



## Philosophy, Policies and Procedures

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## Definitions

**Approved Provider** is a person or an entity who holds a Provider Approval granted under the Children (Education and Care Services) National Law (NSW). This approval authorises the Approved Provider to operate an approved education and care service.

**Centre** means The Stella Bella Little Stars Childcare Centre.

**ECA Code of Ethics** means the Early Childhood Australia [Code of Ethics](#).

**Enrolment Form** means the form set out in Schedule A.

**ISS** means the Inclusion Support Subsidy funding from the Department of Education and Childcare from the Australian Federal Government.

**National Law & Regulations** means the *Education and Care Services National Law Act (ACT) 2011 (ACT)* and the *Education and Care Services National Regulations*.

**Nominated Supervisor** means a person - (a) who is a certified supervisor; and (b) who is nominated by the approved provider of the service to be the nominated supervisor of that service; and (c) who has consented to that nomination. All services are required to have a Nominated Supervisor under the National Quality Framework.

**Privacy Act** means the *Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)*.

**Responsible Person** means • the approved provider or a person with management or control • a nominated supervisor • a person in day-to-day charge of the service.

**WWVP** means Working with Vulnerable People registration.

## Our Philosophy

The Centre's care model is guided by the philosophies of Rudolph Steiner. In early childhood, the Steiner method aims to create a nurturing environment involving natural play materials, vegetable gardens, and in some cases chickens to care for and to collect eggs for baking. Young children learn to cook, paint, garden and use tools. They explore their environment, learning sharing, cooperation and social skills. Young children are given the time to play, enjoy childhood and build strong foundation skills before formal academic learning begins.

From birth, all children learn about positive behaviors as they build relationships with those around them. Through positive relationships, educators are well informed and equipped to support children in developing their lifelong learning about what positive behaviour is, and how to act in a positive way.

Children learn so much from their caregivers and role models. They imitate everything we do and everything we say and even more importantly they imitate who we are. In our centre, we are very mindful of this and we strive to be our best selves, every day, for the children in our care.

As part of our care philosophy, we supply a very healthy diet for the children and strive to regularly use produce from our gardens in the meals that we provide. We share our scraps with our chickens and actively engage our children in gardening. Through this, we help to teach children about the earth and the goodness that nature provides and the process of caring for the environment.

For young children to be able to connect and immerse themselves in the life of the world and for them to be able to engage in self-initiated imaginative play they need to be held in a secure rhythm and warm aesthetic environment without overstimulation. Rhythm brings reassurance and continuity as well as trust in the unfolding of life. A sense that here there is time to do things beautifully is cultivated in the Steiner Kindergarten.

A daily rhythm will usually include:

- Circle Time: music, speech and movement
- Indoor Self-directed Creative Play
- Home Activities: Cooking, Morning Tea, Baking, Tidying
- Lunch Story and rest time
- Artistic Work: Painting, and a variety of crafts utilising natural items from our local environment wherever possible
- Outdoor Play in Nature
- Programmed activities that encourage the development of fine and gross motor skills through interest and enquiry based activities and experiences

The programming of our centre and the interests of the children are interwoven in these activities in a natural way.

# Policies and Procedures

## Enrolment

- Prior to any child and family commencing their formal enrolment, parents and children must meet with the Centre Managers and be given a tour of the Centre. Tours are by appointment only.
- The Centre will endeavour to ensure that the enrolment process for families is clear and consistent. The Centre will do this by:
  - communicating with parents,
  - being available to answer questions about the care we offer and
  - providing parents with our enrolment pack and enrolment form.
  - explaining the Federal Government system of rebates and how they relate to their enrolment
  - directing parents to the Family Assistance Office for more information regarding their personal circumstances.

## Conditions of Enrolment

- The provision of special care to seriously ill children, and their families in a respite and day care model is the overriding purpose of the Centre. This purpose guides the Centre, and differentiates us from other childcare centres in offer in the Canberra region.
- In light of this special purpose the Centre has unique conditions on enrolment to better protect the children under our care in the specialist care unit:
  - Our centre offers a **minimum** of two days of care per week in our mainstream care unit;
  - Children in the mainstream care unit **must** be up to date with all required immunisations at all times; and,
  - we do not allow children to attend our centre for care whilst also receiving care from another childcare centre unless they are over 4 years of age and are attending an external preschool program and our nominated supervisor has been notified in advance of the external enrolment
- There are no minimum days booking requirements in our respite and special care unit as this unit caters to seriously ill children, and their families, for respite and the care model for these children requires a high level of flexibility due to frequent medical appointments and hospital stays.
- We follow the Australian Government 'Priority of Access Guidelines' for priority in filling childcare places when there are limited places available. You can read the guidelines here: <https://www.education.gov.au/priority-filling-child-care-places>
- Once enrolment is confirmed full fees will be charged from the agreed commencement date regardless of whether the child attends from this date. Eligible families can apply for Child Care Subsidy (CCS) through Centrelink (see below in Fees).
- It is the responsibility of the parents/guardians to ensure that the Centre is notified of all changes to contact phone numbers, addresses, emergency contacts, persons authorised to collect children, etc.
- Two weeks written notice needs to be given to the centre if parents decide to discontinue their child's attendance at the centre or if the number of days the child is enrolled at the centre are reduced.
- Scheduled days of care must be paid for, regardless of whether a child is in attendance on that day. This includes days away due to illness or family commitments.

## Continuing Obligations of Parents

To ensure the good health and safety of children at Stella Bella, and in particular, the children in our Special care Unit, parents are required to:

- Disclose prior to enrolment if their child/children are attending another childcare centre

- Immediately disclose to the nominated supervisor if a member of your household has a communicable disease, including Covid-19
- Keep your child up to date with their immunizations
- Notify the Nominated Supervisor, as soon as possible, of any changes or additions to a child's Medical Action and Risk Minimization Plans
- Provide copies of any court orders pertaining to the care of the child
- Read any correspondence from your centre to keep up to date with any policy changes and other information that is important to your child's ongoing enrolment at Stella Bella
- Abide by the Policies and Procedures of Stella Bella at all times.

The Centre reserves the right to withdraw childcare services in the event that these continuing obligations are not met.

### **Orientation Process**

- Parents are encouraged to visit the centre a few times with their child prior to the start of their care to assist their child in feeling comfortable with the staff and in the new environment.
- On the first orientation visit the families will be shown, and discussions will be had about, the daily routine, the children's individual communication books and the class learning journals that are readily available for families to look through to see what their child has been learning about and what adventures they have been up to during their time in the centre.
- After a couple of short visits to the centre with their child, 1-2hours, we encourage parents to leave their child in our care for a couple of hours for their first time at the centre without their parent and then build up to the full day from there. When the child is left in the care of staff they will need to be signed in to our system as attending, regardless of whether their parent is still on the premises but not in the room with their child.
- Once the child has started care, we strongly encourage the parents to say "Goodbye" to their child and reassure them they will come back at the end of the day, rather than leaving while the child is distracted.
- Where a child shows considerable or ongoing distress Centre staff will discuss further strategies for settling the child with parents.

### **Centre Operating Hours**

Stella Bella Children's Centres standard operation hours are 7.30am to 6pm Monday to Friday.

We are closed on Public holidays and for a Christmas break of up to two weeks with closure dates to be provided to parents with 60 days notice.

Under specific circumstances changes to arrival and pick up procedures may be made if needed to protect the health and welfare of centre staff and the children in our care.

### **Supervision policy**

Our Centre considers supervision is essential in ensuring children's safety. Therefore, the educators have a duty of care to ensure children are supervised at all times as they maintain a safe and secure environment adhering to National Regulations. Educators will actively supervise children, identifying risks and minimising injury. Effective supervision of children provides Educators with the opportunity to support and build on children's play experiences.

The Approved Provider of Stella Bella Children Centre delegates the responsibility for the day-to-day operation of the service to the Nominated Supervisor to make sure that the Service is complying with the legislative requirements of adequate supervision practices are in place all the time. Adequate supervision refers to constant, active and diligent supervision of every child at the service. Adequate supervision requires that educators are always in a position to observe each child, respond to individual needs, and immediately intervene if necessary.

Nominated supervisor and/or responsible person on site along with the key educators will make sure that the following variables affecting supervision levels are taken into consideration during all hours of the centre's operation:

- The ratios required for the number, age and abilities of children are:  
0-24months - 1:4  
2yrs -3yrs - 1:5  
3yrs -5yrs - 1:11
- The number and positioning of educators to meet their supervision responsibilities
- The current activities of the children
- The areas in which the children are engaged in an activity (visibility and accessibility)
- The developmental profile of each child and of the group of children
- The experience, knowledge and skill of each educator
- The need for educators to move between areas (effective communication strategies).

## **Attendance Records**

During each day of operation, the centre will record details of each child attending including name, time of arrival and departure. This information is recorded in a program linked to Services Australia and is accessed via the Ipad on our reception counter. During Covid – 19 outbreaks, the staff will record this information in the system. Otherwise, parents will access the system to record sign in and sign out of their child. This system allows Centrelink to access the data required for providing childcare subsidies etc and also enables staff to know at all times how many children are in attendance at the centre.

The Ipad is taken by the Nominated Supervisor during any emergency evacuations so that the children can be counted correctly during these times.

## **Delivery of children to and collection from the Stella Bella Children's Centre.**

The Centre is committed to ensuring the safe delivery and collection of all children enrolled at the centre. In so doing the Centre is able to meet its obligations to children and families and to meet the requirements of the National Law.

### Arrival

- On arrival at the centre, each family will be welcomed at the door by centre staff. Parents must remove their shoes, and their children's shoes (as per our indoor outdoor shoe policy on page 7), and then sanitize their hands before signing each child in to the electronic attendance register in the entry. Once signed in, they may take their child/ren to their care room.

### Pick Up

- The Stella Bella Children's Centre closes at 6pm each weekday and is not registered for care after that time. Children must be picked up before 6pm unless an emergency has occurred and the nominated supervisor has been notified. If the centre is not notified and/or parents arrive after 6pm, the Nominated Supervisor will be informed and will contact the parents the following day to remind them of their obligations to collect the children on time. Overtime charges apply at a rate of \$25 per 15 minutes, or part thereof, per child and will be charged in the next billing cycle unless the Nominated Supervisor has voided the charge due to a valid emergency situation resulting in the children being picked up late. Repeated late pick ups may result in withdrawal of your child's enrolment at Stella Bella.
- The Centre will not release children from the centre unless they are in the care of:
  - A Parent/Guardian;
  - other authorised nominee named in the child's Enrolment Form,;
  - or a person authorised in writing by a parent to collect the child from the Centre.
- If a parent or nominated person cannot collect a child due to unforeseen circumstances the parent or nominated person must contact the centre to provide written authorisation for another person to collect the child and that person should provide their photo identification to staff at the time of pick up.

