

POLICY STATEMENT

Inclusive Practices

AUTHORISATION

POLICY TYPE:	Operational
POLICY LOCATION:	Corporate
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	Children Services Coordinator
AUTHORISED BY:	Director, Corporate and Community Services
DATE ADOPTED:	4 July 2023
ADOPTED BY:	Manex
MINUTE NO:	
REVIEW DUE DATE:	June 2026
REVISION NUMBER:	
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 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	June 2021		CSU Coordinator
2	June 2023		CSU Coordinator

REVIEW OF THIS POLICY

This Policy will be reviewed within Three years (3) 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 with the approval of the General Manager/Manex.

1. Purpose:

Bland Shire Children Services Unit aims to offer children and families an inclusive program based on social justice principles: respect, acceptance, inclusion and participation. These principles are reflected through environments where alternative perspectives, values, beliefs, lifestyles and identities are respected, accepted and distributed fairly to families across the community.

2. Scope:

This policy document applies to all staff and Educators of the Bland Shire Council Children Services Unit and Bland Temora Family Day Care, along with children and families enrolled with Bland Shire Council Children Services Unit.

3. Outcomes:

Our children's services program acknowledges the need for an inclusive program and service based on the right to fair and equal treatment regardless of age, gender, class, ethnicity, sexuality, geographical location, languages spoken, cultural background, additional need or other circumstances. These social justice principles and considerations guide early Education and Care practice in all areas of service delivery.

We encourage active recognition of diversity in developing services that evolve with the needs and interests of the children, their families and communities through their active participation. We aim to encourage children to have a strong sense of belonging, joy of being in the here and now, and acknowledge children's identities, understandings and capabilities.

4. Roles and Responsibilities:

The service will:

- Support the employment of staff/Educators from a range of social and cultural backgrounds.
- Where funding is available; provide or support staff in accessing professional development to extend their knowledge of social justice, inclusive and anti-bias practices, via training opportunities, resources, publications and discussions with peers.
- Establish and maintain links with organisations that promote social justice and inclusion and/ or provide specialist support or resources.
- Where possible we will accommodate a child with additional needs; based upon the availability of sessions, facilities and resources to meet their individual needs.
- Work with Inclusion Support Agencies to include children with additional needs
- Support Educators and staff in up skilling and skill development of working with children and families with additional needs.
- Support and facilitate the development of individual support plans with families and service staff, with a focus on inclusion.
- Offer regular meetings and/or communication between families, supervisors, staff and other agencies and/or specialists.
- Consult with staff working at the Service to ensure that they are aware of individual children's needs and where applicable special requirements, to support programing and maintaining the safety and well-being of the child and the other children in care.

The Nominated Supervisor will:

- Establish strong working relationships with other community agencies including support agencies.
- Where practical and in the best interest of the child and the service, provide child care access to families.

- Collaborate with people, services and agencies to develop shared understandings and actions that support children and families.
- Where available, seek grant and funding opportunities to promote inclusion and diversity within the service.

Educators and staff will:

- Demonstrate democratic, fair and inclusive practices to promote equity and a strong sense of belonging for all Service stakeholders.
- Respect the rights and dignity of each child.
- Be sensitive to differences and become knowledgeable of the families and children they engage with.
- Learn about, respect and respond to the uniqueness of each family, their circumstances, cultures, family structure, customs, language, beliefs and kinship systems.
- Use open and ongoing communication with families to enable the inclusion of social practices of families and communities in the program.
- Develop respectful and trusting relationships with children, so that they feel empowered and act as a positive role model for them to build their own respectful relationships.
- Acknowledge that children are citizens from birth with civil, cultural, linguistic, social and economic rights.
- View children as competent with many strengths and abilities and as initiators and active social constructors of their learning.
- Ensure that children are not discriminated against on the basis of gender, sexuality, aged, ability, economic status, family structure, lifestyle, ethnicity, religion, language, culture or national origin.
- Support children in developing a positive sense of self through identifying and responding to children's strengths and learning styles.
- Provide experiences which reflect and compliment children and Educators' 'family culture' and the community where they live.
- Ensure that all children have opportunities to participate, learn and experience success;
- Provide programs that value personal worth, support children in developing cultural identity and taking pride in their heritage.
- Help children build connections with others and with their community.
- Create environments that are inviting and inclusive and support children's exploration, creativity and learning.
- Encourage others to adopt and act in accordance with Service policies and take action in the presence of unethical behaviours.
- Guide and support children to take appropriate action against unfairness or biased behaviours.
- Within our capacity, access specialised equipment and resources through appropriate agencies and seek support services as available and applicable.

Families will:

- Provide accurate information to the Educators and staff about their child, and inform of any changes to enrolment information as it arises.
- Where applicable, provide updated reports for children.
- Collaborate with Educators and staff to ensure that individual needs are met and the service has the knowledge and capacity to include the child in the program.

Information Sharing

- On initial discussion with the Service and during the enrolment process, families will be requested to provide information to support the successful inclusion of their child

into the Service. The Coordination Unit, Educators and staff will ensure confidentiality is observed.

- Written permission may be sought from families so that the Service can share and exchange information relating to children with external organisations or persons, as required to support inclusion or to assess the services ability to cater for the child/ren.
- Information relevant to a child and/or family will be shared between educators/staff and Coordination Unit Staff to support the development and planning for the child/ren in care.

5. Definitions:

In this policy “staff” and “educators” refers to staff employed by Bland Shire Council Children Services Unit and Educators registered with Bland/Temora Family Day Care.

6. Legislation and Supporting Documents:

Education and Care Services National Regulations

Education and Care Services National Law

Guide to the National Quality Framework 2020

ECA Code of Ethics