

# **Queanbeyan Family Day Care**

## **Policy and Procedure Manual**

# **Quality Area 6**

## **Collaborative Partnerships with Families and Communities**

# Queanbeyan Family Day Care – Policy and Procedure Manual

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## **Quality Area 6 – Collaborative Partnerships with Families and Communities**

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## Information Sharing between Parents, Educators and Co-ordination Unit Policy

### 1. OUTCOMES:

Stakeholders are aware of the importance of good communication between all parties involved in the childcare arrangement.

### 2. POLICY:

Queanbeyan Family Day Care encourages good communication between all stakeholders. The aim is to provide customers with an equitable, fair, transparent and customer friendly approach.

### 3. RELEVANT LEGISLATION

Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011  
Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010  
The Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 (NSW),  
The Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002 (NSW)

### 4. CONTENT

The Queanbeyan Family Day Care Co-ordination Unit recognises the vital link that parent/educator communication serves in the overall communication process. It is the most frequent point of contact within the scheme and occurs between the two people who are the best informed about the needs of each child and family.

### 5. PERFORMANCE INDICATORS:

- Number of newsletters to parents and educators
- Number of emails sent to parents and educators

### 6. KEY RESOURCES:

[www.education.gov.au/child-care-service-handbook-0](http://www.education.gov.au/child-care-service-handbook-0)

Guide to the National Quality Standard 2011

Staying Healthy in Childcare 5<sup>th</sup> Edition;

[www.humanservices.gov.au](http://www.humanservices.gov.au)

[www.kidsafe.com.au](http://www.kidsafe.com.au)

Education and Care Services National Regulations 2012

Education and Care Services National Law 2011

### 7. RELEVANT PROCEDURES

[Communication – Procedure](#)

[Suggestions/Comments – Additional Information](#)

[Participation in Queanbeyan Family Day Care – Additional Information](#)

[Prescribed Information - Procedure](#)

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## Communication – Procedure

Queanbeyan Family Day Care values the views of parents, educators and staff. Effective communication and a sense of cohesion and united purpose is paramount in providing the highest quality childcare for children in Queanbeyan Family Day Care.

### FAMILY DAY CARE CO-ORDINATION UNIT

Co-ordination Unit staff maintains regular contact with parents and educators through various mediums, such as visit notes left by Child Development Officers when they visit children in care, emails, newsletters, phone calls, social events.

Co-ordination Unit staff welcome constructive comments from parents and educators, whether they be favourable or unfavourable.

### EDUCATORS

Educators play a very important role in maintaining good communication with Queanbeyan Family Day Care Co-ordination Unit staff, parents and children.

### PARENTS

Queanbeyan Family Day Care Co-ordination Unit staff endeavour to maintain regular contact with parents. Parents are encouraged to contact staff if they wish to discuss any issue regarding their childcare arrangements.

### CHILDREN

Children “have a voice’ and play a very important role in communicating their needs, wants and interests. Queanbeyan Family Day Care aims to listen to their needs and provide a quality child care service in doing this.

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## **Suggestions/Comments – Additional Information**

Queanbeyan Palerang Regional Council acknowledges the importance of parents, educators and staff having input into the operations of Queanbeyan Family Day Care.

If parents/educators wish to make any suggestions/comments information can be provided to the Co-ordination Unit in writing or parents/educators may wish to speak directly with Co-ordination Unit staff. Such contact is welcomed and all suggestions/comments will be acknowledged by staff.

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## **Participation in Queanbeyan Family Day Care – Additional Information**

Parents and educators registered with Queanbeyan Family Day Care are encouraged to participate in the operations of the scheme. Parents' and educators' input into the operations of the scheme are valued.

From time to time the scheme will invite parents and their children to attend social activities organised by the scheme, such as an end of year celebration, visit by emergency services, open days, playgroups, excursions to various venues and other functions.

The scheme also makes regular contact with families via newsletters, emails, visit notes and phone calls.

On a more individual level, families and educators communicate on a daily basis and by sharing information this supports collaborative partnerships.

Parents' input is sought by educators in developing an understanding of children's strengths and areas where they may require additional support. Ideas about activities their child enjoys and the best ways to support their child are also ways in which the parent can participate in the programming and planning cycle of activities.

The scheme is always looking for parents and educators to assist in the development of quality improvement plans, policies and procedures. Give the scheme a call if you would like to be more involved.

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## **Prescribed Information – Procedure**

Parents and educators must have access to information regarding the nominated supervisor and the contact information for the Department of Education and Communities.