- The newly nominated collection person will be asked for proof of identification on arrival at the centre.
- The newly appointed person should be familiar to the child and the child should feel happy to leave the centre in the care of this person.
- Children may leave the centre with the Nominated Supervisor or Approved Provider in the case of an emergency in which they require urgent medical/hospital treatment and there is no ambulance available. More information about how the Centre deals with a medical incident is set out below.
- Children may leave the centre in the care of centre staff in the case of an emergency in which the building has to be evacuated or for emergency drills. More information about how the Centre deals with emergency evacuations is set out below.
- The centre can refuse to release a child into the care of an Adult if:
  - they have no prior written authorisation from a parent or guardian to pick up the child; or
  - there is a court order in place.
- The centre cannot refuse to release a child into the care of a parent or guardian if:
  - they are listed on the Enrolments Form; or
  - if there is a court order in place requiring the child's release to that parent or guardian.
- If the educators think that the parent / guardian is not fit to collect the child or is picking up on a non-designated day and we have not been informed, the educators will:
  - make contact via a phone call to the other parent or guardian, explain the situation; or
  - if required will contact the police.

Under specific circumstances changes to arrival and pick up procedures may be made if needed to protect the health and welfare of centre staff and the children in our care.

## **Fees**

- Fees are paid for the days the child is booked into the centre, including public holidays, and when the child is absent due to illness or on holidays.
- Unfortunately, we are unable to offer 'make up' days for days missed due to illness or because of public holidays.
- Two weeks' notice is required to withdraw children from the program once a permanent place has been confirmed.
- If children are unable to attend, parents are requested to notify the centre.
- The following additional fees may also be charged If children are collected after 6:00pm pm: \$25.00 per 15 minutes / per family will be charged and added to the parent's account. This money is to cover the cost of staff overtime.
- Fees are reviewed and increased annually.

## **Mainstream Care Room Structure**

- In regards to choosing a mainstream room, a child will be allocated to either our Little or Big Kookaburras room, this decision will made in the best interest of the developmental age and stage of the child.
- Children enrolled into our mainstream care unit who are under 2.5 years of age will usually be in care in our 0-2.5 room, known as Little Kookaburras.
- Our Big Kookaburras room is for children aged 2.5 years to 5 years, however if a child is under the age of 2.5 years but has shown both physical and mental developmental strengths above their age and the early childhood teacher and the team leader and the parents agree that it is in the best interests of the child to move up to the pre-school room, then an exception will be made.
- Conversely, if a child reaching 2.5years or over is considered not developed well enough in these areas, and this is agreed by early childhood teacher, team leader and parents, the child may stay in Little Kookaburras.

## **Indoor and Outdoor Shoes.**

- At the Centre, we take hygiene very seriously and do everything we can to prevent infections from entering the centre.

- We request that all children have two pairs of shoes, one pair they can wear outside and to and from home, and a soft pair of shoes for inside - non-slip socks, slippers, or soft sole shoes that remain at the centre. Alternatively, they are welcome to be barefoot in the warmer months indoors.
- We also ask all parents and visitors to the centre to remove their shoes in the foyer of the centre before entering any of the care rooms when dropping off or collecting their child/ren.
- If parents are unable to remove their shoes, they must generously cover a tissue with hand sanitiser and wipe the entire sole of their shoes thoroughly before entering any of the children's rooms.

## Safe sleep and Rest Times

- All children in the Centre have different sleeping routine.
- Here at Stella Bella we are committed to catering for all children's needs.
- Our sleep spaces are safe and well maintained to ensure and enable their little bodies to rest and sleep. We will make every opportunity for the children to have a quiet place to sleep, rest and relax and will provide them with the easing into sleep that they have been used to at home including provision of their favourite 'blankie' etc.
- We will:
  - Ensure that there are adequate numbers of cots and bedding available to children that meet Australian Standards.
  - Follow the Red Nose Safe sleeping guidelines in relation to all children under 2 at all times
  - Ensure that supervision windows will be kept clear to ensure safe supervision of sleeping children.
  - Maintain up to date knowledge regarding safe sleeping practice and communicate this information to educators and families.
  - Ensure that bed linen is clean and in good repair. Bed linen is for use by an individual child and will be washed before use by another child.
  - Consult with families about children's sleep and rest needs. Educators will be sensitive to each child's needs so that sleep and rest times are a positive experience.
  - Arrange children's beds and cots to allow easy access for children and staff.
  - Encourage children to rest their bodies and minds for 30-40 minutes. If children are awake after this time, they will be provided quiet activities for the duration of rest time.
  - Educators to check the sleeping children in the cot room every 10mins, by touching their chest and listening to their breathing, and record it on the sleeping register
  - A copy of the Sleeping register will be provided to parents on request

## Water Safety

The Centre will follow the below guidelines when using water based learning:

- ensure that all water based learning is actively supervised and containers are emptied when not in use.
- Water troughs and water features are to be filled up or turned on only when play begins and only when active supervision can occur.
- All water features/water troughs must be emptied immediately after use (when all children come indoors from outdoors and when playrooms/outdoors are not in use)
- Children playing with water will be closely supervised with an educator standing at the activity at all times.
- Staff will never leave a child unattended at a water activity
- To prevent the unplanned collection of water, containers are to be stored upright/inverted, and grounds are to be checked after rain or watering and water that has collected in holes or containers is to be emptied.
- Hot water accessible to children is regulated to a temperature under 40 degrees Celsius
- When on an excursion, where there is water close by, a ratio of 1:1 will be enforced to prevent accidents from happening

## Sun Care

The Centre is a sun smart centre and we use the UV guidelines to protect the children when outdoors. We use the following strategies to protect the children in our care:

- We have regular conversations with the staff, children and their parents about skin cancer and sun protection and healthy practices
- All staff are required to act as Sun Smart role models by using a combination of sun protection measures from August 1st to the end of May or when UV levels are 3 and above.
- We work towards a safe childcare environment that provides shade for children, staff and the visitors to the centre
- We assist and educate children to be responsible for their own sun protection.
- We ensure that families and new staff are informed of the centre's Sun Smart policy.
- We ask that all children bring a hat to the centre so they are able to enjoy the beautiful outdoor environment in safety. We also keep a stock of spare hats in the centre for times when a child's hat has not been provided
- We provide Cancer Council approved sunscreen for both staff and children at the centre.

## **Toilet Learning**

Educators will allow the child to learn at their own pace with positive support and help. Providing children with clothing that can be easily put on and removed by them and giving the child positive verbal and non-verbal praise is important to the child's self-esteem. We work in partnership with families and have open communication daily to help ensure consistency and success for the child.

We use the following signs to help us to be aware that a child may be ready to start toilet training:

- The child can stay dry for longer periods of time during the day, or overnight
- The child knows the feelings that signal he/she needs to go to the toilet
- The child can pull down and up own clothing
- The child can get him or herself to the toilet
- The child can point to wet or soiled clothes and ask to be changed
- The child pays attention to the physical signals
- The child knows the words for using the toilet, and can tell an adult when he/she needs to go
- The child has asked to wear underwear, not wanting to wear a nappy anymore
- The child shows interest in using the toilet, e.g. may want to put paper in and flush it

If the child's parent/guardian feels that they would like to initiate toilet training with their child in conjunction with the Centre, we encourage them to organize time for a chat with the educator in charge of the child's room so that the staff can assist in the best ways possible to help the process go smoothly and consistently between the Centre and home.

During the toilet training process, we will do our best to minimize soiled clothing that comes home. Our staff are unable to wash faeces out of pants though they will try to shake off any large amounts into the toilet. Soiled pants will be sent home in a plastic bag, however some parents may opt to have them discarded instead so we will discuss these options during the toilet training planning process with parents.

## **Nappy Change**

We provide nappies to children in our care and use the most environmentally friendly brands we can purchase. We strive to make nappy change time a positive experience for the children. We provide:

- Adequate and appropriate hygienic facilities for nappy changing
- Adult hand washing facilities located within the nappy change area
- Children's hand washing facilities within the nappy change area
- Nappy change facilities that are designed and maintained in a way that Educators have supervision of children at all times

- A sustainable and soothing to bottoms approach to nappy changing using a water/sorbolene mix with reusable cloths for wiping after a wet nappy and water/sorbolene mix with tissue for after a dirty nappy. Our cloths are soaked in strong industrial sanitizer through the day and overnight and then run through our washing machine and air dried.
- updates to families regarding children's nappy change patterns
- Nappy change bins with a 'hands-free' lid.

Our Educators will:

- Utilise nappy change times to interact with children on an individual basis.,
- Converse, sing, play and generally interact with the child. This time allows educators and children to learn more about each other and understand each child's personality and personal strengths
- Change children's nappies at scheduled time of the day determined by the nominated supervisor and educators as well as at times when the need for a change is obvious
- Check nappies throughout the day to ensure children are dry to prevent nappy rash and discomfort
- Use system to record this routine will be maintained for reporting purposes
- Encourage each other to ensure nappy change procedures support children's safety, protection, relationships and learning.

Ensure that soiled clothing and soiled nappies are disposed of (at parents request) or temporarily stored in a location that children cannot access.

## **Nutrition**

All staff and volunteers will implement excellent health and hygiene practices and safe practices for food handling, preparing, serving and storing food. The cook is to undertake the food alert training and at least 2 staff members are required to hold a food safety supervisors certificate. Our centre believes in wholesome nutrition based on the basic food groups.

Our centre will ensure that

- all children being cared for to have access to safe drinking water at all times and be offered food and beverages that are appropriate, nutritious and adequate in quantity taking into account the dietary requirements of individual children, their growth and developmental needs and any specific, cultural, religious or health requirements.
- Our seasonal menu is display in the foyer for families and is posted on our Seesaw app to parents when it is updated
- We endeavour to be well informed about children and staff and their health needs and requirements with a particular emphasis on acknowledging allergies to nuts and nut products.

Our centre is a NUT FREE centre. Products such as peanut butter, chocolate spreads (Nutella), nut food bars, loose nuts and products that have nuts listed in the ingredients will not be allowed in the centre.

Our centre will develop emergency procedures for the treatment of allergic reactions, when there are food or other allergies in the centre. More information about these procedures can be found below.

## **Smoking**

Smoking on the premises or in any of the outdoor areas and carpark at the Centre is strictly prohibited. We encourage all of our educators to refrain from smoking on their breaks or just before their shift starts to protect the children in our care who have respiratory illnesses.

## **Social Media**

Here at the Centre we endeavour to provide the best quality education and care for your child and family. To assist us in upholding respectful relationships we prohibit our educators from connecting with parents from our centre on any social media sites.

We will only ever include photos of any of the children in our care, in any form of public media, with written and verbal permission from the child's parent/guardian on each separate occasion.

## **Photos of Children**

There is a photo permission form that all families are given upon enrolment and parent's preferences are always adhered to. Educators will only take photos of children whose parents have given permission for and the photos will be shared with the parents and not used by staff for personal use. Parents are encouraged to respect other family's privacy and not take photographs of any children who are not their own whilst in the centre.

