POL6-P3
Family Engagement Procedure

1. Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to establish Affinity's approach to engaging families as active partners in their child's education and care.

This procedure supports Affinity's obligations under the Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations and the National Quality Standard by promoting respectful communication, shared decision-making and inclusive practices that strengthen relationships between families, educators and centres.

This procedure recognises family engagement as central to children's wellbeing, learning and sense of belonging, and as a key contributor to positive outcomes across all Affinity centres.

2. Scope

This procedure applies to all enrolled children at Affinity, their families and authorised nominees, staff, students, contractors and volunteers across all Affinity centres, programs and business operations.

This procedure applies when families engage with Affinity centres through communication, participation, feedback, decision-making or access to the service. It outlines Affinity's high-level approach to family engagement, including communication practices, participation opportunities and respectful relationships, to support consistent, inclusive and child-focused practice.

This procedure must be read in conjunction with the POL 6-P7 Family Code of Conduct and Termination of Care Procedure.pdf , POL 6-P1 Enrolment Procedure.pdf , POL6-P6 Complaints Policy and Procedure.pdf , POL2-P31 Child Safe Organisation Principles and Standards Procedure.pdf , POL HR5 AEG Code of Conduct.pdf , POL HR4 Social Media and External Communication Policy.pdf and POL 6-P5 Confidentiality and Privacy Procedure.pdf

3. Definitions

The following definitions support consistent understanding of the terms used in this policy/procedure.

Term	Definition
Family	Includes parents, carers, guardians and other persons with a significant role in the child's life.
Family engagement	The ongoing, respectful collaboration between families and educators that supports children's learning, development and wellbeing.
Authorised nominee	A person authorised by a parent to collect or act on behalf of the child.
Staff	All Affinity employees, including centre-based and corporate roles.

4. Guiding principles

At Affinity, we believe that child safety is everyone's responsibility. We are committed to upholding the safety, rights and wellbeing of all children and promote a culture of child safety with a zero tolerance approach to child abuse and harm. Affinity ensures the Paramountcy Principle is applied in all aspects of our work. All decisions and actions related to the operation and delivery of education and care services must prioritise children's safety, rights and best interests above all other considerations.

The following principles guide how Affinity engages families across all centres:

- **Child-centred practice** – family engagement supports children's safety, belonging and development.
- **Respectful partnerships –** families are valued as children's first teachers and respected partners in decision-making.
- **Open and honest communication** – communication with families is clear, timely, respectful and two-way.
- **Inclusivity and accessibility** – engagement practices recognise diverse cultures, languages, family structures and needs.
- **Shared responsibility –** educators and families work together to support children's wellbeing and learning.
- **Trust and professionalism** – interactions are professional, courteous and grounded in mutual respect.

5. Procedures

This procedure describes the key actions that support respectful, inclusive and effective family engagement across Affinity centres, supported by detailed processes maintained in Promapp.

5.1. Supporting family access and presence

Families of a child being educated and cared for by the service may enter the education and care service premises at any time that the child is being educated and cared for by the service. Follow POL6-P2 Arrival Departure and Collection Policy and Procedure.pdf or POL 2-P28 External Visitor Procedure.pdf for more detailed information

Centre Managers / Nominated Supervisors are responsible for:
• ensuring family access aligns with regulatory, safety and court-order requirements; and
• managing access arrangements where restrictions apply.

Exceptions and contingencies
Access may be restricted where safety, legal or child-protection concerns apply.

Escalation and support
Access concerns are escalated to Regional Manager.

5.2. Promoting open and respectful communication and feedback
This procedure is to promote open and respectful communication and should be read in conjunction with GUI 1380 Storypark Guidelines.pdf, POL 6-P7 Family Code of Conduct and Termination of Care Procedure.pdf , POL6-P6 Complaints Policy and Procedure.pdf , POL HR5 AEG Code of Conduct.pdf should a complaint arise. Following Promapp Processes **3.1.01 Manage Engagement with Families – Unplanned** and **3.1.02 Manage Engagement with Families - Planned**

