

# CHILD SAFE ENVIRONMENT POLICY

## **Rationale and Policy Considerations**

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The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) 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. Children have the right to be protected from violence, abuse or neglect. 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 environment. Our Child Safe Environment Policy embeds a culture of safety and wellbeing within our service to minimise the risk of child abuse or harm to children whilst promoting children's sense of security and belonging.

## **Legislation and Government Requirements**

- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 (SA)
- Education and Care Services National Regulations
- Privacy Act (1988) Commonwealth

## **National Quality Framework**

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**Education and Care Services National Regulations** 82, 84, 103-106, 109, 115, 155, 162, 168(h), S162(A)

**National Quality Standard for Early Childhood Education** Elements 2.2, 2.2.1, 2.2.2, 2.2.3, 5.1.1

## **Policy Statement**

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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. Children's safety is paramount, and we aim to take all practical steps to protect children from harm, ensuring a healthy and safe environment. Our Service provides children and staff with an environment free from the use of tobacco, alcohol and illicit drugs.

## **Strategies for Policy implementation**

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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.

## **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 children 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 and adhere to our Child Protection Policy. (reg 84).

Nominated supervisors and persons in day-to-day charge must complete a course in child protection approved by the Regulatory Authority on an annual basis. All staff must refresh their knowledge about mandatory reporting each year.

**[Primary policy – Child Protection Policy]**

### **Child protection- Allegations Against Employees**

To protect children and ensure their safety, welfare and wellbeing, management is responsive to report allegations or convictions of child abuse and child related misconduct by any staff member to Child Protection Hotline (or reporting authority within your state/territory).

## **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:

- Indoor safety checklist,
- Outdoor safety checklist
- Risk Assessment –Excursion
- Risk Assessment – Incursion

Any findings that require attention will be either dealt with immediately or submitted into the maintenance book depending on priority.

**[Primary policy – Health and Safety Policy]**

## **STORAGE OF HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES**

We reduce the risk of harm to children and educators by using eco-friendly products. Our Service will endeavour to provide a safe environment where necessary chemical and

hazardous equipment are safely stored away from children and handled appropriately.

Management and Educators will keep a register of hazardous chemicals used at the Service, including Safety Data Sheets.

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

- Safe Storage of Hazardous Chemicals audit,
- Poison audit,
- Medication storage audit,
- First Aid Audit

### **[Primary policy – Safe Storage of Hazardous Chemicals 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:

- toy cleaning register

### **[Primary policy – Nursery Furniture and Equipment Safety Policy]**

#### **RISK ASSESSMENT & RISK ASSESSMENT TOOL**

It is a legislative requirement that Management and Educators implement a risk management system where they identify and manage hazards and risks within the workplace to ensure a child safe environment. The key principles of risk management include:

1. Identifying all hazards in the workplace
2. Assess the risk of each hazard
3. Control or manage the risk
4. Monitor and improve safety

It is the responsibility of all staff and educators at the Service to complete a risk assessment where children's safety may be jeopardised and when organising an excursion/incursion. Children's safety must be incorporated into everyday practice within the service. Common hazards within the Service which may require a risk assessment include:

- cross-Infection and infectious disease
- administration of medication
- anaphylaxis procedures and management
- building and equipment (including storage)
- inadequate space for conducting activities and experiences

- hazardous chemicals
- electrical appliances
- food preparation and storage
- environmental influences such as shade, noise etc
- sun safety
- children's behaviours
- water safety
- fire equipment
- pets and/or animals
- inadequate supervision of children
- children's activities and experiences
- Work Health and Safety such as manual handling (eg: safe lifting children from cots and highchairs)
- non-Compliance risk
- hot drinks

### **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 and Departure Policy and Student and Visitors 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 collecting a child. To maintain compliance, parents and educators will complete an [alternate collection form] if they authorise a person who is not on their emergency contact form to pick up their child.

**[Primary policy - Arrival and Departure Policy]**

### **Links to other Policies**

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Arrival and Departure Policy

Child Protection Policy

Excursion Policy

Staffing Arrangements Policy

Interactions With Children, Families & Staff Policy

Physical Environment Policy

Supervision Policy

Work Health and Safety Policy

Sun Safe Policy

Safe storage of Hazardous Chemicals Policy

Water Safety Policy

## **Sourced from**

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Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2014).

Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia. (2009).

Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012

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

Department of Education NSW Providing a child safe environment

<https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/preschool/policies-and-procedures/providing-a-child-safe-environment>

Education and Care Services National Regulations. (2011).

Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations. (2017).

Guide to the National Quality Framework. (2017).

Revised National Quality Standard. (2018).

United Nations Convention of Rights of the Child, (1989). (UNCRC)

Work Health and Safety Act, (2011).

**Ratified by Management Committee September 2020**

**Review October 2023**