

CHILD SAFE ENVIRONMENT POLICY

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

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 Educators and Staff.

SAFETY CHECKLISTS

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

- *Daily indoor and outdoor safety checks*
- *Fortnightly room safety checks – carried out by WHS officer*

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

STORAGE OF HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES

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, in a 'Material Safety Data Sheets' (MSDS) folder.

All cupboards storing chemicals are easily identifiable and clearly labelled, and cupboards with chemicals/hazardous substances are locked at all times. Doors and gates are also labelled if chemicals/hazardous substances are stored within.

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 regularly checked to ensure all aspects are safe, clean and in good condition. 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 also in good condition and working order (these checklists mentioned under "Safety Checklists" section above).

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 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. *Management staff are to ensure Risk Assessments are completed properly and are to provide assistance where required.*

Common hazards within the Service which may require a risk assessment include:

- Building and Equipment (including storage)
- Hazardous Chemicals
- Electrical appliances
- Environmental influences such as shade, noise etc
- Fire equipment
- Pets and/or animals

- Children's activities and experiences
- Work Health and Safety such as manual handling
- Non-Compliance risk

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.

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.

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.

Please refer to the *Arrival and Departure policy* and *Student and Visitors policy* for further details on authorisation for collection of children and visitors at the services.

SOURCE:

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	Modifications	Next Review Date
October 2018	Updated policy word and formatting	October 2019
May 2019	New policy format	May 2020