

# Our Lady of Hope Greenwith Campus Outside School Hours Care



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## POLICY DOCUMENT

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### INTERACTIONS WITH CHILDREN

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## BACKGROUND

The implementation of the National Quality Framework sees the introduction of a learning framework—My Time, Our Place—for school age children in education and care settings. This framework recognises the valuable role OSHC services play in the lives of children and families. My Time, Our Place sets a vision for children’s learning through play and leisure, in contrast to the expectations in classroom settings. There is new language to adopt and incorporate into our OSHC settings and an emphasis on the use of reflection in all practices.

## POLICY STATEMENT

The Our Lady of Hope Greenwith Campus OSHC service uses the My Time, Our Place Framework for School Age Care in Australia to underpin the operational development of the service and ensure that the needs of each child are addressed. Our philosophy states the service’s purpose and direction underpins all policies and procedures. The ethos of our service is to value each of our OSHC educators and enable them to access professional development and training. This informs them of the latest research findings that will guide and empower them to effectively support and nurture children. This will enable us to uphold our mission statement, which outlines our belief that the service grows through meaningful interactions.

## RELATIONSHIP

Regulations	National Quality Standard	Other policies/Service documentation	Other legislation/Guidelines
168	1, 5.1, 5.2 & 7	Philosophy Statement	My Time, Our Place
155 & 156			

## HOW THE POLICY WILL BE IMPLEMENTED

### GENERAL

My Time, Our Place contains broad principles that support practice and reflect contemporary theories and research regarding children’s play, leisure and learning. The principles of secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships, partnerships, high expectations, equity and respect for diversity should guide interactions with children. ‘Educators who are attuned to children’s thoughts and feelings support the development of a strong sense of wellbeing and social competencies’ (My Time, Our Place, p10). Educators who strive to build strong connections with children contribute to their sense of belonging, fairness and self-esteem. ‘Partnerships are based on effective communication which builds the foundations of understanding about each other’s expectations and attitudes and build on the strength of each others’ knowledge’ (ibid). Important qualities for educators when building relationships with children include fairness, integrity, authenticity, humour, sympathy, understanding and open communication. The practices and outcomes identified in My Time, Our Place will guide educators in their interactions with children.

Reflective practice is another principle underpinning the school age care framework. It is central to sustaining high quality programs and interactions with children and brings theory and practice together to enable learning from experiences and to adapt and develop practices in the light of new understandings. Learning together with children and colleagues draws upon the diverse knowledge, experiences, views and attitudes of individuals within the group. Being reflective means being open to change and examining current beliefs, attitudes and knowledge while constantly looking for ways to improve. Services implement reflective practice by providing time for educators to examine aspects of service delivery: firstly, how it is done then, questioning why it is done this way. This examination allows educators to reflect on current theory as well as attitudes and beliefs, which may influence their views. Inquiry may increase levels of cultural appropriateness and reveal practices that may impact on children’s wellbeing.

## PROMOTING PARTICIPATION

Participation is an ongoing process of engagement and involvement through which children and young people:

- are actively listened to
- are supported to express their views
- have their views taken into account and recorded
- are involved in decision-making processes.

The underpinning principles of the Child Protection Act 1999, section 5, clearly emphasise participation by children and young people, respect for their rights, consideration of their views and, where possible, involvement in decision-making processes affecting their lives.

## INCLUSION POLICY

Our OSHC service is committed to providing an environment with activities and experiences that encourage all children to learn, extend their skills and have fun. The service will offer care for children from diverse cultural, linguistic and economic backgrounds and for children with varying developmental, physical and intellectual abilities. The program will be developed to accommodate the needs of all children in our care. The service will actively promote the positive aspects of diversity and encourage acceptance and appreciation of individual differences. Staff will respect individual differences and treat everyone without bias, prejudice or reference to stereotyping, and will encourage the children to reciprocate these ideals.

How the policy will be implemented:

- The individuality of all children and staff will be respected.
- The service is respectful of staff, children and families all backgrounds, and structures the program to assist these individuals wherever possible.
- Programming will be inclusive of each individual's cultural needs and differences as much as possible; diversity will be celebrated. This assists children in understanding and appreciating cultural diversity.
- The service will actively seek input from cultural identities within the local community.
- Children with disabilities and additional needs will be included into the service once appropriate levels of support to facilitate effective inclusion are available. This may include some physical facilities, specialised staff training, and additional staff.
- A positive relationship is formed with all families of children with additional needs to learn more about their child/ren, his/her requirements and the expectations of the family.
- Staff will help children to show understanding, acceptance and respect for individual differences by modelling appropriate behaviour and using opportunities such as informal discussions during play to address issues of fairness and justice.
- Staff will encourage children to communicate with each other respectfully and to be fair to one another.
- The service will program equitably for boys and girls and, where possible, offer opportunities for activities to be done individually or collaboratively, providing the children with choice within the service.
- The service identifies and encourages children's differing special qualities and ensures that programming enables each child to succeed.
- Resources will be monitored within the service to ensure that there is no evidence of stereotyping, bias and discrimination.
- To ensure that all children are receiving optimal care within the service, staff will participate in professional development and training and have ready access to reference materials within the service.

## BEHAVIOUR GUIDANCE POLICY

Our OSHC service is committed to meeting the needs of the children in care in a way that fosters a positive and nurturing environment. The safety of all children and educators is a priority. Children and educators are to be treated respectfully. Within the service environment, educators and children work collaboratively to define consequences for the actions of children who do not respect, or consider the safety of, others. The service has a clear process for unacceptable behaviour, which is compatible with the school policies and procedures.

We believe that to effectively guide children's behaviour we need to:

- ensure children are continually guided positively and encouraged towards acceptable and inclusive behaviour in order to maintain their self-esteem, dignity and personal integrity
- guide children to recognise personal responsibility and self-discipline
- acknowledge that children can learn from their mistakes
- be fair and consistent
- place focus on the behaviour and not the child when guiding behaviour
- recognise that a child's behaviour is affected by a multitude of factors, including age, physical environment, time of day, staff and other children's actions, family experiences and cultural backgrounds
- work together with families and teachers to build positive relationships
- provide a wide and varied program to reduce boredom and discontent
- seek input from families and children when reviewing behaviour management policy, to encourage ownership and acceptance.

The behavioural expectations are as follows:

- We respect and care for ourselves, other people and property.
- We work and play safely and cooperatively.
- We follow directions of educators.
- We stay inside the supervised boundaries.

The following process will be introduced when expectations are not being followed:

On a daily basis:

1 – An **informal reminder** is given to the child about their behaviour

2 – **Reflection time** or a **conversation with an Educator** is given to the child to provide opportunity to review their own behaviour and ensure they are emotionally ready to rejoin other children at the service.

4 – A **step** will be given to the child and will be discussed with families upon collection

### **Please Note:**

- If a child poses a threat to themselves or others or displays frequent, inappropriate behaviour children will receive an instantaneous step.

- The leadership team will discuss behaviour management at scheduled meetings.

## **STEPS**

Every step is recorded in the Behaviour Management Folder and also discussed with families. The step sequence is renewed each school term.

### **Step 1 & 2 – Discussion:**

A discussion with the family about their child's behaviour at the service.

### **Step 3 – Letter Home/Consequence:**

The family will be notified in writing of the previous steps given to their child. The letter provides the opportunity for the child to write an apology and needs to be signed and returned to the director.

A consequence will be put into place by an Educator in conjunction with the child.

### **Step 4 – Discussion:**

A discussion with the family about their child's behaviour at the service.

### **Step 5 – Counselling/Encouragement Plan:**

An encouragement plan will be developed through a counselling session with the family, child, educators and the director. An encouragement plan is designed to help guide a child's behaviour when at our service. Daily communication will take place between the child, educators and families to ensure positive behaviour is occurring.

### **Step 6 – Discussion:**

A discussion with the family about their child's behaviour at the service.

### **Step 7 – Plan Review:**

The encouragement plan will be reviewed and amended (if necessary) in consultation with the child, educators and families. Collaboration will also be sought from the school leadership team.

### **Step 8 – Suspension/Final Warning:**

This will result in the child being suspended for a period of time deemed appropriate by the director in consultation with the family during a meeting.

### **Step 9 – Expulsion:**

This will result in the child being expelled from our service indefinitely.

## **Please Note**

- The above steps will be followed however; the director reserves the right under extreme circumstances to omit any of the above steps if necessary.

- At the start of each term the step process for each child will be renewed and children will have the opportunity to demonstrate appropriate positive behaviour without having outstanding steps from previous terms.

- Educators reserve the right to introduce an encouragement plan before step 5 if it appears beneficial to a child's behaviour.

## **RE-THINK SHEETS**

A re-think sheet will be given to a child when they receive a step. The re-think sheet will be discussed with and signed by the family upon collection of the child. The re-think sheet will be stored in the child's folder and sent home with the letter when a child reaches step 3. They will also be used as evidence for consequential meetings/discussions with families.

## MANAGING CONFLICT THROUGH MEDIATION POLICY AND PROCEDURES

The OSHC service recognises that the service will run most effectively when there is minimal conflict and that any conflict is resolved quickly. We recognise that mediation is an effective tool in achieving this and it is actively promoted within the service.

Mediators promote constructive communication, help disputants take responsibility for their own actions, clarify their needs and feelings and focus on mutual needs and interests.

Mediators help people in a conflict to work together to resolve the dispute. This principle acknowledges that children in conflicts (disputants) have the wisdom within them to resolve their own disputes. The mediator guides and helps this to happen.

Staff are expected to use the mediation process with children's disputes.

### What is mediation?

- Mediation is a fair way to resolve conflict. A mediator does not take sides, but serves as an impartial listener and facilitator to help people in conflict come to an agreement.
- Mediation is workable because the disputants solve their own conflict and their feelings are dealt with.
- Mediation focuses on problem solving rather than on blaming, punishment or revenge.
- Mediation enables the child to own and accept his/her behaviour and the consequences because the child has been involved in resolving the conflict through the mediation process.
- In order for mediation to effectively resolve conflict, the mediator needs to be an active listener, which involves:
  1. Putting yourself in the other person's place to understand what the person is saying and how she/he feels.
  2. Showing understanding and interest by your:
    - tone of voice
    - facial expression
    - gestures
    - eye contact
    - body language.
  3. Do not:
    - interrupt
    - offer advice
    - give suggestions.
  4. Reflect and paraphrase what the person has said to ensure that your understanding of the situation is accurate.
  5. Ask questions to clarify what is being said.
  6. Repeat in your own words what you think the person means.

### Rules for mediation to occur

- If the problem is to be solved, the mediator and disputants must agree on the following points:
  1. One person speaks at a time, no interrupting.
  2. Everyone listens to each other.
  3. Everyone is honest.
  4. No 'put downs' should be expressed.
- The mediator will be fair and not take sides.

### Mediation steps

- Decide who will talk first, then ask:
  1. What is the problem?
  2. How do you feel?
  3. What do you want to happen?
  4. What is the plan/solution?
    - Work with suggestions until disputants develop one they are both happy with.
    - There may be more than one problem.
    - Make sure all problems are solved.
    - Check that both disputants are happy with the plan.
  5. How can you avoid the problem happening again?
- In closing, tell the disputants the problem is solved.

### Strategies for resolving conflicts

1. Take turns
2. Share
3. Compromise
4. Apologise
5. Get help
6. Avoid
7. Humour
8. Allow chances

### Handling difficult situations

1. What are the likely problems?
  - Are they telling the truth?
  - Is there a lack of willingness to solve the problem?
  - Is there an inability to explain the situation due to low self-esteem, powerlessness or unequal power?
2. Strategies to counter difficulties
  - Review rules and agreements (ie the importance of honesty).
  - Separate disputants and talk to them individually, and then try to solve the problem all together.
  - Allow disputants a cool-off period until they are willing to participate.

### What if one person won't agree to mediate?

- Staff member asks what will happen/are the consequences if the problem is not sorted out. Then ask if that is what the disputant wants to happen.
  - No** Then it will help to mediate.
  - Yes** Then I can't help you now. If you change your mind I will help you.  
(This disputant then suffers the consequence.)
- The person who did want help needs to carry on until such time that the other disputant is willing to enter into mediation.

## **HARASSMENT POLICY**

Our OSHC service is a place of belonging where each person has the right, to feel safe and secure at all times and the responsibility to make it happen, and so we seek to live justly, through our mutual respect for each other.

### **WHAT IS HARASSMENT?**

Harassment is any repeated action, which threatens, hurts, frightens, embarrasses or humiliates a person.

Some examples are:

- Fighting, pushing, shoving, gestures
- Picking on others
- Threats
- Name calling, put downs, etc
- Offensive language, notes or graffiti about others
- Repeatedly teasing, making fun of others
- Spreading stories about someone or their family
- Intimidating anyone or their family by 'nuisance' actions e.g. telephone calls, chain letters

### **Other forms of HARASSMENT:-**

#### **Racist:**

- Calling a person names or saying unpleasant things because of their culture, background or language
- Telling jokes or showing offensive material that is degrading to a person of a different racial background
- Deliberately excluding others because of their race

#### **Sexual:**

- Inappropriate touching or brushing against someone
- Unwelcome staring, whistling, gesturing or making comments about someone's body, looks or clothes
- Writing and/or distributing rude/unpleasant notes about someone
- Telling jokes or showing reading material/pictures that are offensive
- Making suggestive comments of a sexual nature
- Making comments about someone's sexuality

### **HARASSMENT CAN OCCUR**

For example .....

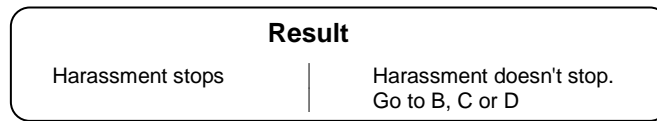
- Between children
- From a child to a staff member
- From a staff member to a child
- Between staff members
- From a parent to a staff member
- Between parents
- From a parent to a child



**WHAT SHOULD BE DONE WHEN BEING HARASSED?**

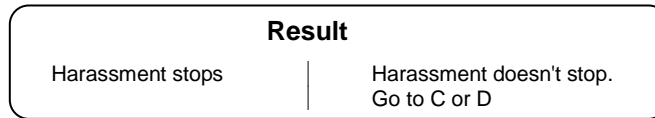
**A**

Ignore it.



**B**

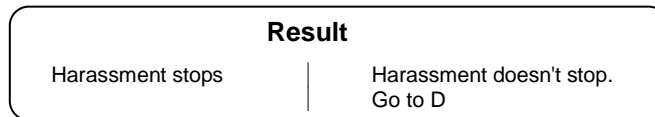
Ask the person who is harassing you to stop. Tell him/her how his/her actions make you feel. If this is difficult for you to do, ask one of the staff to help you.



**C**

Go to your parent, staff member or any adult you can trust for help.

- Talk openly about the problem
- Staff to take appropriate action to include:
  - Interviewing all children named by the victim
  - All children interviewed individually
  - Follow up action depending on results of interviews
  - If further action needed to be referred to the Director



**D**

Go to the Director with staff or parent, or both

- Talk openly about problem
- Allow the Director to take suitable action to control the problem, or to refer the matter to outside authorities.

*Stages may be skipped for cases of serious harassment.*

## Resources/References

It is recommended that services have some reference material that underpins their practice. The following names provide useful reference points for internet searches: Dr Louise Porter, Ben Furman, William Glasser, Dianne Nixon and Katy Gould.

1. UN Convention on the Rights of the Child at [www.unicef.org/crc/](http://www.unicef.org/crc/)
2. Child Protection Act 1999
3. DECD Discipline in Schools Policy  
[www.decd.sa.gov.au/docs/documents/1/SchoolDisciplinePolicy.pdf](http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/docs/documents/1/SchoolDisciplinePolicy.pdf)
4. DECD Protective Practices for Staff in Their Interactions with Students at  
[www.decd.sa.gov.au/docs/documents/1/ProtectivePracticesforSta.pdf](http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/docs/documents/1/ProtectivePracticesforSta.pdf)
5. Guiding Children’s Behaviour in a Positive Way—Article from Putting Child First Issue No 25, March 2008 at [www.acecqu.gov.au](http://www.acecqu.gov.au) (go to NCAC archives)
6. My Time, Our Place, Framework for School Age Care in Australia at [www.acecqua.gov.au](http://www.acecqua.gov.au) (go to publications)
7. CESA Guidelines

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**(Chairperson)**

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**(Date Reviewed)**

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**(Principal)**

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**(Date Reviewed)**