

FAMILY CONDUCT GUIDELINES (Code of Conduct)

The *Family Conduct Guidelines* works in conjunction with our Service's Enrolment Policy, Dealing with Complaints Policy, Family Handbook and the Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics. The Family Conduct Guidelines are in place to emphasize the commitment and ethical responsibilities each family adopts when enrolling their child/ren at Village Early Education.

Aim

The aim of the *Family Conduct Guidelines* is to provide information to support families and the Service develop clear and effective methods of communication to support the building of genuine partnerships and adopt appropriate and expected behaviour for families and educators. This includes acting as an advocate for individual children and discussing more complex and challenging issues that call for astute attention and respect.

It is anticipated that all stakeholders within the Service will adopt the following qualities during their interactions:

- Honesty
- Integrity
- Inclusivity
- Democracy
- Respect
- Confidentiality

Communication

It is expected that families will collaborate with their child's educator/s, working together to support their child's learning and development. Our educators understand that families are busy and often eager to find ways to strengthen the connection between home and our Service. We have a range of methods to promote effective communication with families and encourage your interaction. Effective communication builds mutual respect, understanding and trust. For educators working with families, building a positive partnership includes sharing knowledge and experiences to understand your child.

We appreciate when families share information with our educators about the child. This may include informing the educator when your child has a restless night, sharing something your child has disclosed, or even talking about an activity or experience your child would like to do or share with others.

This helps our educators support your child throughout the day.

Communication is vital within our Service, ensuring children's needs are being met. We ask that families nominate their preferred method of communication which will be amended as required, so we can do our best to be open and responsive.

Meeting with educators or management

It is not always possible or effective to discuss issues 'on the spot'. Usually, most communication between families and educators occurs at child drop-off and pick-up times. This transition time typically is not conducive to meaningful exchanges; families can be rushed, educators are understandably focused on children's transitions, and in the case of full-day programs, educators who spend the largest amount of time with your child may not be available or not rostered on that day.

We encourage families to arrange a time away from the learning environment, where the educator can give families their full attention and make decisions that have been given careful consideration.

Respecting our Educators

We request that all stakeholders involved with the Service are respected. This includes respect for our educators, respect for the children and respect for the families.

If we work to share information, contribute ideas and together, reflect on practices we will have a network for your child that not only supports their time here at Village Early Education, but will also see them thrive.

We all have a common goal: *What's best for your child*. With that in mind, this journey will be rewarding for all.

Complaints or Grievances

If there is an incident that has occurred that families are concerned with, we always want to hear and discuss the issue. We ask families to be mindful about discussing or talking about sensitive issues in front of others, including children. Where possible, ask your child's educator or relevant educator for a suitable time to discuss your complaint.

Families are encouraged to document their concerns by outlining the incident or concern and submit this to Centre Manager. Management will acknowledge your complaint and endeavour to achieve an outcome that supports the best interests and wellbeing of the child where possible. (See our *Dealing with Complaints Policy*). We encourage all parents, carers and family members to work cooperatively with the person managing the complaint. Inappropriate behaviour will not be tolerated, and a meeting may be terminated.

Management will adhere to privacy and confidentiality laws however if the complaint is a notifiable incident (related to child protection or fraud), we are required to notify relevant authorities immediately.

Should you wish to raise concerns regarding the management of Child Care Subsidy, please speak to the nominated supervisor as soon as possible. Concerns can also be directed to the Department of Education via their [Online contact form](#) or potential fraud breaches can be reported anonymously through an online report form: [Reporting fraud via a tip-off](#).

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is something we will not waiver on and expect the same from everyone involved, educators and families alike. If you do have concerns regarding your child, please see your child's educator to arrange a time to meet. The meeting will be in a private area within the Service. If issues are still unresolved, then contact our Nominated Supervisor and reschedule a second meeting.

Child Care Subsidy Obligation

We remind families that there are some issues that educators have no influence over. There are also some issues that the Service has no control over such as Child Care Subsidy, and timing of payments to the Service and your account.

When families enrol their child into our Service, it is the family's responsibility to provide us with the required information to receive Child Care Subsidy. This includes the correct Customer Reference Number (CRN) and date of birth of the child and parent/guardian the child is linked with.

To receive Child Care Subsidy (CCS) families must apply through the myGov website/app. This includes completing the Child Care Subsidy activity test. The Approved Provider and family will enter into an agreement regarding the planned arrangements for care. This is called a Complying Written Arrangement (CWA) and is an agreement to provide care in return for fees. Once the provider submits an enrolment notice, the family will be asked to confirm the enrolment through their myGov account. This is the final step to complete the Child Care Subsidy. It is important for families to understand that until this step is complete, Child Care Subsidy entitlements will not be confirmed.

Families are required to advise if their circumstances have changed. This includes:

- advising if your child begins primary or secondary school for the first time
- if you or your partner's activity details have changed
- if you or your partner's income changes
- your care arrangements change

- your personal circumstances have changes
- you change your address or
- if you leave Australia.

Families are advised that most changes can be made using the Centrelink online account through myGov. Families may incur a debt if they have not notified the change within 14 days.

Policies and Procedures

Our policies and procedures are reviewed at least annually or whenever a change of legislation occurs, or upon critical reflection, modifications are required. We ask families to contribute and provide feedback to our policies and procedures to ensure child safety and wellbeing remains our priority. We aim to provide an environment that promotes and enables children's participation and is welcoming and culturally safe and inclusive for all children and families. We request that your feedback and contribution to policy review is through relevant communication channels and not derogatory in any way to our Service.

Unacceptable Behaviour

At Village Early Education, we are committed to creating a safe, respectful and nurturing environment for all children, families, educators and staff. In order to uphold this commitment, we expect all family members and visitors to conduct themselves in a respectful and courteous manner at all times when engaging with our Service.

We do not condone and will not tolerate any of the following behaviours:

- Aggressive or intimidating behaviour, including raised voices, yelling or threats towards staff, children or other families.
- Disrespectful, demeaning or discriminatory language or comments (spoken, written or via electronic communication)
- Physical intimidation or violence of any kind
- Inappropriate use of social media to air grievances or post defamatory or derogatory content about the service, staff, children or other families
- Making unreasonable demands or refusing to follow service policies and procedures
- Interfering with other children or attempting to discipline them
- Bringing or being under the influence of alcohol or illegal substances on the premises

We understand that parenting can be challenging and emotions can sometimes run high, however, we ask that all interactions remain respectful and solution-focused. If a situation becomes heated, we may ask that the conversation be paused and rescheduled for a more appropriate time.

Our educators and staff have the right to work in an environment that is free from hostility, fear, and disrespect.

Any breach of this Code of Conduct will be taken seriously and may result in:

- Suspension of access to the Service premises (except for child drop-off/pick-up)
- A formal warning from Management
- Termination of enrolment

By working together with mutual respect and understanding, we can ensure that our Service remains a safe and positive environment for every child and family.