Staff are responsible for:
- displaying availabilities of educators can be used to inform families of the best times they may contact their child's educator, outside of regular drop off and pick times.
- providing a communication book, or similar, will be available in each room to be used by families to pass on messages for educators
- meetings can be scheduled with educators when families wish to discuss their child or other issues in more depth
- always communicating with families respectfully and professionally; and
- sharing relevant information in a timely manner. Information regarding the centre will be communicated in many ways including, but not limited to:
  - Verbal Communication Methods - such as daily informal conversations, planned meetings, information evenings, phone calls
  - Written Communication Methods - such as notices and displays, newsletters, emails, notes in pockets, family handbook, online - website, Facebook, Storypark

Families are encouraged to:
- share any information about their child regarding preferences, likes, dislikes, development, care strategies, past experiences or expectations and goals for their child. The All About Me form can be issued on enrolment and Storypark can be used by families to share information.
- provide verbal or written feedback at any time regarding all aspects of the centre, the educators and the education and care of the children. Refer FRM 6-D2 Family Feedback.pdf or FRM 7-D2 Policy Review and Feedback.docx , as relevant
- where there are further concerns or complaints to follow the POL6-P6 Complaints Policy and Procedure.pdf

Exceptions and contingencies
Alternative communication methods may be used to support language, access or inclusion needs.

Escalation and support
Communication concerns are escalated to the Centre Manager or if unable to resolve or need greater assistance to the Regional Manager.

5.3. Encouraging family participation and contribution
Families are encouraged to participate in centre life and contribute to decisions affecting their child. The centre always has an open door and welcomes families to share in the day.

The centre may:
- arrange information evenings with guest speakers relating to identified areas of interest such as school readiness, challenging behaviour or child health issues
- inviting family participation in ways that support learning and wellbeing; and
- recognising family knowledge and contributions.

Families are encouraged to:
- share any skills, knowledge, interests of family traditions that may contribute to the educational program or environments offered to the children. Some examples may include dancing, cooking, speaking another language, sharing an interesting occupation or sharing a cultural celebration.
- provide input into all decisions that affect the care of their child or the running of the centre. This may include, but is not limited to, care practices, routines, learning experiences and programs, their child's development, policy and procedure review. Input can be given verbally or in writing. Refer to the Family Feedback form

- share in events held at the centre. Several opportunities at different times will arranged including morning teas, afternoon teas and evening events to cater for different family preferences and availabilities. Events may include picnics, Mother's/Father's/Grandparent's day, cultural celebrations, community celebrations, fundraisers or planned incursions.

Exceptions and contingencies

Participation may be adapted based on operational or safety considerations.

Escalation and support

Barriers to engagement are escalated to centre leadership for support.

5.4. Promoting respectful behaviour and shared expectations

It is expected that families demonstrate respect and conduct themselves appropriately regarding communication and participation in the centre and The POL 6-P7 Family Code of Conduct and Termination of Care Procedure.pdf should be read and understood.

Staff are responsible for:

- modelling respectful behaviour;
- addressing inappropriate conduct.
- reinforcing shared expectations; and
- managing breaches of conduct. Where educators feel that they have been treated with contempt, an investigation will be carried out by the Nominated Supervisor or AEG representative in an effort to determine the facts of the situation. This may include gathering statements from educators involved and other educators who may have been witnesses to the event.

Families are responsible to:

- act within the guidelines of the code of conduct for families, including but not limited to;
  - Showing respect for all educators, employees, children and families
  - Respecting that educators are qualified, experienced and dedicated to the best educational and care outcomes for all children
  - Abiding by the centre's policies and procedures
  - Understanding the educators' commitment to protecting the privacy of all children and families. Families will not take photos or videos of other children while at the centre.
  - Accepting that all families have the right to choose how to raise their children
  - Refrain from negative, slanderous communication about the centre or employees via online, social media or other outlets
  - Fulfilling financial responsibilities regarding fees
  - Showing tolerance and acceptance for diversity
  - Not engaging in illegal activity in or around the centre property
- not use of offensive language, physical or emotional abuse or threatening behaviour to any person in the centre or online will not be tolerated at any time. If educators deem it necessary, the police will be notified.
- raise concerns and grievances following the Complaints procedure, however, continual, irrational or exaggerated complaints despite conscientious effort being made to address or correct practice is unacceptable

Escalation and support

Serious behavioural concerns are escalated to Centre Manager and Regional Manager or external authorities where required. Please follow GUI 1334 Risk Classification and Escalation Matrix.docx and POL2-P24 Incident Injury Trauma and Illness inc hospitalisation and death Procedure.pdf if authorities are notified.

