

INTERACTIONS WITH CHILDREN

QUALITY AREA 5 | Version 1.3

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 Denzil Don Kindergarten
- every child at Denzil Don Kindergarten is supported to learn and develop in a secure and empowering environment.



POLICY STATEMENT

VALUES

Denzil Don Kindergarten 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 (*see Definitions*) for all children at Denzil Don Kindergarten
- 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 staff at the service.



SCOPE

This policy applies to the Approved Provider, all service staff, students, volunteers, parents/guardians, children, and others attending the programs and activities of Denzil Don Kindergarten, including during offsite excursions and activities.

RESPONSIBILITIES	Approved provider and persons with management or control	Nominated supervisor and persons in day-to-day charge	All service staff	Parents/carers	Contractors, volunteers and students
	R indicates legislation requirement				
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	R	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ensuring all stakeholders are provided with a copy of the <i>Interactions with Children Policy</i> and comply with its requirements	R	✓	✓	✓	✓
Actively supporting and facilitating the participation and inclusion of Aboriginal children, young people, and their families.	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 actively supervised (<i>see Definitions File</i>) and that educator-to-child ratios are always maintained (<i>refer to Supervision of Children Policy</i>)	R	√	√		√
Ensuring the service environment 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 group size and composition 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	Ö	Ö		Ö
Developing and delivering educational programs in accordance with an approved learning framework (<i>see Definitions File</i>), that are based on the developmental needs, interests and experiences of each child, and consider children's individuality and strengths (<i>refer to Inclusion and Equity Policy</i>)	R	R	Ö		Ö
Ensuring the educational program contributes to the development of each child's wellbeing, identity, connection, confidence, and involvement as effective learners and communicators (<i>Regulation 73</i>) (<i>refer to Curriculum Development Policy</i>)	R	Ö	Ö		Ö
Ensuring that the service provides education and care to children in a way that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • encourages children to express themselves and their opinions • allows children to undertake experiences that develop self-reliance and self-esteem • maintains the dignity and rights of children at all times • ensures all children feel safe when interacting with educators and other children • offers positive guidance and encouragement towards acceptable behaviour • has regard to cultural and family values, age, and the physical and intellectual development and abilities of each child (<i>Regulation 155</i>) 	R	√	√		√
Providing a range of opportunities for children to feel valued and empowered to make choices and solve problems during their time at the service		√	√		√
Listening to and respecting children's voices and non-verbal cues		√	√		√
Supporting children to raise concerns if they are unhappy or feel unsafe and acting upon their concerns		√	√		Ö
Demonstrating positive communication, like using calm voices, respectful listening, and acknowledging feelings		Ö	Ö		Ö
Acknowledging children's feelings and helping them name emotions using resources, pictures, feelings chart etc		Ö	Ö		Ö
Developing strategies to help children understand appropriate interactions with educators and know who to tell if something feels wrong or uncomfortable		Ö	Ö		Ö
Creating, promoting and modelling a respectful, child safe culture, where children's views are always listened to, including their right to say 'no'		Ö	Ö		Ö
Teaching children body safety and respect for personal space		Ö	Ö		Ö
Ensuring appropriate physical contact (<i>see Definition</i>) is always maintained		√	√		√

Facilitating children's ability to express their culture, enjoy their cultural rights and are encouraged and actively supported	R	√	√		√
Providing opportunities that promotes a culture that facilitates children's participation and is responsive to their input	R	√			
Ensuring children are informed about their rights, including safety information, compliant handling process and participation	R	√	√		√
Ensuring that the service 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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> their developmental needs, interests, experiences and participation their progress against the outcomes of the educational program (<i>Regulation 74</i>) (<i>refer to Curriculum Development Policy</i>) 	R	√	√		√
Ensuring procedures are in place for effective communication with parents/carers to share information about children's learning, development, interactions, behaviour and relationships	R	√	√		√
Supporting all service 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 all service staff 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>see Definitions</i>), to improve the quality of children's education and care experiences	√	√	√	√	√
Ensuring all service staff, including volunteers and students, have undertaken current child protection legislation training, including for the mandatory reporting requirements and obligations	R	R	√		√
Ensuring notifications of serious incidents (<i>see Definitions</i>) are made to the regulatory authority (DE) (<i>see Definition</i>) through the NQA IT System (<i>see 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 DE within 24 hours of becoming aware of a notifiable complaint (<i>see 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 if/when 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 service staff 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>see Definitions</i>) to support children experiencing social, emotional and behavioural difficulties and their families	√	√	√		√
Ensuring that there is a behaviour guidance plan (<i>see Definitions and Behaviour Support Policy</i>) developed for a child if educators are concerned that the child's behaviour may put the child themselves, other children, service staff and/or others at risk	√	√	√	√	

