



# PROVIDING A CHILD SAFE ENVIRONMENT POLICY

Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety

## POLICY STATEMENT

Our service has a moral and legal responsibility to ensure that the rights and best interests of the child are paramount and that we will provide training, resources, information and guidance to support this in order to:

- ensure that the health, safety and wellbeing of children at the service is protected at all times;
- ensure that people educating and caring for children at the service act in the best interests of the child;
- protect and advocate the rights of all children to feel safe, and be safe, at all times;
- maintaining a culture in which children's rights are respected;
- encouraging active participation from families at the service, supporting a partnership approach and shared responsibility for children's health, safety, wellbeing and development.

## GOALS/ WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO?

All children have the right to experience quality education and care in an environment that promotes opportunities to thrive with adults who safeguard and advocate for their health, safety, security and wellbeing including the right to:

- be asked to express their views and wishes about matters affecting their lives and to have those views appropriately considered by adults;
- feel and be safe in their interactions with adults and other children and young people; and
- understand, as early as possible, what is meant by 'feeling and being safe'.

## STRATEGIES / HOW WILL IT BE DONE?

### The Physical Environment

In order to promote a safe physical environment we will:

- Ensure all equipment and materials used at the service meet relevant Australian safety standards.
- Conduct daily checks of the environment and equipment.
- Remove, repair or replace worn and damaged buildings, structures equipment and resources which may provide a safety risk for children in a timely manner.
- Ensure learning environments are established that provide appropriate child groupings, sufficient space, and include carefully chosen and well-maintained resources and equipment.
- Organise indoor and outdoor spaces to ensure risks to the health and safety are minimised.
- Conduct a risk assessment of the service environment on a quarterly basis to determine any risks to children's health and safety.
- Analyse and evaluate the risks associated with identified hazards.
- Determine appropriate ways to eliminate or control identified hazards.
- Review risk assessments after any serious incident report is made to the Regulatory





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Authority.

- Ensure smoking is banned within the grounds of, and within the legislated distance for our state/territory of any entrance of an enclosed public space.
- Ensure secure storage of hazardous products including chemicals and medications.

## Staffing and Supervision

- Ensure that sufficient numbers of educators are employed to ensure adequate supervision of children at all times.
- Manage rosters to not only ensure that adequate numbers of educators are on duty to meet ratio and qualification requirements but that duty of care implications are considered to ensure adequate supervision at all times.
- Ensure screening and suitability of staff, volunteers as per the legislation and policy at the time of employment and as part of an ongoing process.
- Respond proactively to emerging staff performance concerns.

## Child Protection

- Ensure that all staff including educators, students and volunteers have current working with children checks or equivalent as required by state or territory specific legislation.
- Ensure that all staff are given information and/or training about child protection law and any obligations they have under that law.
- Refer to the *Child Protection Policy*.
- All educators and volunteers of our service are required to familiarise themselves with child protection legislation in their state/territory and take appropriate measures according to state/territory specific protocols if they have reasonable grounds to suspect a child or young person is at risk of significant harm and have current concern about the safety, welfare or wellbeing of a child or young person.
- Staff will undertake training in order to effectively: make appropriate responses to all disclosures of abuse and any allegation of abuse against staff members of the service;
  - understand the responsibilities and processes as a mandatory reporter (or equivalent);
  - be able to recognise the factors that increase a child's vulnerability to maltreatment;
  - be aware of the vulnerabilities which may indicate a need to assess, monitor or curtail the behaviour of individuals in relation to children and young people within organisations;
  - staff will implement procedures for releasing children only into the care of authorised persons

*Acceptance and refusal authorisation policy*

## Preventing other harms and hazards

The service will ensure that:

- Risk assessments are conducted regularly for excursions and transportation provided or arranged by the service in conjunction with the service's Excursions and/or Transportation of Children policies.
- It is the responsibility of all staff and educators at Orchard Early Learning Centre to complete a risk assessment where children's safety may be jeopardised and when





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organising an excursion/incursion. Common hazards within the Service which may require a risk assessment include:

- Cross-Infection and Infectious Disease
  - 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
  - Fire equipment
  - Pets and/or animals
  - Inadequate supervision of children
  - Children's activities and experiences
  - Work Health and Safety such as manual handling
  - Non-Compliance risk
  - Hot drinks
- Risk minimisation practices are in place for the management of medical conditions in conjunction with the service's Dealing with Medical Conditions policy.
  - Emergency evacuation plans specific to the service are implemented in conjunction with the service's Emergency and Evacuation policy.
  - Firearms and ammunition are stored securely and separately from each other (if applicable)
  - If staff consume hot drinks, they are made and consumed away from children.
  - If a staff member works alone, careful consideration has been given to the ability of that individual to meet regulatory and child protection requirements.

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

### The Approved Provider is responsible for:

- Ensure the service operates in line with the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations with regard to the delivery and collection of children at all times.
- Ensure all staff have access to relevant professional development.
- Ensure that the Nominated Supervisor and staff members at the service who work with children are advised of current child protection legislation, its application, and any obligations that they may have under that law (Regulation 84).

