

Interactions with Children Policy

Quality Area 5: Relationships with children

Standard 5.1: Respectful and equitable relationships are developed and maintained with each child.

Standard 5.2: Each child is supported to build and maintain sensitive and responsive relationships.

POLICY STATEMENT

Arabadoo is dedicated to creating a secure, respectful, and inclusive environment for children in our outside school hours service. Our policy on interactions with children aligns with the principles outlined in "My Time, Our Place" and promotes genuine respect for diversity and equity.

We adhere to the following principles:

1. **Nurturing Well-being and Fun:** We foster optimism, happiness, and a sense of fun for children, addressing any barriers that may impact their positive self-identity.
2. **Embracing Diversity and Inclusion:** We value and accept every child and staff member, regardless of race, culture, religion, gender, or ability, fostering an inclusive and safe atmosphere.
3. **Creating a Caring Community:** We provide a caring environment where children feel safe, secure, respected, and valued as active members of our school age community.
4. **Upholding BHPS Values:** We encourage both staff and children to embody and uphold the BHPS values of Responsibility, Personal Best, and Respect.
5. **Positive Educator-to-Child Interactions:** We prioritise positive interactions between educators and children to ensure quality education and care outcomes.
6. **Valuing Educators and Staff:** We support our educators and staff members, equipping them with the knowledge and skills to interact positively with children and promote healthy relationships among them.
7. **Child-Centered Educational Program:** Our program encourages self-expression, self-reliance, and dignity while recognising and celebrating children's diverse cultures, values, and abilities. We continuously reflect and refine the program to meet these objectives.

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Arabanoo is committed to continually improving our interactions with children, providing a nurturing and enriching environment that promotes their development and well-being.

BACKGROUND

The Education and Care Services National Regulations require approved providers to ensure their services have policies and procedures in place for managing excursions.

CONSIDERATIONS:

Education and Care Services National Regulations	Education and care services national law	National Quality Standard	Other Service policies/documentation	Other
r73, r74, r76, r.84, r.155, r.117A, r.118, r.123 , r.126, r.145, r155, r156, r168, r.169, r.170, r.171, r.172	S.165, S.166, S.168, S.169	1.1, 1.2, 1.3 2.2 5.1, 5.1.1,5.1.2 5.2 5.2.1, 5.2.2 6.1, 6.2 7.1.1, 7.2.1	- Parent Handbook - Staff Handbook - Programming and evaluation records - Grievance and Disciplinary action Policy	My Time, Our Place Outcomes 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5.

ENDORSEMENT BY THE SERVICE:

Approval date: Sept 2024

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Policy History

Version 1.0

December 2005, May 2006, March 2007, May 2007, February 2009, August 2010, May 2011, March 2012.

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Version 2.0

Overhaul of policies following regulatory changes in 2012. Drafted from the Network template and using the Current Arabanoo Policy Handbook by Sarah Evans. Reviewed by Lisa Bannerman and Jane Ellis May 2013.

Version	Date reviewed	Who by	Area changed	Changes made	Authorisation
3.0	12 August 2015	Poppy Brown, Cecile Thornley, Constandina Shackleton and Jane Leathwood	Procedures	Added “acknowledging each child’s uniqueness” and changed the wording of a few sentences	Kerry Sinclair 12 February 2016
3.0	12 August 2015	Poppy Brown, Cecile Thornley, Constandina Shackleton and Jane Leathwood	Dealing with consistently inappropriate behaviours	Added that incidents are recorded on an Arabanoo Inappropriate Behaviour Form	Kerry Sinclair 12 February 2016
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4.0	26 April 2019	Rowan Friend, Kate Sellick and	Policy	Updated BHPS values.	Kate Sellick – 8 May 2019

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		Holly O'Driscoll	Standards	Split Policy form Procedure. Updated to the NSQ.	
5.0	June 2023	Katie Woods (KW OSHC Consulting)	Policy Statement Considerations Background	<p>Policy Statement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addition of the principles of positive educator-to-child interactions as essential for quality outcomes. • Acknowledgment of the important role of educators and staff, equipping them with necessary knowledge and skills for positive interactions and relationship-building. • Focus on a child-centered educational program that encourages self-expression, self-reliance, maintains dignity 	Rowan Friend – 3 Sept 2024

