

Early Years Services – QA4.3 Employment of Qualified Staff, and participation of Volunteers and Students

TRIM Reference: D15/15724

Due for Review: 30 July 2026

Responsible Officer: Coordinator Early Years

Purpose

This policy outlines Surf Coast Shire Council's Early Years Services commitment to meet required qualified staff/ratio regulations and to ensure we are supporting staff wellbeing and the further development and training of students while providing opportunities for volunteers.

Policy Principles

Evidence of link to National Quality Standards 2018: 4.1, 4.2, 7.1.3,

Evidence of link to Education and Care Services National Regulations: 118, 19-120, 121-124, 125-

128, 129-135, 136 / r145, r146, r147, r151, r152, r149-1, r168 (2) (h), (i), r299, r342, r343, r344

Victorian Children's Services Regulations 2020: r69

Scope

This policy applies to all Surf Coast Shire Council Early Years Services staff, students, and volunteers engaged with Surf Coast Shire Council Early Years Services

Policy

- We prioritise the health, safety and wellbeing of children. With quality practices for staffing arrangements, we ensure that our educators, staff, volunteers and students safeguard the children at all times.
- All children attending our service are provided with a safe environment through the creation and maintenance of a child safe culture, and this extends to the safe use of digital technologies and online environments.
- We have strict guidelines around the taking, use, storage and destruction of images and videos of children being educated and cared for by the service. Our educators, staff, volunteers and students are guided by a high level of professional standards – we provide position descriptions for our staff, as well as ongoing professional development.
- Early Childhood staff/educators will be employed in line with the requirements set out in the *Education and Care National Regulations 2011* under the Education and Care Services National Law or the *Victorian Children's Services Regulations 2020* (Occasional Care).
- All staff/educators will have the required educational qualifications as outlined in the *Education and Care National Regulations (2011)*.
- Required ratios of qualified staff/educators will be adhered to at all times when approved programs are operational.
- The Educational Leader will support Teachers and Educators:
 - for the development and implementation of the educational program.
 - to ensure clear teaching strategies, and processes are implemented in the curriculum.
 - to establish clear goals and expectations for teaching and learning reflect the National Quality Standards.
 - to promote children's learning and development to families.
- At each service a Nominated Supervisor will be determined by the Approved Provider and details of this person will be displayed in the entrance to the service. The Nominated Supervisor will be responsible for the day-to-day operations and the service.

- Where the Nominated Supervisor is not able to be responsible for the day-to-day operations of the service, a responsible person will be appointed. This person meets the criteria including, qualification, skills, work experience and knowledge in accordance with the National Regulations.

Up to date staff/educator's records will be kept at each service including:

- Staff/educators contact details
- Copies of approved qualifications and training completed
- Record of Working with Children Check sighted and checked each 6 months
- Victoria Institute of Teaching (VIT)
- Records in the form of staff hours? With days and times that each staff member/educator is working with the children.

Educators and Staff:

- must be aware of and follow the Employment of Qualified Staff and participation of volunteers and students policy
- must meet any jurisdictional requirements relating to education and care qualifications, first aid qualifications, and working with children clearance, such as a WWCC, or teacher registration details (jurisdiction dependent)
- must have undertaken current child protection legislation training, including for mandatory reporting requirements and obligations in their jurisdiction
- must not be affected by alcohol or drugs and must not consume these while at the service
- must not use vaping devices or vaping substances at the service
- must be aware of and follow the service's policy and procedures for the safe use of digital technologies and online environments, including the taking, use, storage and destruction of images and videos of children being educated and cared for by the service and obtaining authorisation from parents to do so must implement adequate health and hygiene practices and safe practices for handling, preparing and storing food
- should be familiar with ECA's Code of Ethics
- must be familiar with and adhere to the code of conduct
- ensure quality staffing practices are implemented in line with the National Quality Standard (especially Quality Area 4 – Staffing arrangements)

Volunteers

- Volunteers will need to complete a registration form and induction, which is available at each kindergarten service – and kept in the volunteer's folder at each service once completed.
- Volunteer names are recorded at each service in the Volunteers Folder.
- Volunteers must read the Volunteers Handbook and Watch the Child Safeguarding Video, which are both found on the Surf Coast Shires Website
- Must meet any jurisdictional requirements for working with children clearance, such as a WWCC, or teacher registration details
- Must implement adequate health and hygiene practices and safe practices for handling, preparing and storing food
- Must not be affected by alcohol or drugs and must not consume these while at the service
- Must not use vaping devices or vaping substances at the service
- Must not subject children to any form of corporal punishment or any discipline that is unreasonable.
- People that fail to meet the requirements set out in the Volunteer Handbook will not be able to volunteer at any of the kindergarten locations.
- Volunteers will not be included in staff ratios required to meet regulatory requirements.
- Volunteers must sign in and out of the visitor book when volunteering at the service.
- Volunteers are not to use their personal mobile phone or device whilst engaged with children in the Kindergarten or Occasional Care Educational Programs. Volunteers are not to take images or videos of children when volunteering in the Kindergarten or OCC educational programs

