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HARASSMENT-FREE WORKPLACE POLICY

QUALITY AREA 4: STAFFING ARRANGEMENTS

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National Quality Standard (NQS)

Quality Area 4: Staffing Arrangements

4.2	Professionalism	Management, educators and staff are collaborative, respectful and ethical.
4.2.1	Professional collaboration	Management, educators and staff work with mutual respect and collaboratively, and challenge and learn from each other, recognising each other's strengths and skills
4.2.2	Professional standards	Professional standards guide practice, interactions and relationships.

Introduction

Woden Early Childhood Centre (WECC) believes that creating a workplace with vision and meaningful direction, consistent values and ethics will foster a positive and productive work environment free from bullying, discrimination and harassment. Further, when professional standards guide educators' practices, interactions and relationships, children's learning and development, safety and wellbeing will be effectively supported.

Scope

This policy applies to staff, management and educators of the Service.

Goals – What are we aiming to do?

WECC will foster an environment of mutual respect, equity recognition of educators' skills and strengths. This will be facilitated through WECC's philosophy and by adhering to the *Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics* and the *Code of Conduct* policy. Bullying, discrimination and harassment will not be tolerated under any circumstances. WECC endeavours to define clear expectations and guidelines for educators through clear job descriptions, policies and procedures. WECC will encourage feedback and open communication to create

understanding between educators and management.

Strategies – How will it be done?

Everyone has a right not to be bullied or harassed at work. Workplace bullying occurs when a person or group of people repeatedly behave unreasonably towards a worker or a group of workers, creating a risk to health and safety. Bullying may involve any of the following types of behaviour:

- aggressive or intimidating conduct
- belittling or humiliating comments
- spreading malicious rumours
- teasing, practical jokes or 'initiation ceremonies'
- exclusion from work-related events
- unreasonable work expectations
- displaying offensive material
- pressure to behave in an inappropriate manner

Bullying does not include management action carried out in a reasonable manner.

Discrimination occurs when someone is treated less favourably than others because they have particular characteristic or belong to group within the population, such as age, race or gender.

Harassment involves unwelcome behaviour that intimidates, offends or humiliates a person because of particular characteristics as listed above and including; disability, religion, or sexuality.

There are a number of anti-discrimination, equal employment opportunities, workplace relations, and human rights laws which make it illegal to discriminate or harass a person in the workplace.

WECC's philosophy, *Code of Conduct* policy and the Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics will guide educator interactions and best practice by providing a vision, a purpose and meaningful direction to ensure a safe working environment for all staff.

Management and Nominated Supervisor will ensure:

- a thorough induction process for new employees is conducted at the commencement of employment
- they have a comprehensive understanding of WECC's *Code of Conduct* policy, *Grievances and Complaints Management* policy and the Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics which will be reviewed annually
- educators are informed that inappropriate behaviour, including bullying and harassment will not be tolerated
- inappropriate behaviour is addressed
- educators are aware of WECC's bullying and harassment procedure
- educators are aware of appropriate interactions through professional development and training
- staff and educators are aware of their job roles and responsibilities which will be clarified through job descriptions, team meetings, performance appraisals and expectations
- constructive feedback is provided to staff and educators
- communication practices are reviewed frequently to ensure best practice
- all staff and educators are treated equally
- meetings are documented accurately and appropriately
- an understanding and compliance with discrimination law
- increase educator awareness of appropriate interactions through professional development and training
- encourage open discussion through educator team meetings, informal conversations and at performance

- appraisals to clarify each educator's role within WECC
- welcome constructive feedback. Educators will be encouraged to express opinions and work collaboratively with the Nominated Supervisor or Director and the management of WECC to contribute to WECC's success and to facilitate continual improvement
- regularly review communication practices with WECC to ensure all educators are supported, empowered, and acknowledged for their contributions to the team and the service
- treat all educators equitably

Educators will:

- be involved in decision making with a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities, outlined in each individual job description
- be encouraged to embrace the uniqueness and diversity of their colleagues
- respect the skills, strengths and opinions of all educators in order to create team cohesion based on professionalism
- comply with discrimination law
- be responsible for their own actions in the workplace
- raise matters of concern at an early stage to management
- provide management with specific information regarding the perceived bullying and being prepared to have the complain made known to the person, to allow for fair management and rectification
- maintain confidentiality and not discuss or release information relating to bullying allegations

Evaluation

All educators of WECC will conduct themselves in a professional manner according to the *Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics*, the *Code of Conduct* policy and legislative guidelines. Inappropriate behaviours including harassment and bullying will not be tolerated.

Related policies /documents

- *Code of conduct*
- *Complaints and feedback*
- *Grievances and complaints management*

Statutory legislation and considerations

- Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act 1986
- Fair Work Act 2009
- Discrimination Act 1991 – Human Rights Commission
- Work Health and Safety Act 2011

Sources and references

- Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics
- Australasian Legal information institute – www.austlii.edu.au
- Guide to the National Quality Standards

Authorisation

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2019 WECC Management Committee*