

Volunteers and Students Policy

Quick reference: staffing arrangements | volunteers | students on practicum placements | child safety | screening | Working with Children Check | inductions and orientations | training | supervision | work health and safety | Codes of Conduct | record keeping and documentation | child safe recruitment practices

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

- (1) To set out how volunteers and students are supported to develop their skills and knowledge, and the processes we have in place to ensure their safety and wellbeing, as well as the safety and wellbeing of children, families, staff and visitors at our service
- (2) This policy is a requirement under the *Education and Care Services National Regulations*. The approved provider must ensure that policies and procedures are in place for dealing with staffing, including the participation of volunteers and students on practicum placements (reg 168(i)(ii))

POLICY STATEMENT

Engagement of volunteers and students

- (3) Volunteers and students may only attend our service if approved by the nominated supervisor
- (4) In considering whether to engage a volunteer or student at the service, the nominated supervisor will take into account:
 - The best interests, rights and safety of children (which must be the paramount consideration)
 - The purpose of their engagement and whether it is likely to be a mutually beneficial arrangement
 - The suitability of the student or volunteer for the proposed placement or work
 - Whether we have the resources to support and supervise the student or volunteer
- (5) The nominated supervisor will consult with relevant and/or affected staff members before agreeing to any arrangements with volunteers or students
- (6) The nominated supervisor will ensure that prospective students agree in writing to the proposed arrangements and responsibilities (e.g., duration, reporting, evaluation, working hours, role, support, timesheets etc) before their start date

- (7) We will regularly review student placements and volunteer experiences to ensure they continue to meet our quality and safety standards

Screening and suitability checks

- (8) Staff must follow our procedures for child safe recruitment, including for Working with Children Check (WWCC) and other screening checks such as for prohibition or suspension orders in place
- (9) All volunteers over 18 and students must have a verified valid, non-prohibited WWCC before they start at our service, unless they are exempt under the law (*National Regulations* reg 384 (WA))
- (10) We may also require a resume, proof of ID, proof of student enrolment, qualifications and training, reference checks, police checks or declarations, depending on the nature of the role
- (11) Volunteers and students must immediately (and within 24 hours) notify the nominated supervisor and approved provider of any changes to the status of their WWCC/teacher's registration or accreditation (e.g., negative notice, interim negative notice or expired) or their suitability to work with children, such as relevant new charges or convictions, prohibition notices, supervision notices or other enforceable undertakings
- (12) The approved provider will notify the regulatory authority in writing within 24 hours of changes to a volunteer or student's WWCC/teacher's registration or accreditation
- (13) We must not accept anyone as a volunteer or student if they are prohibited or suspended from working with children or otherwise unsuitable for the role
- (14) See our Recruitment, Induction and Training Policy for details of screening and suitability checks

Induction and orientation

- (15) Inductions and orientations of students and volunteers will be carried out according to our Recruitment, Induction and Training Policy and related procedures
- (16) The approved provider must ensure that students and volunteers have the skills and knowledge to keep children safe, including mandatory child protection and child safety training (*National Law* s 162A and 162B). They must also be advised of and have an awareness of current child protection laws and their obligations under those laws (*National Regulations* reg 84), such as mandatory reporting
- (17) At induction and orientation, volunteers and students must be given access to, our Child Safe Environment Policy, Child Safe Code of Conduct and Child Protection Policy
- (18) They must also be given any other information, support or training required by law, or which is necessary for them to carry out their work, or to keep themselves, children, staff and others safe and well. Depending on their role, for example:

- Expectations and standards for professional and ethical behaviour (e.g., Staff Code of Conduct, Families and Visitors Code of Conduct, ECEC Code of Ethics)
- Supervision of and interactions with children procedures
- Emergency and evacuation procedures
- Work health and safety obligations and procedures
- Health, hygiene and safe food practices
- Managing medical conditions in children policies and procedures
- Incident, injury, trauma and illness procedures
- Privacy and confidentiality policies
- Complaint handling policy and procedure
- Technology and Device Use Policy
- Photography and Video Policy
- Social Media Policy, CCTV Policy

Supervision

- (19) Volunteers and students must be supervised by a qualified staff member at all times
- (20) Occasional parent helpers must always be under the direction of a staff member when working with children and are not allowed to supervise children independently
- (21) Volunteers must not assist children with personal care (e.g., nappy changing, toileting), and students may only assist children with personal care if they are being directly supervised by an educator
- (22) Volunteers and students must not be left alone with children or included in educator-to-child ratios (*National Law s 169*)
- (23) Volunteers and students must act in a professional way and according to our policies and procedures. They must follow reasonable directions of staff
- (24) Room leaders and the nominated supervisor must monitor volunteers and students to ensure that they are meeting our quality and safety standards

