

INCLUSION AND EQUITY POLICY

QUALITY AREA 1 – VERSION 1.1



PURPOSE

This policy provides guidelines for Denzil Don Kindergarten to:

- Ensure that all adults and children at the service are treated equitably, with dignity and respect, regardless of background, ethnicity, culture, language, beliefs, gender, age, socioeconomic status, ability, additional needs, family structure, or lifestyle.
- Promote inclusive practices that support the meaningful participation and engagement of all children.
- Foster a positive and supportive environment that promotes mental health and wellbeing for children, educators, staff, and families.

POLICY STATEMENT

The safety, health, wellbeing, rights and best interests of every child guide all decisions, actions and practices of Denzil Don Kindergarten staff.

VALUES

Denzil Don Kindergarten is committed to:

- Ensuring that every child is supported to fully participate in the service program, with barriers actively identified and addressed through a strengths-based approach.
- Acknowledging and upholding the rights of all children to access and participate in a high-quality early childhood education and care program.
- Creating an environment that actively supports, reflects, and promotes equitable and inclusive practices and behaviours.
- Fostering a strong sense of belonging for all children, families, and staff, where diverse identities, backgrounds, experiences, abilities, and interests are respected, valued, and supported to be expressed and developed.
- Ensuring programs are reflective of, and responsive to, the values and cultural beliefs of families, the local community, and the broader society.
- Promoting a culture in which children are free from discrimination based on background, ethnicity, culture, language, beliefs, gender, age, socioeconomic status, health status, ability, additional needs, family structure, or lifestyle.
- Considering and supporting the mental health and wellbeing of all children, families, and staff.
- Complying with the [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child](#).
- Complying with relevant legislation, including the [Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006](#), [Equal Opportunity Act 2010](#), [Disability Act 2006](#), and [Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001](#).

SCOPE

This policy applies to the Approved Provider, all service staff (educational and non-educational), students, volunteers, parents/carers, children, and others attending the programs and activities of Denzil Don Kindergarten.

Parent/Carer Responsibilities Under This Policy:
Maintain open and transparent communication with the service by providing information that will support your child's wellbeing, learning, and development and therefore, achieve the best possible outcomes
Be actively involved in decision-making processes and provide written consent for any proposed engagement with support services – such as the Pre School Field Officer - or ongoing supports or interventions for your child
Respond to requests from the service to provide assessments, reports, and communication with external service providers regarding your child
Read, understand and follow the service Code of Conduct at all times
Adhere to this policy and all other service policies at all times

Responsibilities: R indicates legislation requirement	Approved provider & persons with management or control	Nominated Supervisor and Person in Day-to-Day Charge	All service staff (educational & non-educational)	Contractors, Volunteers & Students
Ensure that all service policies are consistently implemented and adhered to at all times	R	R		
Ensure that all staff understand and uphold the service's expectations for positive, respectful, and appropriate behaviour when working with children and families (see <i>Code of Conduct Policy & Interactions with Children Policy</i>)	R			
Ensure the service provides a safe, inclusive, and empowering environment that celebrates diversity through positive, respectful, and appropriate interactions with children and families (see <i>Code of Conduct Policy and Interactions with Children Policy</i>) (<i>Child Safe Standards 1</i>)	R	R	√	√
Ensure that racism within the organisation is actively identified, addressed, and not tolerated (<i>Child Safe Standard 1</i>)	R	R	√	√
Ensure that no employee, prospective employee, parent/carer, child, volunteer, or student attending the service is subject to discrimination	R	R		
Ensure that any behaviour, practice, or circumstance that may constitute discrimination or prejudice is promptly reported and addressed in an appropriate and consistent manner (see <i>Complaints Policy</i>) (<i>Child Safe Standard 1</i>)	R	R	√	√
Recognise and respect the diverse backgrounds, needs, and circumstances of all children attending the service. Prioritise cultural safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and give particular consideration to the needs of children with disabilities, children from culturally and linguistically diverse or faith-based communities, and younger children (<i>Child Safe Standards 1 & 5</i>)	R	R	√	√
Create and maintain a culturally safe environment that respects and values the identities and experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people. (<i>Child Safe Standard 1</i>)	R	√	√	√
Actively support and facilitate the participation and inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people, and their families within the service (<i>Child Safe Standard 1</i>)	R	√	√	√
Promote cultural awareness among all children, including fostering understanding and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing, being, and doing. (<i>Child Safe Standard 1</i>)	R	√	√	√
Actively support and encourage children to express their culture and exercise their cultural rights (<i>Child Safe Standard 1</i>)	R	√	√	√
Recognise multilingualism as a strength and support children to maintain their first language, learn English as an additional language, and explore languages other than English (<i>Child Safe Standard 1</i>)	√	√	√	√
Ensure that cultural values and expectations related to health and wellbeing are recognised and respected. (<i>Child Safe Standard 1</i>)	R	√	√	√
Ensure facilities are designed or adapted to promote access and inclusion for every child, family, educator, and staff member, including the provision of appropriate adaptive equipment to support participation	R	R	√	√

