

BERMAGUI PRESCHOOL



2.02 Staff Employment

Written By

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Introduction

All staff at Bermagui Preschool are committed to best practice in Early Childhood Education, passionate about early education and care and participate in ongoing training and professional development. Bermagui Preschool values professionalism and encourages a teamwork approach to all tasks at Bermagui Preschool. The following policies apply to all staff (primary contact, relief, and ancillary) employed by Bermagui Preschool.

Purpose

This policy will provide guidelines for engaging staff at Bermagui Preschool, including:

- employing enough Educators to meet legislative, policy and service standards,
- employing Educators with qualifications and experience that meet legislative, policy and service standards.

Background

Research has demonstrated that the employment of appropriately qualified staff in early childhood services is a key contributor to the delivery of quality programs and better learning outcomes for children. “Those with higher qualification levels and standards of training are better equipped to provide improved learning environments and mentor Educators in quality practices, leading to better outcomes for children” (Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011). The Australian Government has acknowledged this by legislating minimum qualification requirements for all Educators and teachers working in early childhood education and care services. Eligibility for services to receive funding also includes requirements for staff to hold specific qualifications.

Qualified staff and adult to child ratios above the recommended National Regulations is a unique feature of Bermagui Preschool. Where funding permits, Bermagui Preschool will endeavour to ensure adult: child ratios are above the recommended National Regulations.

A current list of approved qualifications is available on the Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) website. Applications can also be made to ACECQA to determine if other qualifications (such as those gained overseas) entitle the individual to work as an Early Childhood Teacher, Diploma level Educator or Certificate III level Educator.

In addition, current legislation requires at least one Educator who holds current approved first aid qualifications, anaphylaxis management training and emergency asthma management training to be in attendance and immediately available at all times that children are being educated and cared for at Bermagui Preschool. These qualifications must be updated as required, and details of qualifications must be kept on an individual’s staff record. As a demonstration of duty of care and best practice, Bermagui Preschool recommends all Educators have current approved first aid qualifications, anaphylaxis management training and emergency asthma management training.

It is essential that all Educators and other adults engaged to work directly with children are provided with opportunities to learn and develop new skills in relation to supporting the learning and development of young children. Opportunities for professional development are also crucial for all Educators to ensure that their work practice remains current and relevant to the practices and principles guided by the Early Year's Learning Framework (2009), National Quality Framework (2010) and other current documents related to Early Childhood Education Best Practice, such as the Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) and United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals.

Staff are required to actively supervise children at all times when children are in attendance at the service (refer to Supervision Policy). To facilitate this, Bermagui Preschool is required to comply with legislated Educator-to-child ratios at all times, and these ratios are based on the ages and number of children at the service. Only those Educators working directly with children can be counted in the ratio.

To ensure that children are protected from harm while participating in service programs, all Educators and staff are required by law to have and maintain a Working with Children (WWCC) Check. Our Nominated Supervisor and Responsible Persons must also complete a criminal history record check. This also applies to volunteers and students unless they are working under the direct supervision of an Educator who is over 18 years of age and holds or is actively working towards an approved Diploma level education and care qualification (Regulation 358).

Equity of employment will be upheld with consideration given to all applicants regardless of gender, age, cultural background etc. Refer to our 5.09 Cultural Diversity and Anti Bias policy for further detail.

Appointments

Primary Contact Staff (including Early Childhood Teachers and Educators):

- Primary Contact Staff are employed at Bermagui Preschool in accordance with conditions, responsibilities and duties outlined in individual employment agreements.
- All appointments for long term Primary Contact Staff will be advertised.
- Interviews for Primary Contact Staff will be conducted by a panel (see below).
- Successful applicants will be given a letter of appointment and are required to sign an employment agreement. We also require a pre-employment health declaration, 7.02 Child Protection Staff Agreement Form, 7.03 Confidentiality Agreement Form, Consent to use and disclosure of Personal Information Form, current identification, copy of qualifications, copy of first aid certificate if applicable.
- Employment agreements will remain in force for the stated term of the employee's employment.
- A probationary period of 6 months will be set for all Primary Contact staff.
- An additional part-time/casual employee may be appointed from year to year to work on an individual basis with children with additional needs. The need for such an employee will be ascertained by the Nominated Supervisor and subject to budget constraints.

Relief Staff:

- The Nominated Supervisor will compile and update a list of relief staff which can be used to replace permanent staff.
- Relief staff are employed in accordance with relevant regulations.
- Persons employed on a relief basis will sign an attendance register on each day of their employment.
- Relief staff will be employed for long-term absences of primary contact staff at the discretion of the Nominated Supervisor.

Ancillary Staff (including Administrator, Cleaner and Gardener/Maintenance):

- All positions for ancillary staff will be advertised as for primary contact staff.
- Successful applicants will be given a letter of appointment and required to sign an employment agreement.
- A probationary period of 6 month will be set.

Vacant or New Employment Positions:

If a staff member of Bermagui Preschool wishes to terminate their employment or change their current working arrangements, they must submit this information in writing to the Bermagui Preschool Board of Directors.

Staff members are required to give two weeks' notice of their intention to vacate their position of employment. The Preschool appreciates as much notice as possible, particularly in regard to teaching staff and continuity of education and care for our children, families and communities.

