

# Collaborative Partnerships with Families and Communities

## Policy statement

At Goodstart Early Learning (Goodstart) children are central to everything we do. Families are our primary partners in our work. Goodstart recognises that every child belongs within their family, their cultural group, neighbourhood and wider community. Goodstart believes that a child's earliest development and learning takes place through their relationships, particularly with their family, who are a child's first and most influential educators. Goodstart commits to respectful and collaborative relationships with families and communities, as we work together to create a positive environment for our children - both where they live and where they learn - to actively promote children's wellbeing, learning and development.

*Related documents: (Belonging, Being & Becoming, the Early Years Learning Framework for Australia, 2009)*

## What does this policy apply to?

- ▶ **Goodstart's vision**
- ▶ **Family rights and responsibilities**
- ▶ **Family involvement**
- ▶ **Information for families**
- ▶ **Connecting with our communities**
- ▶ **Enrolment, orientation and transition**
- ▶ **Children's comfort, safety and wellbeing**
- ▶ **Children's belongings**
- ▶ **Family complaints**
- ▶ **Use of photographic images**

This policy relates to Quality Area 6 of the National Quality Standard

QA6	Collaborative partnerships with families and communities
6.1	Respectful relationships with families are developed and maintained and families are supported in their parenting role.
6.1.1	Families are supported from enrolment to be involved in the service and contribute to service decisions.
6.1.2	The expertise, culture, values and beliefs of families are respected and families share in decision-making about their child's learning and wellbeing.
6.1.3	Current information is available to families about the service and relevant community services and resources to support parenting and family wellbeing.
6.2	Collaborative partnerships enhance children's inclusion, learning and wellbeing.
6.2.1	Continuity of learning and transitions for each child are supported by sharing information and clarifying responsibilities.
6.2.2	Effective partnerships support children's access, inclusion and participation in the program.
6.3	The service builds relationships and engages with its local community.

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## Goodstart's vision

Our Vision is for Australia's children to have the best possible start in life.

Our Purpose is to ensure children have the learning, development and wellbeing outcomes they need, for school and life.

Our Guiding Principles:

- Children are at the centre of everything we do;
- Families are our primary partner;
- Our People make the difference;
- Being a valued part of each unique community.

*Related documents: Goodstart Strategic Plan.*

## Family rights and responsibilities

Goodstart respects our children, staff and families' rights to a safe and positive environment at their Goodstart centre. Goodstart educators are required to ensure practices in the centre respect families' rights and responsibilities.

At Goodstart our families have a responsibility to be in control of their behaviour at all times and conduct themselves in a lawful, safe and responsible manner that respects the rights of others. Families must use appropriate language and volume of speech. The following behaviour towards any person are unacceptable: all forms of bullying, harassment, abuse, discrimination, actions that put another person at risk of harm, or threats of any kind.

Upon enrolling, families agree to the Family Rights and Responsibilities listed in the Enrolment Form. Should families fail to comply with these responsibilities Goodstart may exclude them from the Centre.

*Related documents: NQS6 Family Rights and Responsibilities Requirement, NQS6 Family Exclusion Procedure, Enrolment Form Appendix*

## Family involvement

Goodstart is committed to genuine collaborative relationships between families and early childhood professionals where we can value each other's knowledge of our children, communicate freely and respectfully with each other, share insights and engage in shared decision-making. We encourage families to be involved in the Centre, provide input into learning programs, spend time with our educators and contribute their skills and resources to the Centre to enhance children's wellbeing, learning and development.

*Related documents: (Belonging, Being & Becoming, the Early Years Learning Framework for Australia, 2009); Goodstart Strategic Plan; The Early Years Learning Framework, Principle 2 - Partnerships; National Regulation 74, 75, 76, 99, 102, 111, 157; NQS6 Children's Belongings Requirement; NQS2 Collection of Children Procedure; NQS7 Confidentiality, Privacy and Digital Information Security Requirement; NQS1 Educational Program and Practice Policy; NQS6 Enrolment and Orientation Procedure; NQS6 Family Complaint Procedure; NQS5 Relationships with Children Policy.*

## Information for families

To support collaborative partnerships with families, Goodstart will ensure current and readily understood information is available and effectively communicated about the service. This includes information on policies and procedures, programs and their child's participation, Centre participation in the National Quality Framework, and community services and resources to support parenting and family wellbeing.

*Related documents: Goodstart Strategic Plan; NQS6 Family Handbook Appendix; National Regulation 74, 75, 76, 80, 86, 91, 172, 173, 177, 185; NQS6 Children's Belongings Requirement; NQS2 Collection of Children Procedure; NQS7*

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*Confidentiality, Privacy and Digital Information Security Requirement; NQS1 Educational Program and Practice Policy; NQS6 Enrolment and Orientation Procedure; NQS6 Family Complaint Procedure; NQS5 Relationships with Children Policy.*

## Connecting with our communities

Goodstart is committed to ensuring children’s learning at the Centre is integrated and interconnected with their learning at home and in the community. Goodstart believes that children’s learning and wellbeing are enhanced when the Centre, families, community organisations and individuals develop links, share information and work in collaboration. We encourage our families to develop relationships with each other that are supportive. We encourage our educators to understand and provide links to the services available in the community that will support our families.