## **Interactions with Children**

At the Centre, all interactions are informed by ECA's *Code of Ethics*. All of our interactions are made with purpose, care and understanding, we also

- Encourage children to express themselves and their opinions
- Allow children to undertake experiences that develop self-reliance and self-esteem
- Maintain, at all times, the dignity and rights of each child
- Give each child positive guidance and encouragement toward acceptable behaviour in a way that has regard to the family and cultural values, age and physical and intellectual development and abilities of each child
- Encourage children to interact and develop respectful and positive relationships with each other and with staff members of, and volunteers, at the centre
- Take into account the size and composition of the groups of children within the centre when planning our activities and our responses to the children's needs

## **Inclusion of Children**

- The Centre believes that all children are to be included in planned and unplanned experiences during the day, regardless of their age or abilities. Some of the children in our centre are unable to mix with the other children due to chronic, life threatening conditions but we make sure that they have access to the same educational materials, program planning and quality care that is provided throughout the rest of our centre.
- All children are encouraged and supported to sit in a group on our circle mats during transition times while a story is read or a few songs are sung. Educators will sit on the mat among the children to help to encourage their participation during these short sessions and find gentle ways to encourage them to feel content to join in with the group, for example some children like to hold a toy or play with something with their hands while listening to a story.
- The Centre encourages the visiting of speech and physical therapists who work with children enrolled in our Centre to give us advice about the child's individual needs and how we can engage them in activities during the day and what strategies best support them if they have any additional needs
- If a child has additional needs the Centre is registered for ISS funding and with the family's permission will start the process of apply for additional funding for the children in our care to be able to have some additional assistance.

## **Children's Behaviour Policy**

- Our philosophy and program reflect and encourage core values such as friendliness, acceptance, respect, kindness towards each other and our environment. The children in our centre are provided with support, guidance and the opportunity and encouragement to learn to regulate their own behaviour. Educators will encourage children to talk about any concerns they may have and to settle their differences in a peaceful manner. When challenging behaviour exists or develops, we promote proactive partnerships with families to positively support children's behaviour. We will invite parents/guardians in for a chat and work together to come up with strategies to support the children in their development of positive behaviours. We will devise a plan together that can be implemented both at the centre and at home for consistency, if needed. We reflect regularly as a team on any behavioural issues and work together to find the best outcome for each individual child.
- We realize that occurrences and disputes will occur among children and it is not our intent to exclude children over normal developmental incidents that assist them in acquiring problem-solving skills. However, as individual needs vary in terms of environment and program, some children may not benefit from the program offered in this centre. We will make every effort to meet the needs of your child, which may require the assistance of an outside agency. If the behaviours still occur and it is still deemed that we are unable to meet the needs of you or your child, then services may be withdrawn
- All incidents will be documented by staff using the Incident Report Form.

## Family Participation and Communication

- “Partnerships with families contribute to building a strong, inclusive community within the service. Continuous, honest and open two-way communication with educators assists families to feel connected with their children's experience in education and care and helps them develop trust and confidence in the service. Shared decision making with families supports consistency between children's experiences at home and at the service, helping children to feel safe, secure and supported.”<sup>1</sup>
- Here at the Centre, we actively encourage family participation as we believe it's an important part in honouring each child's cultural and family values into our care program and creating a warm and welcoming environment for all. We welcome and facilitate family participation and open communication in the Centre by encouraging families to engage with their children's educators.
- Families are invited to attend regular social functions at the centre for a chance to spend time with their child in their care environment and to meet other families and get to know the educators on a more personal level.
- The Centre encourages open communication through the enrolment and orientation process, policy review, feedback forms, the daily program, documentation, formal and informal meetings, emails, newsletters and conversations.

## Excursions

The National Law and Regulations provide a framework for planning all excursions.

Prior to any excursion from the Centre and before permission from families is sought a risk assessment will be carried out to identify and assess any risks that the excursion may pose to the safety, health or wellbeing of any child being taken on excursion and a risk mitigation form is completed.

- An excursion register is held at the centre and written permission is obtained from all parents.
- The authorisation from parents must include:
  - information on the proposed destination,
  - the method of transport to be used,
  - proposed activities to be used during the excursion
  - period away from premises
  - the ratio of staff to children.
- Parents will be notified that a risk assessment has been prepared and is available at the service.

<sup>1</sup> Guide to the National Quality Standard (3) ACECQA (2011), p.148.

- A list of parent and emergency contacts accompanies the excursion.
- Staff/child ratios to always comply or exceed the licensing requirements of 1:4. The number of staff required will be determined in relation to any assessed risks.
- All staff members will have current first aid certification.
- A medical kit is carried at all times.
- When on excursion there will be at least one staff member with current anaphylaxis and asthma management training
- In the event of a medical incident the staff accompanying the children will comply with the Medical Procedures set out below.
- Staff accompanying children have First Aid training and carry a First Aid kit and will attend to any minor injuries.

## **Dental Health**

The Centre will promote dental health by doing the following the centre will:

- Provide nutritional foods for children, avoiding food and drinks that have a sweet and sugary content.
- Water will be available at all times.
- Ensure that the daily menu contains a nutritional balance of foods
- Minimise the provision of sugary foods
- Ensure access to safe drinking water at all times
- Include dental health practices in the program
- Provide water at all meal times for the children to drink

## **Immunisation Policy**

- Due to the complex and life-threatening medical conditions of the children in the special care unit at the Centre, **all** children enrolled in our mainstream care unit are required to be fully immunised and up-to-date with their immunisations before being accepted for enrolment into the centre.
- All immunisations scheduled for update after enrolment, are to be carried out at the due times, with evidence supplied to the centre after each immunisation update. If scheduled immunisations are not completed then the child will be unable to attend the centre until the immunisations are up-to-date.
- Children accepted into our special care unit for enrolment are exempt from this policy only on receipt of a letter from their paediatrician listing a specific reason as to why they are unable to be immunised.
- Staff who work at Stella Bella are also required to be up to date with all immunisations relevant to working in a care setting regardless of whether those immunisations are mandated by ACT Health.

## **Managing Medical Conditions**

The Centre is committed to a planned approach to the management of medical conditions to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all children.

We are also committed to ensuring educators are equipped with the knowledge and skills to manage situations to ensure all children receive the highest level of care and to ensure their needs are considered at all times.

Our team will minimise the risks around medical conditions of children by:

- Collaborating with families of children with diagnosed medical conditions to develop an action plan for their child
- Having a dedicated and highly experienced registered nurse on premises during the opening hours of the special care unit. This nurse is able to assist with any medical needs of the children in the entire centre if the need arises

- Informing all staff, including casual staff, and educators, of all children diagnosed with a medical condition and the action plan procedures for these children/conditions
- Where a child's medical condition has the capacity to affect the delivery of care of health of other children, or the actions of other children might adversely affect the physical health of child with a medical condition, all families will be provided with anonymous information about the medical condition, and the strategies in place to support the safe delivery of care to all children in the Centre's care
- Ensuring all children with diagnosed medical conditions have a current action plan that is accessible to all staff
- Ensuring all staff are adequately trained in the administration of emergency medication.
- Where a child attending the Centre has a known allergy, health care need, or relevant medical condition, the Nominated Supervisor will:
  - ensure that the risks relating to a child's specific health care need, allergy or relevant medical condition are assessed and minimised
  - ensure that practices and procedures in relation to the safe handling, preparation, consumption and service of food are developed and implemented;
  - ensure that practices and procedures to ensure that the parents are notified of any known allergens that pose a risk to a child and strategies for minimising the risk are developed and implemented;
  - ensure that practices and procedures ensuring that all staff members and volunteers can identify children with known allergens,
  - ensure that the child's medical management plan and the location of the child's medication are developed and implemented
  - ensure that practices and procedures ensuring that the child does not attend the service without medication prescribed by the child's medical practitioner in relation to the child's specific health care need, allergy or relevant medical condition are developed and implemented;
  - ensure that all staff and educators are aware of the medical management plan and risk minimisation plan;
  - Ensure that staff are adequately trained in procedures contained in the medical management plan;
  - inform other families enrolled at the centre of the need to prohibit any items which may present a hazard to children with diagnosed medical conditions nuts and products that contain nuts are prohibited at all times other foods, such as eggs and dairy products, may also be prescribed at times depending on the risk of anaphylaxis and families will be notified if this situation arises

**The Centre's Nominated Supervisor is responsible for the ongoing management of medical conditions:**

The Nominated Supervisor and Nurse will:

- ensure that any parent with a child enrolled at the service that has a specific health care need, allergy or other relevant medical condition is provided with a copy of this Medical Conditions policy
- inform parents of the requirement to provide the service with a medical management plan of their child's condition
- collaborate with families of children with medical conditions to develop a risk minimisation plan to ensure the child's safety and wellbeing.

**Families will ensure:**

- All relevant Information about their child's health needs, allergies, medical conditions and medication is provided on the enrolment form at the start of enrolment and any updated information is communicated to the centre manager in writing via email to [stellabellacare@gmail.com](mailto:stellabellacare@gmail.com)
- The enrolment form is completed and provides specific details about the child's medical condition.
- Required medication is supplied and a risk minimisation, communication plan and medical action plan is completed in conjunction with the centre manager is and accurate and agreed to.

- The Centre is notified when any changes occur to the Medical Management Plan or Risk Minimisation Plan, in writing, to stellabellacare@gmail.com.
- An annual review of the risk minimisation plan, communication plan and medical management plan will be held and parents/carers will be required to provide any necessary updates.

## **Anaphylaxis Management Policy**

We will involve all Educators, families and children in regular discussions about medical conditions and general health and wellbeing throughout our curriculum. The Service will adhere to privacy and confidentiality procedures when dealing with individual health needs. A copy of all medical condition policies will be provided to all Educators, staff, students and volunteers of the Service. It is important that communication is open between families, Educators and staff to ensure appropriate management of anaphylactic reactions are effective. It is important that all Educators, staff, students and volunteers at the Centre follow a child's Medical Management Plan in the event of an incident related to a child's specific health care need, allergy or medical condition.

### **The Approved Provider / Nominated Supervisor / Responsible Person will ensure:**

- That all staff members have completed first aid and anaphylaxis management training approved by the Education and Care Services National Regulations at least every 3 years and is recorded, with each staff members' certificate held on the service premises.
- That all staff members, whether or not they have a child diagnosed at risk of anaphylaxis undertake training in the administration of the adrenaline auto-injection device and cardiopulmonary resuscitation every 12 months, recording this in the staff records.
- That all staff members are aware of symptoms of an anaphylactic reaction, the child at risk of anaphylaxis, the child's allergies, anaphylaxis action plan and EpiPen kit.
- No child who has been prescribed an adrenaline autoinfection device is permitted to attend the service or its programs without EpiPen kit.
- That the child's risk minimisation and medical action plans are done in conjunction with the family and they are up to date.
- Updated information, resources and support are regularly given to families for managing allergies and anaphylaxis.

In the event that a child suffers from an anaphylactic reaction the staff will:

- Follow the child's anaphylaxis action plan.
- Call an ambulance immediately by dialling 000.
- Commence first aid measures.
- Contact the parent/guardian when practicable.
- Contact the emergency contact if the parents or guardian can't be contacted when practicable.
- Notify the regulatory authority within 24 hours.
- Ensure you follow up with the family.

In the event that a child has an anaphylaxis reaction where the child hasn't been previously diagnosed as anaphylaxis, staff will:

- Call an ambulance immediately by dialling 000.
- Inform the paramedic the symptoms and let them know that the Centre has its own epi pe.
- Follow instructions from paramedics.
- Contact parent/guardian.
- Contact the emergency contact if the parents or guardian can't be contacted when practicable.
- Notify the regulatory authority within 24 hours.
- Ensure you follow up with the family.

