

CODE OF CONDUCT(CHILD SAFE) POLICY

SCOPE

This policy applies to employees, management, and visitors of the service.

POLICY OBJECTIVE

At Integricare we believe in maintaining an inclusive and welcoming environment and workplace that motivates and facilitates personal growth and development for all employees. The Integricare values that underpin our work ethic include **Compassion, Hope, Respect, Innovation, Support, and Trust**.

We are committed to adhering to the ECA Code of Ethics and the ACWA Code of Ethics and creating and maintaining an environment that promotes the safety of all children, families, and employees and embeds the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations. All employees and volunteers are responsible for promoting a culture of safety and well-being to minimise the risk of child abuse or harm to children whilst promoting children's sense of security and belonging.

POLICY PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish a common understanding of workplace standards and ethics expected of all employees of Integricare. We aim to ensure positive working relationships are formed between all employees and management, promoting dignity and respect by avoiding behaviour, which is or may be perceived as harassing, bullying, or intimidating. Employees and management will at all times conduct themselves in an ethical manner and strive to ensure that all interactions are positive and respectful.

Our Services take every reasonable effort to accommodate the diversity of all children in implementing the Child Safe Standards. We are committed to the safety and well-being of children and young people. We recognise the importance of and responsibility for, ensuring our Service provides a safe and supportive environment that respects and fosters the rights and well-being of children in our care.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The guiding principles in the application of this policy are as follows:

- employees and management are committed to Integricare's values, inclusive of best practice in early childhood education and care and building positive partnership with children, families, and employees
- employees and management always adhere to the Child Protection Policy and take all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse and harm
- employees and management understand that *child safety is everyone's responsibility*
- employees are committed to valuing and promoting the safety, health, and wellbeing of employees, volunteers, children, and families
- there is effective, open, and respectful reciprocal communication and feedback between employees, children, families, clients, and management
- it is important to treat colleagues, children, and families with respect. Bullying or insulting behaviour, including verbal and non-verbal aggression, abusive, threatening, or derogatory language or intimidation towards other employees, children, visitors, or families is unacceptable and will not be tolerated
- employees are committed to an Equal Opportunity workplace and culture which values the knowledge, experience, and professionalism of all employees and managers, and the diverse heritage of our families and children
- employees and management respect the privacy of children and their families by keeping all information about child protection concerns confidential.

THE POLICY PROCESS

Employees are instructed to inform themselves of grievance policies and the avenues they can avail themselves of in order to address contraventions of the Code of Conduct. Grievances made outside of these policies could result in disciplinary action.

Appropriate conduct that is commendable, should be supported, and recognised applies to employees who:

- respect the role of management and their responsibilities
- exemplify the Integricare values in their work and interaction with others and go the extra mile
- work proficiently, harmoniously, and effectively
- are courteous and responsive when dealing with colleagues, students, visitors, children, and families
- act in a professional and respectful manner whilst at work, giving their full attention to their duties
- act honestly and exercise attentiveness at all times
- are proactive in being aware of policies and adhering to all policies, procedures, laws and regulations
- carry out all lawful directions, retaining the right to question any direction they consider unethical. If uncertain they can seek advice from the Centre Manager, Groups Services, or the Ombudsman
- uphold the rights of children and always prioritise their needs
- treat all children, particularly those with additional needs, with respect
- are positive role models for children at all times
- promoting the safety of children and taking all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse
- provide adequate supervision of children at all times (where relevant to your role)
- understand their legislative responsibility as mandatory reporters to report any allegation of child abuse, neglect, or possible risk of harm to management
- understand their legislative responsibility to report any inappropriate action of any other employee that involves children or young people to management as part of the *Reportable Conduct Scheme*
- participate willingly in all compulsory training
- report any instances of suspected corrupt conduct, mismanagement of government funds, or other serious allegations to the appropriate agency (tipoffline@dese.gov.au)
- work collaboratively with colleagues and recognise and value diversity
- are mindful of their duty of care toward themselves and others
- engage in critical reflection to inform individual and collective decision-making
- respect the confidential nature of information gained about each child enrolled at Integricare

Conduct that is contrary to Integricare values the commendable conduct listed above includes those who:

- accuse other employees, and in particular management, of unconscionable behaviour or an unfounded denigration of their character
- Criticise and denigrate other employees and management to non-employees of Integricare
- behave in a manner that results in children and/or staff feeling unsafe
- condone or participate in illegal, unsafe, or abusive behaviour towards children, including physical, sexual, or psychological abuse, ill-treatment, neglect, or grooming
- exaggerate or trivialise child abuse issues
- fail to report information to the CEO (or their delegate) if they know a child has been abused
- engage in unwarranted and inappropriate touching involving a child
- persistently criticise and/or denigrate a child
- verbally assault a child or create a climate of fear
- encourage a child to communicate with them in a private setting
- share details of sexual experiences with a child
- use sexual language or gestures in the presence of children
- discriminate against any child, because of culture, race, ethnicity, or disability

- put children at risk of abuse by refusing food or play, making threats, or exposing children to inappropriate language or material (movies, internet, photos).

