

	Interactions with Children Policy & Procedures
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Authorisation	General Manager
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Responsible Officer	Manager Evolve Early Learning & Kindergarten
Policy Owner	Evolve Early Learning & Kindergarten

Policy

Evolve Early Learning & Kindergarten is committed to:

- Maintaining the dignity and rights of each child at the service
- Encouraging children to express themselves and their opinions, and to undertake experiences that develop self-reliance and self-esteem
- Considering the health, safety and wellbeing of each child, and providing a safe, secure and welcoming environment in which they can develop and learn
- Maintaining a Duty of Care (refer to *Definitions*) towards all children at the service
- Considering the diversity of individual children at the service, including family and cultural values, age, and the physical and intellectual development and abilities of each child
- Building collaborative relationships with families to improve learning and developmental outcomes for children
- Encouraging positive, respectful and warm relationships between children and educators/staff at the service.

Purpose

Evolve Early Education & Kindergarten is committed to:

- The development of positive and respectful relationships with each child at Evolve Early Learning & Kindergarten
- Supporting each child at Evolve Early Learning & Kindergarten to learn and develop in a secure and empowering environment.
- This policy has been adapted from *PolicyWorks* Manual - National Quality Framework released by the Early Learning Association Australia.

Scope

This policy applies to Evolve Early Learning & Kindergarten who is responsible for the direct education and care of children including offsite excursions and activities.

This policy applies to the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor/Primary Nominee, Approved/Accepted Nominee, Certified Supervisor, Educators, Staff, Students on placement, Volunteers, Parents/guardians, Children and others attending Evolve Early Education & Kindergarten

National Quality Standards (NQS)

Quality Area 5: Relationships with Children

5.1 Relationships between educators and children – Respectful and equitable relationships are maintained with each child

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 Relationships between children – Each child is supported to build and maintain sensitive and responsive relationships

5.2.1 Collaborative learning – Children are supported to collaborate, learn from and help each other

Quality Area 6: Collaborative partnerships with families and communities

6.1 Supportive relationships with families – Respectful relationships with families are developed and maintained and families are supported in their parenting role

6.1.1 Engagement with the service – Families are supported from enrolment to be involved in the service and contribute to service decisions

6.1.2 Parents view are respected – The expertise, culture, values and beliefs of families are respected and families share decision-making about their child's learning and wellbeing

6.1.3 Families are supported – Current information is available to families about the service and relevant community services and resources to support parenting and family wellbeing

Background

- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child is founded on respect for the dignity and worth of each individual, regardless of race, colour, gender, language, religion, opinions, wealth, birth status or ability.
- Developing responsive, warm, trusting and respectful relationships with children promotes their wellbeing, self-esteem and sense of security.
- Positive interactions between educators/adults and children can empower children to feel valued, competent and capable.
- Actively engaging in children's learning and decision-making during play, daily routines and ongoing activities can stimulate children's thinking, enrich their learning and encourage them to explore and regulate their feelings and behaviour.
- Having supportive relationships with the Nominated Supervisor, educators, coordinators and staff members enables children to develop confidence in their ability to express themselves, work through differences, learn new things and take calculated risks.

- National Regulation 155 requires an Approved Provider of children’s services to take reasonable steps to ensure that the service provides education and care to children in a way that encourages them to express themselves, and develop self-reliance and self-esteem, maintains their dignity and rights, provides positive guidance and encouragement towards acceptable behaviour, and respects their cultural and family values.
- National Regulation 156 requires the Approved Provider to ensure that the service provides children with opportunities to interact and develop positive relationships with each other, and with the staff and volunteers at the service.
- To meet these requirements, the Approved Provider is expected to consider the size and composition of the groups in which the children are educated and cared for.
- In developing an *Interactions with Children Policy*, early childhood education and care services must review and reflect on the philosophy, beliefs and values of the service, particularly with regard to the relationships with children.
- The development of this policy should also be informed by the service’s *Code of Conduct Policy*.

