

POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Document Name:	Child Safe Code of Conduct
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CHILD SAFE CODE OF CONDUCT

1. POLICY STATEMENT AND/OR PURPOSE

Catholic Early Learning and Care recognises the vital role that educators and volunteers play in creating environments that prioritise the safety and wellbeing of children. This Code of Conduct outlines the expected standards of behaviour for all educators, teachers, employees and volunteers who engage directly with children.

Adherence to this Code is mandatory. Any breach may result in disciplinary action, in accordance with organisational policies and relevant legislation.

This Code is informed by the **Child Safe Standards**, the **Universal Principle**, the **Early Childhood Australia (ECA) Code of Ethics**, and the **National Quality Standards**. It must be read alongside all applicable **Australian laws** relating to education, care, and the workplace, as well as the policies, procedures, and guidelines of Catholic Early Learning and Care services.

2. APPLICATION

This Child Safe Code of Conduct applies to all employees and volunteers of Catholic Early Learning and Care who engage directly with children.

All employees and volunteers are expected to actively support the Catholic Ethos and uphold the principles outlined in the *Statement of Principles for Employment in Catholic Education and Care*. Employment responsibilities and professional conduct must reflect a commitment to the Vision and Mission of Catholic Early Learning and Care.

In relation to **children**, employees and volunteers will:

- Act with the best interests of all children at heart.
- Promote the rights, safety and wellbeing of all children within the organisation.
- **ALWAYS** act with integrity by immediately reporting any concerns, allegations, disclosures or witnessing of child abuse in correlation with relevant laws and regulations and the organisation's policies and procedures. If a report needs to be made regarding a Nominated Supervisor, concerns need to be raised to a member of CELC management.
- Act with a sense of urgency, understanding that the Approved Provider is responsible for notifying the relevant regulatory authority within 24 hours of becoming aware of any incident, allegation, or complaint of physical or sexual abuse, as required under the Education and Care Services National Regulations.

- Cooperate fully with any internal or external investigations and maintain accurate records of all reports.
- Take all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse and harm.
- Foster safe, healthy, and inclusive environments that support children's agency and promote their learning.

Demonstrate a commitment to **growth and learning**:

- Contribute to the delivery of a rich and meaningful curriculum that balances child-led and educator-guided experiences.
- Understand and clearly communicate how play and leisure contribute to children's learning, development, and wellbeing.
- Honour childhood as a time to live in the present, not just as preparation for the future.
- Partner with children as global citizens to explore our shared responsibilities to the environment and humanity in conjunction with the Catholic Social Teaching.
- Recognise and strengthen the vital connection between children and their families through reflective practice.
- Uphold every child's right to be free from discrimination, regardless of gender, sexuality, age, ability, economic status, family structure, lifestyle, ethnicity, religion, language, culture, or national origin as stated in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)
- Respectfully involve and consider children in the design of the environment and development of the curriculum by considering their safety, privacy, energy levels, and interests.
- Acknowledge children as capable learners by incorporating their perspectives into teaching, learning, and assessment.

Follow the organisation's **Child-friendly Complaints Procedure**, which outlines how children can raise concerns and how those concerns will be responded to. Through this procedure:

- Support children to express concerns or complaints in ways that are safe, respectful, and age appropriate
- Ensure children know that they have the right to speak up and that their voices will be heard and taken seriously.
- Ensure that educators are actively listening to children's concerns and disclosures and respond appropriately by acting in line with the **Child Protection Policy**.
- Use language, tools, and strategies that are developmentally appropriate to help children understand how to make a complaint.
- Create an environment where children feel safe, supported, and confident to speak up without fear of retaliation or dismissal.

Protect the privacy and confidentiality of children's information, especially when using digital platforms, including photos, videos, and online communication:

- Use only approved devices and platforms for capturing or sharing children's information.
- Follow the organisation's **Digital Safety and Technology Use Policy**, which outlines protocols for online safety, device usage, and parental consent.
- Report any breaches or concerns related to digital safety in accordance with organisational procedures.

Actively promote the **cultural safety and inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children**:

- Respect and celebrate the diverse cultures, identities, and histories of First Nations children and families.
- Engage in culturally responsive practices that honour children's connection to Country, community, and kinship.
- Work in partnership with families and communities to create culturally safe environments and provide inclusive learning experiences

- Challenge racism and discrimination in all forms and advocate for equity and justice for First Nations children.

