



Program Participation for Parents/Guardians, Family & Volunteers Policy

Purpose

This policy will:

- Outline how parents/guardians, family members and volunteers can access and be involved in St Kevin's Out of Hours School Care (OHSC) Centre.
- Provide guidelines to ensure that all interaction with children and adults is respectful, courteous, sensitive and considerate.

Refer to Quality Improvement and Accreditation System (QIAS), Quality Practices Guide 2005, Principles 1.2, 2.1, 2.2, 2.1, 2.2, 5.1, 6.1, 6.2, 7.1.

Policy statement

1. Values

St Kevin's Out of Hours School Care (OHSC) Centre believes that all parents/guardians and volunteers play a crucial and valuable role in the effective operation of St Kevin's Out of Hours School Care (OHSC) Centre programs and in enriching the children's out of school hours care experience.

St Kevin's Out of Hours School Care (OHSC) Centre is committed to:

- The wellbeing of children as the most important priority for the centre
- Promoting and providing opportunities for parents'/guardians' involvement and support in all components of program delivery
- Recognising that parents/guardians are the first and continuing carers and educators of their children
- Ensuring the provision of a safe, secure and welcoming environment in which everyone's contribution is valued and respected
- Creating and supporting a culture that is respectful to the cultural and social background of families attending our centre
- Encouraging volunteers and community members to support and participate in our program
- Complying with all funding and legislative requirements.

2. Scope

This policy applies to staff, parents/guardians, committee, volunteers, students on place and the children's extended family members at St Kevin's Out of Hours School Care (OHSC) Centre.

3. Background and legislation

St Kevin's Out of Hours School Care (OHSC) Centre aims to ensure that parents/guardians, committee, volunteers, staff, students and any other persons involved in or attending our centre adhere to clear guidelines regarding appropriate interaction and communication with one another and with children at the centre.

Relevant legislation may include but is not limited to:

- *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 (ECSNR)*
- *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010*
- *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005*

- *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005*
- *Family Law Act 1995*
- *Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cwlth)*
- *Equal Opportunity Act 1995 (Vic.)*
- *Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act 1986 (Cwlth)*
- *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004*
- *Sex Discrimination Act 1984*
- *Workplace Relations Act 1996.*

4. Definitions

Access: The right of entry to a centre.

Committee: Elected members of the association to control and manage the business and affairs of the association.

Department of Education and Employee workplace relations (DEEWR): federal government responsible for the licensing and regulation of out of hours school care.

Equity: (In context of human rights) the behaviour of acting fair and just to others.

Involvement: Participation in any aspect of the centre, including the delivery of the program.

5. Sources and related centre policies

Sources

- DEECD, Preschool Quality Assessment Checklist and Workbook
- DEECD, *Children's Services Guide and Practice Notes*
- DEECD, *Victorian kindergarten policy, procedures and funding criteria update 2008*
- Victorian Legal Aid and DHS 1999, *Legal Aspects of Child Care: A Guide for Workers in Child Care Centres, Preschools and Parents*, 6th edition, available online at www.education.vic.gov.au/ocecd/docs/ecs_legalcare_1999.pdf
- National Childcare Accreditation Council, QIAS Quality Practices Principles

Centre policies

- Behaviour guidance
- Child protection
- Code of conduct
- Communication
- Complaints and grievances
- Delivery and collection of children
- Inclusion and equity
- Non-smoking
- Privacy
- Supervision

Procedures

The committee is responsible for:

- Ensuring parents/guardians of child/ren attending St Kevin's Out of Hours School Care (OHSC) Centre are able to access the centre at any time during the hours of operation (ECSN regulations)

- Ensuring a range of strategies is in place to enable and encourage parents'/guardians' participation and involvement
- Reviewing the programs provided in consultation with the staff and taking into account feedback from parents/guardians
- Ensuring parents/guardians, staff, volunteers, students and visitors are provided with a summary of this policy, including a copy of [Attachment 1](#): Participation guidelines, at the start of the year or on commencement at the centre and that they are aware of the values, expectations and procedures outlined in it
- Taking appropriate action to protect children and staff if a parent/guardian/volunteer assisting in the service's program appears to be adversely affected by alcohol, drugs or any other deleterious substances (ECSN regulations)
- Ensuring a copy of this policy is easily accessible at the centre
- Responding to any issues that arise in relation to this policy.

