
ARANDA AFTERS ASSOCIATION INCORPORATED



RELATIONSHIPS WITH CHILDREN POLICY

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PAGE

1	REFERENCES	2
	NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARDS	2
	NATIONAL REGULATIONS	2
	MY TIME OUR PLACE	2
2	AIM	3
3	IMPLEMENTATION	3
	INTERACTIONS WITH CHILDREN	3
4	GROUP RELATIONSHIPS	5
5	BEHAVIOUR GUIDANCE	6
6	PROMOTING POSITIVE AND COOPERATIVE BEHAVIOUR	7
7	INCLUSION	8
8	SUPPORTING CHILDREN THROUGH DIFFICULT SITUATIONS	9
	COPING MECHANISMS	10
9	BULLYING	11
10	BITING	11
11	TEMPORARY WITHDRAWAL OF A STUDENT’S PLACE DUE TO UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR	12
12	SOURCES	13

1 REFERENCES

NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARDS

5.1.1	Interactions with each child are warm, responsive and build trusting relationships.
5.1.2	Each child is able to engage with educators in meaningful, open interactions that support the acquisition of skills for life and learning.
5.1.3	Each child is supported to feel secure, confident and included.
5.2.1	Each child is supported to work with, learn from and help others through collaborative learning opportunities.
5.2.2	Each child is supported to manage their own behaviour, respond appropriately to the behaviour of others and communicate effectively to resolve conflicts.
5.2.3	The dignity and the rights of every child are maintained at all times.

NATIONAL REGULATIONS

155	Interactions with children
156	Relationships in groups

MY TIME OUR PLACE

LO1	Children feel safe, secure, and supported
	Children develop their emerging autonomy, inter-dependence, resilience and sense of agency
	Children develop knowledgeable and confident self-identities
	Children learn to interact in relation to others with care, empathy and respect
LO2	Children develop a sense of belonging to groups and communities and an understanding of the reciprocal rights and responsibilities necessary for active community participation
	Children respond to diversity with respect
	Children become aware of fairness
	Children become socially responsible and show respect for the environment

2 AIM

Aranda Afters Association Incorporated [Aranda Afters] aims ensure that all educators form positive relationships with children that make them feel safe and supported in the Service. Educators will encourage positive relationships between children and their peers as well as with educators and volunteers at the Service.

3 IMPLEMENTATION

Our Service's statement of philosophy will guide our interactions with children as follows:

At Aranda Afters we recognise the importance of middle childhood as a time of dynamic, complex and holistic learning, where children construct their own understandings and contribute to others learning.

3.1 We believe our aim is achieved when:

- The children can choose to engage in balanced, fun, educational and interesting experiences which are based on the My Time Our Place Curriculum Framework.
- The children receive good healthy food in a timely manner.
- The children are encouraged to follow safety guidelines, use common sense, show respect and self-discipline.
- Their leaders are consistently good role models, who interact with the children, show and encourage respect and self-discipline, honesty and compassion and communicate well with each other, children and parents.
- There is an underlying order to the program.
- The interest and involvement of all in the Afters community is encouraged by ensuring lines of communication are open, honest and ongoing and that important information is given to all stakeholders in a clear and easy to understand manner.
- Feedback on all aspects of our program is required, valued and encouraged.
- Everyone is being listened to and their needs are respected.
- Everyone strives for a safe, clean and tidy environment.
- The program is run as efficiently and cost effectively as possible by the Committee, and community in consultation, to reduce unnecessary costs and waste of resources.

Parents are more than welcome to provide feedback into our philosophy – does it reflect what you think about Aranda Afters? If you wish to discuss or provide feedback please talk to us or email us at aaainc@bigpond.com

INTERACTIONS WITH CHILDREN

In order to maintain positive interactions with children our service and educators will maintain the following.

3.2 Our service will

- Provide a relaxed and happy atmosphere for the children.

