

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. Children’s safety and wellbeing are paramount at our Service. 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 while promoting children’s sense of security and belonging. [NQF October 2023]

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.
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 LAW AND REGULATIONS	
S162 (A)	Persons in day-to-day charge and nominated supervisors to have child protection training
S165	Offence to inadequately supervise children



S166	Offence to use inappropriate discipline
S167	Offence relating to protection of children from harm and hazards
82	Tobacco, drug and alcohol-free environment
83	Staff members and family day care educators not to be affected by alcohol or drugs
84	Awareness of child protection law
99	Children leaving the education and care service premises
102(A-D)	Transportation of children (risk assessments and authorisations)
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	Premises designed to facilitate supervision
122	Educators must be working directly with children to be included in ratios
123	Educator to child ratios- centre based services
136	First aid qualifications
145	Staff record
149	Volunteers and students
155	Interactions with children
162	Health information to be kept in enrolment record
165	Record of visitors
166	Children not to be alone with visitors
167	Record of service's compliance
168 (2)(h)	Education and care services must have policies- Providing a child safe environment
170	Policies and procedures to be followed
171	Policies and procedures to be kept available

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. Children’s safety and wellbeing is paramount, and we aim to take all practical steps to protect children and young people from harm or risk of 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, educators, management, approved provider, nominated supervisor, students, volunteers and visitors of the Service.

IMPLEMENTATION

Under the Education and Care Services National Regulations the approved provider must ensure that policies and procedures are in place for providing a child safe environment and take reasonable steps to ensure those policies and procedures are followed. (Regulation 168, Regulation 170). 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 children, young people, educators, staff, visitors, volunteers and students.

‘Child safety is everyone’s responsibility.’ (A guide to the Child Safe Standards. p.26. 2020)

KEY TERMS-DEFINITIONS

Code of Conduct	Together with a code of ethics, the code of conduct helps guide interactions between management, educators and staff, as well as informing the service decision-making processes relating to professional standards
Disclosure	The process where a child or young person conveys or attempts to convey that they are being or have been abused.
Information sharing	Refers to sharing or exchanging information, including personal information about or related to, abuse in organisational contexts. The terms refer to

sharing information between (or within) organisations, as well as sharing information with professionals who provide key services for children.

Mandatory reporter	A person who is required to report known and suspected cases of child abuse and neglect to a nominated government department or agency.
Mandatory reporting	The legislative requirement for selected classes of people to report suspected cases of child abuse and neglect.
National Principles for Child Safe Organisations	Reflect ten child safe standards recommended by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse and are the vehicle for giving recommendations relating to the standards.
Reportable conduct	Certain organisations or entities have legal obligations under Reportable Conduct Schemes to notify and investigate certain allegations of abuse involving a child, when the allegation is against someone they employ, engage or contract in circumstances outlined in the legislation.
Rights of the Child	Human rights belonging to all children, as specified in the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child.
Wellbeing	Sound wellbeing results from the satisfaction of basic needs. It includes happiness and satisfaction, effective social functioning and the dispositions of optimism, openness, curiosity, and resilience.
Working with Children (WWCC)	A notice, certificate or other document granted to, or with respect to a person under a working with children law. The person has been assessed as suitable to work with children; there has been no information that if the person worked with children the person would pose a risk to the children; or the person is not prohibited from attempting to obtain, undertake or remain in child-related employment.

Definitions sourced from

ACECQA. (2023). Policy and procedure guidelines. *Providing a Child Safe Environment*.

NSW Department of Education (2021). [Guide to the Child Safe Standards for early childhood education and care and outside schools hours care services](#)

COMMITMENT TO THE SAFETY OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE (National Principles 1-10)

Our Service is committed to being a child safe organisation and embeds the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, placing the protection of children as a priority of our responsibilities and obligations. The Child Safe Standards recommended by the Royal Commission provide guidance for

our Service to ensure our policies and procedures, strategies and attitudes, ensure children's safety is paramount and that we continue to improve our child safe culture and practices.

Our Service has a zero tolerance to child abuse, and we are committed to the safety, participation and empowerment of all children. We ensure all staff, educators, volunteers and students have undertaken current child protection training and understand their obligations as mandatory reporters. We promote diversity and tolerance and aim to form equitable and positive relationships with children. We ensure children and young people participate in decisions affecting them and listen and respect their suggestions and ideas. We respond to any concerns, disclosures, allegations or suspicions of harm by reporting to the relevant authorities.