Babysitting

- We do not provide babysitting services outside normal operating hours.
- Integricare discourages private babysitting arrangements with families, and Integricare takes no responsibility for any private arrangements between employees and families. However, we do expect employees to inform the Service if they are babysitting or caring for a child that attends the Service.

Duty of Care

Management and employees have a responsibility to take reasonable care for the health and safety (both physical and psychological wellbeing) of themselves and others at the workplace to enable compliance with the work health and safety legislation outlined in the *Work Health and Safety Policy*.

Social Media

- As a Child Safe Organisation, our Service has the responsibility to ensure children and employees are protected from harm when they engage with digital technology including social media.
- Employees who have personal social media accounts are not permitted to post any negative comments relating to Integricare, children, colleagues, or families.
- Employees are not permitted to request the 'friendship' of families on social media.
- Integricare does not recommend employees accept 'friend requests' from families of the Service as they will be seen still as a representative of the Service and held to the Service's Code of Conduct on all posts.

Personal phone calls/mobile phones/smart watches

We are mindful that educators have a duty of care to ensure children are protected from potential risk of harm. It is imperative that all employees of our Services provide children with their full attention, ensuring supervision is maintained and remains on the children at all times. Within this context, the following applies:

- employees are not authorised to use the Service's phones for personal reasons unless in the case of an emergency or with permission from management
- no personal mobile phones are to be used, checked, or brought on the floor during working hours
- mobile phones are to be kept inside employee's bags which will be placed in a designated, secure location for safe keeping
- employees are not permitted to use Smart watches to access emails and social media during working hours. Smart watches are only to be used for viewing the time
- personal mobile phones and Smart watches may be used during shift breaks when employees are free from work and supervision duties. They are not to be used in general sight of children, unless a situation arises where there is an emergency
- personal mobile phones are not to be used to take photos of children as this is a breach of children's privacy (service mobile phones or iPads may be used if it is for the purposes of 'observations' etc.)
- children are at no time to be given access to an employee's mobile phones
- employees are not to contact families or children of the Service for personal reasons
- if, for personal reasons an employee needs to remain contactable from someone outside the Service they should ensure that the situation is explained to management and that the service's primary contact details are passed on to the persons/family outside the Service.

Integricare Emails

- Email is to be used only for company usage, not for private communications.
- Passwords and access privileges are strictly confidential and to be used only by the employee issued with that access, or persons delegated to know and use that access in the normal course of operation.
- It is the responsibility of the authorised user to take fair and reasonable steps to ensure that passwords and other forms of access are kept safe.
- Employees are to be aware that their work email account may be accessed by Management at any time.

Use of Alcohol, Drugs and Tobacco

- Smoking is NOT permitted in or on surrounding areas of the Service.
- It is expected that the odour of cigarette smoke will not be detected on an employee's clothing. If an employee is found smoking on the premises, that employee may be terminated.
- Our Service is bound by the Education and Care Services National Regulations. Alcohol, drugs, or other substance abuse by employees can have serious adverse effects on their own health and the safety of others. As such, all employees must not:
 - consume alcohol nor be under the influence of alcohol while working
 - use or possess illegal drugs at any workplace
 - drive a vehicle, having consumed alcohol or suffering from the effects of illegal substances, or
 - bring alcohol or any illegal drugs onto the premises.
- If a co-worker suspects a colleague to be affected by drugs or alcohol, they must inform the Manager immediately. No employee will be allowed to work under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- Employees undergoing prescribed medical treatment with a controlled substance that may affect the safe performance of their duties are required to report this to their Manager. All issues pertaining to these matters shall be kept strictly confidential.

Dress Code for Employees Working with Children

- All employees must adhere to the Clothing Policy and Sun Smart Policy, including the display of their name badge whilst on shift. Jewellery is to be kept to a minimum.
- Appropriate footwear must be worn to carry out the role safely. Shoes must be secure to the foot, have a good tread pattern, and have a cushioned and slip resistant sole. Strictly no high heels, thongs, Ugg boots, or wedges.
- Clothes must be suitable for free movement, active play, and messy play.
- No offensive logos or political statements are to be displayed on clothing.

Personal Hygiene

All employees are to adhere to the following standards:

- long hair is to be kept clean and neat
- fingernails are to be clean and maintained at an appropriate length for the duties performed
- employees will follow appropriate oral hygiene practices
- an appropriate deodorant/antiperspirant will be worn
- strong perfumes should not be worn as they may cause allergic reactions in others.

Expectations of Service Managers and Group Services Leaders

In addition to the above responsibilities, leaders and management are expected to:

- promote a collaborative and interconnected workplace by developing a positive working environment where all employees can contribute to the ongoing continuous improvement of Integricare
- promote leadership by working with employees and providing opportunities for professional development
- provide ongoing support and feedback to employees
- keep employees informed about essential information and any relevant changes and make all documents readily accessible to them
- ensure copies of the ECA Code of Ethics are available to employees and families
- model professional behaviour at all times
- implement supportive and effective communication systems, consulting employees in appropriate decisions
- take appropriate action if a breach of the code of conduct occurs
- share skills and knowledge with employees

- give encouragement and constructive feedback to employees, respecting the value of different professional approaches.

