CELEBRATIONS POLICY

Rituals and traditions strengthen our partnership with children, families and community, bringing a sense of belonging to our Out of School Hours Care (OSHC) Service. We believe that celebrations and cultural traditions need to be handled sensitively. The value in educating children, families and educators is fundamental to our inclusive program. Both the planning and preparation, and the events themselves, can be a satisfying and pleasurable experience.

'From before birth children are connected to family, communities, culture and place. Their earliest learning, development and learning takes place through these relationships, particularly with families, who are children and young people's first and most influential educators. … As children transition to school, their social worlds expand to include a wider range of relationships particularly with other children and young people of multiple age groups.' (MTOP, V2.0, 2022, p. 6).

NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD (NQS)

QUALITY AREA 1: EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM AND PRACTICE		
1.1.1	Approved learning framework	Curriculum decision-making contributes to each child's learning and development outcomes in relation to their identity, connection with community, wellbeing and confidence as learners and effectiveness as communicators.
QUALITY AREA 2: CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND SAFETY		
2.1	Health	Each child's health and physical activity is supported and promoted.
2.1.3	Healthy Lifestyles	Healthy eating and physical activity are promoted and appropriate for each child.
QUALITY AREA 6: COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS		
6.1.2	Parent views are respected	The expertise, culture, values and beliefs of families are respected, and families share in decision-making about their child's learning and wellbeing.

EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL LAW AND NATIONAL REGULATIONS	
S.162 A	Child Protection Training
S.165	Offence to inadequately supervise children.
S.167	Offence relating to protection of children from harm and hazards.

77	Health, hygiene and safe food practices
78	Food and beverages
82	Environment to be free from tobacco, vaping devices, vaping substances, drugs and alcohol
90	Medical conditions policy
155	Interactions with children
162	Health information to be kept in enrolment record
168	Education and care service must have policies and procedures
170	Policies and procedures to be followed
171	Policies and procedures to be kept available
172	Notification of change to policies and procedures

RELATED POLICIES

Anaphylaxis Management Policy	Multicultural Policy
Child Safe Environment Policy	Nutrition Food Safety Policy
Dental Health Policy	Professional Development Policy
Diabetes Management Policy	Safe Use of Digital Technologies and Online Environments Policy
Enrolment Policy	Student, Volunteer and Visitor's Policy
Family Communication Policy	

PURPOSE

Incorporating celebrations into children's services appropriately can be used to strengthen the partnership with children and families, creating a feeling of belonging and developing a sense of community amongst families, educators and children.

Celebrations provide an opportunity for children to develop respect for diverse values and beliefs as they learn about practices, which are different to their own. To ensure we are providing an inclusive program and environment, it is imperative to recognise the array of celebrations, both religious and worldly, that take place throughout the year in our community and to have an understanding of, and respect for, cultural diversity in our services.

SCOPE

This policy applies to children, families, staff, management, approved provider, nominated supervisor students, volunteers and visitors of the Service.

IMPLEMENTATION

Under the *Education and Care Services National Regulations*, an approved provider must ensure policies and procedures are in place to provide a child safe environment. When providing opportunities for children to celebrate special occasions incorporating food or beverages, consideration must be made to ensure children with medical conditions that can be impacted by food are clearly identified and risk minimisation plans are in place and educators and staff implement these plans. Children's safety and wellbeing are paramount, and we aim to take practical steps to protect children from harm. Our OSHC Service embeds the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations- (Victorian Child Safe Standards) to create and promote a child safe culture.

