Capital Region Community Services

Interactions with Children and Young People Policy and Procedure

This document outlines Capital Region Community Services policy and procedure on appropriate and positive communication and interactions with children and young people.

Policy

CRCS believes in using a positive approach to guiding children and young people with behaviour management and takes a risk management approach. We structure the environment to reduce conflict and reinforce *what to do* instead of *what not to do*. We believe that children and young people need to be able to interact successfully with others, to cooperatively solve problems and conflicts, and to begin to develop an understanding of the consequences of their behaviour.

To safeguard our employees, this policy provides advice to employees about the 'duty of care' requirements made of them in their interactions with children and young people. Caring, protective and encouraging forms of touch are healthy and important elements of human interaction. This policy provides educators/employees with guidelines to relate to children and young people in a warm, honest and respectful manner. It also provides guidelines about when, and in what ways, interactions with children and young people can cause harm.

CRCS requires that all employees, volunteers and others engaged by CRCS to undertake work on behalf of CRCS will perform their duties in accordance with this policy and procedure along with the *CRCS Code of Conduct* and will conduct themselves in a professional and respectful manner when dealing with children and young people families and other professionals. For a full understanding of appropriate interactions, this policy must be read in conjunction with the *Protective Practices Policy and Procedure and Restrictive Practices Policy and Procedure.*

CRCS educators/employees will ensure a child and young person's dignity and rights are maintained at all times. Educators/employees recognise that one of the most important experiences they can provide children and young people is positive interactions and communication. Through these daily interactions, children and young people and educators/employees can develop relationships that help children and young people to learn about themselves and the world. Educators/employees who care for children and young people have a responsibility to create and maintain positive and healthy relationships with them. One of the most practical and mutually rewarding ways to achieve this goal is through positive communication.

The Early Years Learning Framework (ECEC), and My Time, Our Place Framework (SAC) highlights educators/employees' relationships with children and young people as central to supporting their learning. The Framework outlines educators/employees should provide and maintain secure, respectful, equitable relationships, and support children and young people to build and maintain sensitive and responsive relationships with each other. These relationships help children and young people feel secure, respect others' rights and contribute to their sense of identity.

For infants in care, educators/employees place high importance in providing a nurturing environment with many warm and friendly interactions. Newborn infants communicate from birth and are learning all the time. Physical contact plays a large role in optimum development.

Parents/guardians of CRCS Children and young people's Programs will be provided with information about this policy and procedure as part of the orientation process and the documentation in the handbook. In addition, Nominated Supervisors are required to ensure that this policy and procedure is complied with and available to all employees, parents and guardians in the workplace.

Scope

This policy applies to all CRCS employees, both paid and unpaid, students and parents/guardians

Definitions

Duty of Care:	The responsibility or the legal obligation of a person or organization to avoid acts or omissions (which can be reasonably foreseen) to be likely to cause harm to others
Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC)	Long Day Care
Early Years Learning Framework:	A document that describes the principles, practices and outcomes that support and enhance young children and young people's learning from birth to five years of age, as well as their transition to school.
My Time Our Place Framework:	A document that supports the ongoing development of children and young people in school age care services. It ensures that they have opportunities to participate in leisure and play-based activities that are responsive to their needs, interests, and choices.
Physical Interactions:	Interactions that involve the use of the body
School Aged Care (SAC)	Before and after school care and school holiday programs.
Verbal Interactions:	Interactions that involve words.

CRCS Communication Methods to all stakeholders

The following table outlines the CRCS methods of Communication to all relevant stakeholders:

Occurrence	Action Required	Responsible Position/s	Timeframe
Consultation	Send open consultation email to internal	Quality and Audit Manager	Within two days of draft document completed

	stakeholders inviting feedback		
	Issue Notice in CRCS Connections Newsletter	Quality and Audit Manager	Next month's edition following ratification or review
	Discuss draft Policies and Procedures at team meetings, tool box talks etc.	Line Manager	Within the consultation timeframe
	Send feedback from consultation to policy@crcs.com.au	Line Manager	Within the consultation timeframe

Implementation

The following table outlines the implementation requirements for this Policy and Procedure:

Occurrence	Action Required	Responsible Position/s	Timeframe
Upon Ratification	Email to all stakeholders	Quality and Audit Manager	Within three days of policy ratified
	Issue notice in CRCS Connections Newsletter	Quality and Audit Manager	Next month's edition following ratification or review
	Discuss ratified Policies and Procedures at team meetings, tool box talks etc.	Line Manager	Next meeting following notice by Quality and Audit Manager
Upon Notification Policy and Procedure ratified	Email to all Education and Care Program's families if there is changes to policy and procedure and implementation state date.	Executive Manager Education and Care Programs	Within three days of Quality and Audit Manager notification. 14 days notice provided to families of any changes
	Display at educator communication point at the service.	Education and Care Programs Nominated Supervisors	Within three days of Quality and Audit Manager notification
	New policy and policy index put into policy folder, accessible within Education and Care centre.	Education and Care Programs Nominated Supervisors	Within three days of Quality and Audit Manager notification.