## Families will:

- Inform staff at the Centre, either on enrolment or on diagnosis, of their child's allergies.
- Develop an anaphylaxis risk minimisation plan with the GP.
- Provide staff with an anaphylaxis medical management action plan signed by the Registered Medical Practitioner giving written consent to use the auto-injection device (EpiPen) in line with this action plan.
- Provide staff with a complete auto-injection device kit.(EpiPen)
- Regularly check the adrenaline auto-injection device expiry date.
- Assist staff by offering information and answering any questions regarding their child's allergies.
- Notify the staff of any changes to their child's allergy status and provide a new anaphylaxis action plan in accordance with these changes.
- Communicate all relevant information and concerns to staff, for example, any matter relating to the health of the child.
- Comply with the Service policy that no child who has been prescribed an adrenaline autoinjection device is permitted to attend the service or its programs without that device.
- Read and be familiar with the policy.
- Identify and liaise with the nominated staff member.
- Bring relevant issues to the attention of both staff and licensee.

## Asthma Management Policy

At Stella Bella we involve all involved educators, families and children in regular discussions about children's specific medical conditions and general health and wellbeing throughout the year. The Centre will adhere to privacy and confidentiality procedures when dealing with individual health needs. All Educators and volunteers at the Centre follow a child's Risk Minimisation / Medical Management Plan in the event of an incident related to a child's specific health care need, allergy or medical condition and will follow all procedures necessary to assist the child should a medical emergency occur.

Once Risk Minimisation / Medical Management Plan is finalised and signed by the parents, the staff will follow it precisely in the event of an emergency and will seek emergency medical assistance for a child as required without seeking further authorisation from a parent or guardian in the case of an emergency (i.e., medical practitioner, ambulance or hospital) including for those emergencies relating to asthma and anaphylaxis.

When caring for a child with **Asthma**, The Approved Provider / Nominated Supervisor / Responsible Person will ensure:

- That all educators, staff, students and volunteers read and are aware of all medical condition policies and procedures, and ensuring that they are aware of asthma management strategies upon employment at the Service.
- That all educators first aid qualifications and Emergency Asthma Management training are current, meet the requirements of the National Law and National Regulations, and are approved by ACECQA.
- That all staff members have read, understood and signed the child's risk minimisation/ communication and medical action plan.
- At least one staff member with current approved Emergency Asthma Management training is on duty at all times
- That where a child has not previously been diagnosed with asthma or where the centre has not been informed of a diagnosis, and medication has been administered to a child in an asthma emergency without authorisation from the parent/guardian or authorised nominee, the parent/guardian of the child and emergency services are notified as soon as practicable.
- That families provide an Asthma Action Plan signed by, a Medical Practitioner.
- That a Risk minimisation, Communication and Medical action plan is developed for every child with asthma, in consultation with parents/guardians and update annually.
- That a Medication Record is kept for each child to whom medication is to be administered by the Service.
- That families of all children with asthma, shall provide reliever medication and a spacer (including a child's face mask, recommended for children under 5 years of age) at all times their child is attending the Centre.
- The expiry date of reliever medication is checked regularly and replaced when required, and that spacers and facemasks are washed with warm soapy water and air dried after every use.

- Communication between Management, Educators, staff and parents/guardians regarding the Service Asthma Policy and strategies is reviewed and discussed regularly to ensure compliance.
- All Educators and staff are able to identify and minimise asthma triggers for children attending the Service, where possible.
- Children with asthma are not discriminated against in any way.
- Children with asthma can participate in all activities safely and to their full potential.
- To communicate any concerns with parents/guardians/carers regarding the management of children with asthma at the Centre.
- Asthma Australia's Asthma First Aid posters are displayed in key locations at the Service.
- That medication is administered in accordance with the Administration of Medication Policy and Child's Asthma Action Plan.

### **Educators will ensure:**

- They are aware of the Services Asthma Policy and asthma first aid procedure (ensuring that they can identify children displaying the symptoms of an asthma attack and locate their personal medication and Asthma Action Plans.
- To maintain current approved Asthma Management qualifications.
- They are able to identify and, where possible, minimise asthma triggers as outlined in the child's Asthma Action Plan.
- That the asthma first aid kit, children's personal asthma medication and Asthma Action Plans are taken on excursions or other offsite events, including emergency evacuations and drills.
- To administer prescribed asthma medication in accordance with the child's Asthma Action Plan and the Service's Administration of Medication Policy
- To communicate any concerns to the management if a child's asthma is limiting his/her ability to participate fully in all activities.
- That children with asthma are not discriminated against in any way.
- That children with asthma can participate in all activities safely and to their full potential, ensuring an inclusive program.
- Any asthma attacks are documented, and that parents and management are advised as a matter of priority, when practicable.

### **Families will:**

- Read and adhere to the Service's Asthma Management Policy.
- Inform staff, either on enrolment or on initial diagnosis, that their child has asthma.
- Provide a copy of their child's asthma action plan to the Service, ensuring it has been prepared in consultation with, and signed by, a medical practitioner.
- Have the Asthma Action Plan reviewed and updated at least annually unless doctors advice requires more regular changes
- Ensure all details on their child's enrolment form and medication record relating to medical conditions are completed prior to commencement at the Service.
- Provide an adequate supply of appropriate and in date asthma medication and equipment for their child at all times.
- Notify staff in writing/via an e mail to [stellabellacare@gmail.com](mailto:stellabellacare@gmail.com) of any changes to the information on the Asthma Action Plan or medication record.
- Encourage their child to learn about their asthma, and to communicate with Centre staff if they are unwell or experiencing asthma symptoms.

### **Action plan for a child with diagnosed asthma**

The staff, together with the parents/guardians of a child with asthma, will discuss and agree on a plan of action for the emergency management of an asthma attack based on the Asthma First Aid Plan. This plan will be included as part of, or attached to, the child's asthma action plan/ risk minimisation plan and medical action plan and enrolment record. This plan should include action to be taken where the parents/guardians have provided asthma medication, and in situations where this medication may not be available. This plan will be followed precisely during any asthma emergency.

## Action plan for a child with undiagnosed asthma

In an event where a child has a breathing difficulty, inform the Centre Director/ Nominated Supervisor or Responsible Person on site (whoever is available) immediately. Simultaneously, staff is advised to get the nurse to check the child. If the nurse/ and/or the Centre Director/ Nominated Supervisor or Responsible Person on site identified it as a medical condition that needs immediate medical attention call 000 and let them know the symptoms and also the findings of the nurse. Inform them that the Centre has a spare Asthma kit and follow the instructions from 000. Call parent when practicable.

In an event where the nurse is unavailable, the Nominated Supervisor or responsible person on site will be informed and they will support staff to act immediately following the emergency asthma policy.

## Diabetes Management Policy

At Stella Bella we involve all involved educators, families and children in regular discussions about children's specific medical conditions and general health and wellbeing throughout the year. The Centre will adhere to privacy and confidentiality procedures when dealing with individual health needs. All Educators and volunteers at the Centre follow a child's Risk Minimisation / Medical Management Plan in the event of an incident related to a child's specific health care need, allergy or medical condition and will follow all procedures necessary to assist the child should a medical emergency occur.

Once Risk Minimisation / Medical Management Plan is finalised and signed by the parents, the staff will follow it precisely in the event of an emergency and will seek emergency medical assistance for a child as required without seeking further authorisation from a parent or guardian in the case of an emergency (i.e., medical practitioner, ambulance or hospital) including for those emergencies relating to asthma and anaphylaxis.

When caring for a child with **Diabetes**, The Approved Provider / Nominated Supervisor / Responsible Person will ensure that:

- Before the child's enrolment commences, the family will meet with the Service and its educators to begin the communication process for managing the child's medical condition in adherence with the registered medical practitioner or health professional's instructions.
- Each child with type-1 diabetes has a current individual Diabetes Medical Management Plan prepared by the child's diabetes medical specialist team, at or prior to enrolment.
- Signed diabetes medical management plan has been written by a registered Medical Practitioner or Paediatrician and provided to the centre by the parents/guardians. This will include all information on how to manage the child's diabetes on a day-to-day basis as well as the emergency management of the child's medical condition. Information may include:
  - blood glucose testing- meter
  - insulin administration
  - food, carbohydrate counting.
  - how to store insulin correctly
  - how the insulin is delivered to the child- as an injection or via an insulin pump
  - Continuous Glucose Monitoring CGM
  - oral medicine the child may be prescribed or
  - managing diabetes during physical activities and excursions
- A risk Minimisation, Communication and Medical Action plan is developed and reviewed annually for staff regarding the management of the child's medical condition, the current status of the child's medical condition, unless advised by parents of any changes throughout the year.
- At least one staff member who has completed accredited training in emergency diabetes first aid is present in the Service at all times whenever a child /child with diabetes are in attendance at the Service. All staff members are trained to identify children displaying the symptoms of a diabetic emergency and are aware of the location of the diabetic Medical Management Plan, required insulin/food as well as the Risk Minimisation and Emergency Action Plan.
- There is a staff member who is appropriately trained to perform finger-prick blood glucose or urinalysis monitoring and is aware of the action to be taken if these are abnormal.
- Consideration is given as to how and where insulin is stored and the safety of sharps disposal.

- The family supplies all necessary glucose monitoring and management equipment, and any prescribed medications with the child's enrolment.
- The programs delivered at the Service are inclusive of children diagnosed with diabetes and that children with diabetes can participate in activities safely and to their full potential.
- Eating times are flexible and children are provided with enough time to eat.

## Medication Administration

The use of medications may be required by children at the Centre to ensure the health and safety of the children. Any medication must be administered as prescribed by our senior staff members to ensure continuing health for the child and for the child's safety and wellbeing.

Our team will ensure that:

- We take reasonable steps to ensure that medication records are maintained accurately
- We keep medication forms in a secure and confidential manner and ensure the records are archived for the regulatory prescribed length of time.
- Educators receive information about the medical and medication policies during their induction.
- We request written consent from families on the enrolment form to administer the *Emergency Asthma Kit*, if required.
- We inform families of the service's medical and medication policies and the need to ensure that safe practices are adhered to for the wellbeing of both the child and educators.
- Families will be reminded that every attempt to contact them for verbal permission will be made by the education and care service prior to administering asthma medications.
- If medication is administered without authorisation in the event of an asthma or anaphylaxis emergency that the parent of the child and emergency services are notified as soon as practical
- Families requesting the administration of medication will be required to follow the guidelines developed by the service to ensure the safety of children and educators.
- The service will follow legislative guidelines and standards in order to ensure the health of children, families and educators at all times.
- A medication form with the children name, name of medication and dosage will be required before we administer prescribed medication. The medication also needs to have a doctors label attached with the child's name, dosage and expiry date.
- We do not administer over the counter medicines including Panadol or Nurofen and branded Antihistamines without a signed medication form for that date. We do not administer medication for temperature control. If your child has a temperature and is unwell, they need to see a doctor and be cared for at home. Panadol or Nurofen will only be given to children if it has been required by a doctor for pain relief under special circumstances and agreed upon with the nominated supervisor or if it has been included in the child's risk minimisation and medical plan.
- All medication will be stored in a locked box either in the fridge or in locked box out of the reach of children. – each medication will be clearly labelled with the child's name so that educators can recognise each individual medication.
- All medication being administered to children by our nurse or by an educator who holds a current first aid certificate. Before administering any medication, the dosage will be checked by a second staff member and both staff members will sign the medication authorization sheet.
- All medication will be signed in and out of our medication register when entering or leaving the centre
- Educators are to follow hand washing procedures before and after administering medication.
- The Educators are to share any concerns or doubts about the safety of administering medications with the Nominated Supervisor to ensure the safety of the child. The Nominated Supervisor may seek further information from the family, the prescribing doctor, or the *Public Health Unit* before administering medication.
- Any non pharmaceutical medications, including naturopathic remedies that parents wish to have administered to their child in the centre must first be discussed with the Centre manager before being approved for use.