Educators are required to display “Prescribed Information” for the information of parents.



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## Orientation of Parents Policy

### 1. OUTCOMES:

Parents are able to contact the relevant people if they have a question about their childcare arrangements with Queanbeyan Family Day Care.

### 2. POLICY:

Parents registered with Queanbeyan Family Day Care are provided with accurate information about their childcare arrangements, access to financial assistance through the Department of Human Services, and other information which may be necessary.

### 3. RELEVANT LEGISLATION

Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011  
Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010

### 4. PERFORMANCE INDICATORS:

- Number of parents who have questions relating to their childcare arrangements

### 5. KEY RESOURCES:

[www.education.gov.au/child-care-service-handbook-0](http://www.education.gov.au/child-care-service-handbook-0)

Guide to the National Quality Standard 2011

Staying Healthy in Childcare 5<sup>th</sup> Edition

[www.humanservices.gov.au](http://www.humanservices.gov.au)

[www.kidsafe.com.au](http://www.kidsafe.com.au)

[www.dec.nsw.gov.au](http://www.dec.nsw.gov.au)

Education and Care Services National Regulations 2012

Education and Care Services National Law 2011

### 6. RELEVANT PROCEDURES

[Orientation Process for Parents – Procedure](#)

[Initial Interview – Parents and Educator – Additional Information](#)

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## Orientation Process for Parents – Procedure

Queanbeyan Family Day Care maintains a registration list of parents who require childcare with the scheme. From time to time, this list may contain a significant number of families requiring childcare whilst at other times the list might be quite short. The number of families on the registration list will determine the length of time before a child can be placed into care with the scheme.

Once a parent has been placed on the registration list, it is important for the parent to maintain contact with the scheme regarding their childcare needs.

When the scheme has a suitable vacancy for the child, the parent will be contacted. Parents are then invited to attend the office to:

- Complete the relevant paperwork, including provision of Customer Reference Numbers from the Department of Human Services, Medicare numbers, immunisation history record and pay a registration fee
- Outline their childcare requirements
- Gain an understanding of Government legislation, including the Child Care Benefit and Child Care Rebate
- Gain an understanding of the scheme's requirements, policies and procedures
- Have any questions answered

Once the interview has been completed, parents will be provided with at least one educator's name (and telephone number) who has been appraised about the possible placement.

It is the parent's responsibility to then contact the educator/s and make a time to visit the educator/s.

Parents are encouraged to visit all educators. If the parents feel comfortable with one of the educators, they should sign a placement contract with that educator indicating the commencement date, hours to be used and payment details. Unsuccessful educators are to be advised by the parent.

A copy of this contract is forwarded to the office by the educator. This information is used to update the computer system and link the family to the Department of Human Services. This enables the scheme to be able to access child care benefit and/or child care rebate details about the family.

Once the child has been in care for a short time a member of the Co-ordination unit will be in contact to discuss the parent's satisfaction, or otherwise, in relation to the care arrangement.

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## Initial Interview – Parents and Educator – Additional Information

Queanbeyan Parents and educators registered with Queanbeyan Family Day Care are encouraged to discuss information about the placement of children into care to ensure that it will be a successful arrangement.

Some topics to be discussed:

- Outline the days and hours the educator can offer and additional care that may be required in the future (if known)
- Individual fee structures and fee reviews
- Fees and when these need to be paid
- Arrival and departure procedures
- The educator's daily routine, program of activities and any routine excursions
- The child's medical history (e.g., allergies and disabilities), any special cultural or religious requirements, any special dietary needs and any problems the child has experienced in care before
- Scheme policies and educator requirements in relation to illness, nutrition, termination of care and grievances
- The behaviour management techniques used by the educator
- What to send with the child – appropriate clothing, adequate and healthy food, hat, etc.
- Emergencies – how and who the educator should contact
- No medication should be given without specific permission (see Medication Policy)
- Toilet training – discuss ideas on toilet training and toileting or nappy changing habits and routine
- Social activities – celebrations, excursions and outings and how they are performed (e.g. transport and permission forms)
- Your family and theirs – a good way to know each other is to firstly know a bit about each other's

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## Fee Setting Policy

### 1. OUTCOMES:

Fees charged by educators registered with Queanbeyan Family Day Care are fair and competitive.

### 2. POLICY:

As an operator of a Family Day Care service, Queanbeyan Palerang Regional City Council through its Queanbeyan Family Day Care scheme, is responsible for ensuring that an educators' service complies with all legislative and business obligations.

