

# Yarram Early Learning Participation of Volunteers and Students Policy

Quality Area 4: Staffing Arrangements

## PURPOSE

This policy provides guidelines for the engagement and participation of volunteers and students at the Yarram Early Learning, while ensuring that children's health, safety and wellbeing is protected at all times.

## POLICY STATEMENT

### VALUES

The Yarram Early Learning is committed to:

- Supporting connections with educational institutions to provide opportunities for students to undertake practicum placements as part of their studies
- Building relationships with community members and providing suitable opportunities to engage volunteers to contribute to the programs and activities of the service
- Ensuring the health, safety and wellbeing of each child at the service through consistent compliance with this policy and procedures when engaging volunteers and students.
- Allowing volunteers to develop reciprocal relationships with children and families to create a trusting and safe environment for both children and the volunteers/students to learn in.

### SCOPE

This policy applies to the Approved Provider, Responsible Person, staff, students on placement, volunteers, parents/guardians, children and others attending the programs and activities of the Yarram Early Learning

## BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATION

### Background

Volunteers and students may participate in programs and activities at the service from time to time in order to observe and experience the provision of centre-based education and care. This will be encouraged and facilitated by the Yarram Early Learning wherever appropriate and possible.

### Volunteers and Students

Volunteers and students can expect:

- A safe and well-managed workplace
- Meaningful work experience with appropriate direction, supervision and training
- Recognition for their contribution.
- Fantastic learning opportunities from experienced and qualified educators.

The role that volunteers play in children's services varies and can include

- Working with groups of children
- Preparing materials or food
- Assisting with administrative tasks or
- Working one-on-one with individual children
- Students may undertake assessment tasks/observations required by their institution, under the supervision of a qualified staff member or supervisor. (communicated with room leader/director so adequate staffing can be arranged for a safe environment for the children for the student to do so under supervision)

The children's service is responsible for ensuring that volunteers are suitable to work with children, and that children's health, safety and wellbeing is protected at all times. Prior to participation at the service, a volunteer (aged 18 years or over) must be in possession of a Working with Children (WWC) Check card, unless they are under the direct supervision of a staff member who is over 18 years of age and holds, or is actively working towards, an approved diploma level education and care qualification (Regulation 358) (refer to *Staffing Policy*).

Volunteers should only be engaged to complement, not replace, the work of paid staff. Accordingly, services should not engage volunteers to fill the place of an employee who is ill or on leave, or to fill a vacant budgeted position.

Volunteers must not be asked to perform tasks:

- That they are untrained, unqualified or too inexperienced to undertake
- That put the children or themselves in a vulnerable or potentially unsafe situation
- Where there is a conflict of interest.
- **Students and volunteers are not counted in staff to child ratios**

Prior to commencing work at the service, all volunteers should be interviewed to ascertain their suitability for, and interest in, the tasks they will be undertaking, and to assess whether the volunteer's goals can be achieved. The interview process also provides an opportunity for volunteers to have their questions answered. Volunteers should be familiar with all policies and procedures that are relevant to their work within the service before commencement, ( Listed in the Policy Manual Induction Policy). Reference checks must be undertaken by the Approved Provider or the Responsible Person, to confirm work abilities or character attributes. Good practice in volunteer management includes acknowledgement and recognition of volunteer contributions, and this can involve a mixture of formal and informal recognition strategies.

It is a requirement under the *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011* that the Responsible Person uses the staff record to document the details of all students and volunteers. The staff record must include the full name, address and date of birth of each student or volunteer who participates at the service. The Approved Provider of a centre-based service must also keep a record for each day on which the student or volunteer participates at the service, including the date and the hours of participation. In addition to this, it is recommended that students and volunteers undertake an induction to the service and complete an induction checklist (refer to Attachment 1), which should also be stored with the staff record.

## Participation of Parents/Guardians and Family Members

## NQS: Quality Area 6 – Collaborative partnerships with families and communities

The Yarram Early Learning values the participation of parents/guardians and other family members, and the voluntary contribution they make to the education and care of their own and other children. "In genuine partnerships families and staff value each other's knowledge and roles, communicate freely and respectfully and engage in shared decision making" (*Early Years Learning Framework*). Yarram Early Learning aims to provide a range of opportunities for family members, volunteers and students to participate in programs and activities while adhering to clear guidelines regarding appropriate interactions and communication with staff, and other adults and children at the service (refer to *Code of Conduct Policy*).

