



DAME NELLIE MELBA  
KINDERGARTEN  
EST 1915

# Interactions with Children Policy

Mandatory– Quality Area 5



## PURPOSE

This policy provides a clear set of guidelines to ensure:

- the development of responsive, warm, trusting and respectful relationships with children that promote their wellbeing, self-esteem, sense of security and belonging at DNМК
- each child at DNМК is supported to learn and develop in a secure and empowering environment.

## POLICY STATEMENT

### VALUES

DNМК is committed to:

- maintaining the dignity, agency and rights of each child at the service
- promoting fairness, respect and equity
- encouraging children to express themselves and their opinions, and to undertake experiences that develop self-reliance and self-esteem
- considering the health, safety and wellbeing of each child, and providing a safe, secure and welcoming environment in which they can develop and learn
- maintaining a duty of care (*refer to Definitions*) towards all children at DNМК
- considering the diversity of individual children at the service, including family and cultural values, age, gender, and the physical and intellectual development and abilities of each child
- building collaborative relationships with families to improve learning and development outcomes for children
- encouraging positive, respectful and warm relationships between children, families and educators/staff at the service.

### SCOPE

This policy applies to the approved provider, persons with management or control, nominated supervisor, persons in day-to-day charge, early childhood teachers, educators, staff, students, volunteers, parents/guardians, children, and others attending the programs and activities of DNМК, including during offsite excursions and activities.

RESPONSIBILITIES	Approved provider and persons with management or control	Nominated supervisor and persons in day-to-day charge	Early childhood teacher, educators and all other staff	Parents/guardians	Contractors, volunteers and students
<b>R</b> indicates legislation requirement, and should not be deleted					
Developing and implementing the <i>Interactions with Children Policy</i> in consultation with stakeholders, and ensuring that it reflects the philosophy, beliefs and values of the service	<b>R</b>	√	√	√	√

Ensuring all stakeholders are provided with a copy of the <i>Interactions with Children Policy</i> and comply with its requirements	R	√	√	√	√
Ensuring all staff are aware of the service's expectations regarding positive, respectful and appropriate behaviour, and acceptable responses and warm, trusting and reciprocal interactions when working with children and families ( <i>refer to Code of Conduct Policy</i> )	R	√			
Ensuring children are adequately supervised ( <i>refer to Definitions</i> ) and that educator-to-child ratios are maintained at all times ( <i>refer to Supervision of Children Policy</i> )	R	√	√		√
Ensuring the environment at the service is safe, secure, free from any hazards ( <i>National Law: Section 167</i> ) ( <i>refer to Child Safe Environment Policy, Occupational Health and Safety Policy and Supervision of Children Policy</i> ) and promotes the active participation of every child	R	R	√		√
Ensuring the size and composition of groups is considered to ensure all children are provided with the best opportunities for quality interactions and relationships with each other and with adults at the service ( <i>Regulation 156(2)</i> ). Smaller group sizes are considered optimal, to promote intentional teaching strategies and responsive engagement opportunities.	R	√	√		√
Developing and implementing educational programs that are delivered in accordance with an approved learning framework ( <i>refer to Definitions</i> ), are based on the developmental needs, interests and experiences of each child, and take into account the individual differences and strengths of each child ( <i>refer to Inclusion and Equity Policy</i> )	R	R	√		√
Ensuring the educational program contributes to the development of children to have a strong sense of wellbeing and identity, and to be connected, confident, involved and effective learners and communicators ( <i>Regulation 73</i> ) ( <i>refer to Curriculum Development Policy</i> )	R	√	√		√
Ensuring that the service provides education and care to children in a way that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>encourages children to express themselves and their opinions</li> <li>allows children to undertake experiences that develop self-reliance and self-esteem</li> <li>maintains the dignity and the rights of each child at all times</li> <li>offers positive guidance and encouragement towards acceptable behaviour</li> <li>has regard to the cultural and family values, age, and the physical and intellectual development and abilities of each child being educated and cared for (<i>Regulation 155</i>)</li> </ul>	R	√	√		√
Ensure that DNМК provides children with opportunities to interact and develop positive relationships with each other, and with the staff and volunteers at the service ( <i>Regulation 156(1)</i> )	R	√	√		√

