# Staff and Educator

# Health and Well Being

## Purpose

As a health promoting service, we will promote the health and wellbeing of all educators and staff through learning, policies, creating a safe and healthy physical and social environment, and developing community links and partnerships. This policy confirms our commitment to:

- providing our educators and staff with a safe, healthy and supportive environment in which to work
- recognising that the health and wellbeing of our staff is important, and that it not only benefits the individual, but also children, families and the wider community
- providing a supportive workplace culture where healthy lifestyle choices are valued and encouraged.

## Policy statement

### Background

A focus on the health and wellbeing of staff can help to improve their physical and mental health, concentration and productivity, and reduce absenteeism and staff turnover.[1] Research has shown that healthy, engaged employees are nearly three times more productive than employees with poor health.[2]

### Whole service engagement

It is recognised that every member of the service impacts on the health of others and can contribute to creating an environment that promotes health and wellbeing. All educators, staff, contractors, visiting students and volunteers will be supported to meet this policy, with opportunities to provide feedback and input.

## Procedures and responsibilities

### Healthy Eating and Oral Health

- Educators are supported to consume healthy foods and drinks and maintain good oral health practices at work.
- Healthy eating and oral health information and policy requirements are included in educator and staff orientation/induction.

---

[1] Australian Government, Department of Health, 2013
http://www.healthyworkers.gov.au/internet/hwi/publishing.nsf/Content/why

[2] Medibank Private, 2005, The health of Australia's workforce http://www.medibank.com.au

- When food is provided to educators and staff for meetings, celebrations and events, healthy food options are included and discretionary options are discouraged.
- There is suitable space for breastfeeding and storing breastmilk

## Physical Activity and Movement

- Educators and staff are supported to be physically active and minimise sedentary behaviour, both inside and outside of work hours.
- Physical activity and movement information and policy requirements are included in educator and staff orientation/induction.
- There is a shower in the public toilets to support active travel for educators and staff.

## Mental Health and Wellbeing

- Educators and staff are supported to learn about and care for their own mental health and wellbeing.
- Mental health and wellbeing information and policy requirements are included in educator and staff orientation/induction.
- Leadership practices and on-the-ground support enable a work environment that minimises stress and promotes mental health and wellbeing for educators and staff.
- Strategies are implemented to promote positive conflict resolution and to prevent and respond to bullying, discrimination and harassment.
- There are clear referral options and pathways for educators and staff to access support services for mental health and wellbeing.

## Safe Environments

- OH&S guidelines are met to ensure a safe work environment for educators and staff.
- Safety information and policy requirements are included in educator and staff orientation/induction.
- Educators and staff are supported to learn about and practice safe behaviours, including cultural safety, cyber safety and physical safety.

## Sun Protection

- Educators and staff are supported to follow sun protective behaviours when UV levels are 3 or above (in Victoria, UV levels are forecast to reach 3 or higher from mid-August to the end of April).
- As part of OH&S UV risk controls and role-modelling, educators and staff:
  - ➢ wear a suitable sun protective hat (e.g. legionnaire, broad-brimmed or bucket style), covering clothing and, if practical, sunglasses
  - ➢ apply sunscreen (SPF30 or higher), and
  - ➢ seek shade whenever possible.
  - ➢ Sunscreen will be supplied for staff.
- Sun protection information is provided to educators and staff, including information about:
  - ➢ sun protective behaviours
  - ➢ UV radiation
  - ➢ health risks associated with UV exposure
  - ➢ early detection of skin cancer.

- Educators and staff are encouraged to access the daily local sun protection times at BOM or the free SunSmart app
- Sun protection information and policy requirements are included in educator and staff orientation/induction.

### Tobacco, Alcohol and Other Drugs

- Educators and staff who want to quit smoking or vaping, drinking or using other drugs are supported and referred to appropriate agencies.
- Tobacco, e-cigarettes, alcohol and other drugs policy requirements are included in educator and staff induction/orientation.
  Resources about the health risks related to smoking and vaping, high-risk drinking and taking other drugs are available to educators and staff.