## Managing Infectious Illness

- The Centre is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for children, staff and other people who may participate in the program. The Centre also provides respite care for seriously children.
- In order to keep the children in our care as protected as possible from infectious illnesses, we have strict illness prevention policies in place.
- Staff are required to:
  - record episodes of illnesses, such as vomiting and diarrhoea, in the illness register.
  - contact the ACT Department of Health in the case of an outbreak of an infectious disease
  - ensure that the exclusion requirements for infectious diseases are adhered to
  - Notify families of any outbreak of an infectious disease within the centre.
  - Clearly display information about the disease and its exclusion period
- Families are required to:
  - notify the centre if their child has an infectious disease;
  - provide accurate and current information regarding the immunisation status of their children when they enrol and any subsequent changes to this whilst they are attending the centre
  - endeavour to not bring their child to the Centre if they have reasonable cause to suspect that their child is suffering from an infectious illness.

### Illness Response

- Centre staff will respond immediately to the needs of children if they become unwell while attending the centre.
- If a child is deemed to be unwell due to a high temp, 37.5 degrees or above, loose bowel movements or vomiting:
  - parents will be called straight away and will need to come and pick up the child as soon as possible and within an hour.
  - The child will be separated from the other children placed in one on one care until the parents arrive.
  - If the child's health deteriorates before the parent arrives, we will enact the Medical Emergency Policy, see below.
- When necessary, a child, parent or staff member with an infectious disease will be excluded from the centre in line with the recommended exclusion periods identified on the Exclusion Poster. A copy of this Poster can be found in Schedule B.
- There is a minimum 24hr exclusion period if your child is sent home from the service with a temperature greater the 37.5 degrees, has had vomiting, and/or loose bowel movements.

### Coronavirus Management Policy

**Stella Bella Children's Centre is classed as a High Risk Setting by ACT Health and the Department of Education as we have a number of children in our care, across the service, who have chronic medical conditions.**

Our Service is committed to minimising the spread of the COVID-19 virus by not only implementing recommendations and health directions provided by the Australian Government and the ACT Government but by the addition of extra precautions as guided by best practice in the medical specialist community in the prevention of spread and the management of Covid-19.

We will be guided, when directed, regarding exclusion periods and notification of any infectious disease, by the Australian Government- Department of Health and ACT Health, however, ***in addition to the Government directives, this policy contains extra precautionary measures and guidelines which must be adhered to at all times.***

### Minimising the transmission of COVID-19

Our Service has the following measures in place to help keep our children and team as safe as possible from COVID-19 infections. These measures are to be followed by all staff, parents and visitors to the service.

- All drop off and pick ups for children to take place outside at the entrance to our centre.
- Temperature checks and evidence sent to the Nominated Supervisor on the centre mobile **before** each session of care for each child attending the service.
- Masks to be worn, correctly covering mouth and nose, by parents at each drop off and pick up.
- Masks to be worn by staff when welcoming children at the door, and saying goodbye at the end of the day
- Masks to be worn by staff at all times throughout the day in the centre, except when they are eating or drinking in the staff room or child free areas, or are outside in the big yard.
- All new staff to be fully vaccinated against Covid-19 and all staff to have booster shots when they are available.
- Staff at Stella Bella to undergo regular Rapid Antigen Testing as just one part of our Covid-19 prevention measures. As RATs are not as reliable in giving true results as PCR tests, our staff members are required to have a PCR test if they have any of the symptoms of Covid-19 or are deemed Close Contacts before returning to work.
- Any visitors to the centre must sanitise hands, have temperature checks before entering the centre rooms and must wear a KN95 or N95 mask at all times whilst in the centre. They must also remove their shoes before entering any classrooms.
- Air purifiers with HEPA filters to be operational in each classroom and in the foyer, offices and staff rooms at all times of the centre operating.
- All windows and doors to be open as often as possible to allow good air circulation in rooms.
- Extra sessions of cleaning and sanitising throughout the day for all high contact areas of the centre
- Separate break time areas for Galahs staff to maintain separation from the rest of the centre
- Table based learning and meals to take place outdoors and undercover as often as possible, for good fresh air flow, unless the weather is very stormy and prevents that from happening
- Extra programming of activities and lessons that can take place in the outdoor spaces

We will revise our strategies regularly and remove or add to these strategies whenever updated evidence and information is provided through ACT and Commonwealth Health departments and other reputable sources in order to offer best practice in dealing with infection prevention at Stella Bella at all times.

Our Service will usually ensure that information about COVID-19 is communicated to families through email, however, in times where information needs to be sent out very quickly for example if there is a close contact at the centre, we will send a text message.

The information provided to families may include updated information about:

- Symptoms of COVID-19
- Transmission of the virus
- Self-isolation and Exclusion
- Centre or individual care room closure due to a known case among the children or staff who are in direct contact
- Covid-19 prevention strategies- including hygiene and self-isolation
- Contact details for health assistance
- Centre policy changes relating to Covid-19

## **Suspected cases of COVID-19 at our Service**

As per our Managing Infectious Illness policy, we reserve the right to refuse a child into care if we have reasonable grounds to believe that a child is showing signs of any of the common symptoms of Covid-19 including the following:

- symptoms like those of a cold or flu including:
  - runny or blocked nose
  - sore throat
  - cough
  - aches and pains,
  - fever or chills
- fever – temperature at or above 37.5 degrees
- difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- new loss of smell or taste
- fatigue
- headache
- vomiting
- diarrhoea
- nausea
- muscle pain
- joint pain
- irritability
- loss of appetite
- poor oral intake and dehydration
- unexplained chest pain

If your child displays or develops **ANY** of the above COVID 19 symptoms, during their time at Stella Bella Children’s Centre, the staff will:

- contact the parents/guardians immediately, let you know that your child has symptoms and direct you to collect your child within 45 minutes. If you are unable to be contacted to collect your child, an emergency contact person will be contacted, and they must collect your child within 45 minutes. If you are unable to get to the centre within 45 minutes because of distance, or any other difficult situation, you will need to make arrangements with the nominated supervisor for some extra time or for another person to pick up your child.
- move your child to a quiet area where they can rest whilst being supervised and monitored
- wear disposable gloves and a face mask avoid possible contamination.
- keep accurate records of the symptoms, child’s temperature, time taken, time parent/s were contacted, staff member’s name and time of collection.
- record all the information in our Incident, Illness, Accident and Trauma Record.
- ask the parents/ to sign this record upon collection of their child.

**If your child is sent home with the above symptoms, they will not be able to return to care until such time that all symptoms have gone or on receipt of a letter from your child’s GP that states that your child does not have a respiratory, or any other contagious virus or illness, and is not contagious to others.**

Numerous COVID-19 symptoms are also experienced as part of seasonal allergies, such as cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, headache, sore throat, congestion or a runny nose. If your child has an allergy or medical condition that is causing symptoms that are similar to Covid-19, please provide a letter from your child’s doctor to the Approved Provider and a Medical Management Plan will be written up for your child.

Our Service reserves the right to prevent employees, children, parents, family members or tradespeople, child therapists and visitors to enter our premises if the Approved Provider or Nominated Supervisor suspects symptoms of COVID-19.

## Confirmation of COVID-19 in a child or staff member who has attended Stella Bella

If your child is diagnosed with COVID-19 or you are a staff member and have been given a positive diagnosis, you **must** notify the Approved Provider, Suzanne Tunks on 0423 439889 as soon as possible. It is imperative that we are aware of any cases in our Stella Bella community to help to protect all of our families as best we can. In the event of a case of a child testing positive who has been in care during their infectious period (two days leading up to diagnosis) we will inform the families in that classroom to be vigilant and to test their child at the earliest sign of any symptoms.

### Isolation/Exclusion time for positive COVID-19 cases and return to care.

As Stella Bella is a **High Risk Facility**, if a child or staff member is diagnosed with COVID-19, they will not be able to attend the centre until after **day 7** from either the date of symptoms starting, or from their positive test result, and only if no symptoms at all are still present and a Negative Nasal RAT has been recorded and sent in an image to the Nominated Supervisor. Parents and staff will need to discuss their return to the centre with the approved provider, Suzanne Tunks, and will be provided with an email containing details of the approved return to care date once it has been set. Children and staff will not be able to return to care without the letter of confirmation from the Approved Provider.

### Close Contact definition

In addition to any current or updated ACT and Commonwealth Health guidelines, at Stella Bella Children's Centre, **Close Contacts** are considered to be any family members that live in the same home with children or staff who attend Stella Bella who have been diagnosed with Covid-19.

### Isolation, testing and exclusion for staff and children who attend Stella Bella Children's Centre and are deemed Close Contacts

To protect all of the children and staff at Stella Bella Children's Centre, the following procedures must be followed if a child attending Stella Bella, or a staff member, is deemed a **Close Contact** (as per our definition above) to a confirmed COVID-19 case.

- The centre is to be notified as soon as a Parent/Guardian becomes aware that their child is a Close Contact (as per our definition above)
- Children who are deemed **Close Contacts** and who are currently in care at the time of notification will be isolated with a staff member and must be picked up from the centre within 45 minutes
- Children who are deemed **Close Contacts** must not attend the centre again for **7 days** and only after they have obtained a negative Nasal Rapid Antigen Test
- Staff members who are **Close Contacts** will be required to wear their N95 mask at all times, including outdoors and to take a RAT before attending the service each day for 7 days during the high risk period.

### Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy

All educators at our centre have a duty of care to respond and manage incidents, injury, trauma and illness occurring at the service and to ensure the safety of children, families and visitors. We will provide a safe environment for all children through ongoing monitoring and in accordance with the requirements of the Education and Care Services National Regulations and Worksafe ACT. We will provide relevant training for staff members and have procedures in place to support practices that minimise the risk of harm to children. We will manage any child incident, injury, trauma and illness with professionalism and respect. We will maintain detailed records of any child incident, injury, trauma and illness in accordance with the requirements of regulatory authorities. In the event of a child falling ill at the Centre we reserve the right for the Nominated Supervisor or current Responsible Person in Charge to make the decision that

the child will need to be collected from care. Collection of the child from the Centre needs to be done immediately or within a reasonable timeframe in consultation with the Nominated Supervisor / Responsible Person in Charge.

