

CHILD SAFE ENVIRONMENT POLICY

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.

NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD (NQS)

QUALITY AREA 2: CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND SAFETY		
2.2	Safety	Each child is respected
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, practiced 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.

QUALITY AREA 5: RELATIONSHIPS WITH CHILDREN		
5.1.1	Positive educator to child interactions	Responsive and meaningful interactions build trusting relationships which engage and support each child to feel secure, confident and included.

EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL REGULATIONS AND NATIONAL LAW	
82	Tobacco, drug and alcohol-free environment
84	Awareness of child protection law
103	Premises, furniture and equipment to be safe, clean and in good repair
104	Fencing
105	Furniture, materials and equipment

106	Laundry and hygiene facilities
109	Toilet and hygiene facilities
115	Facilities designed to facilitate supervision
155	Interactions with children
162	Health information to be kept in enrolment record
168 (h)	Providing a child safe environment
S162 (A)	Persons in day to day charge and nominated supervisors to have child protection training

RELATED POLICIES

Arrival and Departure Policy Child Protection Policy Code of Conduct Policy Excursion Policy Furniture and Equipment Safety Policy Governance Policy Health and Safety Policy Interactions with Children, Families and Staff Policy	Physical Environment Policy Safe Storage of Hazardous Chemicals Policy Staffing Arrangements Policy Sun Safe Policy Supervision Policy Water Safety Policy Work, Health and Safety Policy
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PURPOSE

Our Out of School Hours Care Service (OSHC) 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.

SCOPE

This policy applies to children, families, staff, management and visitors of the OSHC 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 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 Out of School Hours 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.

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. Nominated Supervisors, Responsible persons, **Coordinators, educators and other staff understand their roles and responsibilities in protecting children from abuse and neglect and maintain up-to-date knowledge of child protection law (reg 84).**

Coordinators or responsible 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 Out of School Hours Care Service venues. Educators will complete the 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.

Any findings that require attention will be either dealt with immediately or submitted into the maintenance book depending on priority. The Approved Provider/ Nominated Supervisors and Principals of primary schools must be notified of any areas that need immediate attention within the Service venue.

[Primary policy – Children Health and Safety Policy & Work, 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.

Out of School Hours Care educators will keep a register of hazardous chemicals used within the service, including Safety Data Sheets.

[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 venue of our Out of School Hours Care Service, 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 of children. Educators are aware that toys and equipment need to be checked to ensure they are safe and developmentally appropriate for school aged children from Kindergarten to Year 6. Regular checks occur within the Out of School Hours service to ensure that all toys, furniture and equipment are in good condition and working order.

[Primary policy – Furniture and Equipment Safety Policy]

RISK ASSESSMENT & RISK ASSESSMENT TOOL

It is a legislative requirement that all services 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 Coordinators or Responsible persons in day-to-day charge 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 Family Day Care service.

Common hazards 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
- non-compliance risk
- hot drinks

[Primary policy – Incident, Illness, Accident, and Trauma Policy]

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE AUTHORISATION

National Regulations require our Out of School Hours 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 at all times.

To ensure children's safety, educators have a clear understanding of their legal obligation to check identification when a person is collecting a child from their residence or venue. To maintain compliance, parents and educators will complete an authorisation 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]

SOURCE:

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. (2018).

My Time Our Place: Framework for School Age Care in Australia. (2011).

Revised National Quality Standard. (2018).

[United Nations Convention of Rights of the Child, \(1989\). \(UNCRC\)](#)

Work Health and Safety Act, (2011).