

INTERACTIONS WITH CHILDREN POLICY

QUALITY AREA 5 – VERSION 1.5



PURPOSE

This policy provides clear guidelines to ensure all Denzil Don Kindergarten service staff:

- Develop responsive, warm, trusting, and respectful relationships with children that promote their wellbeing, self-esteem, sense of security, and belonging at kindergarten.
- Support every child to learn and develop in a safe, secure, and empowering environment.

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:

- Maintaining the dignity, agency and rights of each child at the service
- Promoting fairness, respect and equity for all children, families, and staff
- Encouraging children to express themselves, share their opinions, and to engage in experiences that build independence and self-esteem
- prioritising the health, safety, and wellbeing of every child by providing a safe, secure, and welcoming environment for learning and development
- upholding a duty of care towards all children attending the service
- valuing the diversity of individual children at the service, including their family and cultural backgrounds, age, gender, and individual physical and intellectual development and abilities
- building collaborative partnerships with families to improve children's outcomes
- fostering positive, respectful, and warm relationships between children, families, and educators/staff.

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:
Be aware that this policy, along with all service policies, is available on the service website: denzildonkinder.org.au/policies/ and in the Policy Folder located in the service office
Engage in positive and collaborative partnerships with your child's educators, service staff and management, to ensure the best outcomes for your child
Where appropriate, contribute to the development and review of your child's <i>Behaviour Guidance Plan</i> in partnership with educators, service management, and relevant support services
Work collaboratively with the service and relevant support groups where a Behaviour Guidance Plan has not effectively addressed behaviours of concern (<i>see Behaviour Support Policy</i>)
Participate in the development or review of a Behaviour Guidance Plan alongside service staff and program support groups, where appropriate
Inform educators and staff of any circumstances, changes, or events that may impact your child's behaviour or wellbeing (eg: moving, family changes, or the arrival of a new sibling)
Respect and uphold confidentiality in accordance with the service's <i>Privacy and Confidentiality Policy</i>

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 this policy is developed and implemented in consultation with key stakeholders, and that it reflects the service philosophy and values (<i>Child Safe Standard 2</i>)	R	√	√	√
Ensure all staff, volunteers, students, and families are informed that this policy, along with all service policies, is accessible via the service website denzildonkinder.org.au/policies/ and in the policy folder located in the service office (<i>Child Safe Standard 2</i>)	R	√	√	√
Maintain confidentiality at all times, in accordance with the <i>Privacy and Confidentiality Policy (Child Safe Standard 2)</i>	R	√	√	√
Ensure all court orders restricting or prohibiting contact with a child are strictly enforced, and that no unauthorised contact occurs while the child is attending the service (<i>Child Safe Standard 2</i>)	R	R	√	√
Create, model and promote a respectful child-safe culture, where children are consistently listened to and their right to say “no” is explicitly taught and reinforced (<i>Child Safe Standard 3</i>)		√	√	√
Ensure all staff understand and adhere to expectations for positive, respectful, and appropriate behaviour, including appropriate responses and the importance of warm, trusting, and reciprocal relationships with children and families (<i>see Code of Conduct Policy (Child Safe Standard 2)</i>)	R	√		
Ensure all staff, volunteers, and contractors use positive and respectful behaviour guidance strategies, and respond appropriately to children’s behaviour and peer conflict (<i>Child Safe Standard 2</i>)	R	√	√	√
Ensure all staff understand that corporal punishment and inappropriate discipline are prohibited, and that excessive or unreasonable discipline is an offence under <i>National Law: Section 166 (Child Safe Standard 2, 8)</i>	R	R	R	√
Avoid all forms of inappropriate conduct (<i>see Definition</i>), maintain professional boundaries, and act in accordance with the <i>Code of Conduct Policy & Child Safe Environment & Wellbeing Policy (Child Safe Standard 2)</i>	R	R	R	R
Ensure appropriate physical contact (<i>see Definition</i>) in accordance with defined expectations and service policies (<i>Child Safe Standard 2</i>)		√	√	√
Demonstrate positive communication practices, including a calm and respectful tone, active listening, and acknowledging and validating children’s feelings (<i>Child Safe Standard 2</i>)		√	√	√
Ensure all staff, volunteers, and students complete mandatory reporting and child protection training in line with legislative and service requirements (<i>Child Safe Standard 8</i>)	R	R	√	√
Ensure all service staff receive appropriate training and ongoing support to inform their responses to challenging behaviour, in accordance with the <i>Behaviour Support Policy (Child Safe Standard 8)</i>	√	√		
Ensure children are adequately supervised (<i>see Definitions</i>) and that educator-to-child ratios are always maintained (<i>see Supervision of Children Policy (Child Safe Standard 9)</i>)	R	√	√	√
Ensure the service environment is safe, secure, and free from hazards in accordance with <i>National Law: Section 167 and in line with Child Safe</i>	R	R	√	√