Education and Care National Regulations

- Interactions with children (National Regulations 155)
- Relationships in groups (National Regulations 156)

Responsibility/Accountability

The Approved Provider, according to Regulations is responsible for the implementation of this policy. This will be achieved through the Centre Manager and the staff:

- Developing and implementing the *Interactions with Children Policy* in consultation with the Nominated Supervisor, Certified Supervisor, Nominees, educators, staff and parents/guardians, and ensuring that it reflects the philosophy, beliefs and values of the service
- Parents/guardians, the Nominated Supervisor and all staff are provided with access to this policy and comply with its requirements
- The Nominated Supervisor, educators and all staff are aware of the service’s expectations regarding positive, respectful and appropriate behaviour, and acceptable responses and interactions when working with children and families (refer to *Code of Conduct Policy*)
- Children are adequately supervised (refer to *Definitions*) and that educator-to-child ratios are maintained at all times (refer to *Supervision of Children Policy*)
- The size and composition of groups is considered to ensure all children are provided with the best opportunities for quality interactions and relationships with each other and with adults at the service (National Regulation 156)
- Educational programs are delivered in accordance with an approved learning framework, are based on the developmental needs, interests and experiences of each child, and take into account the individual differences of each child (refer to *Inclusion and Equity Policy*)

- The educational program contributes to the development of children who have a strong sense of wellbeing and identity, and are connected, confident, involved and effective learners and communicators (National Regulation 73) (refer to *Educational Program Development Policy*)
- That the service provides education and care to children in a way that:
 - Encourages children to express themselves and their opinions
 - Allows children to undertake experiences that develop self-reliance and self-esteem
 - Maintains the dignity and the rights of each child at all times
 - Offers positive guidance and encouragement towards acceptable behaviour
- Has regard to the cultural and family values, age, and the physical and intellectual development and abilities of each child being educated and cared for (National Regulation 155)

Clear documentation of the assessment and evaluation of each child's:

- Developmental needs, interests, experiences and program participation
- Progress against the outcomes of the educational program (National Regulation 74) (refer to *Educational Program Development Policy*)
- Supporting educators/staff to gain appropriate training, knowledge and skills for the implementation of this policy
- Ensuring the environment at the service is safe, secure and free from hazards for children (refer to *Occupational Health and Safety Policy* and *Supervision of Children Policy*)
- That the Nominated Supervisor, educators and all staff members at the service who work with children are aware that it is an offence to subject a child to any form of corporal punishment, or any discipline that is unreasonable or excessive in the circumstances (National Law Section 166)
- Promoting collaborative relationships between children/families and educators, staff and other professionals, to improve the quality of children's education and care experiences
- Referring Notifiable Complaints (refer to *Definitions*), grievances or complaints that are unable to be resolved appropriately and in a timely manner to the General Manager, Community Services (refer to *Complaints and Grievances Policy*)
- Informing DET, in writing, within 24 hours of receiving a Notifiable Complaint (refer to *Definitions*) (National Law Section 174, National Regulation 176)
- Notifying DET, in writing, within 24 hours of a Serious Incident (refer to *Definitions*) occurring at the service (National Law Section 174, National Regulation 176)
- That where the service has been notified of a court order prohibiting an adult from contacting an enrolled child, such contact does not occur while the child is on the service premises
- Educators and staff use positive and respectful strategies to assist children to regulate their own behaviour, and to respond appropriately to conflict and the behaviour of others
- That individual Behaviour Guidance Plans (see *Definitions*) are developed for children with diagnosed behavioural difficulties, in consultation with the Nominated Supervisor, Nominees, educators, parents/guardians and families, and other professionals and support agencies
- Developing links with other services and/or professionals to support children and their families, where required
- Maintaining confidentiality at all times (refer to *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy*).

The Nominated Supervisor / Primary Nominee is responsible for:

- Implementing the *Interactions with Children Policy* at the service
- Ensuring educators, staff and parents/guardians are provided with access to this policy and comply with its requirements
- Ensuring all staff are aware of the service's expectations regarding positive, respectful and appropriate behaviour, and acceptable responses and reactions when working with children and families (refer to *Code of Conduct Policy*)
- Ensuring children have Adequate Supervision (refer to *Definitions*), that educator-to-child ratios are maintained at all times (refer to *Supervision of Children Policy*) and the environment is safe, secure and free from hazards (refer to *Supervision of Children Policy* and *Occupational Health and Safety Policy*)
- Considering the size and composition of groups when planning program timetables to ensure all children are provided with the best opportunities for quality interactions and relationships with each other and with adults at the service
- Developing and implementing educational programs, in accordance with an approved learning framework, that are based on the developmental needs, interests and experiences of each child, and take into account the individual differences of each child (refer to *Inclusion and Equity Policy*)
- Ensuring the educational program contributes to the development of children who have a strong sense of wellbeing and identity, and are connected, confident, involved and effective learners and communicators (refer to *Educational Program Development Policy*)
- Ensuring that the service provides education and care to children in a way that:
 - Encourages children to express themselves and their opinions
 - Allows children to undertake experiences that develop self-reliance and self-esteem
 - Maintains the dignity and the rights of each child at all times
 - Offers positive guidance and encouragement towards acceptable behaviour
 - Has regard to the cultural and family values, age, and the physical and intellectual development and abilities of each child being educated and cared for (National Regulation 155)
- Ensuring clear documentation of the assessment and evaluation of each child's:
 - Developmental needs, interests, experiences and program participation
 - Progress against the outcomes of the educational program (National Regulation 74) (refer to *Educational Program Development Policy*)
- Organising appropriate training for educators/staff to assist with the implementation of this policy
- Ensuring educators and all staff members at the service who work with children are aware that it is an offence to subject a child to any form of corporal punishment, or any discipline that is unreasonable or excessive in the circumstances (National Law Section 166)
- Ensuring that procedures are in place for effective daily communication with parents/guardians to share information about children's learning, development, interactions, behaviour and relationships
- Informing the Approved Provider of any Notifiable Complaints (refer to *Definitions*) or Serious Incidents (refer to *Definitions*) at the service
- Ensuring that where the service has been notified of a court order prohibiting an adult from contacting an enrolled child, such contact does not occur while the child is on the service premises
- Ensuring educators/staff use positive and respectful strategies to assist children to regulate their own behaviour, and to respond appropriately to conflict and the behaviour of others

- Ensuring that individual Behaviour Guidance Plans (see *Definitions*) are developed for children with diagnosed behavioural difficulties, in consultation with educators, parents/guardians and families, and other professionals and support agencies
- Cooperating with other services and/or professionals to support children and their families, where required
- Maintaining confidentiality at all times (refer to *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy*).

Certified Supervisors and other educators are responsible for:

- Assisting with the development and implementation of this policy, in consultation with the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, parents/guardians and families
- Providing parents/guardians and families with access to this policy
- Complying with the requirements of this policy
- Being aware of service expectations regarding positive, respectful and appropriate behaviour, and acceptable responses and reactions when working with children and families (refer to *Code of Conduct Policy*)
- Providing Adequate Supervision of children at all times (refer to *Definitions* and *Supervision of Children Policy*)
- Communicating and working collaboratively with parents/guardians and families in relation to their child's learning, development, interactions, behaviour and relationships
- Delivering educational programs, in accordance with an approved learning framework, that are based on the developmental needs, interests and experiences of each child, and take into account the individual differences of each child (refer to *Inclusion and Equity Policy*)
- Delivering programs that develop a sense of wellbeing and identity, connection to community, and provide skills for lifelong learning in all children (refer to *Educational Program Development Policy*)

Providing education and care to children in a way that:

- Encourages children to express themselves and their opinions
- Allows children to undertake experiences that develop self-reliance and self-esteem
- Maintains the dignity and the rights of each child at all times
- Offers positive guidance and encouragement towards acceptable behaviour
- Has regard to the cultural and family values, age, and the physical and intellectual development and abilities of each child being educated and cared for
- Developing warm, responsive and trusting relationships with children that promote a sense of security, confidence and inclusion
- Supporting each child to develop responsive relationships, and to work and learn in collaboration with others
- Using positive and respectful strategies to assist children to regulate their own behaviour, and to respond appropriately to conflict and the behaviour of others
- Developing individual Behaviour Guidance Plans (see *Definitions*) for children with diagnosed behavioural difficulties, in consultation with parents/guardians and families, and other professionals and support agencies
- Documenting assessments and evaluations for each child to inform the educational program (National Regulation 74)
- Being aware that it is an offence to subject a child to any form of corporal punishment, or any discipline that is unreasonable or excessive in the circumstances
- Maintaining confidentiality at all times (refer to *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy*).

