POLICY STATEMENT

INTERACTIONS WITH CHILDREN

AUTHORISATION

POLICY TYPE:	Operational
POLICY LOCATION:	Corporate
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	Coordinator Children Services
AUTHORISED BY:	Director, Corporate and Community Services
DATE ADOPTED:	11 March 2025
ADOPTED BY:	Manex
MINUTE NO:	
REVIEW DUE DATE:	March 2028
REVISION NUMBER:	
RELATIONSHIP TO THE COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN	This Policy supports Council's Delivery Program Strategy 4.2: Provide quality, accredited and affordable Education and Care within Bland Shire and surrounds (Bland Preschool, Mobile Resource Unit and Toy Library Services).

DOCUMENT HISTORY

VERSION NO.	DATE	DESCRIPTION OF AMENDMENTS	AMENDED BY
0	May 2012		
1	April 2013		
2	June 2020		
3	July 2022		CSU Coordinator
4	March 2025		CSU Coordinator

REVIEW OF THIS POLICY

This Policy will be reviewed within three (3) Years from the date of adoption or as required in the event of legislative changes or business practice changes. Any amendment to the Policy must be by approval of the General Manager/Manex.

1. Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to guide staff with appropriate behaviours and strategies when interacting with children, families and community members.

2. Scope:

This policy document applies to all staff and educators employed at Bland Shire Children Services Unit and is inclusive of students and volunteers when participating a service.

3. Outcomes:

To promote a safe, secure and nurturing environment for all participants. Demonstrate acceptance and respect for culture, individuality, rights for the community and individuals.

4. Roles and Responsibilities:

The implementation of this policy applies to the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, Educators and Parents enrolled within a Bland Shire Children Service. Each role is listed below in the policy procedure.

5. Definitions:

In this policy "staff" and "educators" refers to people employed by Bland Shire Council Children Services Unit. "Families" refer to parent/carers of children enrolled at the service. "Volunteers" refers to individuals participating in the service program as a special helper or student on placement.

6. Legislation and Supporting Documents:

Children (Education and Care Services national Law Application) Act 2010
Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011: 155, 168.
NSW Government Child Safe Standards
Bland Shire Council's Child Safe Policy

7. Attachments:

Policy Procedure
The Nominated Supervisor and Educational Leader will:
- Guide professional development and practice to promote interactions with children that are positive and respectful.
- Established practiced guidelines that ensure interactions with children are given priority and those interactions are authentic, just and respectful of difference.
- Guide and educate educators, staff, volunteers and families about the Child Safe Standards and expectations.

Educators and Staff will:
- Respond to children's communication in a just and consistent manner.
- Respect and respond sensitively to children's attempts to initiate interactions and conversations.
- Initiate one to one interaction with children, particularly during daily routines and conversations with each child.
- Allow children to undertake experiences that develops and promotes self-reliance and self-esteem.
- Support children's efforts, assisting and encouraging as appropriate.
- Support children's secure attachment through consistent and warm, nurturing relationships.
- Support children when expressing their thoughts, feelings and emotions.
- Encourage children to express themselves, show interest and participate in the child's play/game.

- Encourage children to make choices and decisions.
- Acknowledge children's complex relationships and intervene in ways that promote consideration, alternative perspectives and social inclusion.
- Acknowledges each child's uniqueness with positivity.
- Respect cultural differences in communication and consider alternative approaches to own bias.
- Where applicable, recognise the importance of sibling interactions and provide opportunities throughout the day for children of different ages to interact.

Families will:

- Inform educators about their child's individual likes, dislikes, fears and needs, assisting with a smooth transition into the service.
- Provide ongoing information to the educator to support the belonging and well-being of the child.

Important strategies to consider when interacting with Children and Families:

- Children's rights, Family and Cultural Values – Children/Family rights and cultural values are given due consideration and respect when enrolling in a service. Ongoing communication, documentation and conversations create the foundation for authentic and respectful communication.
- Listening – Educators and staff implement listening as a foundation for interactions. Listening is based on observation by turn taking conversation, suspending judgement and giving children their full attention as they communicate. Attending to children's communication promotes a strong culture of listening.
- Children and Families – A culture of respectful interaction is promoted when children's attempts to communicate are valued. Active engagement is recognised through turn taking the conversation, relaxed body language, slow pace and meeting their level. This generates confidence with interactions.
- Reflection and Consideration – Time is dedicated to reflecting upon interactions with children. Reflections should consider how to spend extended periods engaged in interactions with children that comprise communication and listening.
- Role Modelling – Educators model positive interactions when they show care, empathy and respect for children, other educators, staff and families. Educators continue to learn and use effective communication strategies individual to the child or the need.

Quality interactions increase children's knowledge and understanding of themselves, each other as unique individuals and develop the skills and understandings needed to interact positively. Interactions between educators and children are genuine, positive and responsive based on respect, fairness, acceptance, co-operation and empathy. This is evident in conversation, pedagogy and planning for children and families.