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Our Philosophy

The Stella Bella Children's Centre care model is guided by the philosophies of Rudolph Steiner. In early childhood, Steiner aims to create a nurturing environment involving natural play materials, vegetable gardens, and in some cases chickens to care for and to collect eggs for baking. Young children learn to cook, paint, garden and use tools. They explore their environment, learning sharing, cooperation and social skills. Young children are given the time to play, enjoy childhood and build strong foundation skills before formal academic learning begins.

From birth, all children are learning about positive behaviors as they build relationships with those around them. Through positive relationships educators are well informed and equipped to support children in developing their lifelong learning about what positive behaviour is and how to act in a positive way. At Stella Bella Children's Centre, our aim is for children to be able to guide their behaviour in a positive manner while relying on the support of an educator.

As part of our care philosophy, we supply a very healthy diet for the children and regularly use produce from our gardens in the meals that we provide. We share our scraps with our chickens and our compost heap and actively engage our children in gardening. Through this, we help to teach children about the earth and the goodness that nature provides and the process of caring for the environment.

For young children to be able to connect and immerse themselves in the life of the world and for them to be able to engage in self-initiated imaginative play they need to be held in a secure rhythm and warm aesthetic environment without overstimulation. Rhythm brings reassurance and continuity as well as trust in the unfolding of life. A sense that here there is time to do things beautifully is cultivated in the Steiner Kindergarten.

A daily rhythm would usually include:

Circle Time: music, speech and movement

Indoor Self-directed Creative Play

Home Activities: Cooking, Morning Tea, Baking, Tidying

Artistic Work: Painting, Beeswax Modelling or Crafts

Outdoor Play in Nature,

Lunch Story

Bushwalk /Games.

The programming of our centre and the interests of the children are interwoven in these activities in a natural way.

Policies and Procedures

Enrolment

- Prior to any child and family commencing their formal enrolment, they are encouraged to meet with the Centre Managers and be given a tour of the Centre. Tours are welcome at anytime with an appointment.
- The Stella Bella Children Centre will ensure that the enrolment process for families is clear and consistent by communicating with parents, being available to answer questions about the care we offer and by providing parents with our enrolment pack.
- The Stella Bella Children Centre will provide families with copies of Stella Bella's Enrolment Form, will explain the Federal Government system of rebates and how they relate to their enrolment and will direct clients to the Family Assistance Office for more information regarding their personal circumstances.
- Once enrolment is confirmed full fees will be charged from the agreed commencement date regardless of whether the child attends from this date. Eligible families can apply for Child Care Benefit (CCB) through Centrelink (see below in Fees).
- It is the responsibility of the parents/guardians to ensure that the Centre is notified of all changes to contact phone numbers, addresses, emergency contacts, persons authorised to collect children, etc.
- Two weeks written notice needs to be given to the centre if parents decide to discontinue their child's attendance at the centre.
- Scheduled days of care must be paid for, regardless of whether a child is in attendance on that day. This includes days away due to illness or family commitments.

Orientation Process

Parents are encouraged to visit the centre a few times prior to the start of their care to assist their child in feeling comfortable with the staff and in the new environment. On the first orientation visit the families will be shown, and discussions will be had about, the daily routine, the children's individual communication books and the class learning journals that are readily available for families to look through to see what their child has been learning about and what adventures they have been up to during their time in the centre. Once the child has started care, we strongly encourage the parents to say "Goodbye" to their child and reassure them they will come back at the end of the day, rather than leaving while the child is distracted. Where a child shows considerable or ongoing distress Centre staff will discuss further strategies for settling the child with parents.

Delivery of children to and collection from the Stella Bella Children's Centre.

Stella Bella Children's Centre is committed to ensuring the safe delivery and collection of all children enrolled at the centre. In so doing the Centre is able to meet its obligations to children and families and to meet the requirements of the National Law.

- On arrival at the centre, each family will be welcomed at the door by centre staff. Parents are then required to sign each child into the attendance register with the time of arrival, parent/ guardian name and signature.
- Stella Bella Children's Centre will not release children from the centre unless they are in the care of: A Parent/Guardian, other authorised nominee named in the child's enrolment record, or a person authorised in writing by a parent to collect the child from the Centre.
- If a parent or nominated person cannot collect a child due to unforeseen circumstances the parent or nominated person must contact the centre to provide authorisation for another person to collect the child.
- Contact may be in the form of email or phone call. The newly nominated collection person will be asked for proof of identification on arrival at the centre.
- The newly appointed person should be familiar to the child and the child should feel happy to leave the centre in the care of this person.
- Children may leave the centre with the nominated supervisor or approved provider in the case of an emergency in which they require medical, hospital or ambulance care or treatment.

- Children may leave the centre in the care of centre staff in the case of an emergency in which the building has to be evacuated or for emergency drills.
- The centre can refuse to release a child into the care of an Adult if they have no prior consent to pick up the child or there is a court order in place.
- The centre can not refuse to release a child into the care of a parent or guardian if they are listed on the enrolments form or if there is a court order, if the educators think that the parent / guardian is not fit to collect the child or is picking up on a non-designated day and we have not been informed, the educators will make contact via a phone call to the other parent or guardian and explain the situation or if required will contact the police.