Device use and photography

- (25) Students and volunteers must comply with our Child Safe Code of Conduct, Technology and Device Use Policy and Photography and Video Policy, which detail our rules for device use and photography, including for student assessments
- (26) Volunteers or students must not:

- Have a personal device that is capable of capturing, storing or transmitting images in their possession or control while they are working directly with children (unless they are otherwise authorised by the approved provider under the *National Law*)
 - Use a personal device to capture, store or transmit an image of a child in our care
 - Use a service-supplied device to capture, store or transmit an image of a child in our care unless they have written authorisation to do so from the approved provider and the child's parent
- (27) For the purposes of this policy, a personal device is also any device supplied to students by their training provider

Support for students and volunteers

- (28) Through observation and practical experience, volunteers and students can expect to learn new skills for educating and caring for children, and for working in a team in the early childhood profession
- (29) Students will be given a mentor educator ('student supervisor') with appropriate expertise and experience to supervise their work, and guide and support their learning
- (30) Students are responsible for developing their own workplace learning plan (e.g., timelines for debriefs, competencies, observational documentation), but the student supervisor can provide advice and support where required
- (31) The student supervisor and room leaders will monitor the student's performance, check on the progress of the student's written work and help resolve any issues raised by the student
- (32) Educators will share their skills and knowledge, and maintain open communication with students and volunteers
- (33) Depending on their placement, students may rotate through rooms, activities, and/or shifts to give them a broad and varied experience
- (34) If a student is at risk of failing their practicum, the student supervisor and room leader will discuss the matter with the student, and contact the student's training institution to determine a suitable course of action
- (35) Educators will receive guidance from the nominated supervisor and staff leaders on how to support and monitor students
- (36) Students and volunteers should raise with a staff leader (e.g., student supervisor, room leaders, nominated supervisor) any problems or additional needs they have

Communication and confidentiality

- (37) Staff members only are responsible for communicating with families, not volunteers or students

- (38) Volunteers and students must not share personal or sensitive information about children, families, staff or our service
- (39) Volunteers and students must not speak on behalf of our service or post about their involvement with our service on social media without prior approval from the nominated supervisor
- (40) The nominated supervisor will notify children, parents and staff members of the presence of students and volunteers at our service

Record keeping

- (41) The approved provider must ensure that a record is kept for each student or volunteer who participates at our service (*National Regulations* reg 149(1)), with the following information:
 - The full name, address and date of birth of the student or volunteer
 - A record of identifying number and expiry date of their WWCC if they are required to have one, or a record of the identifying number and expiry date of their current teacher registration if they have one
 - Evidence of mandatory training completed, including dates of completion and expiry (if applicable)
- (42) The approved provider must also ensure that a record is kept for each day on which the student or volunteer participates, with the date and the hours they worked (*National Regulations* reg 149(2))
- (43) The approved provider must also update the National Early Childhood Worker Register in relation to the volunteers and students we engage (*National Law* s 269E), in line with our Recruitment, Induction and Training Policy
- (44) Students may complete any required observational records for their placement, under staff guidance and with the appropriate consent
- (45) Records must be kept securely and in line with our Privacy and Confidentiality Policy

Dealing with concerns or incidents

- (46) Staff must follow our Child Protection Policy and Procedures for any matter than involves harm or risk of harm to a child, including inappropriate conduct or inappropriate discipline by the student or volunteer
- (47) Any other concerns about a student or volunteer's interactions with children or other concerning conduct must be reported promptly to a staff leader immediately
- (48) Where appropriate, staff leaders must escalate concerns to the responsible person to manage according to the relevant policy

- (49) Depending on the circumstances, a student's training institution will be advised of any concerns or incidents involving the student
- (50) The nominated supervisor may ask a student or volunteer to leave the service at any time, and/or terminate any agreements in place, if the student or volunteer:
 - Poses a risk to the health, safety or wellbeing to children, families, staff or visitors
 - Breaches our codes of conduct, policies or procedures
 - Fails to uphold their obligations under any agreements (such as working hours or work placement tasks), or
 - If their presence is not considered to be in the best interests of children or staff members
- (51) Volunteers and students who breach the *National Law or Regulations* may also have disciplinary action taken against them by the regulatory authority

