

Ballina River Street Children's Centre

**(Management Committee Members)
Handbook**

Introduction

Welcome to the Ballina River Street Children's Centre Incorporated Management Committee. This handbook is designed to give you the information you will need whilst you are a member of the preschool management committee.

The Management Committee oversees the management of our preschool. The Management Committee is accountable to members for the performance of the preschool.

Management Committee Role

The Management Committee has overall responsibility to members for the sustainability and relevance of the service. The Management will direct its activities towards achieving the preschool's goals and implementing the preschool's Quality Improvement Plan by guiding and monitoring the preschool's business and affairs in line with the objectives as set out in the preschool's rules and in line with the preschool's philosophy. In carrying out its responsibilities, the Management Committee undertakes to maximise the value and contribution of the preschool to the community, and to serve the interests of the preschool's members, employees, families and children using the service. In serving these interests there is an implicit understanding that the rights of the child are paramount in all decision making. The Management Committee is the employer of all staff of the preschool and are responsible for the management and control of the preschool as the *Approved Provider* of education and care under the Children (Education and Care Services National Law Application) Act 2010 and the Education and Care Services National Regulations.

(Excerpt from the preschool's Governance and Management Policy)

Conflict of Interest

Committee members are expected to carry out their roles impartially to contribute to the successful achievement of the preschool's goals. Under the Association Incorporation Act 2009 strong new measures were introduced to encourage improved governance of incorporated associations. These measures include financial penalties and/or imprisonment or undisclosed conflicts of interest.

Definition

The NSW Associations Incorporation Act 2009 defines a conflict of interest as an interest that "appears to raise a conflict with the proper performance of the committee member's duties in relation to the consideration of the matter". A conflict of interest is any situation in which decision-making is influenced by personal, family, financial, business or other concerns.

Examples of conflicts of interest

A conflict of interest can be actual, potential or perceived. A "perceived" conflict of interest, where there is the idea (whether true or not) of dishonest behavior from a committee member, can be just as damaging to the organisation as an actual conflict.

Examples of potential conflicts of interest include:

Purchasing products from a business in which a committee member has a financial interest, being a member of the committee while also working for a government agency that provides funding to the service, a committee member sitting on a recruitment selection panel when one of the applicants is a family member, a committee member using information gained in the course of their role as a committee member for their own personal gain.

A potential or perceived conflict of interest needs to be properly managed to ensure that it does

not become an actual conflict.

Registering known conflicts of interest

The Associations Incorporation Act 2009 requires the committee to keep a book that is specifically for the purpose of recording disclosed conflicts of interest. This should include potential or real conflicts of interest that exist when a committee member joins the committee (to be requested at the time of joining), as well as conflicts of interest that may arise after they have joined.

A register includes:

- The name of the individual
- The nature of the interest they hold
- The date of the record, and
- If an incident arises as a result of the conflict of interest, the date of the incident and details of how it was managed.

Managing conflicts of interest

The existence of a conflict of interest does not necessarily exclude a person from committee membership, however the conflict of interest must be declared so that the situation can be effectively managed. The conflict of interest needs to be dealt with transparently, and in a way that protects the best interest of the service.

When a conflict of interest is declared or identified, you need a process for ensuring this is managed. As soon as a committee member identifies that they have a direct or indirect interest in a matter being considered at a committee meeting, they must disclose and register the nature of the interest. Once the conflict has been identified, the committee member should not be present during any deliberation of the committee with respect to the matter, or take part in any decision of the committee with respect to the matter. In some cases, for example if a committee member is directly related to a member of staff, it can be unworkable for that committee member to be an executive committee member, as they would need to absent themselves from all staffing and pay related discussions and decisions.

(Source: Community Connections Solutions Australia, Community Governance, Conflict of Interest, Fact Sheet.)

Governance

Governance is the system or process by which organisations are directed, controlled and held accountable to ensure that the right decisions are made. Our preschool service recognises the importance of having a framework of rules, relationships, systems and processes within and by which authority is exercised and controlled in the organisation. We view good governance and management as essential to our provision of quality education and care in a responsible manner.

To ensure our organisation has good governance we will:

- Conduct our affairs legally, ethically and with integrity,
- Identify organisational risks and legal obligations and manage these through policies and relevant processes; and
- Ensure that mechanisms are in place for fair and transparent governance.

