

Providing a Child Safe Environment

QUALITY AREA 2: CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND SAFETY

This policy is guided by the paramount consideration that children's safety, rights and best interests are upheld above all other considerations in all decisions, actions and practices.

Policy Statement

The National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, endorsed by all Australian governments, operationalise laws and regulations pertaining to Child Safe Standards. These principles provide guidance on key actions and performance measures essential to implementing these standards in early education and care settings.

Our Service is committed to providing culturally safe, inclusive and welcoming environments where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, neurodiverse children and children with diverse abilities feel respected, valued, included and safe.

Our service supports all children, with a strong commitment to ensuring their safety and creating a secure environment that extends to online environments. The safety and well-being of children are of utmost importance. We implement the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, use safe recruitment practices, and foster a culture of safety and wellbeing. Our service promotes a sense of security, belonging, and acceptance for all children. We will provide training, resources, transparency, and guidance to support this in order to:

- Prioritise children's safety when using digital technologies and online environments.
- Ensure that the health, safety and well-being of children at the service are always prioritised
- Ensure that people educating and caring for children at the service act in the best interests of the child;
- Protect and advocate for the rights of all children to feel safe and be safe at all times;
- Maintain 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

- Maintain child safe recruitment, screening, induction and employment practices
- Ensure the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations are implemented and regularly reviewed.
- Ensure that the Child Safe Standards are implemented and monitored, where endorsed and mandated by states and territories.

Objectives

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:

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- Be asked to express their views and wishes about matters affecting their lives and to have those views appropriately considered by adults
- Children will be supported to express their views, raise concerns, participate in decisions affecting them and contribute to the development of a child-safe culture. Children's views will be taken seriously and acted upon where appropriate.
- 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'.
- Promote cultural safety and inclusion by respecting and valuing each child's identity, culture, language, abilities and lived experiences.
- Ensuring all children experience a sense of belonging and safety within the service

Strategies

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 that may provide a safety risk for children promptly.
- Maintain an equipment maintenance schedule.
- 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.
- Ensure fencing meets regulatory requirements to avoid entrapment for example, no loop top fencing
- Ensure fencing is maintained and included in the daily environment check
- Determine appropriate ways to eliminate or control identified hazards.
- Review risk assessments after any serious incident report is made to the Regulatory Authority.
- Ensure smoking, vaping and e-cigarettes are 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.

Digital technologies and the online environment

- Refer to the *Safe Use of Digital Technologies and Online Environments* policy
- All stakeholders have a responsibility to ensure online safety, as their children grow up in digital contexts. Children will be provided with information about online safety.
- Our service adheres to the National Model Code and Guidelines developed by ACECQA to comply with the effective and safe use of digital and personal devices in daily practice.
- The National Model Code and the Guidelines advise staff, students, volunteers and families about child safety risks and considerations when using personal and service devices in the centre.

(Source: Guidelines for the National Model Code - ACECQA and Australian Government eSafety Commissioner. (n.d.). Online safety for under-5s.

Biological hazards

Refer to the Biological Code of Practice (2026) Released by Safe Work Australia

- Identify biohazards present in the ECEC
- Treat bodily fluids as a workplace hazard
- Use PPE and infection control cleaning
- Ensure staff training and supervision
- Maintain structured and verified cleaning practices

Supervision

- Ensure that adult-to-child ratios are always maintained. Specified ratios serve as a baseline and only meet regulatory requirements. Services can employ additional educators 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 and paramount consideration implications are considered to ensure adequate supervision at all times.
- Accurate daily attendance records, including arrival and departure times and authorised collection details, are maintained at all times. Attendance records and active supervision practices are used to ensure all children are accounted for throughout the day, including during transitions, routines, indoor and outdoor play.

Staff

- Ensure child safe screening and suitability of staff, volunteers, as per the legislation and the *Staff, Student and Volunteers* policy at the time of employment and as part of an ongoing process.
- Working with vulnerable people/children, check details and verification must be included in volunteer staff records.
- Ensure rigorous induction processes for staff, volunteers and students that embed Child Safe Standards and practices of a child safe culture.
- Complete pre-employment child protection training and annual refresher training.
- Complete National Mandatory Child Safety Training
- Complete a training register for all staff
- Respond proactively to emerging staff performance concerns.
- Ensure all staff are aware of the importance of, and the protections provided to persons who make protected disclosures.

