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

TRIM Reference: D15/15724 Due for Review: 17 March 2028

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. It outlines expected behaviour and training required to work in Early Years education.

Policy Principles

National Quality Standards: QA1-7
Education and Care Services National Regulations: 35, 77, 78, 82, 83, 84, 84A, 128B, 128D, 128E, 136, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150,154A, 154B,155, 156, 168, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 176 B, 176C, 179A, 179B, 295
Education and Care Services National Law: Sections 2A, 56, 56A 161A, 162,162A, 162B, 165, 166, 166A, 167, 168, 169, 170, 172, 173, 175A-J, 179B, 269B.
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**.** The safety, rights and best interests of children is our paramount consideration in the operation of our service and in the delivery of education and care to children.

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.
- All staff, working in education and care services in accordance with the **Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations** must complete EC Protect - mandatory child protection training and child safety training, whether or not they work directly with children.
- All students completing tertiary placement at our services are required to complete mandatory Foundation Child Safety training.
- All community volunteers, are required to complete mandatory Foundation Child Safety training.
- 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).*

- We value the important role of volunteers and students on practicum placements. Volunteers and students are provided with the necessary training and support to ensure they are familiar with our policies and procedures.
- *All staff, Volunteers and Students must hold a valid WWCC check prior to commencing at the service*
- Required ratios of qualified staff/educators will be adhered to at all times when approved programs are operational.
- The Kindergarten Educational Advisor 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 cannot be responsible for the day-to-day operations of the service, a responsible person will be appointed. Our responsible person is appointed in line with regulatory requirements and ensures that the service is effectively supervised and managed.

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 (WWCC) sighted and checked each 6 months and must notify the Regulatory Authority of a change to a staff member's WWCC status
- 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 complete a staff workplace, health and safety induction.
- Must meet any jurisdictional requirements relating to education and care qualifications, first aid qualifications, complete Investigation Declaration - Disclosures Form and working with children clearance, such as a WWCC, or teacher registration details (jurisdiction dependent).
- All staff working in education and care services regulated under the National Quality Framework (NQF) must complete EC Protect - mandatory child protection training and National child safety training, whether or not they work directly with children.
- All staff working directly with children in services regulated by State Law must complete EC Protect – Mandatory Reporting training only.
- Must not be affected by alcohol or drugs and must not consume these whilst 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.
- Must ensure quality staffing practices are implemented in line with the National Quality Standard (especially Quality Area 4 – Staffing arrangements).

Volunteers

- Volunteers can be defined as either parent volunteer, who volunteers with their child's class for short periods of time, not in a regular capacity. Or a community volunteer, who volunteers with a kindergarten in a regular and consistent pattern to support the program.
- All 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.
- All Volunteer names are recorded at each service in the Volunteers Folder.

- All 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.
- Community Volunteers are required to complete the National Foundation Child Safety training and provide their certificate of completion to staff.
- Must be familiar with and adhere to the services code of conduct.
- Must be aware of the existence and application of current child protection law and their obligations under the law.
- 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 via the SISO system on the iPad 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 Occasional Care educational programs.
- 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 whilst 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.
- Must not be left alone with children in their care, they will be under the direct supervision of Surf Coast Shire staff.

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 required to complete the National Foundation Child Safety training and provide their certificate of completion to staff prior to starting their placement.
- Students must read the confidentiality policy, the Child Safe Organisation, and Safe use of digital technology Policy and understand their obligations under these policies.
- 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 students 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.
- 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 whilst 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.
- Must not be left alone with children in their care, they will be under the direct supervision of Surf Coast Shire staff.

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 must read the confidentiality policy, the Child Safe Organisation, and safe use of digital technology Policy and understand their obligations under these policies.
- 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 whilst 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.
- Must not be left alone with children in their care, they will be under the direct supervision of Surf Coast Shire staff.

Kindergarten Inclusion Support Additional Assistant (KIS AA)

- Must complete a Surf Coast Shire staff workplace, health and safety induction in addition to the Gateways service induction.
- Must meet any jurisdictional requirements for working with children clearance, such as a WWCC.
- Must complete the National Foundation Child Safety training and provide their certificate of completion to staff prior to starting their placement.
- 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. KIS AA are not to take images or videos of children while on placement at a SCSC service.
- Must not be included in staff ratios required to meet regulatory requirements.
- 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 whilst at the service.
- 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.
- Must not be left alone with children in their care, they will be under the direct supervision of Surf Coast Shire staff.

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 of 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

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 ie. 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.

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]

Child protection training: Victoria; Staff and volunteers who work directly with children in ECEC settings regulated under state law and National Qualify Framework in Victoria must complete EC PROTECT.
Nominated supervisors, persons in day-to-day charge of a service, staff members who work directly with children and volunteers who work directly with children, including students, will need to complete EC PROTECT every 12 months.

Child safety training: National; In accordance with the **Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations**, all staff, educators, management, community volunteers, and tertiary students are strictly required to complete the Australian Government's mandatory National Child Safety Training course.

Nominated supervisor: Must be nominated by the approved provider of the service and the nominated person must give written consent. They are responsible for the day-to-day management of a service.

