



Star of the Sea School

OSHC
*Interactions with Children
Policy*

Open Hearts Open Minds



SCHOOL VISION STATEMENT

Our school is built on the core values of respect, inclusivity, compassion, collaboration and honesty. We support our families as the first and foremost educators of their child's faith development. Our vision paves the way for educating students for the 21st century but also draws from our history and tradition.

We guide our learners to be self-managed, innovative and critical thinkers who have a strong sense of who they are and their relationship in their world. As a learning community, we value the skills necessary to build meaningful relationships and for learners to be connected to each opportunity to develop their own personal growth. We encourage our learners to question, explore and discover so they actively contribute to a more compassionate society.

PURPOSE

At Star of the Sea School, we believe that every child has the right to feel safe—emotionally, physically, and spiritually. Safety is a fundamental human right and an essential foundation for learning, growth, and wellbeing. Within our Out of School Hours Care (OSHC) service, we are deeply committed to creating an environment where every child experiences a genuine sense of security and belonging.

We recognise that families hold the primary responsibility for their child's safety and wellbeing. At Star of the Sea OSHC, we actively support this responsibility by fostering positive, respectful, and responsive relationships with all children. Our approach is centred on creating a safe, nurturing, and inclusive space where each child feels heard, valued, and empowered.

Grounded in the Gospel values of justice, dignity, and respect for all, our policy is further informed by our obligations under legislative and community frameworks within which Catholic schools operate. We are dedicated to upholding all regulatory requirements and best practices to ensure the ongoing safety and wellbeing of every child in our care.

BACKGROUND

This framework acknowledges the critical role Out of School Hours Care (OSHC) services play in supporting the wellbeing, development, and learning of children and their families. It promotes a vision for learning that is centred on play, leisure, and meaningful engagement distinct from the structured expectations of classroom environments. The framework encourages the adoption of a shared language and reflective practices across all aspects of OSHC, reinforcing the importance of thoughtful, child-centred approaches in every interaction and experience.

POLICY STATEMENT

The Star of the Sea OSHC service provides a developmentally appropriate program that responds to the leisure and care needs of the children who attend. Our program is designed to support each child's holistic development including their social, emotional, physical, intellectual, and creative growth—through engaging, child-led, and play-based learning. Opportunities for children to be involved in program planning, implementation, and evaluation are embedded across the service.

Educators guide children using positive approaches and provide a nurturing, inclusive, and stimulating environment that fosters self-esteem, confidence, and a strong sense of belonging.

HOW THE POLICY WILL BE IMPLEMENTED

- The Director and educators are responsible for developing a program that creates a responsive, inclusive atmosphere aligned with the needs of each individual child and the collective group, reflecting the service's philosophy and goals.
- Staff will be supported to develop their understanding of child development theories and best practices through ongoing professional learning.
- Programs will be developed for all aspects of the service, including before school care, after school care, pupil-free days, and vacation care.
- Staff are encouraged to access high-quality resources and professional development opportunities to offer rich, varied experiences for children and to strengthen their own knowledge and skills.
- Staff will use the framework *My Time, Our Place for School-Age Children in Education and Care Settings* to guide the planning and delivery of programs in line with national quality standards.

PROGRAM PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICES

- Programs will be balanced and inclusive, offering a mix of indoor/outdoor, quiet/active, structured/unstructured experiences that promote social, emotional, cognitive, and physical development.
- Equal opportunity principles are embedded across daily routines and activities. Programs will be culturally inclusive and reflect the diversity of the families who access the service. Children will engage with experiences that celebrate differences in culture, language, ability, and identity in a respectful and meaningful way.
- Programs will actively foster:
 - Positive friendships between children
 - Warm and respectful child-staff relationships
 - Cooperative, inclusive, and responsible behaviours
 - Individual and group interests

- The unique needs, talents, and passions of every child
- Flexibility will be built into programming to allow for spontaneity, enjoyment, and child agency. Both the process and outcomes of activities will be valued equally.
- Programs will be clearly displayed for families. A copy of the vacation care program will be provided to each family. Families are welcomed and encouraged to contribute to program planning and evaluation, with varying levels of involvement respected.
- The service will provide a wide range of inclusive materials, equipment, and resources that are accessible and appropriate for all children regardless of gender, ability, or background.

RELATIONSHIPS, RESPONSIVENESS AND PARTICIPATION

- Children are treated with dignity and respect and are provided with a safe, nurturing space to explore, play, and grow.
- Children will be supported to express their ideas, participate in decision-making, and contribute to the program through regular discussions, planning sessions, and conversations.
- Staff will be actively involved in children's activities where appropriate and will encourage exploration and trying new things.
- Staff will communicate with children in a friendly, encouraging, and age-appropriate way, taking time to build trusting relationships. They will join in play and learning experiences, respond to children's curiosity, and communicate at the child's level to ensure understanding.

PARTNERSHIPS WITH FAMILIES

- Staff work collaboratively with each other, with children, and with families to plan, implement, and evaluate programs aligned with the service's philosophy and goals.
- Parents will be kept informed about their child's interests, participation, and wellbeing. Staff are responsive to parent suggestions and questions.
- New families are supported through orientation processes. Where possible, children will be invited to visit the service prior to enrolment to assist with their transition.
- Families are welcome to call the service to check on their child's wellbeing, especially during early days of attendance.

PROGRAM ROUTINES AND ENVIRONMENT

- Daily routines and structured activities are flexible and responsive to:
 - Children's developmental needs and attendance patterns
 - Weather and environmental factors
 - Staffing and supervision requirements
 - Special needs or adjustments for individual children
- A quiet space is provided each afternoon to support children in completing homework, in alignment with the school's homework policy. Staff may encourage and support children to engage with homework but are not responsible for completion or supervision. One-on-one support cannot be guaranteed.

- Special interest or focus groups for older children may be offered, developed in consultation with children, families, and staff.

EXCURSIONS AND SPECIAL EVENTS

- Excursions are planned as part of the regular program, especially during school holidays, to enrich children's experiences and engage them with the broader community.
- Considerations for excursions will include:
 - Children's interest and enthusiasm
 - Venue suitability, transport and logistics
 - Staffing levels and ratios
 - Cost and value for families
 - Age groupings and developmental appropriateness
 - Service policies and philosophy

(Refer to the **Excursions Policy** for detailed procedures.)

POLICY REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure it remains effective and relevant to the needs of our school community.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND APPROVAL

This policy has been developed in consultation with staff, students, and the broader school community and was approved on _____

REVISION RECORD

Implemented	November 2024
Ratified by School Board	
Last Reviewed	25 th June 2025
Next Review	June 2026