- Ensure mealtimes are relaxed and unhurried and educators take the time to sit and talk with children.
- Implement strategies to assist all children to develop a sense of belonging and confidence through positive interactions between the children and educators.
- Plan our rosters in a way that promotes continuity for children.
- Gather information from families in the enrolment form in order to be able to provide support for children during the settling in process.
- Ensure that we promote equity and inclusion for all children.
- Will, as required, consult with other professionals or support agencies that work with children who have special needs to gather information that will guide our interactions with these children. This information will be recorded in the child's file.
- Ensure that educators document the knowledge gained about children, through their interactions, in the child's file for reference for other educators and will continually review the experiences that are planned for children in light of this information.
- Ensure our routines, as well as planned and spontaneous experiences, are organised to maximise opportunity for meaningful conversations between children and educators.
- Ensure that all children have equal opportunity to engage in one to one and small group conversations with educators.
- Ensure our statement of philosophy and policy on interactions with children are accessible to families.

3.3 Our nominated supervisors and educators will:

- Learn more about the histories, cultures, languages, traditions, child rearing practices and lifestyle choices of families using the service.

3.4 Our educators and program coordinators will:

- Use information from their observations of interactions with children to extend the children's thinking and learning.

3.5 Our educators will:

- Encourage children to initiate conversations about their experiences inside and outside the service as well as what is happening around them, express their ideas and feelings, share humour with the nominated supervisor, educators, coordinators and educators and seek assistance as they take on new challenges and try to do things for themselves.
- Respond sensitively and appropriately to children's efforts to communicate and engage them in sustained conversations about their interests in a positive manner.
- Engage in two way communication with children, by encouraging children to have their own opinions, ideas and comments. Educators should support children with this and let them know that their ideas are valued.
- Participate in children's play using children's cues to guide their level and type of involvement while always maintaining a positive approach when responding to children and offering assistance.

- Take into account our children’s needs for independence and will enable them to spend a large amount of time with their peers, provide leadership opportunities and allow them to be involved in decision making processes.
- Model reasoning, prediction and reflection processes and language.
- Collaborate with children about routines and experiences.
- Use techniques such as sign language and other resources and tools to support children with additional needs.
- Use their interactions with children to support the maintenance of home languages and learning English as an additional language.
- Allow time to talk to parents about their children. This allows educators to gain insight into their home life.

4 GROUP RELATIONSHIPS

In order to encourage respectful and positive relationships between children and their peers and educators our service will adhere to the following practices.

4.1 Our service will:

- Encourage children to participate in enjoyable interactions with their peers, respond positively to ideas, negotiate roles and relationships, contribute to shared play, and develop friendships.
- Ensure that the children have many opportunities to learn about their responsibilities to other, connectedness and interdependence as learners, and the value of collaboration and teamwork.
- Coordinate the staffing and grouping arrangements to support positive relationships between children.
- Ensure that the program and routines of the service will include regular opportunities for children to engage in social play and group experiences.
- Ensure that food is being used appropriately and not as a reward or punishment.
- Ensure that corporal punishment is not used as part of behaviour guidance or any other aspect of our interactions with children. Corporal punishment is never to be used in our service.

4.2 Our educators will:

- Engage children in ongoing group projects that involve research, planning, problem solving and shared decision making.
- Model strategies for children to initiate interactions and participate in group play and social activities and assist them when they have trouble understanding or communicating with each other.
- Promote a sense of community in the service.
- Support and promote children’s interpersonal relationships and support the inclusion of children from diverse backgrounds and capabilities in group play, projects and experiences.
- Learn about children’s shared interests and will use this information to plan further experiences that provide collaborative learning opportunities.

- Pre-empt potential conflicts or challenging behaviours by monitoring children’s play and supporting interactions where there is conflict.
- Consider whether the size and composition of groups enables children to develop positive relationships with their peers and educators. They will minimise the time children spend in very large groups by offering activities where children are able to participate in smaller groups.

5 BEHAVIOUR GUIDANCE

The behaviour guidance we provide children with will be guided by the following practices.

5.1 Our service will:

- Encourage children to engage in cooperative and pro-social behaviour and express their feelings and responses to others’ behaviour confidently and constructively, including challenging the behaviour of other children when it is disrespectful or unfair.
- Gather information from families about their children’s social skills and relationship preferences and record this information in the child’s file. Our educators will use this information to engage children in experiences that support children to develop and practice their social and shared decision making skills.
- Collaborate with schools and other professionals or support agencies that work with children who have diagnosed behavioural or social difficulties to develop plans for the inclusion of these specific children. These will be kept in the individual child’s file.
- Ensure that children are being allowed to make choices and experience the consequences of these choices when there is no risk of physical or emotional harm to the child or anyone else.
- Ensure that children are being acknowledged when they make positive choices in managing their behaviour.
- Have strategies to enable educators to encourage positive behaviour in children while minimising negative behaviour. We will also have strategies in place to involve children in developing behaviour limits and the consequences of inappropriate behaviour.
- Have strategies for the nominated supervisor and educators to manage situations when a child’s behaviour is particularly challenging and when families have different expectations from the service in relation to guiding children’s behaviour.
- Support educators to enhance their skills and knowledge in relation to guiding children’s behaviour.