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

Responsible person is:

- The approved provider or a person with management or control
- A nominated supervisor
- A person in day-to-day charge of the service

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

Community Volunteer: A person that engages in an activity, on behalf of Council on a particular project or event which provides unpaid opportunities on a regular basis. The volunteer must be registered with and approved by Council before commencement and remain under the direct supervision of a qualified staff member at all times.

Parent Volunteer: A parent or legal guardian of an enrolled child who assists the service on an occasional or non-routine basis (e.g., attending a single excursion, reading a story, or helping with a specific room activity). This role is strictly limited to the volunteer's own child's group, they remain under the direct supervision of a qualified staff member at all times.

Service-supplied device: A service-supplied device is a device that is owned or supplied by an approved provider to be exclusively used for providing education and care, including to capture, store or transmit images of children. This may include devices such as phones, cameras, tablet computers, and hard drives. A service-supplied device must not be used for personal purposes.

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.

Capturing, storing and transmitting images of children: Capturing an image includes filming, recording a video or taking a photo/image of a child. Storing means keeping the photo/image or video saved on a device, including a storage device. Transmitting includes sharing a photo or video by text message, email, uploading to any social media or information sharing platform or any other form of distributing an image or recording.

Australian Professional Standards for Teachers: The Standards are a public statement of what constitutes teacher quality. They provide a framework which makes clear the knowledge, practice and professional engagement required across teacher's careers. They also inform the development of professional learning goals, provide a framework by which teachers can judge the success of their learning and assist self-reflection and self-assessment.

ACECQA – Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority: The independent national authority that works with all regulatory authorities to administer the NQF, including the provision of guidance, resources and services to support the sector to improve outcomes for children.

Related Procedure

Nil.

References

Related Surf Coast Shire Council and Early Years Services Policies

HR01	Recruitment and Selection Policy
HR02	Working with Children Checks Policy
MPP-052	Child safe Organisation Policy
MPP-037	Volunteer Management Policy
D15/42616	Early Years Determining the responsible Person Present Policy
D15/42585	Early Years Staff Code of Conduct Policy
D15/35312	Early Years Providing a Child Safe Environment Policy
D16/36657	Early Years The safe use of digital technologies and online environments Policy
D15/54262	Early Years Governance and Management Policy

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

HRF001	Employment Application Guide
HR02	Working with Children and Criminal History Checks
HR03	Employee Induction Checklist
HRF010	Reference Checking Guide
D17/6013	Responsible Persons Form
D17/6015	Educational Leader Role Agreement Form
D20/40559	Early Years – Induction Checklist
D18/72021	Early Years' Service Student Placement Work Instruction
D18/71224	Early Years 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
D26/11388	Investigation Declaration - Disclosures Form
D25/2048	Kindergarten Volunteers Instruction
MPR-007	Volunteer Management Procedure
D25/140977	Early Years Personal Phone request form
D25/141004	Early Years 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
D26/57797	Work Instructions - Early Years Relief Calendar
D25/131209	Work Instruction - Early Years Recruitment
D26/113027	Work Instruction - KIS Additional Assistant
D25/131209	Work Instruction – Early Years Recruitment
D26/53401	Work instruction – Workforce Register
D18/72021	Work Instruction – Service Student Placement
D25/2048	Work Instruction – Kindergarten Volunteers Instruction
D26/63091	Work Instruction – Visitor Registration in kindergarten services
D23/67125	Nominated Supervisor Consent form

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
Early Childhood Australia – Early Childhood Code of Ethics
National Model Code for Early Childhood Education and Care 2024
ACECQA – Children's Rights in their digital footprints 2025
ACECQA – Compliance history statement template for a person to be a person in day-today charge or a nominated supervisor
ACECQA – Guide to the National Quality Framework
ACECQA – Information sheet: Inappropriate discipline
ACECQA – Information sheet: Inappropriate conduct
ACECQA – Information sheet: Understanding the paramount consideration
ACECQA – Information on child protection training and child safety training
ACECQA – Information on the National Early Childhood Worker Register
ACECQA – Safe use of devices in education and care services
ACECQA – Prohibition notice declaration for prospective staff members
ACECQA – Responsible person requirements for approved providers from 1 October 2017
ACECQA – NQF Child Safe Culture Guide
ACECQA – NQF Online Safety Guide
Early Childhood Australia – Codes of Professional Conduct and Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics
Early Childhood Australia – Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics

Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011: Educator to Child Ratios and Qualifications Fact Sheet
VIC GOV - Child Protection and child safety training in early childhood- https://www.vic.gov.au/child-protection-early-childhood-online-learning
Council Early years services regulated by the National Quality Framework: Kindergarten
Council Early year services regulated by state law: Occasional Care

Document History

Version	Document History	Approved by – Date
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2	Amended/Reviewed	Manager Aged and Family – 1 May 2016
3	Amended/Reviewed	Manager Aged and Family – 21 September 2018
4	Amended/Reviewed	Manager Community Strengthening – 13 February 2020
5	Amended/Reviewed	Manager Community Strengthening – 22 May 2020
6	Amended/Reviewed	Manager Community Strengthening – 22 November 2021
7	Amended/Reviewed	Manager Community Strengthening – 11 May 2023
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