

**Best Practice – Quality Area 4**

Please Note: Brimbank Preschool Association Inc. is referred to as BPA in this document.

**PURPOSE**

BPA aim to provide an open, welcoming, inclusive and safe environment for all children and families that attend the centres we manage. We believe that parents are valuable contributors and participants in the life of our centres.

The conduct of centre staff is regulated by:

- (a) The *BPA Code of Conduct Policy*, and/or
- (b) The *Education and Care Services National Regulations*

This Parents Code of Conduct Policy outlines the way in which BPA and our communities require all parents and family members to conduct themselves when visiting our centres, participating in centre activities and communicating with members of our centre community (including children, centre staff, other parents and visitors to our centre).

**1. SCOPE**

This policy applies to all adults including parents, guardians, step-parents, grandparents, extended family, babysitters and any others while involved in activities or communication related to centres managed by BPA. For convenience, the term “parents” will be used throughout the document.

**2. OTHER BPA POLICIES THAT MAY BE RELEVANT TO PARENTS CONDUCT**

- *Code of Conduct Policy*
- *Complaints and Grievances Policy*
- *Delivery and Collection of Children Policy*
- *Interactions with Children Policy*
- *Occupational Health and Safety Policy*
- *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy*

**3. OTHER LEGISLATION THAT MAY BE RELEVANT TO PARENTS CONDUCT**

*Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:*

- *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic)*
- *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic), as amended 2011*
- *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic), as amended 2011*
- *Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)*
- *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010: Sections 166, 167, 174*
- *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004*
- *Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2007*
- *Racial Discrimination Act 1975*
- *Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001 (Vic)*
- *Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)*
- *Working with Children Act*
- *Privacy Act*

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**PROCEDURES**

**The Approved Provider and Nominated Supervisor are responsible for:**

- Ensuring that all educators, staff, volunteers, students, parents and visitors are aware and have an understanding of this policy upon employment, enrolment or arrival at a service.

**Parents/guardians are responsible for:**

**GENERAL PRINCIPLES THAT ALWAYS APPLY**

**(a) Communication**

Parents will use courteous and acceptable written and spoken language in all communications with children, staff and other parents and members of the centre community. No profane, insulting, harassing, aggressive or otherwise offensive language may be used.

**(b) Ethical Conduct**

Parents will act in the best interests of the children, their families and staff members. They will not engage in malicious or judgmental gossip, and should ensure that anything they say about others is fair and truthful.

**(c) Respect**

BPA value the diverse communities in which our centres reside and respect the rights, religious beliefs and practices of individuals and their families. BPA respect points of view that are different from our own and all members of the community must refrain from actions and behaviour that constitutes harassment, discrimination or vilification.

**WHEN VISITING CENTRES**

- (a) BPA requires all visitors to a centre during centre hours to sign a visitors' register, so that their presence in the centre is recorded in the event of an emergency.
- (b) Parents will comply with all safety and emergency procedures in place at the centre and in the event of an emergency while they are on the premises they will follow the instructions given by any member of staff.
- (c) When attending any kind of centre activity or public meeting parents will listen respectfully, in the same manner required of the children and staff, and will refrain from creating any noise or disturbance during performances or speeches by staff or visitors. Heckling will not be tolerated and a parent who heckles may be asked to leave.
- (d) Parents will treat all other visitors to the centre with courtesy and respect.
- (e) A parent may not discipline a child who is not theirs or speak to a child who is not theirs about their behaviour. This is the role of teaching staff. Being approached by an adult they do not know can be distressing for children. Parents should therefore raise any behavioural, bullying or peer group issues with a member of the teaching staff and it is the teacher's responsibility to deal with these issues. (Common sense would apply in an emergency where a child is at risk of harm).

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- (f) When visiting a centre parents accept the authority of the teacher (or co-workers) and that they are in attendance on the teacher's terms. Teachers value parental involvement and assistance, but they may ask a parent to leave for any reason, but not limited to:
  - (i) parental assistance not being required at the time;
  - (ii) parental presence in the playroom or at the activity is disturbing or distracting to any child or teacher;
  - (iii) the parent is not in control of their emotions.