Working with Children Checks and Police Record Checks

- All Council employees and contractors are required to have a current Working with Children Check and undergo a Criminal History Check where required. If you are a teacher you will need to be registered with the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) and have a current VIT number, which includes a Criminal History Check.
- Victoria Police Officers and Australian Federal Police (AFP) are exempt from the Working with Children Check (HR 02), however if the officer is suspended or dismissed from Victoria Police or the AFP, they are no longer exempt and must apply for a check.
- All Students and volunteers including Parent Advisory Group members are required to have a current working with children check.
- If you are a teacher who is currently registered with the (VIT), you are exempt from the Working with Children Check.
- However, if the teacher's (VIT) registration is suspended or cancelled, the teacher is no longer exempt. The teacher must apply for the Check and within 7 days of the registration being suspended or cancelled, notify in writing every organisation that engages them in child-related work that they are no longer exempt.
- Parents that are engaged in an Early Years program are required to have a current Working with Children Check

Refer to: HR-02 Working with Children and Criminal History Check Policy

Student Placements – Tertiary

- Refer to Work Instructions D18/72021
- The student must be studying at a recognised educational institution/training organisation.
- The placement must directly contribute to their study.
- A written agreement between the educational institution/training organisation and Surf Coast Shire Council must be received before the commencement of the student.
- Students must come to the placement with insurance coverage provided by the educational institution/registered training organisation.
- Students are not to use their personal mobile phone or device while working with children
- Students are not to take images or videos of children while on placement at a SCSC service
- Surf Coast Shire Council does not pay the student for their work.
- Students are to inform the staff member/educator early in the placement of requirements of practicum which need to be completed while on placement and are responsible for completion of their own assessment requirements.
- Students will be placed with staff/educators that have a qualification level equal to or greater than the level being studied by the student.
- Surf Coast Shire Council Early Years Services staff/educators must ensure that students have read the confidentiality policy and the Child Safe Organisation Policy. For all early Years students, any discussion of child health and development and education should occur under the supervision of an experienced staff member.
- Students will access Early Years policies via the Surf Coast Shire Website and are expected to familiarise themselves with relevant policies and procedures of the day-to-day operations of the Service and their obligations under these policies.
- Students must complete the Surf Coast Shire Council Workplace Health and Safety Induction Training prior to commencing their placement.
- Students will not be included in staff ratios required to meet regulatory requirements.
- Must meet any jurisdictional requirements for working with children clearance, such as a WWCC, or teacher registration details
- Must implement adequate health and hygiene practices and safe practices for handling, preparing and storing food
- Must not be affected by alcohol or drugs and must not consume these while at the service
- Must not use vaping devices or vaping substances at the service
- Must not subject children to any form of corporal punishment or any discipline that is unreasonable.

Work Experience Students – secondary school

- Refer to Work Instructions D18/72021
- Work Experience students are to be approved by Kindergarten Program Advisor
- A Structured Workplace Learning Arrangement form, or Work Experience Arrangement form from the Victoria State Government – Department of Education must be completed by all parties prior to commencement of work experience.
- Students must complete the Surf Coast Shire Council Workplace Health and Safety Induction Training prior to commencing their placement.
- Students will not be included in staff ratios required to meet regulatory requirements.
- Work Experience students are not to use their personal mobile phone or device while working with children
- Work experience students are not to take images or videos of children while on placement at a SCSC service
- Must implement adequate health and hygiene practices and safe practices for handling, preparing and storing food
- Must not be affected by alcohol or drugs and must not consume these while at the service
- Must not use vaping devices or vaping substances at the service
- Must not subject children to any form of corporal punishment or any discipline that is unreasonable.

Use of personal devices for students and Volunteers

If use of personal device is required, staff are required to complete a request for approval.