Parents/guardians are responsible for:

- Engaging in open communication with educators about their child
- Informing educators/staff of events or incidents that may impact on their child's behaviour at the service (e.g. moving house, relationship issues, a new sibling)
- Informing educators/staff of any concerns regarding their child's behaviour or the impact of other children's behaviour
- Working collaboratively with educators/staff and other professionals/support agencies to develop or review an individual Behaviour Guidance Plan (see *Definitions*) for their child, where appropriate.

Definitions

The terms defined in this section relate specifically to this policy and related procedures. For commonly used terms e.g. Approved Provider, Regulatory Authority etc. refer to the *Glossary of Terms*.

Word/Term	Definition
Adequate Supervision	<p>(In relation to this policy) Supervision entails all children (individuals and groups) in all areas of the service, being in sight and/or hearing of an educator at all times including during toileting, sleep, rest and transition routines. Services are required to comply with the legislative requirements for educator-to-child ratios at all times. Supervision contributes to protecting children from Hazards that may emerge in play, including hazards created by the equipment used.</p> <p>Adequate Supervision refers to constant, active and diligent Supervision of every child at the service. Adequate Supervision requires that educators are always in a position to observe and/or hear each child, respond to individual needs, and immediately intervene if necessary.</p> <p>Variables affecting Supervision levels include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - number, age and abilities of children - number and positioning of educators - current activity of each child - areas in which the children are engaged in an activity (visibility and accessibility) - developmental profile of each child and of the group of children - experience, knowledge and skill of each educator - need for educators to move between areas (effective communication strategies).
Behaviour Guidance	<p>A means of assisting children to self-regulate their behaviour. It differs from traditional 'behaviour management' or 'discipline' which generally implies that an adult is 'managing' children's behaviour or using punishment to control children. Behaviour Guidance applies to all forms of behaviour, not just behaviours labeled as 'negative'.</p>
Behaviour Guidance Plan	<p>A plan that documents strategies to assist an educator in guiding a child with behavioural difficulties to self-regulate their behaviour. The plan is developed in consultation with the Nominated Supervisor, educators, parents/guardians and families, and other professional support agencies as applicable.</p>
Duty of Care	<p>A common law concept that refers to the responsibilities of organisations to provide people with an adequate level of protection against harm and all reasonable foreseeable risk of injury.</p>

Word/Term	Definition
Notifiable Complaint	<p>A Complaint that alleges a breach of the Act or Regulation, or alleges that the health, safety or wellbeing of a child at the service may have been compromised.</p> <p>Any Complaint of this nature must be reported by the Approved Provider (Manager) and to the Department of Education & Training (DET) within 24 hours of the Complaint being made (Section 174(2)(b), Regulation 176(2)(b), National Regulations).</p> <p>If the Approved Provider is unsure whether the matter is a Notifiable Complaint, it is good practice to contact DET for confirmation.</p> <p>Written reports to DET must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - details of the event or incident - the name of the person who initially made the Complaint - if appropriate, the name of the child concerned and the condition of the child, including a medical or incident report (where relevant) - any other relevant information.
Serious Incident	<p>An Incident resulting in the death of a child, or an Injury, Trauma or illness for which the attention of a registered medical practitioner, emergency services or hospital is sought or should have been sought. This also includes an Incident in which a child appears to be missing, cannot be accounted for, is removed from the service in contravention of the Regulations or is mistakenly locked in/out of the service premises (National Regulations 12).</p> <p>A Serious Incident should be documented in an Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Record (sample form available on the (Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority) ACECQA website – refer to Sources) as soon as possible and within 24 hours of the Incident. The Regulatory Authority (DET) must be notified within 24 hours of a Serious Incident occurring at the service (National Regulations 176). Records are required to be retained for the periods specified in the National Regulations 183.</p>
Supervision	Refer to Adequate Supervision (see <i>Definition</i>).

