

POLICY NO 40: CODE OF CONDUCT

Key Policy Contact Person: Manager, Our Village Family Childcare

POLICY STATEMENT:

Sunbury and Cobaw Community Health is the approved provider of Our Village Family Childcare (OVFC) and is committed to ensuring that residents within the catchment area have access to high-quality, culturally sensitive, efficient, and effective community-based services in a timely manner.

OVFC is dedicated to maintaining an inclusive and welcoming environment and workplace that supports and motivates personal growth and professional development for all staff and educators.

The values that underpin our work ethic include:

- **Equity**
- **Respect**
- **Integrity**
- **Positivity**
- **Trust**
- **Diligence**
- **Wisdom**
- **Responsibility**

We are committed to upholding the Early Childhood Australia (ECA) Code of Ethics (2016), which is grounded in the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1991).

This framework guides our ethical responsibilities as early childhood professionals.

CRITICAL INFORMATION:

All educators and OVFC staff are expected to:

- Commit to the service philosophy and values, including best practices in early childhood education and the development of respectful partnerships with children, families, and stakeholders.
- Adhere to key policies, including:
 - Policy No. 7 – *Child Safe Environment & Child Protection*
 - Policy No. 55 – *Child Safety and Wellbeing*
 - *Child Safe Code of Conduct*
- Recognise that child safety is everyone's responsibility, and actively promote the safety, health, and wellbeing of all children, educators, staff, volunteers, and students.
- Maintain respectful, open, and reciprocal communication with children, families, colleagues, and management.
- Treat all individuals with respect, ensuring that bullying, verbal or non-verbal aggression, abusive or threatening language, and intimidation are not tolerated under any circumstances.
- Support an inclusive and equal opportunity workplace, valuing the knowledge, experience, and professionalism of all individuals, including children and families.
- Respect the privacy of children and families, keeping all information confidential and only sharing it when necessary to promote child wellbeing or safety, or to manage risks such as family violence.

- This must be done in accordance with:
 - The Education and Care Services National Regulations and Law
 - OVFC policies and procedures
 - The *Privacy Act 1988*

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PURPOSE:

OVFC and SCCH are committed to strengthening the social fabric of our communities through inclusive programs that empower individuals to support themselves and one another.

We strive to foster a shared understanding of workplace standards and ethical expectations for all staff, educators, students, and volunteers. Our goal is to cultivate respectful and positive working relationships across all levels of the organisation, promoting dignity and mutual respect by actively preventing behaviours that may be perceived as harassment, bullying, or intimidation.

All educators, staff, students, volunteers, and management are expected to conduct themselves ethically and professionally at all times, ensuring that interactions are respectful, constructive, and aligned with the service's philosophy.

Our service makes every reasonable effort to accommodate the diverse needs of all children, in alignment with the Child Safe Standards. We are deeply committed to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people, recognising our responsibility to provide a safe, inclusive, and supportive environment that upholds and nurtures their rights.

We are dedicated to promoting cultural safety for all children in our care.

The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to ensure that all Educators, Staff, Volunteers, and Students:

- Have clear guidelines regarding breaches of the Code of Conduct.
- Are provided with a framework of professional behaviour to consistently uphold when caring for and educating children.

OUTCOME:

The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to clearly define the standards of behaviour expected of all Educators, Staff, Volunteers, and Students OVFC and SCCH). These standards are designed to reflect the values of the organisation and must be demonstrated through professional conduct in all work-related and associated activities.

SCOPE/RESPONSIBILITIES:

This document is applicable to all Educators, Staff, Volunteers, and Students of Our Village Family Childcare Service.

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:

Stakeholders	Stakeholders in early childhood education include parents, children, child caregivers, board members, administrators, social service providers, volunteers, students, educators, and teachers.
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PROCEDURES:

At Our Village Family Childcare (OVFC), all nominated supervisors, educators, staff, volunteers, and students are expected to uphold the highest standards of professional conduct. This includes adhering to:

- The Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics
- The Education and Care Services National Regulations and Law
- The National Quality Standards
- All OVFC service policies and procedures

These standards guide our commitment to fostering positive interactions within the service and the broader community.

