



Interactions with Children

Policy Title	Interactions with Children
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Implementation Date	July 2026
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Policy Statement

SHARE OOSH is committed to providing a child safe, respectful and inclusive environment where every child's safety, dignity, rights and wellbeing are upheld in all interactions.

All interactions with children must be respectful, developmentally appropriate and guided by each child's individual needs, culture, family context, abilities and communication style. Educators will support children to express their views, participate in decisions that affect them, develop confidence and self-regulation, and build respectful relationships with other children and adults.

SHARE OOSH has zero tolerance for inappropriate conduct, inappropriate discipline, humiliation, intimidation, discrimination or behaviour that compromises a child's emotional or physical safety. This includes conduct directed towards children, and adult behaviour occurring in children's presence that may cause distress, model unsafe behaviour, or undermine a child safe environment.

This policy outlines SHARE OOSH's expectations for interactions with children and for supporting relationships between children. Professional boundaries, reportable conduct, child safe reporting, behaviour guidance and digital interactions are addressed in related SHARE OOSH policies and must be read alongside this policy.

Definitions

Adult	Any staff member, educator, Responsible Person, volunteer, student, contractor, visitor, family member or other adult present at, or involved with, the service.
Approved Provider	The individual or organisation that holds legal responsibility for the operation and management of an education and care service under the Education and Care Services National Law.
Child safe interaction	An interaction that protects a child's safety, dignity, rights and wellbeing, and is respectful, appropriate, observable where practicable, and consistent with professional boundaries.
Children's agency	A child's ability to make choices, express views, contribute to decisions and participate meaningfully in matters that affect them.
Children's rights	The rights of children to safety, dignity, respect, participation, inclusion and protection from harm. SHARE supports, and advocates for the United Nations Conventions of the Rights of the Child.
Dignity	Treating each child as a person of value by respecting their feelings, privacy, identity, culture, views, abilities and individual needs.
Inappropriate conduct	Conduct that a reasonable person would consider inappropriate in an education and care service, as defined under Section 5AA of the Children (Education and Care Services) National Law (NSW). It includes behaviour inconsistent with professional standards, likely to cause harm, or having violent or sexual connotations. A child's consent is not relevant in determining whether conduct is inappropriate.
Inappropriate discipline	The use of discipline that is prohibited under the Education and Care Services National Regulations, including corporal punishment or discipline that humiliates, frightens or threatens a child (Regulation 155).
Nominated Supervisor	A person designated by the Approved Provider who has day-to-day responsibility for the management and operation of the education and care service in accordance with the National Law and National Regulations.
Observable interactions	Interactions with children that occur in open, visible or accountable contexts, reducing the risk of secrecy, isolation or boundary concerns.
Positive guidance	Respectful, developmentally appropriate guidance that supports children to understand expectations, regulate behaviour, build skills and repair relationships without shame, intimidation or inappropriate discipline.

Professional boundaries	The clear limits that ensure adult interactions with children remain safe, respectful, transparent, role-appropriate and focused on the child's wellbeing.
Relationships between children	The peer interactions, friendships, group dynamics and social experiences that children are supported to build and maintain in safe, respectful and inclusive ways.
Responsible Person	A person who is placed in day-to-day charge of an education and care service in accordance with the Education and Care Services National Regulations when the Nominated Supervisor is not present.

NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD (NQS)

QUALITY AREA 1: EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM AND PRACTICE

1.1.2	Child-centred	Each child's current knowledge, strengths, ideas, culture, abilities and interests are the foundation of the program.
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QUALITY AREA 2: CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND SAFETY

2.2	Safety	Each child is protected.
2.2.1	Supervision	At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from harm and hazard.
2.2.3	Child safety and protection	Management, educators and staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities regarding child safety, including the need to identify and respond to every child at risk of abuse or neglect.

QUALITY AREA 4: STAFFING ARRANGEMENTS

4.2	Professionalism	Management, educators and staff are collaborative, respectful and ethical.
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4.2.2	Professional Standards	Professional standards guide practice, interactions and relationships.
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QUALITY AREA 5: RELATIONSHIPS WITH CHILDREN

5.1	Relationships between educators and children	Respectful and equitable relationships are maintained with each child.
5.1.1	Positive educator to child interactions	Responsive and meaningful interactions build trusting relationships which engage and support each child to feel secure, confident and included.
5.1.2	Dignity and rights of the child	The dignity and rights of every child are maintained.
5.2	Relationships between children	Each child is supported to build and maintain sensitive and responsive relationships.
5.2.1	Collaborative learning	Children are supported to collaborate, learn from and help each other.
5.2.2	Self-regulation	Each child is supported to regulate their own behaviour, respond appropriately to the behaviour of others and communicate effectively to resolve conflicts.

