

# Code of Professional Conduct

## Policy Statement & Commitments

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The Education and Care Services National Regulations require Brunswick East Primary School Outside School Hours Care Service (BEPS OSHC Service) to have policies and procedures in relation to staffing, including a code of conduct. The National Quality Standard requires educators at BEPS OSHC Service to be respectful and ethical at all times.

The purpose of this Code of Professional Conduct is to promote professionalism, confidentiality and ethical conduct, and to inform children and families, and the community, of the standard of professional conduct they can expect the BEPS OSHC Service to uphold.

BEPS OSHC Service uses this code as a basis for evaluating professional conduct, and as a reference tool for the thought processes that inform pedagogy, including actions and reactions towards professional conduct, relationships, views, influence and position within communities and society.

The professional team, to which this code applies, includes the School Council, BEPS OSHC Management Sub-committee, OSHC Coordinator and all educators and volunteers. This policy has been developed in accordance with Brunswick East Primary School Staff Code of Conduct values of integrity, respect and responsibility.

### BEPS OSHC Service is committed to:

- a code of professional conduct
- upholding ethical principles
- professional standards that guide decision-making and practice
- observe child safe principles and expectations
- a system of ethical inquiry to provide a basis for reflection on how to relate to and contribute to the education and care community in which it actively participates.

## Standards of Professional Conduct

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The professional conduct of the staff team at BEPS OSHC Service in relation to one another, the children and their families, the community, and the sector is based on a the following set of expected standards of professional conduct:

- BEPS OSHC Service will administer an approved education and care service in compliance with legislation including the Education and Care Services National Law, professional standards and best practice.

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- BEPS OSHC Service will provide a program within a family- and child-centred context.
- BEPS OSHC Service will engage in reflective, ethical, and sustainable decision-making.
- The *Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics (2016)* will be used to provide a framework for reflection about the ethical responsibilities of educators.
- The *Code of Conduct for Victorian Public Sector Employees (2007)* will be used to affirm the public accountability of all staff.
- BEPS OSHC Service Staff Handbook.

These standards of should be read in conjunction with

- BEPS Staff Code of Conduct
- Early Childhood Australia's *Code of Ethics (2016)*
- The *Code of Conduct for Victorian Public Sector Employees (2007)*
- the National Quality Framework document suite, available through the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA)
- BEPS OSHC Service's Statement of Philosophy
- BEPS OSHC Service's operational policies and procedures that provide a framework for accountable and responsible professional practice.
- The Child Safe Standards

The purpose of these standards is to:

- promote adherence to the values staff see as underpinning their profession
- provide a set of principles that will guide staff in their everyday conduct and assist them to solve ethical dilemmas
- affirm the public accountability of staff at BEPS OSHC Service
- promote confidence and professionalism in staff at BEPS OSHC Service.

### **Integrity, Respect and Responsibility**

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BEPS OSHC Service holds a unique position of trust and influence, which is recognised through relationships with children and families, colleagues and the wider community.

BEPS OSHC Service demonstrates its integrity by:

- acting in the best interests of children
- maintaining a professional relationship with children and families, colleagues and the community
- behaving in ways that respect and advance our profession.

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BEPS OSHC Service demonstrates its respect by:

- acting with care and compassion
- treating children fairly and impartially
- holding its colleagues in high regard
- acknowledging families as partners in the education and care of their child.

BEPS OSHC Service demonstrates responsibility by:

- providing quality education and care outside of school hours
- maintaining and developing its pedagogy
- working cooperatively with colleagues and community in the best interests of children.

### **Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics**

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*Early Childhood Australia's Code of Ethics (2006)* is an integral part of BEPS OSHC Service as it guides educators in the ethical principles and professional standards of conduct towards children, families, colleagues, communities, students, employers, themselves, and in the conduct of research. *The Code of Ethics is referred to widely within the education and care sector, and is highly respected. The Code of Ethics is owned by the field, rather than imposed upon it (ECA 2006).*

BEPS OSHC Service accepts professional ownership of ECA's *Code of Ethics* and formally acknowledges that it provides BEPS OSHC Service with:

- a basis for critical reflection
- a guide for professional behaviour
- principles to inform individual and collective decision-making.

BEPS OSHC Service's Code of Professional Conduct acknowledges that ECA's Code of Ethics is a valuable tool for empowering families and communities to maintain high expectations of BEPS OSHC Service, and for educators to self-assess their professional behaviour. For this reason, the Code will be widely promoted and upheld by all professionals at BEPS OSHC Service.

- BEPS OSHC Service's Code of Professional Conduct will be made available in the policy and procedures manual, in staffing publications, and family publications.
- The ECA *Code of Ethics* is displayed at BEPS OSHC Service in the sign-in, sign-out area and in the educators' room, and is made available to the professional team of educators during educators' orientation, in staffing publications, and in this policy document.

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All Educators are responsible for program planning and documentation and will ensure that the planning and delivery of the program reflects ECA's *Code of Ethics*.

### **Child Safety Code of Conduct**

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All Educators, volunteers and board members of BEPS OSHC Service are required to observe child safe principles and expectations for appropriate behaviour towards and in the company of children.

