

C.1 Expectations for Communication

C.1.1 Introduction and Overview

Policy Statement

At LOOSH we strive to create a positive and inclusive environment, where we value open communication and a culture of mutual respect. We pride ourselves on building strong, trusting relationships with families that are based on understanding and cooperation.

We aim to maintain open and positive communication between all parties involved in LOOSH. Staff, parents, carers and committee members will be made aware of appropriate communication avenues and procedures.

We value the integral role that families, parents, and caregivers play in children's lives. At LOOSH, we seek to work in partnership with families, as we understand the importance of modelling positive relationships for a child's social learning and development.

Background

This policy articulates our expectations of Educators, Management and Parents/Caregivers. The policy also identifies LOOSH's stance on unacceptable behaviours that breach the culture of respect that we strive for.

Guiding Principles

- LOOSH values family and community input in the form of feedback and communication. However, LOOSH has an expectation that all communication will be respectful in nature.
- LOOSH understands the importance of having an open channel of communication between educators and parents and carers and will seek to pass on any important information relating to their child as soon as is practicable.

Scope

This applies to all staff, educators, volunteers, external providers, families and children who work at, utilise or have any form of communication with the Leichhardt Out of School Hours Care Organisation.

C.1.2 Communication Procedures

Communication expectations between staff and family members

In promoting and upholding this culture, we expect that Educators will:

- Maintain confidentiality
- Support the safety and wellbeing of children and families.
- Treat parents and caregivers with respect and courtesy.
- Welcome feedback and communication that is delivered in an appropriate way.
- Share information with parents regarding observed behaviours and their child's learning and development.
- Provide opportunities for parent involvement in their child's learning.
- Remain calm and respond to parents in an appropriate manner.
- Not be confrontational.

- Be aware of their limitations in relation to parents' problems and ensure they refer parent concerns when appropriate.

In promoting and upholding this culture, we expect that family members:

- Listen to their child, but remember events have many sides and seek to verify facts in finding a solution to any concerns.
- Understand that there is a time and place for difficult conversations.
- Observe LOOSH complaint procedures as displayed at the drop off and pick up point.
- Inform LOOSH of any important information that may be relevant to ensuring staff provide quality care for all children.
- Adhere to LOOSH Policies and Procedures.
- Use respectful language when speaking with any member of the LOOSH Community.
- Will not be confrontational
- Refer to and follow our management of complaints and grievances policy and procedures as required.

Staff safety and wellbeing

LOOSH places high value and priority on maintaining a safe and respectable working environment for our staff; everyone has a right to feel safe. We regard some behaviours as harmful and unacceptable, these behaviours include, but are not limited to:

- Shouting or swearing, in person or over the phone
- Physical or verbal intimidation
- Aggressive hand gestures
- Racist or sexist comments
- Addressing complaints in a time or place considered to be inappropriate

Should a parent or caregiver behave in such unacceptable ways, the Director or a member of the Parent Management Committee will seek to resolve the situation and repair relationships through discussion and/or mediation. Failure to comply with the service's communication procedures will jeopardize your child's enrolment at the service.

Communication between staff and children

Staff and children will treat each other with respect, courtesy, and understanding. Staff will respect children's opinions and encourage participation. Educators will support children in understanding and following LOOSH expectations of being "Safe, Respectful and Responsible" which are guided by our behaviour management procedures of PB4L and 1,2,3 Magic.

Staff will build positive, reciprocal, friendly, and warm relationships with children in their care. Educators will not single children out, ensuring they are heard and understood. Educators will endeavour to communicate with the children at their level. Educators will not threaten or verbally abuse children in any way.

In promoting and upholding this culture, we expect that Educators will:

- Create a welcoming environment in which children experience equitable, friendly and genuine interactions with all educators.
- Always role-model appropriate language and behaviour.
- Support children in developing awareness of their own feelings and the feelings of others.
- Encourage all children to express themselves.

- Respects the dignity and rights of the children as explored in the *UN Rights of the Child*.
- Guide children's behaviour positively.
- Understand that behaviour is a form of communication and will address all behaviour concerns with this mindset.
- Always speak to children in a positive manner, promoting respect, tolerance and empathy, using non-verbal cues and communication where necessary.
- Respect each child's uniqueness, respond sensitively to children's effort to communicate and use the child's own language and communication styles.
- Listen to children and take them seriously.
- Communicate with children by getting down to their level, using eye contact and showing respect to the child whilst engaging in and promoting effective communication.
- Develop trusting relationships between educators, children and their families.
- Know children's names and address them using their preferred name and pronouns.

