

CODE OF CONDUCT

AUTHORISATION

POLICY TYPE:	Operational
POLICY LOCATION:	Corporate and Community Services
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	CSU Coordinator
AUTHORISED BY:	Director Corporate and Community Services
DATE ADOPTED:	18 November 2024
ADOPTED BY:	Manex
MINUTE NO:	
REVIEW DUE DATE: (November 2027
REVISION NUMBER:	3
RELATIONSHIP TO THE COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN	This policy supports Council's Delivery Program Strategy 4.2: Provide quality, accredited and affordable Education and Care Services within Bland Shire and surrounds (Bland Preschool, Family Day Care, Mobile Resource Unit, Vacation Care and Toy Library services).

DOCUMENT HISTORY

VERSION NO.	DATE	DESCRIPTION OF AMENDMENTS <i>Include names of former policies that this policy will replace if applicable</i>	AMENDED BY <i>(Where required)</i>
1	4 November 2020		CSU Coordinator
2	4 November 2021		CSU Coordinator
3	18 November 2024	No amendments required, updated to new template	CSU Coordinator

REVIEW OF THIS POLICY

This Policy will be reviewed within two (3) years from the date of adoption or as required in the event of legislative changes. The Policy may also be changed as a result of other amendment that are to the advantage that Council and in the spirit of this Policy. Any amendment to the Policy must be by way of approval of the General Manager for all policies categorised as "Operational" policies.

1. Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to ensure everyone has the right to feel respected and valued in the workplace based on the Early Childhood Australia 'Code of Ethics' – Displaying integrity, respect and responsibility towards each other.

2. Scope:

This policy document applies to all stakeholders within the Children Services Unit, elected representatives, Council employees, including volunteers, and should be read in conjunction with the Bland Shire Council Code of Conduct.

3. Outcomes:

The Children Services Unit community will uphold the highest standards in ethical conduct in accordance with the ECA Code of Ethics, The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, service policies and Bland Shire Council Code of Conduct. Our aim is to provide clear guidelines about the expectations and responsibilities of ethical conduct and to ensure all staff, educators and families follow these guidelines and maintain professional relationships.

4. Roles and Responsibilities:

The Approved Supervisor will:

- Support staff in the operation of the service in meeting Commonwealth and Stage legislative requirements.
- Provide a safe workplace for staff, and services for children and families.
- Provide support and direction to the service in strategic planning.
- Pass relevant information onto the service in a timely manner.

The Nominated Supervisor will:

- Ensure the service operates in line with the Education and Care Services National Law 2010 and Education and Care Services national Regulations 2011 at all times.
- Ensure all Educators are made aware of their obligations through information sharing, personal discussions, meeting activities and opportunities to critically reflect on ethical practice.
- Ensure decision making processes are clear and transparent.
- Ensure there is a copy of the ECA Code of Ethics displayed in a prominent place within the Children Services Unit for Educators/staff and families to access.
- Ensure there are times when all Educators can participate in staff meetings to discuss and reflect on the practices within the service in relation to continuing improvement.
- Act positively on complaints and provide services to the best of their ability.
- Ensure contractors, volunteers and practicum students are aware of their code of conduct obligations whilst visiting all Children Services sites.

Educators will:

- Treat children with respect and be a positive role model in their conduct with them.
- Be familiar with and maintain their knowledge of the legislation and statutory documents that apply to their role with children, families and other Educators in the service.
- Be familiar with and support the ECA Code of Ethics and service philosophy. This will guide conduct and decision making within the service.
- Comply with all policies and procedures of the service.
- Work in a co-operative and positive manner.
- Work together in the best interests of the children and families and act in a manner that enhances the standing of the early childhood sector. This involves a full understanding of role responsibility and obligations combined with professional practice and collaborative decision making.
- Represent the Children Services Unit and Bland Shire Council in a positive way both within the service and the wider community.

- Record all relevant documentation to support our auditing and compliance obligations.
- Use staff meetings to critically reflect on practices in relation to continuing improvement.
- Consider the family perspective when making decisions which have an impact on the education and wellbeing of children.
- Communicate with families in a timely, understanding and sensitive manner.
- Maintain professional relationships at all times by valuing and treating each other with respect.
- Only discuss confidential information or issues of the service with appropriate people within the service but not with any person outside the organisation, unless appropriate permission is sought or as required by law.
- Treat children, families, other Educators and visitors to the service with courtesy, respect and consideration at all times.
- Communicate with children in an age appropriate and realistic manner.
- Value the rights, religious beliefs and practices of individuals. Refrain from actions and behaviour that constitute harassment or discrimination.
- Not use any form of harassment, physical, verbal or emotional abuse when interacting with children, families, staff, service visitors or members of the community.
- Be respectful at all times on social media sites of Bland Shire Council Children Services Unit. Staff are ultimately responsible for their online behaviour and must avoid contact or actions that are defamatory, pornographic, harassing, disrespectful, libellous or threatening.
- Act positively on complaints and provide services to the best of their ability.
- Not use any form of harassment, physical, verbal or emotional punishment when carrying out their duties with children, families, other Educators and or visitors to the service.
- Respond to a behaviour or a situation that does not seem right by reporting and expressing concerns honestly and professionally.
- Abide by Mandatory Reporter obligations in a timely and confidential manner.
- Wear clean, neat clothes appropriate to the type of work to be undertaken and not offensive to the children, families, other Educators or representatives of Bland Shire Council.
- When wearing clothing that is identifiable as a stakeholder of Bland Shire Council outside of work hours, behave in accordance with the Code of Conduct and ECA Code of Ethics.

Staff must never:

- Communicate inappropriately (i.e. swear, yell, scream, scold, intimidate, humiliate, frighten or distress a child).
- Handle children roughly, not even through play.
- Pull or grab children, particularly by their arms, legs or neck.
- Swing or pick up children by the arms.
- Discipline children using corporal punishment, physical force or unreasonable discipline.
- Subject a child to any form of social isolation or immobilisation.
- Engage in inappropriate or unprofessional relationships with children or their families.
- Subject children or physical, emotional or sexual abuse or neglect or grooming behaviour.
- Smoke, vape (e-cigarettes), take illegal drugs or consume alcohol immediately prior or when on duty at the service.

In addition, Family Day Care Educators will:

- Operate as self-employed business operator.
- Abide by the Bland/Temora Family Day Care Educators Agreement. This will be signed upon registration and re-registration.
- Ensure other household members are aware of their roles and abide by this Code of Conduct.

Failure to comply

Failure to comply with the principles of the Code of Conduct will be considered a breach of Children Services Unit policy, and may trigger an investigation, where necessary and appropriate. Breaches of the Code of Conduct may result in disciplinary action, ranging from formal warning through to the termination of your employment and/or legal proceedings for serious breaches.

Families will:

- Respect confidentiality at all times.
- Give feedback in relation to Educator's professional conduct to the Nominated Supervisor when required.
- Act in a professional manner whenever they are involved in activities provided by the service.
- Not smoke, vape, take illegal drugs or consume alcohol when volunteering at the service.

5. Definitions:

Staff: employees of Bland Shire Council Children Services, Educators registered with the Bland/Temora Family Day Care Scheme and their household members. Staff extends to volunteers, contractors and practicum students where they are required to hold a Working with Children Check for the purposes of their work.

Child: according to the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998, is a person who is under 16 years of age.

6. Legislation and Supporting Documents:

- Guide to National Quality Framework 2018 (Updated October 2024)
- Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics
- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)
- Bland Shire Council – Code of Conduct Policy, should there be a conflict in policy directive, the Bland Shire Council document will take precedence.