If an accident occurs the following procedures apply:

- Decide if the injury or condition requires urgent medical attention:
- If an injury or condition requires urgent medical attention:
  - A staff member to remain with the child
  - phone the ambulance – 000 or 112 (mobile)
  - a staff member to remain with the child before, during, and after ambulance arrival and where possible a staff member who is well known to the child will accompany them in the ambulance to the hospital and stay with them until their parent or guardian arrives.
  - telephone parents and tell them of the injury and inform them of any plans to transport the child to Canberra hospital via ambulance. Where the parent or guardian is not reachable, a voicemail will be left and the Centre will proceed with the transport of the child to the hospital where necessary
  - Medical staff at the hospital will be provided with the child's enrolment form, as this includes the child's medical records and medical treatment permission.
  - Approved Provider/ Nominated Supervisor to inform WorkSafe ACT in case of any serious incident or illness by telephone or in writing (including by fax or email) as soon as possible after the injury, illness or incident.
  - Complete the incident report within 24 hours of the incident and submit to the Children's Education and Care Authority through the portal.
  - Ensure you follow up with the family.
- If injury or condition does not require **urgent** medical attention:
  - telephone parents and advise of injury or condition within 2 hours of the incident
  - first aid officer to treat as appropriate
  - complete all details in the Illness and Accident Register within 24 hours of the incident.
- If injury or condition does not require medical attention:
  - first aid officer to treat as appropriate
  - inform parents of injury or condition on their arrival to collect their child.
- In the case of a medical emergency requiring the treatment of an anaphylactic reaction, we have an Epipen in the centre which will only be administered on the advice of ambulance personnel. Children who are diagnosed with Anaphylaxis will provide their own Epipens and these will be administered only according to the medical management plan.
- We have a Ventolin puffer in the centre in case of emergency but will only administer that if advised by the parent/guardian or our centre nurse or an ambulance office.

## Incident Reporting

- Incident reports must include:
  - The details of the incident in relation to a child or an injury received or trauma that a child has been subjected to whilst at the Centre
  - The name and age of the child
  - Circumstances leading to injury
  - time and date that the incident occurred
  - injury received
  - time the child experienced the trauma
- Incident reports will be kept for 25 years and stored confidentially.

## Mandatory Reporting

The following incidents are required to be reported to the regulatory body, ACECQA, within 24 hours of the incident occurring:

- Any incident involving serious injury or trauma to, or illness of, a child while being educated and cared for by the Centre which a reasonable person would consider required urgent medical attention from a registered medical practitioner. (E.g. whooping cough, broken limb, anaphylaxis reaction); or for which the child attended, or ought reasonably to have attended, a hospital.
- The death of a child while being educated and cared for by the Centre, or following an incident while being cared for by the service.
- Attendance of emergency services at the education and care service premises was sought, or ought reasonably to have been sought.
- A child was missing from the service or was not able to be accounted for.
- A child was taken or removed from the service in a manner that contravenes the National Regulations.

The Centre will take all reasonable steps to tell parents immediately, and within 2 hours, in the event of any of the above incidents occurring.

## Child protection and reporting requirements.

It is of the highest priority for staff at Stella Bella Children's Centre to keep all of the children in their care, safe from harm. This policy outlines the key concepts under the relevant legislation including mandatory reporters and reportable conduct. Reportable conduct that is reportable to the ACT Ombudsman covers a broader range of conduct compared to the specified types of child abuse which must be reported to Child and Youth Protection Services.

Stella Bella Children's Centre requires all staff to report any concern about the safety, welfare or wellbeing of a child or young person to the Nominated Supervisor. This requirement is carried out alongside the mandatory reporting requirement that must be followed if they believe, on reasonable grounds, that a child or young person has experienced, or is experiencing, sexual abuse and/or non-accidental physical injury. In this case Child and Youth Protection Services are to be notified as a first priority. Where a staff member has reasonable grounds to suspect that a child is suffering abuse or neglect or wishes to discuss concerns about a child they should contact Care and Protection Services Centralised Intake Service **1300 556 728** (Mandated Person Line) or **02 6205 0641** as soon as possible. In the case of urgent or immediate assistance staff should call the Police on **000**.

In accordance with the Ombudsman Act 1989, Stella Bella Children's Centre employees must report allegations, offences or convictions relating to child-related misconduct by an employee to the ACT Ombudsman. It does not matter whether or not the employee was engaged in the conduct in the course of employment or whether a child consents to the conduct as long as the person was an employee at the time the employer became aware of the allegation.

Stella Bella Children's Centre requires all staff to report reportable conduct of a member of staff to the Nominated Supervisor. If the allegation involves the Nominated Supervisor, the report should be made to the Approved Provider or to the Chair of Stella Bella Little Stars Foundation.

## Reportable conduct includes:

- sexual offences and convictions where a child is a victim or is present
- offences against the person, including physical offences and convictions, where a child is a victim or is present
- inappropriate discipline or offences relating to protecting children from harm in accordance with the provisions of the Education and Care Service National Law (ACT) Act 2011.
- ill-treatment of a child (including emotional abuse, hostile use of force/physical contact, neglect and restrictive intervention)

- psychological harm
- misconduct of a sexual nature.

Reportable conduct includes allegations, offences and convictions relating to any of the above. Each of these categories is outlined in the ACT Ombudsman Practice Guide No.2 - Identifying Reportable Conduct:

[http://www.ombudsman.act.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0009/81000/No.-2-Identifying-Reportable-Conduct.pdf](http://www.ombudsman.act.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0009/81000/No.-2-Identifying-Reportable-Conduct.pdf)

In the event of reportable conduct being reported to the Nominated Supervisor or the Approved Provider, they must:

- notify the Ombudsman within **30 days** of becoming aware of the allegation by completing the section [17G notification form](#)
- provide details of the allegation or conviction
- provide the organisation's intended response, including an investigation plan and risk assessment
- report to appropriate organisations. These may include ACT Policing, Child Youth Protection Services and Access Canberra (Working with Vulnerable People).

**Mandated Reporters:** The Children and Young People Act 2008 requires teachers, teacher assistants, persons employed to counsel children or young people in a school, and public servants who, in the course of employment as a public servant, work with or provide services personally to children, young people and their families or who has contact with children and young people and their families, to notify Child and Youth Protection Services when they believe on reasonable grounds that a child or young person has experienced, or is experiencing, sexual abuse and/or non-accidental physical injury.

As mandated reporters, staff at Stella Bella Children's Centre are required to make a report to Child and Youth Protection Services if they believe on reasonable grounds that a child or young person has experienced or is experiencing non-accidental physical injury or sexual abuse and the belief arises from information obtained in the course of, or because of the staff member's employment. *The Nominated Supervisor is unable to make the report to Child and Youth Protection Services or the Ombudsman, the staff member must make the report personally.*

All Staff at Stella Bella Children's Centre are educated about Child Protection and Reportable Conduct during induction and provided with access to our Reportable Conduct information folder with detailed information on the scheme and the reporting process and are provided with annual refresher training on Child Protection in team meetings. All senior staff are required to undertake annual Child Protection training to keep up to date with best practices and changes to the legislation.

During the new staff induction process, all staff will be provided with a copy of the Keeping Young Children Safe to read and it can also be accessed here: <https://www.communityservices.act.gov.au/children-and-families/child-and-youth-protection/keeping-children-and-young-people-safe>

## Centre Management

- The Centre will take all reasonable steps to ensure children being cared for in our Centre will not be left alone with any visitors to the Centre, including volunteers and student placements.
- The Centre will ensure no child cared for in our Centre will be subjected to any form of corporal punishment or any discipline that is unreasonable in the circumstances.
- All staff and volunteers at the Centre are required to have an up to date Working with Vulnerable People card
- On the commencement of employment all staff will be given a copy of the ACT Guide to Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect, Keeping children and young people safe, a Shared Responsibility. You can access the guide for your own information by clicking the link below <https://www.communityservices.act.gov.au/children-and-families/child-and-youth-protection/keeping-children-and-young-people-safe>
- The Centre will take all reasonable steps to ensure children being cared for in our Centre will not be left alone with any visitors to the Centre.

- The Centre will ensure no child cared for in our Centre will be subjected to any form of corporal punishment or any discipline that is unreasonable in the circumstances.

## Governance

Our Service aims to ensure all legal and financial requirements are implemented and recognised through appropriate governance practices, providing quality education and care, meeting the principles, practices and elements of the Early Years Learning Framework and the National Quality Standard.

Under the Education and Care Services National Regulations, the approved provider must ensure that policies and procedures are in place in relation to the governance and management of the service and that they take reasonable steps to ensure those policies and procedures are followed.

Governance is the process that directs and controls our Service, ensuring accountability, and supporting decision making. The Approved Provider and Nominated Supervisor of the Service accept the legal responsibilities associated with establishing, administering, and maintaining the Service. Our Service has the following established positions:

Approved Provider	Stella Bella Foundation – A registered Australian charity run by a board made up of community members and business professionals
Nominated Supervisor	Suzanne Tunks Shirsti (Sheenal) Lata Sakuntala Thing Ellyn Kinsman
Educational Leader	Sakuntala Thing
Responsible Persons	Suzanne Tunks Shirsti (Sheenal) Lata Sakuntala Thing Ellyn Kinsman
Lead Educators	Sakuntala Thing Ellyn Kinsman Sheenal Lata

### The approved provider is legally responsible for:

- ensuring compliance with the Education and Care Services National Law and Education and Care Services National Regulations
- complying with Family Assistance Law
- providing the management team of the centre with resources and guidance to implement all policies, laws and regulations in regards to effective operation of the centre using best practice.
- appointing a Nominated Supervisor, an Educational Leader and a Director/coordinator for the Service
- displaying the prescribed information as listed in Regulation 173 including the current rating levels for each quality area stated in the National Quality Standard
- ensuring background checks, including criminal history and Working With Children Checks/ Clearance, are completed for all staff and educators
- determining whether or not a person working in the service is a ‘fit and proper person’
- provide information to the regulatory authority upon request in relation to being a ‘fit and proper person’
- implementing a probation and induction orientation program to ensure employees are aware of their roles and responsibilities, understanding of the values and organisational culture of the Service, policies and procedures, child protection law and other legislation
- supporting the Nominated Supervisors in their roles, providing adequate resources to ensure effective administration of the Service
- developing a clear and agreed philosophy, which guides business decisions and the work of management and staff
- acting honestly and with due diligence
- ensuring that families of enrolled children have access to enter the premises

- ensuring there is a sound foundation of policies and procedures that complies with all legislative and regulatory requirements, and that enables the daily operation of the Service to be in line with the Service's philosophy and goals
- maintaining up to date and current policies and procedures for compliance by all educators
- ensuring the health, safety and wellbeing of children and taking every reasonable precaution to protect children from harm or hazard
- ensuring policies and procedures are followed precisely in the event that a child is injured, becomes ill or suffers a trauma
- confirming incident, injury, illness or trauma records are stored in a safe and secure place until the child is 25 years of age. In the event of a death of child while being cared for by the service or may have occurred as a result of an incident, the records must be kept until 7 (seven) years after the death.
- being an employer, including all legal and ethical responsibilities that this entails and making sure that all rights for staff are recognized according to the Fairwork Australia laws.
- appointing staff and monitoring their performance
- ensuring educator qualification requirements are current
- ensuring all educators and staff have a clear understanding of the hierarchy of management
- providing clear and direct written and verbal feedback and instruction that is suitable and appropriate to the task
- ensuring the Service remains financially viable and can meet its debts and other obligations as they fall due
- ensuring the Service always holds a current insurance policy for public liability with a cover of \$20, 000, 000
- managing control and accountability systems
- monitoring financial performance and management to ensure the Service is solvent at all times and has sound financial strength for longevity and continuity of care for the children enrolled.
- approving annual financial statements and providing required reports to government bodies and maintaining appropriate delegations and internal controls
- complying with funding agreements where appropriate
- reviewing the work process regularly
- completing a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) for the Service and updating it at least annually
- ensuring the QIP is updated upon request by the regulatory authority and submitted to the regulatory authority upon request
- developing coherent aims and goals that reflect the interests, values and beliefs of all stakeholders of the Service
- establishing clearly defined roles and responsibilities for all members of staff, individually and as a collective, and clearly articulating the relationship between all stakeholders
- ensuring the educational program is based on an approved learning framework (EYLF) and contributes to each child's sense of identity and wellbeing
- complying with all other ACT and Australian governments' legislation that impacts upon the management and operations of a Service
- ensuring all notification and reporting requirements are met regarding the National Quality Framework and other legislation
- ensuring a copy of the Education and Care Services National Regulations and National Law is available at all times at the service for use by educators, staff, families and visitors
- ensuring that requirements relating to the physical environment, space, equipment and facilities are met
- notifying families at least 14 days before changes to policy or procedures that:
  - affect the fees charged or the way they are collected
  - significantly impact the service's education and care of children, or
  - significantly impact the family's ability to utilise the service.