### Legislation and standards

Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

- *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010*: Section 169
- *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011*: Regulations 123, 145, 149, 157, 355, 358, 360
- *Equal Opportunity Act 2010* (Vic)
- *Fair Work Act 2009* (Cth) (amendments up to 2018)
- *National Quality Standard*, Quality Area 4: Staffing Arrangements
- Standard 4.1: Staffing arrangements enhance children's learning and development and ensure their safety and wellbeing
- *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004* (Vic)
- *Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2017*
- *Working with Children Act 2006* (Vic)

### DEFINITIONS

The terms defined in this section relate specifically to this policy. For commonly used terms e.g. Approved Provider, Responsible Person, Regulatory Authority etc. refer to the *General Definitions* section of this manual.

**Conflict of interest:** (In relation to this policy) refers to an interest that may affect, or may appear reasonably likely to affect, the judgement or conduct of the volunteer, or may impair their independence or loyalty to the service. A conflict of interest can arise from avoiding personal losses as well as gaining personal advantage, whether financial or otherwise, and may not only involve the volunteer, but also their relatives, friends or business associates.

**Student:** A person undertaking a practicum placement as part of a recognised early childhood qualification. This student will be supported by an educational institution in the completion of their placement.

**Volunteer:** A person who willingly undertakes defined activities to support the education and care programs at a children's service in an unpaid or honorary capacity. These activities may include direct contact with children, administrative tasks, or preparing materials or food.

**Working directly with children:** For the purposes of the National Regulations, working directly with children is defined as being physically present with children and directly engaged in providing them with education and/or care.

**Working with Children (WWC) Check:** The check is a legal requirement for those undertaking paid or voluntary child-related work in Victoria and is a measure to help protect children from harm arising as a result of physical or sexual abuse. The Department of Justice assesses a person's suitability to work with children by examining relevant serious sexual, physical and drug offences in a person's national criminal history and, where appropriate, their professional history. A WWC Check card, notice or document (valid for five years), is granted to a person under working with children legislation if:

- They have been assessed as suitable to work with children
- There has been no information that, if the person worked with children, they would pose a risk to those children
- They are not prohibited from attempting to obtain, undertake or remain in child-related employment.

## SOURCES AND RELATED POLICIES

### Sources

- Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA): [www.acecqa.gov.au](http://www.acecqa.gov.au)
- National Early Years Learning Framework: <http://deewr.gov.au/early-years-learning-framework>
- Working with Children Check, Victoria <https://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au/>

### Service policies

- *Code of Conduct Policy*
- *Occupational Health and Safety Policy*
- *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy*

## PROCEDURES

### ***The Approved Provider is responsible for:***

- Developing guidelines in consultation with the Responsible Person and staff for accepting applications from volunteers/students to work at the service
- Accepting or rejecting a potential volunteer/student based on the circumstances of the service at the time, in consultation with the Responsible Person.
- Ensuring that children being educated and cared for by the service are adequately supervised, and the legislated educator-to-child ratios are complied with at all times (Regulations 123, 355, 360), (refer to *Supervision of Children Policy*)
- Ensuring that, where required, the Working with Children (WWC) Check has been read/sighted prior to the volunteer's commencement at the service
- Ensuring that the staff record contains information for all volunteers/students attending the service with details of name, address, date of birth, days and hours of participation and details of the Working with Children (WWC) Check (Regulations 145, 147, 149)
- Ensuring that volunteers/students and parents/guardians are adequately supervised at all times, and that the health, safety and wellbeing of children at the service is protected

