

Code of Conduct Policy



Document Title	NQS7.45 Code of Conduct Policy	Version	3
Date Approved	August 2024	Date for Review	August 2027
Warning - Ensure you are using the latest version of this policy.			
DCC Network/All Organisation Information/DCC Policies/Quality Area 7 – Leadership & service management			

1. Policy Statement

River Region Early Education is committed to the highest standards of professional, social and ethical conduct so that children and workers are safe from harm and hazard and all individuals and organisations who interact with services are treated with dignity and respect. The River Region Early Education Code of Conduct aligns with the Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics (earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au) and the organisational values and philosophy.

2. Rationale

Education and Care Services National Regulations require approved providers to have policies and procedures in place in relation to staffing, including a code of conduct for staff members, and for these policies and procedures to be followed, kept available, and for families to be notified of changes.

This policy sets out the standards of behaviour and conduct expected from employees and volunteers, including Board members, in all professional undertakings and while representing the organisation.

Other policies that directly relate to worker conduct are:

- NQS7.45 Code of Dress Policy,
- NQS4.36 Tobacco, Drug and Alcohol Policy, and
- NQS2.60 Child Safety and Protection Policy.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all employees, including trainees and students, and volunteers, including Board members.

4. Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of Board members to:

- Abide by the RREE Code of Conduct when seen to be representing the organisation,
- Read and sign the *NQS7.45D Code of Conduct Agreement* on commencement and on an annual basis or as required, and
- Ensure that any allegations of breaches of the Code of Conduct by the General Manager or a Board member are investigated promptly, with procedural fairness, and by an independent and qualified third-party where required.

It is the responsibility of the General Manager to:

- Demonstrate and support an organisational culture that reflects the RREE vision, mission, values, philosophy, commitment to child safety and the code of conduct, and

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- Ensure that any allegations of breaches of the Code of Conduct are investigated promptly and with procedural fairness.

It is the responsibility of Nominated Supervisors and supervisors to:

- Support employees and volunteers in their team or service to understand and demonstrate expected behaviours and conduct,
- Ensure that each employee and volunteer in their team or service receives a copy of the *NQS7.45 Code of Conduct Policy* on commencement,
- Ensure that each employee and volunteer in their team or service reads and signs *NQS7.45D Code of Conduct Agreement* on commencement and annually, or as directed by the General Manager, and records this in the employee's HR file, and
- Display the *NQS7.45E Code of Conduct Poster* in their service or venue.

It is the responsibility of employees to:

- Uphold and abide by the RREE Statement of Commitment to Child Safety and Code of Conduct during work hours, while undertaking any task on behalf of the organisation, and when seen to be representing the organisation in person or online,
- Read and sign the *NQS7.45D Code of Conduct Agreement* on commencement and on an annual basis or as required, and
- Promptly report any witnessed or disclosed breaches of the Code of Conduct or RREE policies and procedures to their supervisor or the General Manager.

5. Definitions

Inappropriate discipline – Actions taken by adults towards children to stop or change behaviour that is unreasonable or harmful, including hitting, yelling, humiliating, dragging, depriving a child of food or drink, unreasonable restraint, physical isolation, exclusion from events or activities, and verbal or physical threats.

Misconduct – Behaviour that is unacceptable in a work environment and is wilfully done with a wrong intention. Examples include using abusive language, wilfully contravening workplace policies, excessive and ongoing lateness, knowingly disclosing confidential information, or deliberate misuse of computer systems. Misconduct is more than unintentional inappropriate conduct, negligence, error of judgement or an innocent mistake.

Serious misconduct – As defined by the Fair Work Regulations 2009 (Cth), wilful or deliberate behaviour in a way that is inconsistent with continuing a work contract or employment. Examples include causing serious and imminent risk to the health and safety of another person or to the reputation or profits of the employer's business, substantial and wilful breach of policy, theft, fraud, assault, sexual harassment, being intoxicated (by alcohol or non-prescribed drugs) whilst working or refusing to carry out a lawful and reasonable instruction that is part of the job.

Procedural fairness – Ensuring fairness of a procedure by which a decision is made, including being free from bias by the decision-maker, being rational or based on evidence that is logically capable of supporting the facts, and providing people likely to be adversely affected by decisions an opportunity to present their case and have their response taken into consideration before the decision is made.

Reportable conduct – A sexual offence against, with or in the presence of a child, sexual misconduct with, towards or in the presence of a child, ill-treatment of a child, neglect of a child,

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an assault against a child, an offence of failure to protect or failure to report under the Crimes Act 1900, or behaviour that causes significant emotional or psychological harm to a child.

6. Guidelines

River Region Early Education is guided by its:

- *NQS7.45A RREE Vision, Mission and Values*, and
- *NQS7.45B RREE Philosophy*.

a) Code of Conduct

River Region Early Education values and philosophy underpin the minimum standards of performance and behaviour for employees and volunteers.