PRINCIPLES

- (52) The rights, best interests, safety and wellbeing of children in our care is our number one priority, so we take every reasonable measure to ensure that the adults at our service are suitable and supported to uphold child safety
- (53) We welcome the involvement of volunteers and students, and see them as beneficial children and our service as a whole
- (54) We believe that volunteers and students support our educational program and bring new perspectives, collaborations, links to our community, energy and continuous learning opportunities
- (55) We support students to develop as individuals, gain knowledge and skills, build relationships with people in the early childhood sector, and further their career
- (56) Staff, volunteers and students are expected to behave professionally, respectfully, fairly and ethically at all times
- (57) Everyone at our service can expect to be safe, and have their rights and dignity upheld

POLICY COMMUNICATION, TRAINING AND MONITORING

- (58) The approved provider and nominated supervisor provide information, training and other resources and support regarding the Volunteers and Students Policy and related documents
- (59) Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined in this policy and in individual position descriptions. They are communicated during staff inductions and in ongoing training

- (60) The approved provider and nominated supervisor monitor and audit staff, volunteer and student practices and address non-compliance. Breaches of this policy are taken seriously and may result in disciplinary action
- (61) Families are notified in line with our obligations under the *National Regulations* when changes are made to our policies and procedures

LEGISLATION (OVERVIEW)

Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations

Law	Description
s 162A	Offence related to child protection training
s 162B	Offence related to child safety training
s 165	Offence to inadequately supervise children
s 166	Offence to use inappropriate discipline
s 166A	Offence to subject a child to inappropriate conduct
s 167	Offence relating to protection of children from harm and hazards
s 169	Offence relating to staffing arrangements
s 170	Offence relating to unauthorised persons on premises
ss 175A-J	Devices in education and care services
s 269A-H	National Early Childhood Worker Register
Regulations	
reg 84	Awareness of child protection law
reg 122	Educators must be working directly with children to be included in ratios
reg 123	Educator to child ratios – centre-based services
regs 145 – 152B	Staff and educator records – centre-based services
reg 168	Education and care services must have policies and procedures
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 177	Prescribed enrolment and other documents to be kept by the approved provider
regs 181, 183 - 184	Confidentiality and storage of records

Other applicable laws and regulations

Act / Regulation / Standard	Description
<i>Work Health and Safety Act 2020</i>	Describes the primary duty of care to people in the workplace
<i>Privacy Act 1988</i>	Principal act protecting the handling of personal information
<i>Food Safety Standards Australia</i>	Food handling requirements, including for volunteers and students
<i>Working with Children (Criminal Record Checking) Act 2004 (WA); Working with Children (Criminal Record Checking) Regulations 2005</i>	Covers working with children checks requirements

National Quality Standard

Standard / Element	Concept	Description
1.1.1	Approved learning framework	Curriculum decision-making contributes to each child's learning and development outcomes in relation to their identity, connection with community, wellbeing, confidence as learners and effectiveness as communicators
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 hazards
2.2.3	Child Protection	Management, educators and staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities in regard to child safety, including to identify and respond to every child at risk of abuse or neglect
4.2.2	Professional standards	Professional standards guide practice, interactions and relationships
6.2.3	Community engagement	The service builds relationships and engages with its community
7.1	Governance	Governance supports the operation of a quality service that is child safe
7.1.3	Roles and responsibilities	Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined, and understood, and support effective decision-making and operation of the service that is child safe
7.2.3	Development of professionals	Educators, co-ordinators and staff members' performance is regularly evaluated and individual plans are in place to support learning and development

Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) V2.0

Outcome	Key component
1: CHILDREN HAVE A STRONG SENSE OF IDENTITY	Children feel safe, secure and supported
2: CHILDREN ARE CONNECTED WITH AND CONTRIBUTE TO THEIR WORLD	Children develop a sense of connectedness to groups and communities and an understanding of their reciprocal rights and responsibilities as active and informed citizens

National Principles for Child Safe Organisations

Most relevant principles
Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture
People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice
Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training
Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.
Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people.