(Excerpt from the preschool's Governance and Management Policy)

Governance Structure

It is important that you understand the way the preschool is governed and managed. From January 1st, 2012 a new National Quality Framework came into being to “ensure the wellbeing of children throughout their lives and lift the productivity of our nation as a whole” (Guide to the NQF, ACECQA, 2011:3).

The National Quality Framework (NQF)

All preschools in Australia operate under an Australian Governmental Quality Framework called the “*National Quality Framework*” (NQF).

The Law

The foremost component of the NQF is the National Law called “*Children (Education and Care Services National Law Application) Act 2010*”. This Law regulates education and care services for children.

The Regulations

The way that this law is applied is detailed through the “*Education and Care Services Regulations*”. These regulations are the practical details and rules under the law (A Really Simple guide to The New Regulations. Community Childcare Cooperative 2011:3).

The National Quality Standards (NQS)

The NQS is a schedule to the National Regulations (The Guide to the National Quality Framework, ACECQA:9). The NQS is part of the Regulations. Amongst other things, the Regulations set out the minimum operational requirements organised around each of the seven Quality Areas of the NQS (Guide to the NQF, ACECQA, 2011:8).

The Learning Framework

NQS 1.1 states, “an approved learning framework informs the development of a curriculum that enhances each child’s learning and development”. The approved learning framework for preschools in NSW is the Early Years Learning Framework called “Belonging, Being & Becoming (DEEWR, 2009). This document is generally referred to as the “EYLF”.

The aim of the EYLF is to extend and enrich children’s learning from birth to 5 years and through the transition to school. It assists services to provide young children with opportunities to maximize their potential and develop a foundation for future success in learning (Guide to the NQF, ACECQA, 2011:10)

The Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs (MCEECDYA)

Is the council that oversees the implementation of the NQF, makes the Regulations and appoints members of the ACECQA (see below) board (Guide to the NQF, ACECQA, 2011:6).

The Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA)

ACECQA is the new national body jointly governed by the Australian Government and state and territory governments to oversee the new system.

NSW Department of Education and Community (DEC)

Under the NQF, each state and territory has its own *Regulatory Authority* that has primary responsibility for the approval, monitoring and quality assessment of services in their jurisdiction in accordance with the national legislative framework and in relation to the NQS

(Guide to the NQF, ACECQA, and 2011:4). In NSW, the Department of Education and Community is the *Regulatory Authority*.

Approved Provider

Our preschool operates under a community-based not-for-profit model of management. This means that we have a management committee (currently comprised of parents of enrolled preschool children and community members) and, any profits made by the preschool are fed back into the service. The management committee of the preschool is referred to as the “*Approved Provider*” under the new Regulations. Our preschool is an incorporated association. This is the preschool’s business structure.

Management Committee

The *Approved Provider* or the Management committee is responsible for the overall performance of the organisation. They determine the service’s mission and purpose, set the strategic directions of the organisation, that is, develop the service’s strategic plan, appoint and monitor the performance of the director/nominator supervisor, ensure staff are employed in accordance with industrial obligations, ensure compliance with legal obligations, ensure the on-going financial viability of the service, monitor and evaluate the service’s performance against the strategic plan (including the committee/board’s own performance), enhance the profile of the service in the community and recruit and orient new committee/board members (Community Connections Solutions Australia fact sheet, Roles and responsibilities of the Committee/Board).

The Management Committee operates under the NSW Associations Incorporation Act 2009, and the Model Constitution. Therefore, we have executive committee member roles of president, vice-president, treasurer, secretary and public officer, as well as ordinary committee members. These positions are annually elected and filled at each Annual General Meeting (AGM).

Constitution

The Management Committee of the Association will:

- Ensure that the organisation’s constitution/articles of association is/are followed at all times,
- Ensure that the constitution/ articles of association are reviewed at least every three years; and
- Ensure that each new member of the Management Committee is provided with a copy of the organisation’s constitution and Quality Improvement Plan on their appointment to the Management Committee.

Preschool Director

The Management Committee delegates the responsibility of implementing the strategic plan and day-to-day management of the organisation to the service’s Director.

