

## CODE OF CONDUCT AND ETHICS

### NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARDS

- **Element 4.2.1:** Management, educators and staff work with mutual respect and collaboratively and challenge and learn from each other, recognising each other's strengths and skills.
- **Element 4.2.2:** Professional standards guide practice, interactions and relationships
- **Element 5.1:** Respectful and equitable relationships are developed and maintained with each child.
- **Element 5.2:** Each child is supported to build and maintain sensitive and responsive relationships.
- **Element 6.1:** Respectful, relationships with families are developed and maintained, and families are supported in their parenting role.
- **Element 7.1.3** Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined, and understood, and support effective decision making and operation of the service.
- **Element 7.2** Effective leadership builds and promotes a positive organizational culture and builds a professional learning community.
- **Education and Care Services National Regulations: 168(2) (i)**

### PURPOSE

***Wise moral decisions will always acknowledge our interdependency; our moral choices are ours alone, but they bind us all to those who will be affected by them. So, deciding for yourself what's right or wrong does not mean deciding in isolation'*** (Mackay, 2004, p. 242).

For the purposes of this document, the following **terms** are used, collectively they are referenced as 'all stakeholders'.

- **Children** - People between the ages of birth and eight years.
- **Colleague** - Includes employers and those with whom you work more directly or more broadly.
- **Communities** - Groups of people who identify as having shared values and intentions. These groups are recognised as complex, being simultaneously connected by commonality and diversity.
- **Early Childhood Professional** - A person who works with or on behalf of children and families in early childhood settings.
- **Employee** - A person casually, for a fixed-term or permanently employed with the Employer.
- **Employer** – Froebel Australia Limited (ACN 135 620 370).
- **Families** - The people who have significant care responsibilities for and/or kinship relationships with the child.
- **Froebel** - Froebel Australia Limited (ACN 135 620 370), including all its branches.
- **Student and/or Volunteer** - A person undertaking study at a secondary or tertiary institution and/or volunteer services at Froebel.

- The purpose of this policy is to detail the **Code of Conduct and Ethics** which guides the behavioral expectations of all Froebel stakeholders in their responsibilities to one another

## **POLICY**

Froebel is committed to ensuring every child has the opportunity to grow into curious, capable, caring and contributing global citizens, beginning with an empowered childhood.

Froebel values excellence, going beyond the expected, and positively nurturing relationships.

Guided by the Early Childhood Australia (ECA) Code of Ethics, Froebel has developed this Code of Conduct and Ethics to set behavioural expectations for all stakeholders.

The Code of Conduct and Ethics applies to the Board of Directors, all permanent, fixed term and casual employees as well as volunteers, students, or other representatives of Froebel Australia, including but not limited to engagement with children, families, caregivers, families, fellow employees, regulatory bodies, Government Department officials, suppliers and contractors.

The Code of Conduct and Ethics applies to all families, caregivers and community members who may engage with Froebel employees and children.

The Code of Conduct and Ethics provides a set of principles for all stakeholders to uphold; failure to do so may be considered a breach of Froebel policy.

A breach of these principles may result in an investigation and lead to further disciplinary action including but not limited to, a first warning through to termination of employment or enrolment and or legal proceedings in the event of serious breaches.

The following **values and processes** are considered central to this code of conduct.

- respect
- democracy
- honesty
- integrity
- justice
- courage
- inclusivity
- social and cultural responsiveness and
- education.

In this Code of Conduct and Ethics, the protection and wellbeing of children is paramount and

ethical practice is an essential responsibility of all stakeholders.

## PROCEDURES

### All stakeholders agree to:

- understand, follow, and implement policies and procedures of Froebel Australia
- uphold the Vision, Mission and Values of Froebel Australia outlined in the organisation's Vision Mission and Values Statement
- be familiar and abide by the Early Education and Care National Regulations (2011)
- be familiar and abide by the Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics (2016).

### Families agree to:

- engaging respectfully and professionally with all Early Childhood Professionals
- uphold the Code of Conduct and Ethics
- abide by policies and procedures of Froebel Australia.

