



## 2.09 Child Protection Policy

### POLICY STATEMENT

Our service is committed to the safety, wellbeing and support of all children and young people. Management, educators and volunteers will treat all children with the utmost respect and understanding.

Our service believes that:

- Children's emotions are real and need to be accepted by adults.
- A reaction given to a child from an adult in a child's early stages of emotional development can be positive or detrimental depending on the adult's behaviour.

### AIM

All educators and volunteers are committed to identifying possible risk and significant risk of harm to children and young people at the service. We comprehend our duty of care responsibilities to protect children from all types of abuse and adhere to our legislative obligations at all time. We aim to implement effective strategies to assist in ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all children. Our service will perform proficiently and act in the best interest of the child, assisting them to develop their full potential in a secure and caring environment.

### STANDARDS AND PROCEDURES

Our service strongly opposes any type of abuse against a child and endorses high quality practices in relation to protecting children. To ensure best practice, all educators will attend approved Child Protection training certified by a registered training organisation. Educators will continue to keep up to date, by completing Child Protection Awareness Training annually, ensuring they keep up to date with their current responsibilities as Mandatory Reporters.

**NOTE: The reporter is not required to prove that abuse has occurred.**

Management/Nominates Supervisor will ensure:

- The Nominated Supervisor of the service and any certified supervisor in day-to-day charge of the service have successfully completed a course in child protection approved by the Regulatory Authority.
- All employees and volunteers are:
  - Clear about their roles and responsibilities regarding child protection.
  - Aware of their requirements to immediately report cases where they believe a child is at risk of significant harm to the **Child and Youth Protection Services (CYPS) 1300 556 728 (Mandated reports 24-hour line)**.
  - Aware of the indicators showing a child may be at risk of harm or significant risk of harm.
- To provide training and development for all educators, staff and volunteers in child protection
- To provide educators with a reporting procedure and professional standards to safeguard children and protect the integrity of educators, staff and volunteers.
- Records of abuse or suspected abuse are kept in line with our Privacy and Confidentiality Policy.

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- To notify the ACT Ombudsman within 30 days of becoming aware of any allegations and convictions for abuse or neglect of a child made against an employee or volunteer and ensure they are investigated and appropriate action taken.
- To notify the Commission for Children and Young People of details of employees against whom relevant disciplinary proceedings have been completed or people whose employment has been rejected because of a risk identified in employment screening processes.
- To notify the regulatory authority (within 24 hours) of any incident where you reasonably believe that physical and/or sexual abuse of a child has occurred or is occurring while the child is being educated and cared for by the Service
- To notify the regulatory authority (within 24 hours) of any allegation that sexual or physical abuse of a child has occurred or is occurring while the child is being educated and cared for by the Service

### Accusations against Educators

Accusations of abuse or suspected abuse against educators, staff members, and volunteers, the Nominated Supervisor or Approved Provider are treated in the same way as allegations against other people. Reports will be made to the Child and Youth Protection Services (CYPS) where a child is at risk of significant abuse by a person at the Service. If the Supervisor is involved in the abuse, then the Approved Provider or most senior educator will assist in notifying the Child and Youth Protection Services (CYPS). This can be completed through calling or completing an online smart form.

#### Educators will:

- Be able to recognise indicators of abuse
- Respect what a child discloses, taking it seriously and follow up their concerns.
  - Comprehend they are mandatory reporters under the legislation and report any situation where they believe on reasonable grounds a child is at risk of significant harm to the **Child and Youth Protection Services (CYPS) 1300 556 728 (Mandated reports 24-hour line)**.
- Be able to contact Child and Youth Protection Services (CYPS) which also help mandatory reporters identify the level of risk to a child and whether a report should be made.
- Contact the police on 000 if there is an immediate danger to a child and intervene instantly if it is safe to do so.
- Promote the welfare, safety and wellbeing of children at the service.
- Prepare precise records recording exactly what happened, conversations that took place and what you observed to contribute to the investigations of abuse or suspected abuse.
- Access [Keeping Children & Young People Safe](#) – also available in iBook's on all ipads.
- Access the Child Story Reporter community and start the Mandatory Reporter guide with your nominated supervisor (although a NSW resources, it is a good tool to help guide the process)

### INDICATORS OF ABUSE

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There are common physical and behavioural signs that may indicate abuse or neglect. The presence of one of these signs does not necessarily mean abuse or neglect. The following is a guide only. One indicator on its own may not imply abuse or neglect. However, a single indicator can be as important as the presence of several indicators. Each indicator needs to be deliberated in the perspective of other indicators and the child's circumstances. A child's behaviour is likely to be affected if he/she is under stress. There can be many causes of stress and it is important to find out specifically what is causing the stress. Abuse and neglect can be single incidents or ongoing and may be intentional or unintentional.

General indicators of abuse and neglect may include:

- Marked delay between injury and seeking medical assistance
- History of injury
- The child gives some indication that the injury did not occur as stated
- The child tells you someone has hurt him/her
- The child tells you about someone he/she knows who has been hurt
- Someone (relative, friend, acquaintance, and sibling) tells you that the child may have been abused.