Essential purposes for which use and / or possession of a personal electronic device may be authorised for purposes other than taking images or recording videos of children include:

- communication in an emergency situation involving a lost child, injury to child or staff member, or other serious incident, or in the case of a lockdown or evacuation of the service premises, and or local emergency event occurring i.e. bush fire
- personal health requirements, e.g. heart or blood sugar level monitoring or disability
- family necessity, e.g. a worker with an ill or dying family member
- technology failure, e.g. when a temporary outage of service-issued electronic devices has occurred

Staff should never use a personal electronic device to photograph children, or record audio or visual images of children for any purpose, including to document children's learning

Key Resources Ratios and Qualifications

- **Key Resource Surf Coast Shire Council Early Years Services**
Refer to Department of Education website
Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011: Educator to Child Ratios and Qualifications Fact Sheet
- **Key Resource Occasional Care**
Refer to Department of Education

Definitions

Code of Conduct: Together with a code of ethics, the code of conduct helps guide interactions between management, educators and staff, as well as informing the service decision-making processes relating to professional standards.

Code of ethics: Together with a code of conduct, a code of ethics helps guide interactions between management, educators and staff, as well as informing the service decision-making processes relating to professional standards, especially when there are conflicting obligations or responsibilities. The Guide to the NQF references ECA's Code of Ethics, although compliance with the Code is not mandatory under the National Law and Regulations

Educational Leader: *a suitably qualified and experienced educator, coordinator or other individual as educational leader at the service to lead the development and implementation of educational programs in the service.¹*

Student: A student undertaking a placement as part of a relevant recognised educational institution course/registered training organisation (either secondary or tertiary).

Volunteer: A person that engages in an activity, on behalf of Council on a particular project or event which provides unpaid opportunities. The volunteer must be registered with and approved by Council before commencement.

Electronic Device

Includes but not limited to iPod, iPad, computers, cameras, mp3 players, Gameboy, Wii, Xbox, PSP, mobile phones, video players, TV's, smart watches with record function, tablets, wearables, such as camera glasses, SD cards, UBS and hard drives.

Personal Electronic Devices

Includes any device that can take images or videos, such as mobile phones, digital cameras, tablets, smart watches and other new and emerging technologies, where those technologies have image taking or video recording capability. The National Model Code and Guidelines also address use and possession of unapproved / personal storage media devices, for example, an SD card, USB drive, hard drive or use of a cloud-based application which can store images or video recordings

Related Procedure

Nil.

References

Related Surf Coast Shire Council and Early Years Services Policies

HR01	Recruitment and Selection Policy
HR02	Working with Children and Criminal History Checks
HR03	Employee Induction Checklist
MPP-037	Volunteer Management Policy
D15/42616	Determining the responsible Person Present Early Years Policy

Related Surf Coast Shire Council and Early Years Services Work Instructions and Forms

HRF001	Employment Application Guide
HRF010	Reference Checking Guide
D17/6013	Responsible Persons Form
D17/6015	Educational Leader Role Agreement Form
D20/40559	Kindergarten – Induction Checklist
D18/72021	Early Years' Service Student Placement Work Instruction
D18/71224	Kindergarten Student Placement Spreadsheet
D18/72018	Early Years Services Student Application and Induction
D19/83650	Early Years Staff Record Template
D24/78151	Staff Induction handbook
D24/109187	Kindergarten – Student Work Experience – Induction Checklist
D23/130373	Kindergarten Volunteer application form
D25/2048	Kindergarten Volunteers Instruction
MPR-007	Volunteer Management Procedure

¹ 118, *Educational Leader, Education & Care Services National Regulations 2011*

D25/140977	Personal Phone request form
D25/141004	Electronic device agreement
D23/104577	Early Years Child Safe Code of Conduct – Child Safe Standards
D25/142472	Work Instruction – Quality Improvement Plan (QIP)
D25/137590	Work Instruction – Early Years Research projects
D25/141711	Work Instruction – Professional Development (PD) Days
D25/141709	Work Instruction – Staff Development Plans

Other References

Education and Care Services National Law 2010
Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
National Quality Standard 2018
Victorian Children's Services Regulations 2020
National Model Code for Early Childhood Education and Care 2024
National Quality Framework Child safe Culture Guide 2025
ACECQA – Children's Rights in their digital footprints 2025
ACECQA – Using digital touch technologies to support children's learning 2025
ACECQA – Digital technology in educational program and practice 2025

Document History

Version	Document History	Approved by – Date
1	Approved	General Manager Culture and Community – 1 April 2014
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3	Amended/Reviewed	Manager Aged and Family – 21 September 2018
4	Amended/Reviewed	Manager Community Strengthening – 13 February 2020
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