**CONTENTS**

1. **Policy Statement**
2. **Strategies for Implementation**
3. **Responsibilities**
4. **Working to the code of professional conduct**
   1. **Ethical and safe workplace**
   2. **Personal and professional behaviour**
   3. **Privacy and confidentiality**
   4. **Dress code and personal presentation**
   5. **Punctuality and reliability**
   6. **Telephone and mobile phones**
   7. **Language and communication**
   8. **Conflict of interest**
   9. **Gifts and benefits**
   10. **IP and copyright**
   11. **Records management**
   12. **Use of Styles Street resources**
   13. **Complaints and Grievances**
   14. **Misconduct**
5. **Monitoring, Evaluation and Review**
6. **Legislation and Considerations**
7. **Related Guidelines, Standards, Frameworks and Other Sources**
8. **Policy Statement**

The Styles Street Code of Professional Conduct incorporates our core values, our policies and procedures, professional standards of behaviour and sound human resources practice.

Our Code of Professional Conduct encompasses the Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics (2016), the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), the National Quality Standards for Early Childhood and the National Employment Standards. Implicit in our Code is the recognition of human rights, the principles of natural justice and a fair and just environment for children, families and our staff.

Our Code of Professional Conduct confirms our commitment to our values, to upholding the highest standards of ethical conduct and affirms our belief in a responsible, fair and ethical work culture. The Code applies to all staff and clarifies the behaviour, practice and standards that we expect from all of our employees.

Our service uses this code as a basis for evaluating professional conduct, and as a reference tool for the thought processes that inform pedagogy, including actions and reactions towards professional conduct, relationships, views, influence and position within communities  
and society. Ethical conduct guides the behaviour and decisions within the service and is underpinned by respect for, and the valuing of children, families, educators and staff, and the extended service community.

1. **Strategies for policy implementation**

You are required to comply with and work to our Code of Professional Conduct. Your agreement to comply with the Code is integral to your appointment and ongoing employment with Styles Street.

* It is our expectation that you will read and familiarise yourself with our Code of Professional Conduct and our policies and procedures
* A copy of the Code will be provided to you with your letter of appointment
* The Code is included in the staff handbook
* Your employee induction will include an overview and discussion of the Code
* We will reference the Code in our decision making process and when reviewing professional standards and behaviours
* The Code is readily available to you in hard and soft copy and available on each computer desktop

The professional conduct of our team, in relation to one another, the children and their families, the community, and the Education and Care Services sector is based on the following set of expected standards of professional conduct:

* Administer an approved education and care service in compliance with the National Quality Framework;
* Operate within a family and child centred context;
* Engage in reflective, ethical, and sustainable decision making.

**Early Childhood Australia’s (ECA) Code of Ethics (2016)**

Early Childhood Australia’s Code of Ethics (2016) is integral to our service as it guides the ethical principles and professional standards of conduct towards children, families, colleagues, communities, students, employers, educators, and the conduct of research. Our service accepts professional ownership of ECA’s Code of Ethics (2016) and formally acknowledges that the ECA’s Code of Ethics (2016) provides us with:

* + A basis for critical reflection about our ethical responsibilities;
  + A guide for professional behaviour;
  + Principles to inform individual and collective decision-making.

These standards of professional conduct are supported by, and should be read in conjunction with:

* + National Quality Framework document suite as made available through the Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA);
  + Statement of Philosophy;
  + Operational policies and procedures, which provide a framework for accountable and

responsible professional practice.

1. **Responsibilities**

The Centre Director and the Committee of Management will assist you in your understanding of the Code.

You are to make yourself fully aware of the requirements of the Code and to communicate the Code to anyone reporting to you and others

In reading and implementing the Code you are expected to comply with both the letter and spirit of its requirement