5.2 Our educators will:

- Support children to explore different identities and points of view and to communicate effectively when resolving disagreements with others.
- Discuss emotions, feelings and issues of inclusion and fairness, bias and prejudice and the consequences of their actions and the reasons for this as well as the appropriate rules.
- Encourage children to listen to other children’s ideas, consider alternate behaviour and cooperate in problem solving situations.

- Listen empathetically to children when they express their emotions, reassure them that it is normal to experience positive and negative emotions and guide children to remove themselves from situations where they are experiencing frustration, anger or fear.
- Support children to negotiate their rights and rights of others and intervene sensitively when children experience difficulty in resolving a disagreement.
- Learn about children’s relationships with others and the relationship preferences they have and use this knowledge to support children manage their own behaviour and develop empathy.
- Work with each child’s family and, where applicable, their school, to ensure that a consistent approach is used to support children with diagnosed behavioural or social difficulties.
- Use positive language, gestures, facial expressions and tone of voice when redirecting or discussing children’s behaviour with them. They will also remain calm, gentle, patient and reassuring even when children strongly express distress, frustration or anger.
- Guide all children’s behaviour in ways that are focused on preserving and promoting children’s self-esteem as well as supporting children to develop skills to self-regulate their behaviour.

6 PROMOTING POSITIVE AND COOPERATIVE BEHAVIOUR

6.1 Aranda Afters follows the Aranda Primary School philosophy that a consistent approach to student management is the most effective way to achieve an environment where:

- Students are responsible for their own choices and behaviour; and
- Students understand the choices they make can have consequences.

6.2 Students will have opportunities to:

- Develop friendly, harmonious and positive relationships with peers and adults.
- Respect and value other students, staff, parents/carers and their opinions.
- Accept responsibility for choices and actions.
- Be aware of, and engage in, safe practices.

6.3 Students attending Aranda Afters will be provided with opportunities to focus on developing **respect** and **responsibility** for:

- **Themselves** by following the health and hygiene rules; such as washing their hands before eating; and wearing sunscreen, sun safe clothes, hats and jumpers.
- **Peers** by respecting and giving space to others, sharing, including others in play experiences, speaking nicely and considering everyone’s feelings and rights children in all activities.
- **Educators** by listening to, and trusting, the educators and vice versa. The educators are there to keep students safe and support their play and learning.
- **The equipment** by using it properly, using it in the right place and putting it away.
- **The boundaries** by playing where they are allowed and staying where an educator can see them.
- **The environment** by demonstrating an increasing awareness of the impact of human activity on natural and constructed environments and the interdependence of living things.

6.4 Everyone has the right to:

- Learn.
- Be respected.
- Feel safe.
- Have property their respected.

We are all **responsible** for this.

7 INCLUSION

Australia is a pluralistic society regardless of specific regional variations in cultural profiles. In order to reduce bias and ensure that no child is excluded our service will abide by the following practices.

7.1 Our service will:

- Promote and value cultural diversity and equity for all children, families and educators from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds.
- Recognise that children and adults from all cultures have similar needs and that each person is unique and valuable.
- Develop a positive self-concept for each child and adult in the group by exploring the cultural backgrounds of each family and child.
- Endeavour to provide a foundation that instils in each child a sense of self identity, dignity and tolerance for all people.
- Increase the knowledge and understanding each child has about his or her own cultural ethnic heritage in partnership with their family, educators and community and other children in the Service.
- Explore family compositions, customs and lifestyles of children and families in many cultures.
- Assist, in partnership with parents, extended family and the community in exploring their own “roots” as they involve children in the culturally diverse environment of the service.
- Provide support for fostered or adopted children to develop a sense of heritage and belonging.
- Avoid common stereotypes and recognise individual differences within a cultural or ethnic group.
- Assist, wherever possible, families who are new to Australia with a transition to a new and different culture.
- Help children to develop ease with and have a respect for physical, racial, religious and cultural differences.
- Encourage children to develop autonomy, independence, competency, confidence and pride.
- Provide all children with accurate and appropriate material that provides information about their own and other’s disabilities and cultures.
- Not isolate a child for any reason other than illness, accident or a prearranged appointment with parental consent.

7.2 Our educators will:

- Become aware of their own beliefs, attitudes, cultural backgrounds, their relationship with the larger society and their attitudes to people.
- Acknowledge that they too have been influenced by their own background prejudices and their points of view.
- Accept that all children can learn and that differences in lifestyles and languages does not mean ignorance.
- Broaden their own cultural and ethnic group awareness and help children to understand themselves in relation to their family, community and other cultures.
- Be actively involved in the development of appropriate resources, support and implement an anti-bias, cross cultural program throughout the Service environment which is reflective of all families/children and the diversity present in Australian society and network with community agencies involved with cross cultural issues wherever possible.
- Be actively involved with children, showing respect, sharing ideas and experiences and asking questions.
- Access and make available resources and information supporting the delivery of anti-bias concepts in the program and attend regular training courses as required. Such resources will be integrated into the daily program and be made available to families.
- Reflect on the service's philosophy and ensure that practices and attitude concur with the philosophy.
- Work with families to encourage positive attitudes to diversity and an ant-bias ethos.
- Ensure that casual workers or visitors to the service are aware of these practices and respect these values.

7.3 Children will:

- Be encouraged to become increasingly independent wherever possible and be actively involved with their peers.
- Be provided with opportunities to explore aspects of different cultures.

8 SUPPORTING CHILDREN THROUGH DIFFICULT SITUATIONS

When a child, family, educator or the service as a whole experiences a stressful or traumatic situation such as a bushfire, car accident, sudden illness or death, crime or violent situation it is important to provide appropriate support so they can recover from the ordeal.

A child's reaction to a stressful or traumatic situation will depend on factors such as their age, stage of development and impact of the event on people around them. A child may react in ways that you don't expect and sometimes will act normally at first but be wary of a delayed reaction.

8.1 Some reactions include:

- Physical symptoms such as stomach aches and headaches.
- Being anxious or clingy.

- Suffering from separation anxiety.
- Having sleeping problems or nightmares.
- Re-living the experience through drawing or play.
- Losing interest in activities.
- Loss of self-confidence.
- Regressing to “babyish” activities.

8.2 Our educators will talk with a child about the event to bring any issues out into the open. The ways our educators will approach this are by:

- Reassuring the child that they are safe, but only if they really are.
- Talking to the child about what happened in a way that they will understand and without going into frightening or graphic detail. Our educators will not leave out important information though, as children will fill in the gaps.
- Ensuring the child hasn’t jumped to conclusions. Some children will think they are to blame in a tragic event; our educators will make sure they know this isn’t so.
- Talking about the event with appropriate people (for example, all children if the event has affected the whole service or the children that have been affected) and letting everyone have their say including children.
- Talking to the children about how people react to stressful or traumatic situations and that the feelings they are feelings are normal.

COPING MECHANISMS

8.3 Some strategies that our educators will use to help children cope in these situations are:

- Giving children a sense of control of their environment and life. Letting the child make decisions, for example, about the daily indoor or outdoor activities will make the child feel more in control.
- Allowing the children plenty of time to play and to do physical exercise; this will help the child burn off stress chemicals and allow for more sleep.
- Helping the children physically relax with quiet activities.
- Limiting stimulants like chocolate, lollies etc.

It is important to remember how you respond to the stressful or traumatic event will affect the child’s response. Children look to their families and educators to find ways to deal with a situation they probably don’t understand. Children need their family members (and other adults who are close to them) to help them understand the situation and their emotions and also offer comfort and support. If adults are distressed about a situation it is important for them to seek help for themselves.

At the service, we wish to help in whatever way we can if your family has undergone a tragedy. Talk to educators (or confidentially to the Nominated Supervisor) and we will endeavour to work with families and children to support all parties through the situation.