While the director does not have voting rights at committee/board meetings, s/he forms an integral part of the management team. In children’s services, the director is employed to: manage the day to day operations of the service including supervising other staff, provide relevant and up-to-date information to the committee to assist with their decision-making, work in partnership with the committee to achieve the service’s mission and purpose, and report to the committee/board on progress against the service’s strategic plan.

The director of the preschool is the expert in regards to the pedagogy of the centre and informs

the management committee through that knowledge and experience.

Responsible Person

The National Law requires service providers to ensure that at all times the service is educating and caring for children, there is a *responsible person* present at a centre-based service.

A responsible person is either:

- The *approved provider*
- The *nominated supervisor*
- A *certified supervisor* placed in day-to-day charge.

Nominated Supervisor

The committee nominates an educational staff member with a supervisor's certificate (usually the director) to be the nominated supervisor of the service. They are responsible for the operation of the service along with the approved provider and for ensuring it is following the Law and Regulations. (Community Childcare Cooperative, Really Simple Guide the New Regulations, 2011:7).

Certified Supervisors

In order to be a nominated supervisor, a *responsible person* or a supervisor placed in day-to-day charge of the service, the educator must hold a Supervisor's Certificate from the NSW Department of Education and Communities. This is a personal approval. There is no maximum number of Certified Supervisors per service. An Approved Provider should assess how many staff may need to hold a supervisor certificate to ensure that the *responsible person* requirement is met (ACECQA Information Sheet – Certified Supervisors).

An educator with a supervisor certificate may consent to be placed in day-to-day charge of the education and care service. The designation must be made by the Approved Provider or the Nominated Supervisor and accepted in writing by the Certified Supervisor. A Certified Supervisor placed in day-to-day charge of an Approved Service **does not** have the same responsibilities under the National Law as the Nominated Supervisor (ACECQA Information Sheet – Certified Supervisors).

Educational Leader

Under the National Law: Section 169 and the National Regulations: Regulations 118, 148 the approved provider of an education and care service must designate, in writing, a suitably qualified and experienced educator, coordinator or other individual as *educational leader* at the service, to lead the development and implementation of educational programs in the service.

According to Community Childcare Cooperatives Educational Leader fact sheet; an educational leader, through a collaborative process with educators, families and the community will guide the development of the program of learning and education for children. They will also assist with educator growth in reflection and the understanding of children's learning and development. This role is key to sound practice in the education and care of children – it is a role of great significance and importance.

Early Childhood Australia Association (ECA) Code of Ethics.

A 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 Early Childhood Australia *Code of Ethics* was first developed in 1990 by a national working party, with considerable input from the early childhood field. The 2003-06 *Code of Ethics Agenda* resulted in a new *Code of Ethics*, which was endorsed at Early Childhood Australia's National Council meeting in September 2006 (currently valid).

The *Code of Ethics* is owned by the field, rather than imposed upon it.
(Source: http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/code_of_ethics)

You will find a copy of the ECA Code of Ethics at the preschool. It is expected that at all times you will uphold the principles and values within it.

Office Bearing Roles and Ordinary Members of the Committee Members

Following is an outline of individual roles of the office bearers and the ordinary members of the committee. Some tasks may be delegated to paid staff.

President or Chairperson

The president/chairperson's role encompasses three broad areas:

- leadership of the committee/board
- liaison with director/s
- Public relations.

To be effective in these areas, it is important that the president/chairperson has an awareness and understanding of the needs of children and families and the role of the service within the community.

The president/chairperson's responsibilities include:

- Understanding the preschool's governing rules
- Developing the committee meeting agenda, in consultation with the directors and other committee members.

A primary responsibility of the president is chairing meetings. This includes:

- working through the agenda, prioritising items to fit the time available
- ensuring discussion remains relevant
- keeping discussions to appropriate time
- Allowing everyone to have an opportunity to express his or her views and opinions.

The president/chairperson must also:

- sign the minutes after they have been confirmed at the following meeting
- prepare and deliver a report at the Preschool's Annual General Meeting as well as any other reports as required
- Communicate regularly with other members of the committee and director.
- keep track of tasks that have been allocated to other committee members or sub-committees
- Speak on behalf of the service and represent it within the broader community.