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				<p>and rights, and recognises diverse cultures, values, and abilities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Overall commitment to continuous improvement in interactions with children and the provision of a nurturing and enriching environment for their development and well-being.	
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PROCEDURES

The educators will:

Create a Supportive and Respectful Environment

Listen and Value Children's Perspectives

- Maintain a positive attitude in all interactions with children and young people.
- Listen carefully to children and young people's experiences and perspectives and show authentic interest in their ideas and perspectives.
- Respect children and young people as individuals, acknowledging each child's uniqueness and encourage each child to voice their opinions, concerns, and ideas in a supportive forum that is free from stigmatism.
- Support children and young people in feeling confident in the environment by never using strategies such as shouting, threats of corporal punishment, or the refusal of food or other basic needs. Educators will always treat children with respect, courtesy, and understanding and promote their self-esteem.

Embrace Diversity and Treat Children Equally

- Treat children and young people equally regardless of race, cultural background, religion, sex, or ability and ensure interactions between children and educators exhibit this.
- Sensitively support children and young people who are having difficulty conveying their message and regulation their emotions.

Ensure Clear Communication and Understanding

- Ensure children and young people understand what is being communicated to them during interactions and allow them time to question or respond.
- Speak to children and young people at their level and use voice intonations, facial expressions, and body language to assist in conveying messages.
- Engage in one-on-one conversations with all children and young people and develop an understanding of their likes, dislikes, and interests.

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Collaborating with Children in Program Development and Individualised Support

- Collaborate with children and young people regarding the daily routines and practices within the service, including programming of experiences, to respond to their individual needs, interests, and abilities.
- Organise environments and spaces that promote small and large group interactions and meaningful play and leisure.

Implement Positive Guidance Techniques

Establish Clear Rules and Boundaries

- Collaborate with children and young people to develop a set of rules or boundaries to guide their behaviours in the service and discuss clear expectations and consequences of inappropriate behaviours.
- Keep rules simple and only have a small number of concise rules that children understand, focusing on appreciating and caring for each other and the environment.
 - All educators, families, and children will be made aware of the rules and the expected consequences.
 - The rules will be clearly displayed.
 - Ensure that all educators always enforce the rules and consequences consistently.
 - Consequences will be relevant to the situation and never demeaning.
- Follow up all issues that arise by discussing the situation with the child and strategising for better solutions in future issues.
- Collaborate with family members and the school regarding appropriate behaviour management practices to ensure there is a consistent approach.
- Access professional development and resources related to positive behaviour management and include this in professional development planning.

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Promote Positive Behaviour through Feedback

- Act as positive role models for appropriate and expected behaviours in the service, being mindful of respectful language and tone.
- Encourage behaviour by giving praise and positive feedback to children and young people as often as possible.

Encourage Conflict Resolution and Self-Regulation Skills

- Assist children and young people in developing self-discipline skills and regulating their own behaviours by using simple conflict resolution skills, building self-reliance and self-esteem, role modelling, and positive direction.
- Provide children and young people with opportunities to interact and develop respectful and positive relationships with each other, educators, and visitors to the service.

Ensure Appropriate Physical Contact

- Ensure that appropriate physical contact is maintained regarding comforting children and young people, application of first aid, safety provisions such as holding hands, and maintaining respectful bodily space.
- Identify when interactions with a child are not appropriate and refer to the service's "Providing a Child Safe Environment" policy to address these concerns.
- Educators are encouraged to engage with parents to work in partnership in promoting a consistent and positive approach to behaviour management.

Develop a child-centred educational program.

At Arabanoo we are committed to providing a child-centered educational program that promotes the holistic development, self-expression, and self-reliance of each child. Our program is designed to maintain the dignity and rights of every child, while fostering positive guidance, respectful relationships, and an inclusive learning environment.

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Reflective Sessions and Planning Cycle

- Regular reflective sessions will be conducted with educators and staff to facilitate discussions and evaluations of the planning cycle, educational program, and daily practices. These sessions will provide opportunities to identify areas for improvement and enhance interactions with children.
- Educators will engage in reflective practices at each stage of the planning cycle to ensure that it aligns with the My Time Our Place learning framework.

Time for Reflection and Programming:

- Educators will be provided with dedicated time off the floor to engage in reflection and programming activities. This time will enable educators to analyse and plan experiences, individualise learning opportunities, and develop strategies for promoting positive interactions with children.