Respect for People and the Service

All educators and OVFC staff are expected to:

- Commit to the service philosophy and values, including best practices in early childhood education and the development of respectful partnerships with children, families, and stakeholders.

Adhere to key policies, including:

- Policy No. 7 – *Child Safe Environment & Child Protection*
- Policy No. 55 – *Child Safety and Wellbeing*
- *Policy 56 – Safe Use of Digital Technologies and Online Environments*
- *Child Safe Code of Conduct*
- Recognise that child safety is everyone’s responsibility, and actively promote the safety, health, and wellbeing of all children, educators, staff, volunteers, and students.
- Maintain respectful, open, and reciprocal communication with children, families, colleagues, and management.
- Treat all individuals with respect, ensuring that bullying, verbal or non-verbal aggression, abusive or threatening language, and intimidation are not tolerated under any circumstances.
- Support an inclusive and equal opportunity workplace, valuing the knowledge, experience, and professionalism of all individuals, including children and families.
- Respect the privacy of children and families, keeping all information confidential and only sharing it when necessary to promote child wellbeing or safety, or to manage risks such as family violence. This must be done in accordance with:
 - The Education and Care Services National Regulations and Law
 - OVFC policies and procedures
 - The *Privacy Act 1988*

The OVFC Code of Conduct enables us to:

- Establish clear standards of behaviour for interactions with:
 - Children in care
 - Educators and staff
 - Families
 - Visitors
 - Community organisations and individuals
- Safeguard all individuals within the service, including children, educators, students, and volunteers, by reducing opportunities for discrimination, bullying, or harm.
- Apply to all members of the OVFC community, including educators, staff, volunteers, and students.
- Form part of the induction process for all new educators, staff, students, and volunteers.

As part of the Engagement and Registration of Educators, the Coordination Unit Staff Policy and Procedure, and the Staff Participation of Volunteers and Students Policy and Procedure, all educators, staff, students, and volunteers are required to adhere to the Our Village Family Childcare Code of Conduct.

This commitment applies whenever individuals are:

- **Caring for and educating children, and**
- **Representing Our Village Family Childcare within the community**

Adherence to the Code of Conduct will be demonstrated through:

Professional Conduct

- Carry out their duties proficiently, harmoniously, and effectively.
- Act in a professional and respectful manner at all times.
- Give full attention to their responsibilities and adhere to:
 - SCCH policies and procedures
 - Child Safe Standards
 - Education and Care Services National Regulations and Law
 - National Quality Standards
- They must:
 - Act honestly and attentively in all service operations.
- Follow lawful directions while retaining the right to question any direction they believe to be unethical.
- Seek guidance from the Nominated Supervisor, Approved Provider, or Ombudsman when uncertain.

Commitment to Child Safety

- Uphold the rights of children and prioritise their needs.
- Treat all children and young people with respect.
- Promote their wellbeing and safety, taking all reasonable steps to protect them from abuse.
- Provide adequate supervision at all times.
- Understand and fulfil their legislative responsibilities as mandatory reporters:
 - Report any allegations of child abuse, neglect, or risk of harm to management or Child Protection.
 - Report any inappropriate actions by other employees involving children or young people under the Reportable Conduct Scheme.

Workplace Expectations

- Participate in all mandatory training.
- Maintain a solid understanding of SCCH policies, procedures, and the Early Childhood Australia (ECA) Code of Ethics.
- Seek clarification from the Nominated Supervisor or Approved Provider when unsure about any policy or procedure.
- Be courteous and responsive in interactions with colleagues, students, visitors, children, and families.
- Work collaboratively and value diversity.
- Be mindful of their duty of care towards themselves and others.
- Serve as positive role models for children.
- Respect the confidentiality of all information related to children and families.
- Engage in critical reflection to inform decision-making and support continuous improvement.

Ethical Responsibilities

- Read and understand the Code of Conduct prior to commencing care or education responsibilities.
- Sign the Code of Conduct Acknowledgement.
- Be truthful, fair, and consistent in dealings with the community, families, and colleagues.
- Demonstrate positivity and enthusiasm in their work.