- Ensuring that volunteers/students and parents/guardians are not left with sole supervision of individual children or groups of children
- Ensuring that parents/guardians of a child attending the service can enter the service premises at any time that the child is being educated and cared for, except where this may pose a risk to the safety of children or staff, or conflict with any duty of the Responsible Person or staff under the law (Regulation 157)
- Developing a range of strategies to enable and encourage the participation and involvement of parents/guardians at the service
- Providing volunteers/students and parents/guardians with access to all service policies and procedures, and a copy of the *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011*
- Ensuring that volunteers/students and parents/guardians comply with the National Regulations and all service policies and procedures, including the *Code of Conduct Policy*, while attending the service
- Developing an induction information sheet for student observations (refer to Attachment 1)
- Developing a checklist for volunteers/students attending the service (refer to Attachment 2) in consultation with the Responsible Person
- **The Supervisors and relevant Room Leader are responsible for ensuring volunteers and students are following this policy and the outlines procedures.**

### **The Responsible Person is responsible for:**

- Assisting the Approved Provider to develop guidelines for applications from volunteers/students to work at the service
- Assisting the Approved Provider with decisions in relation to accepting/rejecting a potential volunteer/student based on the circumstances of the service at the time
- Ensuring that children being educated and cared for by the service are adequately supervised, and the legislated educator-to-child ratios are complied with at all times (Regulations 123, 355, 360) (refer to *Supervision of Children Policy*)
- Ensuring that, where required, the Working with Children (WWC) Check has been read/sighted prior to the volunteer's commencement at the service, and that details are included on the staff record
- Ensuring that volunteers/students and parents/guardians are adequately supervised at all times, and that the health, safety and wellbeing of children at the service is protected
- Ensuring that volunteers/students and parents/guardians are not left with sole supervision of individual children or groups of children
- Ensuring that parents/guardians of a child attending the service can enter the service premises at any time that the child is being educated and cared for, except where this may pose a risk to the safety of children or staff, or conflict with any duty of the Approved Provider, Responsible Person or staff members under the law (Regulation 157)
- Ensuring strategies are in place to enable and encourage the participation and involvement of parents/guardians at the service
- Providing volunteers/students and parents/guardians with access to all service policies and procedures, and a copy of the *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011*

- Ensuring that volunteers/students and parents/guardians comply with the National Regulations and all service policies and procedures, including the *Code of Conduct Policy*, while attending the service
- Assisting in the development of an induction information sheet for student observations (refer to Attachment 1)
- Assisting in the development of a checklist for volunteers/students attending the service (refer to Attachment 2) in consultation with the Responsible Person and staff members.
- Ensuring that, where required, the Working with Children (WWC) Check has been read/sighted prior to the volunteer's commencement at the service.

### **Educators and staff are responsible for:**

- Assisting the Approved Provider and Responsible Person to develop guidelines for applications from volunteers/students to work at the service
- Ensuring that children being educated and cared for by the service are adequately supervised, and the legislated educator-to-child ratios are complied with at all times (refer to *Supervision of Children Policy*)
- Providing volunteers/students and parents/guardians with access to all service policies and procedures, and a copy of the *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011*
- Ensuring that volunteers/students and parents/guardians comply with the National Regulations and all service policies and procedures, including the *Code of Conduct Policy*, while attending the service
- Complying with the requirement that volunteers/students and parents/guardians are adequately supervised at all times, and that the health, safety and wellbeing of children at the service is protected
- Complying with the requirement that volunteers/students and parents/guardians are not left with sole supervision of individual children or groups of children
- Enabling parents/guardians of children attending the service to access the service premises at any time the child is being educated and cared for except where this poses a risk to the safety of children and/or staff
- Encouraging the participation and involvement of parents/guardians at the service
- Assisting in the development of an induction information sheet for student observations (refer to attachment 1)
- Assisting in the development of a checklist for volunteers/students attending the service (refer to attachment 2) in consultation with the Responsible Person and staff members.

### **Volunteers and students, while at the service, are responsible for:**

- Ensuring they have provided all details required to complete the staff record
- Undertaking a Working with Children (WWC) Check and presenting a current WWC Check card or other notification, as applicable
- Understanding and acknowledging the requirement for confidentiality of all information relating to staff and families within the service (refer to *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy*)
- Complying with the requirements of the *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011* and with all service policies and procedures, including the *Code of Conduct Policy*, Emergency and evacuation, mobile phone, hygiene

and privacy and confidentiality (and any more listed in Policy Manual Induction Policy) while at the service undertaking the induction process and completing the induction checklist (refer to Attachment 1) prior to commencement at the service

- Following the directions of staff at the service at all times to ensure that the health, safety and wellbeing of children is protected.
- Asking questions to your supervision of anything they may be unsure of to ensure a safe and comfortable environment for staff, volunteers and children.