QUALITY AREA 6: PARTNERSHIPS WITH FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

6.1.2	Parent views are respected	The expertise, culture, values and beliefs of families are respected, and families share in decision-making about their child's learning and wellbeing.
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QUALITY AREA 7: GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP

7.1.2	Management systems	Systems are in place to manage risk and enable the effective management and operation of a quality service.
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Legislative And Regulatory References

EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL LAW	
2A	Paramount consideration - safety, rights and best interests of children
3A	Paramount consideration
5AA	Meaning of "inappropriate conduct" in relation to child
162A	Child protection training
162B	Child safety training
165	Offence to inadequately supervise children
166	Offence to use inappropriate discipline
166A	Offence to subject child to inappropriate conduct
167	Offence relating to protection of children from harm and hazards
168	Offence relating to required programs
169	Offence relating to staffing arrangements
174	Offence to fail to notify certain information to Regulatory Authority
174AA	Educators and other staff members of education and care service to notify certain information
174AB	Approved Provider must notify Regulatory Authority of event under section 174AA
EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL REGULATIONS	

Reg. 73	Educational program
Reg. 84	Awareness of child protection law
Reg. 115	Premises designed to facilitate supervision
Reg. 118	Educational leader
Reg. 122	Educators must be working directly with children to be included in ratios
Reg. 123	Educator to child ratios - centre-based services
Reg. 145	Staff record
Reg. 149	Volunteers and students
Reg. 155	Interactions with children
Reg. 156	Relationships in groups
Reg. 157	Access for parents
Reg. 168	Education and care service must have policies and procedures
Reg. 168(2)(j)	Interactions with children, including the matters set out in regulations 155 and 156
Reg. 170	Policies and procedures to be followed
Reg. 171	Policies and procedures to be kept available
Reg. 172	Notification of change to policies or procedures
Reg. 175	Prescribed information to be notified to Regulatory Authority
Reg. 176	Time to notify certain information to Regulatory Authority

Related Policies

- Behaviour Guidance
- Child Safe Reporting
- Child Safeguarding and Professional Conduct
- Code of Conduct
- Enrolment and Orientation
- Governance & Management
- Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness
- Management of Complaints
- Providing a Child Safe Environment
- Safe Use of Digital Technologies and Online Environments
- Staffing
- Supervision of Children

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline how SHARE OOSH promotes safe, respectful and meaningful interactions with children.

This policy supports staff, volunteers and students to:

- uphold each child's dignity, rights, safety and wellbeing
- build trusting, positive and developmentally appropriate relationships with children
- support children to express their views, make choices and participate in the program
- guide children's behaviour through respectful, relationship-based practice
- support positive relationships between children
- maintain professional boundaries and identify interactions or conduct that may compromise child safety
- ensure concerns about interactions with children are responded to promptly and in line with related SHARE OOSH policies.

Guiding Principles

SHARE OOSH is guided by the following principles when interacting with children:

- **Child Safety and Wellbeing** - Children's safety, rights and best interests are the paramount consideration in all interactions, decisions and responses.
- **Respect, Dignity and Inclusion** - Every child is treated with respect and supported in a way that recognises their age, development, abilities, culture, identity, communication style and family context.

- **Children's Voice and Agency** - Children are supported to express their views, make choices, contribute to the program and raise concerns in ways that are safe, accessible and taken seriously.
- **Positive Relationships and Professional Boundaries** - Interactions with children are warm, respectful, transparent and appropriate. Adults model safe and respectful behaviour, including in how they speak to each other in children's presence.

Procedures

1. Positive interactions with children

SHARE OOSH will ensure interactions with children are warm, respectful, responsive and appropriate to each child's age, development, abilities, culture, identity, communication style and circumstances.

Educators will:

- speak with children respectfully and use language, tone and body language that supports safety and trust
- listen to children and take their views, feelings and concerns seriously
- support children to understand expectations, routines and boundaries
- encourage children's confidence, self-reliance, self-esteem and sense of belonging
- avoid any interaction that is humiliating, threatening, intimidating, discriminatory, dismissive or degrading.

2. Children's voice, choice and participation

Children will be supported to express their views, make choices and contribute to the program, routines and environments at SHARE OOSH.

Educators will provide age-appropriate opportunities for children to:

- share ideas, feedback and concerns
- contribute to program planning and service routines
- make meaningful choices about play, leisure and participation
- understand how their feedback has been considered or acted on.

3. Supporting relationships between children

Educators will actively support children to build respectful, inclusive and positive relationships with other children.

This includes:

- modelling respectful communication and conflict resolution
- supporting children to collaborate, negotiate, problem-solve and repair relationships
- responding promptly to exclusion, bullying, discrimination or unsafe peer interactions
- considering group size, group composition, developmental needs and supervision when planning activities and environments.

4. Professional boundaries and child safe interactions

All interactions with children must remain professional, transparent and consistent with the Child Safeguarding and Professional Conduct Policy.

Educators, staff, volunteers and students must:

- maintain appropriate professional boundaries with children
- ensure physical contact is appropriate, necessary and respectful
- avoid favouritism, secrecy, private arrangements or conduct that could reasonably be viewed as inappropriate
- ensure interactions are observable wherever practicable
- use digital technologies only in accordance with the Safe Use of Digital Technologies and Online Environments Policy.