Fees

Fees are paid for the days the child is booked into the centre, including public holidays, when the child is absent due to illness or on holidays. Unfortunately, we are unable to offer 'make up' days for days missed due to illness or because of public holidays. Two weeks' notice is required to withdraw children from the program once a permanent place has been confirmed. If children are unable to attend, parents are requested to notify the centre. The following additional fees may also be charged If children are collected after 6:00pm pm: \$25.00 per 15 minutes / per family will be charged and added to the parent's account. This money is to cover the cost of staff overtime.

Indoor and Outdoor Shoes.

At Stella Bella Children's Centre, we take hygiene very seriously and do everything we can to stop cross contamination with the centre. We request that all children have two pairs of shoes, one pair they can wear outside, (joggers, gumboots) and then a pair of shoes for inside - non-slip socks, slippers, or soft sole shoes. All adults and children who enter the centre must either thoroughly clean the bottoms of their shoes with antibacterial solution or take their shoes off in the foyer of the centre before entering the care rooms when dropping off or collecting their child/ren.

Interactions with Children

At the Stella Bella Children's Centre, all interactions are informed by ECA's Code of Ethics (2006)* all of our interactions are made with purpose, care and understanding, we also

- Encourage children to express themselves and their opinions
- Allow children to undertake experiences that develop self-reliance and self-esteem
- Maintain at all times the dignity and rights of each child
- Give each child positive guidance and encouragement toward acceptable behaviour in a way that has regard to the family and cultural values, age and physical and intellectual development and abilities of each child
- Encourage children to interact and develop respectful and positive relationships with each other and with staff members of, and volunteers, at the centre
- Take into account the size and composition of the groups of children within the centre when planning our activities and our responses to the children's needs

*References:

Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) (2011). Guide to the National Law and National Regulations. Canberra: ACECQA

Early Childhood Australia (2006) Code of Ethics.

http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/pdf/code_of_ethics/code_of_ethics_%20brochure_screenweb_2010.pdf (accessed online 20th June 2013)

Inclusion of Children

- Our centre believes that all children are to be included in planned and unplanned experiences during the day, regardless of their age or abilities. Some of the children in our centre are unable to mix with the other children due

to chronic, life threatening conditions but we make sure that they have access to the same educational materials, program planning and quality care that is provided throughout the rest of our centre.

- All children are encouraged and supported to sit in a group on our circle mats during transition times while a story is read or a few songs are sung. Educators will sit on the mat among the children to help to encourage their participation during these short sessions and will hold some little children on their laps when some extra encouragement to stay with the group during these activities is required.
- Our centre encourages the visiting of specialists who work with children enrolled in our centre to give us advice about the child's individual needs and how we can engage them in activities during the day and what strategies best support them if they have any additional needs
- If a child has additional needs the centre is registered for ISS funding and with the family's permission will start the process of apply for additional funding for the children in our care to be able to have some additional assistance.

Family Participation and Communication

"Partnerships with families contribute to building a strong, inclusive community within the service. Continuous, honest and open two-way communication with educators assists families to feel connected with their children's experience in education and care and helps them develop trust and confidence in the service. Shared decision making with families supports consistency between children's experiences at home and at the service, helping children to feel safe, secure and supported." Guide to the National Quality Standard (3) ACECQA (2011), p.148.

- Here at Stella Bella Children's Centre we actively encourage family participation as we believe it's an important part in honouring each child's cultural and family values into our care program and creating a warm and welcoming environment for all.
- Stella Bella Children's Centre welcomes and facilitates family participation and open communication in the service by encouraging families to engage with their children's educators.
- Families are invited to attend regular social functions at the centre for a chance to spend time with their child in their care environment and to meet other families and get to know the educators on a more personal level.
- Stella Bella encourages open communication through the enrolment and orientation process, policy review, feedback forms, the daily program, documentation, formal and informal meetings, emails, newsletters and conversations.
- Staff at the centre form meaningful relationships with the children and their families during their times in the centre and this is one of the things that we pride ourselves in. However, to keep our relations appropriate and professional, private external communications, social media interactions and privately arranged childcare outside of centre hours is strictly prohibited.

Safe sleep and Rest Times

All children in the centre have different sleeping routine, here at Stella Bella we are committed to catering for all children needs. Our sleep spaces are safe and well maintained to ensure and enable their little bodies to rest and sleep. We will make every opportunity for the children to have a quiet place to sleep, rest and relax.

- We will ensure there are adequate numbers of cots and bedding available to children that meet Australian Standards.
- We will follow the Sids and Kids Safe sleeping guidelines in relation to all children under 2 at all times
- Ensure that supervision windows will be kept clear to ensure safe supervision of sleeping children.
- Maintain up to date knowledge regarding safe sleeping practice and communicate this information to educators and families.
- Ensure that bed linen is clean and in good repair. Bed linen is for use by an individual child and will be washed before use by another child.
- Consult with families about children's sleep and rest needs. Educators will be sensitive to each child's needs so that sleep and rest times are a positive experience.
- Arrange children's beds and cots to allow easy access for children and staff.
- Remember that children do not always need to be "patted" to sleep. By providing a quiet, tranquil environment, children will choose to sleep if their body needs it.
- Encourage children to rest their bodies and minds for 30-40 minutes. If children are awake after this time, they will be provided quiet activities for the duration of rest time.
- Educators to check the sleeping children in the cot room every 15mins and record it on the sleeping register

*References:

https://rednose.com.au/downloads/Safe_Sleeping_Brochure.pdf

Water Safety

Stella Bella Children's Centre will ensure that all water based learning is actively supervised and containers are emptied when not in use.