Child protection

- Ensure that all staff, including educators, students and volunteers, have current Working with Children checks as required by NSW Office of the Children's Guardian.
- Ensure that all staff are given information and/or training about child protection law and any obligations they have under that law.
- Ensure risk management strategies are in place to support and protect the safety and well-being of all children.
- Refer to the *Child Protection Policy*.
- Refer to the *Protected Disclosures Policy*
- Maintains a confidential Child Protection Register to record all concerns, disclosures, allegations and incidents relating to child safety. This register includes actions taken and outcomes and is securely stored and regularly reviewed by the Nominated Supervisor or Approved Provider.
- All educators and volunteers of our service are required to familiarise themselves with child protection legislation and take appropriate measures according to NSW Early Learning Commission protocols if they have reasonable grounds to suspect a child or young person is at risk of significant harm and have a current concern about the safety, welfare or wellbeing of a child or young person.
- *Complaint handling policies* include policies and procedures for managing complaints about children exhibiting harmful sexual behaviours.
- *Complaint handling policies* and procedures are child-focused, in accordance with the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations

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- 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 an authorised person

Preventing other harms and hazards

The service will ensure that:

- At a governance level, Approved Providers/Nominated Supervisors identify and manage risks that align with the Child Safe Standards.
- Conduct regular, documented child protection risk assessments that are specific to the service environment, routines and practices. These assessments identify and address risks to children, including supervision, physical contact, toileting, excursions and online environments, and are reviewed following any incident or identified concern
- Risk assessments are conducted regularly for excursions and transportation provided or arranged by the service in conjunction with the service's *Excursion policy and Transportation policy*.
- Risk minimisation practices are in place for the management of medical conditions in conjunction with the service's Medical Conditions policy.
- Emergency evacuation plans specific to the service are implemented in conjunction with the service's Emergency and Evacuation policy.
- If staff consume hot drinks, they are made and consumed away from children.

Roles and responsibilities

Role	Authority/responsibility for
Approved Provider	• Ensure that obligations under the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations are met • Ensure that the Providing a child safe environment policy and procedures are implemented, the appropriate

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Role	Authority/responsibility for
	• Risk assessments and action plans are completed, and all identified actions are taken to minimise the risks to children's health and safety (also known as a risk minimisation plan) • Ensure that nominated supervisors, persons in day-to-day charge, staff and volunteers have completed the required child protection training • Ensure that persons with management and control of the service, nominated supervisors, persons in day-to-day charge, staff and volunteers have completed prescribed child safety training within the prescribed period • Ensure all educators and staff, volunteers and students, are aware of current child protection legislation, including mandatory reporting requirements and obligations. The <i>Responding to incidents, disclosures and suspicions of child abuse</i> (NSW Early Learning Commission) reporting tree will be displayed in each service and accessible to all staff. Please note this is a requirement under regulation 84 and is separate to child protection and child safety training requirements set out above. • Provide an environment that is free from the use of tobacco, vaping devices, vaping substances, illicit drugs and alcohol and ensure no educators or staff are affected by alcohol or drugs (including prescription medication) so as to impair their capacity to supervise or provide education and care to children in the service • Ensure that no child is subjected to any form of corporal punishment, or any discipline that is unreasonable or inappropriate in the circumstances • Ensure that no child is subjected to inappropriate conduct and must not subject children to inappropriate conduct • Ensure that nominated supervisors, staff members and volunteers (including students) meet the requirements for working with children clearances, such as a WWCC registration, or teacher registration (jurisdiction dependent), before they are engaged at the service and that this information is included in the staff record • Require each nominated supervisor, staff member or volunteer (including students) to notify you within 24 hours of becoming aware of a change in status of their WWCC registration or teacher registration, if not already required to notify under a law of the participating jurisdiction • Notify the regulatory authority within 24 hours of becoming aware of a change in status of any WWCC • Registration or teacher registration for any nominated supervisor, staff member or volunteer (including students), if not already required to notify under a law of the participating jurisdiction

