

PROVIDING A SAFE ENVIRONMENT



Reviewed May 2023

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POLICY STATEMENT

Our preschool has a moral and legal responsibility to ensure that the rights and best interests of the children are paramount and that we will provide training, information and guidance to support this to:

- Ensure that the health, safety, welfare and wellbeing of children at this service is protected at all times;
- Ensure that people educating and caring for children at this service act in the best interests of children at all times;
- Protect and advocate the rights of all children to feel safe, and be safe, at all times;
- Maintain a culture in which children's rights are respected and children have an agency and a voice in things that matter in their lives;
- Ensure families are informed and encouraged to actively participate in our service through supporting a partnership approach and a shared responsibility for children's health, safety, wellbeing and development.

GOALS

All children have the right to experience quality education and care in our preschool 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

The Physical Environment

In order to promote a safe and physical environment, we will;

- Undertake an environmental check in indoor and outdoor environments each morning and respond to any risks to children or adults immediately;
- Ensure all equipment and materials used at the service meet relevant safety standards;
- 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 provided 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 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 authority; and

- Ensure smoking, including using e-cigarettes, the drinking of alcohol and the taking of recreational drugs is banned within the grounds of the preschool. Smoking must be at least 4 metres of our entrance areas in accordance with NSW legislation. 'No Smoking' signage is erected in these spaces to encourage the community to adhere to this smoking restriction.

Staffing and Supervision

Our service is committed to;

- Employment of over the required ratio of educators to children in each class setting which ensures adequate supervision of children at all times, and supports children with additional needs;
- Management of rosters not only ensure 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;
- Ensuring the screening and suitability of staff and volunteers as per the legislation and policy at the time of employment and as part of an ongoing process. Working With Children Check certification is forwarded to our Approved Provider for approval;
- Staff committing to valuing ongoing professional development in their role to best support children; and
- Responding proactively to emerging staff performance concerns and staff appraisals undertaken annually.

Child Protection

All educators and volunteers of our service are Mandatory Reporters and are required to report to the Child Protection Helpline (Phone 133 627, or eReport at <https://kidsreport.facs.nsw.gov.au>) 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.

The Mandatory Report Guide (see Resources) will be used, to guide decision making and determine whether or not to report to the Child Protection Helpline under the new risk of significant harm reporting threshold.

It is a requirement of our Approved Provider that all staff working with children in our service complete Child Protection training, 'CHCPR001: Identify and respond to children and young people at risk' every 3 years.

Our Approved Provider has a policy 'Early Childhood Services Child Protection Policy (Jericho Road)' which is reviewed by all employees at our service and our Board of Management Members annually.

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;
- Be able to recognise the factors that increase a child's vulnerability to maltreatment; and

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- 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 the organisation.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Nominated Supervisor responsibilities

- I. Cooperating with other services and/or professionals in the best interests of children and their families.
- II. Ensuring that families are made aware of support services available to them and of the assistance that these services can provide.
- III. Ensuring that all staff who work with children are supported to implement this policy in the service.
- IV. Protecting the rights of children and families and encouraging their participation in decision-making at the service.
- V. Ensure all staff are aware of the location of the ROSH file for documentation.

Educator responsibilities

- I. Act in accordance with the obligations outlined in this policy.
- II. 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 service.
- III. Keeping up to date and complying with any relevant changes in legislation and practices in relation to this policy.
- IV. Follow all record keeping requirements.
- V. Undertaking appropriate training and education on child protection.
- VI. 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.
- VII. Cooperating with other services and or / professionals in the best interests of children and their families.
- VIII. Informing families of support services available to them (such as Child First), and of the assistance that these services can provide.
- IX. Ensuring that no child is left alone (or is out of sight) with a contractor, visitor, volunteer, student or parent/guardian at the service.
- X. Implementing the procedures for reporting suspected child abuse.
- XI. 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.
- XII. Offering support to the child and their family, and to other staff in response to concerns or reports relating to the health, safety and wellbeing of a child at the service.
- XIII. Maintaining confidentiality at all times
- XIV. Adhering to all service policies.

Family's responsibilities

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

RELATED GUIDELINES, STANDARDS, FRAMEWORKS, LEGISLATION

National Quality Standards

Quality Area 4: Staffing Arrangements – Standard 4.1
Quality Area 7: Governance and Leadership – Standard 7.1

Legislation

Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010: 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

www.aifs.gov.au/cfca/publications/Australian-child-protection-legislation

Australian Privacy Principles

www.oaic.gov.au

Privacy Act 1988 (Privacy Act)

www.oaic.gov.au/law/act

Office of the Children's Guardian

www.ocg/msw.gov.au/resources

NSW Health Smoke-free laws

www.health.nsw.gov.au/tobacco/pages/smoke-free-laws

Office of the Children's Guardian: Child Safe Standards

Standard 1: Child safety is embedded in the organisational leadership, governance and culture.

Standard 2: Children participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.

Standard 3: Families and communities are informed and involved.

Standard 4: Equity is upheld and diverse needs are taken into account.

Standard 5: People working with children are suitable and supported.

Standard 6: Processes to respond to complaints of child abuse are child focused.

Standard 7: Staff are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children safe through continual education and training.

Standard 8: Physical and online environments minimise the opportunity for abuse to occur.

Standard 9: Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is continuously reviewed and improved.

Standard 10: Policies and procedures document how the organisation is child safe.

MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW

This policy will be monitored to ensure compliance with legislative requirements and unless deemed necessary through the identification of practice gaps, the service will review this Policy every 18 months.