While the role of the president tends to be an all-encompassing one, the help and support of fellow committee members can be enlisted in any area. The president should delegate and

coordinate tasks to make sure action is taken.

Vice-President or Vice-Chairperson

The vice-president/vice-chairperson supports the president/chairperson, and fills the role of president/chairperson when required (for instance, chairing the meeting or representing the service if the president/chairperson is absent). This role tends not to be too arduous so individual services should consider how best to utilise the skills of the person in this role by assigning particular tasks.

Secretary

The secretary is responsible for the records of the service (other than financial records).

Secretarial responsibilities include:

- Keeping a current list of members of the preschool, including addresses and contact numbers
- Consulting with the president/chairperson on preparation of the agenda
- Distributing the agenda for meetings, keeping in mind any requirements under your association rules
- Keeping accurate records of meetings
- Distributing copies of minutes at or before the next meeting, in accordance with governing rules
- Presenting applications for new membership to the committee/board for approval in accordance with governing rules
- Collecting, reporting and responding to relevant correspondence as directed
- Keeping the committee/board's files in order and up-to-date.

Treasurer

The extent of the work of treasurer needs to be assessed in conjunction with current practices within your service. Most services will have delegated some or all of the day-to-day financial administration of the service to the director who may in turn supervise the work of a bookkeeper/clerical assistant.

Even if such delegations are in place, the role of the treasurer is to ensure:

- Signatories and passwords for bank accounts, cheque books and internet banking are up to date and secure
- The service prepares an annual budget
- Income and expenditure (profit/loss) is checked against the budget
- Accurate books and financial records representing the current financial situation of the service are kept
- The service uses correct accounting procedures and keeps associated documentation (invoices, receipts, bank statements, etc)
- The correct information is compiled for the annual audit.

The treasurer plays a key role in reporting on the financial position of the preschool to the committee, including:

- Tabling financial reports (e.g. profit and loss statements against the budget and the balance sheet)
- Presenting annual financial statements and the auditor's report at the AGM.

Although the treasurer's role is vital, the whole committee is responsible for ensuring the

financial viability and accountability of the service – this is particularly the case if the committee does not have anyone who has agreed to serve as treasurer.

Ordinary committee members

In addition to the roles of the office bearers, the committee will also have a number of other members who may or may not have delegated responsibilities.

What makes an effective committee member?

It is important to remember that the key to being an effective committee member is the attitude and values that you bring to the position. Here are a few suggested principles to help you be an effective committee member:

- Attend committee meetings regularly and take an active part in meetings
- Be aware of and keep up to date with what the preschool is doing (for example, you should read the service's - Service Specifications and Funding Agreement.)
- Find out how any proposed action will affect the preschool – by asking the director or another relevant person to provide information
- Work as a team with your committee to make joint decisions and work towards shared goals, whilst making sure you act independently and not at the bidding of other people, such as the director or president/chairperson
- Always put the preschool's interests above your own personal interests
- Declare any interest to the president/chairperson in any matter that could affect your income or other activities and be prepared to stand aside for votes or discussion when there is a direct or indirect conflict of interest
- Use any information gained through the position properly – that is, in the best interests of the preschool
- Maintain the confidentiality of children, families and the committee at all times
- Take individual responsibility for ensuring the preschool has appropriate records of its financial transactions and its financial position and that it does not incur expenditure it cannot meet
- Take personally responsibility for ensuring the preschool meets its legal requirements.

An effective committee member must also be prepared to:

- Ask reasonable questions to help make informed decisions
- Show respect to fellow committee members and listen to their point of view
- Assist the director and staff whilst maintaining objectivity
- Have a sense of humour and enjoy committee meetings.

An effective committee member is someone who can work as part of the team but be independent in their views and voting. They will actively support decisions of the committee as a whole.

(Source: CCSA Community governance, Roles and responsibilities of the Committee/Board Fact Sheet)

Meeting Procedures

Sound meeting procedures ensure effective use of time and encourage committee members to attend. The following is designed to assist in the preparation and smooth running of your meetings. The preschool's constitution indicates the minimum number of general and committee meetings to be held each year.

When holding a meeting it is important to be aware of:

- The quorum (the minimum number of members required to hold the meeting)
- Who has voting rights
- Procedures for dealing with confidential items.