	All educators to sign educator awareness record.	Education and Care Programs Nominated Supervisors and Educators	Within five working days of Notice being place in staffroom.

Education and Training

Occurrence	Training Description	Responsible Position/s	When
Induction of new employees	New Employee Workplace Induction	Line Manager	Within first week of employment
Staff meeting	Policy	Education and Care Nominated Supervisors	Upon ratification
Annual Training	KINEO – Introduction to the Early Years learning Framework	Employee	Annually as due

PROCEDURE

The following procedure outlines appropriate interaction utilised across CRCS Education and Care Programs:

- Appropriate physical contact, non-physical intervention and physical restraint
- Reporting.

Section 1 – Appropriate physical contact, non-physical intervention and physical restraint

The following information outlines the appropriate and inappropriate interactions with children and young people in an Early Childhood Education and Care and School Age Care Setting.

1.1. Early Childhood Education and Care Setting:

- When children and young people indicate they want comfort, ensure that it is provided in a public setting.
- Signs of discomfort in children and young people such as stiffening, pulling away or walking away must be respected. In these situations the child must continue to be observed/monitored until their distress is managed.
- Children and young people must not be left in states of high distress for long periods. Parents/guardians need to be contacted under these circumstances.
- In the case of infants, provide nurturing, physical interactions on a regular basis or when required such as hugging and carrying and eye contact.
- Carrying, hugging, sitting a child on laps when a child is upset, unwell and/or separating from their parents/guardians. Educators/employees are to ensure this does not occur for extended periods of time
- Holding children's hands.

1.2. School Age Care Setting:

At times, educators/employees will be required to give practical assistance to a child or young person who is hurt or needs particular assistance or encouragement. Examples of physical contact that are acceptable include:

- Administration of first aid.
- Helping a child who has fallen.
- Assisting with the toileting and personal care needs of child who requires additional support (a Management Plan for children and young people must be discussed with the parents/guardians).
- Non-intrusive gestures to comfort a child who is experiencing grief and loss.
- Non-intrusive touch, e.g. congratulating a child by shaking hands. Educators/employees should remember the importance of accompanying such touch with positive and encouraging words.
- Seeking a child's permission to touch (keeping in mind that a highly distressed student may be incapable of expressing their wishes).
- Touching a child as part of an interaction on the hand, arm, shoulder, or upper back.
- Touching a child in order to gain the child's attention.

1.3. Verbal Interactions:

Appropriate verbal interactions within an Early Education and Care and School Age Care Setting:

- Asking a child to cease a behaviour or action by using the word, 'stop'.
- Approaching the child before interacting.
- Getting on a child's level when interacting (where applicable).

Inappropriate verbal interactions within an Early Childhood Education and Care and/or School Age Care Settings:

- Asking a child to cease a behaviour or action by using the word, 'no'.
- Swearing.
- Yelling.
- Talking/yelling to a child across a room.

Section 2 – Reporting

Incidents will be reported within 24 hours, by the Nominated Supervisor or Responsible Person to:

- CECA on the Notification of Incident Form
- The CRCS Chief Executive Officer
- CRCS eBMS Incident Reporting System.

Relevant CRCS Policies and Legislation

CRCS:

- *Breastfeeding and Bottle Feeding Policy and Procedure*
- *Child Protection Policy and Procedure*
- *Children's Toileting Policy and Procedure*
- *Code of Conduct*
- *Incident and Injury Reporting Policy and Procedure*
- *Nappies in Education and Care Programs Policy and Procedure*
- *Nappy Changing Safe Work Guideline*
- *Protective Practices and Reporting Policy and Procedure*
- *Restrictive Practices Policy and Procedure*
- *Workplace Health and Safety Policy and Procedure*

Legislation:

- *Education and Care Services, National Regulations and Law*

National Quality Framework:

- *Early Years Learning Framework*
- *My Time, Our Place Framework*
- *National Quality Framework*
- *National Quality Standards*

Acknowledgement / Sources

- *ACECQA*
- *Early Childhood Australia*

Feedback

Feedback on this policy can be submitted to policy@crcs.com.au.

Review

This policy will be reviewed within three years of the date of endorsement.

Compliance

Non-compliance to this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

Audit

This policy and procedure is to be audited for compliance three months after implementation.

Audit Questions	
Question 1	Are appropriate verbal interactions being observed by all educators?
Question 2	Are educators in the early education and care setting being observed comforting children in a public setting, is respectful of the child and appropriate to their age and/or stage of development?
Question 3	Are educators observed refraining from using the word no?
Question 4	Are educators aware of what is appropriate verbal interactions with children
Question 5	Are all educators aware of what is appropriate physical interactions with children?
Question 6	Are educators observed monitoring children who are distressed and respect they do not want any physical contact?
Question 7	Are educators observed moving towards children and talking rather than yelling across the room/playground?
Question 8	Does the Nominated Supervisor understand their reporting requirements?
Question 9	Has this policy been reviewed/discussed at staff meeting following ratification?
Question 10	