



# Child Safe Environment

## Policy Statement

Child Safety and wellbeing is embedded in the attitudes, behaviour and practices of the staff working with in our service through building and maintaining a child safe and child friendly environment which is inclusive, transparent and where all children are valued and feel safe.

Our service has a responsibility to ensure that the rights and best interests of the child are paramount and that we will provide training, resources, information and guidance to support this in order to:

- Ensure that the health, safety and wellbeing of children at the service is protected at all times
- Ensure that people educating and caring for children at the service act in the best interests of the child
- Protect and advocate the rights of all children to feel safe, and be safe at all times
- Maintain a culture in which children's rights are respected
- Encourage active participation from families at the service, supporting a partnership approach and shared responsibility for children's health, safety, wellbeing and development

## Goals

All children have the right to experience quality education and care in an environment that promotes opportunities to thrive with adults who safeguard and advocate for their health, safety, security and wellbeing including the right to:

- Be asked to express their views and wishes about matters affecting their lives and to have those views appropriately considered by adults
- Feel and be safe in their interactions with adults and other children and young people
- Understand as early as possible what is meant by "feeling safe"

## Strategies

### The Physical Environment

- Ensure all equipment and materials used at the service meet relevant Australian Safety Standards
- Risk Assessments including for Regulation 97.2 will be conducted and updated regularly to ensure potential risks at the service are managed and minimised appropriately to ensure the health and safety of children
- Conduct daily safety checks of the equipment and environment
- Remove, replace or repair worn and damaged equipment, structures and resources in a timely manner

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- Organise indoor and outdoor spaces to ensure risks to health and safety are minimised
- Analyse and evaluate the risks associated with identified hazards
- Determine appropriate ways to eliminate or control identified hazards
- Review Risk Assessments after any serious incident report is made to the Regulatory Authority
- Ensure smoking is banned within the grounds of, and within the legislated distance if any entrance of an enclosed public space
- Ensure secure storage of hazardous products including chemicals and medications
- Ensure secure equipment and food are stored securely and safely so as not to attract pests and vermin
- Work closely with the school to manage and maintain the school site, and ensure the environment is free from potential hazards and harm

### **Staffing and Supervision**

- Ensure that sufficient numbers of educators are employed to ensure adequate supervision of children at all times
- Manage rosters to not only ensure that adequate numbers of educators are on duty to meet ratio and qualification requirements, but that duty of care implications are considered to ensure adequate supervision at all times
- Consideration is given to the design and arrangement of children's environments to support active supervision
- Ensure Supervision Plans are in place for the indoor and outdoor areas to provide optimum supervision of those spaces
- Ensure screening and suitability of staff and volunteers as per the legislation and services policies at the time of employment and as a part of an ongoing process
- Provide regular and ongoing training for staff that embeds the Child Safe Standards
- Respond proactively to emerging staff performance concerns

### **Child Protection**

- Ensure that all staff including educators, students and volunteers have current Working with Children Checks
- Ensure that all staff are given information and training about Child Protection Law and any obligations they have under that law

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- Staff will undertake training in order to effectively:
  - Make appropriate responses to disclosures of abuse and any allegations of abuse against staff members of the service
  - Understand the responsibilities and processes as a mandated reporter
  - Be able to recognise the factors that increase a child's vulnerability to mistreatment
- Be aware of the vulnerabilities which may indicate a need to assess, monitor or curtail the behaviour of individuals in relation to children and young people
- Staff will implement procedures for releasing children only into the care of authorised persons
- Children are provided with ways to provide feedback or concerns
- Children's views are listened to, respected, they are involved in decision making, especially decisions that directly affect them

### **Preventing other Harms and Hazards**

The service will ensure that:

- Risk Assessments are conducted regularly for excursions, regular outings and transportation provided or arranged by the service
- Risk minimisation practices are in place for the management of medical conditions in conjunction with the service's policy
- Emergency Evacuation plans specific to the service are implemented in conjunction with the service's policy, and in line with the schools' procedures
- If a staff member works alone, careful consideration has been given to the ability of that individual to meet regulatory and child protection requirements

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

#### **Approved Provider**

- Ensure the service operates in line with the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations
- Ensure all staff have access to relevant professional development
- Ensure that the Nominated Supervisor and staff members at the service who work with children are advised of current child protection legislation, its application and any obligations they may have under that law

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## Nominated Supervisor/Service Coordinator

- Ensure screening and suitability processes are maintained to meet policy and legislative requirements
- Identifying and providing appropriate resources and training to assist staff, visitors, volunteers and students to implement this policy
- Provide a comprehensive induction process for staff that includes training and guidance on the Child Safe Standards and Child Protection
- Keeping up to date and complying with any relevant changes in legislation and practices
- Cooperate with other services and professional in the best interests of children and their families
- Ensure families are made aware of support services available to them
- Ensure that all staff who work with children are supported to implement this policy in the service
- Protect the rights of the children and families, and encourage their participation in decision making at the service

## Educators

- Act in accordance with the obligations outlined in this policy
- Raise concerns when barriers or threats to the protection of children and young people's safety and wellbeing are identified
- Keeping up to date and complying with any relevant changes in legislation and practices in relation to this policy
- Undertake appropriate training and education on child protection
- Identifying any potential for risk and harm to children at the service, developing and implementing effective prevention strategies in consultation with the service coordinator
- Ensuring no child is left alone (or is out of sight) with a visitor, volunteer or student at the service
- Notifying your service coordinator immediately if you become aware of any concerns,, complaints or allegations regarding the health, safety and welfare of a child at the service
- Offering support to the child and their family and to other staff in response to concerns or reports relating to the health, safety and wellbeing of a child at the service
- Maintaining confidentiality at all times

### LINKS TO:

- Education & Care Services National Law Section 162A, 165, 166, 167
- Education & Care Services National Regulations: 82, 83, 84, 99, 103, 115, 122, 123, 158, 159, 165, 168(2)(h), 175, 176
- National Quality Standards/Elements: 2.2, 3.1, 3.2, 7.1, 7.2
- Child Safe Standards: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10



## Families

- Reporting any concerns including in relation to potential for child abuse to the Nominated Supervisor or Service Coordinator

## Continual Monitoring and Improvement

Continual improvement and monitoring will occur in the following ways:

- Incidental and planned consultation with families
- Approved Provider and Co-ordination Unit Staff accessing current relevant information
- Approved Provider, Co-ordination Unit Staff and Educators accessing current and relevant training
- Internal evaluation of incidences and the improvement of systems

### LINKS TO OTHER POLICIES:

- Acceptance & Refusal of Authorisations
- Child Protection
- Dangerous Products
- Dealing with Medical Conditions
- Delivery & Collection of Children
- Emergency & Evacuation
- Regular Outings & Excursions
- Safe Transportation of Children
- Sole Educator
- Supervision
- Tobacco, Drug & Alcohol Free Environment
- Water Safety

### SOURCES

Education and Care Services National Regulations, October 2020  
Education and Care Services National Law, February 2018  
Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations, October 2017  
Guide to the National Quality Standard, January 2020  
Implementing the Child Safe Standards: A Guide for Early Education and Outside School Hours Care Services, NSW Department of Education, 2021  
A Guide to the Child Safe Standards, NSW Office of the Children's Guardian, 2020  
Be You  
Childsafety Australia  
United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child  
Australian Human Rights Commission  
Australian Childhood Foundation