The agenda

The agenda provides a framework for meetings by identifying a list of items to be discussed. It gives direction to the meeting and enables time to be kept. Ideally, agendas should be circulated prior to the meeting, so committee members and other interested people know what will be discussed. Preparation of the agenda is usually the responsibility of the president/chairperson or the secretary in consultation with the director, staff and other committee members. If the agenda is lengthy, then items should be prioritised at the start of the meeting, to ensure important issues are adequately addressed, and given sufficient time. An agenda should be altered at a meeting only by a motion of amendment that is voted on and approved by the meeting.

The role of the chairperson

The chairperson should come to meetings prepared. They need to:

- Understand the constitution, particularly in relation to the conduct of meetings
- Identify the purpose of the meeting
- Have a pre-planned agenda but be prepared to make adjustments (with the approval of the meeting)
- Have all relevant material at hand (minutes of previous meeting, copies of reports, etc).

During the meeting the chairperson needs to:

- Provide direction, keep the meeting relevant and in accordance with agreed time remain impartial, and avoid leading the meeting from the chair. If the chairperson holds a strong viewpoint on an item and wishes to participate in the discussion, they should allow another member to chair that particular part of the meeting.
- Provide opportunities for participation from all who are in attendance.
- Be aware of individual needs within the group (e.g. people who have English as a second language, nervous speakers, etc).
- Where conflict occurs, it should be acknowledged but not allowed to dominate, be prepared to mediate by allowing each person to present his or her point of view.
- Move the meeting forward by calling for motions after a reasonable discussion period.
- Ensure that all voters understand all motions that are put to the meeting.
- Ensure that motions are recorded accurately and reflect the intentions of the mover and seconder, if the motion prescribes an action; the chair should call for or nominate a delegate to carry out the task.

It is important to remember that while the chairperson provides leadership and direction within the meeting, there is an onus on all of those present to take responsibility to ensure the success of the meeting and progress through the agenda.

Minutes

Minutes are a concise and accurate record of decisions resolved at the meeting and are extremely important. They comprise the recorded history of the service. Minutes should include:

- Copy of the agenda
- Date and commencement time of the meeting
- The name of the chairperson
- Venue (if place varies)
- Attendees
- Apologies
- A motion regarding confirmation/acceptance of previous minutes as a true and accurate record, or notes as to where previous minutes should be amended
- Business arising from the minutes
- Record of correspondence (incoming and outgoing)
- Summary or complete reports presented at the meeting
- Items of general business (include a brief summary of discussion and exact record of any decision made)
- The time meeting closed.

Decision-making should be recorded in the form of motions. A motion must have a mover and a seconder and must be put to the vote. Record whether the motion was carried or lost. Also be careful to record movers and seconds for any amendments to motions.

To assist in the recording of minutes:

- Record minutes in a standard format – use the agenda points as headings
- Keep minutes brief and succinct
- As motions are recorded, read them back to the meeting to ensure their accuracy and check that the mover and seconder agree
- If the meeting moves ahead, request the chairperson to pause until the minute taker has caught up

Minutes should be written up as soon as possible after the meeting. Every meeting should start with a motion to confirm the previous minutes, or note changes. Once the minutes have been confirmed, the chairperson needs to sign each page of the previous minutes. Keep the minutes in a book that does not allow pages to be easily removed (for instance, paste them into a book with numerically numbered pages). Minutes must be kept for the life of the preschool. Distribution of the minutes varies however all members must have access to them. Therefore it is important to be aware of how sensitive and confidential issues are recorded in the minutes. It may be necessary to record more confidential decisions in another place and refer only to the decision in very broad terms.

It is appropriate to identify and highlight decisions that are intended to set policy within the minutes, and to include those decisions in a separate policy book so you have a quick reference point for past decisions. The policy book should refer to the date of the meeting the policy was passed and must indicate whether the decisions superseded another policy.

(Source: CCSA Community governance, Roles and responsibilities of the Committee/Board Fact Sheet)

Policies

The NQS QA 4 (p.111) states the importance of clear policies and procedures to:

- Ensure there are common expectations about how things are done at the service
- Promote consistent practice.