### The Nominated Supervisor is responsible for:

- Ensuring screening and suitability processes are maintained to meet policy and legislated requirements.
- Identifying and providing appropriate resources and training to assist staff, contractors, visitors, volunteers and students to implement this policy (refer to Sources).
- Keeping up to date and complying with any relevant changes in legislation and practices in relation to this policy.





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- Cooperate with other services and/or professionals in the best interests of children and their families.
- Ensure that families are made aware of support services available to them and of the assistance these services can provide.
- Ensure that all staff who work with children are supported to implement this policy in the service.
- Protect the rights of children and families, and encourage their participation in decision-making at the service.

### Educators are responsible for:

- Act in accordance with the obligations outlined in this policy.
- Raise concerns when barriers or threats to the protection of children and young people's safety and wellbeing are identified, including through the conduct of other adults at the site/service.
- Keeping up to date and complying with any relevant changes in legislation and practices in relation to this policy.
- Follow all record keeping requirements.
- Undertaking appropriate training and education on child protection.
- Identifying any potential for risk and harm to a child at the service and developing and implementing effective prevention strategies in consultation with the approved provider and the nominated supervisor.
- Co-operating with other services and/or professionals in the best interests of children and their families.
- Informing families of support services available to them, and of the assistance these services can provide.
- Ensuring that no child is left alone (or is out of sight) with a contractor, visitor, volunteer, student or parent/guardian at the service.
- Implementing the procedures for reporting suspected child abuse.
- Notifying the nominated supervisor or the approved provider immediately on becoming aware of any concerns, complaints or allegations regarding the health, safety and welfare of a child at the service.
- Offering support to the child and their family, and to other and staff in response to concerns or reports relating to the health, safety and wellbeing of a child at the service.
- Maintaining confidentiality at all times.
- Adhering to all service policies.

### Families are responsible for:

- Reading and complying with this policy.
- Reporting any concerns, including in relation to potential for child abuse, to the Nominated Supervisor.

## EVALUATION

This policy will be monitored to ensure compliance with legislative requirements and unless





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deemed necessary through the identification of practice gaps, the service will review this Policy every 18 months.

Families and staff are essential stakeholders in the policy review process and will be given opportunity and encouragement to be actively involved. In accordance with R. 172 of the Education and Care Services National Regulations, the service will ensure that families of children enrolled at the service are notified at least 14 days before making any change to a policy or procedure that may have significant impact on the provision of education and care to any child enrolled at the service; a family's ability to utilise the service; the fees charged or the way in which fees are collected.

### RELATED LEGISLATION, GUIDELINES, STANDARDS, FRAMEWORK

- National Quality Standard, Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety – Standard 2.2
- National Quality Standard, Quality Area 3: Physical Environment – Standard 3.1, 3.2
- National Quality Standard, Quality Area 7: Governance and Leadership – Standard 7.1, 7.2
- Education and Care Services National Law: Sections 162A, 165, 166, 167
- Education and Care Services National Regulations: Regulations 82, 83, 84, 99, 103, 115, 122, 123, 158-159, 165, 168(2)(h), 175, 176
- Australian Child Protection Legislation [aifs.gov.au/cfca/publications/australian-child-protection-legislation](http://aifs.gov.au/cfca/publications/australian-child-protection-legislation)
- Australian Privacy Principles – [www.oaic.gov.au](http://www.oaic.gov.au)
- Privacy Act 1988 (Privacy Act) – [www.oaic.gov.au/law/act](http://www.oaic.gov.au/law/act)

### RESOURCES / USEFUL LINKS

- Office of the Australian Information Commissioner – [www.oaic.gov.au](http://www.oaic.gov.au)
- Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) – [www.acecqa.gov.au](http://www.acecqa.gov.au)
- ACECQA's Guide to the National Quality Framework
- Australian Institute of Family Studies: Pre-employment screening: Working With Children Checks and Police Checks - [aifs.gov.au/cfca/publications/pre-employment-screening-working-children-checks-and-police-checks](http://aifs.gov.au/cfca/publications/pre-employment-screening-working-children-checks-and-police-checks)
- Childsafety Australia – [www.childsafetyaustralia.com.au](http://www.childsafetyaustralia.com.au)
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child – [www.unicef.org.au](http://www.unicef.org.au)
- The Supporting young children's rights: Statement of intent (2015-2018) – [www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au](http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au)
- Australian Human Rights Commission – [www.humanrights.gov.au](http://www.humanrights.gov.au)
- Australian Childhood Foundation – [www.childhood.org.au](http://www.childhood.org.au)

### LINKS TO OTHER POLICIES

- Safe sleep and rest
- Water safety
- Working directly with children guide
- Child protection
- Interactions with children





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## POLICY REVIEW

The Service encourages staff and parents to be actively involved in the annual review of each of its policies and procedures. In addition, the Service will accommodate any new legislative changes as they occur and any issues identified as part of the Service's commitment to quality improvement. The Service consults with relevant recognised authorities as part of the annual review to ensure the policy contents are consistent with current research and contemporary views on best practice.

**Date(s) reviewed: June 2021 / February 2022**

