

STAFF HEALTH AND WELLBEING

QUALITY AREA 7 | VERSION 1.0



PURPOSE

This policy provides guidelines for Gembrook Preschool to support and enhance the health and wellbeing of all staff by fostering a culture of continuous learning, implementing effective policies, creating a safe and healthy physical and social environment, and building strong community links and partnerships.



POLICY STATEMENT

VALUES

Gembrook Preschool is committed to:

- promoting a safe, supportive, and healthy work environment for all staff members
- encouraging a workplace culture that prioritises staff health and wellbeing
- implementing strategies that address both physical and mental health needs
- fostering a positive work-life balance, ensuring staff have access to resources and support
- supporting ongoing professional development and resilience building initiatives for all staff members

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 Gembrook Preschool, including during offsite excursions and activities.

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					
Ensuring that the service provides a safe, inclusive (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) and empowering environment which celebrates diversity through positive, respectful and appropriate behaviour when working with children and families (<i>refer to Code of Conduct Policy and Interactions with Children Policy</i>)	R	√	√	√	√



Ensuring a safe, inclusive, welcoming environment is created for all community members, promoting a culture of respect, fairness and equity	R	√	√	√	√
Ensuring that the nominated supervisor, early childhood teachers, educators, staff, families and children are active participants in the development and implementation of the <i>Staff Health and Wellbeing Policy</i>	R	√	√	√	√
Monitoring staff health and wellbeing (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) regularly and providing access to appropriate support services and professional development (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) opportunities	√	√	√		
Educators and staff model respectful interactions with each other, children, and families, promoting a positive approach to mental health and wellbeing (<i>refer to Interaction with Children policy</i>)	√	√	√	√	√
Providing staff with ongoing training and professional development to support their health and wellbeing and promote a positive work-life balance	R	√	√		√
Promoting a workplace culture (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) that encourages positive communication, respect, and staff wellbeing initiatives	R	√	√		√
Educators and staff are supported to learn about and care for their own mental health and wellbeing (<i>refer to Occupational Health and Safety policy and Attachment 2</i>)	R	√	√		√
Ensuring mental health and wellbeing information and guidelines are included in site induction/orientation	√	√			
Developing and promoting practices that enhance physical and mental health and wellbeing in the workplace (<i>Refer to Attachment 1 & 2</i>)	√	√	√		
Ensuring leadership practices and on-the-ground support to enable a work environment that minimises stress and promotes mental health and wellbeing for educators and staff	√	√			
Implementing strategies to promote positive conflict resolution and to prevent and respond to bullying, discrimination and harassment (<i>refer to Compliments and Complaints policy and Staff Grievances and Dispute Resolution policy</i>)	R	√	√		
Ensuring that cultural values and expectations about health and wellbeing are respected	√	√	√	√	√
Ensuring that the nominated supervisor, early childhood teachers, educators, staff and families are provided with information about policy requirements, with opportunities to provide feedback and input	√	√	√	√	√

Staff Health and Wellbeing

Gembrook Preschool Association Inc
 Registration No: A0010029N
 ABN: 36 754 804 648

Sourced from Early Learning Association Australia



BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATION

BACKGROUND

The health and wellbeing of staff in early childhood services are essential for fostering a positive learning environment for children. Healthy and engaged staff lead to better outcomes for children and families. A supportive workplace culture promotes collaboration and respect, enhancing staff morale and job satisfaction. Ongoing professional development is crucial for equipping educators with the necessary skills to support their own health and that of the children in their care.

In Victoria, the Education and Care Services National Law (2010) provides the framework for regulating education and care services, emphasizing the importance of a safe and healthy environment for both children and staff. The Education and Care Services National Regulations (2011) outline specific health and safety requirements for children and the obligations of service providers regarding staff training and support.

The Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act (2006) ensures the right to a safe workplace, while the Occupational Health and Safety Act (2004) mandates that employers provide a safe and healthy working environment. Additionally, the Victorian Equal Opportunity Act (2010) aims to eliminate discrimination and promote equality in the workplace, fostering inclusivity.

The National Quality Standard (NQS), part of the National Quality Framework, includes standards focused on the wellbeing of staff and emphasizes support for staff to achieve quality outcomes for children. Organisations like Early Childhood Australia (ECA) and the Victorian Department of Education and Training provide resources to promote health and wellbeing in early childhood settings.

LEGISLATION AND STANDARDS

Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

- National Quality Standard (NQS)
- The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia
- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
- Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework
- Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act (2006)
- Occupational Health and Safety Act (2004)
- Victorian Equal Opportunity 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



The terms defined in this section relate specifically to this policy. For regularly used terms e.g. Approved provider, Nominated supervisor, Notifiable complaints, Serious incidents, Duty of care, etc. refer to the Definitions file.

Health and wellbeing: Refers to both physical and mental health, encompassing overall wellness, including the ability to manage stress, maintain a balanced lifestyle, and foster positive relationships.

Inclusive: The practice of ensuring that all individuals, regardless of their background, abilities, or identities, are valued and have equal opportunities to participate in the service.

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Professional Development: Ongoing training and education provided to staff to enhance their skills, knowledge, and effectiveness in their roles.

Workplace Culture: The shared values, beliefs, and practices that shape the environment in which staff work. A positive workplace culture promotes collaboration, respect, and wellbeing.

