CHILD SAFE BOUNDARIES

QUALITY AREA 4

PURPOSE

This policy provides a clear set of guidelines and procedures for Emma McLean Kindergarten and Daycare:

- Establishing and maintaining clear professional boundaries between teachers, educators, staff, volunteers, families, and children by prohibiting babysitting or making private care arrangements outside the service.

It supports compliance with the Victorian Child Safe Standards, particularly:

- Child-safe culture and governance
- Staff suitability and conduct
- Risk management and prevention of harm
- Clear policies and procedures

POLICY STATEMENT

VALUES

Emma McLean Kindergarten and Daycare:

- maintaining a child-safe environment where all interactions with children and families are transparent, accountable, and professionally appropriate.
- ensuring the safety and wellbeing of children is of paramount consideration by proactively managing risks, conflicts of interest, and professional boundaries
- To maintain professional boundaries and safeguard all parties, staff, teachers, educators, students, contractors, and volunteers must not undertake babysitting, private childcare, or care arrangements for enrolled children outside approved service operations

SCOPE

This policy applies to the approved provider, persons with management or control, nominated supervisor, persons in day-to-day charge, early childhood teachers, educators, staff, students, volunteers, parents/guardians, children, and others attending the programs and activities of Emma McLean Kindergarten and Daycare, including during offsite excursions and activities.

This policy aligns with the Child Safe Standards requirement to:

- Minimise opportunities for harm in physical and social environments
- Ensure staff behaviour reflects child safety values
- Maintain clear professional boundaries.
- Babysitting or private care arrangements
- Create dual relationships (professional and personal)
- Reduce transparency and organisational oversight
- Increase risk of allegations, misconduct, or actual harm
- Undermine safe complaint and reporting processes
- May compromise duty of care and legal protections

The Child Safe Standards require organisations to actively identify, prevent and mitigate risks to children, including risks arising from informal or unsupervised arrangements.

RESPONSIBILITIES	Approved provider and persons with management or control	Nominated supervisor and persons in day-to-day charge	Early childhood teacher, educators and all other staff	Parents/guardians	Contractors, volunteers and students
R indicates legislation requirement, and should not be deleted					
Policy to be provided to families at enrolment		✓			
A statement regarding babysitting to be included in the Parent Handbook, provided to families upon enrolment		✓			
A statement regarding babysitting to be included in the Staff Handbook, provided to staff upon induction		✓			
Staff to participate in regular professional training on professional boundaries grooming and dual relationships		✓	✓		
A statement regarding babysitting to be included in the Code of Conduct, signed by staff upon induction and at regular intervals during employment		✓			
Employees, contractors, volunteers and students to model professional boundaries at all times		✓	✓		✓
Approved Provider / Nominated Supervisors to reinforce expectations of professionalism during meetings		✓			
Management to address and document boundary concerns promptly and confidentially		✓			
Employees to only use approved communication channels to communicate with families (Storypark, kindergarten email addresses, kindergarten telephone) Private messaging via social media channels is prohibited		✓	✓		
Employees to report boundary concerns and babysitting requests to management, escalating to Nominated Supervisors / Approved Providers where deemed appropriate			✓		
All employees to decline babysitting and care requests		✓	✓		
All employees to maintain active and engaged supervision at all times		✓	✓		
All employees to actively prevent unauthorised 1:1 situations		✓	✓		
Employees to review supervision practices regularly		✓	✓		

PROCEDURES

PROHIBITED CONDUCT

Staff must not:

- Babysit or provide private care for children currently enrolled at Emma McLean Kindergarten and Daycare
- Arrange ongoing or one-off care outside the service
- Transport children outside service operations without express written authorization from parents/guardians of children
- Engage in informal care arrangements initiated by families.

PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARIES

Staff must:

- Maintain clear, professional relationships with families
- Avoid dual relationships that could impair judgement or safety
- Ensure all interactions with children occur within approved service settings

FAMILY REQUESTS

If a family requests babysitting:

- Staff must politely decline and refer to this policy
- Staff should inform the Nominated Supervisor / Centre Manager.

EXCEPTIONS

Exceptions to this policy are not permitted, unless:

- Explicitly approved by the Approved Provider under exceptional circumstances,
- Risk assessed and documented,
- Consistent with all Child Safe Standards and regulatory obligations.

(*Note: Exceptions should be extremely rare and generally discouraged.*)

BREACH OF POLICY

Failure to comply may result in:

- Disciplinary action (including termination),
- Mandatory reporting (if applicable),
- Notification to regulatory authorities.

LEGISLATION

LEGISLATION AND STANDARDS

Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic),
- Victorian Child Safe Standards (2026) https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/child-safe-standards/
- National Quality Framework (NQF) https://www.acecqa.gov.au/national-quality-framework
- National Quality Standards https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2018-07/RevisedNQSHandoutA4.pdf
- NQS Quality Area 2 - Children's Health & Safety
- Quality Area 4 - Staffing Arrangements
- Quality Area 7 - Governance & Leadership,
- Education and Care Services National Regulations, 2011
- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010

The most current amendments to listed legislation can be found at:

- Victorian Legislation – Victorian Law Today: www.legislation.vic.gov.au
- Commonwealth Legislation – Federal Register of Legislation: www.legislation.gov.au

DEFINITIONS

Babysitting / Private Care includes:

- Caring for a child enrolled at the service outside operating hours,
- Providing care in the child's home or another location,
- Being paid or unpaid for private childcare,
- Arrangements made directly with families, outside the service.

SOURCES AND RELATED POLICIES

RELATED POLICIES

- Child Safe Environment and Wellbeing Policy
- Code of Conduct
- Compliments and Complaints Policy
- Supervision of Children Policy
- Duty of Care

EVALUATION

In order to assess whether the values and purposes of the policy have been achieved, the approved provider will:

- notifying all stakeholders affected by this policy at least 14 days before making any significant changes to this policy or its procedures, unless a lesser period is necessary due to risk *(Regulation 172 (2))*.

ATTACHMENTS

- N/A

AUTHORISATION

This policy was adopted by the approved provider of Emma McLean Kindergarten and Daycare in MAY 2026.

REVIEW DATE: MAY 2027