### 3. RELEVANT LEGISLATION

Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011  
Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010

### 4. CONTENT

Queanbeyan Family Day Care has the authority to apply a fee setting policy to the charges which educators registered with the scheme are to apply to parents using childcare with the scheme. The scheme also has the ability to place some restrictions on other requirements within this fee setting policy (including but not limited to – the scheme's core hours and penalties to be charged by educators).

### 5. KEY RESOURCES:

[www.education.gov.au/child-care-service-handbook-0](http://www.education.gov.au/child-care-service-handbook-0)

Guide to the National Quality Standard 2011

Staying Healthy in Childcare 5<sup>th</sup> Edition

[www.humanservices.gov.au](http://www.humanservices.gov.au)

[www.kidsafe.com.au](http://www.kidsafe.com.au)

[www.dec.nsw.gov.au](http://www.dec.nsw.gov.au)

Education and Care Services National Regulations 2012

Education and Care Services National Law 2011

### 6. RELEVANT PROCEDURES

[Fee Setting – Procedure](#)

[Fees Charged to Parents – Additional Information](#)

[Fees Charged to Educators – Additional Information](#)

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## Fee Setting – Procedure

Queanbeyan Family Day Care has the authority to apply a fee setting policy to the charges which educators registered with the scheme are to apply to parents using childcare with the scheme. The scheme also has the ability to place some restrictions on other requirements within this fee setting policy (including but not limited to - the scheme's core hours and penalties to be charged by educators). In doing this the scheme will comply with the guidelines set out in the Child Care Service Handbook (<https://education.gov.au/child-care-service-handbook-0>) for the relevant year and other relevant legislation.

It should also be noted that an educator cannot charge a fee for the care of a child that is different to the fee charged for any other child for the same kind of care

Intrinsic to the fee setting policy is the requirement to ensure that the scheme's fees remain competitive with other forms of childcare operating in the area, including long day care centres, before and after school programs and other family day care programs.

The amount an educator charges depends on the service provided and the amount that customers are prepared to pay. Educators should also take into account that some fees include meals and nappies.

A good business practice is to increase fees once a year, reserving the right to review fees midyear. 1 January and 1 July are the usual times for increases and review. It should be noted that families in receipt of Child Care Benefit (CCB) receive a Consumer Price Index (CPI) increase in July.

### **Range of Fees**

Each financial year, Queanbeyan Family Day Care sets a range of fees to be charged by educators.

### **Minimum Hours Charged**

One of the flexible options that draws families to family day care is that parents can contract for the number of hours they need each day, rather than have to contract for a full day as in a centre.

To maintain this flexibility for parents, the scheme strongly recommends educators set a minimum number of hours up to 8 hours per day. Educators who charge beyond 8 hours per day, particularly when parents do not need the extra care, run the risk of outpricing themselves and being less competitive than other educators.

Minimum hours do not apply to children using before and after school hours care, or children who need backup care for a short time.

### **Incidentals**

Educators may charge parents for incidentals such as nappy wipes, nappies, creams etc. These charges must be commensurate with the actual cost of these items.

### **Food Charges**

Where an educator provides food to children and charges a fee for this, educators can include this fee in their actual cost of care or an individual cost for each meal. Again the fees charged must be commensurate with the actual cost of these items.

Please note, where educators provide food on a regular basis, educators must notify the NSW Food Authority and Queanbeyan Palerang Regional Council's Environmental Health section (more information can be obtained from the Co-ordination Unit).

# Fee Setting – Procedure

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## Travel

Where an educator transports children by car e.g., pick-up or delivery to a pre-school or home, educators may charge a set rate per kilometre or have a set cost per trip.

Please note, where educators charge families a separate fee for travel, motor vehicle insurers will view that as two separate businesses and may require educators to take out a commercial policy to cover the transportation business.

Where an educator accompanies (walks) a child/ren to school, bus stop, pre-school, the fees charged must be commensurate with the actual cost of this trip.

In determining what fees educators should consider setting, the following questions should be considered:

## **Qualifications/Skills/Knowledge/Experience**

To assist educators to determine an appropriate level of remuneration, the scheme will consider the various qualifications educators have and the educator's ability to apply this qualification to the childcare setting.

Educators will need to provide information about their highest level of qualification, e.g., Certificate III, Diploma, Associate Diploma, Bachelor of Education and/or other qualification. It will also be important for educators to show the relevance of this qualification to the actual role of an educator.

