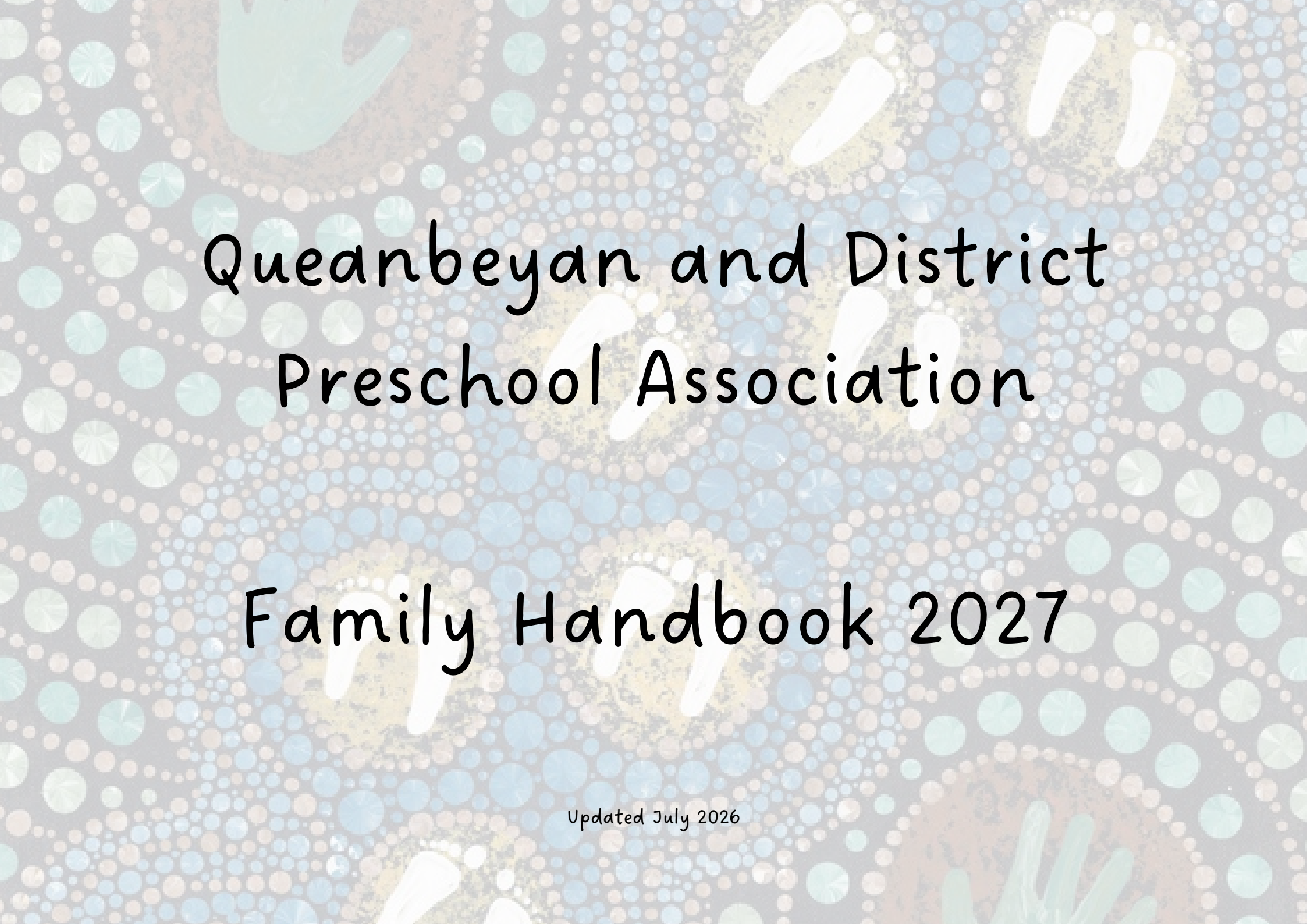


The background features a dense pattern of small, overlapping circles in shades of teal, light blue, and pale yellow. Interspersed among these dots are several stylized handprints in the same color palette, some appearing as if they are reaching towards the center.