- Model appropriate behaviours at all times.
- Respect confidentiality in all interactions.
- Acknowledge and support the diverse contributions of colleagues and educators.
- Be innovative and open to change based on evidence and shared decisions.
- Ensure a child-safe organisation by creating safe and healthy physical and psychological working conditions.
- Provide responsive, effective, and efficient service to the community.

Use of Resource and Compliance

- Use resources appropriately and ethically.
- Avoid improper use of inside information.
- Refrain from using their position to gain personal or external advantage.
- Comply with all relevant regulations, policies, procedures, and legislative requirements.
- Disclose and take reasonable steps to avoid any real or perceived conflict of interest.
- Comply with the terms and conditions outlined in their position descriptions or Educator Agreements.
- Observe safe work practices to protect themselves and others.

Prohibited Conduct

Individuals must not engage in any behaviour that compromises the safety, wellbeing, or dignity of children.

This includes, but is not limited to:

- Participating in or condoning any form of illegal, unsafe, or abusive behaviour towards children, including physical, sexual, psychological abuse, ill-treatment, neglect, or grooming.
- Minimising, exaggerating, or trivialising issues related to child abuse.
- Failing to report known or suspected abuse of a child to the Approved Provider or relevant authority.
- Engaging in unwarranted or inappropriate physical contact with a child.
- Persistently criticising, belittling, or verbally assaulting a child.
- Creating a climate of fear or intimidation.
- Encouraging private or secretive communication with a child.
- Sharing personal or inappropriate sexual experiences with a child.
- Using sexual language, gestures, or innuendo in the presence of children.
- Discriminating against any child based on culture, race, ethnicity, ability, or other personal characteristics.
- Placing children at risk by:
 - Withholding food, play, or comfort.
 - Making threats or using coercive behaviour.
 - Exposing children to inappropriate language, media, or materials (e.g., movies, internet content, photographs).

Expectations of Leaders and Management

In addition to the responsibilities outlined for all staff, students, educators and volunteers, management at OVFC and SCCH are expected to:

- Foster a collaborative and inclusive workplace culture that encourages continuous improvement and

values the contributions of all team members.

- Demonstrate leadership by actively supporting and providing opportunities for professional growth and development.
- Offer flexible arrangements to enable participation in meetings and professional learning opportunities.
- Provide consistent support and constructive feedback.
- Communicate essential information clearly and promptly, ensuring all relevant documents are easily accessible.
- Ensure that copies of the Early Childhood Australia (ECA) Code of Ethics are accessible for all stakeholders
- Model professional and ethical behaviour at all times while representing the Service.
- Establish and maintain effective communication systems, consulting with staff, students, educators and volunteers on decisions that affect their work and the Service.
- Take appropriate and timely action in response to any breach of the Code of Conduct.
- Share knowledge and expertise to build team capacity and confidence.
- Provide encouragement and respectful feedback, recognising and valuing diverse professional approaches and perspectives.

Reporting Breaches of the Code of Conduct

- Intervene immediately if a child is at risk of harm or abuse, especially when witnessing a breach of the Code of Conduct by another Educator, Staff member, Student, or Volunteer.
- Report any serious criminal behaviour committed by another individual to:
 - A member of the Coordination Unit
 - Our Village Family Day Care Manager
 - Head of Services (SCCH Child Safety Officer)
 - Chief of Operations
- Report any suspected risk of harm to a child or young person, in accordance with mandatory reporting obligations, to the same contacts listed above.
- Report any breach of the Code of Conduct to the Coordination Unit, Our Village Family Day Care Manager, Head of Services (SCCH Child Safety Officer), or Chief of Operations.

Legal and Ethical Responsibilities

- All individuals are legally required to hold a valid and current Working with Children Check (WWCC), which must be verified by the employer.
- Individuals must report any serious criminal behaviour by another employee to management, in accordance with the Reportable Conduct Scheme.
- As mandatory reporters, individuals must report:
 - Any possible risk of harm to children or young people to management and/or Child Protection.
 - Any inappropriate actions by another employee involving children or young people to management, as required under the Reportable Conduct Scheme.
- Management is responsible for reporting any allegations or child-related misconduct in accordance with legislative requirements. This may include notifying:

- Victoria Police
- The Orange Door
- Other relevant authorities

Any breach relating to suspected abuse will be managed in accordance with the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and Procedure. The Coordination Unit and Head of Services (Child Safety Officer) will support the Educator in making a report to the appropriate authorities.

