



Periwinkle

PRESCHOOL

for Rudolf Steiner
early childhood education

Interactions with Children

Policy Statement

*Children who live in an atmosphere of love and warmth,
and who have around them truly good examples
to imitate, are living in their proper element.
Rudolf Steiner (1907) The Education of the Child*

Educators working within the Steiner tradition view love and emotional warmth as fundamental to children's healthy development. These qualities should live between the adult caregiver and the child, in the children's behavior toward one another, and among the adults in the early childhood centre. Children are also served if this love and warmth exist in the relationships between the educators and the parents, between the early childhood educators and in the surrounding community.

At Periwinkle preschool, we promote a positive atmosphere through attentive care and quality interactions with children. Emotional development and social relationships are enhanced through thoughtful and sophisticated approaches to conversation, gestures and action which invite the child's imitation and support children's language and communication development.

Our commitment to ensuring quality interactions with children reflects our belief that children who experience relationships that are built on respect, fairness, cooperation and empathy are likely to develop these qualities themselves. It is our view that when children have positive experiences of interactions they develop an understanding of themselves as significant and respected, and feel a sense of belonging. Quality interactions also increase children's knowledge and understanding of one other and help them to develop the skills and understandings they need to interact positively with others.

All staff at Periwinkle Preschool will:

- be responsive to children's strengths, interests, abilities;
- provide opportunities to become self-reliant and develop self-esteem;
- uphold children's dignity, rights, and agency;
- provide positive guidance and support towards acceptable behaviour;
- promote an emotionally safe, secure and nurturing environment;
- be authentic and responsive;



Periwinkle PRESCHOOL

for Rudolf Steiner
early childhood education

- be based in fairness, acceptance and empathy with respect for cultural and linguistic rights

Our goals for interactions with children are to:

- promote an emotionally safe, secure and nurturing environment
- Interact with children in a way that is authentic and responsive
- be responsive to children's strengths, interests, abilities;
- provide opportunities to become self-reliant and develop self-esteem;
- uphold children's dignity, rights, and agency;
- provide positive guidance and support towards acceptable behaviour
- ground interactions in fairness, acceptance and empathy with respect for culture, and linguistic rights.

Strategies

Children's Rights, Family and Cultural Values

Interactions within the setting are greatly enhanced when children's rights and family and cultural values are given due consideration and respect. Administrative procedures, initial conversations, documentation and ongoing communication with children and families are a reference point for interactions and a foundation for authentic and respectful communication.

Interaction occurs within a culture of listening

Educators and staff must use listening as a foundation for interactions. Listening is based on observation and in leaving spaces in conversations and communication. In line with Steiner philosophy, educators suspend judgment and give their full attention to children as they communicate. Truly attending to children's communication promotes a strong culture of listening.

Interactions with children and families are respectful

A culture of respectful interaction is promoted when children's attempts to communicate are valued. Educators model turn taking and regulate children's conversations to promote the active engagement of all participants. Respectful communication with families generates greater confidence in interacting.

Educators consistently model the behaviour they seek to develop in children

- Educators show care, empathy and respect for children, other educators and staff, and families.
- Educators learn and use effective communication strategies.



Periwinkle

PRESCHOOL

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Educators are encouraged to reflect on the quality of their interactions with children

- Time is allocated within the schedule of professional development to support educators to reflect on interactions
- Educators reflect on their intentions when interacting with children and families as well as the quality of interactions and the suitability of educators' behaviour as a model for children's imitation.

Principles for Behavioural Management

Staff respect individual children's needs and differences in age, ability and experience regarding issues surrounding behaviour management and they are happy to discuss individual family expectations with parents. There may be times when staff will need to negotiate management strategies with parents to suit the needs of individual children.

- Wherever possible, children and staff will negotiate and determine boundaries and rules.
- Rules will be reasonable considering the age, development and individual characteristics of the children.
- Rules will be consistently enforced.
- Children will be encouraged for desirable behaviour.
- It is the behaviour that is praised or addressed, not the child.
- Staff present a good example through positive role modelling.
- Children are encouraged to make appropriate choices.

The Role of the Staff

In response to challenging behaviour, staff:

- Empower children to make positive choices around behaviour.
- Recognise certain reactions as understandable behaviour, a reflection of communication and social development.
- Redirect the child or remove the child from the situation if necessary.
- Advise children of the consequences of continuing with the behaviour.
- Remind children of appropriate behaviour.
- Explain to children how behaviour results in consequences.
- Actively listen to children's feelings and discuss the rules.
- Help children to return to play.



