

# St Joseph's Preschool

## Interactions with Children Policy



**St Joseph's School**  
PORT LINCOLN  
*In all things love*

### Policy Statement

We recognise the importance of developing and maintaining positive and respectful relationships with children, as well as with educators. We encourage a child-centred approach that promotes the development of the child's sense of self – self reliance, self expression, self esteem and self respect. We are committed to meeting our regulatory requirements in relation to interactions with children.

### Background

The Education and Care Services National Regulations require approved providers to ensure their service have policies and procedures in relation to interactions with children. Our Service aims to ensure that all educators form positive relationships with children that make them feel safe and supported in the Service. Educators will encourage positive relationships between children and their peers as well as with educators and volunteers at the Service.

### NQS

QA5	5.1.1	Positive educator to child interactions - Responsive and meaningful interactions build trusting relationships which engage and support each child to feel secure, confident and included.
	5.1.2	Dignity and rights of the child - The dignity and rights of every child are maintained.
	5.2.1	Collaborative learning - Children are supported to collaborate, learn from and help each other.
	5.2.2	Self-regulation - Each child is supported to manage their own behaviour, respond appropriately to the behaviour of others and communicate effectively to resolve conflicts.

### National Law

Sect	165	Offence to inadequately supervise children
	166	Offence to use inappropriate discipline
	168	Offence relating to required programs
	169	Offence relating to staffing arrangements

### National Regulations

Regs	73	Educational program
	84	Awareness of child protection law
	115	Premises designed to facilitate supervision



**St Joseph's School**  
PORT LINCOLN  
*In all things love*

117 A	Placing a person in day to day charge
118	Educational leader
123	Educator to child ratios – centre based services
126	Centre based services – general educator qualifications
145	Staff record
155	Interactions with children
156	Relationships in groups
168	Education and care services must have policies and procedures
170	Policies and procedures to be followed
171	Policies and procedures to be kept available
172	Notification of changes to policies or procedures

## EYLF

LO1	Children feel safe, secure, and supported.
	Children develop their emerging autonomy, inter-dependence, resilience and sense of agency.
	Children develop knowledgeable and confident self identities.
	Children learn to interact in relation to others with care, empathy and respect.
LO2	Children develop a sense of belonging to groups and communities and an understanding of the reciprocal rights and responsibilities necessary for active community participation.
	Children respond to diversity with respect.
	Children become aware of fairness.
	Children become socially responsible and show respect for the environment.

## Related Policies

- Additional Needs Policy
- Continuity of Education and Care Policy
- Enrolment Policy
- Orientation for Children Policy
- Physical Activity Promotion Policy



**St Joseph's School**  
PORT LINCOLN  
*In all things love*

## Implementation

### Interactions with Children

Our Service's statement of philosophy will guide our interactions with children as follows:

At St Joseph's preschool, we are committed to providing a high-quality program that promotes learning, growth, and development in a safe, stimulating, and inclusive environment. Our program is informed by the Early Years Learning Framework and the Josephite tradition, and is designed to provide a strong foundation for future learning.

We believe that every child is unique, capable and deserves to be respected, valued, and supported in their individual needs and abilities. Our program is welcoming and inclusive, and we celebrate the diversity of our community.

Through our play-based approach, children are encouraged to imagine, discover, and create, fostering a love of learning that will last a lifetime. We believe that children learn best when they are engaged and inspired, and we provide many opportunities for children to explore and learn through hands-on activities and play.

We understand the importance of building friendships and growing in confidence, and we provide a supportive environment that enables children to develop their social and emotional skills. Our educators are highly trained professionals who are dedicated to providing individualised care and support to each child.

As a Catholic preschool, we are committed to instilling the values of the Josephite tradition, including love, compassion, and service to others. We believe that this spiritual foundation will guide our children throughout their lives and inspire them to make a positive difference in the world.

In order to maintain positive interactions with children our service and educators will maintain the following:

- Our service will provide a relaxed and happy atmosphere for the children.
- Our service will ensure mealtimes are relaxed and unhurried and educators take the time to sit and talk with children.
- Our educators will encourage children to initiate conversations about their experiences inside and outside the service as well as what is happening around them, express their ideas and feelings, share humour with the nominated supervisor, educators, coordinators and educators and seek assistance as they take on new challenges and try to do things for themselves.