### Early childhood professionals agree to:

- abide by the principles stated in the Froebel Australia Code of Conduct (Appendix 1)
- all Froebel stakeholders agree to the ECA commitments to action as outlined in the Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics:

### In relation to children, I will:

- act in the best interests of all children
- create and maintain safe, healthy, inclusive environments that support children's agency and enhance their learning
- provide a meaningful curriculum to enrich children's learning, balancing child and educator-initiated experience
- understand and be able to explain to others how play and leisure enhance children's learning, development, and wellbeing
- ensure childhood is a time for being in the here and now and not solely about preparation for the future
- collaborate with children as global citizens in learning about our shared responsibilities to the environment and humanity
- value the relationship between children and their families and enhance these relationships through my practice
- ensure that children are not discriminated against on the basis of gender, sexuality, age, ability, economic status, family structure, lifestyle, ethnicity, religion, language, culture, or national origin
- negotiate children's participation in research, by taking into account their safety, privacy, levels of fatigue and interest
- respect children as capable learners by including their perspectives in teaching, learning and assessment.

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- safeguard the security of information and documentation about children, particularly when shared on digital platforms.

### **In relation to the profession, I will**

- base my work on research, theories, content knowledge, practice evidence and my understanding of the children and families with whom I work
- take responsibility for articulating my professional values, knowledge and practice and the positive contribution our profession makes to society
- engage in critical reflection, ongoing professional learning and support research that builds my knowledge and that of the profession
- work within the scope of my professional role and avoid misrepresentation of my professional competence and qualifications
- encourage qualities and practices of ethical leadership within the profession
- model quality practice and provide constructive feedback and assessment for students as aspiring professionals
- mentor new graduates by supporting their induction into the profession
- advocate for my profession and the provision of quality education and care.

### **In relation to colleagues, I will:**

- encourage others to adopt and act in accordance with this Code, and take action in the presence of unethical behaviours
- build a spirit of collegiality and professionalism through collaborative relationships based on trust, respect and honesty
- acknowledge and support the diverse strengths and experiences of colleagues in order to build shared professional knowledge, understanding and skills
- use constructive processes to address differences of opinion in order to negotiate shared perspectives and actions
- participate in a 'lively culture of professional inquiry' to support continuous improvement
- implement strategies that support and mentor colleagues to make positive contributions to the profession
- maintain ethical relationships in my online interactions.

### **In relation to families, I will:**

- support families as children's first and most important teacher and respect their right to make decisions about their children
- listen to and learn with families and engage in shared decision making, planning and assessment practices in relation to children's learning, development and wellbeing
- develop respectful relationships based on open communication with the aim of encouraging families' engagement and to build a strong sense of belonging
- learn about, respect and respond to the uniqueness of each family, their circumstances, culture, family structure, customs, language, beliefs and kinship systems respect families' right to privacy and maintain confidentiality.

**In relation to community and society, I will:**

- learn about local community contexts and aspirations in order to create responsive programs to enhance children's learning, development and wellbeing
- collaborate with people, services and agencies to develop shared understandings and actions that support children and families
- use research and practice-based evidence to advocate for a society where all children have access to quality education and care
- promote the value of children's contribution as citizens to the development of strong communities
- work to promote increased appreciation of the importance of childhood including how children learn and develop, in order to inform programs and systems of assessment that benefit children
- advocate for the development and implementation of laws and policies that promote the rights and best interests of children and families.

**REFERENCES**

- Children Education and Care Services National Law Application Act 2010
- Education and Care Services National Regulations
- Barblett/Hydon/Kennedy, The Code of Ethics: A guide for everyday practice; 2008.
- Early Childhood Australia 2016 Code of Ethics:

**ASSOCIATED POLICIES**

- Computer and Information Technology
- Cultural Responsiveness
- Child Protection Policies (NSW & VIC)
- Child Safety and Wellbeing
- Educational Program
- Equity and Diversity Principles
- Froebel Philosophy
- Interactions with Children and Positive Behaviour Guidance
- Privacy and Confidentiality
- Professional Boundaries and Protective Practices
- Statement of Inclusion

**REVIEW**

Last review: 4/03/2024

Next review: 4/03/2025

## **Froebel Australia Code of Conduct and Ethics**

### **All Froebel Employees agree to**

#### **Professionalism**

- Carry out their responsibilities as Employee as per their job description
- Apply themselves diligently to work during working hours. At times an Employee may be asked to assist with additional appropriate tasks at the discretion of the Employee's manager
- Engage in all areas of their day-to-day tasks with a growth mindset and solution focused approach
- Ensure a high level of personal grooming and presentation, which aligns with relevant health and safety practices and aligns with sun smart attire

