

## 8.9.2 Middle Park OSHC Code of Conduct for Interacting with Children and Young People

### Guiding Principles

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Middle Park State School P&C Association expects that all persons interacting directly with children and young people at Middle Park Outside School Hours Care (MPOSHC) will demonstrate the highest standards of personal conduct to uphold the commitment to safety and wellbeing of children.

The service recognises the nature of providing quality education and care means the fostering of positive relationships between adults, children and their families. It is critically important that in forming and maintaining these relationships and interactions we do not compromise children and young people's welfare. Therefore, the service has developed a clear outline of expected behaviour to support positive interaction and safety.

This Code of Conduct for Interacting with Children and Young People has been developed to support the organisation's *Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy*. Additionally, the service has additional obligation to maintain responsibilities, including (but not limited) to the following provisions:

- *National Quality Framework*
- *National Quality Standard*
- *Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations*
- *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000 (Qld)*
- *Child Protection Act 1999 (Qld)*
- *Work Health Safety Act 2011 (Qld)*
- *United National Convention on the Rights of the Child*

### Conduct Expectations

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The MPOSHC Code of Conduct for Interacting with Children and Young People applies to all people involved with the service, including:

- The Approved Provider (P&C Executive)
- OSHC Sub-Committee Members
- OSHC Employees (including permanent, temporary and casual)
- Volunteers
- Children and Young People
- Parents
- Consultants and Contractors
- Visitors

### Relationships (and Professional Boundaries)

All persons will maintain professional boundaries in their relationships with children and families. Education and care professional and the community in which they operate rely on the fostering of positive relationships between adults and children and young people. These settings are places where adults can have a significant influence in the lives of children and young people.

These features make it extremely important that all people involved in the service understand how to foster positive relationships in ways that do not compromise children and young people's welfare. The professional boundaries outlined in this code apply beyond specific education or care premises and extend to the contact, communication and interaction that might be facilitated outside the bounds of the service. For example, where educators have a '*duality of roles*' – meaning they support families of the service in another context as well.

The context and richness of the connection with people to their community can influence the likelihood of stakeholders within the OSHC service sharing social relationship and duality of roles (e.g. being an Educator and a local sporting coach). There can be legitimate reasons, on occasions, to attend social events which involve private and informal contact with the families that employees of the service work, even more so in rural and isolated settings).

## Appropriate ways to manage external interaction may:

Following the guidelines will assist stakeholders in navigating the complexities of creating clear personal and professional boundaries, these form the expectation for people involved in our OSHC service:

- The trigger for external social contact and interaction ought to be generated via the relationship with the event or group, rather than by invitation of children or young people. A request by parents (adults) may be more appropriate. However, the employee will be transparent and either seek advice or disclose the social interaction from service management before proceeding.
- Employees should avoid being alone with children and young people on any occasion.
- People should conduct themselves in a way that will not give others a perception to question their suitability to interact with children or young people. For example, consuming alcohol in a social situation with families of the service in attendance may impact both the perception of professionalism and a person's judgement of a professional boundary (Remove).
- All persons privileged with service information should politely refuse to discuss matters relating to the workplace or service and never discuss children or young people's learning or social progress outside of policy guidelines.
- If a person feels unsure or uneasy about a situation, they should discuss it openly with a relevant service manager and if necessary, they will be directed to completing a Declaration of Conflict-of-Interest form.
- Employees of the service are required to act consistently with the service's policies and expectation.
- Establish clear expectations for pre-existing non-professional relationships and ensure these are followed.
- All persons should be mindful when offering overnight, weekend, holiday care of children and young people (where this is not through another formal and professional mechanism i.e. employed at a respite facility). This activity is undertaken at the discretion of the persons and family and will have no direct bearing or impact on Middle Park State School Outside School Hours Care.

## Inappropriate conduct and boundary violations can include:

<b>Personal and Inappropriate Disclosure</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussing personal details of self, other stakeholders or children in a non-professional forum.</li> <li>• Seeking advice or support for personal matters from people whom you have a professional relationship.</li> <li>• Discussions of an intimate theme with children and young people that may directly or indirectly allude to intimate relations. (Previously read: Discussions of a personal or intimate theme with children and young people)</li> </ul>
<b>External Contact</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inviting, allowing or encouraging children or young people to attend a staff member's home.</li> <li>• Inviting, allowing or encouraging children and young people access to a staff member's personal internet locations (e.g. social networking sites).</li> <li>• Attending children or young people's homes or their social gatherings.</li> <li>• Being alone with a child or young person outside of professional responsibility.</li> <li>• Any secretive or concealed contact or interaction.</li> </ul>
<b>Acting Outside Scope of Role</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adopting an ongoing welfare role that is beyond the scope of a person's position or responsibility (e.g. an educator responding as an informal counsellor)</li> </ul>
<b>Possessions and Gifts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Giving personal gifts or special favour.</li> <li>• Singling the same children and young people out for special duties or responsibilities.</li> </ul>

<b>Violation of Privacy and Dignity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Entering change rooms or toilets occupied by children or young people when supervision is not required or appropriate.</li> <li>• Using toilet facilities allocated to children and young people when a suitable alternative is available.</li> <li>• Undressing using facilities set aside for children and young people (where inconsistent with procedures).</li> </ul>
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## People’s Language and Communication

All people involved with the service will use language and tone that meets community expectations and supports children to feel safe and belonging. The environment children use and access should promote pro-social behaviours and communication. Children should be able to feel psychologically safe and have an opportunity to build interpersonal skills.