Managing Breaches of the Code of Conduct

Serious Breaches

- Serious breaches will be assessed by the Coordination Unit in conjunction with the Educator Agreement Termination or Suspension Policy and Procedure.

Minor Breaches

Minor breaches will be:

- Assessed by the Coordinator and reported directly to the Our Village Family Day Care Manager.
- Documented in the individual's file (Educator, Staff, Student, or Volunteer).
- Managed with the following steps by the Coordination Unit:
 - Ensure the individual is supported and that strategies are discussed and implemented to prevent further breaches. This may include identifying and offering additional training opportunities.
 - Schedule and conduct follow-up meetings to review the original breach, evaluate the effectiveness of implemented strategies, and determine if further support is needed.
 - Clearly communicate the importance of compliance with the Code of Conduct and the consequences of any future breaches.
 - Any Breach of the Code of Conduct needs to be reported to a member of the Coordination Unit, Our Village Family Childcare Manager, Head of Services (SCCH Child Safety Officer), or Chief of operations.
- When managing a breach relating to suspected abuse it will be done so alongside the *Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and Procedure*. The Coordination Unit and Head of Service (Child Safety Officer) will support an Educator to make a report to the relevant authorities.

Reporting Minor Breaches of the Code of Conduct

Any minor breaches will be:

- Assessed by the Coordinator and reported directly to OVFC Manager
- Documented in the individual file of the Educator, staff, student, or volunteer.
- The coordination unit must ensure:
 - The individual has been supported, and strategies have been discussed and put into place to avoid further breaches of the Code of Conduct. For example:
 - Additional training options for the individual have been investigated.
 - Follow-up meetings with the individual have been scheduled and completed about the original breach to discuss strategies that have been put into place as well as any other additional support that may be required.
 - It has been discussed, and the individual understands the importance and the

consequences of any further breach of the Code of Conduct

Managing Conflict, Confidentiality, and Record Keeping in the Workplace

Workplace conflict is managed in accordance with:

- Policy 18 – Complaints, Grievances and Feedback
- Policy 08 – Governance and Management of FDC Service, which includes confidentiality and record retention

These policies ensure that all conflict resolution processes uphold confidentiality and proper record retention.

Management Responsibilities

Management will:

- Remain objective and impartial when addressing conflict.
- Respond promptly to any breach of the Code of Conduct.
- Conduct fair and transparent investigations, with outcomes ranging from remedial action to dismissal.
- Ensure all decisions are lawful, aligned with Service policies, and free from conflicts of interest.
- Maintain accurate records of conflict resolution processes, stored securely and retained in line with policy requirements.

Staff and Educator Responsibilities

All staff and educators must:

- Protect confidential information and prevent unauthorised access.
- Only disclose information with appropriate approval or legal authorisation.
- Adhere to the Privacy and Confidentiality Policy.
- Ensure that any documentation related to conflict or complaints is handled in accordance with the Service's record keeping procedures.

Duty of Care

Both management and all staff and educators share the responsibility to ensure a safe and healthy work environment for themselves and others. This includes meeting the requirements outlined in the Policy No 28 Occupational Health and Safety.

Duty of care applies to both the physical safety and mental wellbeing of everyone in the workplace.

Staff, educators, and management must:

- Provide constant and appropriate supervision of children.
- Take all reasonable steps to protect children and young people from foreseeable risks or harm.
- Ensure the health, safety, and welfare of children in their care is always a top priority.

Appropriate use of electronic communication, social networking as well as the safe use of digital technologies and online environments

Social Media

Our Service recognises the importance of maintaining professional boundaries and upholding the integrity of our work with children and families. The following guidelines apply to all educators and staff:

Printed on 4 July 2024 - this document is uncontrolled and may not be current.