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Role** | **Authority/Responsible For** |
| Approved Provider | * Ensure the service operates in line with the Education and Care Services National Law & National Regulations 2011 at all times * Ensure all Educators and staff are made aware of their obligations through personal discussions, staff meeting activities and opportunities to critically reflect upon ethical practice. |
| Nominated Supervisor | * Ensure the service operates in line with the Education and Care Services National Law & National Regulations 2011 at all times. * Ensure all educators and staff are made aware of their obligations through personal discussions, staff meeting activities and opportunities to critically reflect upon ethical practice. * Ensure decision making processes are clear and transparent. * Ensure there is a copy of the ECA Code of Ethics displayed in a prominent place within the service for eductors/staff and families to access. * Ensure that there are times when all educators can participate in staff meetings to discuss and reflect on the practices within the service in relation to continuing improvement. |
| Early Childhood Educators  Responsible Persons | * Educators and staff will be familiar with the legislation and statutory documents that apply to their role with children, families, and other staff in the centre, * Educators and staff will be familiar with the ECA Code of Ethics and service philosophy. * Maintain their knowledge of the broad legislation and conventions that apply to their role with children, families and their team. * Demonstrate an ongoing engagement with the principles outlined in The Early Years Learning Frameworks and the ethical requirements in the National Quality Standards. * Use staff meetings to critically reflect on practices in relation to continuing improvement. * Engage respectfully and collaboratively within the team. * Ensure a professional relationship is maintained with all educators while demonstrating integrity, honesty and mutual respect. * Recognise and value diversity and knowledge amongst team members. |
| Families | * Respect confidentiality at all times. * Give feedback in relation to educators’ professional conduct to the Approved Provider as necessary * Act in a professional manner whenever they are involved in the programs provided by the service * Communicate to Responsible Person or staff any individual requests regarding staff/educators’ code of conduct. * Speak respectfully to staff at all times * Follow the complaints handling policy for communicating complaints and grievances. |

1. **Working to the Code of Professional Conduct**

If you, in good faith, raise a complaint or alleged breach of the Code, whilst following reporting procedures, you will not be disadvantaged or prejudiced. All reports will be dealt with in a timely and confidential manner

Any employee in breach of the Code of Conduct may be subject to disciplinary action, which may include termination

Should you have doubts about any aspect of the Code of Conduct, you must seek clarification from the Centre Director

## 4.1 Ethical and safe environment

An ethical environment relies upon individuals having responsibility for their own professional behaviour. Styles Street has a responsibility to provide a safe, encouraging and supportive work environment that recognises and values staff diversity, abilities and contributions. All members of staff are entitled to be treated with respect and work in an environment that is free from discrimination, harassment or bullying. Equally, all staff have a responsibility to act with integrity, honesty, transparency and impartiality in your dealings with colleagues, families and members of the wider community.

## 4.2 Personal and professional behaviour

Staff will act professionally and with integrity at all times. Staff are required to perform their duties to the best of your ability, with care, competence and efficiency and demonstrate the following behaviours:

* Be considerate and respectful of others and the environment
* Exercise fairness, equality, courtesy, consideration and sensitivity in dealing with children, families, colleagues and the community
* Strive to keep up to date with sector information and advances
* Comply with any relevant legislative and industrial requirements
* Abide by organisational policies, procedures and lawful directions that relate to their employment
* Maintain the confidentiality of the organisation’s data with regard to information pertaining to children, families, colleagues, business plans and practices
* Maintain adequate records
* Be responsible in the proper use of the organisation’s information, equipment and resources
* Avoid any activity that could potentially compromise the performance of your duties
* Avoid apparent conflicts of interest, promptly disclosing to the Centre Director, any interest that may constitute a conflict of interest
* Comply with and adhere to this code

## 4.3 Privacy and Confidentiality

In the course of your work you will be exposed to all kinds of information. At all times you are to comply with the privacy laws, protecting the privacy of others and maintaining appropriate confidentiality.

You must not discuss nor disclose private or confidential information with other employees or any other person, unless such discussion and disclosure is required to perform their duties or to comply with a legal requirement.

All information relating to the operations of Styles Street, which includes at a minimum: child and family information; employee-related information; and organisational records must be kept in an appropriate, secured, storage area.

You are required to adhere to Styles Street’s approved photographic images policy with regard to the taking and displaying of photographic images unless prior consent is given by the parent or guardian.

If you are unsure as to the status of information or the need to use/disclose/discuss any information, you are required to seek advice and direction from the Centre Director.

Styles Street requires all employees to sign a confidentiality agreement. The confidentiality agreement is provided to you when you accept a position with the organisation. The agreement requires you to observe the confidential status of all information in relation to the children, families, employees and operations of the organisation.

## 4.4 Dress code and personal presentation

Establishing and maintaining a safe work environment includes setting standards for a workplace dress code.

Working with children requires you to be mindful of the nature of your work and to dress accordingly, conducive to active participation in the program with children, parents, colleagues and other professionals. Given the physical nature of the work clothing needs to be comfortable and allow for freedom of movement, and considers safety when working with children. In addition, as you are a role model for children, this includes maintaining a high standard of personal hygiene and demonstrating sun smart behaviours.

We have developed a workplace dress code which must be adhered to at all times.