When the Bermagui Preschool Board of Directors becomes aware a position of employment will become vacant, or a new position is to be created, a subcommittee may be formed to be responsible for the employment process. The subcommittee should consist of at least one staff member (generally the Nominated Supervisor) and two other members (generally board members, however; subcommittee members can be any member of Bermagui Preschool). The Employment Subcommittee will act as the interview panel should the need arise to interview candidates for the vacant position. The Employment Subcommittee will act on behalf of the Bermagui Preschool in regard to employing a suitable person to fill the vacancy.

Advertise the Vacant Position:

The vacant position should be advertised. The nature of the vacant position will determine the most appropriate method of advertising. The Subcommittee will record any interest received in regard to the advertised position. Those who phone/contact the Preschool in regard to the position should be forwarded (via email) the following:

Vacant Position Information Pack including a Cover Letter (including the application deadline and requirements to be submitted with the application), Position Description, Selection Criteria and List of Duties.

Once the application deadline has passed, if there is more than one applicant for the position, candidates will be shortlisted for interview. The Employment Subcommittee will review applications and CVs to determine those to be contacted for interview.

Once a date and times for the interviews has been decided, a member of the Employment Subcommittee will contact those applicants who have been shortlisted for interview.

If no applications are received, casual/relief staff may be considered for vacant positions.

The Employment/Induction Procedures

Those who are selected for interview will be contacted. Otherwise applicants who have not been selected for interview should be contacted after the selection process.

The Employment Subcommittee will formulate appropriate questions to be asked of the candidates, by the panel, during interview. Interviews will normally be conducted at the Preschool, allowing candidates to view their prospective place of employment and for the panel to view the candidate's interactions with the children. The interview panel will make every effort to ensure that candidates are comfortable and at ease during the process. During the interview a panellists will make notes for later discussion. Once all interviews have been conducted, the Employment Subcommittee will discuss the candidates: their qualifications, experience and how they performed during interview, referring to the selection criteria. A majority decision will decide the successful candidate. Pending referee checks, the successful candidate will be contacted by phone, by a member of the Employment Subcommittee, as soon as practicable after the decision is made. They will be formally offered the position in writing. Unsuccessful candidates will be contacted in writing.

The Employment Subcommittee will inform the Board of Directors of the appointment of the new staff member.

Staff Induction/Orientation

Refer to Staff Orientation Policy and Folder.

Probation Period

Six month probation period. During the first six months of a new employee undertaking their new position, the Nominated Supervisor will document any concerns or issues that are raised with them in regard to the new employee. These may be issues raised by other staff members of other members of the Preschool.

At any time, if the issues or concerns raised are significant, the Nominated supervisor will meet with the Employment Subcommittee to discuss a course of action.

In the event that the issues and concerns raised in regard to the new employee are unable to be resolved to the satisfaction of the subcommittee, and the Preschool, the new employee will have their contract terminated.

Stand Down

Refer to 2.14 Stand Down Policy

Termination of Employment

Actions to follow if a problem arises in relation to the performance of an employee:

Refer and follow Bermagui Preschools Grievance and Complaints Procedure

Act promptly. If the Nominated Supervisor or Board of Directors is concerned about a staff member's work performance or conduct, or has received a complaint in relation to this, it is important to address the issue as soon as possible. The aim is to address any misunderstandings or issues quickly, and to resolve problems before they escalate.

Contact Industrial Relations advisor to discuss the process that the Board of Directors must follow.

Follow a fair and equitable process.

Take appropriate action if necessary. If, after investigating the issue, the Nominated Supervisor or Board of Directors believes action is warranted, the Board Members should again consult Industrial relations advisor in regard to the available options.

Instant Dismissal

A staff member can be dismissed instantly where the employee is guilty of serious misconduct and a proper process is followed. Conduct which may fall within the scope of serious misconduct, includes:

- Fraud and theft
- Attendance at work while under the influence of alcohol or non-prescription drugs
- Conduct that endangers a person's health or safety
- Conduct that puts the Preschool, children, family's, staff or others at serious risk
- Wilful disobedience of a reasonable instruction

Students, Volunteer and Work Experience:

Refer to Students, Volunteer and Work Experience policy

Evaluation

Evaluation of staff employment will include staff appraisals and reviews annually or as required.

Relevant Legislation	<p>Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010: Sections 12, 13, 14, 161, 162, 165, 169 Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011: Regulations 14, 15, 16, 46, 47, 48, 49, 83, 84, 118, 120, 121–123, 125–126, 129–135, 136, 137–143, 145–152, 355, 357, 358, 360–364 Equal Opportunity Act 2010 Fair Work Act 2009 Information Privacy Act 2000, as amended 2011 National Quality Standard, Quality Area 4: Staffing Arrangements Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2007 Privacy Act 1998, as amended 2011 Working with Children Act 2005</p>		
Resources & References	<p>Bermagui Preschool Enrolment Handbook. Privacy Law. Access website www.privacy.gov.au/law UNICEF (n.d) fact sheet: A summary of the rights of the child under the Convention on the Rights of the child (March 2011). www.unicef.org Early Childhood Australia (ECA). Code of Ethics. Access website: www.earlychildhoodaustralia.or.au/codeofethics Belonging Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia (2009)</p>		
Relevant Documentation	<p>Refer to Staff Orientation Policy and Folder. 2.14 Stand Down Policy 5.09 Cultural and Anti Bias Policy</p>		
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