### **Parents/guardians are responsible for:**

- Complying with the requirements of the *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011* and with all service policies and procedures, including the *Code of Conduct Policy*, while attending the service
- Following the directions of staff at the service at all times to ensure that the health, safety and wellbeing of children is protected.

## **EVALUATION**

In order to assess whether the values and purposes of the policy have been achieved, the will: Responsible Person will:

- Check staff records on a regular basis to ensure details of students and volunteers are maintained in line with all legislative requirements as outlined in the policy
- Regularly seek feedback from everyone affected by the policy regarding its effectiveness
- Monitor the implementation, compliance, complaints and incidents in relation to this policy
- Keep the policy up to date with current legislation, research, policy and best practice
- Revise the policy and procedures as part of the service's policy review cycle, or as required
- Notify parents/guardians at least 14 days before making any changes to this policy or its procedures.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

- Attachment 1: Student Observations - Induction Information
- Attachment 2: Volunteer orientation checklist

## **AUTHORISATION**

This policy was adopted by Yarram Early Learning Incorporated in May 2020

**REVIEW DATE:** May 2022

## **ATTACHMENT 1**

### **Yarram Early Learning**

#### **Student Observations - Induction Information**

##### **About**

Yarram Early Learning philosophy is based on 10 focus areas. This is displayed on our YEL Website and in the Foyer of the service.

##### **Visiting Information**

###### **Please provide:**

- Photo copies of your Student Card
- Contact details of the appropriate supervisor
- Working with Children Check – unless under the age of 18

**Dress code:** Neat casual, including a sun hat. Please do not wear gym gear, singlet tops, open toe shoes/sandals or dangerous footwear.

###### **Upon arrival please make yourself familiar with the layout of the Service:**

- Emergency exits and group assembly points
- Responsible Person's Office
- 4 Childrens rooms
- Adult Bathrooms
- Staff Room
- Storage Areas and Resource Collections
- Central First Aid Cabinet & Children's & Staff's Medical Lists
- Computer & Printing Access

###### **Student Conduct:**

- Please conduct your observations quietly to avoid disruption of the class room learning experiences.
- Please consult with the Room Leader before interviewing a child/ren.
- Please be respectful of each child's personal space.
- Please ensure the safety of all those associated with the observations and research.
- Please ensure that observations and research comply with established guidelines in the lesson plans.
- Please refrain from taking photographs or using phones while at Yarram Early Learning.
- Please familiarise yourself with the relevant policies and procedures listed within the Policy Manual Induction

**Please do not hesitate to speak with Yarram Early Learning Staff if you have any questions.**



VOLUNTEER ORIENTATION CHECKLIST			
STAFF DETAILS			
Name:		Date of Birth:	/ /
Address:			
FOLLOWING FORMS/INFORMATION RECEIVED			TICK
Validation of Personal Information			
WWC Check <i>Checked for currency on WWCC website and attached verification</i> <input type="checkbox"/>			
STAFF MEMBER TO DISCUSS			TICK
Visitor sign in/out			
Staff Toilet & Lockers			
Staff Room			
Staff Food Storage / labels /dates			
Location of bins			
CENTRE POLICIES (TO BE TICKED BY NEW STAFF MEMBER WHEN READ AND UNDERSTOOD)			TICK
Code of Conduct Policy			
Occupational Health and Safety Policy			
Participation of Volunteers and Students Policy			
Privacy and Confidentiality Policy			
TO BE COMPLETED BY NEW STAFF MEMBER			
<p>I hereby acknowledge that on (date) I received a digital link of the YELI Centre Policies and Procedures, I have read and understood the above listed Centre Policies which it contained. I understand the contents of said policies and agree to abide by the principles, practices and consequences set out within.</p> <p>I understand that the YELI Approve Provider and Responsible Person will address any breach of these policies, and that any serious breach could lead to legal or disciplinary action. I understand that a signed copy of this acknowledgement will be kept on my staff record while I am working at</p>			

the service.

Date: ..... Signed: .....