**St Joseph's School**  
PORT LINCOLN  
*In all things love*

- Our educators and coordinators will respond sensitively and appropriately to children's efforts to communicate and engage them in sustained conversations about their interests in a positive manner.
- Our educators will talk with children in a two-sided manner. That is, encourage children to have their own opinions, ideas and comments. Educators should support children with this and let them know that their ideas are valued.
- Our routines, as well as planned and spontaneous experiences will be organised to maximise opportunity for meaningful conversations between children and educators and the service will ensure that all children have equal opportunity to engage in one to one and small group conversations with educators.
- Our statement of philosophy and policy on interactions with children will be visible.
- Our educators will participate in children's play using children's cues to guide their level and type of involvement while always maintaining a positive approach when responding to children and offering assistance.
- Our educators will model reasoning, prediction and reflection processes and language.
- Our educators will collaborate with children about routines and experiences.
- Our educators will use techniques such as sign language and other resources and tools to support children with additional needs.
- Our educators will use their interactions with children to support the maintenance of home languages and learning English as an additional language.
- Our educators and coordinators will use information from their observations of interactions with children to extend the children's thinking and learning.
- Our nominated supervisor, educators and coordinators will learn more about the histories, cultures, languages, traditions, child rearing practices and lifestyle choices of families using the service.
- Our educators will frequently talk with families to get an idea of the non-verbal forms of communication used by their children in order to convey messages such as hunger, needing the toilet, tiredness and emotions.
- Our educators will allow time to talk to parents about their children. This allows educators to gain insight into their home life.
- Our service will implement strategies to assist all children to develop a sense of belonging and confidence through positive interactions between the children and educators.
- Our service's roster will be planned in a way that promotes continuity for children.
- Our service will gather information from families in order to be able to provide support for children during the settling in process.



**St Joseph's School**  
PORT LINCOLN  
*In all things love*

- When children have special needs our service will consult with other professionals or support agencies that work with children to gather information that will guide our interactions with these children. This information will be recorded in the child's file.
- Our service's approach to equity and inclusion will be documented in our statement of philosophy.
- Our service will ensure that educators document the knowledge gained about children, through their interactions, in the child's file for reference for other educators and will continually review the experiences that are planned for children in light of this information.

## Group Relationships

In order to encourage respectful and positive relationships between children and their peers and educators our service will adhere to the following practices:

- Our service will encourage children to participate in enjoyable interactions with their peers, respond positively to ideas, negotiate roles and relationships, contribute to shared play, and develop friendships.
- Our educators will engage children in ongoing group projects that involve research, planning, problem solving and shared decision making.
- Our educators will model strategies for children to initiate interactions and participate in group play and social activities and assist them when they have trouble understanding or communicating with each other.
- Our service will ensure that the children have many opportunities for peer scaffolding.
- Our educators will promote a sense of community in the service.
- Our service will coordinate the staffing and grouping arrangements to support positive relationships between children.
- Our educators will support and promote children's interpersonal relationships and support the inclusion of children from diverse backgrounds and capabilities in group play, projects and experiences.
- Our educators will learn about children's shared interests and will use this information to plan further experiences that provide collaborative learning opportunities.
- Our educators will pre-empt potential conflicts or challenging behaviours by monitoring children's play and supporting interactions where there is conflict.
- Our service will ensure that the program and routines of the service will include regular opportunities for children to engage in social play and group experiences.
- Our service will ensure that food is being used appropriately and not as a reward or punishment.



**St Joseph's School**  
PORT LINCOLN  
*In all things love*

- Our service will ensure that corporal punishment is not used as part of behaviour guidance or any other aspect of our interactions with children.
- Corporal punishment is never to be used in our service.

## Behaviour Guidance

### Positive Behaviour

Educators, staff and volunteers will model positive behaviour and guide children's behaviour in ways that promote their self esteem by:

- encouraging children to be cooperative and helpful, to express their feelings and responses to others' behaviour confidently and constructively, and to respectfully guide the behaviour of other children when it is disrespectful or unfair
- supporting children to explore different identities and points of view, to negotiate their rights and the rights of others in a positive, respectful way and to communicate effectively when resolving disagreements
- discussing emotions and issues of inclusion and exclusion, fairness and bias
- encouraging children to listen to other children's ideas, consider alternate behaviour and co-operate to solve problems
- using positive language, gestures, facial expressions and tone of voice when redirecting or discussing children's behaviour with them, and remaining calm, gentle, patient and reassuring even when children strongly express distress, frustration or anger
- using their knowledge of children's personalities and friendships to help them manage their own behaviour and develop empathy
- using information from families about their children's social skills and relationship preferences to engage children in experiences that support their social development
- intervening sensitively when children have difficulty resolving a disagreement, and helping them remove themselves from situations where they are experiencing frustration, anger or fear
- interacting with children and teaching them how to play in different ways: movement play, object play (understanding and solving problems), imaginative play (emotional resilience, creativity and empathy), social play (friendship and belonging, rough and tumble play, celebrations and ritual play), storytelling (my world, myself and where I fit in), creative play (new behaviours and thoughts) role play