All personnel of BEPS OSHC Service are responsible for supporting the safety, participation, wellbeing and empowerment of children by:

- Adhering to BEPS OSHC Service child safe policy at all times
- Taking reasonable steps to protect children from abuse
- Listening and responding to views and concerns of children, particularly if they are telling you that they or another child has been abused and/or worried about their safety or the safety of another
- Promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of aboriginal children
- Promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds – zero tolerance on discrimination
- Promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of children with a disability
- Ensuring as far as practicable adults are not left alone with a child
- Reporting any allegations of child abuse to BEPS OSHC Service child safety officer/leadership, and ensure any allegation to be reported to the police or child protection
- Reporting any child safety concerns to BEPS OSHC Service child safety officer/leadership
- If an allegation of child abuse is made, ensure as quickly as possible that the child/ren are safe
- Encouraging children to 'have a say' and participate in all relevant organizational activities where possible

Staff and volunteers must not:

- Develop any 'special' relationships with children that could be seen as favouritism
- Exhibit behaviours with children which may be construed as unnecessarily physical (sitting on laps)
- Put children at risk of abuse
- Do things of a personal nature that a child can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes
- Engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children
- Use inappropriate language in the presence of children
- Express personal views on cultures, race or sexuality in the presence of children
- Discriminate against any child, including because of culture, race, ethnicity or disability
- Have contact with a child or their family outside of our organization without our child safety officers knowledge and/or consent
- Have any online contact with a child or their family unless it is necessary OSHC service information
- Ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse

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- By observing these standards you acknowledge your responsibility to immediately report any breach of this code to BEPS OSHC Service Child Safety Officer/leadership
- If you believe a child is at immediate risk of abuse phone 000

### **Code of Conduct for Victorian Public Sector Employees**

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All employees of the Department of Education and Training are expected to abide by the Code of Conduct for Victorian Public Sector Employees (2007). They must undertake their duties in accordance with government and departmental policies including Ministerial Order 199; Victorian Institute of Teaching Code of Conduct; Victorian Institute of Teaching Code of Ethics; Victorian Government Schools Agreement (2010); Victorian Government Schools – Education Support Officers Agreement (2010).

BEPS OSHC staff employed centrally through the Department of Education and Training or locally through the School Council, are therefore expected to carry out their role in accordance with the school’s code of conduct.

The school code of conduct offers the following principles for BEPS OSHC Service staff.

#### **Personal Conduct**

- Be positive role models at school.
- Ensure that school meeting norms are adhered to.
- Act with discretion and maintain confidentiality when discussing workplace issues.
- Be civil, courteous and observe fairness and equity in all official dealings with students, the public, other employees at the school and other persons employed by the Department or School Council.
- Maintain a clean and neat appearance and will dress appropriately to their role at the school.
- Report improper conduct.

#### **Professional Competence**

- Be knowledgeable in their area of expertise.
- Be committed to pursuing their own professional learning.
- Complete their duties in a responsible, thorough and timely way.
- Be cognizant of their responsibilities in terms of discrimination, harassment, vilification, negligence, mandatory reporting, privacy, occupational health and safety, and duty of care.

### **Ethical Response Cycle**

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All employees in the BEPS OSHC Service endeavour to ensure that the planning and delivery of the program reflects the School Code of the Ethics and the ECA’s Code of Ethics; however, we recognise that every now and then situations present that do not have laws, policies or procedures to guide their resolution.

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BEPS OSHC Service adopts an ethical response cycle, which consists of:

- identifying the facts surrounding an issue
- identifying any legal aspects and community values
- referring to the BEPS OSHC Service philosophy, policies and procedures
- identifying the ethical principles that are relevant to the issue
- forming an opinion based on professional knowledge, application of the Code of Ethics, and the specific contexts for the issue, then discussing these opinions with others to decide on how to respond to the issue
- reflecting on the outcomes to guide the development of consistent ways of responding to the issue if it arises again, and documenting the outcome to inform further development of policies and guidelines that are fair and equitable.

**This policy should be read in conjunction with:**

Philosophy

General Service Information

Equal Opportunity & Protection from Discrimination & Harassment

Inclusion & Valuing Diversity

Interactions with Children

Providing a Child Safe Environment

Staff Communication

Staff Recruitment

Grievance Policy

**Sources & Legislative References**

<i>Child Safe Standards</i>
<i>DEEWR Child Care Service Handbook 2012-2013 – Sections 6.5, 6.6 &amp; 6.7</i>
<i>Education &amp; Care Services National Law Act 2010 (Vic) – Sections</i>
<i>Education &amp; Care Services National Regulations (2011) – Regulations</i>
<i>National Quality Standard for Early Childhood Education and Care &amp; School Age Care (2010)</i>
<i>Victorian Early Years Learning &amp; Development Framework (2009) – Practice Principles</i>
<i>Framework for School Age Care in Australia (2012) – Outcomes</i>
<i>Victorian Child Wellbeing &amp; Safety Act 2005 – Part 2: Principles for Children</i>
<i>Victorian Public Health &amp; Wellbeing Act 2008</i>

National Department of Education Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) 2009, *Belonging, Being & Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia*, Commonwealth of Australia, ACT

Early Childhood Australia 2006, *ECA Code of Ethics*, ECA, [www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au](http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au)

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I agree to adhere to this code of conduct

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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