- Water troughs and water features are to be filled up or turned on only when play begins and only when active supervision can occur.
- All water features/water troughs must be emptied immediately after use (when all children come indoors from outdoors and when playrooms/outdoors are not in use)
- Children playing with water will be closely supervised with an educator standing at the activity at all times.
- Staff will never leave a child unattended at a water activity
- To prevent the unplanned collection of water, containers are to be stored upright/inverted, and grounds are to be checked after rain or watering and water that has collected in holes or containers is to be emptied.
- Hot water accessible to children is regulated to a temperature under 40 degrees Celsius
- When on an excursion, where there is water close by, a ratio of 1:1 will be enforced to prevent accidents from happening

Managing Infectious Illness

Stella Bella Children's Centre is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for children, staff and other people who may participate in the program. Stella Bella Children's Centre also provides respite care for seriously children so we have very strict policies on preventing and dealing with infectious illnesses within the centre to help to protect these children.

Stella Bella Children's service staff will respond to the needs of children if they become unwell while attending the centre.

- When necessary, a child or other person with an infectious disease will be excluded from the centre in line with the recommended exclusion periods identified on the Exclusion Poster.
- Staff are required to record episodes of illnesses, such as vomiting and diarrhoea, in the illness register.
- Staff to contact the ACT Department of Health in the case of an outbreak of an infectious disease
- Staff to ensure that the exclusion requirements for infectious diseases are adhered to
- Staff are to Notify families of any outbreak of an infectious disease within the centre.
- Staff to ensure that information about the disease and its exclusion period will be clearly displayed
- Families are required to: notify the centre if their child has an infectious disease; provide accurate and current information regarding the immunisation status of their children when they enrol and any subsequent changes to this whilst they are attending the centre.
- There is a minimal 24hr exclusion period if your child is sent home from the service with a temperature greater the 38 degrees, has had vomiting, and loose bowel movements.

Managing Medical Conditions

Stella Bella Children's Service is committed to a planned approach to the management of medical conditions to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all children.

Stella Bella Children's Service is also committed to ensuring educators are equipped with the knowledge and skills to manage situations to ensure all children receive the highest level of care and to ensure their needs are considered at all times.

Stella Bella Children's Service will minimise the risks around medical conditions of children by: Collaborating with families of children with diagnosed medical conditions to develop an action plan for their child;

The paediatric Nurses that will be on premises from 9-5 in the special care unit will be able to assist with any medical needs of the children in the entire centre with the need is there.

Informing all staff, including casual staff, and educators, of all children diagnosed with a medical condition and the action plan procedures for these;

- Providing all families with current information about identified medical conditions of children enrolled at the service with strategies to support the implementation of the action plan;
- Ensuring all children with diagnosed medical conditions have a current action plan that is accessible to all staff; and
- Ensuring all staff are adequately trained in the administration of emergency medication.
- Ensure the Nominated Supervisor fulfils responsibilities in the management of medical conditions.
- The Nominated Supervisor and Paediatric Nurse will ensure that any parent with a child enrolled at the service that has a specific health care need, allergy or other relevant medical condition is provided with a copy of this Medical Conditions policy; inform parents of the requirement to provide the service with a medical management plan of their child's condition; collaborate with families of children with medical conditions to develop a risk minimisation plan to ensure the child's safety and wellbeing:
- Ensure that the risks relating to a child's specific health care need, allergy or relevant medical condition are assessed and minimised; and if relevant, to ensure that practices and procedures in relation to the safe handling, preparation, consumption and service of food are developed and implemented; and if relevant, to ensure that practices and procedures to ensure that the parents are notified of any known allergens that pose a risk to a child and strategies for minimising the risk are developed and implemented; and to ensure that practices and procedures ensuring that all staff members and volunteers can identify the child, the child's medical management plan and the location of the child's medication are developed and implemented; and if relevant, to ensure that practices and procedures ensuring that the child does not attend the service without medication prescribed by the child's medical practitioner in relation to the child's specific health care need, allergy or relevant medical condition are developed and implemented; and ensure that all staff and educators are aware of the medical management plan and risk minimisation plan;
- Ensure that staff are adequately trained in procedures contained in the medical management plan; and inform other families enrolled at the centre of the need to prohibit any items which may present a hazard to children with diagnosed medical conditions nuts and products that contain nuts are prohibited at all times other foods, such as eggs and dairy products, may also be proscribed at times depending on the risk of anaphylaxis and families will be notified if this situation arises

Medical Emergency & First Aid Administration

If an accident occurs the following procedures apply:

- Decide if the injury or condition requires urgent medical attention:
- If an injury or condition requires urgent medical attention: A staff member to remain with the child;
- If child cannot be moved: phone the ambulance – 000 or 112 (mobile)
- If child can be moved: a staff member to remain with the child; telephone parents and tell them of the injury and inform them of any plans to transport the child to Canberra hospital via ambulance;
- Medical staff to be provided with the child's enrolment form, as this includes the child's medical records and medical treatment permission.
- Staff to complete all details in the Illness and Accident Register.
- If injury or condition does not require **urgent** medical attention: telephone parents and advise of injury or condition;
- first aid officer to treat as appropriate;
- complete all details in the Illness and Accident Register.
- If injury or condition does not require medical attention: first aid officer to treat as appropriate; inform parents of injury or condition on their arrival to collect their child.