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Role	Authority/responsibility for
	• Understand their responsibility under the Reportable Conduct Scheme. • Ensures all committee members are fit and proper persons and successfully complete the National Child Safety Training • 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 child safe recruitment, screening and ongoing suitability processes for all staff, including the nominated supervisor, are maintained, including reference checks, and induction procedures are followed to meet policy and legislated requirements • Ensure all staff have access to relevant professional development on child safety, including child protection training. • Ensure all records are kept in accordance with legislation (Regulation 183). • 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). • Promote a culture of child safety and wellbeing that underpins all aspects of the service's operations, to reduce risk to children (including the risk of abuse) • Ensure the safe use of service-supplied, service-authorised and personal devices and online environments at the service in line with our Safe use of digital technologies and online environments policies and procedures • Ensure policies and procedures promote equity and respect diversity for the safety and wellbeing of children and young people • Take reasonable steps to ensure that nominated supervisors, educators and staff follow the Providing a child safe environment policy and procedures • Ensure that copies of the policy and procedures are readily accessible to nominated supervisors, coordinators, educators and staff, and available for inspection
Nominated Supervisor	• Implement the Providing a child safe environment policy and procedures and ensure that any plans developed from risk assessments are in place for individual children and are carried out • Meeting staff to child ratios to ensure adequate supervision

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Role	Authority/responsibility for
	• Ensure all educators and staff know where to access the Providing a child safe environment policy and procedures • Ongoing communication with educators and staff about their responsibilities and any changes to policies, procedures and legislation • Support educators and staff to uphold the service's culture of child safety and wellbeing • Must complete register child protection and regularly monitor child protection training schedules and ensure all educators and staff are up to date with their training, as required by section 162A of the National Law • Must complete Foundation and Advanced child safety training and ensure that all educators and staff, including volunteers and students, have undertaken required child safety training within the prescribed timeframes, as required by section 162B of the National Law • When required, work collaboratively with appropriate services and/or professionals to support children's access, inclusion and participation in the program • Ensure the safety and wellbeing of children attending the service by keeping a visitors' record, including signatures and arrival/departure times. • Ensure that no child is subjected to inappropriate conduct and must not subject children to inappropriate conduct • Must notify the approved provider within 24 hours of becoming aware of a change of status in their WWCC registration or teacher registration. • Understand their responsibility under the Reportable Conduct Scheme. • Ensure child safe employment recruitment, screening and suitability processes are maintained, including reference checks, to meet policy and legislated requirements. • Ensure all educators understand their role as mandatory reporters • 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. • 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.

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Role	Authority/responsibility for
	• 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. • Children and families will be provided with appropriate information about how to raise concerns, make complaints and seek support if they feel unsafe. • Contractors, visitors and other adults attending the service will be supervised appropriately and must comply with the service's child safe expectations, code of conduct and visitor procedures.
Educators	• Be aware of current child protection legislation, including the mandatory reporting requirements and obligations • Implement the Providing a child safe environment policy and procedures and ensure that any action plans for individual children are carried out • Implement the service's culture of child safety and wellbeing • Know the individual needs and action plans for the children in your care • Must complete required child protection training, including mandatory reporting requirements and obligations • Must complete Foundation and Advanced child safety training • Maintain current approved first aid qualification, emergency asthma management training and anaphylaxis management training • In centre-based services, must not use personal digital devices while working directly with children, unless there is an exemption or written authorisation in place • Must only use service-supplied or service-authorised devices to capture, store or transmit images of children • Monitor and maintain staff to child ratios to ensure adequate supervision of children, including when using digital technologies and online environments • Provide an environment that is free from the use of tobacco, vaping devices, vaping substances, illicit drugs and alcohol • Keep a visitors' record, including signatures and arrival and departure times. • Recognise and respond effectively to children and young people, taking into account diverse needs

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Role	Authority/responsibility for
	• Ensure children and young people participate in decision making in matters affecting them, including in relation to safety issues and risk identification • Must not subject children to any form of corporal punishment or any discipline that is unreasonable • Must not subject children to inappropriate conduct • Must notify the approved provider within 24 hours of becoming aware of a change of status in their WWCC registration or teacher registration, if not already required to notify under a law of the participating jurisdiction 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. • All allegations, concerns or complaints relating to educators' conduct towards children will be managed in accordance with the relevant Reportable Conduct Scheme requirements and legislative obligations. • 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.