The Management Committee will:

- Ensure that a comprehensive set of policies are in place as required under Education and Care Service Regulations and other Regulations and laws that the service must comply with;
- Ensure that these policies comply with relevant legislation; and
- Update these policies on a regular basis.

(Excerpt from the Preschool's Governance and Management Policy)

The Management team (the Committee, the nominated supervisor and centre director) writes and reviews the policies and procedures that inform the way the centre is operated. These policies are informed by all the legal documents that the centre is governed by, including the Education and Care Services Regulations, the National Law, WH&S legislation, Fair Work Australia, the NQF and other relevant sources. It is expected that all committee members at the centre adhere to the policies and procedures of the service and refer to them when needed.

These policies will aid you, should you need to find information on the grievance procedures, resolution of formal complaints, responding to a complaint, appeals, work-place health and safety (WH&S), staff conduct, leave, child protection, mandatory reporting procedures and policies relating to working with children.

Preschool History

Ballina River Street Children's Centre is in its 32nd year of service. It began operating at this location (12 River Street) in 1980 in a small "cottage", originally a NSW Maritime Services Board residence. The cottage since then has undergone extensive renovation and extension in response to the growth of Ballina and was officially opened, as it exists now, on 27th November, 1993, by Mrs. June Wangman, who at the time was the Head of Studies at the Institute of Early Childhood Macquarie University.

Preschool Philosophy

The philosophical perspectives of the preschool underpin all of our actions and drive our preschool in all aspects, from management and governance, to staffing and the pedagogy that occurs with the children. It is important that you know and understand the preschool's philosophy. As a parent of a preschool child, your beliefs and theories will also shape the preschool philosophy. Therefore it is important that our philosophy is seen as dynamic and fluid. For this reason our philosophy is revised, reviewed and reflected upon regularly.

The need for a written statement of philosophy is highlighted in the National Quality Standard 7.2.1 (page 181), which states that a written statement of philosophy outlines the principles under which the service operates and reflects the principles of the National Law, and the Early Years Learning Framework. "It underpins the decisions, policies and daily practices of the approved provider, nominated supervisor, educators, coordinators and staff members and assists in planning, implementing and evaluating quality experience for children" (NQS 7.2.1, 2011:181).

Currently our written philosophy reads as follows:

Ballina River Street Children's Centre Inc. Centre Philosophy – 2012

Ballina River Street Children's Centre is committed to providing children, families, colleagues and the community with an environment that allows everyone to have a voice in the educational development of children within our centre.

We will respect the rights of children as enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the rights of the child (1989) and Early Childhood Australia's Code of Ethics and commit to advocating for these rights.

We believe children are connected to family, community, culture and place. Their earliest development and learning takes place through these relationships, particularly within the families, who are children's first and most influential educators.

We acknowledge that children are competent and capable learners.

We believe collaborative partnerships with families and the community and the centre assists children to develop to their full potential.

Through children's interests we will develop a learning environment, as co-constructors in an interactive curriculum. We will respect children's rights to participate through respectful reciprocal relationships.

We will collaborate with our colleagues to generate a culture of continual reflection and renewal of high quality practices in early childhood.

We respect our natural environment and the importance of this environment to our planet and we aim to support and implement sustainable practice within the centre.

Aims of centre

The pedagogy of our preschool supports the principles and outcomes of the Early Years Learning Framework "Belonging, Being & Becoming" (DEEWR:2009).

Principles:

1. Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships.
2. Partnerships.
3. High expectations and equity.
4. Respect for diversity.
5. Ongoing learning and reflective practice.

Practice:

1. Holistic approaches
2. Responsiveness to children
3. Learning through play
4. Intentional teaching
5. Learning environments
6. Cultural competence
7. Continuity of learning and transitions
8. Assessment of learning

Outcomes:

1. Children have a strong sense of identity.
2. Children are connected with and contribute to their world.
3. Children have a strong sense of wellbeing.
4. Children are confident and involved learners.
5. Children are effective communicators.

Communication

We believe that:

A preschool operates most effectively when there is open communication and information is shared. Effective communication and problem solving between the adults in the service also models successful working relationships for children.

Teamwork and collaboration, where others' viewpoints are respected and contributions are acknowledged, are fundamental to the development of trusting relationships.

