Hills Grammar

Code of Conduct Policy

Policy Statement

The ECEC is deeply committed to fostering a child safe culture and upholding the highest standards of professional conduct and ethical principles. This commitment is founded on unwavering respect for, and the valuing of, children, families, educators, and the extended community. Our decisions and practices are guided by a code of professional conduct that prioritises the safety, rights, and wellbeing of all children. The ECEC Code of Conduct operates in conjunction with, and is informed by, the Early Childhood Australia (ECA) Code of Ethics, The Hills Grammar School Community Code of Conduct, the ECEC philosophy, the National Quality Framework (NQF) including the National Quality Standard (NQS), the Early Years Learning Framework (V2.0) (EYLF), the NSW Child Safe Standards, and the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.

Rationale

The ECEC will uphold the highest standards in ethical conduct in accordance with the Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics, The Hills Grammar Community Code of Conduct and the ECEC philosophy. The professional conduct of our team, in relation to one another, the children and their families and the community is based on the following set of expected standards of professional conduct:

• Administer an approved education and care service in compliance with the National Quality Framework.

• Operate within a family and child centered context, always prioritising the best interests of the children and their protection from harm.

• Engage in reflective, ethical, and sustainable decision making.

• Utilise the Early Childhood Australia's (ECA) Code of Ethics as a basis for critical reflection about ethical responsibilities, a guide for professional behaviour, and principles to inform individual and collective decision making.

• Explicitly define expected behaviors, attitudes, and responsibilities for everyone at the ECEC, covering conduct in both physical and online environments.

• Actively encourage the reporting of any child safety concerns or breaches, and clearly state the consequences for non-compliance or breaches of this Code.

These standards of professional conduct are supported by, and should be read in conjunction with;

- National Quality Framework
- ECEC Philosophy
- ECEC policies and procedures, which provide a framework for accountable and responsible practice

Strategies

The Nominated Supervisor will:

- Lead ECEC in operating in line with the Education and Care Services National Regulations and National Law at all times, including child safety as a paramount consideration.
- Advocate for and model a strong child safe culture, prioritising children's safety in all communications and actions.
- Facilitate changes or decisions that are made are shared with educators and that all educators are well supported, particularly regarding child safety matters.
- Provide a copy of the ECA Code of Ethics and ECEC philosophy in a prominent place within the ECEC for educators, families and volunteers/visitors to access.
- Oversee that all educators are made aware of their obligations through discussions, staff meetings, and opportunities to critically reflect upon ethical practice and child safety.
- Maintain clear and transparent decision making processes, especially concerning child safety concerns and disclosures.
- Provide opportunities for educators to participate in meetings to discuss and reflect on practices within the ECEC in relation to continuous improvement of child safe practices.
- Support educators in being aware of and understanding what constitutes acceptable, concerning, and unacceptable behaviours, providing specific examples and definitions of child maltreatment, abuse, neglect, and grooming behaviours, both physical and online.
- Implement and regularly review child focused recruitment, induction, and ongoing professional development practices that specifically focus on child safety, body safety awareness, and trauma informed care.
- Implement robust processes for responding to complaints and disclosures of harm, keeping them, child focused, understood by all staff, and aligned with mandatory reporting obligations.
- Actively seek children's opinions and feedback on safety issues and the effectiveness of child safe practices, ensuring their voices are heard and taken seriously in age and developmentally appropriate ways.
- Regularly assess risks in both physical and online environments and implement strategies to minimise opportunities for abuse to occur, ensuring transparency and appropriate supervision.

Educators will:

- Be familiar with the legislation and statutory documents that apply to their role with children, families, and other staff in the ECEC, particularly the National Law, National Regulations, Approved Learning Frameworks, National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, and NSW Child Safe Standards.
- Be aware of and understand what constitutes acceptable, concerning, and unacceptable behaviours, including specific indicators of child maltreatment, abuse, neglect, and grooming, and actively work to prevent these.
- Ensure the Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics and the ECEC philosophy guides educator's everyday practice, with a strong emphasis on child safety and wellbeing.
- Critically reflect on practices in relation to continuous improvement of child safe practices and their own professional learning, including staying updated on emerging best practices in child safety.
- Maintain professional relationships with children, families, visitors, volunteers, and with each other, ensuring these relationships are built on respect, fairness, and equality, and are always within clear professional boundaries.
- Work together in the best interests of the children and families within the ECEC, promoting children's rights and agency, and empowering them to voice their concerns.

- Demonstrate an ongoing engagement with the principles outlined in The Early Years Learning Framework (V2) and the ethical requirements in the National Quality Standards, including the emphasis on secure, respectful, and reciprocal relationships, partnerships, respect for diversity, and cultural responsiveness.
- Foster respect and collaboration within the team, promoting a supportive environment where child safety concerns can be raised without fear of retribution.
- Maintain professional relationships with all educators while demonstrating integrity, honesty, and mutual respect.
- Be aware of conduct outside ECEC, including when in uniform.
- Recognise and value diversity amongst team members and within the local community, promoting equity and inclusion for all children, including those with disabilities, from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.
- Acknowledge Darug People as the traditional owners of the land and embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives into daily practices, creating culturally safe and responsive environments.
- Embed the Hills Grammar School Ethos and Graduate Aim into their daily practices.
- Teach children about body safety awareness, personal safety, and consent in age and developmentally appropriate ways, ensuring children understand their right to say ‘no’ and who to talk to if they feel unsafe.
- Adopt trauma informed practices in all interactions with children, recognising and responding to the signs and symptoms of trauma.
- Respond to any disclosures or suspicions of child maltreatment, abuse, or neglect promptly and appropriately, following established reporting obligations and processes.

Families will:

- Respect confidentiality at all times.
- Give feedback in relation to educators’ professional conduct, especially regarding child safety concerns, to the Nominated Supervisor as necessary, and understand that their input contributes to a child safe culture.
- Act in a professional manner whenever they are involved in the events provided by the ECEC.
- Communicate to the educators any individual requests regarding the educators’ code of conduct.
- Work in partnership with ECEC to reinforce key messages about child safety and appropriate behavior.

Statutory Legislation and Considerations

Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010

Education and Care Services National Regulations

Guide to the National Quality Standard ACECQA

Sources

Community Early Learning Australia www.cela.org.au

Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) www.acecqa.gov.au

Australian Childcare Alliance www.childcarealliance.org.au

Early Childhood Australia http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/our-publications/eca-code-ethics/

NSW Guide to Child Safe Standards – Office of Children's Guardian

The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia (V2.0)

Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) – NQF Child Safety Guide

Links to other policies

ECEC Child Protection Policy

ECEC Providing a Child Safe Environment Policy

ECEC Statement of Commitment to Child Safety

ECEC Child Safe Standards Procedure

ECEC Safe Use of Digital Technology and Online Environment Policy

ECEC Dealing with Complaints Policy

The Hills Grammar Community Code of Conduct

Review

This policy is reviewed by management, employees and families as required or when legislative requirements change.

Families and staff are essential stakeholders in the policy review and will be given opportunity and encouragement to be actively involved.