



Wangaratta Children's Services Centre

Providing A Child Safe Environment Policy

Document Type	Corporate Policy
Department	Children's Services
Date of Council Endorsement	27 September 2023
Date for Review	September 2027
Responsible Officer	Family & Early Childhood Services Coordinator
Authorising Officer	Director Community and Infrastructure
Vision Reference Number	1.0
SIM Reference Number	TBC

National Quality Standard

2.2	Each child is protected
2.2.1	At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from harm and hazard
2.2.2	Plans to effectively manage incidents and emergencies are developed in consultation with relevant authorities, practised and implemented.
2.2.3	Management, educators and staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities to identify and respond to every child at risk of abuse or neglect
5.1.1	Responsive and meaningful interactions build trusting relationships which engage and support each child to feel secure, confident and included.

National Regulations

Section/ Regulation	Description
Section 165	Offence to inadequately supervise children
Section 166	Offence to use inappropriate discipline
Section 167	Offence relating to protection of children from harm and hazards
Regulation 82	Tobacco, drug and alcohol-free environment
Regulation 84	Awareness of child protection law

Regulation 103	Premises, furniture and equipment to be safe, clean and in good repair
Regulation 104	Fencing
Regulation 105	Furniture, materials and equipment
Regulation 106	Laundry and hygiene facilities
Regulation 109	Toilet and hygiene facilities
Regulation 115	Facilities designed to facilitate supervision
Regulation 122	Educators must be working directly with children to be included in ratios
Regulation 123	Educator to child ratios- centre based services
Regulation 123A	Educator to child ratios – Family day care service
Regulation 165	Record of visitors
Regulation 166	Children not to be alone with visitors
Regulation 167	Record of service’s compliance
Regulation 168H	Education and care services must have policies- Providing a child safe environment
Regulation 170	Policies and procedures to be followed

Statement and Purpose

Childrens safety and wellbeing are paramount at our service and will be fostered through responsive relationships, engaging experiences and a safe and healthy environment.

The Education and Care Service National Regulations require approved providers to ensure their services have policies and procedures in place for proving a child safe environment to minimise risk of harm and hazard to children attending education and care services.

Policy

Our service is committed to being a child safe organisation, placing the protection of children as a priority of our responsibilities and obligations. The child safe standards provide guidance for our service to ensure our policies and procedures, strategies, and attitudes, ensure children’s safety is paramount. Our service has a zero tolerance to child abuse, and we are committed to the safety participation of all children. We ensure children participate in decisions affecting them and listen and respect their suggestions and ideas. We are dedicated in promoting cultural safety for children from culturally diverse backgrounds and provide a safe environment for children with disabilities.

Working with Children Checks and Police Checks

A Working with Children Check (WWCC) is a requirement for all staff that works at our service. It involves a national criminal history check a review of findings of workplace misconduct. The WWCC must be current and renew every five years. Management will ensure that the periodic

review and maintenance of up-to-date records of employees Working with Children Check, including the WWCC number and the date on which each clearance expires. The WWCC will be placed in the individual's file. On employment all staff are required to obtain a police check.

Children Protection – Reportable Conduct Scheme

Educators are provided with training and ongoing supervision to ensure they understand that child safety is everyone's responsibility. All educators and staff are mandatory reporters and must make reports if they suspect on reasonable grounds, a child is at risk of significant harm. All staff needs to complete mandatory training annually. Through continual education and training, educators and staff are equipped with knowledge, skills, and awareness to keep children safe. The training gives educators and staff confidence to identify, respond and report child abuse.

Physical Environment- Supervision and safety checklists

We ensure effective and adequate supervision is always provided to children. To ensure supervision and safety, ratio is always kept across the service. Consideration will be made for the different activities that may require different levels of supervision.

Sleeping infants and toddlers will be closely monitored, with educators completing sleep checks regularly and ensuring that the children are within sight and hearing distance of an educator.

Educators understand their duty of care and responsibilities in ensuring a child safe environment. Educators conduct regular safety checks using the safety checklist every day.

Storage of Hazardous Substance

Chemicals and hazardous equipment are safely stored away from children. The chemicals can be found in the laundry where children are **not** allowed to access. Any chemicals in rooms are stored in a high place away from children's reach. A register of hazardous chemicals used at the Service, including relevant Safety Data Sheets (SDS) is documented and place a folder found in the laundry room.

