



**Coowarra Out Of School Hours  
Care Service Inc**

## **Participation and Service Access Policy**

### **POLICY STATEMENT:**

Coowarra OOSH believes that participation by parents/guardians/approved persons in issues relating to their children is important. We aim to provide a caring and supportive environment where everyone feels welcomed and valued. Involvement of parents in activities will be actively sought and open communication constantly maintained.

We aim to provide out of school hour's care for primary school aged children. We will not discriminate against any families needing care however; priority of access will be determined by the Department of Education and Communities (DEC) and placement on our waiting list and our capacity to accommodate the individual needs of each child.

### **PROCEDURE**

- Educators will greet and farewell parents on arrival and departure and communicate with parents in a positive and supportive manner, making the parent/guardians feel welcome and valued.
- Educators will establish a pattern of exchange of information, communicating to parent/guardians about their child or what they did on that day that may be of interest to them.
- Educators will accept individual differences in the way parents bring up their children.
- Parent/guardians will be informed of all relevant issues in the centre through direct contact, notice boards, communication book or letters home.
- Parent/guardians are welcome in the centre at all times and staff will happily explain activities or answer any questions about the centre to them.
- Parent/guardians need to be aware however of the Educators' requirement to supervise the children during the activity sessions. If parent/guardians wish to discuss or exchange detailed information about their child or the centre with the Nominated Supervisor or an Educator, an appointed time suitable to both will be organised.
- Parent/guardians are encouraged to become involved in the centre's activities.
- Our centre will be available for school aged children from kindergarten to year 6. Children must have already started school before they can attend (eg. children starting Kindergarten can not attend January vacation Care unless they are already enrolled to start school).



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- No one will be discriminated against on the basis of his or her cultural background, religion, gender, disability, marital status or income.
- The centre will try to meet any specific needs of the families in the local community.
- The centre will ensure that access to children and families with special needs is catered for to the best of their ability.
- The centre follows the 'Priority of Access' as defined by the Commonwealth Government when the service is at capacity.
- A waiting list will be developed and updated regularly which identifies priority of access, eligibility, date placed on list and required days of care.
- Placement from the waiting list is determined by priority of access guidelines, siblings of children already in care and date of placement on the waiting list.
- Parent/guardians are able to access their status on the waiting list on request.
- Children above primary school age may only attend the service in very special circumstances. Applications must be made in writing to the coordinator which will then be considered by a panel. The panel will be made up of the coordinator, manager and any two members of the management committee. Applications will be assessed on a case by case basis and subject to the capacity to accommodate. Considerations will be made based on the family circumstances, the behaviour of the child and the impact it would have on the primary school age children in care.

The priority of access we follows:

1. A Child at risk of abuse or neglect
2. A child of a single parent or two parents who both satisfy the work training study test under section 14 of the Family Assistance Act
3. Any other child  
Within each category the following children are to be given priority:
  - a) Children in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families
  - b) Children in families which include a disabled person
  - c) Children in families with a non-English speaking background
  - d) Children in socially isolated families
  - e) Children of single parents



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### Access by Non-custodial Parent

- If a child is subject to an access order or agreement, the service must have a copy on record plus any subsequent alteration registered by the court.
- Evidence of court orders or agreements will be considered part of the enrolment in order to minimise the likelihood of distressing situations occurring in the future.
- When a non-custodial parent attempts to collect a child from the centre the educators will:
  - Be polite, firm and clear and remember your primary duty is to the children in your care.
  - Clarify the legal position with the non-custodial parent. For example, Educators may say, “I’m sorry but I’m not legally able to allow the child to leave with you without the permission of the custodial parent.”
  - Ask the person politely to leave.
  - If they refuse to leave, call the Police.
  - In all cases educators should be immediately aware of any unfamiliar person on the premises and find out what they want as quickly as possible.
  - If required, children are to be put into lock down as per the emergency procedure until the situation is resolved.

### CONSIDERATIONS

Education and Care Services National Regulations	National Quality Standard	Other Service policies/documentation
	National Standards, section 4.6 (Access)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Parent Handbook</li> <li>- Enrolment and Orientation Policy</li> <li>- Providing a Child Safe Environment Policy</li> <li>- Priority of access guidelines</li> <li>- Family law act</li> </ul>

UPDATED AND ENDORSED: January 2023

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