Involvement of Children and Families:

- Children, young people and families will be actively involved in the programming and planning processes. We will seek input from children regarding their interests, preferences, and ideas for activities and experiences.
- Families will be encouraged to contribute their perspectives, cultural practices, and values, ensuring that the program reflects the diversity and individual needs of the children.

Educator and Staff Training:

- Comprehensive induction training will be provided for new educators and staff members, focusing on the principles, practices and learning outlined in My Time Our Place Learning Framework.

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- Standalone training sessions will be conducted to enhance educators' knowledge and skills in promoting positive interactions, self-expression, self-reliance, and cultural sensitivity.
- Regular updates and reviews at team meetings will be scheduled to reinforce the importance of quality interactions with children and to share new research, resources, and strategies.

Reflection on Educator-Child Interactions:

- Regular reflections, such as during team meetings, will be dedicated to examining and discussing how educators and staff interact with children. This reflection process will foster a culture of continuous improvement, where educators can share successful strategies, challenges, and areas for growth.
- These reflections will emphasise the significance of positive guidance, respectful language, and nurturing relationships between educators and children.

Clear Roles and Responsibilities:

- Clear roles and responsibilities will be established for educators and staff regarding the implementation of the Educational Program.
- All team members will understand their responsibilities in promoting positive interactions, self-expression, self-reliance, dignity, and respectful relationships with children.
- Regular reviews and communication of these roles and responsibilities will ensure consistency and accountability throughout the service.

Children and young people will:

- Be treated with respect, courtesy, and understanding regardless of race, cultural background, religion, sex, or ability.

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- Be encouraged to listen to others and display respect, courtesy, and understanding regardless of race, cultural background, religion, sex, or ability.
- Be encouraged to share humour and express themselves in a variety of ways.
- Practice strategies for problem-solving, debating, negotiating, and interacting with others in an appropriate way with the guidance of educators.
- Have opportunities to use and share their home language with other children, young people, and educators.
- Collaborate with educators in developing service routines and procedures, including rules and boundaries, and the consequences they should expect if these are not followed.
- Encourage their peers to adhere to the rules and expectations.
- Participate in experiences that will build relationships and promote interactions between each other, educators, and visitors to the service.
- Assist educators in developing programs and routines for the service that reflect their individual needs, interests, and abilities.
- Have their need for solitude or quiet time supported and respected by educators and children.
- Develop an understanding of the choices they make and the responsibility they must manage their own behaviours in conjunction with educators.

Dealing with consistently inappropriate behaviours

Behaviour management strategies employed by educators will be consistent with those operating within the school. Where a child demonstrates unacceptable behaviour consistently, educators will:

- Ensure the child/ young person is aware of the limits and what is appropriate behaviour.
- Ensure the expectations are appropriate for the child/young person's level of development and understanding.

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- Look for and assess possible causes for the behaviour such as environmental factors or trauma.
- Discuss the issue with the child/ young person and their family members.
- Record all incidents that occur in relation to inappropriate behaviours, making note of the events leading up to the incident, the date and time, who was involved, and how the incident was handled on an Arabanoo *Appropriate Behaviour Form*.
- Develop a support plan for the management of the specific behaviours and include a plan for regular discussions with all educators, children/young person's families and professionals to review the action plan's effectiveness and progression.

Where a child demonstrates behaviours that are physically harmful, educators will:

- Remove the child or young person from the situation as quickly as possible or remove other children/ young people from the area.
- Ensure the wellbeing and safety of children, young people or educators involved and apply first aid / offer support where required.
- Record the details of the incident, including the date, time, people involved, people injured, and the action taken, on an Arabanoo *Appropriate Behaviour Form*.
- Ensure that the family members of all children/ young people involved in the incident are notified whilst maintaining confidentiality for those involved.
- No child is to be threatened with:
 - Corporal Punishment
 - Threats or humiliation
 - Withdrawal of food
 - Long periods of time-out.

If a child deliberately injures other children/adults, the educators will:

- Remove the child or young person from the situation as quickly as possible or remove other children/ young people from the area.

