educators will:

- Ensure the code of conduct is always adhered to.
- Together with Educators they will actively seek support from relevant agencies when assistance is required or requested.
- Develop trusting, warm, and responsive relationships with children.
- Ensure the rights and dignity of the children are always maintained.
- Ensure that children have opportunities to develop a sense of belonging within the educational program, this ensures each individual child culture is represented and celebrated in the educational program.
- Promote the safety, participation, and empowerment of children with a disability or developmental delay by ensuring all children have opportunity to:
 - Participate within the whole educational program.
 - Educational Program provides the opportunity to achieve success.
 - Develop positive relationships with other children and Educators.
 - Observe children and people with disabilities represented positively throughout the service.
- All children will have equal access to play experiences, toys, and equipment in the Educator's home environment suitable to their age/stage and interests.
- Collaboratively work with families and any associated specialist agencies to support the inclusion of children with additional needs by developing inclusion support plans.
- Model culturally sensitive behaviour and language.
- Promote positive, equal, and respectful relationships between all children.
- Consider how a proposed excursion or incursion is inclusive of all children regardless of their abilities, additional needs, or medical conditions.
- Ensure that there are opportunities for a child/ren to participate in any activity, exercise or excursion that is appropriate and in accordance with their Risk Minimisation Plan as per the *Dealing with Medical Conditions Policy*
- Monitor their own interactions for bias and reflect regularly on behaviours displayed with children, families, and other Educators.
- Discuss inclusion, fairness, equity, and diversity as part of our practices.
- Develop Educational programs and practices that:
 - Reflect the service's values, beliefs, and philosophy, and embraces the principles of fairness, equity, diversity, and inclusion.
 - Provide a range of materials and resources that explore diversity and reflect the families in the service and the wider community e.g., books, dolls, dress ups, posters, puzzles, musical instruments, art materials and dramatic play props.
- Provides opportunities for children to develop positive relationships with each other.
- Encourage all children to express a wide range of feelings, including empathy for others.

Following the code of conduct OVFC Educators, staff, volunteers, and students all promote an environment that is inclusive by:

- Ensuring a welcome and supportive environment is provided and is promoting positive interactions.
- All children, families, Educators, staff, students, and volunteers are treated with respect, including listening to, and valuing different ideas and options.
- Relationships developed are positive, based on mutual trust, equity, and fairness.
- Creating an environment that is free from bullying, harassment, and discrimination.
- Ensuring all children’s cultural practices, beliefs, needs, and individual abilities are respected.
- Encourage parents to provide the service with as much information as possible regarding their child/ren.

The Coordination Unit Staff and Educators will always strive to build strong relationships with families by:

- The service acknowledges that parents/guardians are the primary influence on children’s learning and development and seek to work in partnership to meet the needs of each child.
- Educators and the service develop collaborative relationships with families by:
 - Providing a welcoming and inclusive environment that encourages family involvement and participation in the educational program.
 - Engaging in open and shared decision making with parents/guardians about their child.
 - Actively seeking to work in partnership with parents/guardians to enhance children’s learning, development, and behaviour outcomes.
 - Maintaining regular contact with parents/guardians in relation to their child's learning and development. The service promotes partnerships with families by:
 - Engaging in open, honest, and respectful conversations with parents/guardians.
 - Showing sensitivity to individual family needs, values, and culture.
 - Learning about and respecting the histories, cultures, languages, traditions, child rearing practices and lifestyle choices of families.
 - Educators value children’s different capacities and abilities and respect differences in families’ home lives.
 - 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 and families, including (but not limited to):
 - Inclusion Support Services
 - Early Intervention Services
 - Family Support Services
 - Disability Services
 - Language Services
 - Ensuring confidentiality is always maintained as per the Confidentiality & Privacy Policy

The coordination unit can offer support to vulnerable families and children within the service. Where it is identified that a child and/or family is experiencing vulnerability, the service will:

- Consider suitability for Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS)
- Meet with the parent/guardian to determine:
 - The vulnerability or vulnerabilities faced by the family.
 - If there are any risk issues e.g., court orders, children with disabilities requiring additional equipment to access the service safely etc.
 - The level and type of support already being accessed (where applicable).
 - The level and type of support required and/or planned/requested.
 - If additional orientation processes are required
 - If there are any agencies or support organisations that can provide assistance
 - Written parent/guardian permission must be sought prior to any outside agencies being contacted.
 - If the child/family is eligible for any funding that could facilitate the child's inclusion at the service
 - If Educators require any additional training prior to the child commencing/continuing at the service.
 - If any additional equipment, materials, or resources are required to facilitate inclusion of the child.
- The Coordination unit must ensure:
 - Staff and Educators are aware of the child's individual circumstances, needs and support processes currently in place and planned for the child.
 - The educational program is appropriate for the child's individual needs, in consultation with staff and the Educator.
 - The child's inclusion plan (if relevant) is reviewed regularly.
 - The Educator and staff work collaboratively with the child, parents/guardians, applicable agencies, and support organisations (including contributing to any Inclusion Support Plans or other management plans) to facilitate the inclusion of the child and/or positive outcomes for the child and family.

REFERENCES:

- [Education and Care Services National Regulations, \(updated version July 1, 2023\) – Regulation 168](#)
- [Early Years Learning Framework V2.0 – Belonging, Being Becoming.](#)

RELATED POLICIES & PROCEDURES/ WORK INSTRUCTIONS:

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- SCCH Client Empowerment policy and Procedure

VERSION CONTROL AND LEGISLATION:

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