Queanbeyan and District Preschool Association

Family Handbook 2027

Updated July 2026



Acknowledgement of Country

Queanbeyan & District Preschool Association acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land in which we play, live and learn, and guide the young leaders of tomorrow.

We recognise the traditional custodians connection to land, water and community. We pay our respects to First Nations peoples and their culture, and to Elders past, present and emerging.

*Always was, Always will be,
Aboriginal Land.*

Welcome to QDPA

We are a community-based, not-for-profit organisation running four preschools in Queanbeyan, NSW:

- Harris Park Preschool (80 children per day)
- Waratah Preschool (25 children per day)
- Karabar Preschool (24 children per day)
- Mura Preschool (60 children per day)



Vision and Mission

Vision Statement: Our vision is to be a leading provider of inclusive and culturally responsive early childhood education that nurtures each child's potential, supports their learning journey, and empowers families and communities.

Mission Statement: At QDPA, we are dedicated to fostering inclusive, respectful, and supportive early learning environments that empower children and their families. In all that we do, the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children is paramount and takes precedence over all other considerations, including financial, operational, or reputational interests. We prioritise each child's unique strengths, cultural background, and developmental needs, while ensuring access to high-quality, affordable education. Through collaborative partnerships with families and the community, we aim to inspire a lifelong love of learning and promote social justice, respect, and sustainable practices in every aspect of our work. We strive to create environments where children feel safe, respected, and valued, fostering their development into confident, capable, and compassionate individuals. Through innovative programs and sustainable practices, we aim to shape a future where every child has access to high-quality education and opportunities to thrive.



Philosophy

At QDPA, we believe that every child is unique, capable, and deserving of high-quality early childhood education that respects their individual strengths, cultural identity, and developmental journey. We view children as active participants in their learning and empower them through play-based, experiential learning environments that nurture and cultivate a love of learning, curiosity, resilience, and sense of belonging.

We strongly believe children have the right to be treated with dignity and respect and to have their voices heard. We are dedicated to being strong advocates for children's rights, through the principles of the United Nations Rights of the Child and provide and support children with opportunities to develop relationships and engage with their peers, educators, families, and community, with the aim of building each child's confidence to communicate their thoughts and feelings.

We are unwavering in our commitment to child-first paramountcy. The safety, welfare and wellbeing of children is our highest priority and underpins every decision we make. We affirm that children's safety will always take precedence over financial, operational, or reputational interests. In all circumstances, we act in the best interests of the child.

We are committed to fostering strong partnerships with families and the broader community, recognising that collaboration is key to ensuring children thrive. Inclusion, equity, and respect for all forms of diversity guide our practices. We believe that education is a tool for promoting social justice and children's rights. We strive to create environments where every child feels safe, valued, and empowered to express themselves fully.

We hold high expectations for our educators to ensure they align with our values, beliefs, and this philosophy to provide the highest level of care and education for the children. We are committed to recruiting and retaining educators who demonstrate these skills, as well as investing in educators' growth through a vast range of professional development opportunities.

We strive to create learning environments that inspire children. As co-constructors alongside children, we aim to create nurturing and stimulating environments that encourage curiosity, foster creativity, and support the whole child. We embrace change and innovation, ensuring our programs are responsive to the evolving needs of children, families, and society.

We also believe that some of the best opportunities for learning are through exploring risks, allowing children to analyse their environments and challenge their own learning and development. We encourage children to play in all environments and weather and to experience the natural world in all its fundamental elements.

We value reconciliation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples as being essential to our mission to raise awareness and educate future generations. We acknowledge and are grateful for the Nggunawal and Ngambri Peoples' custodianship of the land on which we live, play, teach and learn. We acknowledge that everything we do is on Aboriginal land, and wish to build and maintain strong, meaningful relationships with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members.