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- Ensure the other person feels safe and supported and given first aid attention and care.
- Record the incident. Records should indicate what happened before and after the incident, the time and date, and who/what was involved.
- Have the child or young person write an *Appropriate Behaviour Form* identifying reasons for his/her action and strategies for improvement (taking responsibility for his/her actions).
- Explain the circumstances of the incident to the parent(s) and show them the child/young person's incident report, requesting that the parent(s) sign this.
- Report any serious or deliberate injury that requires medical treatment other than general first aid to the Parent Management Committee. The Parent Management Committee will then be responsible for determining any further action on a case-by-case basis.
- Report any serious incidents to the Regulatory Authority as required.

Damage to property:

- The educators are to record the incident, indicating what happened before and after the incident, the time and date, and who/what was involved on an *Arabadoo Appropriate Behaviour Form*.
- The child or young person is to write an incident report identifying reasons for his/her action and strategies for improvement (taking responsibility for his/her actions).
- The Nominated Supervisor is to explain the circumstances of the incident to the guardian and show them the child/young person's incident report, requesting that guardian sign this.
- The Nominated Supervisor will report any incident involving property damage to the Parent Committee. The Parent Committee will then be responsible for determining restitution/further action on a case-by-case basis.

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Family Involvement Collaboration

When a child's behaviour is deemed inappropriate, the following steps are taken to involve and collaborate with the family:

- **Informal Conversation:** The educators will initiate an informal conversation with the family to discuss the child's behaviour and address any concerns. This initial discussion aims to provide open communication and gather insights from the family regarding the child's behaviour at home and school and any supports Arabanoo can implement.
- **Ongoing Communication and Check-Ins:** Regular communication and check-ins will be established between the educators and the family to monitor the child's progress. This ongoing dialogue allows for sharing updates, strategies, and interventions implemented by both the service and the family to address any ongoing inappropriate behaviour.
- **Meeting:** If there is no significant improvement in the child's behaviour, a formal meeting will be scheduled between the educators and the family. This meeting provides an opportunity to discuss the challenges faced, review strategies used, and explore new approaches to address the inappropriate behaviour effectively. Collaborative decision-making and joint planning are emphasised during this meeting.
- **Seeking External Support Services:** If necessary, external support services may be involved to provide additional guidance and expertise. This can include consulting with the Integrated Support Services (ISS), reaching out to the child's school and teachers for further insight, or seeking assistance from other relevant professionals or specialists.

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By actively involving families, we aim to establish a collaborative approach to address and support the child's inappropriate behaviour. This process promotes effective communication, shared decision-making, and access to external resources if required, ensuring a holistic and coordinated approach to the child's well-being and development.

Exclusion for unacceptable behaviours:

- Should unacceptable behaviour continue, and the above strategies have not worked effectively, the educators will inform management and discuss the issue.
- Where, in the interest of the child and other children at the service, exclusion is seen as a necessary step, this will be decided by management and will only be considered after:
 - Adequate support and counselling have been provided.
 - Family members have been notified and given the opportunity to discuss the child's behaviour and strategies for creating change.
 - Referrals to other agencies have been suggested where necessary.
 - Educators and management have carefully considered the issue.
 - Clear procedures have been established for accepting the child back into the service.

Safeguarding and Child Protection

At Arabanoo we prioritise the safety and wellbeing of every child in our care. We are committed to maintaining a secure and nurturing environment that protects children from abuse, neglect, and any potential harm. This section outlines our policies and procedures regarding safeguarding and child protection, including the reporting process for incidents or concerns related to a child's well-being.

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Recognising Signs of Abuse, Neglect, or Concerns:

Educators should be familiar with common signs and indicators of abuse, neglect, or concerns about a child's wellbeing. These signs may include physical injuries, unexplained changes in behaviour, emotional distress, inappropriate sexual knowledge or behaviour, or any other significant changes observed in a child's appearance or behaviour.

Reporting Procedures:

- Any educator who has reasonable grounds to believe that a child may be at risk of abuse, neglect, or harm must follow the designated reporting procedures.
- Immediate concerns should be reported to the designated staff member or supervisor responsible for child protection.
- The designated staff member or supervisor will be responsible for initiating the appropriate response, which may involve contacting the relevant authorities, such as child protective services or law enforcement agencies.
- All reports should be documented accurately, providing relevant details of the incident or concern, the child involved, and any other pertinent information.

Confidentiality and Whistleblower Protection:

- The confidentiality of the reporter and the child involved in a safeguarding concern is of utmost importance. All information related to the report should be handled discreetly and shared only with authorised individuals involved in the investigation or response.
- Any staff member who reports a safeguarding concern in good faith will be protected from any form of retaliation. We encourage open communication and a supportive environment for staff members to report concerns without fear.