INTERACTIONS WITH CHILDREN PROCEDURE

Purpose

This procedure will provide a process to:

- The development of positive and respectful relationships with each child at Evolve Early Learning & Kindergarten
- Supporting each child at Evolve Early Learning & Kindergarten to learn and develop in a secure and empowering environment.

Procedure

- Educators interactions with children will have a direct link to the learning outcomes for those children.

When working directly with the children it is necessary that educators and staff:

- Encourage the children to express themselves and their opinions
- Allow the children to undertake experiences that develop self-reliance and self-esteem
- Maintain the dignity and rights of each child at all times
- Give each child positive guidance and encouragement towards acceptable behaviour
- Consider the family, cultural values, age of child, and physical and intellectual development and abilities of each child being educated and cared for by the service
- Develop and maintain respectful and equitable relationships with each child
- Interact with each child in a warm and responsive manner
- Build trusting relationships with each child
- Engage with every child in meaningful dialogue that support the acquisition of skills for life and learning
- Support each child to feel secure, confident and included
- Provide the children with opportunities to interact and develop respectful and positive relationships with each other and other educators and staff at the service
- Support each child to build and maintain sensitive and responsive relationships with other children and adults
- Support every child to work with, learn from and help others through collaborative learning opportunities
- Support each child to regulate their own behaviour, respond appropriately to the behaviour of others and communicate effectively to resolve conflicts

In terms of Behaviour Guidance

The dignity and the rights of the child will be maintained at all times.

This includes:

- Recognising that every child is an individual and should be treated as such
- Respect for the child's family values
- Positive guidance towards acceptable behaviour, with encouragement freely given
- Implementing a strategy that does not include physical, verbal or emotional punishment, including, for example, punishment that humiliates, frightens, or threatens the child.

Positive Behaviour Guidance strategies

Maintain appropriate expectations:

- Learn what is expected or appropriate behaviour for the child's age and stage of development and set your expectations accordingly.
- Understand that children's behaviour challenges are a normal part of development and deal with these situations in an objective and supportive manner.

Reinforce positive Behaviour:

- When a child has done something that you have asked, or shows appropriate behaviour, reinforce this with positive encouragement.
- Avoid using food as part of your positive encouragement technique.

Be consistent:

- Clear guidelines should be established and understood by adults and children.
- Where appropriate, guidelines should be established in consultation with the children. Don't allow at one time, what is not allowed at another.

Anticipate:

- Avoid a problem before it occurs. This involves you knowing the children in your care, so you can be aware of certain situations that may cause difficulties.

Re-direction:

- Redirect inappropriate behaviour to something that is acceptable. Consider offering an experience that will allow the child to act out similar behaviours in an appropriate way.

Natural consequences:

- Identify with the children any consequences that may arise from their behaviour.

Role modelling:

- Set a good example yourself. Adults need to model positive, socially acceptable behaviour and language.
- Remember children learn from imitating your actions.

Distraction:

- When a problem is anticipated or develops, distract the child to an appropriate experience. This is often effective with very young children.

Planning the environment:

- Think in advance about how you can best meet the needs and interests of each child.
- Make adjustments to the environment and care routines to minimise confrontation and conflict.
- Arrange the environment to ensure the adult rarely needs to say no

Planning for routines and experiences:

- Allow the children time to complete their tasks and activities.
- Give children notice prior to pack up time.
- Allow children the time to be independent without rushing them.
- Be there for the child if help is needed but remember to stand back and allow the child to be independent.
- Plan the routine so that there are not waiting times with nothing to do.

Communicating with children:

- Encourage children to use their language skills to tell you or another child what they want.
- Show children respect when speaking with them.
- When possible get down to the child's eye level and speak with them rather than being the taller and dominant figure.
- Swearing, yelling and shouting in the presence of the children in care is unacceptable, this includes family members and any visitors to the service during childcare hours.
- Ensure that all people in contact with children behave in a non-aggressive manner.

In terms of managing on-going unacceptable behaviour:

- Unacceptable Behaviour is defined as behaviour that has not responded to the strategies set out in the above procedures and is causing concern or risk to the educator, staff or other children.