Our Programs

HARRIS PARK

BURU ROOM
WALLABIES
 Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday
 9.00 – 3.00

JOEYS
 Thursday & Friday
 8.15 – 3.45

BURUGAN ROOM
GOANNAS
 Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday
 8.45 – 2.45

GECKOS
 Thursday & Friday
 8.30 – 4.00

GUGUBURA ROOM
COCKATOOS
 Monday & Tuesday
 8.30 – 4.00

MAGPIES
 Wednesday, Thursday, Friday
 8.45 – 2.45

WIDJAN ROOM
KOALAS
 Monday & Tuesday
 8.15 – 3.45

WOMBATS
 Wednesday, Thursday & Friday
 9.00 – 3.00

MURA

YURUNG ROOM
BROLGAS
 Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday
 8.30 – 2.30

LYREBIRDS
 Thursday & Friday
 8.30 – 4.00

YURRH ROOM
PELICANS
 Monday & Tuesday
 8.15 – 3.45

CYGNETS
 Wednesday, Thursday, Friday
 8.45 – 2.45

BURIN ROOM
BILBIES
 Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday
 9.00 – 3.00

NUMBATS
 Thursday & Friday
 8.15 – 3.45

KARABAR

BURU
 Monday & Tuesday
 8.15 – 3.45

GULA
 Wednesday, Thursday, Friday
 8.30 – 2.30

WARATAH

MALIYAN
 Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday
 8.45 – 2.45

MALUNGANG
 Thursday & Friday
 8.30 – 4.00

Together we nurture curiosity, connection and a love of learning.

Preschool Fees

- QDPA is a not-for-profit community organisation. We strive to keep our fees as low as possible to make preschool accessible to all families across our community.
- Fees are reviewed by the Management Committee at the end of each year for the following year. Our fees policy can be found in OWNA.
- Upon accepting a placement with QDPA, a \$180 enrolment levy is payable. This levy covers the costs of enrolment processing and funds excursions, maintenance contributions as well as the Association Membership fee. **The enrolment levy is not refundable.**
- Current daily fee is \$39 (\$25 for eligible equity families)
- NSW Affordable Preschool funding is available to reduce your fees - you **must opt into** this program.
- Fees are invoiced fortnightly via direct debit (where fees are payable).
- Late fees apply for late collection past the program end time
- Non-payment of fees and/or late fees, may result in termination of care in accordance with our fee policy.



For fee assistance and hardship queries, contact admin@qdpa.com.au

Daily Checklist for Families

- Packed lunch (nut-free) to fuel for a busy preschool day
- Labelled water bottle
- Sun-safe hat (available for purchase)
- Weather-appropriate clothing and spare clothes
- Comfort item (if needed for rest)

Attendance

- Signing in/out is a legal requirement under National Law.
- Use the iPad at the entrance to electronically record attendance.
- Notify educators when you arrive and depart.
- Children will only be released to authorised contacts (with photo ID if unknown to staff).
- Persons under 16 cannot collect children.
- Absences can be marked on the app to notify the team your child won't be in.
- Absences are automatically marked if a child is more than 30 minutes late.

The OWNA App

OWNA is our platform for:

- Marking absences
- Receiving updates, newsletters, and notifications
- Signing digital forms (medication, incident reports, permissions)
- Families are strongly encouraged to download and regularly check OWNA.



Our Policies

Our policies guide the way we provide safe, high-quality education and care for children. They are developed in accordance with the Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations, the National Quality Framework, current legislation and recognised best practice.