**St Joseph's School**  
PORT LINCOLN  
*In all things love*

- promoting children's agency by allowing them to be as independent as possible, to try things they see for themselves and experience the consequences of their choices while considering the risk and benefit to others. This may include teaching children how to use things
- ensuring curriculum is mainly based on children's ideas and interests rather than being led by educators
- setting up rooms and environments to foster positive behaviour – making the room interesting but not cluttered, defined and obstacle free walkways, resources are attractively displayed. The environment may include mirrors to help children focus and provide interest, contains photos of where resources belong
- ensuring activities are of interest to children
- supporting children with strategies to deal with their raw emotions such as anger, fear, panic and being patient when children revert to old behaviour if they are stressed, tired, hungry etc. This includes listening empathetically to children when they express their emotions and reassuring them that it is normal to experience positive and negative emotions
- ensuring children's basic needs are met
- supporting children who appear to be insecurely attached by sensitively building relationships with the child and family
- allowing children to have uninterrupted play where they can continue their engagement in learning as they explore and improvise (one of the ideas behind progressive morning teas), and not interrupting a child who is actively engaged in an activity, or forcing a child to share when they are engaged with a resource. Simple strategies may be reducing unnecessary transitions or introducing progressive morning snack or mealtimes.
- providing explicit instruction for routines and learning
- understanding that children's comprehension of vocabulary concepts or instructions may require support such as visuals, key word signing, two step instructions or allowing time for a child to process the instruction or information. This may be as simple as waiting three seconds after speaking to the child so they can process what has been said
- understanding that children may not be able to interpret or understand some words. For example 'sharing' may not be understood as taking turns.

## Inappropriate Behaviour

Educators and staff understand that inappropriate behaviour is a child's way of saying they need support. Educators will reflect on the reasons for the child's behaviour and develop strategies or a plan



**St Joseph's School**  
PORT LINCOLN  
*In all things love*

with the Nominated Supervisor which can be implemented by all educators to ensure consistent responses to the child's behaviour at the service.

Children's behaviour may be inappropriate for a variety of reasons. Some of these include:

- insecure attachment to educators or families
- emotional immaturity
- insufficient language skills to express their needs and wishes
- used to gaining attention from negative behaviour
- condition or number of toys, resources and equipment
- a diagnosed or undiagnosed additional need such as spectrum disorder.

Depending on the reason for the behaviour, some strategies for dealing with inappropriate behaviour may include:

- ignoring the negative behaviour and praising the positive behaviour (while ensuring the safety of all children), and ensuring all body language is consistent with actions and words
- building strong social bonds through a focus on attachment theory and Circle of Security approaches
- using key words with signing and objects or visuals to help children with communication difficulties
- using minimal steps in directions then allowing time for a child to understand
- using terminology that children understand such as 'my turn' 'your turn' rather than assuming children understand
- allowing children to develop their reasoning and emotional knowledge by helping them to reflect on their actions. For example "Tommy, what are you doing?" "I saw you ...." "What were you about to do with ...?"
- not telling a child to do something but asking the child a question. For example "What do we have to do so we can have lunch" rather than "pack up"
- talking with children about the consequences of their actions, our rules and why we have them
- providing sufficient opportunities for exercise including running which can calm anxious or agitated children through the production of certain brain chemicals
- intentionally teaching behaviours like walking inside, never assuming children know how to do things or behave, and reaffirming those and other positive behaviours
- using empathy and putting themselves in the child's position to try and understand where the behaviour came from (rather than yelling at the end result of the behaviour)





**St Joseph's School**  
PORT LINCOLN  
*In all things love*

- documenting incidences of inappropriate behaviour and when they are occurring and developing a behaviour plan with parents and if relevant other professionals
- appointing one person as a contact point for parents
- Educators will not isolate, intimidate or subject children to corporal punishment to guide behaviour.
- Parents will:
  - work in partnership with educators where concerns are raised about the behaviour of their child
  - consent in writing where educators believe liaising with relevant professionals to support the learning and development of their child and apply for funding to do this where necessary
  - agree to work with educators to minimise risk where the child's behaviour is a danger to children and educators. This may include seeking professional support from, for example a paediatrician, speech pathologist or family support services, or reducing the hours of care until the child's behaviour is supported and risk to others is minimised.
- Adhere to the parent code of conduct.

## Inclusion

We believe that every child is unique, capable and deserves to be respected, valued, and supported in their individual needs and abilities. Our program is welcoming and inclusive, and we celebrate the diversity of our community.”

Our policies and practices promote cultural awareness and sensitivity, encourage family involvement and communication, and provide appropriate support and accommodations for children with special needs.

St Joseph's Preschool endeavours to foster a sense of belonging and promote positive social interactions among its students, regardless of race, gender, learning performance, disability or socio-economic status. In this way we help our students thrive.

