

POLICY 2.12

CHILD PROTECTION

Rationale and Policy Considerations

The service understands it has a duty of care to ensure that children are provided with a safe, secure education and care environment.

The service takes our responsibility to provide a safe and caring environment for all children seriously. We believe that the safety of children is paramount at all times and aims to protect a child's right to be safe from abuse of any kind.

The service also aims to defend the rights of educators to confidentiality if a complaint against them is made and is found to be unsubstantiated. The service will ensure that all parties affected by this policy are made aware of their roles and responsibilities regarding child protection.

The service aims to educate all parties about their roles in child protection and also about signs of abuse and ensure that all requirements of child protection requirements are being met.

Philosophy

Documented approach to provision of a safe and healthy environment for children and acting in the best interest of the child; approach to professionalism, duty of care and ethical conduct.

Legislation and Government Requirements

- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 (SA)
- Education and Care Services National Regulations (84)

National Quality Standards

QA2 2.3.4

Educators and co-ordinators are aware of their roles and responsibilities to respond to every child at risk of abuse and neglect

Strategies for Policy implementation:

Management:

Ensure that all employees are:

- Clear about their roles and responsibilities regarding child protection.
- Aware of their obligations to immediately report suspected abuse to the Child Protection Hotline.
- Aware of the indicators when a child may be at risk of harm or significant harm.
- Provide training and development for all employees in the recognition and reporting of abuse and harm.
- Provide reporting procedures and professional standards for care and protection work.
- Conduct a Working with Children Check for anyone that will be heavily involved with service operations.
- Enable educators to have access to relevant acts, regulations, standards and other resources in order for them to complete their obligations.

Educators:

- Report any situation where they suspect a child is at risk of significant harm to the Child Abuse Report Line (CARL – 131 478).
- Promote the welfare, safety and wellbeing of children at the service.
- Have an awareness of referral agencies for families where concerns of harm do not meet the significant harm threshold.
- Be aware of obligations as per the Child Safe Environments guidelines.
- Assist in supporting children and families when liaising with relevant government agencies.
- Consumption of alcohol and illicit substances is prohibited while on the service's premises. Staff must not come to the service whilst under the influence of alcohol or illicit substances.
- Smoking is prohibited on the service's premises.
- Staff must not show favouritism towards any child.
- Staff must refrain from developing close personal relationships with children out of the carer/child relationship.
- Staff must refrain from using the abusive, derogatory or offensive language.
- Individual or groups of children are not permitted to be withdrawn into areas where they are not visible by other staff members, or taken into rooms that can be locked.
- Permanent or temporary child-care staff are to be directed to ensure that they at all times remain readily accessible and within the visibility of other staff while with the children.
- Students and volunteers are to be directed to ensure that they are never alone with children in a direct, un-supervised capacity.
- Casual staff are to at all times remain readily accessible and within the visibility of other staff while with the children.
- While there is a child on the premises of the service, there is to be a minimum of two staff on the premises. It is the responsibility of the Director to ensure that rosters meet this requirement and it is the responsibility of all staff to ensure this requirement is upheld.
- Parents are to be informed of the procedures staff use to toilet children. Changing of babies should take place within the view of other adults
- Parents should be made aware that it may be necessary to physically restrain an out of control child who may be compromising the safety of him/herself, other children or staff, or to isolate the child from other children for short periods of time.
- Up-to-date developmental records on all children are to be kept. Relevant conversations with parents that may relate to a child's behaviour change (e.g. parents separating, new baby in the family, moving house etc.) are to be noted in the developmental record
- Staff should ensure they are aware of the individual's child stage of development and particular needs and plan the curriculum accordingly.
- Staff should work with parents to develop and record appropriate procedures for managing toilet practices and behaviour management.

For Families:

- Treat all children at the service equally and respectfully.
- Report any suspicions to the most senior person on duty when at the service.
- Respect the rights, dignity and worth of every person, regardless of their abilities, gender, religion or cultural background.
- Respect the decision of employees and teach children to do likewise.

- Focus on encouraging children's efforts and learning.
- Support all efforts to remove any form of abuse in the service and encourage a safe and supportive service environment.
- Consumption of alcohol and illicit substances is prohibited while on the service's premises. Parents must not come to the service whilst under the influence of alcohol or illicit substances.
- Smoking is prohibited on the service's premises.

For Children:

Children are encouraged and instructed to:

- Respect other children and adults at the service.
- Cooperate and will follow our classroom rules.
- Listen to educators' instructions and follow them.
- Control their temper and talk to an educator if they are feeling upset.
- Have a say in what activities they are involved in.
- Speak to an educator if they are worried or concerned about something.

Child Protection Risk Management Strategy:

Managing Breaches

This plan outlines the steps to be taken following a breach of the child and youth risk management strategy in order to address the breach in a fair and supportive manner.

Definition A breach is any action or inaction by any member of the organisation, including children and young people, that fails to comply with any part of the strategy.

This includes any breach in relation to:

- Statement of commitment to the safety and wellbeing of children and the protection of children from harm.
- Code of conduct for interacting with children and young people.
- Procedures for recruiting, selecting, training and managing paid employees and volunteers.
- Policies and procedures for handling disclosures or suspicions of harm, including reporting guidelines.
- Policies and procedures for implementing and reviewing the children and youth risk management strategy and maintaining an employee register.
- Risk management plans for high risk activities and special events.
- Strategies for communication and support. All stakeholders are to be made aware of the actions or inactions that form a breach as well as the potential outcomes of breaching the child and youth risk management strategy.

Processes to manage a breach of the child and youth risk management strategy Breaches will be managed in a fair, unbiased and supportive manner.

The following will occur:

- All people concerned will be advised of the process.
- All people concerned will be able to provide their version of events.

- The details of the breach, including the versions of all parties and the outcome will be recorded.
- Matters discussed in relation to the breach will be kept confidential and an appropriate outcome will be decided.

Suitable outcomes for breaches Depending on the nature of the breach, outcomes may include:

- Emphasising the relevant component of the child and youth risk management strategy, for example, the code of conduct.
- Providing closer supervision.
- Further education and training.
- Mediating between those involved in the incident (where appropriate).
- Disciplinary procedures if necessary.
- Reviewing current policies and procedures and developing new policies and procedures if necessary

Sourced from:

Community and Disability Services Ministers' Conference (2005).

Creating safe environments for children: Organisations, employees and volunteers: National framework. Retrieved April 27, 2010, from

<http://www.ocsc.vic.gov.au/downloads/childsafeframework.pdf>

Fact sheet: A summary of the rights under the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Retrieved January 11, 2018, from http://www.unicef.org/crc/files/Rights_overview.pdf

Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011

Early Years Learning Framework

Ratified by Management Committee February 2018

Next review: February 2020