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Role	Authority/responsibility for
	• 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 that adhere to the Child Safe Standards. • Understand and adhere to risk management strategies for the relevant children in their care. • Ensuring risk management strategies are understood and adhered to.
Families	• Reading and complying with this policy. • Reporting any concerns, including in relation to potential for child abuse, to the Nominated Supervisor.

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 12 months.

Families and staff are essential stakeholders in the policy review process and will be given the opportunity and encouragement to be actively involved.

Related Guidelines, Standards, Frameworks

- 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
- National Principles of Child Safe Organisations
- National Model Code for Taking Images or Videos of Children in Early Childhood Education and Care
- Office of the Australian Information Commission draft Children's Online Privacy Code [OAIC releases Exposure Draft of the Children's Online Privacy Code | OAIC](#)
- Model Code Biological hazards and training- <https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/doc/model-code-practice-managing-risks-biological-hazards-work>

Related Legislation

- Section 2A
- Education and Care Services National Law: Sections 18, 162A, 162 B, 165, 166, 166A, 167, 175A -175 J
- Education and Care Services National Regulations: Regulations 82, 83, 84, 99, 103, 115, 122, 123, 123A, 124, 128B, 128D, 128E, 145, 158-159, 165, 167, 168(2)(h), 170, 171, 172, 175, 176B, 176C, 179A, 179B, 183, 268, 295, 344, 358, 384
- Australian Child Protection Legislation
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/privacy/privacy-legislation/the-privacy-act

Related Policies

- Child Protection Policy
- Safe and Responsible Use of Digital Devices
- Supervision
- Smoke, Drug, Vape and Alcohol-Free Environment Policy
- Participation of Volunteers and Students
- Professional Standards and Ethical Conduct
- Code of Conduct
- Complaints Handling

Last review date	Changes made	Next review date
23/07/2024	Policy rewritten	23/07/2025
14/07/2025	Updates to the NQF review and National Regulations coming into effect from 01/09/2025.	14/07/2026
4/02/2026	Strengthening of safe recruitment practices	4/02/2027
31.03.2026	Specific reference to the national mandatory child safety training	March 2027
13.03.2026	Updated to include Child Safety Changes 2025-2026	April 2027
24.06.2026	Updated to strengthen the child voice, cultural safety, and reportable conduct, ensuring Alignment with Child Safe Standards.	June 2027

Sources

- Office of the Australian Information Commissioner – www.oaic.gov.au
- NSW Office of the Children's Guardian <https://ocg.nsw.gov.au/>
- (NSW Only) [Reporting Obligations Poster Resources | Office of the Children's Guardian \(nsw.gov.au\)](#)
- NSW Dept of Education: [Guide on the Child Safe Standards for early childhood education and outside school hours care services \(nsw.gov.au\)](#)
- (NSW only) [Child Safe Standards Fact Sheet](#)
- Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) – 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
- Childsafety Australia – www.childsafetyaustralia.com.au
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child – www.unicef.org.au
- The Supporting young children's rights: Statement of intent (2015-2018) – www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au
- Australian Human Rights Commission – www.humanrights.gov.au
- Australian Childhood Foundation – www.childhood.org.au
- UNICEF The Convention on the Rights of the Child: The children's version - www.unicef.org/child-rights-convention/convention-text-childrens-version
- National Model Code - www.acecqa.gov.au/national-model-code-taking-images-early-childhood-education-and-care
- Early Years program for educators [Early Years program for educators | eSafety Commissioner](#)
- QA2 information sheet -Active Supervision; Ensuring safety and promoting learning- [QA2 information sheet - Active Supervision: Ensuring safety and promoting learning | ACECQA](#)
- NQF Child Safe Culture Guide - [NQF Child Safe Culture Guide | ACECQA](#)
- Providing a child safe -environments Policy and procedure guidelines - [Providing a child safe environment_0.pdf](#)