In dealing with unacceptable behaviour, educators, staff and Team Leaders will:

- Discuss the behaviour with the parent/guardian if usual behaviour management techniques have been unsuccessful
- Discuss with the parent/guardian possible strategies and resources available (such as Inclusion Support Professional, referral for specialist assessment, additional adult support).
- Consent from parent/guardian must be given before any intervention/assessment is accessed
- After discussion with the parent/guardian, develop a Behaviour Guidance Plan (see *Definitions*), which is clear and easily followed by all educators working with the child
- Set a review date and ensure future case conferences with parent/guardian and relevant, involved professionals occur frequently
- Ensure any discussion maintains an adequate level of confidentiality.

In dealing with unacceptable behaviour, the Centre Manager /Families and Children will:

- Address unacceptable behaviour with families
- Address a complaint lodged by a parent/guardian concerning another child's behaviour which is threatening the safety of other children
- Seek clarification from educators as to their professional evaluation of the situation and whether it is in hand e.g. have strategies been developed or resources accessed
- Investigate the availability of extra assistance, finance or in-service training, where applicable, to assist the situation

Nominate a representative if they believe the situation is not being resolved to:

- Assist the educator/parent/guardian to evaluate and if necessary, adjust the behaviour management plan.
- Meet with the staff and parent/guardian to discuss possible outcomes

These outcomes may include:

- The parent/guardian remaining with the child
- Behavioural assessment of the child
- Behavioural intervention program or specialist assistant
- Adjusting the amount of time the child attends
- Parent/guardian assistance or other support services for the family
- Additional staffing assistance, where funding is available for this.
- Ensure time lines are set for the resolution of issues
- Report back to the Centre Manager as to the general outcome of these meetings
- Abide by confidentiality requirements (don't use the child/parent/guardians name and don't divulge confidential details without first gaining consent from parent/guardian)
- Discuss with parent/guardian concerned if outcomes have not been followed through within the nominated time line and/or require immediate action e.g. suitability of placement.

In terms of play and development:

Evolve Early Learning & Kindergarten services/programs encourage children to interact with others and participate in a range of play and recreational experiences by:

- Encouraging children to participate and respecting their level of participation
- Ensuring that it is a priority of staff to encourage and support the involvement of children in the program activities, supporting them to initiate, create and explore
- Children are encouraged to work together on their own projects and opportunities to participate in ongoing projects are provided
- Being sensitive to the varying levels of competence and confidence of all children and know when to offer challenge/choice/help and when not to
- Responding to the cultural barriers that may influence children's ability to take part in play
- Sharing information with families about interesting initiatives taken by children within the program.

Evolve Early Learning & Kindergarten services communicate with children about their interests and support the physical development of children by:

- Staff/educators taking an active, sensitive role in extending children's physical play so that they feel confident in attempting new play experiences
- Encouraging children to participate in the setting up of physical resources where appropriate and provide ideas for activities and experiences
- Encouraging children to adapt and make simple resources to develop their physical skills
- Structuring physical experiences to provide opportunities for all children to participate according to their level of ability
- Assisting children in finding ways to include others in their physical play and encouraging them to accept the differences in development and skill levels of others.

The programs support the development of children’s growing independence and development of life skills according to their levels of development and the expectations of their families by:

- Encouraging children to make decisions and consider the consequences of their actions
- Encouraging children to develop self-help skills and providing opportunities for children to have responsibility
- Encouraging children to collaborate and cooperate with each other on a range of activities and play experiences
- Including experiences that promote the individual competence of children and the competence of groups
- Encouraging children to share their ideas and experiences, challenging them to express and think for themselves
- Supporting children to take on challenges within safe boundaries and take on roles of leadership in small and large group contexts.

In terms of language:

We aim to provide an environment where children are encouraged to communicate. Staff/educators promote the use of good language skills by:

- Modelling and using correct terminology when speaking to children and other staff, while accepting children’s forms of speech
- Allowing children to use their speech in creative ways when writing stories and plays reading to children frequently and encourage them to read alone and with others.

References, Sources, Links to Legislation and Other Documents

Please refer to Reference and Sources page.

Related service policies:

- Code of Conduct Policy*
- Complaints and Grievances Policy*
- Educational Program Development Policy*
- Inclusion and Equity Policy*
- Occupational Health and Safety Policy*
- Privacy and Confidentiality Policy*
- Supervision of Children Policy.*