## Supporting Children through Difficult Situations

When a child, family, educator or the service as a whole experiences a stressful or traumatic situation such as a bushfire, car accident, sudden illness or death, crime or violent situation it is important to provide appropriate support so they can recover from the ordeal. A child's reaction to a stressful or traumatic situation will depend on factors such as their age, stage of development and impact of the event on people around them. A child may react in ways that you don't expect and sometimes will act normally at first but be wary of a delayed reaction. Some reactions include:



**St Joseph's School**  
PORT LINCOLN  
*In all things love*

- Physical symptoms such as stomach aches and headaches.
- Being anxious or clingy.
- Suffering from separation anxiety.
- Having sleeping problems or nightmares.
- Re-living the experience through drawing or play.
- Losing interest in activities.
- Loss of self-confidence.
- Regressing to “babyish” activities.

Our educators will work with families in relation to the best way to help children through a difficult situation. We may, for example, provide families with information about child psychologists or social workers and be guided by the suggestions or plans these professionals put in place. Educators will also implement the indicators under the EYLF learning outcomes which show what educators can do to promote learning, particularly learning outcome 1.1 safe secure relationships in consultation with families. The ways our educators will approach this are:

- Reassuring the child that they are safe, but only if they really are.
- Talking to the child about what happened in a way that they will understand and without going into frightening or graphic detail. Our educators will not leave out important information though, as children will fill in the gaps.
- Ensuring the child hasn't jumped to conclusions. Some children will think they are to blame in a tragic event; our educators will make sure they know this isn't so.
- Talking about the event with appropriate people (for example, all children if the event has affected the whole service or the children that have been affected) and letting everyone have their say including children.
- Talking to the children about how people react to stressful or traumatic situations and that the feelings they are feeling are normal.

## Coping Mechanisms

Some strategies that our educators will use to help children cope in these situations are:

- Giving children a sense of control of their environment and life. Letting the child make minor decisions, such as what to eat for lunch, what to wear or what toy to play with will make the child feel more in control.
- Allowing the children plenty of time to play and to do physical exercise; this will help the child burn off stress chemicals and allow for more sleep.
- Helping the children physically relax with story times and relaxation.
- Limiting stimulants like chocolate, lollies etc.



**St Joseph's School**  
PORT LINCOLN  
*In all things love*

It is important to remember how you respond to the stressful or traumatic event will affect your child's response. Children look to their families and educators to find ways to deal with a situation they probably don't understand. Children need their family members (and other adults who are close to them) to help them understand the situation and their emotions and also offer comfort and support. If adults are distressed about a situation it is important for them to seek help for themselves.

At the service, we wish to help in whatever way we can if your family has undergone a tragedy. Talk to educators (or confidentially to the Nominated Supervisor) and we will endeavour to work with families and children to support all parties through the situation.

## Bullying

In order to prevent and educate our children about bullying our educators will implement the following strategies to overcome bullying:

- Our educators will practice all-encompassing and socially inclusive care.
- Daily programs will recognise, value and reflect the social and cultural diversity of our community.
- Our educators will role model and actively encourage appropriate behaviours.
- Our educators will form a close relationship with family members in order to work cooperatively to overcome instances of bullying.
- Our educators will empower children by giving them responsibilities that will make them feel valued.
- Our educators will help children deal with their anger. This includes offering alternative dispute resolution techniques that are socially acceptable.
- Our educators will seek the support of children's services professionals when it is necessary.
- Our educators will respond promptly to children's aggressive or bullying behaviour.

## Biting

All individuals involved in the care of a child need to recognise that at times, some children, for a variety of reasons, attempt to bite other children. In preschool aged children, children usually bite due to being frustrated.

In the event of a biting incident, educators will abide by the following procedure:

- Check for broken skin.
- Clean all bites, regardless of whether the skin is broken or not.



**St Joseph's School**  
PORT LINCOLN  
*In all things love*

- Apply a cold compress to the bitten area
- Our educators will contact the families of the child who has bitten and the child that has been bitten as soon as possible. Families are then responsible for any follow up medical treatment.
- If the biter is a known infectious disease carrier, or can be seen to have facial herpes and the victim's skin is broken, the Nominated Supervisor or Authorised Supervisor will convey this information to the family.
- Should the behaviour continue, our educators will work in conjunction with families and, if necessary, external agencies, to develop a Behaviour Guidance plan for the child who is biting.
- Our educators will complete an incident report for any occasion where a child bites and submit to the Nominated Supervisor.
- Monitor the behaviour of the child who has bitten and use distraction techniques to prevent the child reaching the point where the child feels the need to bite.

## Sources

- National Quality Standard
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
- Early Years Learning Framework
- Young children, aggression, bullying and what to do - Bullying. No Way! Safe and Supportive School Communities Working Group.

## Review

The policy will be reviewed annually by:

- Management
- Employees
- Families
- Interested Parties

## Approval of Interactions with Children Policy

**Chair of School Board**

---

**Date of Ratification**

---