#### **Privacy and Confidentiality**

- Uphold the principles of the Privacy and Confidentiality Policy
- At times employees are privy to confidential information of staff, children and families. Any such information must not be disclosed during employment or following their employment at Froebel, unless discussion and disclosure is required to perform duties, or comply with legal requirements
- At times employees are privy to confidential information in relation to the running of Froebel's business. Employees agree not to disclose any such information during or following their employment, unless discussion and disclosure is required to perform duties, or comply with legal requirements.

#### **Drugs and Alcohol**

- Refrain from any consumption of alcohol and/or prohibited drugs during work hours on or around Froebel premises, and prior to the commencement of any shift to ensure they are not under the influence of any such substances at work
- Inform their manager about taking prescription drugs which may have a relevant impact on work performance and/or impair personal safety and the safety of others; therefore, a specialist evaluation may be required to assess if regular duties can be performed safely
- Refrain from smoking in or around any Froebel premises. 'No Smoking' rules must be adhered to in any public areas where smoking is prohibited; Employees who socially smoke will ensure that it will not impact on their responsibilities as a Froebel Employee when engaging with stakeholders (children in particular)
- Refrain from any illegal gambling of any kind on Froebel premises.

#### **Work Health and Safety**

- Work safely and observe all work health and safety policy and procedures.

#### **Workplace Bullying, Discrimination and Harassment**

- Observe the Bullying, Discrimination and Harassment Policy
- Conduct themselves and communicate in a manner that does not intimidate, offend, degrade or

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humiliate, and which does not harass, sexually harass, unlawfully discriminate or bully another stakeholder.

### **Feedback and Grievance Management**

- Observe professional boundaries which are set to protect the Employee and to appropriately manage stakeholder relationships and expectations as outlined in the Professional Boundaries and Protective Practices Policy
- Raise any concerns with the Employee's work environment, colleagues or families as well as professional boundaries following the grievance procedures as outlined in the Feedback and Grievances Management Policy.

### **Security**

- Observe and follow the Information Technology Policy
- Observe and follow protocol in relation to Froebel premises' access and security practices and procedures, including but not limited to access codes, keys, alarm systems, access rules
- Engage with Froebel premises and property in an appropriate and respectful manner
- Froebel provides physical property, resources and equipment for Employees to carry out their daily duties. These include but are not limited to mobile devices, telephones, internet systems, computer and technology systems. Any items in the property of Froebel are not to be temporarily or permanently removed from the Froebel premises without prior approval of the Employee's manager
- Not download, access or view inappropriate material (e.g. footage of real or simulated violence, criminal activity, and/or sexually explicit content) on any device in the property of Froebel and/or utilising internet access provided by Froebel
- Personal mobile phones, smart watches and other personal devices are not to be used to take, share and/or store photographs of children or of children's learning
- Personal mobile phones, smart watches or other devices are not to be used for personal reasons during work hours unless in the event of an emergency. An Employee may use a personal device in break times or as approved by the Employee's manager.

### **Media / Social Media**

- Refrain from making statements to media representatives and on social media (including but not limited to their personal social media accounts) relating to Froebel as their employer or Froebel as an organisation as such unless express prior approval from the Managing Director is sought.
- An employee will not share on their personal social media accounts any documentation or photographs of children or families who attend a Froebel service. They will also not share any documentation or photographs of children or families with any third party outside Froebel and refrain from keeping photographs of children enrolled or previously enrolled with Froebel saved to personal electronic devices.

In general, Froebel employees will not engage in any action which by its nature and considering reasonable community standards would be adjudged to be misconduct in context of the employee's

employment with Froebel.

**For serious breaches of these rules the employee will be liable to dismissal without notice.**

Employees are encouraged to report any concerns regarding assumed or observed breaches of this Code of Conduct and Ethics to their manager or, if required, the Board of Directors, following the Feedback and Grievances Management Policy.

I acknowledge that I have read and understood my obligations as outlined in the Froebel Code of Conduct and Ethics.

Full Name:

Signature:

Date: