

PARENTAL ACCESS AND INVOLVEMENT POLICY

PURPOSE

This policy will outline how parents/guardians access and involvement is to be provided.

POLICY STATEMENT

1. VALUES

Woodridge Pre-school is committed to:

- Promoting and providing opportunities for parents/guardians involvement in all components of program delivery and the management of the centre.
- Recognising parents/guardians are the first and continuing carers and educators of their children.
- Listening to parents/guardians knowledge of their child to ensure the program provided is responsive to the individual needs of each child.
- Fostering a spirit of cooperation between the parents/guardians of the children attending the centre, staff and the committee/board.
- Compliance with all funding and legislative requirements.
- Supporting a culture that is sensitive to the cultural and social background of families attending the centre.

While the centre acknowledges parents/guardians access and involvement is an integral part of the operation of the centre, the staff and the committee's duty of care to the children is of prime consideration and it will take precedence over parents/guardians participation in the program if this is deemed to place the children at risk.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to parents/guardians, staff and the committee of the centre.

3. BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATION

Background

Centres in receipt of kindergarten funding from the Department of Education are required to ensure that:

- The children's centre is sensitive to the cultural and social backgrounds of the families, their lifestyles and their child-rearing practices and that their parents/guardians are involved in addressing issues relating to their child care and development.
- A range of communication strategies is in place to enable and encourage parents/guardians participation in kindergarten activities, including input into kindergarten policy, decision making, quality assessment processes, and user satisfaction surveys, parents/guardians participation in the planning/operation of the centre, and in addressing issues relating to children's care and development.
- They have in place access and equity policies that are clear, fair and comply with legislative requirements; are developed on the basis of consultation (with regard to hours of operation and models of centre delivery) and are communicated to families and the community.
- DET *Kindergarten Guide 2016*

Legislation and standards

Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

- *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010*
- *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2012: Regulation 157.*
- *National Quality Standard, Quality Area 5.1: Respectful and equitable relationships are developed and maintained with each child.*
- *National Quality Standard, Quality Area 5.2: Each child is supported to build and maintain sensitive and responsive relationships with other children and adults.*
- *Children's services Act 2011*
- *Children service regulations 2009*
 - Part 6 Div1 Reg 71 (a) and (b) requires the proprietor to ensure that any parents or guardian of a child being educated or cared for by the service can:
 - Enter the child's service at any time during the hours of operation.
 - Exchange information about the child with a staff member.
 - Children, youth and families Act 2005
- Child wellbeing and safety Act 2005
- Family Law Act 2006
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Commonwealth)
- Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Victoria)

The most current amendments to listed legislation can be found at:

- Victorian Legislation – Victorian Law Today: <http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/>
- Commonwealth Legislation – ComLaw: <http://www.comlaw.gov.au/>

4. DEFINITIONS

The terms defined in this section relate specifically to this policy. For commonly used terms e.g. Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, Regulatory Authority etc. refer to the *General Definitions* section of this manual.

Access: The right to entry of a centre

Association Member: A member of the incorporated association as defined in the centre's constitution.

DET: Department of Education and Training

Involvement: Participation in any aspect of the management and planning of the centre, and delivery of the program.

Proprietor: This includes the owner of the centre and any person who manages or controls the centre. The term proprietor includes the licensee, the primary nominee and nominee(s) of a licensed centre.

5. PROCEDURES:

The committee are responsible for:

- Ensuring parents and guardians are able to access the centre at any time during the hours of operation.
- Ensuring a range of communication strategies are in place to enable and encourage parents/guardians participation and involvement in all aspects of the centre. Participation will be welcomed at all levels, be it active involvement on the committee as determined by the constitution of the centre, support at working bees, or involvement in the children's programs.
- Ensuring opportunities are provided for communication between parents/guardians, the staff and the committee. This can be facilitated through such things as informal discussions, surveys, noticeboard displays, social events, newsletters, individual and group portfolios and the Woodridge Pre-school website.
- Reviewing the programs provided (that is, the sessions and times that children attend at the centre), considering feedback from parents/guardians in the development of future program models.
- Implementation of this policy and approving any changes.

The staff are responsible for:

- Providing access for parents/guardians to the centre at any time their child is attending a program at the centre.
- Ensuring all communication with parents/guardians is sensitive to the culture and social backgrounds of each individual family, their lifestyles and child rearing practices.
- Providing access to interpreters, translated materials and other resources to implement this policy.
- Providing parents/guardians with information about how the educational program at the centre is developed and the philosophy on which it is based.
- Developing the educational program, in consultation with parents/guardians, incorporating the development of children's language, physical skills, emotional and cognitive processes and social interaction skills.

- Offering a variety of opportunities for parents/guardians to participate directly in the children's program, including spending time with the children, assisting with activities, excursions and special events and volunteering special skills to share with children. In addition, providing opportunities for them to offer feedback concerning the program.
- Encourage parents/guardians to contribute their suggestions regarding any aspect of the program through discussions with the staff and/or the committee.
- Providing the parents/guardians with opportunities for communication about their child, either informally before or after the program, or by appointment during the staff member's non-contact time with the children and encouraging the parents/guardians to take up these opportunities.
- Developing strategies that contribute to a partnership approach where parents/guardians to create a two-way process of knowledge and information sharing. For example: The Learning stories and individual portfolios are available for parents' contribution and understanding how Woodridge Pre-school strongly link the Early Years Learning Development Framework when developing the program.
- Providing opportunities for parents/guardians to discuss the individual records the qualifies staff member has recorded for their child.
- Providing information regarding the educational program through bulletin boards and regular newsletters, which will show an understanding of, and consideration of, the relevant languages and cultural diversity of the families using the centre.

The parents/guardians are responsible for:

- Reading information provided for the centre, this can include information handbooks, newsletters, policies, children's program and noticeboard displays etc.
- Participating in centre events, for example the children's program, excursions and committee positions.
- Communicating information about their children with staff, including significant events in the child's life such as the arrival of a new baby, grandparents visiting from overseas.
- Contributing feedback and ideas for the children's programs.
- When visiting the pre-school outside of normal drop-off pick-up time, parents/guardians must sign-in and sign-out of the Sign-In book.

6. SOURCES AND RELATED POLICIES

Sources

- DET Kindergarten guide 2016

EVALUATION

In order to assess whether the values and purposes of the policy have been achieved, the Committee of Management will:

- regularly seek feedback from everyone affected by the policy regarding its effectiveness
- monitor the implementation, compliance, complaints and incidents in relation to this policy
- keep the policy up to date with current legislation, research, policy and best practice
- revise the policy and procedures as part of the service's policy review cycle, or as required
- notify parents/guardians at least 14 days before making any changes to this policy or its procedures.

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1: *Conflict of interest disclosure statement*

AUTHORISATION

This policy was adopted by the Approved Provider of Woodridge Pre-school in May 2019

REVIEW DATE: MAY 2022