

Interactions with Children Policy

Rationale and Policy Considerations

Developing responsive, warm, trusting and respectful relationships with students promotes their wellbeing, self-esteem and sense of security. Positive interactions with students convey to them that they are valued as competent and capable individuals, and students develop confidence in their ability to express themselves, manage their feelings, learn new skills and take risks to extend their capabilities.

Students need assistance from educators and other important adults in their lives to guide their interactions with their peers and others as they explore their identity and develop more complex social skills and relationships.

The National Quality Standard for Early Childhood Education requires that the rights and interests of children are paramount, and the approved learning frameworks identify developing secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships as one of the principles that reflects contemporary theories and research evidence concerning children's learning and early childhood pedagogy.

Philosophy

Documented approach to the development of secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships; approach to access and participation, and commitment to quality outcomes for children; approach to educator / staff professionalism and responsible conduct.

Legislation and Government Requirements

Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 (Vic) (or corresponding legislation)

Code of Conduct Policy

Duty of Care Policy

Early Childhood (K-2) Operational Handbook

Early Years Learning Framework

Kindergarten Curriculum Guidelines

Students' Needs

Educators develop warm relationships with students; respect student's opinions; provide students with opportunities to become self-reliant and develop self-esteem; maintain student's dignity and rights; and provide students with positive guidance and support towards acceptable behaviour.

Families' Needs

Their children are respected and liked; educators develop responsive, warm trusting relationships with students and their families; children are happy and feel safe and secure at the school; educators are responsive to their student's strengths, interests, capabilities and background.

Educator / Staff Needs

Educators to support each other and reflect on ways to improve relationships and interactions with students and their families; access to up-to-date training and resources on effective communication; opportunities to model appropriate communication and interactions with students; organisational culture that supports and encourages open and trusting interactions; time to actively engage with students.

Management Needs

Educators / staff and nominated line managers to interact in a respectful and cooperative manner and be positive role models for students; to budget for adequate educator / staff professional learning.

National Quality Standards

Quality Area 1 – Education program and practice 1.1.1, 1.1.2, 1.2.2, 1.2.3.

Quality Area 2 – Children's health and safety 2.1.1.

Quality Area 4 – Staffing arrangements 4.2.2.

Quality Area 5 – Relationships with children 5.1.1, 5.1.2, 5.2.1.

Policy Statement

South Newman Primary School aims to develop responsive, warm, trusting and respectful relationships with each enrolled student through taking the time to genuinely listen and talk with students and their families.

Educators / staff relate to the students, their families, and to each other, in a friendly, caring and sensitive manner, valuing each individual and the unique contribution they make. The service aims to create an environment in which students feel they are valued members of their community, and in which their sense of belonging and wellbeing is supported. Educators will achieve this through providing consistent emotional support that will nurture the development of students' self-esteem and assist them to acquire the skills and understandings they need to interact positively with others.

Strategies for Policy Implementation

Nurturing positive interactions with children

- As each student arrives at school they will be greeted by an educator / staff member.
- Educators will be supportive and encouraging and engage in one to one and small group communications with children in a friendly, positive and respectful manner. They will form warm relationships with each student in their classroom.
- Educators / staff use students' names and get down to the students' eye level when communicating with them, and ensure that their interactions are both meaningful and personal.
- Educators / staff create a relaxed and happy atmosphere in which students experience equitable, friendly and genuine interactions with all educators, and other staff members at school.
- Educators instigate many playful social interactions with students' including conversations, songs, rhymes, finger plays, peek-a-goo games, sharing books or stories.
- Educators / staff respect each student's uniqueness, are attuned to and respond sensitively and appropriately to children's efforts to communicate and will use the child's own language, communication styles and culture to enhance their interactions.

- Educators / staff assist students to learn to communicate and interact positively and cooperatively with their peers through modelling appropriate communication and responding positively to students at all times.
- Educators encourage students to communicate their own ideas in a respectful and courteous way, and will respond appropriately to students' non-verbal cues.
- Educators / staff show empathy, respect and understanding when communicating with students and model this in their interactions with adults.
- Students will never be singled out or made to feel inadequate at any time.
- Educators / staff comfort students who are upset, or are showing signs of distress, and help them to feel safe, secure and understood.
- Educators ensure routines such as toileting, and rest times are used for positive one to one interactions with students and a time when they can get to know more about the students' likes, dislikes, interests, joys, fears etc.
- Educators / staff interact with students during eating times in a relaxed, unhurried manner, in which the enjoyment of foods and the social aspect of eating times is promoted.
- Educators / staff are genuinely interested in students' own interests and needs, and take the time to fully understand what students are doing or saying, listening to their responses and asking open ended questions.
- Students are encouraged to share their feelings or thoughts, and express different viewpoints about matters that affect them.
- Educators / staff share humour with students' and are playful and friendly in their interactions.
- Educators / staff respect children's desire not to engage in conversations or interactions at certain times or for particular reasons.

Involving children in decision making

- Educators will genuinely seek children's input, respect their ideas and take their suggestions on board.

Encouraging families to share information about the child

- Educators will use information gained from families to enhance their interactions with students and continue to build students sense of wellbeing and belonging.
- Educators will encourage families to share important information about their student through:
 - initiating regular on-going communications with families in a manner that promotes the development of strong relationships that re based on mutual respect, trust and understanding;
 - encouraging families to share their thoughts, ideas, questions and concerns, and promoting supportive partnerships between families, educators and the service;
 - treating families equitably without bias or judgement;
 - recognising that each family is unique and valuing this uniqueness.

Educator / staff communications with each other

- South Newman Primary School recognises that the way educators / staff interact with each other has an effect on the interactions they have with children and families.
- Educators / staff will role model warm and supportive interactions as they interact with each other.
- Educators / staff will convey mutual respect and recognition of each other's strengths and skills through:
 - recognising each other's strengths and valuing the different work each does;
 - working collaboratively to reach decisions which will enhance the quality of the education and care service;
 - welcoming diverse views and perspectives;
 - working together as a team and engaging in open and honest communication at all times;
 - respecting each other's feelings;
 - developing and sharing networks and links with other agencies;
 - resolving differences promptly and positively and using the experience to learn more effective methods of working together;
 - using calm, friendly voices with each other.