Medication Administration

The use of medications may be required by children at the centre to ensure the health and safety of the children. Any medication must be administered as prescribed by medical practitioners to ensure continuing health for the child and for the child's safety and wellbeing.

- Ensure that if medication is administered without authorisation in the event of an asthma or anaphylaxis emergency that the parent of the child and emergency services are notified as soon as practical and
- Ensure that enrolment records for each child outline the details of persons permitted to authorise the administration of medication to the child.
- Take reasonable steps to ensure that medication records are maintained accurately.
- Keep medication forms in a secure and confidential manner and ensure the records are archived for the regulatory prescribed length of time.
- Ensure that educators receive information about the medical and medication policies during their induction.
- Request written consent from families on the enrolment form to administer the *Emergency Asthma Kit* if required.
- Families will be reminded that every attempt to contact them for verbal permission will be made by the education and care service prior to administering asthma medications.
- Inform families of the service's medical and medication policies and the need to ensure that safe practices are adhered to for the wellbeing of both the child and educators.
- Families requesting the administration of medication will be required to follow the guidelines developed by the service to ensure the safety of children and educators.
- The service will follow legislative guidelines and standards in order to ensure the health of children, families and educators at all times.
- A medication form with the children name, name of medication and dosage will be required before we administer any medication. The medication also needs to have a doctor local attached with the child's name, dosage and expiry date.
- All medication will be stored in a locked box either in the fridge or in locked box out of the reach of children. – each medication will be clearly labelled with the child's name so that educators can recognise each individual medication.
- Educators are to follow hand washing procedures before and after administering medication.
- The Educators are to share any concerns or doubts about the safety of administering medications with the Nominated Supervisor to ensure the safety of the child. The Nominated Supervisor may seek further information from the family, the prescribing doctor, or the *Public Health Unit* before administering medication.

Sun Care

Stella Bella Children's Centre is a sun smart centre and we use the UV guidelines to protect the children when outdoors. We use the following strategies to protection the children in our care:

- We have regular conversations with the staff, children and their parents about skin cancer and sun protection and healthy practices
- All staff are required to act as Sun Smart role models by using a combination of sun protection measures from August 1st to the end of May or when UV levels are 3 and above.
- We work towards a safe childcare environment that provides shade for children, staff and the visitors to the centre
- We assist and educate children to be responsible for their own sun protection.
- We ensure that families and new staff are informed of the centre's Sun Smart policy.
- We ask that all children bring a hat to the centre so they are able to enjoy the beautiful outdoor environment in safety. We also keep a stock of spare hats in the centre for times when a child's hat has not been provided
- We provide Cancer Council approved sunscreen for both staff and children at the centre.

Toilet Learning

Educators will allow the child to learn at their own pace with positive support and help. Providing children with clothing that can be easily put on and removed by them and giving the child positive verbal and non-verbal praise is important to the child's self-esteem. We work in partnership with families and have open communication daily to help ensure consistency and success for the child. We use the following signs to help us to be aware that a child may be ready to start toilet training:

- The child can stay dry for longer periods of time during the day, or overnight
- The child knows the feelings that signal he/she needs to go to the toilet
- The child can pull down and up own clothing
- The child can get him or herself to the toilet
- The child can point to wet or soiled clothes and ask to be changed
- The child pays attention to the physical signals
- The child knows the words for using the toilet, and can tell an adult when he/she needs to go
- The child has asked to wear underwear, not wanting to wear a nappy anymore
- The child shows interest in using the toilet, e.g. may want to put paper in and flush it

Nappy Change

We provide nappies to children in our care and use the most environmentally friendly brands we can purchase. We strive to make nappy change time a positive experience for the children. We provide:

- Adequate and appropriate hygienic facilities for nappy changing;
- Adult hand washing facilities located within the nappy change area;
- Children's hand washing facilities within the nappy change area;
- Nappy change facilities that are designed and maintained in a way that Educators have supervision of children at all times. We provide updates to families regarding children's nappy change patterns
- Nappy change bins with a 'hands-free' lid. Nappy bins will be located out of children's reach, in a childproof cupboard where possible.

Our Educators will:

- Utilise nappy change times to interact with children on an individual basis.,
- Converse, sing, play and generally interact with the child. This time allows educators and children to learn more about each other and understand each child's personality and personal strengths;
- Change children's nappies at scheduled time of the day determined by the nominated supervisor and educators as well as at times when the need for a change is obvious.
- Check nappies throughout the day to ensure children are dry to prevent nappy rash and discomfort.
- Use system to record this routine will be maintained for reporting purposes.
- Encourage each other to ensure nappy change procedures support children's safety, protection, relationships and learning.
- Ensure that soiled clothing and soiled nappies are disposed of or temporarily stored in a location that children cannot access.