Provide quiet and reflective spaces that support the diverse needs of children, educators, and families	R	√		
Ensure the physical environment reflects the diversity, identity, and interests of children, families, educators, and staff (<i>Child Safe Standards 1 & 5</i>)	√	√	√	√
Ensure that the enrolment process is fair, equitable, and inclusive, facilitating access for all children (<i>see Enrolment and Orientation Policy</i>)	R	√	√	
Tailor the orientation process to meet the individual needs of each child and their family (<i>see Enrolment and Orientation Policy</i>)	R	√	√	
Ensure that all eligible 3-year-old Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from refugee or asylum seeker backgrounds, and children known to Child Protection are supported to access the Early Start Kindergarten program (<i>see Definitions</i>) (<i>Child Safe Standard 1 & 5</i>)	R	R		
Identify barriers to participation in service programs and activities and implement strategies to address and overcome these barriers (<i>Child Safe Standard 1 & 5</i>)	√	√	√	√
Recognise and understand children's diverse circumstances, providing appropriate support and responsive practices for those who are vulnerable. (<i>Child Safe Standard 1 & 5</i>)	R	R	√	√
Ensure that reasonable adjustments are identified and implemented to provide equal protection, participation, and inclusion for all children (<i>see Child Safe Environment and Wellbeing Policy</i>)	R	R	R	R
Encourage collaborative, family-centred practice (<i>see Definitions</i>) to support the inclusion and participation of both the child and their family	R	√	√	√
Use family-centred practice (<i>see Definitions</i>) to work collaboratively with service staff, families, specialist services, and other professionals to implement programs and provide individualised support for each child. (<i>Child Safe Standards 4</i>)	R	R	√	√
Provide families with clear and accessible information about support options available for children (<i>see Sources</i>) (<i>Child Safe Standards 4</i>)	R	√	√	
Provide meaningful opportunities for families to contribute to the program as valued partners in their child's learning and development (<i>Child Safe Standard 4</i>)	R	R	√	√
Respond to the needs and concerns of parents/carers, providing appropriate support and guidance. (<i>Child Safe Standard 4</i>)	√	√	√	√
Ensure that parents/carers are consulted, remain informed, and provide written consent where individualised practice, supports, or interventions are planned for their child (<i>Child Safe Standard 4</i>)	R	√	√	
Ensure that service programs are accessible and inclusive for families from diverse backgrounds (<i>see Curriculum Development Policy</i>)	R	R	√	√
Deliver educational programs in accordance with an approved learning framework, based on each child's developmental needs and experiences, and responsive to their individual strengths, abilities, and differences (<i>see Sources</i>)	R	R	√	√
Provide an educational program that reflects the service's values, beliefs, and philosophy, and upholds the principles of fairness, equity, diversity, and inclusion (<i>see Sources</i>) (<i>Child Safe Standards 5</i>)	R	R	√	√
Ensure the program offers meaningful opportunities for all children to participate, engage, and interact with one another in inclusive ways (<i>Child Safe Standard 3</i>)	√	√	√	√
Embed social and emotional learning (our Wellbeing Program) within the program, supporting children to develop an understanding of, and care for their mental health and wellbeing (<i>see Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy</i>)	√	√	√	√

