

CHILD SAFE ENVIRONMENT PROCEDURE

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. 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 Service embeds the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations and promotes a culture of safety and wellbeing to minimise the risk of child abuse or harm to children whilst promoting children's sense of security and belonging.

Working in conjunction with the *Child Safe Environment Policy*, this procedure provides guidance for educators to ensure the environment is safe for all children at all times and that child safe policies and procedures are understood and practiced by all educators and staff.

Education and Care Services National Law or Regulations (R.86, 84, 102-106, 109, 115, 122, 123, 136, 155, 162, 165-168(h) and 170) NQS QA 2, and 5: Element 2.2.1, 2.2.2, 2.2.3 and 5.1.1. Health and Safety and Relationships.

Related Policy: Child Safe Environment Policy

STEP 1: CHILD SAFE STANDARDS		
1	The Approved Provider, Director/ Nominated Supervisor and educators will review the Service's <i>Child Safe Environment Policy</i> every 12 months	
2	Families and children will be invited to review the <i>Child Safe Environment Policy</i>	
3	New educators, students and volunteers will be introduced to the <i>Child Safe Environment Policy and Procedure</i> during induction and orientation	
4	Educators and staff will refer to the <i>Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy</i> for further information on implementation of the Child Safe Standards	
5	A Statement of Commitment to providing a Child Safe Environment will be developed in consultation with families, children and educators	
6	Families and educators are informed of the <i>Complaints/Grievance Procedure</i> for steps on how to raise any concerns, including concerns around child safety	
7	The Approved Provider/ Nominated Supervisor will discuss any complaints/issues raised with the complainant within 24 hours of receiving the verbal or written complaint and will investigate and document the complaint or grievance fairly and impartially	
8	Educators are to follow the <i>Delivery of Children to and Collection from EEC Service Premises Policy</i> to ensure children are only released to an authorised person as named on the child's enrolment form	
9	Online safety for children is supported by the <i>Cyber Safety Policy</i>	

10	The Approved Provider/Nominated Supervisor will notify the regulatory authority within 24 hours of any serious incident or complaint as per the Education and Care National Regulations	
----	---	--

STEP 2: STAFFING PROVISIONS

1	The Approved Provider, Director/ Nominated Supervisor and educators will review the Service's <i>Probation, Induction and Orientation Policy, Professional Development Policy and Staff Performance Review Policy</i> every 12 months	
2	New educators, students and volunteers will be introduced to the <i>Probation, Induction and Orientation Policy, Professional Development Policy and Staff Performance Review Policy</i> during induction and orientation	
3	The <i>Code of Conduct Policy</i> will be reviewed every 12 months in consultation with families, children and educators	
4	New educators, students and volunteers will be required to sign acknowledgment that they read and understand the Service Code of Conduct	
5	The Approved Provider/Nominated Supervisor will ensure a Responsible Person is physically present at the Service at all times that children are being educated and cared for	
6	The Approved Provider will ensure that volunteers and students meet any requirements for WWCC	
7	At no time will volunteers and/or students be left alone with a child or group of children or be included in the educator to child ratio.	
8	Each educator will participate in a Performance Review every 12 months which include an opportunity to reflect on the educator's understanding of an adherence to the Code of Conduct and child safe policies and procedures	
9	A Professional Development Plan will be developed for each educator and reviewed every 12 months	

STEP 3: RECRUITMENT

1	The Approved Provider, Director/ Nominated Supervisor and educators will review the Service's <i>Recruitment Policy</i> every 12 months	
2	The Approved Provider/Nominated Supervisor will ensure the Child Safe Standards underpin all areas of the recruitment process	
3	All preferred candidates will undergo appropriate pre-employment checks including reference checks, Working With Children Checks (WWCC) and where applicable National Police criminal history checks before an offer of employment is recommended	
4	Employees, volunteers or students that are unable to provide a copy of a validated WWCC (or equivalent) prior to the start of engagement or employment will not be able to undertake any work-related activity within the service.	

5	Management will ensure any notifications or concerns regarding a person's WWCC (or equivalent) are recorded and steps taken immediately to ensure the person is not working directly with children in accordance with directions from the Office of the Children's Guardian (VIC)	
6	Each new employee shall be subject to a Probationary Period of six (6) months.	
7	Induction and orientation for new staff will include relevant information on child safe practices adhering to the Child Safe Standards, Code of Conduct, strategies that identify, assess and minimise risks to children and mandatory reporting procedures.	
8	A <i>New Employee Induction Checklist</i> will be completed for all new employees	

STEP 4: CHILD PROTECTION

1	The Approved Provider, Director/ Nominated Supervisor and educators will review the Service's <i>Child Protection Policy</i> every 12 months	
2	New educators, students and volunteers will be introduced to the <i>Child Protection Policy and Procedure</i> , including mandatory reporting requirements during induction and orientation	
3	Educators will complete online training (if applicable) to understand the child protection reporting process and use of the online reporting guide per state requirements.	
4	Educators will introduce protection behaviours to children through educational programs. A Risk Assessment will be conducted prior to educational programs regarding protection behaviours implemented	
5	Information regarding mandatory reporting obligations are shared with families	
6	All educators will be advised of their obligations regarding the Reportable Conduct Scheme	

STEP 3: PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

1	The Approved Provider, Director/ Nominated Supervisor and educators will review the Service's <i>Physical Environment Policy</i> every 12 months	
2	New educators, students and volunteers will be introduced to the <i>Physical Environment Policy</i> during induction and orientation	
3	Educators are required to adhere to the Service's <i>Supervision Policy</i> and floor plan to maintain effective supervision	
4	Adequate supervision will be provided when children are being transported. Consideration will be made depending on risk assessments, number, age and ability of children, visibility of children, each child's current activity.	

5	Our Service will ensure the minimum child ratio requirements are met at all times	
6	A daily inspection of the physical premises will be undertaken before children begin to arrive. The <i>Opening Checklist</i> and <i>Outdoor Cleaning/Safety Checklist</i> will be used as the procedure to conduct these safety checks. A record of these will be kept by the service.	
7	Risk Assessments are completed and reviewed every 12 months to ensure risks are minimised and care taken to protect children from harm and hazards	
8	All educators and staff are informed of the <i>Safe Storage of Hazardous Chemicals Policy</i> during induction and orientation	
9	The <i>Hazardous Chemical Register</i> lists hazardous chemicals used and/or stored within the Service	
10	The <i>Emergency and Evacuation Policy</i> and Procedures are followed to ensure children are protected from harm during an emergency	

REVIEW OF PROCEDURE			
Date procedure created	June 2022	To be reviewed	June 2023
Approved by	Tracey Davey	Signature	
Procedure Reviewed Date	Modifications/Changes		