THE APPROVED PROVIDER/MANAGEMENT/NOMINATED SUPERVISOR-WILL ENSURE:

- educators, staff, students, visitors and volunteers have knowledge of and adhere to this policy families are aware of this *Celebrations Policy*
- families are aware of the *Celebration Policy* during their orientation process and reminded throughout the year via centre correspondence
- information is provided in accessible formats, including translated materials where required
- the Service adopts and aligns with the National Model Code and Guidelines and ensures only service-issued /approved devices are to be used when taking images or videos of children
- that for child safety and privacy reasons, families and visitors are **not permitted** to use personal devices to take photograph or video children while at the Service. Exceptions may be made for special events (such as graduations, end of year concerts, family cultural celebrations) where written consent has been obtained in advance from all families of children. Images must be for observation use only.
- written authorisation from families is required for any collection, use, storage, or destruction of images/videos of children
- a record is maintained of all children who are NOT to be photographed or recorded and shared with educators and staff
- environments remain free from the use of tobacco, including vaping substances/devices, alcohol and drugs (Reg. 82)

- they value rituals and routines and prioritise nurturing relationships through culturally safe and responsive interactions (MTOP, V2.0, 2022, p.14).
- they recognise the diversity of children and young people and value children and young people's unique and diverse capacities and capabilities and affirm different ways of knowing, being and doing (MTOP, 2022, p.15).
- cultural responsiveness is evident in everyday practice as educators respect multiple cultural ways of knowing, doing and being as they celebrate the benefits of diversity
- cultural celebrations that are significant to our families and relevant to our broader community are implemented within the OSHC Service
- religious celebrations such as Christmas and Easter are recognised within the OSHC Service and reflected in our programs
- sensitivity to issues such as family composition is respected (e.g.: Mother's & Father's Day)
- families' beliefs about celebrating birthdays are respected within the OSHC Service
- healthy options for birthday celebrations are discussed with families which may include fruit platter, fruit salad, watermelon balls or muffins in preference to a cake
- families discuss cake options with the nominated supervisor prior to celebrations
- parents provide ingredients of any cakes brought to the service (if store bought, the 'use by' date and ingredients must be clearly labelled)
- families are reminded that we are 'Allergy Aware' Service prior to celebrations and food that cannot be brought into the OSHC Service is clearly identified.
- educators are aware and make alternate arrangements if families would prefer that their child does NOT participate in such celebrations
    - if this is the case, we will respect the rights and feelings of this child and will provide an alternative experience for them to participate in so that they do not feel that they are being left out
- the OSHC Service has an '*Events Calendar*' that is used to support such events throughout the year. We ask that families add their celebration to the calendar, so educators can prepare the program.
- families are encouraged to be involved in the preparation and/or the celebration in the Service
- educators remain current with the professional knowledge and skills that support planning for and engaging in culturally inclusive practice
- they liaise and collaborate with our local Aboriginal educational consultative group to provide advice on relevant cultural celebrations and correct protocols to be followed (e.g. NAIDOC Week, Sorry Day, National Reconciliation Week)

- advance planning is adhered to if food or drink is provided for children at the Service. Additionally, all parents must be advised prior to the celebration. This allows for any feedback / concerns from parents which can then be considered as part of the normal planning involved in such activities.
- safety issues are taken into account prior to the implementation of celebratory experiences and risk assessments completed to identify, manage and minimise the risk of harm to children
- all requirements in our *Nutrition Food Safety Policy* are adhered to when planning for celebrations
- professional development is considered as a tool to assist to expand educator's knowledge of cultural awareness and cultural celebrations.

EDUCATORS WILL:

- provide active supervision at all times, especially during celebrations and when visitors are present
- adhere to the Service's adoption of the National Model Code and guidelines
- never use personal electronic devices, including mobile phones or smart watches to take images or videos of children whilst providing education and care
- check and respect the record of children who must NOT be photographed or recorded
- remind families and visitors of the Service's policy on photography and video before special events
- complete and follow risk assessments for activities that involve candles, cooking, excursions, or other potential hazards and seek written approval from the nominated supervisor prior to any celebration
- identify children with medical conditions that may be impacted by particular foods and if required complete risk minimisations plans/risk assessments to ensure children's safety
- ensure food handling training has been completed (as required)
- ensure the use of candles is carried out with the children's safety in mind and fully supervised. A full risk assessment will be submitted to the nominated supervisor prior to such celebrations.
- ensure each child is provided with a separate cupcake (with a candle, if they wish for the child celebrating their birthday; or a large cake that can be cut and shared
- be aware of cultural tokenism and stereotyping
- encourage and support family members to be involved in sharing their customs and celebrations with our OSHC Service