Identify and support children with additional needs, ensuring programs are inclusive of all children, including those with disability, those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, children unable to live at home, and children of diverse gender identities (<i>Child Safe Standard 5</i>)	R	√	√	√
Ensure that service programs are inclusive of all children with medical conditions (<i>Child Safe Standard 5</i>)	R	√	√	√
Ensure child-specific practice includes regular opportunities for review and evaluation, in consultation with all those involved in the child's education and care	√	√	√	√
Review and evaluate individualised support programs in consultation with all stakeholders involved in the child's education and care	√	√	√	√
Implement appropriate practice to support vulnerable children and families, including working collaboratively with relevant services and professionals where required (<i>see Child Safe Environment and Wellbeing Policy</i>) (<i>Child Safe Standard 5</i>)	√	√	√	√
Regularly engage with vulnerable children and their families to ensure their needs are understood and appropriately supported. (<i>Child Safe Standard 5</i>)	√	√	√	√
Ensure children have access to information, support, and complaints processes in ways that are culturally safe, accessible, and easy to understand (<i>see Complaints Policy</i>) (<i>Child Safe Standard 7</i>)	R	√	√	√
Ensure clear referral pathways are established so that children, families, and staff can access appropriate wellbeing support services	R	R		
Establish and maintain collaborative relationships with specialised services and professionals to support families and children with disability, complex medical needs, and/or developmental delays	√	√	√	
Develop and maintain partnerships with other education and care settings, and schools, to support children's transition between environments	√	√	√	
Ensure that all staff have access to professional development that promotes understanding of diversity, equity, and inclusion, as well as mental health and wellbeing, and builds capacity to effectively implement this policy (<i>see Staffing Policy</i>)	√	√		
Encourage and support all staff and families to act as role models, demonstrating inclusive, respectful relationships and promoting positive mental health and wellbeing	R	√		
Promote and support educators and staff to develop awareness of, and actively maintain, their mental health and wellbeing	R	R		
Ensure mental health and wellbeing information, expectations, and policy requirements are included in orientation and induction processes	R	R		
Ensure that leadership practices and operational support foster a work environment that minimises stress and actively promotes the mental health and wellbeing of all staff (<i>see Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy</i>)	R	R		
Engage in ongoing critical reflection to ensure practices, interactions, and programs promote an environment where children and families feel valued, respected, and welcomed, and where their contributions are encouraged	R	R	√	√

BACKGROUND & LEGISLATION

BACKGROUND

The National Quality Framework (NQF) recognises the capacity and right of all children to succeed, regardless of their diverse circumstances, cultural backgrounds, or abilities. Denzil Don Kindergarten always has high expectations for every child's learning and development, while recognising that each child follows an individual learning pathway and progresses in different, yet equally meaningful, ways.

Inclusion involves recognising and responding to children's social, cultural, and linguistic diversity - including differences in learning styles, abilities, disabilities, gender, family circumstances, and geographic location - within

curriculum decision-making processes. Denzil Don Kindergarten provides responsive, equitable, and individualised opportunities, along with additional support, whenever barriers to participation are identified.

The NQF is underpinned by a commitment to *Closing the Gap* and acknowledges that Australia is a diverse nation, as well as an ancient land cared for by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples for tens of thousands of years. Education and care services have a shared responsibility to support children, families, colleagues, and the broader community to understand, respect, and value this diversity.

State and Commonwealth legislation prohibits discrimination based on personal characteristics, including race, age, gender, religious belief, disability, health status, or parental status.

Under the [Child Safe Standards](#), we are required to provide an environment and program that support all children to feel safe, to participate fully, and to express and celebrate their identities. The standards are guided by overarching principles that recognise the increased vulnerability of Aboriginal children, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and children with disabilities.

The Victorian Government requires our service to ensure our policies and procedures promote equality of opportunity, enabling all children to fully participate in our program. Our philosophy reflects a strong commitment to inclusion and equity, supported by the development and implementation of an Equity and Inclusion Policy. Building professional knowledge and skills, and applying family-centred practice, supports services to work in partnership with children, families, communities, and other agencies to identify, include, and effectively support children with additional needs and their families.

LEGISLATION & STANDARDS

Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

- Age Discrimination Act 2004
- Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic)
- Charter for Children in Out-of-home Care (Vic)
- Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)
- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)
- Child Safe Standards (Vic)
- Dardee Boorai: Victorian Charter of Safety and Wellbeing for Aboriginal Children and Young People (Vic)
- Disability Act 2006 (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)
- Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth)
- Health Records Act 2001 (Vic)
- Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 (Vic)
- National Quality Standards Quality Areas 1-7
- Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004
- Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)
- Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001 (Vic)
- Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth)
- Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)

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

- Victorian Legislation – Victorian Law Today: www.legislation.vic.gov.au
- Commonwealth Legislation – Federal Register of Legislation: www.legislation.gov.au

DEFINITIONS

The terms defined in this section relate specifically to this policy. For regularly used terms, see the Definitions File located online: <https://denzildonkinder.org.au/policies/> OR in the Policies Folder in the kindergarten office.