Equipment, Furniture and Maintenance Record

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 can be 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.
- Provide appropriately sized furniture and equipment in the indoor and outdoor setting for the age range.
- Place any outdoor climbing equipment is following playground safe standards of 1.5m away from any surrounding structures.
- Regular checks occur within the service to ensure that all toys, furniture and equipment are in good condition and working order.

Facilities

The Approved Provider or Nominated Supervisor and FDC educators will:

- provide adequate, sufficient and accessible facilities for handwashing, toileting, eating and sleeping. Toileting and hand-washing facilities will be accessible from our indoor and outdoor environments.
- provide access to clean drinking water in our indoor and outdoor environments.
- providing secure and hygienic laundry facilities
- ensure that the premises and grounds comply with building regulations (Local, State and Federal Government) and the Building Code of Australia in relation to fire, ventilation, lighting and safety glass
- provide appropriate and hygienic areas for food preparation.
- Provide adequate shade, fencing and include natural elements like plants, trees rocks, water.
- implement management plans to ensure the safety of educators, children, families and visitors if the service undertakes major renovations (FDC educators to notify Nominated Supervisor of any intended renovations)

Layout/ Environment/ Supervision

Educators will:

- organise the environment so children, educators and visitors can move around without disrupting children's activities. Including elements that challenge children and encourage appropriate risk taking for child's developmental level.
- create spaces which encourage collaborative learning through group interactions and one-on-one interactions to encourage children to explore, solve problems, create, construct and engage in critical thinking.
- create areas where children can engage in quiet, restful or independent activities.
- establish the environment so children can be adequately supervised at all times.
- Regularly evaluate the efficiency of Supervision plans, informing new and relief educators about supervision arrangements and responsibilities.
- Ensure Educators move around the environment to ensure the best view of the area and to avoid standing with their back to children.

Risk Assessment and Risk Assessment Tool

Management and educators 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 a risk include:

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

Arrival and Departure Authorisation

Our Service prioritises children's safety at all times. We will only release children to an authorised person as named on the child's enrolment form. We request families provide current court orders, and parenting plans to ensure our records are up to date. (See Delivery to and collection of children from, education and care service premises policy.)

Code of Conduct

Management, Educators, staff and students will adhere to our Services Code of Conduct Policy. We will:

- Provide adequate supervision of children at all times.
- 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.
- Adhere to our Privacy and Confidentiality Policy
- Not discriminate against any child, because of culture, race, ethnicity, or disability.
- Be responsible for their own, and others health and safety.
- Be a positive role model to children.
- Respect children’s privacy and dignity at all times.
- Not put children at risk of abuse.
- Report any allegations of child abuse to the Approved Provider as mandatory reporter.
- Notify the approved provider and/or the regulatory authority within 24 hours of any serious incident or complaints as per the National Regulations.

Continuous Review

We will ensure our child safe practices are regularly reviewed, evaluated, and improved. We will ensure all staff understand and effectively implement our policies and procedures to provide a child safe environment at our service.

Definitions

Term	Meaning	Source
Mandatory Reporting	The legislative requirements for selected classed of people to report suspected child abuse and neglect to government authorities	State/territory based child protection legislation.
Reasonably Believes	Believes on grounds that are reasonably in the circumstances.	Schedule 3, child protection act 1999
Reasonable Grounds	Suspect that a child may be at risk of significant harm based on your observations of the child or what has been reported to you about a child	Schedule 3, child protection act 1999
Reasonably Suspects	Suspects on grounds that are reasonable in the circumstances.	Schedule 3, child protection act 1999
Responsible Person	In relations to an education and care service, mean a person referred to in section 162(1)(a) to (c) of the Education and Care Services National Law.	National Law.
Reportable Conduct	Certain organisations or entities have legal obligations under reportable Conduct Schemes.	State/ territory based child protection legislation.
Rights of the child	Human right belonging to all children, as specified in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.	Guide to the NQF

References:

Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2014).
ACECQA. (2021).
Policy and procedure guidelines.
Providing a Child Safe Environment.
Australian Government. Department of Skills, Education and Employment.
Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia. (2009).
Australian Human Rights Commission (2020).
Child Safe Organisations. <https://chidsafe.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
Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services
National Regulations. (2017).
Guide to the National Quality Framework. (2017). (Amended 2020).
A guide to the Child Safe Standards. (2020).