Incident Injury and trauma procedures

- In the event of a child requiring first aid as a result of injury, illness or trauma parents will be notified as soon as possible and not later than 2 hours after the incident has occurred.

- If a child sustains an injury above the shoulders the families will be notified as soon as possible after the incident and not later than 2 hours after the incident has occurred.
- The incident report will be filed within 24 hours. The record must include the details of the incident in relation to a child or an injury received or trauma been subjected too whilst in the Centre. It will include name and age, of child, circumstances leading to injury, time date the incident occurred, the injury received or the time the child experienced the trauma.
- All incident, injury and trauma reports and records will be kept and confidentially stored for 25 years.

Medical Emergency / Accident

If a medical emergency or accident occurs the following procedures apply:

- Senior staff will decide if the injury or condition requires urgent medical attention
- If an injury or condition requires urgent medical attention: A staff member will remain with the child, while another staff member phones and ambulance 000 or 112 (mobile)
- A staff member to remain with the child at all times even when an ambulance arrives and the paramedics take over.
- Parents of the child will be telephoned as soon as possible and told of the emergency and updated on the status of the child when the paramedics have assessed the child.
- A staff member will accompany the child in the ambulance if the child is taken to hospital and if the parents have not arrived to accompany them.
- Staff will complete all details in the Illness and Accident Register.

If an injury occurs or a child becomes unwell but does not require urgent medical attention, staff will:

- Telephone parents and advise of injury or condition;
- Administer and first aid required
- Complete all details in the Illness and Accident Register

Serious Incident Initial Reporting and Notification guidelines

The following incidents are required to be reported to the regulatory body within 24 hours of the incident occurring. Parents are to be notified as soon as possible and within two hours.

- The death of a child while being educated and cared for by the service, or following an incident while being cared for by the service.
- Any incident involving serious injury or trauma to, or illness of, a child while being educated and cared for by an education and care service which a reasonable person would consider required urgent medical attention from a registered medical practitioner. (E.g. whooping cough, broken limb, anaphylaxis reaction); or for which the child attended, or ought reasonably to have attended, a hospital.
- Attendance of emergency services at the education and care service premises was sought, or ought reasonably to have been sought.
- A child was missing from the service or was not able to be accounted for.
- A child was taken or removed from the service in a manner that contravenes the National Regulations.

Dental Health

Stella Bella Children's Centre will promote dental health by doing the following the centre will:

- Provide nutritional foods for children, avoiding food and drinks that have a sweet and sugary content. Water will be available at all times.
- Ensure that the daily menu contains a nutritional balance of foods;

- Minimise the provision of sugary foods.
- Ensure access to safe drinking water at all times.
- Include dental health practices in the program;
- Provide water at all meal times for the children to drink.

Nutrition

All staff and volunteers will implement excellent health and hygiene practices and safe practices for food handling, preparing, serving and storing food. The cook is to undertake the food alert training and at least 2 staff members are required to hold a food safety supervisors certificate.

- Our centre will ensure all children being cared for to have access to safe drinking water at all times and be offered food and beverages that are appropriate, nutritious and adequate in quantity taking into account the dietary requirements of individual children, their growth and developmental needs and any specific, cultural, religious or health requirements.
- A weekly menu is display in the foyer for families to see as well as a blackboard that has what we are eating for lunch that day.
- We will endeavour to be well informed about children and staff and their health needs and requirements with a particular emphasis on acknowledging allergies to nuts and nut products.
- Our centre believes in wholesome nutrition based on the basic food groups.
- Our centre has a NUT FREE centre. Products such as peanut butter, chocolate spreads (Nutella), nut food bars, loose nuts and products that have nuts listed in the ingredients will not be allowed in the centre.
- Our centre will develop emergency procedures for the treatment of allergic reactions, when there are food or other allergies in the centre.

Smoking

Smoking on the premises or in any of the outdoor areas and carpark at the Stella Bella Children's Centre is strictly prohibited.

- We encourage all of our educators to refrain from smoking on their breaks or just before their shift starts to protect the children in our care who have respiratory illnesses.

Social Media

Here at Stella Bella Children's Centre we endeavour to provide the best quality education and care for your child and family. To assist us in upholding respectful relationships we strongly discourage our educators from connecting with parents from our centre on any social media sites.

We will only ever include photos of any of the children in our care, in any form of public media, with written and verbal permission from the child's parent/guardian on each separate occasion.

Photos of Children

There is a photo permission form that all families are given upon enrolment and parents preferences are always adhered to. Educators will only take photos of children whose parents have given permission for and the photos will be shared with the parents and not used by staff for personal use. Parents are encouraged to respect other families privacy and not take photographs of any children who are not their own whilst in the centre.

Confidentiality

The aim of Stella Bella Children's Centre confidentiality policy is to safeguard the privacy of each Child, family, staff member and volunteer involved with the centre. We are committed to making sure that any child, parent or family member, staff member or volunteer has their individual privacy respected and protected. We are committed to ensuring that information provided to us remains protected from misuse, loss or unauthorised access and we do this by providing locked office areas, administrative protocols and by limiting computer access to electronically stored information.

In relation to children and their families, we gather and hold information before, during and after enrolment. This information can only be seen by the parent or legal guardian, centre staff, authorised representatives from the

Licensing Authority, and assessors from ACECQA (Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority). We collect the information required in a variety of ways. These include; enrolment forms, private discussions, meetings, personal correspondence, email and telephone calls.