Communication between staff and Service Management

In promoting and upholding this culture, we expect that staff and Service Management:

- Treat each other with respect, courtesy, and understanding.
- Always use appropriate language.
- Understand that the Nominated Supervisor or designated Staff Liaison Officer is the recommended line of communication between staff and management.
- Raise any issues with Management through the Nominated Supervisor or Staff Liaison Officer.
- Raise any concerns they do not wish to address with the Nominated Supervisor with the Staff Liaison Officer.
- All formal grievances raised with management must be communicated in writing and will be subject to the service's grievance procedure.

Communication between staff

LOOSH staff will strive to communicate with one another clearly and with kindness.

In promoting and upholding this culture, staff will:

- Listen actively
- Demonstrate professionalism
- Use appropriate tone, volume and language
- Approach all communication with empathy and understanding
- Be open to feedback
- Collaborate with others
- Demonstrate honesty, patience and trust
- Choose an appropriate time and place to discuss concerns
- Respect privacy and confidentiality
- Respect the boundaries of others
- Check and where necessary clarify assumptions
- Seek clarification when unsure
- Balance positive and constructive communication
- Provide clear instructions and set clear expectations of others

- Recognise and acknowledge the communication styles of others
- Will refer to and follow our management of complaints and grievances policy and procedures as required.

C.1.3 Roles and Responsibilities

Approved provider and Nominated Supervisor
• Ensure that the service has an Expectations for Communication Policy in place and take all reasonable steps to ensure that all policies and procedures are upheld by staff. • Ensure that a copy of the service expectations for Communication Policy and Procedures is readily accessible for staff, volunteers, and families. • To have knowledge of the service communication policy and procedures and to adhere to these when communicating with others. • To respect and maintain the confidentiality of children, families and staff when communicating with others. • Support educators to approach communication with all stakeholders in line with quality practice.
Educator Responsibilities
• To have knowledge of the service communication policy and procedures and to adhere to these when communicating with others. • To respect and maintain the confidentiality of children, families and staff when communicating with others. • To adhere to and promote quality practice when communicating with others.
Parent/carer Responsibilities
• To have knowledge of the service communication policy and procedures and to adhere to these when communicating with others. • To adhere to service policy and procedures when communicating with staff.

C.1.4 Legislation and Related Service Documentation

Legislative requirements:

- Standard 4.2, 5.1, 5.2, 6.1 and 6.2 of the National Quality Standard.
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 155, 156, 157, 168 and 170.

Related Service Documentation and Policies:

- LOOSH Family handbook
- Management of complaints and grievance policy and procedures
- Interactions with children policy and procedures

C.1.5 Key Terminology

Term	Definition	Source
Dignity and rights of the child	Element 5.1.2 of the National Quality Standard ('Dignity and rights of the child') aims to achieve the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, a universally agreed set of	Guide to the NQF (Element 5.1.2)

	non-negotiable standards and obligations founded on respect for the dignity and worth of each child, regardless of race, colour, gender, language, religion, opinions, origins, wealth, birth status or ability. Article 19 of the Convention states that children have the right to be protected from being hurt and mistreated, physically, or mentally.	
Collaboration	Working together cooperatively towards common goals. Collaboration is achieved through information sharing, joint planning and the development of common understandings and objectives	Guide to the NQF
Communication	The imparting or exchange of information, ideas or feelings either verbally, via message, letter, email or phone call.	Collins dictionary
Community	The local or wider social, cultural or geographical context shared with an education and care service.	Guide to the NQF
Confidentiality	Keeping information shared by an individual private, without disclosing the information to others.	Legal dictionary
Family Members	In relation to a child, means: • a parent, grandparent, brother, sister, uncle, aunt, or cousin of the child, whether of the whole blood or half blood and whether that relationship arises by marriage (including a de facto relationship) or by adoption or otherwise; or • a relative of the child according to Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander tradition; or • a person with whom the child resides in a family-like relationship; or • a person who is recognised in the child's community as having a familial role in respect of the child (<i>National Law</i>).	Guide to the NQF
Relationships between educators and children	When children experience nurturing and respectful reciprocal relationships with educators, they develop an understanding of themselves as competent, capable and respected. Consistent emotional support contributes to children developing a strong sense of wellbeing and belonging. Relationships are the foundation for the construction of identity, and help shape children's thinking about who they are, how they belong and what influences them	Guide to the NQF (Standard 5.1) Framework for School Age Care, p. 19

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