

## Interactions with Children Policy

### Purpose

At ECMS, we recognise that interactions are the heart of early childhood practice. Every exchange between an educator and a child has the potential to build trust, foster belonging, and open pathways for learning. Research confirms that high-quality interactions are the strongest predictor of children's wellbeing, development, and long-term learning outcomes. This policy positions interactions as central to our pedagogy, guided by the principles of CLASS (Classroom Assessment Scoring System) and Circle of Security in the Classroom (COS-C).

Our approach ensures that interactions are not only respectful and inclusive but also intentionally designed to promote children's agency, identity, and lifelong learning. The policy supports compliance with the Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010, the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011, the National Quality Standard, the Victorian Child Safe Standards, the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF v2.0), and the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF).

This policy provides clear guidance to ensure all interactions with children at ECMS are respectful, inclusive, and supportive of children's rights, dignity, agency, and wellbeing. It aligns with and supports compliance with the Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010, the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011, the National Quality Standard, the Victorian Child Safe Standards, the Early Years Learning Framework, and the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework.

### Scope

This policy applies to:

- The Approved Provider, persons with management or control, Centre Director, Nominated Supervisor, and persons in day-to-day charge.
- Early Childhood teachers, educators, staff, contractors, students, volunteers, parents/guardians, children, and others enrolled and participating in ECMS programs and services, including during offsite excursions and activities.
- All ECMS-operated Early Learning Centres and Kindergarten programs.

### Policy Statement

ECMS is committed to fostering positive relationships and interactions that promote children's sense of belonging, security, and self-worth. ECMS is committed to an anti-bias approach in early childhood. ECMS operates within a framework of social justice

and equity, this means we celebrate family and cultural diversity and aim to be supportive, responsive, and inclusive of all children. We are committed to:

- Maintaining the dignity and rights of every child.
- Ensuring interactions are respectful, warm, inclusive, and grounded in equity.
- Supporting children's agency and participation in decision-making.
- Maintaining a duty of care towards all children.
- Actively listening to children's voices and cues, both verbal and non-verbal.
- Co-constructing relational spaces where children learn with and through others.
- Guiding behaviour positively, using encouragement and support, never punishment or humiliation.
- Embedding an anti-bias approach in all relationships and daily practice.
- Creating environments where children feel safe to raise concerns and know who will listen and respond.
- Considering the diversity of individual children, including family and cultural values, age, gender, and the physical and intellectual development and abilities of each child.
- Building collaborative relationships with families to improve learning and development outcomes for children.
- Encouraging positive, respectful and warm relationships between children, families and educators/staff at the service.

Through this, we are committed to an evidence-based approach to fostering warm, responsive, and attuned relationships with every child. We believe that interactions are the foundation of quality and equity in early childhood education.

Drawing on CLASS and Circle of Security in the Classroom, we commit to:

- **Emotional Support:** Creating environments of warmth, delight, and trust where children feel safe to express themselves, regulate their emotions, and take risks in their learning.
- **Classroom Organisation:** Designing daily rhythms and interactions that support engagement, minimise disruptions, and promote fairness and inclusion.
- **Instructional Support:** Using conversations, feedback, and intentional scaffolding to extend children's thinking, curiosity, and problem-solving.
- **Secure Base & Safe Haven (COS-C):** Being a reliable presence who both encourages exploration and provides comfort, ensuring children know they are seen, valued, and cared for.

## Why Interactions Matter

Neuroscience and longitudinal research show that children thrive when relationships are consistent, attuned, and responsive. Interactions shape:

- **Identity and Belonging:** Children build a strong sense of self when educators honour their voices, culture, and agency.

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- **Wellbeing:** Attuned interactions support emotional regulation and resilience.
- **Learning and Development:** Language, thinking, and collaboration grow through everyday back-and-forth exchanges.
- **Equity and Social Justice:** When educators interact with anti-bias intent, they affirm every child's right to participate fully and fairly.

## Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

ECMS will:

- Regularly review this policy in consultation with children, families, and staff.
- Monitor incidents, feedback, and practice reflections to strengthen implementation.
- Ensure alignment with evolving research, legislation, and best pedagogical practices.

## Roles & Responsibilities

Approved Provider/ Executive Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure this policy is implemented and resourced.</li> <li>• Promote a culture of respect, equity, and child safeguarding.</li> <li>• Embed a culture where interactions are prioritised as the foundation of practice.</li> <li>• Resource professional learning and continued engagement in CLASS and Circle of Security in the Classroom.</li> </ul>
Area Managers/ Practice Coaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure this policy is implemented.</li> <li>• Promote a culture of respect, equity, and child safeguarding and safety.</li> <li>• Embed a culture through coaching and mentoring where interactions are prioritised as the foundation of practice.</li> <li>• Lead with and through CLASS and Circle of Security in the Classroom concepts in practice.</li> </ul>
Nominated Supervisors/ Centre Directors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure educators and staff are trained in child safe practices.</li> <li>• Monitor educator-to-child ratios and dynamic supervision practices.</li> <li>• Support staff in implementing positive behaviour guidance strategies.</li> <li>• Ensure educators are trained and supported through ongoing professional learning in high-quality interaction practices.</li> <li>• Support daily practice to ensure relational pedagogy is consistently enacted.</li> </ul>
Educators, Volunteers, Students on Placement, and Contractors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interact with children respectfully, positively and inclusively.</li> <li>• Ensuring dynamic supervision that allows every child to be seen heard and supported.</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support children's agency, participation and cultural identity.</li> <li>• Use positive guidance strategies to support behaviour and conflict resolution.</li> <li>• A commitment to being bigger, stronger, wiser and kind – balancing children's need for both comfort and exploration.</li> <li>• Model respectful communication and relationships.</li> <li>• Model respectful communication and collaboration with children and colleagues.</li> </ul>
Parents/Guardians	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partner in relationship with educators to support children's wellbeing, identity and learning.</li> <li>• Share knowledge of their child's needs, strengths and cultural background.</li> <li>• Be supported to co-regulate within transitions between home and ECE.</li> </ul>

### Related Legislation, Regulations and Resources

- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010: Sections 165-167
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011: Reg 155-156, 168
- National Quality Standard: Quality Area 5 – Relationships with Children
- Victorian Child Safe Standards – Standard 3: Child empowerment and participation

### Related Policies and Procedures

- Child Health and Hygiene Policy
- Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Code of Conduct
- Complaints and Feedback Policy
- Incident Reporting & Reportable Conduct Policy
- Nutrition, Food, Beverages and Dietary Requirements Policy
- Participation of Students and Volunteers Policy
- Privacy and Confidential Information Policy
- Risk Management Framework

Document Version History			
Version	Reason for Amendment	Approved by	Approval date
5.0	Policy reviewed, consulted and updated	ECMS Executive	September 2025

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