In regards to families and children, Stella Bella may gain information from a third party and examples of this may include reports from Doctors, speech therapists and specialist services.

Stella Bella will only disclose information to another source with the parents' or legal guardian's written consent. This may include government departments or medical practitioners. We are guided in this policy by Early Childhood Australia's Code of Ethics:

- Stella Bella Children's Centre will maintain private and confidential files for the Staff, Managers, Volunteers and students. We will continue to improve systems for the appropriate use, storage and disposal of records.
- We will ensure the information in these files is used only for the provision of services by the centre and only shared with relevant organisations as defined in this policy and in our Privacy Collection Statement.
- We will ensure each staff member, Volunteer and Student information is correct in personnel and other files. This includes information on qualifications, WWVP Card, criminal history checks, contact and emergency information, health and immunisation information, and any relevant medical and legal information.
- Individuals will be allowed access to their personal information as requested. Individuals must request this information in writing from the organisation.
- We will maintain the confidentiality of all children and their families that attend the centre, along with their personal files, personal details and conversation that happen within the centre.

Emergency and Evacuation Procedures

Stella Bella Children's Centre is assessed for compliance to meet ACT fire safety standards annually. We have scheduled practice evacuations and lock down drills to help the children to learn the routine and to be able to cope more easily in the event that a true emergency arises. We keep a fully stocked emergency kit ready at all time which contains a first aid kit, children's current medications, snacks and water and an emergency contact list with all of the details for each family.

- All staff are familiar with and refer to the Emergency Evacuation procedure located on all EXIT doors and the kitchen door.
- Staff are trained to stay calm and orderly during emergency situations
- In the event of an emergency, designated staff members will collect the Sign-in Register, the evacuation kit and calmly, but firmly, usher the children to the designated assembly area. Once all children and staff are safely at the evacuation point, staff will check off the children's names from the Sign-in Register.
- All staff and children will remain in assembly area unless unsafe. If unsafe the whole group will proceed to alternate designated area.
- Staff will not re-enter the building until it is confirmed safe.
- Members of the Stella Bella Children's Centre permanent staff will fulfil the roles of First Aid Officer and Fire Wardens and will have regular training in regard to emergency evacuation procedures and First Aid.
- Regular practice evacuations and locks down will take place within the centre.

Excursions

The Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations (2011) provide a framework for planning all excursions. Prior to any excursion from the Centre and before permission from families is sought a risk assessment will be carried out to identify and assess any risks that the excursion may pose to the safety, health or wellbeing of any child being taken on excursion and a risk mitigation form is completed.

- An excursion register is held at the centre and written permission is gained from all parents. The authorisation from parents must include information on the proposed destination, the method of transport to be used, proposed activities to be used during the excursion and period away from premises as well as the ratio of staff to children.

- Parents will be notified that a risk assessment has been prepared and is available at the service.
- A list of parent and emergency contacts accompanies the excursion.
- Staff/child ratios to always comply or exceed the licensing requirements of 1:4. The number of staff required will be determined in relation to any assessed risks.
- All staff members will have current first aid certification.
- A medical kit is carried at all times.
- When on excursion there will be at least one staff member with current anaphylaxis and asthma management training
- Transport to excursion venues is predominantly by Canberra's ACTION bus service. In the event of a vehicle breakdown or accident occurring while on excursion staff will use a mobile phone and the contact list containing details of all children, staff and parent helpers to inform parents and the Centre of any delays or injuries. If the incident is a vehicle breakdown staff will contact the Centre Director to make alternate transport arrangements.
- If the incident is of a more serious nature that includes injuries to children or staff the following measures will be taken: Staff accompanying children have First Aid training and carry a First Aid kit and will attend to any minor injuries.
- Staff will notify the Police to report the accident
- If the incident is of a more serious nature staff will contact the Ambulance and Police for emergency attendance.
- Staff will contact the Director as soon as possible
- A Serious Incident Form will be completed as soon as staff members return to the Centre.
- The Licensing Authority will be contacted within 24 hours of the incident occurring.

Child Protection

The Children and Young People Act of 1999 requires certain professional groups to report non-accidental physical, emotional and/or sexual abuse of children and young people.

Under the Act all staff caring for a child at a childcare centre are mandated to report a belief on reasonable grounds that a child has been subjected to any form of sexual or physical abuse. (Additional detailed information will be provided to all staff regarding what constitutes physical and sexual abuse)

Keeping children safe from harm is a priority at the Stella Bella Children's Centre and we ensure that all staff are trained in mandatory reporting.