Ensuring parents/carers and program support groups (<i>see Definitions</i>) (as appropriate) are consulted if an individual behaviour guidance plan has not resolved the challenging behaviour (<i>refer to Behaviour Support Policy</i>)	√	√	√	√	
Working collaboratively with all service staff and program support groups (<i>see Definitions</i>) to develop or review an individual behaviour guidance plan for their child, where appropriate.	√	√	√	√	√
Setting clear timelines for review and evaluation of behaviour guidance plans	√	√	√		
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, DE if a suitable and mutually agreeable behaviour guidance plan cannot be developed	R	√	√		
Investigating the availability of extra assistance, such as Kindergarten Inclusion Support (<i>see Definitions</i>) or training, by contacting the regional Preschool Field Officer (<i>see 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 guidance plan	R	√			
Ensuring that all service staff are provided with appropriate training to guide the actions and their responses to children with challenging behaviour (<i>refer to Behaviour Support Policy</i>)	√	√			
Informing all service staff of concerns, events or incidents that may impact their child's behaviour (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 everyone, 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 this policy, Denzil Don Kindergarten considers our philosophy, beliefs and values, particularly regarding relationships with children. The development of this policy is also 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
- 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, please see the Definitions File in the service Policy folder, or at the Policy page of the kindergarten website.

Adequate supervision: all children (individuals and groups) in all areas of the service, are 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. It 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 guidance: 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 guidance plan: a plan that documents strategies to assist educator's 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, service educators, parents/carers 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.

Dignity and rights of the child: Element 5.1.2 of the National Quality Standard ('Dignity and rights of the child') aims to achieve the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, a universally agreed set of non-negotiable standards and obligations founded on respect for the dignity and worth of each child, regardless of race, colour, gender, language,

religion, opinions, origins, wealth, birth status or ability. Article 19 of the Convention states that children have the right to be protected from being hurt and mistreated, physically, or mentally.

Kindergarten Inclusion Support Program (KIS): support for funded kindergarten 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.

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.

Preschool Field Officer (PSFO) Program: the PSFO Program supports the access and participation of children with additional needs in their kindergarten program. For more information visit: www.education.vic.gov.au

Appropriate Physical Contact: physical interactions between an educator and child that are respectful, nurturing, and developmentally suitable. Such contact supports the child's safety, wellbeing, learning, and emotional development. Where possible, the child consents to or initiates the contact.

It includes actions such as:

- comforting a distressed child,
- holding a child's hand for safety,
- providing assistance with personal care in a respectful and hygienic manner,
- giving first aid, and
- supporting children who have hurt themselves.

All physical contact MUST be observable by to another staff member. It must always align with the service's policies, maintain professional boundaries, and uphold child safe standards.

Examples of appropriate physical contact include:

- Placing a hand or gently patting a child on the back or shoulder to comfort or reassure them
- Holding a child's hand while crossing the yard, during group transitions and crossing a road/carpark
- Sitting a child on your lap if they are upset and seeking comfort; only when initiated by the child and in view of others, and until the child is no longer distressed
- Helping a child blow their nose, clean up, or change clothes when needed, using respectful hygiene practices
- Administering first aid with care and sensitivity when a child is injured
- Offering a side hug or placing a supportive hand on a child's shoulder (if welcomed by the child), and reciprocating affection from the child in an appropriate and respectful manner.

SOURCES AND RELATED POLICIES



SOURCES

- Belonging, Being & Becoming – The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia: www.acecqa.gov.au
- Child Safe Standards: www.cryp.vic.gov.au
- Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics: www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au
- Guide to the National Quality Framework, ACECQA: www.acecqa.gov.au
- Inclusion Support Program: 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
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child: www.unicef.org
- Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework: www.acecqa.gov.au
- Victorian Inclusion Agency (VIA): www.viac.com.au
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RELATED POLICIES

- Behaviour Support
- Child Safe Environment and Wellbeing
- Code of Conduct
- Complaints
- Educational Program
- Inclusion and Equity
- Occupational Health and Safety
- Privacy and Confidentiality
- Supervision of Children

EVALUATION



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 \(2\)](#)).



ATTACHMENTS

- Nil



AUTHORISATION

This policy was adopted by the approved provider of Denzil Don Kindergarten on 02/09/2025.

REVIEW DATE: 02 / SEPTEMBER / 2027