Diversity within the team in terms of skills, experiences and backgrounds enhances the team and ultimately leads to more effective and responsive programs for children.

Committee members, nominated supervisors, educators, directors, staff members, students and volunteers develop and maintain relationships with each other that are based on the principles of mutual respect, equity and fairness.

Committee members, educators, directors, staff members, students and volunteers respect and value the diverse contributions and perspectives of their colleagues and this is evident in their interactions with each other.

(Source: The NQS, QA 4).

Workplace Health and Safety

It is vital that you understand your responsibilities as a member of the management committee in relation to Workplace Health and Safety.

New work health and safety laws replaced the occupational health and safety (OHS) laws in NSW on 1 January 2012. The new laws provide greater consistency, certainty and clarity making it easier to understand your work health and safety duties. Under the new work health and safety (WHS) laws, the term 'employers' has been replaced by 'persons conducting a business or undertaking' (PCBU) and 'employees' has been replaced by 'workers'.

Volunteer associations

A volunteer association is a group of volunteers working together for one or more community purposes that may be incorporated or unincorporated and **does not** employ any 'workers'.

Volunteer organisations with paid workers

A volunteer organisation **with** paid workers is regarded as a 'person conducting a business or undertaking' (PCBU). As the preschool employs paid workers it falls under this classification.

As a PCBU, the Preschool has responsibilities under the WHS Act, including a primary duty of care to ensure its workers (paid employees and volunteers) are not exposed to any risk to their health and safety.

Volunteer directors and officers of a PCBU

Volunteers serving as officers of a volunteer organisation that employs paid workers must exercise due diligence to ensure the volunteer organisation complies with its duties.

For example, a volunteer officer serving on the management committee of a PCBU such as a not for profit preschool is considered an officer of that preschool. As an officer, you must exercise due diligence to ensure the preschool complies with its work health and safety duties.

Duties of a Person Conducting a Business or Undertaking (i.e. the Approved Provider or Management Committee)

Primary duty of care

The PCBU has a primary duty of care to ensure workers and others are not exposed to a risk to their health and safety.

A primary duty of care is owed by a PCBU when it:

- Directs or influences work carried out by a worker
- Engages or causes to engage a worker to carry out work (including through subcontracting)
- Has management or control of a workplace.

The PCBU must meet its obligations, so far as is reasonably practicable, to provide a safe and healthy workplace for workers of other persons by ensuring:

- Safe systems of work
- A safe work environment
- Safe use of plant, structures and substances
- Facilities for the welfare of workers are adequate

- Notification and recording of workplace incidents
- Adequate information, training, instruction and supervision is given
- Compliance with the requirements under the work health and safety regulation
- Effective systems are in place for monitoring the health of workers and workplace conditions.

Employees and workers

Duties of a worker

A worker must, while at work:

- Take reasonable care for their own health and safety
- Take reasonable care for the health and safety of others
- Comply with any reasonable instruction by the PCBU

Risk Management

The Management Committee will:

- Ensure the organisation operates with and to a valid Constitution/Articles of Association and that all governance and management practices of the Management Committee and staff align with the Constitution/Articles of Association;
 - Demonstrate achievement of this through accessible meeting minutes and Management Committee self assessments; and
 - Assist Board members to receive ongoing support and professional development in the implementation of effective and evidence based governance practice.
- (Excerpt from the Preschool's Governance and Management Policy)

Hazard Reporting

It is important that you address any hazards in the environment as soon as possible. This will ensure that our preschool continues to be a safe place.

Injury and Accident Reporting

The preschool has policies and procedures for reporting of injury and accident to your self. Please ensure you follow these as your own health and safety is of high importance.

First Aid Training

It is a requirement of the preschool to ensure that staff members maintain an up-to-date Apply First Aid certificate including the Perform CPR component that is to be refreshed every 12 months and current Asthma and Anaphylaxis training. The preschool covers costs incurred by this.

Emergency Procedures

It is important that you understand and comply with any emergency procedures that the preschool has. The primary emergency procedure is that of the fire evacuation. Please ensure that you familiarise yourself with this procedure.

Code of Conduct

Your conduct within the preschool is very important. Ethical conduct guides the behaviour and decisions within the preschool setting and is founded in respect for, and the valuing of children, families, educators and staff, and the extended community.