- If a staff member suspects that a child may be at risk of abuse or neglect she needs to discuss the situation with the room leader, nominated supervisor or centre manager immediately.
- Concerns should be documented and held in confidential records, accessible only to authorised staff. Exemptions to this would include a court order or a request by Child Protection services under the Children and Young People's Act.
- Detailed records should be kept. These should be based on observation and direct comments from the child, which should be recorded verbatim and without interpretation.
- Where a staff member has reasonable grounds to suspect that a child is suffering abuse or neglect or wishes to discuss concerns about a child they should contact Care and Protection Services Centralised Intake Service 1300 556 728 (Mandated Person Line) or 02 6205 0641
- In the case of urgent or immediate assistance staff should call the Police on (0)000
- Staff must make a report to Child Protection Services when they have current concerns about the safety, welfare and wellbeing of a child for any of the following reasons:
 - The basic physical or psychological needs of the child are not being met
 - The parents or caregivers have not arranged necessary medical care (unwilling or unable to do so)
 - There is risk of physical or sexual abuse or ill-treatment
 - The parent or caregiver's behaviour towards the child causes or risks psychological harm
 - There are incidents of domestic violence and as a consequence a child is at risk of serious physical or psychological harm
- On the commencement of employment all staff will be given a copy of the ACT guide to reporting child abuse and Neglect, Keeping children and young people safe, a shared responsibility.

- Stella Bella Children’s Centre will take all reasonable steps to ensure children being cared for in our Centre will not be left alone with any visitors to the Centre.
- Stella Bella Children’s Centre will ensure no child cared for in our Centre will be subjected to any form of corporal punishment or any discipline that is unreasonable in the circumstances.
- All staff and volunteers at the Centre are required to have an up to date Working with Vulnerable People card

Staffing Responsible Person

A ‘responsible person’ is the approved provider or the nominated supervisor or a certified supervisor of a childcare centre.

- The Stella Bella Children’s centre will always have a ‘responsible person’ present in the centre at all times when the centre is operating.
- There will be a whiteboard clearly visible in the entrance of the centre with the name and position of the “responsible person”, on duty at all times.

Code of Conduct in staff.

All Stella Bella childcare centre staff members, both educators and administrative staff and volunteers, are bound by the principles enshrined in the Early Childhood Code of Ethics (2006). The Code of Ethics is a set of statements about appropriate and expected behaviour of members of a professional group and, as such, reflects its values. The following processes and values are considered central to the Code of Ethics and frame the practice of educators and staff members in our Centre:

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

In addition to these the Stella Bella Children’s Centre encourages:

- kindness
- empathy
- fairness
- and an understanding of the importance of family, community and care for the natural environment
- As stated in the Code of Ethics, staff members are required to focus on the protection and wellbeing of children and therefore believe that speaking out or taking action in the presence of unethical practice is an essential and guiding principle of our professional practice.
- All staff at the centre regardless of their position will be seen as valued members of our team, and will be acknowledged for their contributions and offered regular opportunities for training and skills advancement.
- The Provider of the Stella Bella Children’s Centre (The Stella Bella little stars foundation) will also adhere to the code of ethics as stated above in all dealings with centre staff and volunteers and will also encourage family friendly employment conditions.

Grievances

We believe that staff and families should interact with each other at all times with respect and kindness. We believe that everyone who accesses Stella Bella Children’s Centre has the right to have any grievances heard and dealt with accordingly and without fear of recrimination.

We are very open to comments, suggestions and complaints because they help us to provide a better service. We believe that any comments, suggestions or complaints should be brought to the attention of whichever staff member the person making the comment, suggestion or complaint feels most comfortable in contacting. After identifying a grievance, the desired outcome is that the matter is dealt with in such a way as to meet a mutually satisfactory resolution. In the case of grievance, the following procedures are suggested:

- Staff or parents are encouraged to bring up any issues with one of Stella Bella's leading team members – Suzanne Tunks or Dannie Condon. All parents and staff have access to contact information for both leading team members during and after hours and are encouraged to call or organise a meeting at any time they feel they need to discuss an issue.
- All complaints, verbal and written will be taken very seriously and will be lodged through the portal to the governing authority within 24 hours.
- If an issue appears to be not easily resolved in the first instance, our leading team members will contact the Stella Bella Children's Centre Advisory Board which is made up of a panel of highly experienced child health and welfare professionals. A member of the advisory board will be invited to a meeting with the concerned parents (and their support person if needed), along with the leading team members.
- The Stella Bella Children's Centre will always do its utmost to resolve any issues that arise with respect and understanding so that parents will always feel that their concerns are valued.

Participation of volunteers and students on practicum placements.

- The Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor or Certified Supervisor will maintain a visitor's book and will request sign in of all visitors to the service including full name, contact details and date of birth and reason for visit.
- Records relating to visitors, volunteers and students to the centre will be maintained and stored for 25 years.
- Educators and staff will abide by regulatory protocol when visitors are in the service.
- The centre will ensure that all educators and staff understand the regulatory and ethical guidelines relating to visitors at the centre and will provide an induction protocol for all staff to use with visitors and will keep a record of all volunteers and students who spend time in the service.
- The record will include: full name; address; date of birth; emergency contacts: names and numbers.
- Welcome visitors to the service, direct visitors appropriately and make the Nominated or Certified Supervisor aware of a visitor presence in the service;
- Welcome family and friends to visit and participate at any time.
- The Approved Provider/ Nominated Supervisor will conduct the orientation of volunteer, work placement or work experience students.
- The responsible person will ensure that a Working with Vulnerable People Check (WWVP) has been carried out or will instigate this process.

Animals in the Environment

Stella Bella Children Centre believes that having pets is a healthy part of childhood and learning and works hard to accommodate certain pets in the centre whilst ensuring that high standards of hygiene and safety around them is maintained. The centre has a very well-trained therapy dog who attends with the Director and who is always under her supervision. There is also a chicken house and yard in the garden containing 3 chickens who eat the food scraps and repay with eggs.