Recognising the importance of friendships and encourage support from peers, to help children and young people feel safe and be connected	√	√	√		√
Ensuring clear documentation of the assessment and evaluation of each child's: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>developmental needs, interests, experiences and program participation</li> <li>progress against the outcomes of the educational program (<i>Regulation 74</i>) (<i>refer to Curriculum Development Policy</i>)</li> </ul>	R	√	√		√
Ensuring that procedures are in place for effective daily communication with parents/guardians to share information about children's learning, development, interactions, behaviour and relationships	R	√	√		√
Supporting ECT/educators/staff to access resources and gain appropriate training, knowledge and skills for the implementation of this policy, including promoting social, emotional and mental health and wellbeing	√	√			
Ensuring that staff members at DNМК who work with children are aware that it is an offence to subject a child to any form of corporal punishment, or any discipline that is unreasonable or excessive in the circumstances ( <i>National Law: Section 166</i> )	R	R	R	√	√
Promoting collaborative relationships between children/families and program support groups (if required) ( <i>refer to Definitions</i> ), to improve the quality of children's education and care experiences	√	√	√	√	√
Ensuring notifications of serious incidents ( <i>refer to Definitions</i> ) are made to the regulatory authority (DET) ( <i>refer to Definition</i> ) through the NQA IT System ( <i>refer to Definitions</i> ) as soon as is practicable but not later than 24 hours after the occurrence ( <i>National Law: Section 174(2)(a), Regulations 176 (2)(a)</i> )	R	√			
Notifying DET within 24 hours of becoming aware of a notifiable complaint ( <i>refer to Definitions</i> ) or allegation regarding the safety, health and/or welfare of a child at the service ( <i>National Law: Section 174(2)(b), Regulations 176 (2)(a)</i> )	R	√			
Ensuring that where the service has been notified of a court order prohibiting an adult from contacting an enrolled child, such contact does not occur while the child is on the service premises	R	R	√		√
Ensuring all staff, volunteers and contractors use positive and respectful strategies to assist children to manage their own behaviour, and to respond appropriately to conflict and the behaviour of others	R	√	√		√
Developing links with and referral pathways to services and/or program support groups ( <i>refer to Definitions</i> ) to support children experiencing social, emotional and behavioural difficulties and their families		√	√		√
Ensuring that there is a behaviour support plan ( <i>refer to Definitions</i> ) developed for a child if educators are concerned that the child's behaviour may put the child themselves, other children, educators/staff and/or others at risk		√	√	√	

Ensuring that parents/guardians and program support groups ( <i>refer to Definitions</i> ) (as appropriate) are consulted if an individual behaviour support plan has not helped the child progress		√	√	√	
Working collaboratively with educators/staff and program support groups ( <i>refer to Definitions</i> ) to develop or review an individual behaviour support plan for their child, where appropriate.		√	√	√	√
Setting clear timelines for review and evaluation of the behaviour support plan.		√	√		
Providing information, ideas and practical strategies to families, educators and staff on a regular basis to promote and support health and wellbeing in the service and at home		√	√		
Consulting with, and seeking advice from, DET if a suitable and mutually agreeable behaviour support plan cannot be developed	R	√	√		
Investigating the availability of extra assistance, such as Kindergarten Inclusion Support ( <i>refer to Definitions</i> ) or training, by contacting the regional Preschool Field Officer ( <i>refer to Definitions</i> ), specialist children’s services officers from DET or other agencies working with the child	R	√	√		
Ensuring that additional resources are sourced, if required, to implement a behaviour support plan	R	√			
Ensuring that educators/staff at the service are provided with appropriate training to guide the actions and their responses to a child/children with challenging behaviour.	√	√			
Informing educators/staff of concerns, events or incidents that may impact on their child’s behaviour at the service (e.g. moving house, relationship issues, a new sibling)				√	
Maintaining confidentiality ( <i>refer to Privacy and Confidentiality Policy</i> )	R	√	√	√	√

## BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATION

### BACKGROUND

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child is founded on respect for the dignity and worth of each individual, regardless of race, colour, gender, language, religion, opinions, wealth, birth status or ability. When children experience nurturing and respectful reciprocal relationships with educators, they develop an understanding of themselves as competent, capable and respected. Relationships are the foundation for the construction of identity, and help shape children’s thinking about who they are, how they belong and what influences them [Early Years Learning Framework, p. 20; Framework for School Age Care, p. 19]

‘Constructive everyday interactions and shared learning opportunities form the basis of equitable, respectful and reciprocal relationships between educators and children. Educators who are actively engaged in children’s learning and share decision-making with them, use their everyday interactions during play, routines and ongoing projects to stimulate children’s thinking and to enrich their learning. These relationships provide a solid foundation from which to guide and support children as they develop the self-confidence and skills to

manage their own behaviour, make decisions and relate positively and effectively to others.’ (*Guide to National Quality Framework – refer to Sources*)

*Child Safe Standard 3* requires services to have strategies to empower children about their rights, ensure children can participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously. When children feel respected and valued, they are much more likely to speak up about issues of safety and wellbeing. Enabling and promoting empowerment and the participation of children within a service has multiple benefits in addition to enhancing the safety of children, including demonstrating a commitment to upholding the rights of children, checking that what the service is doing is what children want and building the communication and leadership skills of children.

In developing an *Interactions with Children Policy*, early childhood education and care services must review and reflect on the philosophy, beliefs and values of the service, particularly with regard to the relationships with children. The development of this policy should also be informed by the service’s *Code of Conduct Policy*.

## LEGISLATION AND STANDARDS

Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

- Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic)
- Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)
- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)
- Child Wellbeing and Safety Amendment (Child Safe Standards) Act 2015 (Vic)
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)
- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
- Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)
- National Quality Standard, Quality Area 5: Relationships with Children

The most current amendments to listed legislation can be found at:

- Victorian Legislation – Victorian Law Today: [www.legislation.vic.gov.au](http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au)
- Commonwealth Legislation – Federal Register of Legislation: [www.legislation.gov.au](http://www.legislation.gov.au)

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## DEFINITIONS

The terms defined in this section relate specifically to this policy. For regularly used terms e.g. Approved provider, Nominated supervisor, Notifiable complaints, Serious incidents, Duty of care, etc. refer to the Definitions Attachment.

**Adequate supervision:** entails all children (individuals and groups) in all areas of the service, being in sight and/or hearing of an educator at all times including during toileting, sleep, rest and transition routines. Services are required to comply with the legislative requirements for educator-to-child ratios at all times. Supervision contributes to protecting children from hazards that may emerge in play, including hazards created by the equipment used.

Adequate supervision refers to constant, active and diligent supervision of every child at the service. Adequate supervision requires that educators are always in a position to observe each child, respond to individual needs and immediately intervene if necessary. Variables affecting supervision levels include:

- number, age and abilities of children
- number and positioning of educators
- current activity of each child
- areas in which the children are engaged in an activity (visibility and accessibility)

- developmental profile of each child and of the group of children
- experience, knowledge and skill of each educator
- need for educators to move between areas (effective communication strategies).

**Behaviour support:** a means of assisting children in a positive and effective ways to help children gain understanding and learn skills that will help them learn to manage their own behaviour.

**Behaviour support plan:** A plan that documents strategies to assist an educator in guiding a child with diagnosed behavioural difficulties or challenging behaviours to self-manage their behaviour. The plan is developed in consultation with the nominated supervisor, early childhood teachers, educators, parents/guardians and families, and other professional support agencies as applicable.

**Challenging behaviour:** behaviour that can be described as:

- infringes on the rights of others
- disrupts others or causes disputes between children
- causes harm or risk to the child, other children, adults or living things
- is destructive to the environment and/or equipment
- inhibits the child's learning and relationship with others
- a child presenting as shy, withdrawn or excessively passive in a way which is inhibiting their learning and/or development
- is inappropriate relative to the child's developmental age and background.

**Kindergarten Inclusion Support Program (KIS):** Supports funded kindergartens to plan and implement a program that is responsive to the individual abilities, interests and needs of children with a disability, developmental delay or complex medical needs. Long Day Care services can apply for the KIS program for their Victorian Government-funded kindergarten programs.

**Program Support Groups (PSG):** A program support group brings together key people to support the inclusion of children with disability or developmental delay, or complex medical needs, from the time of enrolment at kindergarten until they move to school. The group may include:

- the early childhood teacher
- the child's parent/carer(s)
- early childhood intervention professionals
- a preschool field officer
- medical practitioners, therapists or other allied health professionals
- a support person – if the child's parent/carer(s) chooses to use one.