RELATED DOCUMENTS

Key Policies	Child Safe Environment Policy Child Protection Policy Child Safe Code of Conduct Staff Code of Conduct Recruitment, Induction and Training Policy Work Health and Safety Policy Record Keeping Policy Staff Communication Policy Visitors Policy Privacy and Confidentiality Policy Relevant HR policies Photography and Video Policy Technology and Device Use Policy <Families and Visitors Code of Conduct>
Procedures	Roles and Responsibilities – Volunteers and Students (attached) Working with Children Check Procedure (in Recruitment, Induction and Training Policy) Induction and orientation procedures (in Recruitment, Induction and Training Policy) HR procedures

SOURCES

Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations | National Quality Standard | Work health and safety laws and guidelines | ACECQA's policy and procedure guidelines for Staffing Arrangements | ACECQA's Providing a Child Safe Environment Guidelines and Promoting a Child Safe Culture Guide | Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics

POLICY INFORMATION

The policy will be reviewed annually by:

- Management
- Employees
- Families
- Interested Parties

POLICY REVIEWED	*** 2026	NEXT REVIEW DATE	*** 2027
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Version	Date of release	Summary of changes
3.0	May 2026	Revised to comply with The Early Childhood Legislation Amendment (Child Safety) Bill 2025 (that is: amendments to the National Laws, particularly those relating to device use, child safe recruitment and child safety and child protection training)
2.0	June 2025	Minor update to correct a typo appears in the policy: the word 'prohibited' was inadvertently omitted in the sentence in point 13 page 2: 'We must not accept anyone as a volunteer or student if they are prohibited from working with children or otherwise unsuitable for the role'
1.0	May 2025	New stand-alone policy. Covers content that was in our retired Educator and Management Policy

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES – Volunteers and students

Approved provider responsibilities (not limited to)

Ensure our service meets its obligations under the *Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations*, including to take every reasonable precaution to protect children from harm and hazards likely to cause injury, ensure that children are adequately supervised at all times and not subjected to inappropriate conduct or inappropriate discipline

Ensure that our service's governance, management, operations, policies, plans, (including risk management/action plans), systems, practices and procedures related to volunteers and students are appropriate in practice, up-to-date, best practice, and comply with all relevant legislation, standards and guidelines

Ensure this Volunteers and Students Policy and related procedures are in place and available for inspection

Take reasonable steps to ensure our Volunteers and Students Policy and related procedures are followed (e.g. through clear and accessible communication, and systemised inductions, training and monitoring of all staff – including volunteers, students)

Ensure that students and volunteers have completed mandatory child protection training and child safety training, and are advised and are aware of current child protection laws and any obligations they have under the laws, including for mandatory reporting

Ensure that volunteers and students are suitable to work in a children's service, and that they are screened according to the law and our policies and procedures, including checking before they start that they hold a valid and non-prohibited WWCC. Notify the regulatory authority within 24 hours if you become aware that a WWCC / teacher registration's status has changed (e.g., cancelled, suspended, expired, relevant charges or convictions)

Ensure that volunteers and students follow our child safety rules, including for personal devices and photography

Ensure that a staff record is kept with the details outlined in this policy, and ensure the National Early Childhood Worker Register is updated with volunteers and students' details

Ensure that students and volunteers are supported and supervised according to this policy and related procedures

Ensure that staff, children and families are sufficiently informed about the presence of any students or volunteers

Ensure that volunteers and students are given the necessary training, support, information and resources to ensure the health and safety of themselves, children, staff and anyone else at our service

Ensure that volunteers and students agree to uphold our professional standards and practices, including our Staff Code of Conduct and our Child Safe Code of Conduct, and that any incidents or allegations of misconduct or policy/procedure breaches are dealt with promptly and appropriately

Regularly review this Volunteers and Students Policy and related procedures in consultation with children, families, communities and staff

Notify families at least 14 days before changing this Volunteers and Students Policy if the changes will: affect the fees charged or the way they are collected; or significantly impact the service's education and care of children; or significantly impact the family's ability to utilise the service

Nominated supervisor / persons in day-to-day charge responsibilities (not limited to)

Ensure our service meets its obligations under the *Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations*, including to take every reasonable precaution to protect children from harm and hazards likely to cause injury, ensure that children are adequately supervised at all times and not subjected to inappropriate conduct or inappropriate discipline

Support the approved provider to ensure that our service's management, operations, policies, plans, (including risk management/action plans), systems, practices and procedures related to volunteers and students are appropriate in practice, up-to-date, best practice, and comply with all relevant legislation, standards and guidelines

Implement this Volunteers and Students Policy and related procedures

Support the approved provider to ensure our Volunteers and Students Policy and related procedures are followed (e.g. through clear and accessible communication, and systemised inductions, training and monitoring of all staff – including volunteers, students)