Employees and volunteers are required to:

- Understand and abide by the RREE Statement of Commitment to Child Safety,
- Demonstrate organisational values and philosophy in work performance, in their conduct when seen to be representing the organisation in person and online, and in all interactions with children, families, community and work colleagues,
- Be honest and act with integrity and accountability for their actions,
- Treat all people with dignity and respect and uphold their human rights, including those identified in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics,
- Ensure no person is discriminated against due to their gender, sexuality, age, cultural background, physical or intellectual abilities, appearance, family status or other protected attributes,
- Set and maintain clear professional boundaries with children, families and work colleagues,
- Only have physical contact with a child in ways appropriate to their professional role and responsibilities and avoid any form of corporal punishment or inappropriate discipline.
- Take responsibility for achieving and maintaining a high standard and continuous improvement of work performance,
- Work within the requirements and delegations of their job role or position description and follow reasonable directions from supervisors,
- Be compliant with all relevant laws and regulations, including Education and Care Services National Law and Regulation,
- Maintain the privacy of children, families and work colleagues and the confidentiality of RREE information,
- Use RREE resources lawfully, efficiently and only as authorised,
- Declare and manage any real, perceived or potential conflicts of interest, and
- Maintain awareness of and follow RREE policies and procedures.

The RREE Statement of Commitment to Child Safety can be found in *NQS2.60 Child Safety and Protection Policy*.

The following documents provide more information for supervisors, employees and volunteers:

- *NQS7.45C RREE Values and Behaviours Chart*,
- *NQS7.45F UN Convention on the Rights of the Child*, and
- *NQS1.45G ECA Code of Ethics Brochure*.

b) Breaches of the Code of Conduct

A breach of the Code of Conduct may be considered misconduct, particularly where it is deemed to be wilful or is repeated, or serious misconduct. Breaches will be managed in line with *NQS7.44 Underperformance, Misconduct and Disciplinary Policy* and may result in performance management or disciplinary action.

Breaches that are reportable conduct will be managed in line with *NQS2.60 Child Safety and Protection Policy*.

Where an employee or volunteer witnesses another person breaching the Code of Conduct, a confidential report can be made to the person's supervisor, the General Manager, or the Board Chairperson (if the allegation relates to the General Manager).

7. Relevant Legislation, Regulations and Standards

Legislation	
166	Offence to use inappropriate discipline
167	Offence relating to protection of children from harm and hazards
Education and Care Services National Regulation	
155	Interactions with children
156	Relationships in groups
168	Education and care service must have policies and procedures
170	Policies and procedures to be followed
171	Policies and procedures to be kept available
172	Notification of change to policies and procedures
National Quality Standards	
2.2.3	Management, educators and staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities to identify and respond to every child at risk of abuse or neglect.
4.2.2	Professional standards guide practice, interactions and relationships.
7.1.3	Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined, and understood, and support effective decision-making and operation of the service.
Child Safe Standards	
1	Child safety is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture
4	Equity is upheld and diverse needs are taken into account
5	People working with children are suitable and supported
10	Policies and procedures document how the organisation is child safe
Early Years Learning Framework Learning Outcomes	
Early Years Learning Framework Principles	

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	Secure, respectful, and reciprocal relationships
	Equity, inclusion, and high expectations
	Collaborative leadership and teamwork
Early Years Learning Framework Practices	

8. Related Documents

Doc #	Attachments
NQS7.45A	RREE Vision, Mission and Values
NQS7.45B	RREE Philosophy
NQS7.45C	RREE Values and Behaviours Chart
NQS7.45D	Code of Conduct Agreement
NQS1.45E	Code of Conduct Poster
NQS1.45F	UN Convention of the Rights of the Child (simplified version)
NQS1.45G	ECA Code of Ethics Brochure

Doc #	Intersections with other key documents
NQS7.44	Underperformance, Misconduct and Disciplinary Policy
NQS2.60	Child Safety and Protection Policy
NQS4.36	Tobacco Drug and Alcohol Policy
NQS4.40	Code of Dress Policy
NQS7.60	Privacy and Confidentiality Policy
NQS7.64	Photography Policy
NQS5.37	Interactions with Children Policy
NQS5.38	Inclusion Policy
NQS7.48	Conflict of Interest Policy
NQS7.50	Delegations Policy
NQS7.61	Digital Technology and Social Media Policy

9. Document Control

Doc #	Doc Title	Version	Approved	Next Review
NQS7.45	Code of Conduct Policy	1	July 2018	July 2020
NQS7.45	Code of Conduct Policy	2	April 2021	April 2024

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Doc #	Doc Title	Version	Approved	Next Review
NQS7.45	Code of Conduct Policy (minor changes due to name change and new policy document format)	2a	January 2024	April 2024
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