**The nominated supervisor is responsible for:**

- adhering to the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations

- working with the Approved Provider in developing ethical standards and a code of conduct which guide actions and decisions in a way that is consistent and reflective of the Service's expectations
- undertaking periodical planning and risk assessments and having appropriate risk management strategies in place to manage risks faced by the Service
- ensuring that actions taken, and decisions made are clear and consistent and will help build confidence in all stakeholders
- the day-to-day management of the Service
- ensuring all notification and reporting requirements are met regarding the National Quality Framework and other legislation
- producing outcomes together with educators and staff. Educators must agree on their responsibilities and work according to current policies and procedures.
- providing educators with training, resources and support
- identifying and reporting if something significant occurs (for example: Work Health and Safety; Fraud Prevention; Complaint handling)
- identifying work required for completion and delegate to the appropriate educator/staff
- ensuring educators and staff do not delegate responsibilities for which they are accountable for or have been delegated to them by Management
- ensuring educators are adhering to service policies and procedures.

## **Service philosophy**

The development and review of the philosophy and policies will be a continuous process on an annual basis or when required. The philosophy and associated mission statement will reinforce all other documentation and the practices of the Service. The philosophy will reflect the principles of the approved national framework *"Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia"*

There will be a collaborative and consultative process to support the development and maintenance of the philosophy that will include children, parents and educators.

## **Code of conduct**

The standards of behaviour outlined in our Staff Code of Ethics, and the ECA Code of Ethics, provide guidance for all staff to make personal and ethical decisions related to confidentiality, recruitment, duty of care, record keeping, professional relationships and appropriate use of resources within the Service.

## **Confidentiality**

All members of the Leadership team along with the Nominated Supervisor, Responsible Person, educators, and staff who gain access to confidential information, whether in the course of their work or otherwise, shall not disclose information to anyone unless the disclosure of such information is required by law and will respect the confidentiality of all documents and meetings that occur. Child Information Sharing may be mandated to promote children's wellbeing and safety under state/territory legislation. This also includes:

using information acquired for their personal or financial benefit, or for the benefit of any other person.  
 permitting any unauthorised person to inspect or have access to any confidential documents or other information.  
 any information received or transmitted via mobile telephone (including text/SMS) or any other electronic device (e.g., email) shall be treated with the same confidentiality as any other written form of communication and must be stored confidentially.

This obligation, placed on a member of the Committee of Management, Nominated Supervisor, Responsible Person, educator, and staff shall continue even after the individual has completed their term and is no longer on the Management Committee or employed by the Service. The obligation to maintain confidentiality also applies to any person who is invited to any meetings of the Management Committee.

## **Ethical decision-making**

Our Service will make decisions which are consistent with our policies and procedures and that work in conjunction

with the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations, our approved learning framework (EYLF), and the ethical standards within the ECA Code of Ethics.

## **Review and evaluation of the service**

Ongoing review and evaluation will support the continuing development of the Service. We will do our best to ensure that the evaluation involves all stakeholders.

The ongoing updating and evaluation of our Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) will form part of the reflection procedure. Reflection on what works within the Service and what needs additional development will be included in the QIP.

## **Maintenance of records**

- The Service will adhere to record keeping requirements outlined in the National Regulations
- The Service will adhere to the storage of confidential records outlined in the National Regulations
- The Service has a responsibility to keep sufficient records about staff, families, and children in order to operate dependably and lawfully
- The Service will safeguard the interests of all children, their families, and the staff, using procedures to ensure appropriate privacy and confidentiality practices are upheld
- The Approved Provider assists in determining the process, storage location, and timeline for storage of records, using the National Regulations as a minimum standard
- The Service's orientation and induction processes will include the provision of significant information to managers, educators, children, and families to comply with National Regulations and Standards
- The Approved Provider will ensure that the record retention procedure meets the requirements of the following government departments and laws:
  - Australian Tax Office (ATO)
  - Family Assistance Office (FAO)
  - Family Assistance Law
  - National Law and Regulations

## **Managing conflicts of interest**

Conflict of interest, whether actual, potential or perceived, must be declared by all members of the Management Committee/Nominated Supervisor, Senior Staff and managed effectively to ensure integrity.

Every stakeholder that is in a position of management has a responsibility to ensure their transactions, external business interests and relationships will not cause potential conflicts and to make such disclosures in a timely manner as they arise.

The following process will be followed to manage any conflicts of interest:

Whenever there is a conflict of interest, the member concerned must notify the Approved Provider about the conflict. The member with a conflict of interest must not be present during the Management meeting where the matter is being discussed, or participate in any decisions made on that matter. The member concerned must provide the committee / Licensee with any and all relevant information they possess on the particular matter.

The minutes of the meeting must reflect that the conflict of interest was disclosed and appropriate processes followed to manage the conflict.

## **Emergency and Evacuation Procedures**

During emergency situations, the team at Stella Bella will always follow the directions of ACT Emergency Services as well as the Children's Education and Care Authority to make sure the children are kept as safe as possible from any harm that may be present. These emergencies can include, fire, storm, pandemics, or any danger that is presented as a threat to the centre and its staff and children.

- We have scheduled practice evacuations and lock down drills to help the children to learn the routine and to be able to cope more easily in the event that a true emergency arises.

- We keep a fully stocked emergency kit ready at all times which contains a first aid kit, children's current medications, snacks and water and an emergency contact list with all of the details for each family.
- All staff are familiar with and refer to the Emergency Evacuation procedure located on all EXIT doors and the kitchen door.
- Staff are trained to stay calm and orderly during emergency situations
- In the event of an emergency, designated staff members will collect the Sign-in Register, the evacuation kit and calmly, but firmly, usher the children to the designated assembly area. Once all children and staff are safely at the evacuation point, staff will check off the children's names from the Sign-in Register.
- All staff and children will remain in assembly area unless unsafe. If unsafe the whole group will proceed to an alternate designated area.
- The Centre is assessed for compliance to meet ACT Fire Safety standards annually.
- Staff will not re-enter the building until it is confirmed safe.
- Members of the Centre's permanent staff will fulfil the roles of First Aid Officer and Fire Wardens and will have regular training in regard to emergency evacuation procedures and First Aid.
- Practice evacuations and locks down will take place a minimum of every three months within the centre.

## **Confidentiality**

The aim of the Centre's confidentiality policy is to safeguard the privacy of each Child, family, staff member and volunteer involved with the centre.

We are committed to making sure that any child, parent or family member, staff member or volunteer has their individual privacy respected and protected. We are committed to ensuring that information provided to us remains protected from misuse, loss or unauthorised access and we do this by providing locked office areas, administrative protocols and by limiting computer access to electronically stored information.

In relation to children and their families, we gather and hold information before, during and after enrolment. This information can only be seen by the parent or legal guardian, centre staff, authorised representatives from the Licensing Authority, and assessors from ACECQA (Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority). We collect the information required in a variety of ways. These include; enrolment forms, private discussions, meetings, personal correspondence, email and telephone calls.

In regards to families and children, the Centre may gain information from a third party and examples of this may include reports from Doctors, speech therapists and specialist services.

The Centre will only disclose information to another source with the parents' or legal guardian's written consent. This may include government departments or medical practitioners. We are guided in this policy by ECA's Code of Ethics:

- The Centre will maintain private and confidential files for the Staff, Managers, Volunteers and students. We will continue to improve systems for the appropriate use, storage and disposal of records.
- We will ensure the information in these files is used only for the provision of services by the centre and only shared with relevant organisations as defined in this policy and in our Privacy Collection Statement.
- We will ensure each staff member, Volunteer and Student information is correct in personnel and other files. This includes information on qualifications, WWVP Card, criminal history checks, contact and emergency information, health and immunisation information, and any relevant medical and legal information.
- Individuals will be allowed access to their personal information as requested. Individuals must request this information in writing from the organisation.
- We will maintain the confidentiality of all children and their families that attend the centre, along with their personal files, personal details and conversation that happen within the centre.

## **Privacy Policy**

The centre protects the privacy, dignity and confidentiality of individuals by ensuring that all records and information about individual children, families, staff and management is treated with discretion, kept in a secure place and only accessed by or disclosed to those people who need the information to fulfil their responsibilities at the centre or have a legal right to know.

- Staff will respect the rights to privacy of: enrolled children and their families; other staff and their families, and agree to comply with the Privacy Act.
- Information pertaining to children and their families, or staff and their families is not discussed with, or made available to, any person who has not been authorised by the individual family, except in circumstances involving an authorised officer of the Education and Care Regulatory Unit or from other government departments covered by legislation.
- Information about individual children or their families is only discussed with persons working within the Centre. All discussions relating to individual children and their families by staff will be on a confidential and professional basis.
- Information about a staff member and their family is not discussed with other staff at the centre, or with any person or persons within or outside the Centre, without the staff member's consent.
- Staff relationships will remain professional and confidential outside of work hours, and private and working relationships will not interfere with each other.
- Children and families of staff members who have a child enrolled in the centre for care will not be discussed with other staff members unless it is in relation to the direct care of the child within the centre during centre hours.
- Staff are not to discuss children and their families from within the centre when communicating with other staff members outside of the work environment and work hours.

## **Staffing - Responsible Person**

A 'responsible person' is the approved provider or the nominated supervisor or a registered responsible person of a childcare centre. At Stella Bella our 'responsible persons' must be 18 years or older and have a clear understanding of the role, be trustworthy, mature and have proven themselves to be responsible in their dealings with staff, children and families, and managing any situations that may arise.

The approved provider will ensure that the responsible person on duty will:

- Meet the minimum requirements for qualification, experiences and management capabilities.
- Take on the role of the Nominated Supervisor in their absence.
- Be responsible for signing off from their responsibilities when they have finished their duty and ensuring that the

Nominated Supervisor or another appointed Responsible Person signs on, taking on the role of Responsible Person.