*Related documents: (Belonging, Being & Becoming, the Early Years Learning Framework for Australia, 2009); Goodstart Strategic Plan; The Early Years Learning Framework, Principle 2 - Partnerships; National Quality Standard, Standard 6.2; (Guide to the National Quality Framework, February 2018).*

## Enrolment, orientation and transition

Goodstart actively communicates with families to provide effective orientation when they first join our Centre and when they transition to new rooms. During enrolment, orientation and transitions, information about children, their routines and belongings, is exchanged by educators and families to support continuity of learning and care between the child’s home, the centre and other services in the community, in a way that meets the individual requirements of each child and their family. We encourage families to spend time at the Centre to participate in orientation and information sessions, ask questions and exchange as much information with our educators as possible.

*Related documents: NQS6 Enquiry, Centre Tour and Waitlist Management Procedure; Goodstart Strategic Plan; NQS6 Enrolment and Orientation Procedure; NQS6 Relationships with Children Policy; NQS6 Family Handbook Appendix; NQS6 Enrolment Form Appendix; Regulation 155 – Interactions with children;*

## Children's comfort, safety and wellbeing

Goodstart promotes children’s comfort, safety and protection while participating in the program both indoors and outdoors, during rest and sleep, when storing and administering children’s medication, and when storing and preparing children’s food. We encourage families to work with us to meet each child's particular dietary, medical, sun protection and other safety needs.

*Related documents: NQS6 Children's Belongings Requirement; NQS2 Children's Health and Safety Policy; NQS2 Collection of Children Procedure; NQS6 Enrolment and Orientation Procedure; NQS6 Inclusion Support Procedure; Regulation 78 – Food and beverages; Regulation 81 – Sleep and rest; Regulation 93 – Administration of medication; National Quality Standard, Elements 2.1.1; 2.1.2 and 2.2.1.*

## Children's belongings

Goodstart promotes a strong sense of identity in children by encouraging them to bring their own family's ways of being into the early childhood program. We recognise that children’s own special belongings help them to feel secure, confident and connected to familiar people and places. We encourage families to bring their children's familiar belongings to the Centre and will work with children and families to look after their belongings.

*Related documents: (Belonging, Being & Becoming, the Early Years Learning Framework for Australia, 2009); NQS6 Children's Belongings Requirement.*

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## Family complaints

Families are actively encouraged to provide feedback to Goodstart. Goodstart will promptly address any concerns from families to resolve issues and maintain good relationships. Goodstart provides a variety of avenues for families to raise concerns or compliments:

- In person, by speaking directly with the Centre Director
- By phoning the Family Support Team on 1800 222 543
- Via the 'Contact Us' form on the website ([www.goodstart.org.au](http://www.goodstart.org.au))
- Through our regular Family Feedback Survey
- By writing to the Family Support Team, Goodstart Early Learning, PO Box 10120, Adelaide Street, QLD 4000.

Feedback and concerns are valuable for improving the learning and care provided by Goodstart to children and families.

All Goodstart staff respect the privacy of families when addressing any concern.

Goodstart ensures that any necessary notifications about complaints and incidents are made to the relevant regulatory authorities.

*Related Documents: NQS6 Family Complaint Procedure.*

## Use of photographic images and video recordings

To protect the privacy of all children, families and staff at Goodstart, strict measures are in place regarding engagement and taking of photographic images or video recordings facilitated by the organisation. All photographs and video recordings will be undertaken in a manner that is respectful and maintains the integrity of the original image. Goodstart will only use and store photographic images of children according to the permission granted by families in their completed enrolment documentation or permission specifically sought for media and marketing purposes.

*Related Documents: NQS6 Image and Media Consent Procedure.*

## Responsibilities

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This policy is to be implemented by: All employees.

## Definitions

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### Children:

- Refers to each baby, toddler, three to five year old and school age child; children as individuals and as members of a group in the education and care setting, unless otherwise stated. It is inclusive of children from all social, cultural and linguistic backgrounds and of their learning styles, abilities, disabilities, gender, family circumstances and geographic locations (Guide to the National Quality Framework, February 2018).

### Children's belongings:

- Clothing, footwear, accessories and personal items that belong to a child.

### Communities:

- Social or cultural groups or networks that share a common purpose, heritage, rights and responsibilities and/or other bonds (Belonging, Being & Becoming, the Early Years Learning Framework for Australia, 2009)

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**Families in relation to a child:**

- A parent, grandparents, sibling, uncle, aunt or cousin of the child, whether that relationship arises by birth, marriage (including a de facto relationship) or by adoption or otherwise; or
- A relative of the child according to Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander tradition; or
- A person with whom the child resides in a family-like relationship; or
- A person who is recognised in the child's community as having a familial role in respect of the child (National Law) (Guide to the National Quality Framework, February 2018).

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