



1.04 Family Involvement and Responsibilities

Written By

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Aim

At Bermagui Preschool we acknowledge each family as the first educators of their children and value their right to participate and contribute to their children's schooling. Family participation is very important to each child's achievement and school success. Effective partnerships between Preschool and families also contribute to the general climate and development of our Preschool. Comprehensive family participation is valued and encouraged.

Our main aim is to create a community in which each family, regardless of its family structure, socioeconomic, racial, religious and/or cultural backgrounds, gender, abilities, or preferred language feels welcome and has the opportunity to participate at their desired level. This policy aims to provide a framework for effective partnerships with each family and Bermagui Preschool.

Procedure

All families have knowledge, skills and resources that support their children's learning and development. Preschool and families have a strong complementary role to play in each child's learning and behaviour. At Bermagui Preschool we promote family participation in a diversity of roles to support children's education. We aim to acknowledge, encourage and extend family participation through the following:

Access to Our Preschool and Program

Families are always welcome at Bermagui Preschool. Although the aim is to move your child toward participating in the program independently, we honour your right to visit the program at any time. If you would like to spend time at Bermagui Preschool, please check in with our Educators first and sign in and out as a visitor on the attendance sheets.

Home Visits

Families may request a home visit if they feel it may benefit transition to Preschool. By mutual agreement our Teachers/ Educators may visit you and your child at home at a mutually convenient time. This may help your child become acquainted with the Preschool staff in their familiar home setting prior to commencing Preschool.

Orientation and Family – Teacher/Educator Interviews

At the start of each year or when a child enrolls throughout the year, families are invited to attend an Orientation session. This is an opportunity to meet Preschool staff, complete enrolment paperwork and familiarise yourself with the Preschool program and routines. This is also an important time to share information to support each child on their journey at Bermagui Preschool. We also have two Family Teacher/ Educator Interviews during the year, one each in term 2 and one in term 4. A parent may request other meetings if they have any additional concerns during the school year.

Family - Teacher/Educator Chats

We designate a staff member to meet and greet families on arrival and departure each day to ensure information and communication is shared. Our chats provide an opportunity for the Preschool staff to discuss what is going on in the classroom, as well as child development and progress at Preschool. If these informal conversations are insufficient a family/ teacher meeting may be arranged at a mutually convenient time. In working with families we encourage raising concerns and working collaboratively to find mutually satisfying solutions that the staff then incorporates into classroom practice.

Bermagui Preschool Board of Directors and Advisory Groups

Bermagui Pre School is governed by a voluntary Board of Directors. Members of the Board of Director's are elected by members of the Pre School at the Annual General Meeting. The Board of Directors role is to work collaboratively with the staff, families and broader community to govern the Pre School for the following twelve months. The Board of Directors is ultimately responsible for meeting the Pre Schools legal obligations and ensuring on-going viability. The Board of Director's is accountable to the members of the Pre School, clients and the broader community. As the parents and teachers work together for the benefit of the children and the school, our goals can be achieved. For further information refer to Board of Directors Policy.

Advisory Groups for projects and fundraising may also be formed at times to support the Preschool with various projects and fundraising events. Examples of this have included our Costa Fundraiser, Rockquiz Trivia Night, Art Exhibitions and Playground Advisory Group.

Family Volunteers

Volunteering allows families to observe their child in the Preschool environment, which can be truly rewarding for both families and the child. This may be for a few minutes or a few hours. At Bermagui Preschool we encourage families to volunteer in a variety of other ways. For example families may like to read to the children, come to help in the classroom, assist with excursions, and contribute ideas and skills to the program.

Please note, family members volunteer in the classroom under the direct supervision of our teaching staff. Family assistance is additional to paid, trained teachers/ educators assistants and not in place of them. Family members may not be included in ratios. Educator: Child ratios must be maintained at all times. No payment, wages, reduction in Preschool fees will be given for any volunteer work. Although volunteering is greatly appreciated, families are under no obligation to volunteer at Bermagui Preschool. All volunteers are covered under the Preschools Public Liability Insurance.

Family Workshops

At Bermagui Preschool we plan workshops that are of interest to our families. Past themes have included Transitioning to Kindergarten, Managing Challenging Behaviour, First Aid and Sustainable Gardening Practises. We also promote workshops facilitated by other organisations in the area that may be of interest to families. Please advise staff of any workshops you would like to see at Bermagui Preschool.

Program Evaluation

The annual evaluation process includes Family Surveys. These surveys are used to evaluate that way in which Bermagui Preschool supports program quality, children's progress and learning, family involvement and satisfaction and community awareness and satisfaction. This, plus results of licensing visits and recommendations by our early childhood staff, form the basis for a yearly evaluation that points out the strengths of the Preschool and the areas that are in need of attention for the next year, to inform our Quality Improvement Plan (QIP). At times surveys boxes, questionnaires and feedback forms are also used.