6. Roles and responsibilities summary

The following table provides a summary of role responsibilities that align with the procedures and ProMapp processes referenced.

Role	Responsibilities

Families	• May access the service at any time their child is in care (unless restricted for safety/legal reasons)
	• Are encouraged to:
	  ○ Share information about their child (preferences, development, needs)
	  ○ Provide feedback or raise concerns appropriately
	  ○ Participate in meetings, events, and centre activities
	  ○ Contribute to decision-making about their child and the centre
	• Behaviour Expectations:
	  ○ Act respectfully toward staff, children, and other families
	  ○ Follow policies and procedures, including privacy requirements
	  ○ Refrain from inappropriate behaviour, including:
	  ▪ Offensive language

	▪ Abuse or threatening conduct ▪ Negative or harmful public commentary ▪ Illegal activity
Centre Manager/ Nominated Supervisor	• Ensure family access complies with regulatory, safety, and legal (including court orders) requirements • Manage restricted access arrangements where safety or legal concerns exist • Investigate and manage conduct issues, including inappropriate behaviour toward staff • Escalate access or communication concerns to the Regional Manager where required
Staff/Educators	• Provide clear, accessible communication channels, including: ○ Availability of educators ○ Communication books / tools ○ Scheduled meetings • Share relevant information in a timely manner • Use a range of communication methods (verbal and written) • Communicate respectfully and professionally at all times • Model respectful behaviour and reinforce expectations • Address inappropriate conduct from families • Support inclusive communication (e.g. alternative methods for language or accessibility needs)

7. Related legislation and internal documents

The following legislation, regulations and internal documents inform and support this policy/procedure, ensuring compliance with legal requirements and consistent implementation across Affinity services.

Legislation	Regulation 75 Regulation 76 Regulation 80 Regulation 86 Regulation 91 Regulation 98 Regulation 99 Regulation 102	Regulation 111 Regulation 155 Regulation 157 Regulation 160 Regulation 168 Regulation 172 Regulation 173 Regulation 181
Policies and Procedures	POL 6-P7 Family Code of Conduct and Termination of Care Procedure.pdf , POL 6-P1 Enrolment Procedure.pdf , POL6-P6 Complaints Policy and Procedure.pdf , POL2-P31 Child Safe Organisation Principles and Standards Procedure.pdf , POL HR5 AEG Code of Conduct.pdf , POL HR4 Social Media and External Communication Policy.pdf POL 6-P5 Confidentiality and Privacy Procedure.pdf POL6-P2 Arrival Departure and Collection Policy and Procedure.pdf POL 2-P28 External Visitor Procedure.pdf POL2-P24 Incident Injury Trauma and Illness inc hospitalisation and death Procedure.pdf	
ProMapp Processes	**3.1.01 Manage Engagement with Families – Unplanned** **3.1.02 Manage Engagement with Families - Planned**	
Forms or Guides	FRM 6-D2 Family Feedback.pdf FRM 7-D2 Policy Review and Feedback.docx GUI 1334 Risk Classification and Escalation Matrix.docx GUI 1380 Storypark Guidelines.pdf,	

8. Version history

Version Control	Date	Author	Description of Change
1	Oct 2013	AEG	Update ECSNR
3.16	Mar 2016	AEG	Revision
7.17	July 2017	AEG	Revision
9.18	Sept 2018	AEG	Reviewed
11.19	Nov 2019	AEG	Scheduled review
2.21	Feb 2021	AEG	Scheduled review
2.22	Feb 2022	AEG	Covid variation

3.23	Mar 2023	AEG	Scheduled review
V12.23	Dec 2023	AEG	Added RACI table and reference
V3.24	Mar 2024	AEG	Added access to address Reg 157
V4.25	April 2025	AEG	Scheduled review
V5.0	May 2025	AEG	Scheduled review – uplifted to new standards and linked relevant supporting policies and procedures