* You are to wear enclosed protective footwear at all times – not high heels, flip flops or sandals – all footwear should be well maintained and provide support
* ShirtsT-shirts, polo top with collar and at least ¾ sleeve – not bare midriffs, low cut tops
* Smart pants, ¾ length pants, below knee length wide skirt – not track suit pants
* Clothing is to be freshly laundered and in good condition
* Minimal jewellery – no large drop or loop ear rings
* Finger nails should be to a safe length
* Long hair to be tied back when working with children and/or food
* An appropriate sun hat should be worn at all times outdoors.
* NOTE: Active wear is not considered appropriate work attire.

All clothing is to reflect the requirements of our Sun Smart Policy, be well maintained and freshly laundered.

Styles Street casual and Agency casual staff must comply with the Centre dress code and sun smart policy

Given these guidelines our expectation is that you will make informed decisions and present in appropriate work attire. If you present for work inappropriately dressed you will be sent home to change. Work time lost will not be paid.

## 4.5 Punctuality and reliability – readiness for work, late arrival

Readiness for work

You are required to arrive at the Centre with time to store your belongings and address any personal needs (bathroom/breakfast) prior to the commencement of your shift. You are required to be in the classroom for your shift start time and leave the classroom no earlier than your shift finish time.

You are required to return on time from any breaks or planning time. Tardiness in time-keeping impacts on others and the smooth flow of the program for children.

Late arrival

Any late arrival must be personally reported to the Centre Director as soon as practicable and prior to the shift starting time. An estimated time of arrival should be provided to allow for any interim re-organising of staff and adjustments to the daily program.

* Employees arriving 5 to 10 minutes late will be required to work back at the end of the day
* Employees arriving more than 10 minutes late will be required to make up time (time-owing) as agreed with the Centre Director. The Centre Director will track time owing and will in agreement with the employee deduct time owing from any time-in-lieu-balance.

Absence

Absence due to illness, injury or any other reason must be personally reported to the Centre Director/ Responsible Person as soon as practicable and a minimum of two hours before your shift start time if you are unable to work, to allow for the organising of replacement staff. If you are unable to make contact personally, a family member or other individual must telephone on your behalf.

Text messages are not an acceptable way to notify of an absence, to avoid cases where text messages are not seen or received. Absences should be reported via phone where you/your family member and the Centre Director/Responsible Person have spoken. You should not assume your leave is accepted until you have spoken with the Centre Director/Responsible Person.

If you are a Styles Street casual employee, you are required to contact the Centre Director and provide details of your shift to ensure program staff replacement occurs in a timely manner and educator to child ratios are maintained.

* If you are unable to work due to illness or injury, you are required to notify the Centre Director/Responsible Person a minimum of 2 hours before your shift staff time.
* If you are rostered for a shift and unsure of your capacity (injury, illness or other reason) to attend work the following day, you are required to contact the Centre Director by 3.30pm on the day prior to the rostered shift
* If you are rostered on the 7.30am shift and become aware overnight of your incapacity to attend the early shift, you are required to contact the Centre Director by 6am on the morning of the rostered shift, you may, however, still need to attend work until a replacement educator is found.
* In the absence of the Centre Director, you are required to contact the designated Responsible Person.

Agency casual staff

To ensure Styles Street meets the required educator to child ratios at all times, the Centre Director/ Responsible Person after exhausting Styles Street staff resources will access the services of a reputable early childhood staffing agency.

* To book an agency staff member call the shift information through to the agency.
* The preferred agency contact details are in the Centre Director’s office. The agency will confirm the booked staff member’s name and estimated time of arrival. These details are recorded in the daily diary.

## 4.6 Telephone and mobiles

The Centre telephone should be used for business purposes only. When making or receiving calls, you are required to follow the Centre’s telephone protocol:

* stating the Centres name: Good Morning / Styles Street
* speaking in a clear and professional manner
* providing assistance and information as requested
* ensuring messages are taken correctly and relayed.

You are to ask the Centre Director prior to accessing the centre telephone if you need to make a personal call during work hours.

It is not appropriate to make personal mobile calls or send text messages while working with children, attending a work meeting or during planning time. Personal mobile phones are to be switched off and stored in the employee’s locker. Personal mobile phones may be used during work breaks.

## 4.7 Language and communication

In all communications you are representatives of Styles Street and are required to uphold the values and policies of the organisation at all times. You need to be respectful, courteous and responsive in your dealings with others, using appropriate language and modelling professional behaviour. Language and/or behaviour that is abusive, threatening or derogatory in nature is unacceptable in the workplace or at any work related functions or associated activities.

## 4.8 Conflict of interest

Conflict of interest arises whenever the personal, professional or business interests of an employee are potentially at odds with the best interests of Styles Street. You should aim to avoid being put in a situation where there may be a conflict between the interests of Styles Street and your own personal or professional interests, or those of relatives or friends. Where such a conflict occurs (or is perceived to occur), the interests of Styles Street will be balanced against your interests, and unless exceptional circumstances exist, resolved in favour of Styles Street.