Additional needs: A broad term relating to challenges experienced across a number of areas including physical health, mental health, disability, developmental concern, or emotional need (resulting from trauma, abuse or grief), family displacement (due to war or refugee status), domestic violence, mental illness, family separation or divorce, which affects a person's ability to participate or learn.

Developmental delay: A delay in the development of a child under the age of 6 years that:

- is attributed to a mental or physical impairment, or a combination of mental and physical impairments, and
- is manifested before the child attains the age of 6 years, and
- results in substantial functional limitations in one or more of the following areas of major life activity self-care, receptive and expressive language, cognitive development, motor development, and
- reflects the child's need for a combination and sequence of special interdisciplinary or generic care, treatment or other services that are of extended duration and are individually planned and co-ordinated (Disability Act 2006 (Vic)).

Early Start Kindergarten: A funding program that enables 3-year-old Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from a refugee or asylum seeker background and children known to Child Protection, to attend a free kindergarten program that is planned and delivered by an early childhood teacher for a specific number of hours.

Family-centred practice:

- uses families' knowledge and understanding of their children to support shared decision-making about their learning and development
- creates a welcoming and culturally inclusive environment, where all families are encouraged to participate in and contribute to their child's learning and development
- actively engages families and children in planning children's learning and development
- provides feedback to families on their child's learning and provides information about how families can further advance children's learning and development at home and in the community.

Kindergarten Fee Subsidy (KFS): A state government subsidy paid directly to the funded service to enable eligible families to attend a funded kindergarten program or funded three-year-old place at no cost (or minimal cost) to promote participation. Details are available in The Kindergarten Guide (refer to Sources).

Kindergarten Inclusion Support Packages: A package of support for children with a disability and high support needs and/or with complex medical needs.

Trauma-Informed Practice: a support framework based on an understanding of how trauma affects individuals' lives and needs, focussing on minimising these impacts while promoting recovery and reducing the risk of further trauma.

SOURCES & RELATED POLICIES

SOURCES

- [Be You](#)
- [Best Start](#)
- [Commission for Children and Young People, Child Safe Standards](#)
- Early Childhood Agreement for Children in Out-of-Home Care (January 2019). Endorsed by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, the Department of Human Services, Municipal Association of Victoria, Early Learning Association Australia, Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency, Victorian Aboriginal Children and Young People's Alliance, Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare, Community Child Care Association, Vic Tas Primary Health Network Alliance, Victorian Healthcare Association and Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated: www.education.vic.gov.au
- Early Childhood Australia (ECA) and Early Childhood Intervention Australia's (ECIA) Position Statement on the Inclusion of Children with a Disability in Early Childhood Education and Care – available at: Search 'statement on inclusion of children with disability' at: <https://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/our-work/inclusion-resources/>
- Early Childhood Intervention Services (ECIS) and the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS): <https://www.vic.gov.au/early-childhood-intervention-services-national-disability-insurance-scheme-fka-childrens-services>
- Guide to the National Quality Framework and National Quality Standards: www.acecqa.gov.au
- [Kindergarten for Aboriginal children: Koorie Kids Shine](#)
- The Kindergarten Funding Guide (DE): www.education.vic.gov.au
- Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework Principal Practice Guide: Equity and Diversity: www.education.vic.gov.au

RELATED POLICIES

- Anaphylaxis and Allergic Reactions

Inclusion and Equity Policy – Date reviewed: 24/05/2026

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- Asthma Management
- Child Safe Environment and Wellbeing
- Code of Conduct
- Complaints
- Curriculum Development
- Dealing with Infectious Diseases
- Dealing with Medical Conditions
- Diabetes
- Enrolment and Orientation
- Epilepsy and Seizures
- Excursions and Service Events
- Interactions with Children
- Nutrition, Oral Health and Active Play
- Occupational Health and Safety
- Privacy and Confidentiality
- Staffing

EVALUATION

To assess whether the values and purposes of the policy have been achieved, we will:

- seek feedback from all parties 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
- notify all stakeholders affected by this policy at least 14 days before any significant change is made to the policy or its procedures, unless a lesser period is necessary due to risk ([Regulation 172 \(2\)](#)).

ATTACHMENTS

NIL

AUTHORISATIONS

This policy was adopted by the approved provider of Denzil Don Kindergarten on 24/05/2026.

REVIEW DATE: 24 / MAY / 2028