We are committed to diversity and welcome all children and young people regardless of their abilities, sex, gender or social economic or cultural background.

Our Service will not tolerate bullying or harassment. Our priority is to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children and young people and encourage positive relationships.

COMMUNICATION (National Principles 2 and 3)

We aim to build and maintain positive and respectful relationships with children, families, staff and educators of our Service and prioritise a child safe environment. We communicate regularly and clearly with all stakeholders and ensure our policies and procedures are available to staff, educators, employees, students, volunteers, families and children and young people. (Reg. 170). Our policies are all available to view on our website, within our app and in our office located on the services premises. We welcome and encourage children, young people and families to share feedback and evaluation of our policies and procedures through surveys, feedback or discussions with management.

PARTICIPATION OF FAMILIES, CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE (National Principle 2)

Our Service ensures families are always welcome and feel comfortable asking questions on how we prioritise child safety. We provide a range of opportunities for consultation and collaboration about decisions about their child's safety whilst at our Service including:

- policy and procedure review
- child protection
- allegations/grievance procedures

- sun safety
- written authorisations- parenting orders
- code of conduct
- inclusivity and supporting children and young people with diverse needs.

We promote a respectful, child safe culture where children and young people concerns are always responded to, and children and young people feel empowered to participate in decisions and provide feedback to educators and staff.

Our Service provides opportunities for conversations with children and young people about their rights and encourages children and young people speak up if they are feeling unsafe or worried. We provide multiple channels for children and young people to lodge complaints, tailoring these options to their communication preferences based on their feedback. We work individually with children and young people about the type of support they may require to participate in the complaints procedure.

CODE OF CONDUCT (National Principles 4 and 6)

Management, educators, staff, volunteers and students will adhere to our Service's *Code of Conduct Policy*. Our *Code of Conduct Policy* clearly outlines expectations regarding behaviour and describes the principles, values, and ethical guidelines that guide our staff and stakeholders in their interactions and activities. All educators and staff members are made fully aware that following breaches of the Code of Conduct and role responsibilities may result in disciplinary action which may lead to termination of employment. Individuals can report any concerns they may have about inappropriate actions of any educator, staff, student or volunteer that involves children or young people to management, ensuring a prompt and thorough response to maintain a safe and secure environment for all.

We will:

- promote a culture of child safety and wellbeing in all aspects of our Service's operations
- adhere to our *Child Safe Environment Policy*, *Child Protection Policy* at all times
- ensure all staff, educators, volunteers and students have undertaken current child protection legislation training
- provide adequate and effective supervision of children at all times
- ensure the safe use of online environments
- take reasonable action to protect children and young people for risk of harm
- ensure the service premise is free from the use of tobacco, illicit drugs and alcohol

- be responsible for their own, and others health and safety
- be a positive role model to children and young people
- respect children and young people’s privacy and dignity at all times
- listen and respond appropriately to the views and concerns of children and young people
- report any allegations of child abuse to the approved provider or to relevant authorities
- notify the approved provider and/or the regulatory authority within 24 hours of any serious incident or complaint as per the National Regulations
- encourage children and young people to ‘have a say’ on issues that are important to them.

Staff, educators, students and volunteers must:

- not discriminate against any child, because of age, gender, cultural background, race, ethnicity or disability
- not put children or a young person at risk of abuse- refusing food/play, making threats, exposing children to inappropriate language or material (movies, internet, photos)
- not develop any ‘special’ relationships with children or young people that could be seen as favouritism such as the offering of gifts or special treatment
- not be under the influence of drugs or alcohol while working; bring alcohol or drugs onto the premises
- not smoke or vape in or on surrounding areas of the Service.

RECRUITMENT (National Principle 5)

Our Service maintains a rigorous and consistent recruitment, screening and selection process to ensure the best staff members and educators are employed based on skills, qualifications, experience and suitability for the position available. All staff and educators participate in robust interviews and have reference checks completed to ensure the applicant’s suitability to the role, previous experiences and their commitment to child safe values and practices. All staff and educators are provided with a comprehensive induction process which outlines our Code of Conduct, identifying and responding to child abuse, grievance processes, and work health and safety. New employees (including the nominated supervisor and staff members), students and volunteers are to familiarise themselves with the Child Protection Policy to understand the Child Protection Law and their obligations and mandatory reporting duties to ensure the safety and well-being of children at the service.

WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECK- POLICE CHECKS (National Principle 5)

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. Management will verify all student and volunteer WWCCs prior to placement. Any visitor who has direct contact with children will be required to provide a WWCC for verification prior to coming into contact with children (*best practice*). The approved provider will keep a record for each day a student or volunteer participates in the service including date and hours of participation.

CHILD PROTECTION- REPORTABLE CONDUCT SCHEME (National Principle 6)

Children and young people always have a right to be safe and protected. To comply with legislation and ensure a child safe environment, all educators, staff, volunteers and students are advised of current child protection law and understand any obligations under the law. Supervision is effective to ensure they understand that *child safety is everyone's responsibility*.

All management (with direct contact of children or young person), educators and staff are mandatory reporters and have a legal obligation to make reports if they suspect on reasonable grounds, a child is at risk of significant harm. Neglecting these obligations could potentially be deemed a criminal offence. All staff are provided with up-to-date training about child protection law and their obligations under this law and to ensure they are confident in following the reporting guidelines within Western Australia and adhere to our *Child Protection Policy*. (Reg 84). Management will ensure training and development are provided for all educators, staff, and volunteers in child protection on an annual basis.

Through continual education and training, educators and staff are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children safe. Training gives educators and staff confidence to identify, respond and report child abuse. 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.

To protect children and young people and ensure their safety, welfare and wellbeing, management is responsive to report allegations or convictions of harm or risk of harm to a child or young person and child related misconduct by any staff member, educator, volunteer or contractor to the relevant organisation or Department for Child Protection.

Our Service is committed to providing support to children, young people, families, educators or staff who have made a report regarding child protection, with a focus on upholding strict confidentiality throughout the process. Our primary concern is the well-being and safety of the child or young person, and we will work closely with relevant authorities, professionals, and support networks to ensure that the child or young person's best interests are met throughout the process. Our dedicated support system will assist educators and staff in navigating this challenging process while safeguarding their privacy and professional well-being.

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 or volunteer or contractor as part of the *Reportable Conduct Scheme*.

Our Service will ensure an appropriate level of confidentiality of information relating to the reportable allegations as per the Children's Guardian Act 2019 Western Australia

We take our legislative responsibilities as part of the Reportable Conduct Scheme seriously and will respond to any reportable allegation or conviction against employees or volunteers that may arise.

REPORTING AND RESPONDING TO GENERAL COMPLAINTS (National Principle 6)

Feedback from children, families, educators, staff and the wider community is fundamental in creating an evolving Childcare Service working towards the highest standard of care and education.

We ensure educators, staff, volunteers and students are well informed about the different ways children may express concerns, distress and disclose harm as well as the process for responding to

disclosures from children- including a complaint that alleges a child is exhibiting sexual behaviours that may be harmful to the child or another child. (ACECQA 2023)

We aim to investigate all complaints and grievances with a high standard of equity and fairness. Our Service believes in procedural fairness and natural justice that govern the strategies and practices, which include:

- The right to be heard fairly
- The right to an unbiased decision made by an objective decision maker
- The right to have the decision based on relevant evidence.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT – SUPERVISION AND SAFETY CHECKLISTS (National Principles 5 and 7)

Children’s safety is embedded in our day-to-day practices. We ensure effective and adequate supervision is provided to children at all times, while ensuring educator to child ratios are met at all times. Educators will employ ‘active supervision’ strategies within the service environment and when participating in excursions or transporting children. Consideration will be made for the different ages and abilities of children and the activities that may require different levels of supervision.

Sleeping infants and toddlers will be closely monitored at regular intervals and will always be within sight and hearing distance of educators so a child’s breathing, and the colour of their skin can be monitored. Consideration will be provided when older children are using the toilet and bathroom areas, including monitoring and supervision across all areas that children access.

Through conducting risk assessments, we assess and manage risks in the physical environment collaborating with children to develop behaviour guidelines for play including adventurous play to ensure their safety. Educators have a sound understanding of their duty of care and responsibilities in ensuring a child safe environment.

Educators conduct regular safety checks to maintain basic standards of safety within our Service. We believe that child safety is a shared responsibility at all levels within our Service. Children are encouraged to speak up about their safety and the safety of their friends by telling an educator if they feel unsafe in a particular situation or environment.

Educators will complete regular visual checks to assist and will 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.