You must disclose in writing to the Committee of Management/Centre Director the existence of any potential or actual conflicts of interest that may impact on your Styles Street-related duties.

It is impossible to define all potential areas of conflict of interest. If you are in doubt if a conflict exists, you should raise the matter with the Centre Director.

Circumstances that may lead to a conflict of interest include but are not limited to:

* Undertaking secondary employment that impacts on your capacity to perform your duties to the required standard
* Undertaking babysitting or other secondary employment with families who attend Styles Street
* Accepting gifts or benefits from a supplier of goods or services to Styles Street
* Accepting inappropriate or excessive personal gifts from families attending Styles Street
* Working with a group of children which includes a child who is a close relative (for example child, step-child, foster-child, niece, nephew or grandchild)
* Being involved in a staff selection and recruitment process where one of the applicants is a close-relative or friend.

If you declare such an interest, Styles Street will review the potential areas of conflict with you and mutually agree on practical arrangements to resolve the situation.

Failure to declare a potential, actual or perceived conflict of interest or to take remedial action as agreed with Styles Street, in a timely manner, may result in performance improvement proceedings including dismissal.

## 4.9 Gifts and benefits

The Committee of Management recognises that gifts are commonplace in everyday life. Gifts can range in value from nominal to significant and are usually offered to say thank you or to celebrate important events.

In the interest of fairness and transparency the following applies:

* You are required to advise the Centre Director of all gifts offered and accepted
* You are not to accept money as a personal gift or otherwise
* You must not give individual gifts to children/families

## 4.10 IP and copyright

All Styles Street related documents, materials and tools (including its policies, procedures and learning and educational programs) are the property of Styles Street and cannot be copied or re-produced without obtaining written approval from the Management Committee.

If you develop material that relates to your employment with Styles Street, the copyright in that material will belong to Styles Street. This may apply even if the material is developed in your own time at home.

When creating material you need to ensure the intellectual property rights of others are not infringed and any third party copyright is referenced.

## 4.11 Records management

Styles Street observes the National Privacy Principles. Refer to the Privacy Policy:

* All data is backed-up off site by an independent secure server provider
* Financial and administration records are maintained on a locked server, and only accessible to the Centre Director and the administration team and Executive Board Members
* Employee records are secured digitally in the admin shared drive and the Centre’s HR software
* The Privacy Policy details storage, archiving and destruction information.

You have a responsibility to:

* Create and maintain full, accurate and honest records of your activities and decisions
* To capture the records in the Centre’s records system
* Ensure children’s records are secured at all times.

In addition, you must:

* Maintain confidentiality of all official information and documents relating to the children, families, colleagues and the Centre – maintained in a safe locked place
* Not destroy or remove records without appropriate authority.

## 4.12 Use of Styles Street resources

Styles Street provides a number of property and resource items to enable employees to undertake their role within the organisation. This may include but is not limited to: laptops, iPads, iPods, camera, USB sticks, stationary and program equipment.

These resources and property items are provided to enable Styles Street to effectively manage its business activities and provide the children’s program. Whilst there may be some approved usage of these items by employees on a ‘personal-use’ basis, such usage is at the discretion of Styles Street. Employees are required to acquire the permission of the Centre Director/Committee of Management before using any of the organisation’s property or resources (of any sort what so ever) for personal/non-business use.

Styles Street logo, letterhead and other stationary must be used carefully, lawfully, honestly and not misappropriated. This includes the provision of references of any description using the employee’s role at Styles Street to give the reference credibility.

In addition, Styles Street property is not to be removed from the Centre premises without the permission of the Centre Director/Committee of Management.

## 4.13 Complaints and Grievances

Styles Street recognises the importance of promoting and supporting positive work relationships across the Styles Street Team, including those who have management and leadership responsibilities for educators and staff.

Styles Street acknowledges that you have the right to raise concerns or lodge a complaint when you experience a sense of injustice, which may include:

* Feeling that you have been unfairly dealt with by the organisation or another staff member
* Believing there is an unfair balance of workload
* Feeling a team member’s actions or behaviours are inappropriate and do not reflect the values and philosophy of the organisation.

Styles Street is committed to the principles of procedural fairness, equity, timeliness and confidentiality in reviewing, evaluating and the conciliation of employee complaints and grievances. Our aim is to resolve problems and grievances promptly and as close to the source as possible. When necessary, graduated steps will be taken for further discussion and resolution at higher levels of authority.

The Centre Director will do his or her utmost to action grievances objectively, discreetly and promptly.

