

Partnerships with Families Policy

Policy Statement & Commitments

Brunswick East Primary School Outside School Hours Care Service (BEPS OSHC Service) believes that families are the most important contributors to children's learning and development. BEPS OSHC Service actively encourages family involvement in the development of all aspects of the program and management of BEPS OSHC Service. Children's learning is advanced when families and the OSHC Service work collaboratively and holistically together.

BEPS OSHC Service is committed to:

- actively engaging families and children in planning children's learning and development
- providing feedback to families on their children's learning and information about how families can further advance children's learning and development at home and in the community
- using each family's understanding of their child to support shared decision-making about each child's learning and development
- creating a welcoming and culturally inclusive environment where all families are encouraged to participate in and contribute to children's learning and development experiences.

Responsibilities

The BEPS School Council is responsible for ensuring the following:

- Nominations for membership of the BEPS School Council and its OSHC Management Sub-committees are called on an annual basis.
- OSHC Management Sub-committee meetings are always open and families are encouraged to attend.
- Sub-committees are developed to address specific issues relating to BEPS OSHC Service as required.
- families are encouraged to participate in fundraising and accreditation activities and processes.

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The BEPS OSHC Coordinator and OSHC educators are responsible for ensuring the following:

- Family members are welcomed upon arrival.
- Families are informed of all potential changes to all aspects of BEPS OSHC Service and its programs, including changes related to the child-care and education industry, legislation, physical, staffing, educational program and child-care benefit, and that they have a chance to offer feedback and comment.
- Annual evaluations and questionnaires are conducted to allow families to have input into the past practices and future planning of BEPS OSHC Service.
- Both formal and informal evaluations of BEPS OSHC Service occur throughout the year.
- Parents are encouraged to attend BEPS OSHC Service to observe and participate with their child.
- Families are encouraged to participate in ways that acknowledge and value diversity.
- Special events that complement the children’s program are held throughout the year to enable parents to attend and view BEPS OSHC Service and meet the staff.

Parents/Guardians have a responsibility for ensuring the following:

- They stake an active involvement in BEPS OSHC Service.
- They communicate their needs to the OSHC Coordinator and educators.
- They are mindful that BEPS OSHC Service operates within a legal and ethical framework.

Family-centred Practice

Educators at BEPS OSHC Service engage in family-centred practice by respecting the role of families in their children’s lives. This approach is carried out effectively when educators:

- understand what family-centred practice means and why it is important
- approach interactions with families in a respectful and responsive way
- welcome and support families to develop a sense of community and belonging
- establish clarity about roles and responsibilities
- respect diversity and difference
- develop cultural competence.

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Strategies for Children

All children are given the opportunity to participate in every aspect of the program from planning activities, facilitating activities and doing activities and packing up. No child is told they cannot participate in an activity.

- The children have access to a suggestion box at all times during the program’s operational hours for any suggestions they may have. Children are also encouraged by staff to tell them if there is something they want included in the program.
- At initial enrolment, children are given a ‘Children’s Enrolment Form’, which identifies their interests and the things they like to do. Educators use these to inform their knowledge of the child’s interests.
- Throughout the year, children are given a range of surveys and questionnaires to gauge their feedback, including: ‘Food you like to eat at afternoon tea’, ‘Physical activities you would like to do at OSHC’, ‘Resources & Equipment you would like at OSHC’, ‘Activities & Experiences you would like at OSHC’, etc. Changes are made to the program based on this feedback
- Children are encouraged to help plan menus and activities. They are also given the opportunity to gather ideas to deliver ‘Child directed activities and experiences’.
- Informal meetings with staff and children are held daily and when needed, to discuss any issues or ideas that have been raised by the children.

Strategies for Families

BEPS OSHC Service values collaborative partnerships with families.

- Families can give oral feedback to any staff member or leave written comments or suggestions on the clipboard located next to the sign-out book. All feedback is taken very seriously; educators aim to collaborate on all suggested changes to the program.
- Families are welcome to participate in all aspects of the program through Parent Feedback forms, informal chats with staff members, being the program’s Parent Representative on School Council, or coming in and doing a special activity.
- Parents are welcome to join the OSHC Management Sub-committee. Meetings are held monthly with the program coordinator, assistant coordinator, Sub-committee members and the School Principal.

Family members wishing to volunteer

- Family members wishing to volunteer their time during service operation will be introduced to operational expectations prior to their contact with BEPS OSHC Service, and supervised by an educator who holds an approved diploma-level education and care qualification.

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- Family members will not be left alone or be considered responsible for children inside or outside BEPS OSHC Service. Family members must not take children out of the grounds, except on excursions when a member of the staff team is in charge
- Family members wishing to volunteer on excursion with BEPS OSHC Service must hold a volunteer (V) Working with Children (WWC) check card. Volunteers may apply for their own WWC check. There is no application fee for volunteers and the WWC check card for volunteers only applies to volunteering (unpaid) roles. The card is valid for five years and is an easy way for BEPS OSHC Service to verify WWC status.

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- General Service Information Policy
- Children’s Wellbeing
- Childrens Behaviour
- Providing a Child Safe Environment
- [Record Keeping & Confidentiality Policy](#)

Sources & Legislative Resources

Gonzalez-Mena, J & Stonehouse, A 2003, ‘High-Maintenance Parent or Parent Partner? Working with a Parent’s Concern’, *Child Care Information Exchange*, July/August, Exchange Press, WA.

Kennedy A, & Stonehouse A, 2012, *Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework Practice Principle 1: Family-centered Practice*, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, East Melbourne, www.education.vic.gov.au/earlylearning

<i>DEEWR Child Care Service Handbook 2011–2012 – Sections 5.5, 5.6, 6.6, 6.10 & 9</i>
<i>Education & Care Services National Law Act 2010 (Vic) – Part 1 – Preliminary – 3(3)(a)&(c); 175</i>
<i>Education & Care Services National Regulations (2011) – Regulations 75, 88, 102, 168(2)(k), 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 177, 180 & 181</i>
<i>National Quality Standard for Early Childhood Education and Care & School Age Care (2010) – Quality Area 4 Elements 4.2.1, 6.1.1, 7.3.1 & 7.3.3</i>
<i>Framework for School Age Care in Australia (2012) – Holistic & Responsive Practices; Outcome 1</i>
<i>Victorian Early Years Learning & Development Framework (2009) p. 10</i>
<i>Family Assistance Law – Priority of Access & Administration of Child Care Benefit</i>
<i>Children, Youth & Family Act 2005 – Reporting & Referral</i>
<i>Information Privacy Act 2000 (Vic) – Information Privacy Principles</i>

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