RISK ASSESSMENT & RISK ASSESSMENT TOOL (National Principle 8)

It is a legislative requirement that management, staff and educators implement a risk management system where they identify and manage hazards and risks within the workplace to ensure a child safe environment. Strategies are in place to make sure child safety (through the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations) and *Education and Care National Regulations* are embedded across our Service. The key principles of risk management include:

1. Identifying all hazards or potential hazards in the service/residence/venue
2. Assess the risk of harm or potential harm for each hazard
3. Control or manage the risk – Risk Rating Matrix
4. Monitor and improve safety – Risk Assessment Action Plan
5. Evaluate and Review

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 or any transportation of children. 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 (e.g., safe lifting children from cots and highchairs)
- non-compliance risk
- hot drinks
- transportation of children (regular outing and regular transportation)
- excursions
- potential emergencies
- natural disasters
- safe arrival of children
- sleep and rest
- organisation culture (child-safe culture)
- physical contact
- training
- online activities
- electrical devices (photographs/videos)
- privacy and confidentiality

To maintain a child safe environment, all staff and educators will adhere to Service policies and procedures and will continually ensure they are vigilant in regularly checking the service for risks.

EMERGENCY AND EVACUATION PROCEDURES

Management will ensure that copies of the emergency and evacuation floor plan is displayed in prominent positions near each exit of the service premises, including indoor and outdoor learning areas. All staff and educators are familiar with emergency evacuation procedures and regulatory requirements. Rehearsals for emergency and evacuation procedures, including lock downs, are conducted at least once every 3 months. Records will be kept for all rehearsals.

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE AUTHORISATION

Our Service prioritises children's safety at all times. Staff and educators will only release children to an authorised person as named on the child's enrolment form. Management will request families provide current court orders, and parenting plans to ensure our records are up to date.

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 or young person.

Educators will work in collaboration with our *Delivery of children to and Collection from Education and Care Premises Policy, Safe Arrival of Children Policy* and *Student, Volunteer and Visitor's Policy* to ensure children feel safe and secure.

To ensure children's safety, staff and educators have a clear understanding of their legal obligation to check identification when a person is collecting a child if they are unknown to educators. To maintain compliance, parents must email the service (so it is in writing) if they authorise a person who is not on their emergency contact form to pick up their child.

ONLINE SAFETY (National Principle 8)

Our Service is committed to create and maintain a safe online environment with support and collaboration with children, educators, staff, families and community. Management ensures anti-virus and internet security systems are installed to block access to unsuitable web sites, newsgroups and chat rooms.

Our Service ensures backups of important and confidential data is made regularly and either stored securely offline, or online. Software and devices are updated regularly to avoid any breach of confidential information.

Families are provided with information about our software program which is password protected and used to share observations, photos, videos, daily reports and portfolios. Passwords are not to be shared with others as per our written agreement.

Children are always supervised using any technology.

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, staff and educators will keep a register of hazardous chemicals used at the Service, including relevant Safety Data Sheets (SDS).

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, our Service has 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.

CONTINUOUS REVIEW (National Principle 9)

To ensure we maintain a culture of continuous improvement, we will ensure our child safe practices are regularly reviewed, evaluated and improved. We aim to ensure all educators, staff, students and volunteers understand and effectively implement our policies and procedures to provide a child safe environment at our Service.

We will regularly review and monitor the effectiveness of our Child Safe policies and procedures and invite children, staff members, families and communities to contribute to their development. Any updates or revisions will be communicated to all stakeholders. Our *Child Safe Environment Policy* will be reviewed on an annual basis

CHILD SAFE STANDARDS LEGISLATION/RESOURCES

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

The commencement for legislation around the implementation of the National Principles is led by the Commissioner for Children and Young People (CCYP).

Department of Communities

[WA Commissioner for Children and Young People \(CCYP\)](#)

SOURCES

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

ACECQA. (2023). Policy and procedure guidelines. [Providing a Child Safe Environment](#).

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Australian Government. Department of Skills. (2022). [Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia](#).V2.0, 2022

Australian Human Rights Commission (2020). *Child Safe Organisations*. <https://childsafe.humanrights.gov.au/>

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

Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010. (Amended 2023).

[Education and Care Services National Regulations](#). (Amended 2023).

Revised National Quality Standard. (2018).

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

[Western Australian Education and Care Services National Regulations](#)

Work Health and Safety Act, (2011).

REVIEW

POLICY REVIEWED BY	KYLIE SHOWMAN	DIRECTOR	APRIL 2025
POLICY REVIEWED		NEXT REVIEW DATE	MAY 2026
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MODIFICATIONS	•		
POLICY REVIEWED	PREVIOUS MODIFICATIONS	NEXT REVIEW DATE	