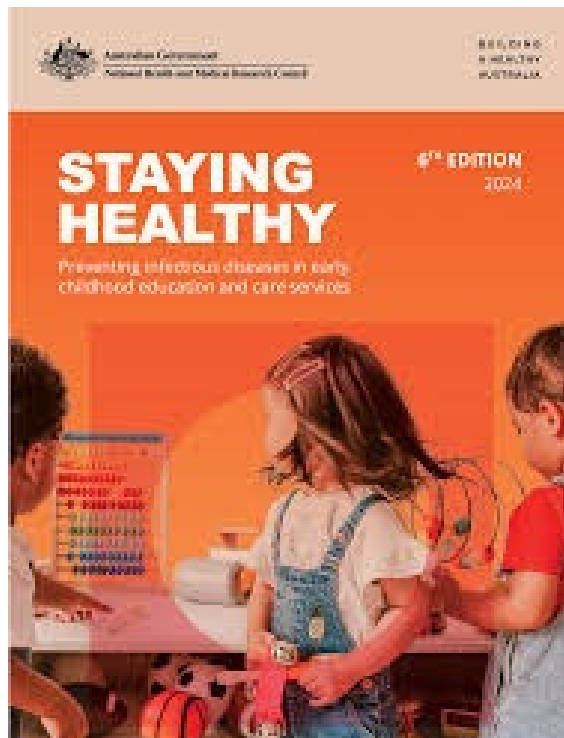
Policies are reviewed regularly to ensure they remain current and responsive to legislative changes, sector updates and the needs of our children, families and community. Families are encouraged to provide feedback during policy reviews, as your perspectives help shape the continuous improvement of our service.

Current policies are available:

- Through the OWNA App
- On our website
- From your Preschool Director upon request

If you would like to provide feedback or suggest improvements to any policy, we welcome your input at any time.





Health & Illness

- Keep contact details updated for emergencies.
- Children must stay home for 24 hours after starting antibiotics or pain relief.
- We follow NSW Health exclusion periods to prevent the spread of illness.
- Illnesses and incidents are documented in OWINA for your records.
- You will be contacted to collect your child within 30 minutes if they become unwell.

Medication Policy

- Complete an online authorisation form via OWINA.
- Medication must be in original packaging with pharmacy label (if prescribed).
- Hand medication directly to staff – never leave it in bags.
- Pain relief (Panadol, Nurofen) is not administered at preschool.

Behaviour Guidance

- Children thrive when they feel safe, supported, and understand boundaries.
- Our approach focuses on positive guidance, redirection, and prevention rather than punishment.
- We maintain each child's dignity and encourage self-regulation.
- Educators use strategies tailored to individual needs, respecting family and cultural values.

High Learning Support Needs

We welcome children to enrol with additional learning or developmental needs. We:

- Collaborate with families to create individualised learning plans.
- Work with external professionals (speech therapists, occupational therapists, paediatricians, etc).
- Provide referrals to support services when needed.
- Ensure our environment is inclusive, supportive, and adaptable (where possible).
- Seek additional funding where available to enhance support.
- Request you share any relevant reports or action plans during enrolment to help us support your child.

Diversity & Inclusion

At QDPA, we celebrate and respect the diversity of our community.

Our preschools welcome children and families of all backgrounds, cultures, and abilities.

We:

- Promote an anti-bias approach that encourages acceptance and respect.
- Support children in learning about different family structures and cultural traditions.
- Provide resources in families' first languages where possible.
- Encourage families to share cultural experiences, music, food, and stories.
- Actively embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures in our programs through our Reconciliation Action Plans and partnerships with local Elders.