**Mental health:** In early childhood, a child's mental health is understood as a child's ability to 'experience, regulate and express emotions; form close and secure interpersonal relationships; and explore the environment and learn – all in the context of family, community and cultural expectations for young children. Infant mental health is synonymous with healthy social and emotional development. <https://beyou.edu.au/>

**Preschool Field Officer (PSFO) Program:** The role of the PSFO Program to support the access and participation of children with additional needs in their kindergarten program. For more information visit: [www.education.vic.gov.au](http://www.education.vic.gov.au)

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## SOURCES AND RELATED POLICIES

### SOURCES

- Belonging, Being & Becoming – The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia: [www.acecqa.gov.au](http://www.acecqa.gov.au)
- Child Safe Standards: [www.cryp.vic.gov.au](http://www.cryp.vic.gov.au)
- Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics: [www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au](http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au)
- Guide to the National Quality Framework, ACECQA: [www.acecqa.gov.au](http://www.acecqa.gov.au)



- Inclusion Support Program: [www.dese.gov.au](http://www.dese.gov.au)
- Kids Matter, an Australian mental health and well-being initiative set in primary schools and early childhood education and care services: <https://beyou.edu.au>
- The Kindergarten Funding Guide (DET): [www.education.vic.gov.au](http://www.education.vic.gov.au)
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child: [www.unicef.org](http://www.unicef.org)
- Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework: [www.acecqa.gov.au](http://www.acecqa.gov.au)
- Victorian Inclusion Agency (VIA): [www.viac.com.au](http://www.viac.com.au)

#### RELATED POLICIES

- Child Safe Environment and Wellbeing
- Code of Conduct
- Compliments and Complaints
- Curriculum Development
- Inclusion and Equity
- Occupational Health and Safety
- Privacy and Confidentiality
- Supervision of Children

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#### 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
- notifying all stakeholders affected by this policy at least 14 days before making any significant changes to this policy or its procedures, unless a lesser period is necessary due to risk (*Regulation 172 (2)*).

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#### ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1: General Definitions.

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#### AUTHORISATION

This policy was adopted by the approved provider of DNМК on August 2023

**REVIEW DATE:** Aug 2026



## Attachment 3

### General Policy Definitions

**Approved Provider:** An individual or organisation that has completed an application and been approved by the Regulatory Authority as fit and proper (in accordance with Sections 12, 13 and 14 of the National Law) to operate one or more education and care services. Where the applicant is an organisation, each person with management and control (see definition below) of that organisation must complete a separate application form. (Note: Under the Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010, Section 5, Definitions: “**person with management or control**, in relation to an education and care service, means – (b) if the provider of the service is an eligible association, each member of the executive committee of the association who has the responsibility, alone or with others, for managing the delivery of the education and care service”.)

**Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA):** The national authority established to oversee the National Quality Framework and guide its implementation in a consistent way throughout Australia.

**Department of Education and Training (DET):** The Victorian State Government department with Primary responsibility for the approval, monitoring and quality assessment of services in Victoria in accordance with the national legislative framework and in relation to the *National Quality Standards*

**Early childhood teacher:** A person with an approved early childhood teaching qualification as listed on the ACECQA website [www.acecqa.gov.au](http://www.acecqa.gov.au)

**Educational Leader:** The Approved Provider of an education and care service must designate, in writing, a suitably qualified and experienced educator, coordinator or other individual to lead the development and implementation of education programs at the service (Regulation 118). This person must have a thorough understanding of the Early Years Learning Framework (or other approved learning framework), be able to guide other educators in their planning and reflection, and mentor colleagues in their implementation practices.

**Educator:** An individual who is qualified to provide education and care for children as part of an education and care service.

**Learning frameworks:** Under the National Quality Framework (NQF), education and care services are required to ensure that the program delivered to all children being cared for and educated by the service is based on and delivered in a manner that accords with an approved learning framework. In Victoria, the approved frameworks are:

- ☐ *Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF)*
- ☐ *Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF)*
- ☐ *My Time, Our Place: Framework for School Age Care in Australia.*

**National Law:** Refers to the *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010*: the national law regulating education and care services for children.

**National Quality Framework (NQF):** This framework for the early childhood education and care sector helps providers to improve the quality of services in areas that impact on a child’s development. The framework includes:

- ☐ a National Law – the Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010
- ☐ National Regulations – the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 (please check online to ensure the most current version is being used)
- ☐ the National Quality Standard
- ☐ an assessment and rating system
- ☐ a Regulatory Authority in each state and territory with primary responsibility for the approval, monitoring and quality assessment of services in their jurisdiction in accordance with the national legislative framework and in relation to the National Quality Standard
- ☐ the Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA). The national body responsible for providing oversight of the system and ensuring consistency of approach.

**National Quality Standard (NQS):** The NQS sets a National benchmark for the quality of children’s education and care services. The NQS is comprised of guiding principles, quality areas, standards and elements. There are seven quality areas which capture aspects critical to the provision of quality education and care.