Ensure that volunteers and students are suitable to work in a children's service, and that they are screened according to the law and our policies and procedures, including checking before they start **that they hold a valid and non-prohibited WWCC**. Notify the approved provider immediately if you become aware that a WWCC / teacher registration's status has changed (e.g., cancelled, suspended, expired, relevant charges or convictions)

Ensure that students and volunteers have completed mandatory child protection and child safety training, and are advised of and are aware of current child protection laws and any obligations they have under the laws, including for mandatory reporting

Ensure that volunteers and students follow our child safety rules, including for personal devices and photography

Ensure that a staff record is kept with the details outlined in this policy and support the approved provider to ensure the National Childhood Worker Register is updated with volunteers and students' details

Ensure that students and volunteers are supported and supervised according to this policy and related procedures

Ensure that staff, children and families are sufficiently informed about the presence of any students or volunteers

Ensure that volunteers and students are given the necessary training, support, information and resources to ensure the health and safety of themselves, children, staff and anyone else at our service

Ensure that volunteers and students agree to uphold our professional standards and practices, including our Staff Code of Conduct and our Child Safe Code of Conduct, and that any incidents or allegations of misconduct or policy/procedure breaches are dealt with promptly and appropriately

Contribute to policies and procedure reviews and risk assessments and plans in consultation with children, families, communities and staff. Support the approved provider to notify families of reviews and changes according to legislation and our policies and procedures

Educator / other staff responsibilities (not limited to)

Follow this Volunteers and Students Policy and related procedures, including to train, support and supervise volunteers and students as required

Model professional standards at all times

Report any breaches to our policies, procedures or codes of conduct promptly

Contribute to policy and procedure reviews and risk assessments and plans, and participate in training and professional development opportunities

Volunteers and students (not limited to)

Follow this Volunteers and Students Policy, related procedures and other relevant policies and procedures

Undertake any required training and professional development, including for child safety and child protection

Complete and submit any necessary documentation before you start – may include, for example, WWCC, written agreement for your engagement, proof of ID, paperwork from training institutes (for students)

Immediately notify the nominated supervisor and approved provider of any changes to your WWCC/teacher's registration or accreditation (e.g., a cancelled, suspended or expired WWCC, new charges, convictions, findings of guilt for offences set out in the legislation)

Immediately notify the approved provider/nominated supervisor about any changes to your identity, contact details, relevant qualifications or training

Model professional standards and uphold our Child Safe Code of Conduct and Staff Code of Conduct at all times. Never subject any child to any form of harm, or risk of harm, inappropriate conduct/discipline, corporal punishment or unreasonable discipline

Follow our rules about personal devices and photography

Report any breaches to our policies, procedures or codes of conduct promptly

Accept guidance and follow directions of staff members

Take care not to risk your own or others' health and safety

Notify your supervisor / room leaders as soon as you can if you won't be attending your assigned working hours or there are any other changes we should know about

Students should comply with any reporting and evaluation requirements of our service and their training institution

Maintain the privacy and confidentiality of children, families and staff at our service

Families responsibilities (not limited to)

Report any concerns you have about a volunteer or student to educators, the nominated supervisor or the approved provider

RESOURCE – Quick guide to our Volunteers and Students Policy

We welcome volunteers and students and are committed to ensuring their involvement supports children's safety, wellbeing and learning.

Approval and suitability

- All volunteers and students must be approved by the nominated supervisor before attending the service
- A valid, verified, non-prohibited Working with Children Check is required unless legally exempt
- We do not accept anyone who is prohibited, suspended or otherwise unsuitable to work with children
- Additional checks or documents may be required depending on the role

Induction, training and child safety

- Volunteers and students complete induction and orientation before starting
- Mandatory child protection and child safety training applies
- Volunteers and students receive access to and information about key child safety policies and codes of conduct
- Volunteer and students must not have personal devices in their possession or control while they are working directly with children. They must also follow our rules for photography

Supervision and roles

- Volunteers and students are never left alone with children and are not included in ratios
- They must be supervised by a qualified staff member at all times
- Volunteers do not provide personal care
- Students may assist with personal care only under direct supervision

Professional conduct and confidentiality

- Volunteers and students must follow all policies, procedures and codes of conduct
- They must not communicate with families, share confidential information, or post about the service without approval

Records and monitoring

- The service keeps required records, including WWCC details, training and attendance
- Concerns or incidents are managed promptly under our child protection and complaints processes
- Students and volunteers must notify the nominated supervisor and approved provider immediately if there is a change to their WWCC status (e.g., cancelled, expired, suspended, new relevant charges or convictions)