<i>Environment Policy, Occupational Health and Safety Policy and Supervision of Children Policy</i> while promoting active participation of every child (<i>Child Safe Standard 9</i>)				
Ensure group size and composition support quality interactions and relationships, maintaining smaller groups to enable intentional teaching and responsive engagement <i>Regulation 156(2)</i> (<i>Child Safe Standard 9</i>)	R	√	√	√
Ensure the safe and respectful use of digital technologies, including online interactions, digital devices, photographs, videos, and communication platforms, to protect children's privacy and dignity (<i>Child Safe Standard 9</i>)	R	√	√	√
Notify the Department of Education (DE) within 24 hours of any notifiable complaint or allegation relating to the safety, health, or wellbeing of a child at the service, in accordance with <i>National Law: Section 174(2)(b), Regulations 176 (2)(a)</i> (<i>Child Safe Standard 2</i>)	R	√		
Ensure all serious incidents are reported to the regulatory authority (DE) via NQA IT System as soon as practicable, and no later than 24 hours after the incident occurs, in accordance with <i>National Law: Section 174(2)(a), Regulations 176 (2)(a)</i> (<i>Child Safe Standard 2</i>)	R	√		
Actively support and facilitate the participation and inclusion of Aboriginal children and their families (<i>Child Safe Standard 1</i>)	R	√	√	√
Actively support and encourage children to express their culture and cultural identity, fostering an inclusive environment that respects, values, and celebrates diversity (<i>Child Safe Standard 1</i>)	R	√	√	√
Provide opportunities that promote a culture of participation, ensuring children's ideas are encouraged, acknowledged and responded to (<i>Child Safe Standard 1</i>)	R	√		
Develop and implement educational programs in accordance with an approved learning framework, responsive to each child's developmental needs, interests, strengths and experiences (<i>see Inclusion and Equity Policy</i>) (<i>Child Safe Standard 1, 3, 5</i>)	R	R	√	√
Ensure the educational program supports each child's wellbeing, identity, connection, confidence, participation, learning and communication, in accordance with <i>Regulation 73 (see Curriculum Development Policy)</i> (<i>Child Safe Standard 1 & 3</i>)	R	√	√	√
Ensure practices promote dignity, rights, independence, safety, provide positive behaviour guidance, and reflect each child's culture, development, strengths, and abilities (<i>Regulation 155</i>) (<i>Child Safe Standard 1, 3, 5</i>)	R	√	√	√
Ensure accurate and ongoing documentation of each child's learning and development, including assessment and evaluation of their development, interests, and progress against learning outcomes, in accordance with <i>Regulation 74 (see Curriculum Development Policy)</i>	R	√	√	√
Embed effective communication processes with parents/carers to share information about children's learning, development, behaviour, interactions, and relationships (<i>Child Safe Standard 4</i>)	R	√	√	√
Promote collaborative partnerships between children, families, and relevant support teams to enhance outcomes (<i>Child Safe Standard 4, 5</i>)	√	√	√	√
Provide regular information and practical strategies to families and staff to support and promote children's health, wellbeing, and positive behaviour at the service and home (<i>Child Safe Standard 4</i>)	√	√	√	
Ensure a Behaviour Guidance Plan is developed and implemented (<i>see Definitions and Behaviour Support Policy</i>) for any child whose behaviour may pose a risk to themselves or others (<i>Child Safe Standard 5, 9</i>)	√	√	√	
Work collaboratively with staff and relevant program support groups (<i>see Definitions</i>) to develop and review Behaviour Guidance Plans (<i>Child Safe Standard 4</i>)	√	√	√	√