Collaboration with Authorities and Supportive Services:

- We will cooperate fully with child protection agencies, law enforcement, or any other relevant authorities during the investigation of a safeguarding concern.

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- We recognise the importance of providing appropriate support to the child and their family throughout the process, and we will work in collaboration with relevant support services to ensure their well-being.

Training and Professional Development:

- Educators will receive regular training and professional development on recognising signs of abuse, neglect, and concerns about a child's well-being, as well as understanding their responsibilities in reporting and responding to such incidents.
- Ongoing training will also cover topics related to preventing and addressing bullying, fostering a safe and inclusive environment, and promoting the overall well-being of children.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

Approved Provider

- Ensure that obligations under the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations are met.
- Provide education and care to children in a way that encourages them to express themselves and their opinions.
- Enable children to undertake experiences that develop self-reliance and self-esteem.
- Maintain the dignity and rights of each child at all times.
- Give each child positive guidance and encouragement toward acceptable behavior.
- Consider the family and cultural values, age, physical and intellectual development, and abilities of each child.
- Ensure that the service provides opportunities for children to interact and develop respectful relationships with each other, educators, staff, and volunteers.
- Ensure that the service meets minimum educator and staff requirements, including qualifications and educator-to-child ratios.

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- Ensure that Family Day Care (FDC) educators are at least 18 years old, suitably qualified, have adequate knowledge of education and care, and are 'fit and proper' persons.
- Ensure that all educators and staff have received current child protection legislation training, including mandatory reporting requirements and obligations.
- Ensure that no child is subjected to any form of corporal punishment or any discipline that is unreasonable or inappropriate.
- Take reasonable steps to ensure that nominated supervisors, educators, staff, and volunteers follow the Interactions with children policy and procedures.
- Ensure that copies of the policy and procedures are readily accessible to nominated supervisors, coordinators, educators, staff, volunteers, and families and available for inspection.
- Notify families at least 14 days before changing the policy or procedures if the changes will affect fees, significantly impact the service's education and care of children, or significantly impact the family's ability to utilise the service.

Nominated Supervisor

- Implement the Interactions with children policy and procedures.
- Devise methods to lead the development and implementation of quality practices across the service to meet the requirements of regulations 155 and 156.
- Support educators in promoting quality practice approaches to interactions with children.
- Ensure minimum educator and staff requirements are met, including qualifications and educator-to-child ratios.
- Ensure that all educators and staff have received current child protection legislation training, including mandatory reporting requirements and obligations.
- Ensure that no child is subjected to any form of corporal punishment or any discipline that is unreasonable in the circumstances.

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Educators

- Contribute to the development and implementation of quality practices to meet the requirements of regulations 155 and 156.
- Promote quality practice approaches to interactions with children.
- Be aware of current child protection legislation, including mandatory reporting requirements and obligations.
- Monitor and maintain staff-to-child ratios to ensure adequate supervision of children.
- Support children in line with the strategies in the ACECQA Relationships with children information sheet.
- Support children by:
 - Being aware of their abilities, challenges, and unique needs, as well as supporting transitions.
- Creating physical environments, programs, and routines that allow children the time and resources needed for positive interactions with their peers.
- Supporting children to explore reciprocal rights and active community participation, fostering resilience and agency through activities that recognise children as capable and competent learners.
- Considering the pace and flow of the program that allows a balance of play experiences such as individual and group, quiet and noisy, active and passive experiences.
- Being intentional in planning and providing support to scaffold learning.
- Promoting a range of social skills such as group entry skills and negotiation to consider expectations, diversity, and democracy.
- Implementing flexible arrangements centered around children's routines, interests, and offering extended periods of uninterrupted play.
- Encouraging children to take on different roles within groups.
- Inviting children to collaborate with educators.

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CONSIDERATIONS:

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r73, r74, r76, r155, r156, r168.	1.1, 1.2, 1.3 2.2 5.1, 5.1.1, 5.1.2 5.2 5.2.1, 5.2.2 6.1, 6.2 7.1.1, 7.2.1	- Parent Handbook - Staff Handbook - Programming and evaluation records - Grievance and Disciplinary action Policy	My Time, Our Place Outcomes 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5.

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