

# Interactions with Children, Families & Staff Policy



## RATIONALE

The relationship between educators and children is perhaps the most important aspect of a school. Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships are one of the basic principles of the Montessori philosophy and The Early Years Learning Framework that provides a vision for the children's learning at this school. Relationships between educators and children can have an impact on other relationships and can dictate the mood of the group, or the whole school/school environment. The value of other skills like observing, planning and organising the environment depends upon the extent to which educators are able to develop these relationships. Children who are secure in the relationship with their educator/s are confident in their learning and are able to enjoy and feel relaxed in their time at the school.

Children need positive relationships with adults that they can trust and who respond to them. This is the basic foundation that they need in order to feel good about themselves and their being in the world, and secure enough to take pleasure in actively exploring and learning about themselves, people and things around them.

Children under five are learning communication and social skills. The way in which educators relate and interact with them and to other people in the school is an important source of information about how they should communicate and interact with others. Therefore, these adults should relate to children in a positive way which responds to each child's individual needs and enables the child to develop the ability to relate in a similar positive way to others. Children also need adults who actively teach them communication skills, by relating to them in ways which build upon their existing and emerging social and interactive communication skills, and by providing them with opportunities, and activities to exercise and develop these skills.

All adults, and especially experienced school educators, are more able than young children to empathise, adapt and modify their behaviour. One of the basic principles of communicating with children is that educators need to approach the children in their care in a child-centred way. Children under five are still very much the centre of their own universe. From birth they are very sensitive to what is going on around them, and are continually trying to make sense of their environment and to discover new ways of relating to it. As they develop, their ability to understand other people, to take account of others' feelings, and to modify their behaviour, increases. However, even when they are five, they are not yet very experienced or skilled in the complexities of social and communications skills.

As educators we are able to establish trusting relationships with the children and at the same time we are able to be positive role models by communicating, interacting and socialising with the children in our care.

Good interaction between adults and children is at the heart of a Montessori School. The art of being a Montessori educator is that of being a child advocate in the deepest sense, one who respects the child's total being. The educator is a firm believer in the powers of the individual child and his desire to act autonomously. A Montessori educator aims never to unnecessarily interfere or correct.

NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD (NQS)

QUALITY AREA 5: RELATIONSHIPS WITH CHILDREN		
5.1	Relationships between educators and children	Respectful and equitable relationships are maintained with each child.
5.1.1	Positive educator to child interactions	Responsive and meaningful interactions build trusting relationships which engage and support each child to feel secure, confident and included.
5.1.2	Dignity and rights of the child	The dignity and rights of every child are maintained.

5.2	Relationships between children	Each child is supported to build and maintain sensitive and responsive relationships.
5.2.1	Collaborative learning	Children are supported to collaborate, learn from and help each other.

QUALITY AREA 6: COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS WITH FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES		
6.1	Supportive relationships with families	Respectful relationships with families are developed and maintained and families are supported in their parenting role.
6.1.1	Engagement with the service	Families are supported from enrolment to be involved in the service and contribute to service decisions.
6.1.2	Parents views are respected	The expertise, culture, values and beliefs of families are respected, and families share decision-making about their child's learning and wellbeing.
6.1.3	Families are supported	Current information is available to families about the service and relevant community services and resources to support parenting and family wellbeing.

### PURPOSE

We aim to build positive relationships with children, families, and educators through collaboration and interactions, which is reflective of our School philosophy. Educators will encourage positive relationships between children and their peers as well as with educators and families at the Farmhouse, ensuring children feel safe and supported.

### SCOPE

This policy applies to children, families, staff, management, and visitors of the School.

### IMPLEMENTATION

In order to build and maintain positive and respectful relationships with children, families and Educators of our School we will adhere to our philosophy and Code of Ethics Guide.

Management and Educators will:

- Interacting frequently with children, expressing affection by smiling, and speaking to children at their eye level throughout the day.
- Being available and responsive to the children, encouraging them to share experiences, ideas and feelings and listen to them with attention and respect.
- Encouraging children to be involved in developmentally appropriate problem solving.

- Speaking to children in a friendly and positive manner by getting down to their level, using eye contact, and showing respect to the child whilst engaging in and promoting effective communication.
- Displaying tolerance and patience in dealing with each child's individual needs.
- Treating all children regardless of race, religion, culture and gender with respect and consideration.
- Understanding the importance of encouraging each child to speak their home language as well as English thus ensuring that the values, beliefs, and cultural practices of the child and family are considered and respected.
- Show empathy to children. .
- Encouraging developmentally appropriate independence or self-help skills in the children.
- Ensure that no child is ever isolated for any reason other than illness, accident or pre-arranged appointment with parental consent. During this time, they will be under adult supervision.
- Modelling positive behaviour patterns in language, manners and interaction at all times.
- Assisting children to be comfortable, relaxed, "at home" and involved in the daily routine.
- Having expectations of the children that are developmentally appropriate.
- Encouraging children to verbalise feelings and ideas.
- Monitoring child: staff ratios both indoor and outdoor.
- Being aware of changing surroundings to ensure effective supervision.
- Respecting the child's dignity and rights.
- Educators will create a welcoming and relaxed atmosphere in which children experience equitable, friendly and genuine interactions with all Educators
- Appropriate language and behaviour will be role modelled by Educators
- Educators will support children to be aware of their own feelings as well as the feelings of others
- Children are encouraged to treat all children with respect as their friend
- Encouragement and praise is given freely regardless of success, allowing the children to undertake experiences that develop self-reliance and self-esteem
- Educators will regularly reflect on their relationships and interactions with children and how these can be improved to benefit each child

## INTERACTIONS WITH FAMILIES

Effective communication is the key to developing and maintaining positive interactions and relationships with others. Educators working within our school are required to demonstrate mutual respect towards each other and value the contributions made by each educator. This enables our School to maintain positive relations and model the type of communication they want children to develop. Educators also need to use positive communication with families and siblings in order to create a responsive and inclusive environment for all.