POLICY NON-COMPLIANCE

Actions taken as a result of policy non-compliance will depend on any consequential negative impact caused by the non-compliance. As a guide, it will be at the discretion of senior management to determine the level of adverse impact on Integricare i.e.:

- Catastrophic Impact could lead to Instant dismissal;
- Very High Impact - A written warning and grounds for dismissal could apply;
- High Impact - A written warning, recorded in the employee's HR file in GSO;
- Low Impact - A verbal warning given by the line manager;
- Minimal Impact - A reminder of the policy by the line manager.

CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY AGREEMENT

I have read and understood Integricare's <i>Code of Conduct</i> and agree to abide by the provisions set out in the Code of Conduct at all times. Failure to do so may lead to disciplinary action or dismissal.			
NAME		SIGNATURE	
POSITION		DATE	

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CHILD SAFE CODE OF CONDUCT

The Child Safe Code of Conduct must be signed by all students, employees, volunteers, and child related contractors. As an Integricare employee, contractor, or volunteer, you are responsible for promoting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people in an Integricare Service.

I will not:

- condone or participate in illegal, unsafe, or abusive behaviour towards children, including physical, sexual, or psychological abuse, ill-treatment, neglect, or grooming
- exaggerate or trivialise child abuse issues
- fail to report information to the CEO (or their delegate) if I know a child has been abused
- engage in unwarranted and inappropriate touching involving a child
- persistently criticise and/or denigrate a child
- verbally assault a child or create a climate of fear
- encourage a child to communicate with me in a private setting
- share details of sexual experiences with a child
- use sexual language or gestures in the presence of children
- discriminate against any child, because of culture, race, ethnicity, or disability
- put children at risk of abuse by refusing food or play, making threats, exposing children to inappropriate language or material (movies, internet, photos)
- use my personal mobile phone (camera) to take photos of children as this is a breach of children's privacy (service mobile phones or iPads may be used if it is for the purposes of 'observations' etc.)
- give children access to my personal mobile phone, including content and images on the phone
- use tobacco products or possess or be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs at any time while working with children
- develop any 'special' relationships with children that could be seen as grooming/favoritism such as the offering of gifts or special treatment
- do things of a personal nature that a child can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes.

I will:

- adhere to the *Child Protection Policy* at all times, and take all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse and harm
- understand that *child safety is everyone's responsibility*
- respect the privacy of children and their families by keeping all information about child protection concerns confidential
- treat children with respect and be a positive role model in my conduct with them
- ensure I have a valid and current Working with Children Check (WWCC) which has been verified by Integricare
- uphold the rights of children and always prioritise their needs
- promote the safety of children and take all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse
- adhere to Integricare's guidelines for the use of social media as outlined in the *Social Media Policy*
- communicate with the children in an age appropriate and realistic manner
- set clear boundaries about appropriate behaviour between myself and a child
- only have physical contact with a child in ways which are appropriate to my professional or agreed role and responsibilities
- be willing to listen and respond appropriately to a child's views and concerns
- respond quickly, fairly, and transparently to any serious complaints made by a child or related to a child
- understand and abide by my reporting obligations as a Mandatory Reporter.

CHILD SAFE CODE OF CONDUCT AGREEMENT

I have read and understood Integricare’s Child Safe <i>Code of Conduct</i> and agree to abide by the provisions set out in the Code of Conduct at all times. Failure to do so may lead to disciplinary action or dismissal.			
NAME		SIGNATURE	
POSITION or ROLE		DATE	
WITNESS NAME		SIGNATURE	
POSITION or ROLE		DATE	

INTEGRICARE RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

- PO22 Grievance and Complaints Investigation Policy
- PC38 Sun Protection Policy
- PC28 Child Protection Policy
- PC21 Clothing Policy
- PO09 WH&S Policy

LEGISLATION:

NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD (NQS)

QUALITY AREA 4: STAFFING ARRANGEMENTS		
4.1	Staffing arrangements	Staffing arrangements enhance children's learning and development.
4.1.2	Continuity of staff	Every effort is made for children to experience continuity of educators at the service.
4.2	Professionalism	Management, educators, and staff are collaborative, respectful and ethical.
4.2.1	Professional collaboration	Management, educators, and staff work with mutual respect and collaboratively, and challenge and learn from each other, recognising each other’s strengths and skills.
4.2.2	Professional Standards	Professional standards guide practice, interactions, and relationships.

QUALITY AREA 7: GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP

7.1.1	Service philosophy and purpose	A statement of philosophy guides all aspects of the service's operations.
7.1.3	Roles and responsibilities	Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined, and understood, and support effective decision-making and operation of the service.

EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL REGULATIONS

82	Tobacco, drug, and alcohol-free environment
84	Awareness of child protection law
155	Interactions with children
168	Education and care services must have policies and procedures

OFFICE USE ONLY

Risk Manager	Prepared by	Approved by	Version History			Next Review Date
			Previous Version	Last Version	Current Version	
Dom Valastro CEO	Dom Valastro CEO	Domenic Valastro CEO	C5	PO12-01 PO12-02	PO12-03	
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