- ensure sensitivity to issues such as family composition is respected (e.g.: Mother's & Father's Day)
- ensure children and young people have the agency to make choices about the celebrations they would like to participate in, engaging and collaborating with families to give advice on traditions, ceremonies, lore and culture
- ensure that children and young people have the resources and time necessary to be able to celebrate effectively
- ensure that families who do not wish to be involved in celebrations have an option to not participate
- balance family values about receiving gifts and products from their children and educator's values about avoiding product-based activities by developing creative and meaningful gifts for families
- notify the community about the celebration e.g., requesting consent for taking photos to display on the Service notice board or displaying children's artwork and drawings about the celebration
- provide opportunities for children and young people to participate in 'open-ended' celebration activities
- ensure that the same amount of time and energy is dedicated to ALL celebrations
- invite educators and families to share their own personal experiences of celebrations
- use storybooks, images, and music that reflect contemporary and diverse celebrations
- be respectful of all religions and cultural backgrounds
- participate in ongoing professional development cultural competence and child safe practices

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT/REFLECTION

Our *Celebrations Policy* will be evaluated and reviewed on an annual basis or earlier if there are changes to legislation, ACECQA guidance or incidences related to child safety or celebration practices. Feedback will be requested from children, families, staff, educators and management and notification of any change to policies will be made to families within 14 days.

SOURCES

Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2025). *Guide to the National Quality Framework*

Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2024). *Taking Images and Video of Children While Providing Early Childhood Education and Care. Guidelines For The National Model Code*.

Australian Government Department of Education. *My Time, Our Place- Framework for School Age Care in Australia.V2.0, 2022*

Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics. (2016).

Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010. (Amended 2025)

Education and Care Services National Regulations. (Amended 2025)

National Health and Medical Research Council. (2024). *Staying Healthy: preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services* (6th Ed.). NHMRC. Canberra.

REVIEW

POLICY REVIEWED BY	Melina Strangio	Educational Leader	30/04/26
POLICY REVIEWED	APRIL 2026	NEXT REVIEW DATE	APRIL 2027
VERSION NUMBER	V12.11.25		
MODIFICATIONS	• annual policy review • related National Law sections added • red text indicates conditional allowances for use of personal devices for celebrations. Services to adjust for their own context. • embedded child safe practices throughout policy • points added re: *Safe Use of Digital Technologies and Online Environments* • sources checked for currency and updated as required • inclusion of MTOP references.		

POLICY REVIEWED	PREVIOUS MODIFICATIONS	NEXT REVIEW DATE
APRIL 2024	• policy maintenance • updated reference to EYLF, V2.0, 2023 • hyperlinks checked and repaired as required • additional information added re: food safety requirements	APRIL 2025
NOVEMBER 2022	• policy maintenance - no major changes to policy • hyperlinks checked and repaired as required • minor formatting edits within text • continuous improvement/reflection section added • link to Western Australian Education and Care Services National Regulations added in 'Sources'	NOVEMBER 2023

NOVEMBER 2021	• Addition of related Education and Care National Regulations • additional related polices • reference to risk minimisation plans for medical conditions • sources checked for currency	NOVEMBER 2022
NOVEMBER 2020	liaising with local Aboriginal educational consultants added healthy options for birthday cakes included sources checked for currency	NOVEMBER 2021
NOVEMBER 2019	Inclusion of EYLF references Updated referencing	NOVEMBER 2020
NOVEMBER 2018	Grammar, punctuation and spelling edited. Wording 'corrected' and sentences reworded. Sources/references alphabetised.	NOVEMBER 2019
OCTOBER 2017	Updated the National Quality Standards references to comply with revised standards.	AUGUST 2018
AUGUST 2017	Minor changes made to policy to ensure children's safety is upheld and we are providing an inclusive environment.	AUGUST 2018
FEBRUARY 2016	New Format created and policy created.	NOVEMBER 2017