

Yarram Early Learning Mobile Phone/Communications Policy

Quality Area 7: Governance and Leadership

POLICY

The physical possession or use of mobile phones and other personal communication devices by educators will not be allowed whilst that educator is counted in educator-to-child ratios as their main responsibility is the supervision of children. This is due to the disturbance that is created in the learning environment, threats to the health and safety of children and potential confidentiality breaches of children and families.

As a member of an early childcare centre each educator has a responsibility to the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, other staff, children and families. Each educator is responsible for creating an environment for learning – free from disturbances.

In addition to learning disturbances, mobile phones and personal communication devices create a risk for the health and safety of children and confidentiality of children and families.

PROCEDURE

Educator's mobile phones must remain in the staff room, office, lockers or at home whilst the educator is counted in educator-to-child ratios. Mobile phones may not be carried on the educator in their pocket or to be located in the childcare room, kitchens, bathrooms or storage rooms.

When educator constantly leaves the room, it causes a disruption to the room's routines and the children's environment. This includes leaving the room for a toilet break and checking your phone whilst out of the room. Staff have set breaks where they are discounted in the child to educator ratios and able to use their phones.

If unusual or infrequent extenuating circumstances exist, the educator must talk with the Director or Responsible Person on the day to determine a plan based on each individual situation. Educators who believe they have extenuating circumstances on a regular basis will be asked to re-evaluate their ability for successful ongoing employment within the childcare industry.

VIOLATIONS

Violations of this policy/procedure will be cause for written warning and will be documented using a written warning template and a record of the disciplinary action will be kept in their staff file.

Staff have a limit of three written warnings before a dismissal of work duties is issued. Any violations of this policy are considered highly disrespectful to the children and families who attend Yarram Early Learning and will be handled appropriately.

POLICY STATEMENT

VALUES

Yarram Early Learning is committed to:

- Providing adequate supervision of all enrolled children in all aspects of the service's program
- Ensuring all children are directly and actively supervised by staff employed or engaged by Yarram Early Learning
- Ensuring staff are respecting all children, families and other staff members rights by providing quality care and undivided attention to the children enrolled at Yarram Early Learning.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all educators, students on placement and volunteers attending the programs and activities of Yarram Early Learning, including during offsite excursions and activities.

BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATION

Background

Supervision is essential in ensuring that children's safety is protected in the service environment.

Supervision is an integral part of the care and education of children and requires staff members to make ongoing assessments of the child and the activities in which they are engaged. Active supervision assists in the development of positive relationships between staff, children and their families, and informs ongoing assessment and future planning. Adequate supervision requires teamwork and good communication between staff. Mobile phone use or other personal communication device use may cause distraction from supervision leading to a risk for the health and safety of children and confidentiality of children and families.

Legislation and standards

Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

- *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010*: Sections 165, 167, 169
- *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011*: Regulations 101, 168, 176
- *National Quality Standard*, Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety
 - Standard 2.2 Safety: Each child is protected.
 - Element 2.2.1 Supervision: At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from harm and hazard.
- *National Quality Standard*, Quality Area 7: Governance and Leadership
 - Standard 7.1 Governance: Governance supports the operation of a quality service.
 - Element 7.1.2 Management systems: Systems are in place to manage risk and enable the effective management and operation of a quality service.
 - Element 7.1.3 Roles and responsibilities: Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined, and understood, and support effective decision-making and operation of the service.
- *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004*

DEFINITIONS

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

Adequate supervision: (In relation to this policy) **supervision** entails all children (individuals and groups) in all areas of the service, being in sight and/or hearing of a staff member at all times including during toileting, sleep, rest and transition routines. Services are required to comply with the legislative requirements for educator-to-child ratios at all times. Supervision contributes to protecting children from hazards that may emerge in play, including hazards created by the equipment used. Adequate supervision refers to constant, active and diligent supervision of every child at the service. Adequate supervision requires that staff are always in a position to observe each child, respond to individual needs, and immediately intervene if necessary.

SOURCES AND RELATED POLICIES

Sources

- *Guide to the National Quality Standard (ACECQA)*
- *Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 (ACECQA)*

Service policies

- *Child Safe environment Policy*
- *Interactions with Children Policy*
- *Occupational Health and Safety Policy*
- *Staffing Policy*
- *Privacy and Confidentiality*
- *Code of Conduct Policy*

PROCEDURES

The Approved Provider and Nominated Supervisor and Responsible Person are responsible for:

- Ensuring that children being educated and cared for by the service are adequately supervised (refer to *Definitions*) at all times they are in the care of that service (*Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010: Section 165(1)*)
- Ensuring appropriate procedures are followed during the event of a violation of this policy.
- In the event of a circumstance where a staff member has communicated the acceptance for a mobile phone, ensure the staff member can safely step out of a room without disruptions to room ratios and routines.
- **The Supervisors and relevant Room Leader are responsible for ensuring volunteers and students are following this policy and the outlines procedures.**

Educators are responsible for:

- Providing adequate supervision (refer to *Definitions*) at all times
- Ensuring they communicate with the nominated supervisor or responsible person if there is a circumstance where there may be an acceptance for a mobile phone to be answered.

- Being respectful to families, children and other staff members by ensuring they are providing quality care to all children enrolled within the service.

EVALUATION

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

- 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: Warning letter for breach of *Mobile Phone/Communications Policy*

AUTHORISATION

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

Reviewed by Committee - August 2023

To be reviewed - 2025



<Date>

Private and confidential

<Insert employee's full name>

<Insert employee's residential address>

Dear <insert name>

Warning letter

I am writing to you about your conduct during your employment with Yarram Early Learning.

On <insert date> you met with <insert name of others at the meeting>. At this meeting you were advised that you had breached <relevant breach or policy> on <insert date>. In Particular you were advised that <insert explanation of unsatisfactory performance or conduct> and that immediate improvement is required.

In the meeting you were asked if you had anything you wished to say or to respond to the situation and you <insert details of the employee's response or if no response was provided you can note here that the employee 'did not respond'>.

After considering the situation it is expected that your conduct improves and specifically that you do not continue to breach the <relevant breach or policy> or any other YELC policies.

This is your <first/second> warning letter. Your employment may be terminated if your conduct does not improve.

I propose that we meet again on <insert date> to review your progress. Please let me know if this time is convenient to you. If you wish to respond to this formal warning letter please do so by contacting me on 51825190 or by replying in writing.

Regards,

Cathy Gay – Director
Yarram Early Learning Centre