SOURCES AND RELATED POLICIES



SOURCES

- Be You, Beyond Blue: www.beyondblue.org.au
- Child First and family services: www.services.dffh.vic.gov.au/families-and-children
- Commission for Children and Young People, Child Safe standards: www.ccyp.vic.gov.au
- Department of Education and Training www.education.vic.gov.au
- Early Childhood Australia, Code of Ethics: www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/our-publications/eca-code-ethics
- Early Childhood Australia: www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au
- Federal Register of Legislation: www.legislation.vic.gov.au
- Mental Health Victoria: www.mhv.org.au
- Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004: www.legislation.vic.gov.au
- Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission: www.humanrights.vic.gov.au
- Victorian Law Today: www.legislation.vic.gov.au
- WorkSafe Victoria: www.worksafe.vic.gov.au
- Work Well Victoria: www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/mental-health
- Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority (ACEQUA): www.acequa.gov.au

RELATED POLICIES

- Child Safe Environment and Wellbeing
- Code of Conduct
- Interaction with Children
- Occupational Health and Safety
- Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness
- Privacy and Confidentiality
- Compliments and Complaints
- Staff Grievances and Dispute Resolution
- Staffing
- Participation of Volunteers and Students

EVALUATION



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

- regularly seek feedback on staff wellbeing, workplace culture, and support services
- monitor the implementation, compliance, complaints and incidents in relation to this policy
- keep the policy up to date with current legislation, research, policy and best practice
- revise the policy and procedures as part of the service’s policy review cycle, or as required
- 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

- Attachment 1: Wellbeing Day Guidelines
 - Attachment 2: Staff Wellbeing Checklist
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AUTHORISATION

This policy was adopted by the approved provider of Gembrook Preschool on 22nd February 2016.

REVIEW DATE: 17th November 2024

PASSED AT COMMITTEE MEETING: 12th February 2025

REVIEW FREQUENCY: 1 Year

NEXT REVIEW DUE: Annually as per policy review calendar

ATTACHMENT 1. WELLBEING DAY GUIDELINES

SUPPORTING EMPLOYEE WELLBEING THROUGH FLEXIBLE LEAVE OPTIONS

Gembrook Preschool is dedicated to supporting the physical and mental health of its employees by providing each permanent staff member, employed on an ongoing contract, with one Wellbeing Day per year. This initiative aims to promote work-life balance and self-care by allowing employees to take a paid day off during the term without needing to meet standard paid leave entitlements outlined in the award. No specific reason is required to take a Wellbeing Day.

The following conditions apply:

Eligibility: All staff on an ongoing contract are eligible for one Wellbeing Day per calendar year.

Entitlement: The Wellbeing Day consists of one working day, regardless of the number of hours the employee is rostered for on that chosen day. This day will be provided as a paid day and will not be deducted from the employee's personal (sick) leave entitlements.

Accrual: Wellbeing Days do not accumulate. If an employee does not use the Wellbeing Day by the end of the calendar year, it will be forfeited.

Notice Requirements: Employees are encouraged to inform the Executive Committee of Management or their Nominated Supervisor (via the agreed communication channel) prior to the start of their shift or as soon as possible if they intend to take a Wellbeing Day. Requests can be submitted up to six months in advance, and providing early notice is greatly appreciated.

Approval: Only one employee may take a Wellbeing Day at any given time. If another staff member has already booked a Wellbeing Day or is on approved leave, the request may be denied. Wellbeing Days will not be approved during the first three weeks or the final week of the kindergarten year. Only one Wellbeing Day may be taken per calendar year.

Discretionary Approval: All Wellbeing Day requests will be approved at the discretion of the Executive Committee of Management. If a request is denied, management must provide a clear explanation.

Review: The Wellbeing Day policy and its provisions will be reviewed annually by the Committee of Management to ensure ongoing relevance and effectiveness. This policy aims to prioritise staff wellbeing while maintaining a balanced and structured approach to managing leave during the kindergarten term.

ATTACHMENT 2. STAFF WELLBEING SELF-CHECKLIST

SUPPORTING YOUR OWN HEALTH AND WELLBEING AT WORK

This checklist is designed to help you monitor your personal health and wellbeing at work. Use it as a guide to reflect on your physical, mental and emotional health, as well as to identify any areas where you might need extra support or resources.

Maintaining a Positive Work Environment

- Comfortable Workplace:** Does your workplace feel safe, comfortable and inclusive?
- Workload Balance:** Am I encouraged to maintain a health work-life balance? Is there flexibility when needed?
- Wellbeing Days:** I am aware of the availability and conditions for taking my Wellbeing Day.

Health and Safety

- Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Compliance:** Are health and safety regulations adhered to and reviewed regularly?
- Mental Health Support:** Are resources available to support my mental health? I have been provided information for the Employee Assistance Program (EAP)?
- Bullying and Harassment Prevention:** I am protected from bullying, harassment and discrimination? I am familiar with policies and procedures in place to prevent bullying and harassment.

Professional Development and Growth

- Training Opportunities:** I am aware of the professional development opportunities available to me.
- Performance Development Plans:** Do I have a performance development plan that outlines my goals and growth areas?

Communication and Feedback

- Open Communication Channels:** Are there open and respectful channels for me to communicate my needs and concerns?
- Regular Check-Ins:** Do my managers regularly check in with me to discuss my wellbeing and workload?
- Constructive Feedback:** I am receiving regular feedback.