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PRESCHOOL

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Responsibilities

Approved Provider

- Ensure the service operates in line with the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations 2011 with regard to the delivery and collection of children at all times.
- Ensure all staff have access to relevant professional development.
- Ensure the educational program contributes to the development of children who have a strong sense of wellbeing and identity, and are connected, confident, involved and effective learners and communicators.
- Ensure that the Nominated Supervisor and all staff members at the service who work with children are aware that it is an offence to subject a child to any form of corporal punishment, or any discipline that is unreasonable or excessive in the circumstances (National Law: Section 166) (Regulation 73).
- Inform the Regulatory Authority in writing, within 24 hours of receiving a notifiable complaint (Section 174(4), Regulation 176(2)(b)).
- Inform the Regulatory Authority in writing within 24 hours of a serious incident occurring at the service (Section 174(4), Regulation 176).

Nominated Supervisor

- guides professional development and practice to promote interactions with children that are positive and respectful
- establishes practice guidelines that prioritise interactions with children and promotes interactions are authentic, just and respect difference.
- Ensure all staff are aware of the service's expectations regarding positive, respectful and appropriate behaviour, and acceptable responses and reactions when working with children and families.
- Consider the size and composition of groups to ensure all children are provided with the best opportunities for quality interactions and relationships with each other and with adults at the service.
- Develop and implement educational programs, in accordance with an approved learning framework, that are based on the developmental needs, interests and experiences of each child, and take into account the individual differences of each child.



Periwinkle

PRESCHOOL

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early childhood education

- Ensure that staff provide education and care to children in a way that encourages children to express themselves and their opinions and allows children to undertake experiences that develop self-reliance and self-esteem.
- Under section 166 of the Education and Care National Law, a staff member, nominated Supervisor and Approved Provider may receive a penalty for up to \$10,000 (up to \$50,000 in the case of Approved Provider) for subjecting a child to any form of corporal punishment or any discipline that is unreasonable in the circumstances.

Early Childhood Educators

- act in accordance with the obligations outlined in this policy.
- respond to children's communication in a just and consistent manner
- respond sensitively to children's attempts to initiate interactions and conversations
- initiate one to one interactions with children
- support children's efforts, assisting and encouraging as appropriate
- support children's secure attachment through consistent and warm nurturing relationships;
- support children's expression of their thoughts and feelings
- encourage children to express themselves and show an interest and participate in what the child is doing
- encourage children to make choices and decisions
- acknowledge children's complex relationships and sensitively intervene in ways that promote consideration and alternative perspectives and social inclusion. Guidance strategies should be reflective of this approach.
- acknowledge each child's uniqueness in positive ways;
- respect cultural differences in communication and consider alternative approaches.
- Respect children's agency and encourage them to express themselves and their opinions.
- Maintains the dignity and the rights of each child at all times.
- Offer positive guidance and encouragement towards acceptable behaviour.
- Genuinely seek children's input, respect their ideas and take their suggestions on board.
- Form warm relationships with each child.
- Have regard to the cultural and family values, age, and the physical and intellectual development and abilities of each child being educated and cared for.

Families

- Reading and complying with this policy.
- Engage in open communication with staff about their child.



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PRESCHOOL

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early childhood education

- Inform staff of events or incidents that may impact on their child's behaviour at the service (e.g. moving house, a new sibling).
- Inform staff of any concerns regarding their child's behaviour or the impact of other children's behaviour.
- Work collaboratively with staff and other to develop or review an individual behaviour guidance plan for their child, where appropriate.

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: Sections 166, 167
- Education and Care National Regulations: 73, 74, 155, 156, 157, 168(2)(j)
- Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998
- Commission for Children and Young People Act 1998
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)

Related Guidelines, Standards, Frameworks

- National Quality Standard, Quality Area 5: Relationships with children – Standards 5.1, 5.2
- National Quality Standard, Quality Area 7: Governance and Leadership – Standard 7.1.

Sources/Useful Resources

- Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) – www.acecqa.gov.au
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child – www.unicef.org.au



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early childhood education

- The Supporting young children's rights: Statement of intent (2015-2018) – www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au
- Australian Human Rights Commission – www.humanrights.gov.au