Staff are responsible for:

- Providing access for parents/guardians to the centre at any time their child is attending a program
- Respecting the individual needs, cultural practices and beliefs of families in all interactions, both verbal and non-verbal
- Working with colleagues, committee members, volunteers, students on placement and parents/guardians in providing an environment that encourages positive interactions and supports constructive feedback
- Providing guidance to parents/guardians and volunteers through positive role-modelling and, when appropriate, clear and respectful directions
- Providing adequate supervision by ensuring parents/guardians or other adults participating in the program, are not placed in a situation where they are left alone with a child (ECSNR regulations)
- Contacting the licensee representative and/or police if parents/guardians/volunteers assisting in the service's program appear to be adversely affected by alcohol, drugs or any other deleterious substances
- Accessing interpreters, translated materials and other resources as required or offering pictorial communication where possible to facilitate communication
- Offering a variety of opportunities for parents/guardians, family members and volunteers to participate directly in the children's program, including spending time with the children, assisting with activities and centre events, and volunteering special skills to share with the children.

Parents/guardians are responsible for:

- Reading information provided from the centre, which can include information handbooks, newsletters, policies, children's program, noticeboard displays and Participation guidelines ([Attachment 1](#))
- Participating in the children's program, committee positions, working bees, centre and fundraising events (if able)
- Ensuring that they are not adversely affected by alcohol, drugs or any other deleterious substance when assisting at St Kevin's Out of Hours School Care (OHSC) Centre
- Contributing feedback and ideas for the children's program
- Ensuring they are never left alone with a child or group of children other than their own
- Complying with the requirements of the Participation guidelines ([Attachment 1](#)) and other centre policies
- Maintaining privacy and confidentiality in relation to observations of children and families while participating in or attending the centre.

Evaluation

In order to assess whether the policy has achieved the values and purposes, St Kevin's Out of Hours School Care (OHSC) Centre will:

- Assess whether a satisfactory resolution of issues raised in relation to parents'/guardians' access and involvement has been achieved.
- As part of the annual family survey, incorporate relevant questions relating to this policy
- Take into account feedback from staff, parents/guardians and committee members regarding the policy
- Monitor compliance with the expectations and procedures set out in the policy
- Monitor complaints and incidents regarding access and involvement.

Attachments

[Attachment 1](#): Participation guidelines

Authorisation

This policy was adopted by the St Kevin's Out of Hours School Care (OHSC) Centre committee of management at a committee meeting on **25th June 2012**.

Review date: June 2014

Attachment 1 - Participation guidelines

Parents/guardians, family members, volunteers and students on placement are a valued part of our program. Below are some helpful guidelines to ensure your stay with us is enjoyable and fun.

Why do we need guidelines?

The Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 (ECSNR) outline specific requirements for the protection of children from hazards, which includes providing adequate supervision at all times. Adequate supervision is defined as constantly, actively and diligently and involves staff keeping each child within sight at all times. Parents/guardians and volunteers are not considered staff and are therefore unable to be left alone with a child or children at any time.

The guidelines provided below will provide you with information to ensure we meet our licensing requirements in relation to the care and education provided for all our children.

St Kevin's Out of Hours School Care (OHSC) Centre has a detailed Behaviour guidance policy. This policy is written mainly for staff interactions with children; therefore, we have provided some additional guidelines to assist you in participating in our program.

Parents/guardians, family members and volunteers are encouraged to refer to the St Kevin's Out of Hours School Care (OHSC) Centre Code of conduct policy and the requirements set out below for guidance when attending or assisting at St Kevin's Out of Hours School Care (OHSC) Centre.

In relation to children

- Be a positive role model at all times.
- Speak in an encouraging and positive manner.
- Listen actively to children and offer empathy, support and guidance where needed.
- Regard all children equally, and with respect and dignity.
- Respect a child's personal space—for example, if physical contact is required for an activity, ensure the child is comfortable with this. One way of doing this is to 'describe' your action to a child: 'You look like you might need some help to get up there. Would you like me to lift you?'
- Refer any action relating to a child's personal care needs to a staff member, such as toileting and first aid.

In relation to other adults (including staff)

- Use respectful and accepting language.
- Respect the rights of others as individuals.
- Give encouraging and constructive feedback.
- Accept staff decisions and follow their directions at all times. Speak with the staff member if you have a problem complying with any of their directions.
- Be aware of routines and guidelines for children's play within the centre, abide by them and seek advice from staff when unsure. (Please feel free to read through our program displayed on the noticeboard.)
- Be aware of emergency evacuation procedures (displayed on the noticeboard).
- Refer any matters or concerns relating to managing children's behaviour to staff immediately. Staff are responsible for behaviour guidance at all times.
- Refrain from public criticism of children and adults at the centre.
- Smoking is not permitted on centre property at any time (refer to the Non-smoking policy).

In general

- The centre and staff are responsible for the children that are enrolled and signed in—that is, those children attending the program.
- Under NO circumstances should a child, parents/guardians or member of staff be approached directly in a confrontational manner.
- Parents/guardians and other persons attending with children not enrolled in the program are responsible for the supervision of their children at all times. This is particularly important, for example, where equipment may be set up older children and could be hazardous for younger siblings visiting the centre.
- Maintain privacy and confidentiality in relation to observations of children and families while participating in the program.