5. Behaviour guidance within interactions

Children's behaviour will be guided through respectful, relationship-based practice that protects each child's dignity and rights.

Educators will not use corporal punishment, inappropriate discipline, shame, threats, isolation, intimidation, yelling, humiliation, or the withholding of food, comfort or basic needs.

Where a child requires support to regulate or participate safely, educators will respond in accordance with the Behaviour Guidance Policy.

6. Adult conduct in children's presence

Adults at SHARE OOSH must model respectful and child safe behaviour in children's presence.

Staff, volunteers, students, visitors and families must not engage in behaviour around children that may cause distress, model unsafe conduct or undermine a child safe environment. This includes aggressive communication, yelling, intimidation, conflict between adults, or comments that are inappropriate for children to hear.

7. Concerns involving children

Adults must not directly approach, question, discipline, confront or attempt to resolve matters with another person's child at the service.

Concerns about a child's behaviour, interactions or safety must be raised with an educator, Responsible Person or the Nominated Supervisor so the matter can be managed fairly, safely and in line with SHARE OOSH policies.

8. Responding to concerns about interactions

Any concern that an interaction with a child may be inappropriate, unsafe, harmful, a breach of professional boundaries, or inconsistent with this policy must be acted on promptly.

Concerns must be escalated in accordance with the relevant SHARE OOSH policy, including the Child Safe Reporting Policy, Child Safeguarding and Professional Conduct Policy, Management of Complaints Policy, Behaviour Guidance Policy, Supervision of Children Policy, or Incident, Injury, Illness and Trauma Policy.

Roles and Responsibilities

ROLE	RESPONSIBLE FOR
Approved Provider	- Ensuring the service has a compliant Interactions with Children Policy and that reasonable steps are taken for the policy to be followed. - Ensuring governance, staffing, training and supervision arrangements support safe, respectful and appropriate interactions with children.
Nominated Supervisor	- Leading a child safe culture and ensuring staff understand and apply this policy. - Responding to concerns about interactions with children and escalating matters under the relevant SHARE OOSH policy where required.
Responsible Persons	- Supporting educators to maintain safe, respectful and professional interactions during each session. - Responding to concerns raised by children, staff or families and escalating any child safety, conduct, behaviour or supervision concerns as required.
Educators	- Building positive, respectful and developmentally appropriate relationships with children. - Supporting children's voice, choice, self-regulation, peer relationships and inclusion. - Maintaining professional boundaries and reporting any interaction or conduct concern promptly.
Families	- Treating children, staff and other adults respectfully while at the service. - Raising concerns with staff rather than directly approaching, questioning, disciplining or confronting another person's child.
Other Staff	Modelling respectful conduct in children's presence and following SHARE OOSH expectations for child safe

	behaviour, professional boundaries, privacy and escalation of concerns.
Students/Volunteers	• Interacting with children respectfully and only within their role, under staff direction and supervision. • Following this policy and raising any concerns with an educator, Responsible Person or the Nominated Supervisor.

Induction and Ongoing Training

SHARE OOSH will ensure staff, volunteers and students are made aware of their responsibilities for safe, respectful and appropriate interactions with children.

As part of induction, staff, volunteers and students will be introduced to this policy and related expectations, including:

- positive and respectful communication with children
- children's dignity, rights, voice and participation
- professional boundaries and child safe conduct
- appropriate supervision and observable interactions
- supporting positive relationships between children
- behaviour guidance and regulation support
- responding to concerns about interactions, conduct or child safety.

Ongoing training and reflective practice will be provided through staff meetings, supervision, professional development, policy review, incident reflection and updates to child safety requirements.

Training will be guided by staff roles and responsibilities and must be read alongside SHARE OOSH's Child Safeguarding and Professional Conduct Policy, Child Safe Reporting Policy, Behaviour Guidance Policy, Supervision Policy and Safe Use of Digital Technologies and Online Environments Policy.

Monitoring, Evaluation, and Review Process

Monitoring

SHARE OOSH will monitor the implementation of this policy through regular observation of educator practice, supervision of daily interactions, review of incident and behaviour records, child and family feedback, staff reflection, and management review of any concerns relating to interactions with children.

Responsible Persons and the Nominated Supervisor will support educators to address practice concerns promptly and reinforce expectations for respectful, professional and child safe interactions.

Evaluation

The effectiveness of this policy will be evaluated by considering whether:

- children are treated with dignity, respect and fairness
- children feel safe, heard and included
- educators are consistently applying positive, relationship-based practice
- concerns about interactions, inappropriate conduct or inappropriate discipline are identified, documented and responded to appropriately
- patterns in incidents, behaviour records, complaints or feedback indicate a need for further training, supervision or policy review.

Review

This policy will be reviewed at least every two years, or earlier if required due to legislative or regulatory changes, incidents, complaints, child safety concerns, updates to related SHARE OOSH policies, or feedback from children, families, staff or the Management Committee.

Any changes to this policy will be communicated to staff and families as required, and the current version will be made available in accordance with the Education and Care Services National Regulations.