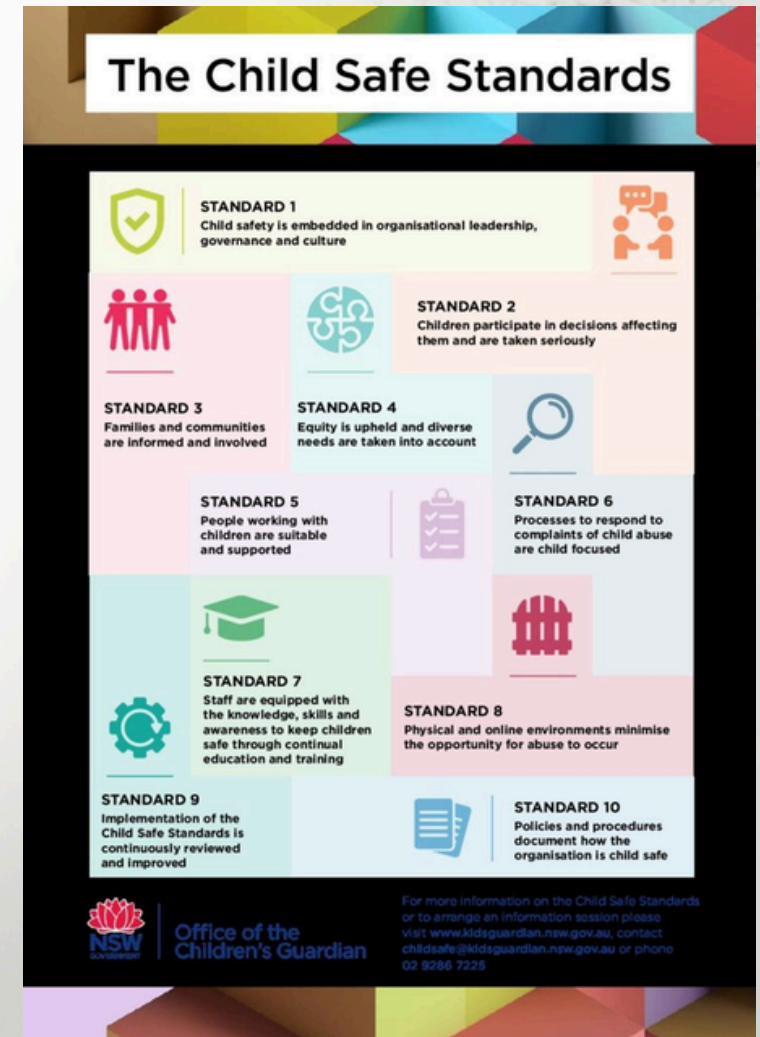
Child Safety

- All staff are mandatory reporters under NSW law.
- All staff have completed child protection training, and refresh this annually.
- We must report concerns if we suspect a child is at risk of harm, including neglect, abuse, or domestic violence.
- Reports are made to protect children and ensure they receive the help they need.
- We follow the NSW Child Safe Standards, embedding safety into our culture, policies, and practices.

Protecting **children** is

EVERYBODY'S

BUSINESS



Child Protection Complaints and Notifications

Queanbeyan & District Preschool Association (QDPA) is committed to ensuring that all child protection concerns are taken seriously and responded to promptly, including those raised outside normal operating hours. Children's safety, welfare and wellbeing remain the paramount consideration at all times.

At QDPA, children's safety, welfare and wellbeing are always our highest priority. You may contact the Nominated Supervisor and/or the Executive Officer if you have a concern about:

- A child's safety or wellbeing
- Suspected abuse or neglect
- Inappropriate conduct
- A breach of our Child Safe Code of Conduct

Concerns can be raised by email, phone message or written communication. All complaints or notifications received outside normal operating hours will be responded to within 24 hours of the next business day.

 If a child is in immediate danger, please contact:

- Emergency Services – 000, or
- NSW Department of Communities & Justice (DCJ) Child Protection Helpline – 132 111