In determining an appropriate level of remuneration, the scheme will also take into consideration the knowledge, skills and experience of the educator. This will be determined by the number of years the educators has worked in childcare/family day care, the amount of training undertaken by the educator (including the currency of training), and the educator's ability to apply their skills and knowledge to everyday situations.

## **Professional Development**

- Does the educator attend ongoing professional development – both within the service and externally? Is the educator currently studying any child related topics?

## **Educational Program and Practice**

- Does the educator's educational program provide a stimulating and engaging environment which enhances children's learning and development?
- What documentation is available to parents about each child's program and progress?
- Does the educator provide an ongoing cycle of planning, documentation and evaluation?

## **Children's Health and Safety**

- Does the educator show that he/she has an understanding of the policies and procedures surrounding health, hygiene and safety issues?
- Does the educator enforce healthy eating and include physical activity in the program?
- How does the educator ensure there is an adequate level of supervision provided? Are children able to be seen and heard at all times?
- Is the educator aware of his/her roles and responsibilities in relation to children at risk of abuse or neglect?

# Fee Setting – Procedure

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## **Physical Environment**

Having access to a welcoming and child friendly environment is also crucial to the criteria for determining an educator's fees. Considerations which will be taken into account include:

- Variety of resources/activities (are these changed on a regular basis?)
- Do the resources/activities match the program?
- Are there sufficient resources and activities for the number of children in care?
- Are the toys and activities age appropriate?
- Is the space used to the best advantage?
- Is the area well ventilated and heated/cooled when appropriate?
- Are children encouraged to become environmentally responsible and show respect for the environment?
- Environments that support learning are vibrant and flexible spaces that are responsive to the interests and abilities of each child.
- The environment is inclusive, promotes competence, independent exploration and learning through play

## **Social Environment**

- Do the educator and children interact with other Family Day Care educators?
- Do the educator and children attend community outings such as a visit to library or special events organised by family day care?
- Do the educator and children undertake child focussed outings/excursions?
- Do the children have interactions with people outside of Family Day Care?

## **Staffing Arrangements**

- Does the educator work collaboratively with co-ordinators and staff members?
- Does the educator's interactions convey mutual respect, equity and recognition of other's strengths and skills?

## **Relationships with Children**

- Are the educator's interactions with children warm and responsive?
- Are relationships within groups encouraged?

## **Collaborative Partnerships with Families and Communities**

- Do educators support families in their parenting roles?
- What information does the educator make available to families about community services?
- What sort of orientation process does the educator have for families?

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## **Fees Charged to Parents – Additional Information**

### ADMINISTRATION LEVY

The administration levy is set by Queanbeyan Palerang Regional Council through its annual Fees and Charges process, and after consultation with the Co-ordination Unit.

The administration levy is applied to every hour of hour that child/ren use. The administration levy is deducted from a parent/guardian's childcare benefit and/or childcare rebate payment via the educator.

The levy is used to support the scheme to operate.

### PARENT/SIBLING REGISTRATION FEE

The parent registration fee is paid by parents/guardians upon registration with Queanbeyan Family Day Care, i.e. when an "Application for Care" form is completed. This fee is applied to parents/guardians to assist the scheme to meet the workload involved in placing a child into care with the scheme.

This fee is non-refundable and is to be paid to the scheme in cash, cheque, money order or EFTPOS. Care cannot commence until the registration/sibling fee has been paid.

Similarly, if parents/guardians need to enrol a sibling at a later date, a further fee will apply when the relevant paperwork is completed (sibling fee)

Please note: If a child does not use care for six months or more, the Parent/Sibling Registration Fee will need to be paid again, before the child can commence care.



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## **Fees Charges to Educators – Additional Information**

Educators registered with Queanbeyan Family Day Care pay an educator fee which is charged per child per hour.

This fee is non-refundable.

The money raised from the educator levy assists the scheme to operate.

The educator fee is set by Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council through its annual Fees and Charges process.

# Ethical Conduct Policy

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## Complaints/Grievance Policy

### 1. OUTCOMES:

Grievances are to be resolved as informally and quickly as possible by the parties involved. When grievances cannot be resolved informally by the persons directly involved, a formal grievance process should be provided (see section on “Complaints/Grievance Procedures”).

### 2. POLICY:

Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council encourages good communication between all areas of the Council, and empowers staff with delegations to resolve complaints wherever possible at the first point of contact.

