



Periwinkle PRESCHOOL

for Rudolf Steiner
early childhood education

Code of Conduct for Staff Members

*You will not be good teachers
if you focus only on what you do
and not on upon who you are.
Rudolf Steiner*

Steiner educators recognize something that is often unspoken in other educational programs: The importance of the thoughts, attitudes, and imaginations living in the adults who care for the children. Steiner educators believe that this “invisible realm” has a profound influence on the child’s development because it shapes the spiritual environment in which they are educated. This belief shapes our expectation that **all staff members will be conscious to uphold the highest standards so as to be worthy role models for the child’s imitation.**

As role models, staff members are expected to engage in ethical conduct. Our expectation that staff conduct themselves ethically is founded in respect for, and a valuing of children, families, other educators and staff, as well as the extended service community.

Code of Conduct Policy

Purpose and scope

As an approved education and care service, Periwinkle Preschool is protective of its children, families and staff and Periwinkle Preschool itself. Our Code of Conduct policy reflects that level of concern.

Periwinkle Preschool seeks to be recognised as a service committed to the highest ethical standards. Periwinkle Preschool is proud of the quality of its staff and of the reputation built by their work.

The Code is in place to guide Periwinkle Preschool and to ensure that it operates in a professional and appropriate manner.



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Periwinkle Preschool expects that every employee will ensure that they maintain the highest standards of professional conduct and ethics in their dealings with families, children, colleagues and the extended service community.

Underpinning this Code of Conduct is the rule that **the rights and best interests of the child are paramount**.

Our goals for staff conduct:

- all staff act in accordance with the *Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics, The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Periwinkle Preschool philosophy and policies.*

Ethical Standards

The professional conduct of our team, in relation to one another, the children and their families, the community, and the Education and Care Services sector 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 centred context;
- engage in reflective, ethical, and sustainable decision making.

Early Childhood Australia's (ECA) Code of Ethics (2016)

Early Childhood Australia's Code of Ethics (2016) is integral to our service as it guides the ethical principles and professional standards of conduct towards children, families, colleagues, communities, students, employers, educators, and the conduct of research. Our service accepts professional ownership of ECA's Code of Ethics (2016) and formally acknowledges that the ECA's Code of Ethics (2016) provides us with:

- A basis for critical reflection about our ethical responsibilities;
- A guide for professional behaviour;
- Principles to inform individual and collective decision-making.

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

- National Quality Framework document suite as made available through the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority;



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- Statement of Philosophy;
- Operational policies and procedures, which provide a framework for accountable and responsible professional practice.

There is a copy available in Periwinkle Preschool or it can be found at:

<http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/our-publications/eca-code-ethics/>

Policies and procedures

Periwinkle Preschool has a set of policies and procedures to underpin staff practices.

Staff are required under the Education and Care National Law and Regulations to adhere to the policies and procedures required by that Law. Staff should discuss any questions or concerns with their Manager.

Strategies

Regular structured opportunities for staff reflection

- During fortnightly Staff College meetings, staff reflect on readings on fundamental tenets of Steiner education and on their own role in the delivery of a quality experience for students.

Collegial conversations

- The director guides staff in how to hold the space so as to be respectful of children and their learning.

Roles and responsibilities

Staff are recruited for designated roles to which there are position descriptions. Orientation and supervision are provided to ensure staff are clear on their roles and have an opportunity to seek and be provided with any clarification and support that is needed. Staff are required to actively participate in their role and discuss any questions or concerns with their Manager.



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The Approved Provider will:

- Ensure the service operates in line with the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations 2011 at all times.
- Ensure all Educators and staff are made aware of their obligations through personal discussions, staff meeting activities and opportunities to critically reflect upon ethical practice

The Nominated Supervisor will:

- Refer to the ECA Code of Ethics when under-taking performance discussions, mentoring and forward planning for the service and practices within.
- Ensure that all behaviour and practices at the services are conducted in accordance with the ECA Code of Ethics and within a professional manner.
- Ensure the service operates in line with the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations 2011 at all times.
- Ensure all educators and staff are made aware of their obligations through personal discussions, staff meeting activities and opportunities to critically reflect upon ethical practice.
- Ensure decision making processes are clear and transparent.
- Ensure there is a copy of the ECA Code of Ethics displayed in a prominent place within the service for educators/staff and families to access.
- Ensure that there are times when all educators can participate in staff meetings to discuss and reflect on the practices within the service in relation to continuing improvement.