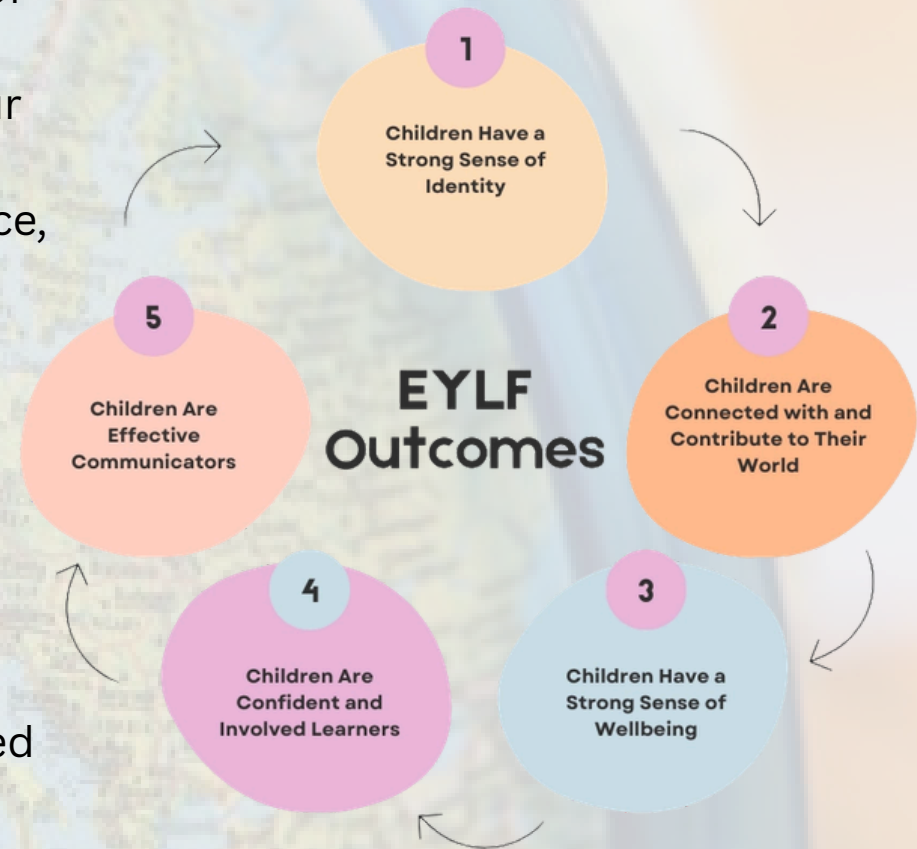
Emergency reporting should never wait for a service response. QDPA has zero tolerance for child abuse and is committed to acting promptly, respectfully and confidentially in response to all concerns.

Learning at QDPA

At QDPA, we believe that children are best prepared for school through meaningful play, strong relationships and rich learning experiences, not by replicating a school classroom. Our programs support school readiness by fostering children's curiosity, confidence, independence and love of learning within a play-based environment guided by the Early Years Learning Framework.

Research consistently shows that the strongest predictors of a successful transition to school are social and emotional skills, rather than early academic knowledge. Throughout our programs, educators intentionally support children to develop resilience, confidence, self-regulation, independence, problem-solving skills, communication and positive relationships with others. These essential life skills help children feel secure, capable and ready to embrace the opportunities and challenges of "big school."

We work closely with families and local schools to support each child's individual transition to school, recognising that every child develops at their own pace. Our goal is for every child to leave QDPA feeling confident in who they are, excited about learning and ready to thrive in their next educational journey.



Management Committee

The Management Committee is the key governance structure of QDPA. The committee ensures our organisation operates in line with regulations, values, and community needs. New members are always welcomed, and the AGM is held in April each year.

Roles

- Chairperson – leads the committee and oversees governance
- Vice Chair – supports the chair and steps in when required
- Treasurer – support the Executive Officer in managing finances and budgets
- Secretary – records meetings and correspondence
- General Committee Members – contribute ideas, decisions, and support projects

Committee Meetings

- Held monthly during term weeks
- Mix of online and in-person to support accessibility and participation

Key Responsibilities

- Strategic planning and decision-making
- Ensuring compliance with laws and regulations
- Overseeing finances and resources
- Supporting staff and families through effective governance

Family Involvement

At QDPA, we believe children thrive when families and educators work together. We welcome families as valued partners in our preschool community and encourage you to become involved in ways that suit your interests, skills and availability.