## Relevant legislation and policy documents

- Australian Dietary Guidelines. National Health and Medical Research Council, 2013
- Australia's Physical Activity and Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines for Adults
- Victorian Government OHS Planning Documents
- Occupational Health and Safety Act (2004)
- Tobacco Act 1987
- Liquor Control Reform Act 1998

## Related service policies (examples)

- Occupational Health and Safety
- Mental Health and Wellbeing
- Physical Activity and Movement/Active Play
- Sun Protection
- Healthy Eating and Oral Health/Nutrition
- Safe Environments/Child Safety

## Monitoring and review

This Staff Health and Wellbeing Policy will be monitored and reviewed by educators, staff, management and the health and wellbeing team at least once every three years.

# Appendix – Definitions:

**Healthy eating and oral health:** For the purposes of this policy and for the Healthy Early Childhood Services Achievement Program, the 'Healthy Eating and Oral Health' health priority area focuses on supporting healthy eating, including nutrition, positive food habits and food literacy, and supporting oral health and hygiene practices.

**Healthy eating:** Eating a wide variety of foods from the five food groups each day. These are:

- fruit
- vegetables and legumes/beans
- grain (cereal) foods, mostly wholegrain
- milk, yoghurt, cheese and alternatives
- lean meat, poultry, fish, eggs, tofu, nuts and seeds and legumes/beans.

Healthy eating also means eating in a way that is socially and culturally appropriate, having regular meals and snacks and eating food to satisfy hunger, appetite and energy needs.[3]

**Nutrition:** The process of providing or obtaining the food necessary for health and growth.[4]

**Discretionary/sometimes food and drink:** Discretionary/sometimes food and drink is high in fat, sugar and salt or a combination of these.[5] They typically have very little nutritional value and are often processed and packaged. Examples of discretionary food and drink include:

- chocolate, confectionery, jelly
- sweet biscuits, high fat/salt savoury biscuits, chips
- high sugar/high fat cakes and slices
- cream, ice cream
- deep fried foods (e.g. hot chips) and pastry-based foods (e.g. pies, sausage rolls and pasties)
- most fast food and takeaway foods
- some processed meats (e.g. sausages, frankfurts/hot dogs, salami, strasbourg, devon, some commercial chicken nuggets and fish fingers)
- soft drinks, fruit juice and fruit drinks, cordial, sports drinks, energy drinks, flavoured milk and flavoured mineral water.[6]

**Oral health:** A standard of health of the oral and related tissues that enables an individual to eat, speak and socialise without active disease, discomfort or embarrassment and that contributes to general wellbeing.[7]

---

[3] Nutrition Australia Victorian Division, www.nutritionaustralia.org

[4] http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/nutrition

[5] National Health and Medical Research Council, 2013, Australian Dietary Guidelines, http://www.eatforhealth.gov.au

[6] Commonwealth of Australia, 2009, Get Up & Grow: Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for Early Childhood, https://www1.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/phd-early-childhood-nutrition-resources

[7] COAG Health Council, 2015, Healthy Mouths Healthy Lives: Australia's National Oral Health Plan 2015–2024, http://www.coaghealthcouncil.gov.au/Publications/Reports/ArtMID/514/ArticleID/81

**Food literacy:** A collection of inter-related knowledge, skills and behaviours required to plan, manage, select, prepare and eat food to meet (dietary) needs.[8]

**Physical activity and movement:** For the purposes of this policy and for the Healthy Early Childhood Services Achievement Program, the 'Physical Activity and Movement' health priority area focuses on physical activity participation, fundamental movement skills and reducing sedentary behaviour.

**Physical activity** includes sport, incidental exercise and many forms of recreation.

**Active travel** includes walking, cycling, scootering or any similar transport where physical activity is used to travel.

**Mental Health and Wellbeing:** For the purposes of this policy and for the Healthy Early Childhood Services Achievement Program, the 'Mental Health and Wellbeing' health priority area focuses on social and emotional wellbeing and resilience.