The Centre will always have a 'responsible person' present in the centre at all times when the centre is operating. There will be a notice clearly visible in the entrance of the centre with the name and position of the "responsible

## **Code of Conduct in staff.**

All Centre staff members, both educators and administrative staff and volunteers, are bound by the principles enshrined in the ECA Code of Ethics. The Code of Ethics is a set of statements about appropriate and expected behaviour of members of a professional group and, as such, reflects its values. The following processes and values are considered central to the Code of Ethics and frame the practice of educators and staff members in our Centre:

- respect
- democracy
- honesty
- integrity
- justice
- courage
- inclusivity

- social responsiveness
- cultural responsiveness
- education

## Code of Conduct of Parents/Guardians

- All staff members at the Centre are to be treated with respect and dignity regardless of race, creed, sexual orientation, disability, or any other ground.
- Inappropriate behaviour or harassment of any kind towards an educator, student or parent/guardian, will result in immediate intervention up to and including the family's expulsion from the Centre and/or police involvement.
  - This type of behaviour includes but is not limited to harassment or intimidation by written note, email, phone calls, words, gestures and/or body language.
- If an incident should occur in which the parent/guardian breaches the Parent Code of Conduct, the parent/guardian will be given written notice warning them of their inappropriate behaviour. The second infraction will result in written notice of immediate withdrawal of childcare services.
- Certain serious infractions will result in immediate withdrawal of childcare services. The decision for suspension and/or withdrawal will be based on, but not limited to, the following types of incidents:
  - Any violent physical contact or threat of physical contact or assault against other parents, children or staff
  - Non-compliance with a reasonable Staff direction.
  - Verbal attacks on other parents, children or Staff, which include the use of threats, name-calling, as well as repeated profane or degrading language. Individuals engaging in such behaviour will be asked to leave the premises immediately.
  - Racial or other discriminatory incidents.
  - Theft of personal or centre property.
  - Conduct that is injurious to the moral tone of the Centre. Breach of any confidentiality and/or privacy policies.
  - Repeated failure to comply with the parental/guardian responsibilities outlined in the contract and policies of the Centre, including reading, signing, and returning all required documents and policies within the requested time frame.
  - Repeated and consistent late pick up of child.

## Grievances and Complaints

We believe that staff and families should interact with each other at all times with respect and kindness. We believe that everyone who accesses the Centre has the right to have any grievances heard and dealt with accordingly and without fear of recrimination.

We are very open to comments, suggestions and complaints because they help us to provide a better service. We believe that any comments, suggestions or complaints should be brought to the attention of whichever staff member the person making the comment, suggestion or complaint feels most comfortable in contacting. After identifying a grievance, the desired outcome is that the matter is dealt with in such a way as to meet a mutually satisfactory resolution. In the case of grievance, the following procedures must be followed:

- Staff or parents must first raise any issues with one of Centre's leadership team– Suzanne Tunks or Chamalee Prathiraja. All complaints, verbal and written will be taken seriously and, if required by law, be lodged through the portal to the governing authority within 24 hours.
- If an issue appears to be not easily resolved in the first instance, our leading team members will initiate a face to face meeting with the parents/parent, and a support person if they choose, and will do their best to resolve the issues.
- The Centre will always do its utmost to resolve any issues that arise with respect and understanding so that parents will always feel that their concerns are valued.

## Procedure for formal written complaints

- Formal complaints about any aspects of a child's care or a staff member are to be submitted in writing.
- The complaint will be dealt with in the strictest confidence. The Service Provider /Nominated Supervisor or delegated staff member involved in investigating the complaint will ensure that information is restricted only to those who genuinely need to be notified in order to deal with the complaint. If information specific to the complaint needs to be disclosed to others during its resolution, the complainant will be informed prior to this occurring.
- Complainants must be offered the opportunity to have a meeting with the Service Provider/Nominated Supervisor. A record of the meeting will be made and sent to the parties involved.
- The complaint will be entered into the Centre's **Grievance and Complaint Register**, and written acknowledgment that the complaint has been received sent to the complainant.
- The Nominated Supervisor/Management Committee will investigate the complaint in an equitable, transparent and fair manner, and document the findings. Investigations involve consulting with the relevant stakeholders (including any person who may be the subject of the complaint) and reviewing documentation such as attendance records, accident reports and the Centre's Policies.
- Actions to address the complaint will be determined, and the complainant notified in writing of those actions.
- Any complaints or grievances made to the Centre will be reported to the Children's Education and Care Assurance office (CECA) within 24 hours of the lodgement of complaint or grievance.
- When an issue cannot be resolved at the Centre, the Nominated Supervisor or the complainant may contact CECA by phone on (02) 6207 1114 or by email on [CECA@act.gov.au](mailto:CECA@act.gov.au) for assistance and advice.
- The same processes as those set out above apply to educators and staff in submitting formal complaints about any aspect of the Centre's operations. However, staff grievances are dealt with under its Staff Grievance and Complaint processes.

## Participation of volunteers and students on practicum placements.

- The Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor and Responsible Persons will maintain a visitor's book and will require that all visitors to the service sign into the visitors book. The sign in must include the visitor's full name, contact details, emergency contact details, date of birth and reason for visit.
- Records relating to visitors, volunteers and students to the centre will be maintained and stored for 25 years.
- Educators and staff will abide by regulatory protocol when visitors are in the service.
- The centre will ensure that all educators and staff understand the regulatory and ethical guidelines relating to visitors at the centre and will provide an induction protocol for all staff to use with visitors and will keep a record of all volunteers and students who spend time in the service.
- 
- We will welcome visitors to the service, direct visitors appropriately and make the Nominated Supervisor or Responsible Persons aware of a visitor presence in the service.
- The Approved Provider/ Nominated Supervisor will conduct the orientation of volunteer, work placement or work experience students.
- The responsible person will ensure that a Working with Vulnerable People Check (WWVP) has been carried out or will instigate this process.

## Animals in the Environment

- The Centre believes that having pets is a healthy part of childhood and learning and works hard to accommodate certain pets in the centre whilst ensuring that high standards of hygiene and safety around them is maintained.
- There is a chicken house and yard in the garden containing 3 chickens who eat the food scraps and repay with eggs.
- The Educators at the Centre will ensure that:
  - all pets and their homes are kept clean and hygienic.
  - they have clean bedding, water and Food. f
  - animal food is kept out of reach of children at all times.
  - Children will be supervised at all times when interacting with pets or animals.
  - any health or safety risk for the children that may be caused by animals, such allergies that Children and Educators may have, are appropriately managed.
- There are situations that may spontaneously occur, involving animals. For example, there may be a situation where an animal or bird has made its way into the education and care service. Educators may use this as a spontaneous learning experience for the children. At all times, they will ensure the safety and wellbeing of the children.
- The presence of animals in the education and care service will be managed by educators to ensure that the safety and wellbeing of children, families, educators and animals is maintained at all times. Educators will consider the risks versus the benefits of including animals in the educational program.
- If the remains of an animal, or animal faeces, have been found in or around the premises, the remains will be disposed of according to the local Council guidelines and the area where the remains were found will be thoroughly disinfected with hot, soapy water and sanitiser.

## Safe storage of dangerous goods

By maximising awareness and ensuring dangerous products are safely stored we reduce the risk of harm to educators, children and families. The Centre aims to reduce the use of dangerous products within the environment by introducing eco-friendly and less toxic cleaning procedures.

Our staff ensure:

- That there are emergency procedures and practices for accidental spills, contamination and corresponding first aid plans for all dangerous goods handled and stored in the service.
- That at all times there is an educator on the premises with WorkCover & ACECQA approved first aid qualifications.
- That there are appropriate storage facilities in the service in which dangerous products are stored under lock and key. Dangerous products are locked away in areas of the service that are not accessible to children or in cupboards fitted with childproof locks.

A Hazardous Substances Register and a risk assessment for any dangerous materials stored in bulk within the Centre is made available in the chemical cupboard. The register records the product name, application, whether the MSDS is available, what class risk the chemical has, controls for prevention of exposure required, what first aid, medical or safety action should be taken if a person is exposed. Staff will:

- In the event a person is exposed to the chemical, seek medical advice as needed by contacting the **Poisons Information Line – 13 11 26** or by calling **000**.
- Strictly adhere to the 'Directions for use' on the product label.

- Dispose of all products safely, in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions on the product label, Work Health and Safety regulations and Council by-laws.

## **Environmental sustainability**

- The Centre encourages and increases awareness of environmental responsibilities and implements practices that contribute to a sustainable future children.
- We show respect for the environment.
- Environmentally sustainable practices are embedded into the operations of the centre and involve all educators, children and families.
- The service will ensure the environment is safe, clean and well-maintained at all times
- Children's awareness of the environment will be promoted through daily practices, resources and interactions.
- Sustainable practices will be encouraged within the centre
- Educators, children and families will be encouraged to become advocates for a sustainable future.
- We have recycling bins, paper bins, veggie patches, composting facilities, and a chicken coop for the children to help them learn about the life cycles of plants and animals.

## **The Indoor & Outdoor Environment**

The physical environment can contribute to children's wellbeing, happiness, creativity and developing independence. It can contribute to and express the quality of children's learning and experiences.

- The Centre will ensure that the centre's physical environment is safe, clean and well maintained.
- Children's awareness of the environment and sustainable practice will be supported through daily practices, resources and interactions.
- The physical environment, both in and outdoors will support children's learning, safety, levels of engagement and access to positive experiences and inclusive relationships.
- Fencing and barriers which enclose outdoor areas used by children centre are maintained to ensure they are of a height and design that prevents children of preschool age from going through, over or under the structure.
- Sufficient furniture, materials and developmentally appropriate equipment are provided and maintained in the education and care service in order to support all children to engage and access the program and develop their skills and independence.
- Any laundry facility in the premises is located and maintained in a way that does not pose any risks to children.
- Adequate space requirements are maintained in both the indoor and outdoor environments.
- Toilet, washing and drying facilities are developmentally and age appropriate and are located and designed in a way that support safe use and convenient access by children.
- The nappy change areas support safe access and hygienic nappy change routines and that educators and children have ready access to hand washing facilities.
- Education and care environments are well ventilated and have adequate natural light.
- Indoor temperatures are maintained at levels that support children's safety and wellbeing.
- The play spaces in the education and care service provide children with opportunities to explore and experience the natural environment.
- The outdoor education and care environment has adequate shaded areas to protect children from ultraviolet radiation from the sun.
- The environment seeks to support convenient access to both indoor and outdoor play activities and to toilet and nappy change facilities according to supervision requirements, children's independence and developmental needs.
- Where possible, gardens reflect the local natural habitat and encourage native wildlife into the education and care environment.
- Encourage and nurture children's interest in the world around them. By providing children with materials, resources and information, educators can help children to appreciate and respect the beauty of their natural and built environments.

- Encourage children and families to collect and bring recycled equipment and natural resources into the environment.
- Encourage children to care for plants by growing plants from seeds and seedlings and nurturing them till they grow into produce and flowers.

**This policy can be amended at any time by giving 14 days written notice. In addition, the policy can be amended with immediate effect if, in the sole discretion of Stella Bella, the amendment is considered necessary to protect the safety, health or wellbeing of any child at the service. In that case Stella Bella must notify parents as soon as practicable after making the change. Without limiting the ways in which notice may be given, an email notification to the email address provided or commonly used by the parent(s) will be taken to satisfy any notice requirements under this policy.**

***This document was updated in October 2023***