Should it be required, educators will liaise with appropriate authorities, such as the Community Services Directorate and follow any recommendations made by these authorities.

9 BULLYING

In order to overcome bullying in our service, our educators will be aware of the following information and maintain the following practices:

9.1 Our educators will be aware of the following characteristics in children who bully:

- Children of all backgrounds can bully.
- Preconceived notions of children who bully should be avoided.
- The child who bullies may also be the victim of bullying.
- The child who bullies will often think that they are innocent, and that the child being bullied is somehow deserving of this negative experience.

9.2 Our educators will be aware of the following characteristics of victims of bullying:

- Children of all backgrounds can fall victim to bullying.
- Preconceived notions of children who fall victim to bullying should be avoided.
- Victims may have low self-esteem, lack of confidence, lack social skills or be viewed as unpopular.
- It is important to remember that victims are often sensitive and easily hurt, and feel incapable of preventing such negative experiences.

9.3 Our educators will implement the following strategies to overcome bullying by:

- Demonstrating an all-encompassing and socially inclusive care.
- Implementing programs that recognise, value and reflect the social and cultural diversity of our community.
- Modelling and actively encourage appropriate behaviours.
- Forming a close relationship with family members in order to work cooperatively to overcome instances of bullying.
- Empowering children by giving them responsibilities that will make them feel valued.
- Helping children deal with their anger. This includes offering alternative dispute resolution techniques that are socially acceptable.
- Seeking the support of children's services professionals when it is necessary.
- Responding promptly to children's aggressive or bullying behaviour.

10 BITING

All individuals involved in the care of a child need to recognise that at times, some children, for a variety of reasons, attempt to bite other children.

In the event of a biting incident, educators will observe the following procedure:

- Check for broken skin.
- Clean all bites, regardless of whether the skin is broken or not.

- Apply a cold compress to the bitten area
- Contact the families of the child who has bitten and the child that has been bitten as soon as possible. Families are then responsible for any follow up medical treatment.
- If the biter is a known infectious disease carrier, or can be seen to have facial herpes and the victim's skin is broken, the Nominated Supervisor or Authorised Supervisor will convey this information to the family.
- Should the behaviour continue, our educators will work in conjunction with families and, if necessary, external agencies, to develop a Behaviour Guidance plan for the child who is biting.
- Complete an incident report for any occasion where a child bites and submit it to the Nominated Supervisor.
- Monitor the behaviour of the child who has bitten and use distraction techniques to prevent the child reaching the point where the child feels the need to bite.

11 WITHDRAWAL OF A STUDENT'S ENROLMENT DUE TO UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR

If all reasonable measures to assist a student improve their behaviour have not been successful it may be necessary to temporarily withdraw the right of the student to attend the service.

The student's parent(s)/carer(s) will be consulted and informed of the behaviour(s) which have been causing concern and what the service has done to address these concerns before implementing this course of action.

11.1 Temporary Withdrawal of a Student's Enrolment.

The purpose of a temporary withdrawal of a student's enrolment will be to:

- Restore a safe working and operating environment at the service for children and staff.
- Allow Aranda Afters time to review our practices and establish support plans for the student.
- Communicate the significance of the behaviour and for the student to accept responsibility for behaviour change.

11.2 Termination of Enrolment.

A student who poses an extreme threat to the welfare and safety of students and staff may have their enrolment terminated.

This would only occur in exceptional circumstances when the support required to establish a safe work environment is beyond the resources of Aranda Afters to:

- Provide a safe environment for students and staff.
- Establish the resources and support necessary to assist the student.

11.3 Procedural Fairness.

The rules of procedural fairness or natural justice require that in respect of any decision the student must be given a reasonable opportunity to be heard and that an impartial decision will be made.

A reasonable opportunity to be heard requires that the student and their parent(s)/carer(s) understand:

- The behaviours that have caused concern.
- What action has already been taken to address these concerns and behaviour prior to implementing this course of action.
- That the Director, or delegate, has considered their response before making the final decision to temporarily withdraw the student's place at the service.
- They have the right to appeal.

The right of a person to an impartial decision includes:

- The right to impartiality in the investigation and decision-making phases.
- The right to an absence of bias in the decision-maker.

12 SOURCES

- National Quality Standard.
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011.
- My Time, Our Place Framework for School Aged Care.