**National Regulations:** Refers to the *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011*: the regulations or rules under which education and care services must operate. The regulations are the way in which the law is applied.

**Nominated Supervisor:** A person who has been nominated by the Approved Provider of the service under Part 3 of the Act and who has consented to that nomination in writing can be the Nominated Supervisor. All services must have a Nominated Supervisor with responsibility for the service in accordance with the National Regulations. The Approved Provider must take reasonable steps to ensure that the Nominated Supervisor is a fit and proper person (in accordance with Sections 12, 13 and 14 of the National Law), with suitable skills, qualifications and experience. The Regulatory Authority must be notified if the Nominated Supervisor for the service changes, or is no longer employed at the service.

**Person with management or control:** Means— (a) if the provider or intended provider of the service is a body corporate, an officer of the body corporate within the meaning of the Corporations Act 2001 of the Commonwealth who is responsible for managing the delivery of the education and care service; or (b) if the provider of the service is an eligible association, each member of the executive committee of the association who has the responsibility, alone or with others, for managing the delivery of the education and care service; or (c) if the provider of the service is a partnership, each partner who has the responsibility, alone or with others, for managing the delivery of the education and care service; or (d) in any other case, a person who has the responsibility, alone or with others, for managing the delivery of the education and care service (Note: Under the *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010*, Section 5).

**Person in day-to-day charge:** A person is in day-to-day charge if (a) the person is placed in day-to-day charge by the approved provider or a nominated supervisor of the education and care service after meeting the definition for a service supervisor certificate: and (b) the person consents to the placement in writing (Regulation 54)

**Policy:** A formal statement of principles which provides a framework for decision-making and indicates the course of action to be taken in specific circumstances. Policies provide services with an approved way of operating in relation to particular matters and improve the management of risk. They reflect the values and beliefs of a service, current thinking, national standards and community expectations, and are relevant in terms of current laws and regulations.

**Procedures:** The steps required to implement and comply with a policy. Procedures specify how to achieve the necessary result by outlining who does what and when. Procedures are succinct, factual and to the point, and are generally expressed as a list.

**Program:** The group/activity in which a child is enrolled and which has specific hours of attendance.

**Regulatory Authority:** see definition for the Department of Education and Training.

**Responsible Person:** The Approved Provider (if that person is an individual, and in any other case the person with management or control of the service operated by the Approved Provider) or a Nominated Supervisor or person who has been placed in day-to-day charge of the service in accordance with the National Regulations.

**Service Supervisor Certificates:** On 1st November 2016 the National Regulations were amended to expand the classes of people who may be covered by a prescribed class supervisor certificate.

The new prescribed classes are set out in regulation 238A, and include a person who is:

- ☐ *responsible for day to day management of the service, or*
- ☐ *exercising supervisory and leadership responsibilities for part of the service, or*
- ☐ *a family day care coordinator*

Certificates issued for people working in one of these roles are referred to as “*service supervisor certificates*”.

Service supervisor certificates will not be issued to a particular person. Instead they may apply to any person working at the service who has been identified by the approved provider as working in one of the above roles.

For example, if the service director is responsible for day to day management of the service, they can be covered under the service supervisor certificate. Similarly, a room leader who is responsible for supervising part of the service can also be covered by the service supervisor certificate.

With this new flexibility, most individuals do not need to apply to the regulatory authority for a supervisor certificate.

Under these arrangements, a person is covered under the service supervisor certificate and may be a nominated supervisor if:

- ☐ the approved provider identifies that they meet the definition for a service supervisor certificate and
- ☐ they give their written consent to be the nominated supervisor (required under sections 35, 44 and regulation 56).

Nominated supervisors have specific obligations under the National Law (See Nominated Supervisors above).

A person is covered and may be placed in day to day charge of the service if:

- ☐ the approved provider or the nominated supervisor identifies that they meet the definition for a service supervisor certificate and
- ☐ they give their written consent to be placed in day to day charge of the service (required under regulation 54).

These arrangements apply for centre based and family day care services, and make it easier for providers to meet the requirements to ensure that:

☐ for centre based services, either the approved provider, nominated supervisor or certified supervisor in day to day charge is present at the service at all times the service is educating and caring for children (section 162) and

☐ for family day care services, either the approved provider, nominated supervisor or a certified supervisor in day to day charge is available at all times to support family day care educators

**Staff:** Any individual (other than the Nominated Supervisor or a volunteer) employed, appointed or engaged to work in or as part of an education and care service.