At our preschool we aim to uphold the highest standards in ethical conduct in accordance with

the ECA Code of Ethics (2010) and The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. We view the National Quality Standards as minimum standards of which we constantly aim to far exceed.

Management Committee members will:

- Commit themselves members to ethical, businesslike, and lawful conduct, including proper use of authority and professional decorum when acting as Management Committee members,
 - Demonstrate un-conflicted loyalty to the interests of the organisation when acting as a Management Committee member;
 - Avoid conflicts of interest with respect to their role;
 - Annually disclose their involvement with other organisations or companies that currently do business or may do business with the preschool;
 - Immediately disclose to the Management Committee any and all impending conflicts of interest. That member shall absent herself or himself without comment from both the deliberation and final decision-making;
 - Not use information exclusive to Management Committee members for personal gain and will respect the confidentiality of all information obtained during meetings or through their role; and
 - Respect the confidentiality appropriate to issues of a sensitive nature.
- (Excerpt from the Preschool's Governance and Management Policy).

Staff Recruitment

At our preschool we aim to have consistent and committed educators and directors who support good quality standards and continuity of care for children. We value effective, transparent and equitable recruitment processes that ensure the preschool attracts and retains educators, directors and other staff members who can best meet the needs of children and their families (refer to NQS QA 4). Should the preschool need to employ any new staff members the executive of the management committee will be involved in this process.

Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO)

The Ballina River Street Children's Centre Association Inc. is an Equal Opportunity Employer. As a member of the management committee you have a responsibility to uphold this. This means employees (and students and volunteers) of the preschool will not be discriminated against based on legally protected qualities including race, colour, sex, sexual preference, age, physical or mental disability, marital status, family or carer's responsibilities, pregnancy, religion, political opinion, national extraction or social origin.

As a committee member, you have the same rights and responsibilities as paid employee and also have the responsibility to:

- Take steps to ensure that all work practices and behaviours are fair in the workplace,
- Ensure the work environment is free from all forms of unlawful discrimination, harassment or bullying,
- Provide employees with information and resources to enable them to carry out their work,
- Consult employees about decisions that affect them,
- Provide all employees with equal opportunity to apply for available jobs, higher duties, job rotation schemes and flexible working arrangements,
- Ensure selection processes are transparent and the methods used are consistent,
- Provide all employees with equal access to fair, prompt and confidential processes to deal with complaints and grievances,
- Give your employees equal access to relevant training and development opportunities,

- Identify special training and development needs of EEO group members in your team, and help them gain access to training and development opportunities,
- Participate in learning opportunities and seek feedback to help you manage staff effectively.

Source: Office of Employment, Equity & Diversity “What is EEO?”

Confidentiality

The NQS QA 7 highlights the importance of maintaining confidentiality and currency of information provided by families, educators, directors, staff members, students and volunteers or other stakeholders of the preschool at all times. This practice is an indicator of the level of professionalism that exists within the service and builds families’ confidence in the service’s records management practices.

As a member of the management committee you will be required to sign our confidentiality agreement as an indication of your awareness of the significance of this area.

Working with Children Check

In keeping with the laws under which the preschool operates, you will be required to undergo a working with children check through the NSW Department of Education and Communities.

Social Justice

At our preschool we actively practice the principles of social justice and we work to promote and encourage them in our pedagogy. As a member of the management committee there is an expectation that you will uphold these principles too.

Social Justice Principles

Social justice is based on four interrelated principles of equity, rights, access and participation, to ensure that:

- There is **equity** in the distribution of resources
- **Rights** are recognised and promoted
- People have fairer **access** to the economic resources and services essential to meet their basic needs and to improve their quality of life and
- People have better opportunities for genuine **participation** and consultation about decisions affecting their lives.

(Source: The Social Justice Framework 2008 – 2012, Division of Local Government, NSW)

We are very pleased to welcome you to the Ballina River Street children’s Centre management committee and to have the opportunity to interact together to enhance the sustainability and pedagogy of our community preschool.

Linked Documents:

- Governance and Management Policy
- The Ballina River Street Children’s Centre Policy Folder
- ACECQA’s National Quality Framework (2012)
- Education and Care Services National Regulations (2011)
- Education and Care Services National Law (2011)