- The Educators at Stella Bella Children's Centre Educators will ensure that all pets and their homes are kept clean and hygienic.
- Educators will ensure they have clean bedding, water and Food. But food kept out of reach of children at all times.
- Children will be supervised at all times when interacting with pets or animals.
- Educators will manage any health or safety risk for the children that may be caused by animals, such as allergies that Children and Educators may have.
- Educators will complete risk assessment paperwork in relation to the visit.

- There are situations that may spontaneously occur, involving animals. For example, there may be a situation where an animal or bird has made its way into the education and care service. Educators may use this as a spontaneous learning experience for the children. At all times, they will ensure the safety and wellbeing of the children.
- The presence of animals in the education and care service will be managed by educators to ensure that the safety and wellbeing of children, families, educators and animals is maintained at all times. Educators will consider the risks versus the benefits of including animals in the educational program.
- If the remains of an animal, or animal faeces, have been found in or around the premises, the remains will be disposed of according to the local Council guidelines and the area where the remains were found will be thoroughly disinfected with hot, soapy water and sanitiser.

Safe storage of dangerous goods

By maximising awareness and ensuring dangerous products are safely stored we reduce the risk of harm to educators, children and families. Stella Bella Children's Centre aims to reduce the use of dangerous products within the environment by introducing eco-friendly and less poison cleaning procedures. Our staff ensure:

- That there are emergency procedures and practices for accidental spills, contamination and corresponding first aid plans for all dangerous goods handled and stored in the service.
- That at all times there is an educator on the premises with WorkCover & ACECQA approved first aid qualifications.
- That there are appropriate storage facilities in the service in which dangerous products are stored under lock and key. Dangerous products are locked away in areas of the service that are not accessible to children or in cupboards fitted with childproof locks.

A Hazardous Substances Register and a risk assessment for any dangerous materials stored in bulk within the centre is made available in the chemical cupboard. The register records the product name, application, whether the MSDS is available, what class risk the chemical has, controls for prevention of exposure required, what first aid, medical or safety action should be taken if a person is exposed. Staff will:

- Seek medical advice as needed by contacting the **Poisons Information Line – 13 11 26** or by calling **000**.
- Strictly adhere to the 'Directions for use' on the product label.
- Dispose of all products safely, in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions on the product label, Work Health and Safety regulations and Council by-laws.

Environmental sustainability

- Stella Bella Children's Centre encourages and increases awareness of environmental responsibilities and implements practices that contribute to a sustainable future Children.
- We show respect for the environment.
- Environmentally sustainable practices are embedded into the operations of the centre and involve all educators, children and families.
- The service will ensure the environment is safe, clean and well-maintained at all times
- Children's awareness of the environment will be promoted through daily practices, resources and interactions.
- Sustainable practices will be encouraged within the centre
- Educators, children and families will be encouraged to become advocates for a sustainable future.
- We have recycling bins, paper bins, veggie patches, composting facilities, and a chicken coop for the children to help them learn about the life cycles of plants and animals.

The Indoor & Outdoor Environment

The physical environment can contribute to children's wellbeing, happiness, creativity and developing independence. It can contribute to and express the quality of children's learning and experiences.

- Stella Bella Children's Centre will ensure the environment is safe, clean and well maintained.
- Children's awareness of the environment and sustainable practice will be supported through daily practices, resources and interactions.

- The physical environment, both in and outdoors will support children’s learning, safety, levels of engagement and access to positive experiences and inclusive relationships.
 - Fencing and barriers which enclose outdoor areas used by children centre are maintained to ensure they are of a height and design that prevents children of preschool age from going through, over or under the structure.
 - Sufficient furniture, materials and developmentally appropriate equipment are provided and maintained in the education and care service in order to support all children to engage and access the program and develop their skills and independence.
 - Any laundry facility in the premises is located and maintained in a way that does not pose any risks to children.
 - Adequate space requirements are maintained in both the indoor and outdoor environments.
 - Toilet, washing and drying facilities are developmentally and age appropriate and are located and designed in a way that support safe use and convenient access by children.
 - The nappy change areas support safe access and hygienic nappy change routines and that educators and children have ready access to hand washing facilities.
 - Education and care environments are well ventilated and have adequate natural light.
 - Indoor temperatures are maintained at levels that support children’s safety and wellbeing.
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- The play spaces in the education and care service provide children with opportunities to explore and experience the natural environment.
 - The outdoor education and care environment has adequate shaded areas to protect children from ultraviolet radiation from the sun.
 - The environment seeks to support convenient access to both indoor and outdoor play activities and to toilet and nappy change facilities according to supervision requirements, children’s independence and developmental needs.
 - Where possible, gardens reflect the local natural habitat and encourage native wildlife into the education and care environment.
 - Encourage and nurture children’s interest in the world around them. By providing children with materials, resources and information, educators can help children to appreciate and respect the beauty of their natural and built environments.
 - Encourage children and families to collect and bring recycled equipment and natural resources into the environment.
 - Encourage children to care for plants by growing plants from seeds.

This document was updated in August 2017 and is regularly reviewed and amended in line with any new policies.