Email groups, Phone Calls, Text messages, Facebook and Website

Communication is a two way process and is one of the most basic elements of supporting home-school partnerships. Bermagui Preschool uses various form to communicate and collaborate with our families and the broader community, including emails, Facebook and our Preschool website. Phone calls and text messages may also be used to communicate with families.

Newsletter, Notice Boards, Displays and Pockets

A newsletter is issued once a fortnight to communicate Preschool and Community news. These are issued electronically or in hard copy upon request. Notice Boards and Displays are also used to share information. Each child has a Preschool pocket where Preschool information, children's art work etc. can be collected at the end of each day.

Assessments and Portfolios

Each Teacher/ Educator has a small group of focus children. This ensures the individual interests, needs, developmental and educational requirements of each child are met. Parents are encouraged to regularly contribute information that guides the teachers/ educators in making decisions about the child's goals, plans for activities, and services. Each Teacher/ Educator prepares mid and end of year assessment for their focus children. They also work collaboratively with each of their focus children to develop a portfolio which includes, these assessments, the children's art work, learning stories and other work and achievements throughout each child's year at Preschool. These are available throughout the year and presented to families to take home at the end of each year.

Connecting Families with Community and Support Services

Our community are the children, their families, the educators and all people and services the preschool has made connections with since our establishment in 1976. We believe as part of this community, we have a responsibility to our children and families to establish and maintain a sense of belonging and connection. We encourage families to take and active active roles in community organisations and access other community services including sporting organisations, integrated support services, community clubs and activities.

Roles and Responsibilities

Responsibilities of Nominated Supervisor

The responsibility of the Nominated Supervisor is to:

- Establish a Preschool environment that welcomes and encourages all families to raise questions, participate in Preschool activities and volunteer their services in a variety of ways.
- Ensure that families are treated as collaborators in children's learning.
- Ensure that family views are sought in developing policies and addressing Preschool wide issues and that families and their representatives are involved in decision making processes about Preschool policies and programs.

- Report on family participation at Preschool Board meetings.
- Promote frequent, clear, relevant, accurate, timely and two way communication between Preschool and families about student progress, aspects of school programs and policies with respect for the diversity and differing needs of families. Encourage formal and informal communication between home and school about school programs, activities and student progress.
- Develop system and Preschool programs and strategies that encourage and assist families to actively participate in their children's education both at Preschool and at home.
- Develop programs and activities designed to develop family skills. Provide information about the benefits of family participation and enhancing the skills of teachers and families in developing effective home-school partnerships.

Responsibilities of Educators

The responsibilities of Educators is to:

- Acknowledge that all families have positive strengths that contribute to their children's learning.
- Respect diversity of family backgrounds and cultures and their contribution to children's learning.
- Encourage family involvement in their children's learning and provide advice to support that environment.
- Provide clear and timely information to families about the achievements and progress of their children and provide regular opportunities for two way dialogue about progress.
- Create an environment in which the participation of all families in preschool and student learning is welcomed.
- Support system and Preschool programs and strategies that encourage and assist families to actively participate in their children's education both at Preschool and at home
- Support programs and activities designed to develop family skills. Provide information about the benefits of family participation and enhancing the skills of teachers and families in developing effective home-school partnerships.

Responsibility of Families

- Families and teachers/ educators need to work in partnership, with the best interest of the children and the smooth running of the Preschool being the utmost priority.
- Families need to comply with all relevant policies, procedures and guidelines, and the Nominated Supervisors' directives that pertain to visitors when they enter the Preschool.
- Families and teachers treat each other with mutual respect and where differing views and opinions are considered and discussed with a view to finding solutions. At Bermagui Preschool our families have a responsibility to conduct themselves in a lawful, safe and responsible manner, respect the rights of others, and use appropriate language. Poor behaviour towards any other person is unacceptable, including: all forms of bullying, harassment, abuse, discrimination, actions that put another person at risk of harm, or threats of any kind. Families who have issues with Bermagui Preschool will refer to and abide by Bermagui Preschools Complaints and Grievances Policy and Procedure
- Families who, in the course of their participation, become a party to confidential information must agree not to divulge the information to any other person (refer to Bermagui Preschools Confidentiality Policy).
- Upon enrolling, families agree to the Bermagui Preschool policies detailed on our website (and available in hard copy on request). Should families fail to comply with these responsibilities Bermagui Preschool may exclude them from the Centre, although their children may not be excluded.

Resources & References <http://www.volunteering.nsw.gov.au/volunteers/types-of-volunteering/education>
Education and Care National Regulations 2011
The National Quality Standard (2010)
Being, Belonging and Becoming: The Early Years Framework for Australia (2009)

Relevant Documentation
Enrolment and Orientation
Students, Volunteers, Visitors and Work Experience
Approved Providers and Board of Directors Responsibility
Program and Documentation
Interaction with families
Complaints and Feedback
Confidentiality

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