Establish clear timelines for the review and evaluation of Behaviour Guidance Plans to ensure its effectiveness (<i>Child Safe Standard 4</i>)	√	√	√	
Ensure parents/carers and support services are consulted when a Behaviour Guidance Plan has not effectively addressed behaviours of concern, in accordance with the <i>Behaviour Support Policy (Child Safe Standard 4)</i>	√	√	√	
Consult with the Department of Education (DE) where a suitable and mutually agreed Behaviour Guidance Plan cannot be developed (<i>Child Safe Standard 4</i>)	R	√	√	
Investigate and access additional support services, including Kindergarten Inclusion Support (<i>see Definitions</i>), training opportunities, and advice from Preschool Field Officers, Department of Education (DE) specialists, and relevant external agencies working with the child (<i>Child Safe Standard 4</i>)	R	√	√	
Establish referral pathways and partnerships with relevant services and program support groups (<i>see Definitions</i>) to support children experiencing social, emotional, or behavioural difficulties, and their families (<i>Child Safe Standard 4</i>)	√	√	√	√
Ensure additional resources are identified and provided, where required, to effectively implement a child's Behaviour Guidance Plan	R	√		
Empower children to feel valued, make choices, and develop problem-solving skills (<i>Child Safe Standard 1, 3, 5</i>)	√	√	√	
Listen to and respect children's voices, including verbal and non-verbal communication (<i>Child Safe Standard 1, 3, 5</i>)	√	√	√	
Support children's emotional development, including recognising and naming emotions, guided by the service's Wellbeing Program (<i>Child Safe Standard 3</i>)	√	√	√	
Develop strategies to support children's understanding of appropriate interactions and help them to identify trusted adults (<i>Child Safe Standard 3</i>)	√	√	√	
Teach body safety and respect for personal space, supporting children's understanding of appropriate interactions (<i>Child Safe Standard 3</i>)		√	√	√
Provide opportunities for children to build positive relationships with peers, educators, staff, and volunteers, in accordance with <i>Regulation 156(1)</i> (<i>Child Safe Standard 3</i>)	R	√	√	√
Recognise and support the importance of friendships and peer relationships to promote safety, belonging and connection (<i>Child Safe Standard 3</i>)	√	√	√	√
Support and empower children to raise concerns about their safety or wellbeing, and respond promptly and appropriately (<i>Child Safe Standard 7</i>)		√	√	√
Inform children of their rights, including their right to safety, participation, and access to complaint processes, in a way that is age-appropriate and meaningful (<i>Child Safe Standard 3, 7</i>)	R	√	√	√

BACKGROUND & 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.

'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 that we 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. Embedding and promoting empowerment and the participation of children has multiple benefits in addition to enhancing the safety of children, including demonstrating a commitment to upholding the rights of children, ensuring that what the service is doing is what children want, and building communication and leadership skills in children.

In developing an *Interactions with Children Policy*, early childhood education and care services must review and reflect on the philosophy, beliefs and values of the service, particularly regarding the relationships with children. The development of this policy is informed by the *Code of Conduct Policy*.

LEGISLATION & 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, see the Definitions File located online: <https://denzildonkinder.org.au/policies/> OR in the Policies Folder in the kindergarten office.

Adequate supervision: all children in all areas of the service, always being in sight and/or hearing of an educator including during toileting, sleep, rest and transition routines. The legislative requirements for educator-to-child ratios are 1:11 and must be always observed.

Appropriate Physical Contact: refers to physical interactions between an educator and a 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, assisting personal care in a respectful 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
- Administering first aid with care and sensitivity when a child is injured
- Offering a 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.

Behaviour guidance plan: documents strategies to assist an educator in guiding a child with diagnosed behavioural difficulties or challenging behaviours to self-manage their behaviour. The plan is developed in consultation with all service staff, parents/carers and families, and other support people as applicable.

Challenging behaviour: behaviour that can be described as:

- infringing on the rights of others
- disruptive to others or causing disputes between children
- causing harm or risk to the child, other children, adults or living things
- destructive to the environment and/or equipment
- impacts the child's learning and relationship with others
- shyness, withdrawal or excessive passivity that inhibits a child's learning and/or development
- is inappropriate relative to the child's developmental age and background.

Inappropriate conduct: conduct that a reasonable person would consider inappropriate in an education and care service, considering any of the following circumstances:

- Whether the conduct aligns with generally accepted education and care practice
- The child's age and developmental stage
- Whether the conduct is likely to cause or result in harm (including emotional, psychological or physical harm) or injury to a child or children
- Whether the conduct is sexual, aggressive or violent.

In deciding if the conduct is inappropriate, it does not matter if:

- the child consented (agreed to the conduct, either by directly expressing their consent or implying consent through their actions)
- the person subjecting the child to the conduct believes the child has consented
- the person subjecting the child to the conduct is related to the child.

Subjecting a child to inappropriate conduct can occur in a number of ways including, but not limited to:

- in-person with words or behaviour, including both adult to child or between adults in the presence of a child/ren
- filming and capturing images or recordings
- as a single occasion or as part of a pattern over time
- either directly or indirectly (for example, exposure to inappropriate language or conversations, or leaving inappropriate material accessible to children)
- online
- as an omission (for example, deliberately excluding a child).

Kindergarten Inclusion Support Program (KIS): supports funded kindergartens 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): unites 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, preschool field officer, medical practitioners, therapists or other allied health professionals and/or a support person – if accessed by the child's parent/carer(s).

Preschool Field Officer (PSFO) Program: supports the access and participation of children with additional needs in their kindergarten program.

SOURCES & RELATED POLICIES

SOURCES

- Belonging, Being & Becoming – The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia: www.acecqa.gov.au
- Child Safe Standards: www.ccyp.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

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, 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 \(2\)](#)).

SUPPORT DOCUMENTATION

- NIL

AUTHORISATIONS

This policy was adopted by the approved provider of Denzil Don Kindergarten on 12/05/2026.

REVIEW DATE: 12 / MAY / 2028