<https://sunburychc.sharepoint.com/sites/QualitySafetyandCompliance-KOD/VersionControl/Shared Documents/UNIT/Ops/OVFD/Policy No 40 - Code of Conduct.docx>

- Educators and staff who maintain personal social media accounts (e.g., Facebook, Instagram) must not post any negative comments relating to the Service, children, colleagues, or families.
- The Service discourages educators and staff from adding families as 'friends' on social media platforms. Even on personal accounts, educators and staff are viewed as representatives of the Service and are expected to uphold the Service's Code of Conduct in all online interactions.
- Families are informed through our Social Media Policy that educators and staff may choose not to connect on social media due to their professional philosophy. The Service supports this boundary and does not recommend personal connections between educators/staff and families online.
- As a Child Safe Organisation, the Service is committed to protecting children and educators from harm when engaging with digital technologies, including social media.
- Strict guidelines for the use of social media are outlined in Policy No. 42 – Social Media and must be adhered to at all times.

Active Supervision

In line with Policy No 52 Active Supervision Educators and staff have a duty of care to ensure children are protected from potential risk of harm. This includes:

- Providing children with full attention at all times.
- Ensuring supervision is active, engaged, and continuous, particularly when children are using digital devices or engaging in online activities.
- Avoiding distractions, including the use of personal mobile phones or social media during work hours, unless explicitly required for work-related purposes.

Safe Use of Digital Technologies

In line with Policy 56 Safe Use of Digital Technologies and Online Environments OVFC adheres to the National Model Code Parts 1 and 4 and relevant guidelines regarding the use of images and videos of children. To protect the privacy and safety of children in care, OVFC will ensure that along with staff and educators all visitors, volunteers, and family members are informed that the use of personal electronic devices to take photos, record audio, or capture video is prohibited. This is done by:

- Ensuring appropriate signage.
- Notifications as well as declaration within the visitors log regarding the safe use of digital technology.
- The use of service issued devices only used by educators and the coordination unit when taking photos, record audio, or to capture video.

This restriction applies to all personal devices, including but not limited to mobile phones, tablets, digital cameras, smartwatches, META sunglasses, and any form of personal storage or file transfer media such as SD cards, USB drives, external hard drives, and cloud-based storage platforms.

All service issued devices are formally registered with OVFC that contains the following information:

- Identifiable information specific to the device (i.e. a serial number)
- Confirmation the educator has signed an agreement on use of personal and service issued devices.
- The device meets standardise security standards.
- The service retains the right to audit the device as needed.

Educators may use their personal electronic devices for approved operational purposes, including signing children in and out of care via the Harmony OVFC third-party software, communicating with families through calls or written messages, and responding to emergency situations.

Serious Breaches of the Code of Conduct

Any serious breaches of the Code of Conduct will be assessed by the Coordination Unit in conjunction with the Policy No 39 Educator Agreement Termination or Suspension Policy and Procedure.

The practices underpinned by these values are detailed in, but not limited to, the following documents:

- Educator Agreement
- Child Safe Code of Conduct
- Staff Position Descriptions
- Educator Position Description
- Service Policies and Procedures
- Dealing with Complaints Policy
- Child Protection Protocol
- Reportable Conduct Scheme
- Child Safe Standards
- Orientation Training for new Educators
- Educator and Staff Ongoing Professional Development
- Education and Care Services National Quality Standards, (updated version July 1, 2023)
- SCCH Client Empowerment Policy and Procedure
- SCCH Code of Conduct
- The Code of Ethics as developed by the Australian Early Childhood Association (see Appendices)

APPENDICES:

- Early Childhood Australia – Code of Conduct 2016
- SCCH Code of Conduct Policy and Procedure

REFERENCES:

- [Education and Care Services National Regulations, \(current version Septmber 1, 2025\)\), Part 2.2 Service approvals, Regulation 29, Regulation 168](#)
- [Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics](#)

RELATED POLICIES & PROCEDURES/ WORK INSTRUCTIONS:

- Interactions with Children & Guiding Children's Behaviour – 19
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- Governance and Management of FDC Service Including Confidentiality and Retention of Records - 8
- Dealing with Complaints, Grievances and Feedback – 18

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- (SCH Legacy) Child Abuse Protection & Reporting Work Instruction
- SCCH Client Empowerment Policy and Procedure
- SCCH Code of Conduct Policy and Procedure
- Monitoring, Support and Supervision of Family Day Care Educators Work Instruction
- Our Village Family Childcare Playgroups Work Instruction

VERSION CONTROL AND LEGISLATION:

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