**Mental health** in early childhood can be understood as a young child's ability to 'experience, regulate and express emotions; form close and secure interpersonal relationships; and explore the environment and learn – all in the context of family, community and cultural expectations for young children. Infant mental health is synonymous with healthy social and emotional development.'[9]

**Resilience:** The ability to bounce back from adversity in order to lead a healthy and fulfilling life.[10]

**Social and emotional competence:** The ability to recognise and manage emotions, develop caring and concern for others, make responsible decisions, establish positive relationships and handle challenging situations capably.[11]

**Safe environments:** For the purposes of this policy and for the Healthy Early Childhood Services Achievement Program, the 'Safe Environments' health priority area focuses on supporting physical safety, cultural safety and cyber safety.

**Physical safety:** Protection from harm and hazards that can cause injury. Identified risks are managed and minimised.

**Cultural safety:** An environment that is spiritually, socially and emotionally safe, as well as physically safe for people 'where there is no assault challenge or denial of their identity, of who they are and what they

---

[8] Vidgen HA, Gallegos D, 2014, Defining Food Literacy and its components, *Appetite*, 76, 50–59, Retrieved from https://blogs.deakin.edu.au/apfnc/wp-content/uploads/sites/119/2015/06/Vidgen_2014_food-literacy-Appetite.pdf

[9] Zero to Three, 2002 https://www.zerotothree.org/

[10] Government of Western Australia, 2005, School Drug Education and Road Aware. Challenges and Choices, Early Childhood Resource for resilience, drug and road safety education.

[11] Zins JE & Elias MJ, 2003, Social and Emotional Learning in Safe and Sound: An educational leader's guide to evidence-based social and emotional learning programs, Developed by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, USA.

need. It is about shared respect, shared meaning, shared knowledge and experience of learning together'.[12]

**Cyber safety/Online safety/Internet safety/E-safety:** The safe and responsible use of technology including use of the internet, electronic media and social media in order to ensure information security and personal safety. There are three main areas of risk to safety:

'Content: being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful material
Contact: being subjected to harmful online interactions with other users (including bullying)
Conduct: personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm'.[13]

**Sun protection:** For the purposes of this policy and for the Healthy Early Childhood Services Achievement Program, the 'Sun Protection' health priority area focuses on the creation of environments and behaviours that will prevent over-exposure to UV radiation.

**UV radiation:** Ultraviolet (UV) radiation is a type of energy produced by the sun and some artificial sources, such as solariums. Too much UV radiation can cause skin and eye damage, sunburn, tanning and skin cancer. Some UV exposure is recommended for vitamin D. UV radiation isn't like the sun's light or heat, which we can see and feel. Your senses cannot detect UV radiation, so you won't notice the damage until it has been done.

**Tobacco, alcohol and other drugs:** For the purposes of this policy and for the Healthy Early Childhood Services Achievement Program, the 'Tobacco, Alcohol and Other Drugs' health priority area focuses on creating smoke-, vape- and drug-free environments and low-risk alcohol consumption. Smoke- and vape-free refers to both traditional and electronic cigarettes (i.e. e-cigarettes).

**Tobacco product:** Any device or product that contains organic matter that is heated or burned to create aerosol or smoke that is inhaled by the user.

**E-cigarette product:** Any electronic device that is intended to be used to create an aerosol for inhalation and any liquid, or product containing liquid, intended to be used in or with an electronic device to create an aerosol for inhalation.

**Drug:** Any substance taken to change the way the body and/or mind functions. [14]
**Alcohol:** A depressant drug that slows down activity in the central nervous system.[14]

**Endorsed by: Yarram Early Learning Committee of Management**
**Reviewed by Committee - October 2023**
**To be Reviewed - 2025**

---

[12] Williams R, 1999, Cultural safety – what does it mean for our work practice? *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health*, vol. 23, no.2, pp.213–214.

[13] Kodo Education, 2015, Safeguarding Essentials: What is E-Safety*,* Retrieved from https://www.e-safetysupport.com/stories/166/what-is-e-safety#.WydANdIzaUl

[14] Australian Drug Information Network, 2012, Glossary https://adf.org.au/resources/did-glossary/