**Procedure relating to concerns/complaints/ grievances of individual team members:**

1. The employee should try to resolve the grievance as close to the source as possible. This can be informal and verbal. At this stage, every possible effort should be made to settle a grievance before the formal grievance process starts. If the matter cannot be resolved, the process continues and becomes formal.
2. To start the formal grievance the complainant is required to notify the Centre Director verbally and then in writing; fully describing the grievance, with dates and locations wherever possible and outlining steps taken in attempt to settle the grievance, and what outcome the employee is wanting to achieve.
3. The person(s) against whom the complaint/ grievance is made should be given the full details of the allegation(s) against them. They should have the opportunity and a reasonable time to respond before the process continues.
4. If the matter is not resolved at Centre Director level, the employee and the Centre Director may escalate the matter to the Staffing Sub-Committee.
5. If the matter is not resolved at the Staffing Sub Committee level, the matter may be escalated to the President and Executive Committee for consideration and final decision.
6. At the conclusion of all discussions the Centre Director must provide a response to the employee’s grievance advising the employee of the outcome, including any reasons for not implementing the employee’s proposed outcomes.
7. While a procedure is being followed, normal work must continue
8. The employee may choose to be represented by an industrial organisation of employees

**Procedure relating to disputes between the employer and employees:**

1. Initially the matter/dispute should be dealt with as close to the source as possible with graduated steps for further discussion and resolution at a higher level of authority, which may include the Staffing Sub-Committee and or President and Executive Committee.
2. Reasonable time limits must be allowed for discussion and investigations
3. While a procedure is being followed, normal work must continue
4. The employer may choose to be represented by an industrial organisation of employers and the employee may choose to be represented by an industrial organisation of employees for the purposes of the procedure

Disputes in relation to the interpretation, application or operation of a provision of the industrial award/agreement in place will be handled in accordance with the dispute resolution procedure of that award/agreement.

## 4.14 Misconduct

Ethical conduct guides the actions, behaviours and decisions made within the care and education setting. It is founded in respect for, and the valuing of children, families, educators and staff, and the extended community.

As a representative of Styles Street, you are required to act in accordance with the organisation’s values and expected to conduct yourself in a professional and courteous manner observing our Code of Professional Conduct in your actions, behaviours and decisions. This includes out of work conduct in any circumstances connected to work e.g. a work-related function, attending a community event.

Misconduct constitutes non-compliance with our Code of Professional Conduct and may result in performance management (disciplinary action) leading to dismissal.

The actual performance management procedure to be adopted will be a matter for the discretion of the Management Committee and in consideration of the circumstances as a whole. Styles Street will endeavour to investigate all allegations of unacceptable conduct fairly and promptly. Nothing in our policy prevents Styles Street from issuing a final warning at any stage of the process. Similarly, if circumstances warrant, nothing in our policy prevents Styles Street from dismissing an employee at any stage of the process.

Employees are directed to raise concerns with the Centre Director about what might be considered unacceptable actions or behaviours of team members.

1. **MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW**

This policy will be monitored to ensure compliance with legislative requirements and unless deemed necessary through the identification of practice gaps, the service will review this Policy every two years.

Families and staff are essential stakeholders in the policy review process and will be given opportunity and encouragement to be actively involved.

In accordance with R. 172 of the Education and Care Services National Regulations, the service will ensure that families of children enrolled at the service are notified at least 14 days before making any change to a policy or procedure that may have significant impact on the provision of education and care to any child enrolled at the service; a family’s ability to utilise the service; the fees charged or the way in which fees are collected.

1. **LEGISLATION AND CONSIDERATIONS**

* Education and Care National Law Act 2010
* Education and Care National Regulations:168 (2)(i)(i)

1. **RELATED GUIDELINES, STANDARDS, FRAMEWORKS AND OTHER SOURCES**

* Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) – www.acecqa.gov.au
* **National Quality Standard, Quality Area 4: Staffing Arrangements – Standard 4.2, 4.2.2**
* Early Childhood Australia – [www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au](http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/)
* Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics 2016
* Australian Government Department of Education, Skills and Employment – [www.dese.gov.au](http://www.dese.gov.au/)
* Department of Education and Communities – [www.dec.nsw.gov.au](http://www.dec.nsw.gov.au/)
* UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
* Community Early Learning Australia (CELA) - www.cela.org.au

Policy adopted: 15 August 2016

Policy Reviewed: 15 July 2021

For review: 15 July 2023

**APPENDIX A**

All Staff Please Sign Below

**I have read and understand my rights and responsibilities under the Code of Professional Conduct**

Name\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Position \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Signature\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_