### MANAGEMENT AND EDUCATORS WILL ENSURE:

- All families will be treated equitably without bias or judgement; recognising that each family is unique
- Educators are to greet parents as well as children upon arrival
- Educators are to encourage two way communication through leading by example and asking questions
- Educators are to use common terminology when talking to parents regarding their child's development
- Educators are never to discuss another child or family information with a parent or visitor
- Educators are to be sensitive to cultural differences amongst families and are to encourage families to share cultural aspects with the children and Educators at the Centre
- Educators will always endeavour and seek the advice and opinion from experts with family permission, to help with regards to a child with additional needs or support a family through resources available from support agencies in the Area Health or the private sector

- Staff will endeavour to recognise and implement a number of different ways to communicate with families in their preferred chosen way
- Verbal communication will always be open, respectful and honest
- Service information, updates and notices will be made available via the school Newsletter, communal signs etc Noticeboards and front of school sign, emails and letters in parent pigeon holes.
- Educators will regularly reflect on parent input into the program and make changes where necessary that will best benefit the service and children

### **Interactions with Staff and Educators**

The service recognises that the way Educators interact with each other has an effect on the interactions they have with children and families

#### **TO MAINTAIN PROFESSIONALISM AT ALL TIMES, EDUCATORS WILL:**

- Engage in professional communication in order to create an effective work environment and to build a positive relationship with Educators, children and families. Communication amongst colleagues creates a positive atmosphere and a professional service for families. Communication between staff and families ensures that important information is being passed on and that consistency occurs
- All duties within the room are to be shared and Educators are responsible for ensuring this occurs through the use of a roster where necessary
- Educators are to be respectful when listening to each other's point of view and ideas
- Effective communication is required to ensure that the teamwork occurs
- Educators will use staff meetings to communicate their professional reflections and ideas for continuous improvement as a team
- In-service training on communication will be encouraged to update and refresh knowledge
- Educators will refer to the Staff Grievance Policy/Procedure if they feel a situation with another Educator is not being handled with professionalism, respect and quality
- Recognise each other's strengths and valuing the different work each does
- Working collaboratively to reach decisions which will enhance the quality of the Education and care offered at the service
- Welcoming diverse views and perspectives
- Working together as a team and engaging in open and honest communication at all times
- Respecting each other's feelings
- Developing and sharing networks and links with other agencies
- Resolving differences promptly and positively and using the experience to learn more effective methods of working together

#### **TO ENHANCE COMMUNICATION AND TEAMWORK, MANAGEMENT WILL:**

- Provide new educators with relevant information about the Service and program through an Educator handbook, induction, and daily communication.
- Treat Educators with respect.
- Be sensitive to the feelings and needs of Educators.
- Provide constructive feedback to Educators.
- Value the role and contribution of each educator.
- Provide opportunities for all educators to have input and evaluate the program.
- Appreciate and utilise educator skills and interests.
- Provide support and assistance to Educators.
- Hold regular educator meetings.
- Use appropriate conflict resolution techniques to solve problems.

- Ensure policies and procedures are up to date regarding communication, expected behaviour and grievances.
- Provide opportunities for professional development.

**TO ENHANCE COMMUNICATION AND TEAMWORK, EDUCATORS WILL:**

- Maintain confidentiality.
- Treat each team member with respect.
- Be sensitive to the feelings and needs of other team members.
- Provide constructive feedback to each other.
- Trust each other.
- Value the role and contribution of colleagues.
- Appreciate and utilise colleague skills and interests.
- Provide support and assistance to each other.
- Share responsibilities.
- Have a flexible attitude towards team roles and responsibilities.
- Greet each other by name.
- Show genuine interest in the other person by using active and reflective listening.
- Communicate ideas and opinions clearly and professionally.
- Use a communication book or daily diary to pass on messages and record relevant information.
- Use appropriate conflict resolution techniques to solve problems.
- Engage in opportunities for professional development.

**Source**

- Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia. (2009).
- Children’s Services Central. Respectful Relationships. (No longer available.)
- Education and Care National Regulations. (2011).
- Guide to the National Quality Standard. (2017).
- Revised National Quality Standard. (2018).

**Policy Review Date**

**November 2016  
2018**

**Review**

<b>Policy Reviewed</b>	<b>Modifications</b>	<b>Next Review Date</b>
<b>Nov 2016</b>		2018

<b>Feb 2018</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minor grammatical changes made to content (Not critical to its delivery)</li> <li>• New format and logo added</li> </ul>	2020
<b>May 2020</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Added section '<i>To enhance communication and teamwork, Management will:</i>' taking relevant points from section '<i>To enhance communication and teamwork, Educators will:</i>'.</li> <li>• Additional information added to points.</li> <li>• Sources checked for currency. Made note of sources that are no longer available.</li> <li>• Sources/references alphabetised.</li> <li>• Minor formatting for consistency throughout policy.</li> </ul>	2022