### 3. RELEVANT LEGISLATION

Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011  
Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010  
The Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 (NSW)  
The Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002 (NSW)

### 4. CONTENT

Parents and educators registered with Queanbeyan Family Day Care are encouraged to resolve any complaint/grievance in a timely fashion. A complaint/grievance often highlights an area where a review of practices, policies and procedures may be required.

### 5. PERFORMANCE INDICATORS:

- Number of grievances/complaints received
- Number of grievances/complaints received that cannot be resolved within the scheme and/or Council

### 6. KEY RESOURCES:

[www.education.gov.au/child-care-service-handbook-0](http://www.education.gov.au/child-care-service-handbook-0)

Guide to the National Quality Standard 2011  
Staying Healthy in Childcare 5<sup>th</sup> Edition

[www.humanservices.gov.au](http://www.humanservices.gov.au)

[www.dec.nsw.gov.au](http://www.dec.nsw.gov.au)

Education and Care Services National Regulations 2012  
Education and Care Services National Law 2011

### 7. RELEVANT PROCEDURES

[Grievances/Complaints – Procedure](#)

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## Grievances/Complaints – Procedure

Queanbeyan Family Day Care recognises that parents, educators and staff have a right to comment and complain about the services they receive. Services benefit from feedback from parents, educators and staff because problems can be identified and fixed. In the interests of quality care and good relationships, these complaints need to be attended to efficiently, expeditiously and in a positive manner.

Grievances should be resolved as informally and quickly as possible by the parties involved. When grievances cannot be resolved informally by the persons directly involved, a formal grievance process should be provided (see section on “Complaints/Grievance Procedures”).

**Not all disputes can be handled in one particular format and judgement needs to be made on what particular style is appropriate to suit each individual dispute.**

Queanbeyan Family Day Care encourages parents and educators to contact Co-ordination Unit staff if they feel they have been treated unfairly or if they believe their particular situation deserves special consideration. Parents and educators can also complain if they believe that the service they have received from staff or educators is sub-standard.

Complaints can be resolved through communication and negotiation and should aim to achieve a satisfactory outcome for all involved.

Complaints/grievance management procedures should:

- Ensure that the complaint/grievance is resolved at the earliest possible stage
- Ensure that the complaint/grievance process is fair to all parties involved in the complaint
- Ensure that the person making the complaint/grievance is protected against recrimination or reprisals if they exercise their right to complain
- Ensure that the complaint/grievance is accepted with courtesy and respect
- Ensure that the person making the complaint/grievance is aware that they can use an advocate if they wish
- Ensure confidentiality and privacy guidelines are adhered to (see section on “Confidentiality and Privacy”)
- Allow changes to be made to procedures, policies and practices, if deemed necessary

Where a parent or educator has a complaint or grievance in relation to a parent/educator/staff member, the following steps will occur:

- i. Raise the concern with the person
- ii. If this does not resolve the matter, the parent or educator should feel free to raise the matter with the Nominated Supervisor. The Nominated Supervisor will undertake to discuss the complaint/grievance with the parent/educator/staff member involved. Reports will be prepared following any meeting which may occur. (If the complaint involves the Nominated Supervisor, then step (iii) should be taken)

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- iii. If the problem is still unresolved, either party may ask for the matter to be referred to the Service Manager Education and Communities if required. Upon receiving a complaint, the Service Manager Education and Communities will undertake to investigate the complaint/grievance within seven days, including meeting with those concerned as required. The person making the complaint will be informed of any outcomes. This may be verbal or written, as appropriate. A written record of all meetings will be kept and forwarded to the participants. The Service Manager Education and Communities will prepare a report for the Portfolio General Manager, Community Choices
  - iv. If the matter is not able to be resolved at this level, the matter may be referred to the Portfolio General Manager Community Choices
  - v. If the matter cannot be resolved, then the complaint will be reviewed or investigated by senior staff members from Queanbeyan Palerang Regional Council. All written records will be forwarded to the Queanbeyan Palerang Regional Council prior to their meeting and the person making the complaint will be informed of the outcomes in writing

Any meetings conducted during this process will be recorded. A copy of this record will be given to participants involved in the meetings within 5 working days.

If the person making the complaint has concerns regarding the way in which the complaint is being handled, he/she has the right to request that the matter be referred to any of the above named at any time during the process.

In some situations, it may be necessary to seek the services of an independent agency or to some other alternative resolution procedure or, as a last resort any legal remedy.