### All people should display:

Conduct consistent with service expectations includes:

- Caring and compassionate response to children and others.
- Respectful and courteous communication.
- Welcoming and calm tone, being appreciative of the perspectives of others.
- Modelling language and communication that is expected from children

### People should never use:

<b>Aggressive and Hostile Interactions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of explicit language (swearing and offensive terms).</li> <li>• Abusive, harassing, or derogatory language.</li> <li>• Hostile and threatening language and comments.</li> </ul>
<b>Discriminatory and Offensive Behaviour</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Using any discriminatory, racial or vilifying language or terms</li> <li>• Disrespectful treatment or interaction to any person based on a personal characteristic (ability, race, sexual orientation, affiliation etc.)</li> <li>• Behaviour that humiliates another person</li> </ul>
<b>Personal/ Intimate Themes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inappropriate comments around or directed towards a child or young person, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Excessive flattering comments.</li> <li>○ Inappropriate conversation or enquiries of a sexual nature</li> <li>○ Inappropriate disclosure or seeking out of advice/support of a personal theme.</li> <li>○ Sexual-themed jokes or innuendo of a sexual nature</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Use of inappropriate pet names</li> <li>• Obscene gestures and language</li> </ul>
<b>Tone and Behaviour</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shouting, yelling or aggression.</li> <li>• ‘Talking down’ to others.</li> <li>• Intimidating behaviour.</li> <li>• Criticising others publicly.</li> </ul>

## Physical Contact

At times it might be necessary to have physical contact while having the responsibility for caring for children. Adults are required to be responsible for their conduct and personal contact with others, especially children.

Middle Park OSHC does not support the method of physically restraining children as an everyday behaviour management strategy ( policy 2.6 Positive behaviour support practices)

### Appropriate physical contact may include:

Conduct consistent with service expectations includes:

- Injury management and administration of first aid.
- Demonstrate a skill for the purpose of instructing an activity
- Assisting with personal care of young children
- Non-intrusive gestures to comfort a child or young person who is experiencing grief or distress, such as a hand on the upper arm or upper back
- Non-intrusive touch and accompanying such contact with positive and encouraging words.
- Seeking permission from a child or young person before physical touch.
- Respecting and responding to signs a child is uncomfortable with touch.
- In some circumstances, adults may need to discourage younger children from inappropriate expectations of hugs or cuddles. This should be done gently and without embarrassment or offence to the child.
- Educators maybe required to assist children in changing. Educators should seek assistance from one of the Responsible people who are out of contact to oversee and assist them to safe guard them selves.
- In some circumstances, children may seek out touch as a means of comfort and/or attachment. Educators are to be mindful of children's emotional and developmental needs, catering to this using the above non-intrusive strategies and gestures. Educators are to deter children from engaging in practices that may encourage prolonged close physical contact (e.g., sitting on educator laps).

### People should never use or engage in:

- Violent or aggressive behaviour such as hitting, kicking, slapping or pushing.
- Corporal punishment (physical discipline, smacking etc.).
- Kissing or intimate contact.
- Any unwanted touching either personally or with objects.
- Initiating, permitting or requesting inappropriate or unnecessary physical contact with a child or young person.
- Facilitating situations unnecessarily result in close physical contact with a child or young person.
- Any touching of a sexual nature

## Photography and Technology

Photos and information about children is captured by the service as part of the learning experience, communicating with families and the planning cycle. Likewise, technology is used as a tool to store, access and share information with the OSHC community.

### All people should display:

Conduct consistent with service expectations includes:

- Using a service-owned device to capture children's learning.
- Displaying photos and images with consent and in a manner consistent with appropriate information sharing and service policy.

### People should never:

- Photograph or film children or young people (via any medium) when not authorised by the Nominated Supervisor and without express parental consent.
- Use images in a manner that is inconsistent with the informed consent provided by parents, e.g. uploading to the services Facebook page when only have permission for in-service display.
- Using personal devices rather than service equipment to capture images or recordings of children without Nominated Supervisor and parent permission and with a valid reason for doing so.
- Storing images or recordings of children and young people on personal equipment or kept in personal locations.

## Compliance Breaches

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The service expects all persons must comply with this Code of Conduct for Interacting with Children and Young People. Likewise, any persons suspecting breaches of this code are to report details to the Nominated Supervisor or Approved Provider for a response.

Any persons failing to meet the standard of conduct expected and described in this code will be counselled, and/or be suitably sanctioned or discipline (as appropriate) up unto and including suspension or exclusion from the service.