

STAFF WELLBEING POLICY- COVID-19

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), adults spend approximately *one third* of their lives at work. Our work in Early Childhood Education requires sustained high physical, mental and emotional effort to complete our job. The COVID-19 pandemic, however, is having an increasingly significant impact on not only the way we live but also the way we work. The unpredictability of our current situation can take a toll on our mental and physical health and therefore the wellbeing of staff is at the forefront of management and planning. Our Service is committed to provide leadership by implementing strategies to support the health, safety and wellbeing of our employees.

NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD (NQS)

QUALITY AREA 4: STAFFING ARRANGEMENTS		
4.2	Professionalism	Management, educators and staff are collaborative, respectful and ethical.
4.2.1	Professional collaboration	Management, educators and staff work with mutual respect and collaboratively, and challenge and learn from each other, recognising each other's strengths and skills.
4.2.2	Professional Standards	Professional standards guide practice, interactions and relationships.

QUALITY AREA 7: GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP		
7.1	Governance	Governance supports the operation of a quality service

RELATED POLICIES

COVID-19 Management Policy Grievance Policy (staff) Interactions with Children, Family and Staff Policy	In-Service and Staff Development Policy Privacy and Confidentiality Policy Work Place Health and Safety Policy
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PURPOSE

We believe in providing a healthy workplace that values and enhances the health and wellbeing of our employees. During challenging times of uncertainty, enhancing wellbeing is critical as it can help foster resilience and create a positive and supportive working environment.

SCOPE

This policy applies to staff and management of the Service.

DEFINITION

Wellbeing is a complex concept but can generally be defined as an interplay between physical, psychological, emotional and social health factors. Wellbeing is linked to our happiness and how we feel about ourselves and our lives. *'Wellbeing can change moment to moment, day to day and be influenced by what's happening in a specific moment'*. (BeYou, 2020)

IMPLEMENTATION

During this challenging time, our Service is focused on implementing proactive measures to support the wellbeing of all employees. As our Educators care for, and educate young children, it is essential for staff to implement self-care strategies to enhance their own health and wellbeing. Employees who remain healthy and manage their own emotions, enhance the workplace culture and embody the healthy behaviours we model to children on a daily basis.

External factors beyond our control, may impact the personal wellbeing of employees. Our Service will collaborate with staff to develop a shared language and understanding of wellbeing, identify the needs of staff at this particular time and implement strategies to support and build their wellbeing.

The Approved Provider and Management will:

- maintain strong and supportive relationships with all staff members (including staff on leave)
- provide accurate and up to date information from reliable sources related to:
 - COVID-19
 - health and safety of staff
 - employment
 - wages
 - leave entitlements
- provide a workplace environment and systems that are supportive of employee health and wellness (see COVID-19 Management Policy)
- provide opportunities for staff discussion- individually and as a whole staff
- identify common areas of concern and prioritise these
- acknowledge stressful situations for employees, both at work and at home
- show sensitivity and empathy to the feelings of individual staff members

- foster wellbeing initiatives as suggested through Government and Sector organisations (**see Resource section**)
- provide opportunities for employees to participate in wellness activities – e.g.: mindfulness, yoga, dancing
- provide opportunities for employees to be involved in online professional development opportunities, time for programming, mentoring sessions and capacity building
- ensure employees take their required breaks (e.g. morning tea, lunch)
- provide access to support agencies, including counselling services (Beyond Blue)
- encourage employees to support colleagues during difficult situations

The Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor and Educators will:

- create an environment to enhance wellbeing where all members feel supported and valued
- be respectful, caring and inclusive
- utilise each other's strengths regardless of qualification and experience
- challenge negative or unhelpful conversations or comments
- be mindful and self-aware
- engage in wellness initiatives

Resources

'Wellness encompasses the health of the whole person- physical, mental, social and emotional'. BeYou

[Beyond Blue](#)- online and phone mental health support. 1300 22 4636

[Beyou](#)- Educator self-care resource for early learning and schools

[Family Day Care Australia](#) Wellbeing Campaign provides information for family day care educators

[Healthier. Happier. Workplaces](#) Queensland Government Resources, information, initiatives to help everyone think about small changes to improve their health and fitness

[Head to Health](#)- Australian Government Department of Health Digital mental health resources for all your needs.

[Smiling Mind](#)- Free mindfulness meditation app to help you look after your mental health and manage stress and daily challenges

[Ted Talks](#)- explore the latest thinking on how to build a better learning community for educators, families and children.

[The Black Dog Institute](#)- Provides useful information on workplace wellbeing and the role we can play in creating a mentally healthy workplace.

[The Spoke](#)- Early Childhood Australia’s Blog provides accurate and current information for the Early Childhood sector.

[Work Health and Wellbeing- Strengthen your business](#) Workplace Health and Safety Queensland.

Toolkit designed to help businesses to improve systems that influence work health and wellbeing.

Source

Australian Children’s Education & Care Quality Authority. (2014).

Be You (2018): <https://beyou.edu.au>

Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics. (2016).

Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth).

Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations. (2017).

Guide to the National Quality Framework. (2020).

Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 (Cth).

Revised National Quality Standard. (2018).

Queensland Government Healthier. Happier. Workplaces

Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (Cth).

Workplace Relations Act 1996 (Cth).

World Health Organization: https://www.who.int/occupational_health/publications

REVIEW

POLICY REVIEWED	April 2020	NEXT REVIEW DATE	April 2021
MODIFICATIONS	New policy drafted for commencement June 2020		