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## Neutrality and Non-Bias Policy

### The Good Shepherd Child Contact Services

At The Good Shepherd Child Contact Services, we maintain absolute neutrality and independence in all interactions with parents, children, and professionals. Our service exists solely to facilitate safe, child-focused contact and changeovers — never to take sides, make judgments, or influence outcomes in family matters.

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#### 1. Purpose

This policy ensures that all decisions, interactions, and communications are conducted in a fair, objective, and impartial manner, free from bias or personal influence. Our priority is always the safety, wellbeing, and best interests of the child.

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#### 2. Principles of Neutrality

We uphold the following core principles:

- **Impartiality:** Staff must remain neutral at all times and treat both parents with equal respect and professionalism.
- **Independence:** The service is not aligned with either party, legal representative, or agency.
- **Transparency:** All communication and documentation are factual, objective, and verifiable.
- **Child-centred focus:** The child's welfare, comfort, and emotional safety override all other considerations.

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#### 3. Professional Conduct

All staff and supervisors:

- Conduct themselves with fairness and respect in all interactions.
- Avoid engaging in conversations or behaviour that could be perceived as taking sides.
- Refrain from offering personal opinions, legal advice, or counselling to either parent.
- Maintain professional boundaries and confidentiality at all times.

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#### 4. Observation and Reporting

When written reports or observational summaries are required:

- Only objective, factual observations are recorded (e.g., punctuality, attendance, child behaviour).
  - Reports avoid assumptions, opinions, or judgments.
  - Both parents may access the same factual information if authorised by the court or referring body.
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## 5. Conflict of Interest

Any staff member who has, or could be perceived to have, a conflict of interest must immediately disclose it to management.

Where necessary, an alternate supervisor will be appointed to ensure neutrality is maintained.

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## 6. Complaints About Bias

Any party who believes a staff member has acted without neutrality may raise a concern under our Complaints and Feedback Policy.

All complaints are reviewed promptly and fairly, and outcomes are recorded.

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## 7. Review

This policy is reviewed annually to ensure alignment with:

- The Attorney-General's Guiding Principles Framework for Good Practice (2014)
  - The ACCSA Standards for Children's Contact Services (2008)
  - Best-practice standards for trauma-informed and child-safe service delivery.
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Last Updated 18/08/2025