In relation to **families**, employees and volunteers will:

- Acknowledge families as children's first and most influential teachers and respect their right to make decisions about their children.
- Actively listen to and learn alongside families, engaging them in shared decision-making, planning, and assessment related to their child's learning, development, and wellbeing.
- Build respectful, open, and communicative relationships that encourage family engagement and foster a strong sense of belonging.
- Recognise and respond to the uniqueness of each family—their circumstances, culture, structure, customs, language, beliefs, and kinship systems—with genuine respect.
- Uphold families' right to privacy and maintain strict confidentiality ensuring that you are meeting all relevant Laws and Regulations.

In relation to the **profession**, employees and volunteers will:

- Develop their practice in current research, theoretical frameworks, content knowledge, evidence-based strategies, and a deep understanding of the children and families they work with.
- Take responsibility for expressing their professional values, knowledge, and practices, and for highlighting the positive impact of the profession on society.
- Engage in critical reflection and ongoing professional learning, and support research that enhances both their own knowledge and that of the broader profession.
- Work within the boundaries of their professional role, avoiding any misrepresentation of their qualifications or expertise.
- Promote ethical leadership and encourage its development within the profession.
- Demonstrate high-quality practice and offer constructive feedback and assessment to support students entering the field.
- Mentor new employees by guiding and supporting their transition into the profession.
- Advocate for the early childhood profession and for the delivery of high-quality education and care.

Educators and volunteers, will **not**:

- Engage in any unwarranted or unwanted physical contact, whether with hands, other body parts, or objects.
- Be alone with a child when there is no professional reason for doing so.
- Show favour to one child over others.
- "Friend" or engage with any children on any/all social media platforms including gaming platforms.
- Share or engage with children in any digital/visual/audio resources that are not age appropriate or are of sexual/explicit content.
- Engage in any child exploitation material.
- Initiate, allow or request inappropriate physical contact with children or young people, including massages, kisses, tickling, rough play or hugging that is not age appropriate or welcomed, or any other physical contact that could be considered intrusive or sexual in nature.
- Create or encourage situations that lead to unnecessary close physical contact, such as tickling or rough play, children sitting on educator's laps or picking up and carrying children for play or entertainment purposes.
- Perform personal care tasks, such as dressing, grooming, or toileting, that a child is capable of doing themselves.
- Use obscene, offensive, racist, sexist, homophobic, or culturally insensitive language.

- Engage in abusive or intimidating behaviour. This includes yelling, invading someone's personal space, pointing fingers, or speaking over others.
- Engage in any type of physical disciplining/shaming of children.
- Exhibit passive-aggressive behaviour – for example, deliberately ignoring, excluding, or dismissing others.
- Demonstrate threatening behaviour, including making physical or psychological threats intended to harm another person/children.
- Refer to children as nicknames or pet names other than the name identified in a child's enrolment record as a preferred name.

When engaging with children outside of the service refer to **Babysitting Policy**.

4. BREACHES OF THIS POLICY

Breaches of the Code

As employees and volunteers who hold positions of trust within the community, we are accountable for our actions. We each have an obligation to report suspected serious breaches of the code to our supervisor.

Proven breaches of the code may result in disciplinary action, including (but not limited to):

- Informal meeting and discussion.
- An official reprimand.
- Counselling.
- Implementation of misconduct procedures.
- Relocation to another work area.
- Termination of employment.

5. CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Catholic Early Learning and Care is committed to continuous improvement of child safety practices. To ensure our environments remain safe, inclusive, and responsive to the needs of children and families, we will:

- Regularly review and update the Child Safe Code of Conduct and related policies in line with legislative changes, best practice, and feedback from children, families, and staff.
- Monitor compliance with child safety procedures through audits, supervision, and reflective practice.
- Encourage feedback from children, families, and staff to inform improvements.
- Ensure all staff are informed of updates and receive ongoing training in child safety and protection.

6. ENQUIRIES

Catholic Early Learning and Care Director - admin@ccelc.catholic.org.au

7. SEE ALSO

Legislation

- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 - Regulation 168 2 (h)
- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010

8. APPROVAL



Alison Forster
Director
Catholic Early Learning and Care

Date: 25 September 2025