There are many ways you can be involved, including:

- Sharing your culture, language, traditions, hobbies or profession with children.
- Participating in special events, celebrations and excursions.
- Assisting with fundraising and community events.
- Joining our Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) Working Group.
- Becoming a member of our Management Committee and contributing to the governance of our organisation.
- Volunteering to support learning experiences or projects within the preschool.

Volunteering at QDPA

We value the contribution of volunteers and appreciate the time families give to our preschool community.

To help us maintain a child safe environment, all volunteers who are engaged in child-related activities are required to hold a current NSW Working With Children Check (WWCC) that has been verified by QDPA before volunteering. Depending on the nature of the volunteer role, additional induction or supervision requirements may also apply.

If you are interested in volunteering, please speak with your Preschool Director.

Respectful Communication and Partnerships

Positive relationships between families and educators are essential to creating a safe, respectful and supportive environment for children.

QDPA is committed to maintaining open, honest and respectful communication. We ask that all interactions between families, educators, volunteers and visitors reflect our shared values of kindness, professionalism and mutual respect.

We ask families to:

- Communicate respectfully with educators, staff, children and other families.
- Raise concerns in a calm and constructive manner, following our Complaints and Feedback Policy where appropriate.
- Respect the privacy and confidentiality of other children, families and staff.
- Work collaboratively with educators to support the best outcomes for their child.

To ensure the safety and wellbeing of everyone in our community, the following behaviours are not acceptable:

- Aggressive, abusive or threatening language or behaviour.
- Harassment, bullying, intimidation or discrimination.
- Offensive, defamatory or inappropriate comments made in person, by phone, email or through social media.
- Filming, photographing or recording staff, children or families without permission.
- Behaviour that compromises the safety, wellbeing or privacy of children, families or staff.

Zero-Tolerance

QDPA has a zero-tolerance approach to violence, intimidation and abusive behaviour.

Where these behaviours occur, we may ask a person to leave the premises, restrict communication to written correspondence, involve relevant authorities where necessary, or take other appropriate action to ensure the safety of children, families and staff.

We are committed to working in partnership with families and believe that respectful communication enables us to provide the best possible outcomes for every child.



Commitment to Professional Practice

Our educators are qualified professionals who are committed to providing high-quality early childhood education and care through evidence-informed practice, ongoing professional learning, and strong partnerships with families.

Families can expect our team to communicate respectfully, maintain confidentiality, act in the best interests of children, and uphold the highest standards of professionalism.

In return, we ask that all interactions with our educators reflect the same respect and courtesy. Together, we create a positive, safe and welcoming environment where children can thrive.

At QDPA, children's safety, welfare and wellbeing are always our paramount consideration. We believe that respectful relationships between children, families, educators, volunteers and the broader community are fundamental to achieving this.

Every interaction contributes to the culture of our preschool, and together we share responsibility for creating environments where everyone feels safe, welcomed, respected and valued.

Thank you for being part of our QDPA community!
Together, we create a safe, nurturing, and inspiring start to your child's education

Waratah Preschool

27 Alanbar Street
Karabar NSW 2620

Director: Joanne Crammond

Phone: 02 6297 3850

Email:

Waratah@qdpa.com.au



Karabar Preschool

191 Cooma Street
Karabar NSW 2620

Director: Belinda Southee

Phone: 02 6297 5111

Email:

Karabar@qdpa.com.au

Harris Park Preschool

61 Lowe Street
Queanbeyan NSW 2620

Director: Ainsley Wellfare

Phone: 02 6297 1689

Email:

HarrisPark@qdpa.com.au



Mura Preschool

181 Cooma Street
Karabar NSW 2620

Director: Carly Smith-
Beeson

Phone: 02 6297 1640

Email: Mura@qdpa.com.au

Our Office Team



QDPA Association Office

181 Cooma Street

Karabar NSW 2620

Phone: 02 6297 1640

Association Administration:

Narelle Westerhof

Admin@qdpa.com.au

Executive Officer:

Ashleigh Daly

Ashleigh.Daly@qdpa.com.au

Web Site:

www.qdpa.com.au