**WHEN COMMUNICATING WITH CENTRE STAFF**

- (a) All centre staff are entitled to a safe and happy work environment. This is in the best interests of our children as well as staff themselves. Parents should therefore ensure that their interactions with staff do not create unnecessary stress and anxiety.
- (b) The priority for centre staff is the welfare and education of all children in the centre. Centre staff are therefore not required to respond to emails and telephone calls instantaneously. Normal service standards suggest that an acceptable response time for emails is 2 working days. Responses are not expected outside normal working hours or during centre holidays unless it is an emergency.
- (c) The time available for parents to meet with staff is limited and must be scheduled at a time that is not disruptive. Parents should be mindful of the teacher's time, communicate the reason for the meeting and allow the teacher time to prepare, unless there is a genuine emergency that needs to be discussed.

**WHEN COMMUNICATING WITH BPA**

BPA welcomes feedback from parents. Correspondence to BPA may be forwarded in writing to our email address at [info@bpachildrenservices.com](mailto:info@bpachildrenservices.com) or posted to PO Box 215, Sunshine 3020.

**WHEN COMMUNICATING WITH OTHER PARENTS**

- (a) Parents will respect the privacy of other parents' email addresses and will not send unsolicited emails or "spam" to parents or forward unsolicited emails or spam that they receive to other parents. Parents will not forward other parents' email addresses without their permission. Parents provide their email address to the centre in order to receive communications from the centre about centre related matters and their child. The centre will not give out the email address of parents to other parents without permission. Parents give their email addresses in order to receive communications about centre activities and to establish rosters for fundraising activities and so on. Staff will not pass on parent email addresses to other parents without permission.
- (b) Parents who are members of the centre Committee, Parent or Fundraising Group, are valued volunteers who play a critical role in our community and commit a great deal of time for the benefit of all. Apart from the general principles that always apply, parents should be particularly sensitive about the manner in which they provide feedback and ask questions of hardworking volunteers.

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**WHEN MAKING A COMPLAINT**

Parents have the right to raise issues and concerns related to the education of their child or centre matters. Parents should ensure that they raise their issues and concerns with the right person and follow the correct communication channels. When making a complaint parents should refer to:

- The *BPA Complaints and Grievances Policy*, which is available upon request.

Parents must follow the procedures outlined the above. It is a breach of this Parents Code of Conduct Policy to make a complaint in a way that is not consistent with the *BPA Complaints and Grievances Policy*, especially when the complaint is about a member of staff.

**CONSEQUENCES OF A BREACH OF THE PARENTS CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY**

Any parent, member of staff may notify the centre Nominated Supervisor and/or BPA of a possible breach of the Parents Code of Conduct Policy. The Nominated Supervisor and/or BPA will investigate the complaint and if satisfied that a breach has occurred:

- (a) provide a first and final warning that a breach of the Parents Code of Conduct Policy has occurred and that a further breach will not be tolerated;
- (b) determine whether a breach may be rectified by the parent making a private or public apology, depending on the circumstances, to an individual or group of individuals;
- (c) where the breach concerned unacceptable behaviour on a visit to the centre, issue a trespass warning to the parent, which, if the behaviour continues, may accelerate to a trespass notice requiring the parent to stay away from the centre unless on the centre grounds with the express permission of the Nominated Supervisor and/or BPA.

Correspondence that is in breach of this Parents Code of Conduct Policy, because of the language and expression used or the manner, in which it is sent or delivered, will not be responded to.

Correspondence which is defined as “vexatious” according to the Complaints and Grievances Policy will not be responded to.

Nothing in this Policy precludes any person from exercising their individual legal rights in respect of obtaining restraining and intervention orders, reporting assault, bringing action for defamation, exercising rights under vilification or discrimination laws or in any other way.

**EVALUATION**

In order to assess whether the values and purposes of the policy has been achieved, the Approved Provider (BPA) 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
- assess whether a satisfactory resolution has been achieved in relation to issues arising from this policy
- keep the policy up to date with current legislation, research, policy and best practice
- revise the policy as part of BPA's policy review cycle, or as required
- notify parents/guardians at least 14 days before making any changes to the policy

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## **AUTHORISATION**

This policy was adopted by the Approved Provider, Brimbank Preschool Association Inc. on 6<sup>th</sup> August 2016.

**REVIEW DATE:** 6<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST 2019