

CHILD SAFE ENVIRONMENT POLICY

(ALL STATES, EXCLUDING VIC)

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child outline that children and young people have a right to be safe and cared for, no matter where they are or who they are with. When working with children and young people, it is important to understand children’s rights and needs.

We are advocates for children and have a strong commitment to child safety and establishing and maintaining a child safe and child friendly environment.

NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD (NQS)

QUALITY AREA 2: CHILDREN’S HEALTH AND SAFETY		
2.2	Safety	Each child is protected.
2.2.1	Supervision	At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from harm and hazard.
2.2.2	Incident and emergency management	Plans to effectively manage incidents and emergencies are developed in consultation with relevant authorities, practised and implemented.
2.2.3	Child protection	Management, educators and staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities to identify and respond to every child at risk of abuse or neglect.

EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL REGULATIONS

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168 (h)	Providing a child safe environment

RELATED POLICIES (Primary policies supporting a child safe environment)

- Arrival & Departure Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Excursion Policy
- Health & Safety Policy
- Physical Environment Policy
- Supervision Policy
- Work Health & Safety Policy

PURPOSE

Our service has a legal and ethical responsibility to provide a safe and friendly environment where all children are respected, valued and encouraged to reach their full potential. We aim to take all practical steps to protect children from harm, ensuring a healthy and safe environment.

SCOPE

This policy applies to children, families, staff, management and visitors of the service.

IMPLEMENTATION

The National Law requires management to ensure all children being educated and cared for are adequately supervised and every reasonable precaution is taken to protect children from harm and any hazard likely to cause injury. Our focus is to build a child safe environment which is reflected in our service policies and procedures and understood and practiced by all educators and staff.

SAFETY CHECKLISTS

Regular safety checks maintain basic standards of safety within our service. Educators will complete the following daily checklists to assist and record inspections of the physical environment where foreseeable risks may be evident and cause harm or injury to a child:

- Opening Checklist
- Closing Checklist

Any findings that require attention will be either dealt with immediately or submitted on a Maintenance & Hazard Record depending on priority.

[Primary policy – Health & Safety Policy]

STORAGE OF HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES

We reduce the risk of harm to children and educators by using eco-friendly products whenever possible. Our service will endeavour to provide a safe environment where necessary chemical and hazardous equipment are stored safely away from children and handled appropriately.

Management and educators will maintain a Safety Data Sheet Register of all hazardous chemicals used at the service.

To maintain a safe environment for children, the following audits and checklists are conducted:

- Safe Storage of Hazardous Substances Audit
- Poison Safety Checklist
- Medication Audit

[Primary policy – Safe Storage of Hazardous Substances Policy]

EQUIPMENT, FURNITURE & MAINTENANCE RECORD

There are several factors that can contribute to a hazard, such as a deprived program, insufficient supervision and dilapidated equipment. To ensure a child safe environment free from hazards, we have implemented practices and continue to monitor service policies and procedures that uphold Australian Safety Standards.

The premises and all equipment and furniture used within the service are audited to ensure all aspects are safe, clean and in good repair. We understand that hazards are specific to developmental stages. Educators are aware that toys and equipment need to be checked to ensure they are safe and developmentally appropriate for children. Regular checks occur within the service to ensure that all toys, furniture and equipment are in good condition and working order. These checks include:

- Maintenance & Hazard Record
- Cleaning and Disinfection Record

[Primary policy – Nursery Furniture & Equipment Safety Policy]

WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECK

Working in conjunction with the Child Protection Act and National Regulations, the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children is paramount within our service and community. A Working with Children Check (WWCC) is a requirement for people who work in child-related work. It involves a national criminal history check and a review of findings of workplace misconduct.

The result of a Working with Children Check is either a clearance to work with children and is valid for five years, or a bar against working with children. Cleared applicants are subject to ongoing monitoring and relevant new records may lead to the clearance being revoked.

Management is responsible for the periodic review and maintenance of up to date records of employees' Working with Children Check, including the Working with Children Check number and the date on which each clearance expires. Once an employee provides their WWCC clearance, management will verify the clearance to ensure that it is valid and current. The WWCC will be placed in the individual's file and continue to be updated as required.

[Primary policy - Staffing Arrangements Policy]

CHILD PROTECTION

Children and young people always have a right to be safe and protected. All educators and management have a legal and moral duty to protect from harm. It is essential when working with children to be aware of indicators of harm and be able to recognise and report concerns regarding suspected harm or protection concerns. Staff are given information and training about child protection law and any obligations they have under that law.

To comply with legislation and provide a child safe environment, educators will keep up to date with child protection requirements; this includes adhering to the Child Protection Policy, updating Child Protection Training as required, and completing the Child Protection Assessment on an annual basis.

[Primary policy – Child Protection Policy]

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE AUTHORISATION

National Regulations require our service to keep a record of children and visitor's arrival and departures, with the signatures of the person responsible for verifying the accuracy of the record and the identity of the person collecting the child.

Educators will work in collaboration with our Arrival & Departure Policy and Student & Volunteer Policy to ensure children feel safe and secure. To ensure children's safety, educators have a clear understanding of their legal obligation to check identification when a person is picking up a child. To maintain compliance, parents and educators will complete an **Authorisation to collect child form** if they authorise a person who is not on their emergency contact form to pick up their child.

[Primary policy - Arrival & Departure Policy]

SOURCES:

ACECQA

Children's Health and Safety – An analysis of Quality Area 2 of the National Quality Standard

Child Protection Act

Education and Care National Regulation

National Law

National Quality Standard

NSW Department of Education: <https://education.nsw.gov.au>

The Big Picture: Karen Kearns, 2010

Work Health and Safety Act

REVIEW

POLICY REVIEWED	NOVEMBER 2018	NEXT REVIEW DATE	NOVEMBER 2019
MODIFICATIONS	New policy DRAFT		