

Interactions with Children Policy

1. Purpose:

The Y Whittlesea is committed to maintaining the dignity and rights of each child. Children are encouraged to express themselves and their opinions, and to undertake experiences that develop self-reliance and self-esteem. This policy ensures the development of positive and respectful relationships between children as well as between children and staff at the service. Each child will be supported to learn and develop in a secure, safe and empowering environment.

2. Scope:

This policy applies to all operations and services of Y Whittlesea including all Board members, Sub Committee members, Educators and Volunteers.

3. Policy Statement

At Y Whittlesea, we are committed to upholding each child's dignity, agency, and rights through warm, respectful, and positive relationships. Our educators foster an environment where children are encouraged to express themselves, engage in meaningful experiences, and build self-esteem, resilience, and social connection.

We recognise that secure relationships form the foundation of effective learning and development. Therefore, all interactions between children and educators must be grounded in fairness, equity, respect, and inclusion, considering each child's individual background, abilities, and needs.

We ensure all children are cared for in a way that:

- Protects their rights and promotes self-worth
- Encourages self-expression, collaboration and empathy
- Prioritises safety, wellbeing, and positive behaviour guidance
- Respects cultural identity, family values, and developmental diversity
- Builds genuine, trusting partnerships with families to support each child's learning journey

4. Responsibilities:

Approved Provider

- Ensure compliance with the Education and Care Services National Law and Regulation
- Promote respectful and empowering interactions across the service
- Ensure:
 - Children's rights and dignity are upheld at all times
 - No child is subjected to corporal punishment or inappropriate discipline
 - The environment supports equity, safety, and inclusiveness
- Ensure all staff:
 - Meet qualification and supervision requirements
 - Are at least 18 years old and 'fit and proper'
 - Complete annual child protection and mandatory reporting training
 - Ensure all children are supported to:
 - Express themselves and build self-esteem
 - Engage in positive social relationships
 - Ensure notifiable complaints and serious incidents are reported to DET within 24 hours
 - Prevent contact with children where court orders prohibit adult access
 - Support the development of individual behaviour guidance plans in collaboration with families and professionals
 - Ensure policy accessibility for all stakeholders and promote awareness and compliance

Nominated Supervisor

- Implement and monitor this policy across the service
- Ensure staff and families understand and have access to the policy
- Reinforce expectations for respectful, positive, and appropriate interactions
- Maintain educator-to-child ratios and ensure adequate supervision
- Oversee the delivery of developmentally appropriate programs aligned to an approved learning framework
- Ensure staff:
 - Apply behaviour guidance strategies that are positive and respectful
 - Avoid all forms of unreasonable or inappropriate discipline
- Ensure staff:
 - Have up-to-date training in child protection and mandatory reporting
 - Are trained in documenting observations and behaviour plans
 - Ensure families are informed of their child's learning, development, behaviour and relationships through daily communication
 - Notify the Approved Provider of any notifiable complaint or serious incident
 - Prevent prohibited adults from having contact with children on-site
 - Facilitate individual behaviour guidance planning for children with diagnosed behavioural needs

Educators and Staff

- Foster nurturing, respectful, and inclusive relationships with all children
- Supervise children actively and maintain staff-to-child ratios
- Understand and implement positive behaviour guidance practices
- Know and follow current child protection and reporting obligations
- Develop and deliver educational programs based on:
 - Each child's interests, development and needs
 - Approved learning frameworks
- Promote:
 - Child voice and expression
 - Experiences that build independence and self-esteem
 - Respect for cultural identity and family values
 - Collaborate with families to support children's learning, behaviour, and relationships
 - Use respectful conflict resolution and behaviour support strategies
 - Document observations and evaluations to inform programming
 - Support the development and implementation of behaviour guidance plans, where required
 - Know it is an offence to use corporal punishment or any unreasonable or excessive discipline

5. Related policies, procedures and supporting resources:

- Child safe environment policy and procedure
- Diversity, equity and inclusion policy
- Safeguarding children and young people policy
- Code of conduct
- Dealing with complaints policy and procedure

6. Legislative and Industry Requirements: [Link here](#) to Legislative Compliance Register

7. Consequences of breaching this policy: All elements of this policy must be adhered to, and any breach will be dealt with in accordance with the [YMCA Whittlesea Disciplinary and Termination Policy](#).

- 8. Policy owner:** The General Manager of Early Years is responsible for keeping this policy current - including making amendments as required, and regular reviews as scheduled. Y Whittlesea reserves the right to vary, replace or terminate this policy from time to time.
- 9. Document Control:** Review of this policy will be undertaken every two years, or prior as required by law, in consultation with appropriate Y People.

Version:	Description of Amendment	Amended by	Date	Release Date
3.0	Review	M Rowse	15/7/25	July 2025
2.0	Separated Policy and Procedure	Farryn Burrill	5/10/2024	Oct 2024
1.0	Reviewed and approved	Children and families leadership team	29/03/2019	April 2019