Educators will:

- Educators and staff will be familiar with the legislation and statutory documents that apply to their role with children, families and other staff in the centre.
- Educators and staff will be familiar with the ECA Code of Ethics and service philosophy.
- Maintain their knowledge of the broad legislation and conventions that apply to their role with children, families and their team.
- Ensure that interactions towards children, families and co-workers is conducted in a professional manner and abides to the ECA Code of Ethics and the United Convention on the Rights of the Child.



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- Report to the Supervisor immediately of any behaviour that is witnessed to contravene this Code of Ethics.
- Reflect on individual behaviour in relation to the ECA Code of Ethics when engaging in reflective practice and performance conversations.
- Demonstrate an ongoing engagement with the principles outlined in The Early Years Learning Frameworks and the ethical requirements in the National Quality Standards.
- Use staff meetings to critically reflect on practices in relation to continuing improvement.
- Engage respectfully and collaboratively within the team.
- Ensure a professional relationship is maintained with all educators while demonstrating integrity, honesty and mutual respect.
- Recognise and value diversity and knowledge amongst team members.

Families

- Respect confidentiality at all times.
- Give feedback in relation to educators' professional conduct to the Approved Provider as necessary.
- Act in a professional manner whenever they are involved in the programs provided by the service.
- Communicate to Responsible Person or staff any individual requests regarding staff/educators' code of conduct.

Conflict of interest

'Private interests' include financial, legal or professional or other significant interest. A conflict of interest is where the private interests interferes with your responsibilities as an employee at the Periwinkle Preschool. Where you believe your private interests may conflict with, or give rise to a perception of conflict with your role at Periwinkle Preschool, you must discuss it with your Manager.

You may undertake other paid employment only if there is no conflict of interest and if your responsibilities with Periwinkle Preschool are not affected.

Staff may be approached by parents or may wish themselves to approach parents to undertake babysitting or nanny work. Such work may place staff in a position of being perceived as having a personal interest in conflict with their role at Periwinkle Preschool. It



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also risks staff being placed in a position of risk over professional and personal practices and are not covered by service guarantees or insurance. Staff are to advise parents that they are not permitted to babysit or transport children.

Gifts and benefits

Staff must not accept any gifts or benefits because of your position at Periwinkle Preschool if they:

- Influence or might be seen to influence the performance of your duties;
- Influence or might be seen to influence another staff member in the performance of their duties; and/or
- Are cash or are substantial.

Staff must declare with your manager all gifts and benefits offered, received or provided to staff in the course of their duties, including the nature and purpose of the gift and where appropriate, the basis for acceptance / supply. Where the benefit of the gift is the attendance at an event, staff must notify you're the director of the invitation and seek authorisation before accepting the invitation.

In the event the gift cannot be accepted staff will need to arrange for the return of the goods, or politely decline the invitation.

Staff must not offer gifts to families or children outside the normal practices of Periwinkle Preschool. Such gifts will be equitably applied across the group. Any gifts given between staff out of friendship such as for birthdays or other notable events such as end of year gifts, are not limited by this section but must be appropriate to Periwinkle Preschool's standards of professionalism.

Acceptable behaviour

The Code of Conduct and the referred to Code of Ethics discuss the desired behaviour of staff but are not exhaustive. Staff are held to be accountable for their own decisions and



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actions in a manner appropriate to the issue under consideration. Staff should discuss any questions or concerns with their Manager.

Evaluation

Educators and the community of the service will conduct themselves in an ethical manner through clear processes in accordance with legislative and statutory guidelines.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

This policy will be monitored to ensure compliance with legislative requirements and unless deemed necessary through the identification of practice gaps, the service will review this Policy every 2 years.

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

In accordance with R. 172 of the Education and Care Services National Regulations, the service will ensure that families of children enrolled at the service are notified at least 14 days before making any change to a policy or procedure that may have significant impact on the provision of education and care to any child enrolled at the service; a family's ability to utilise the service; the fees charged or the way in which fees are collected.

Related Legislation

- Education and Care National Law Act 2010
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011: 168 (2)(i)(i)

Related Guidelines

- National Quality Standard, Quality Area 4: Staffing Arrangement – Standard 4.1, 4.1.1, 4.1.2



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Sources/Useful Resources

- Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) - www.acecqa.gov.au
- Early Childhood Australia – www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au
- Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics 2016
- Australian Government Department of Employment – <https://www.employment.gov.au>
- Department of Education and Communities – www.dec.nsw.gov.au
- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child