#### **NEGLECT**

Child neglect is the continuous failure by a parent or caregiver to provide a child with the basic things needed for their growth and development, such as food, clothing, shelter, medical care and adequate supervision. Some examples are:

- Inability to respond emotionally to the child
- Child abandonment
- Depriving or withholding physical contact
- Failure to provide psychological nurturing
- Treating one child differently to the others

#### **Indicators of Neglect in children**

- Poor standard of hygiene leading to social isolation
- Scavenging or stealing food
- Extreme longing for adult affection
- Lacking a sense of genuine interaction with others
- Acute separation anxiety
- Delay in development milestones
- Untreated physical problems

#### **PHYSICAL ABUSE**

Physical abuse is when a child has suffered, or is at risk of suffering, non-accidental trauma or injury, caused by a parent, caregiver or other person. Educators will be particularly aware of looking for possible physical abuse if parents or caregivers:

- Make direct admissions from parents about fear of hurting their children
- Have a family history of violence
- Have a history of their own maltreatment as a child
- Make repeated visits for medical assistance

#### **Indicators of Physical Abuse**

- Facial, head and neck bruising
- Lacerations and welts
- Explanations are not consistent with injury
- Bruising or marks that may show the shape of an object
- Bite marks or scratches
- Multiple injuries or bruises
- Ingestion of poisonous substances, alcohol or drugs
- Sprains, twists, dislocations
- Bone fractures

- Burns and scalds

### **EMOTIONAL ABUSE**

Emotional abuse occurs when an adult harms a child's development by repetitively treating and speaking to a child in ways that damage the child's ability to feel and express their feelings. This may include:

- Constant criticism, condescending, teasing of a child or ignoring or withholding admiration and affection
- Excessive or unreasonable demands
- Persistent hostility, severe verbal abuse, and rejection
- Belief that a specific child is bad or 'evil'
- Using inappropriate physical or social isolation as punishment
- Exposure to domestic violence

#### **Indicators of emotional abuse**

- Feeling of worthlessness
- Lack of trust in people and expectations
- Other behavioural disorders (disruptiveness, aggressiveness, bullying)

### **SEXUAL ABUSE**

Sexual abuse is when someone involves a child in a sexual activity by using their authority over them or taking advantage of their trust. Children are often bribed or threatened physically and psychologically to make them partake in the activity. Educators will be predominantly conscious of looking for potential sexual abuse if parents or caregivers are suspected of or charged with child sexual abuse or display inappropriate jealousy regarding age appropriate development of independence from the family. Sexual abuse may include:

- Exposing the child to sexual behaviours of others
- Coercing the child to engage in sexual behaviour with other children
- Verbal threats of sexual abuse
- Exposing the child to pornography

#### **Indicators of Sexual Abuse**

- They describe sexual acts
- Age inappropriate behaviour and/or persistent sexual behaviour
- Self-destructive behaviour
- Regression in development achievements
- Injuries such as tears or bleeding from the vagina or anus

### **PSYCHOLOGICAL ABUSE**

Psychological harm occurs where the behaviour of the parent or caregiver damages the confidence and self-esteem of the child, resulting in serious emotional deficiency or trauma. In general, it is the frequency and duration of this behaviour that causes harm. Some examples are:

- Excessive criticism
- Withholding affection

- Exposure to domestic violence
- Intimidation or threatening behaviour

#### Indicators of psychological abuse

- Constant feelings of worthlessness
- Lack of trust in people
- Lack of people skills necessary for daily functioning
- Extreme attention seeking behaviour
- Takes extreme risks, is markedly disruptive, bullying or aggressive
- Suicide threats
- Running away from home

#### Documenting Suspicion of Harm

If educators have concerns about the safety of a child, they will:

- Record their concerns in a non-judgmental and accurate manner as soon as possible.
- Record their own observations as well as precise details of any discussion with a parent (who may for example explain a noticeable mark on a child).
- Provide all information to the Nominated supervisor or responsible person
- Not endeavor to conduct their own investigation.
- Document as soon as possible so the details are accurately apprehended including:
  - Time, date and place of the suspicion
  - Full details of the suspected abuse
  - Date of report and signature

#### Confidentiality

It is important that any notification remains confidential, as it is vitally important to remember that no confirmation of any allegation can be made until the matter is investigated. The individual who makes the complaint should not inform the person they have made the complaint about. This ensures the matter can be investigated without prior knowledge and contamination of evidence.

#### EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL REGULATIONS

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##### Children (Education and Care Services) National Law NSW

- 12 - Meaning of serious incident
- 85 - Incident, injury, trauma and illness policies and procedures
- 86 - Notification to parents of incident, injury, trauma and illness
- 87 - Incident, injury, trauma and illness record
- 88 - Infectious diseases
- 168 - Education and care service must have policies and procedures
- 174 - Prescribed information to be notified to Regulatory Authority
- 176 - Time to notify certain information to Regulatory Authority

## SOURCE LIST

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This section contains websites, industry bodies, or Legislation that have been used to assist in sourcing the information for this policy. It also acts as a guide to sourcing further reading on each relevant policy.

- [Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority](#)
- [Early Childhood Australia - Code of Ethics](#)
- [Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011](#)
- [Guide to the National Quality Standard](#)
- [Revised National Quality Standard](#)
- [ACT Child and Youth Protection Services](#)
- [Keeping Children and Young People Safe](#)
- [ACT State Legislation & Reporting](#)
- [Child Protection \(Working with Children\) Act 2012](#)
- [Early Years Learning Framework](#)
- [ACT Government: Children and Young People Act 2008](#)
- [Australian Government: Reporting child abuse and neglect](#)
- [Creating Child Safe Organisations](#)
- [Child Safety Standards](#)
- [Child Story Reporter](#)

## RELATED POLICIES

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- 2.01 Administration of First Aid Policy
- 2.02 Administration of Medications Policy
- 2.04 Incident, Illness, Accident and Trauma Policy
- 2.19 Work Health & Safety Policy
- 6.02 Family Communication Policy
- 7.06 Privacy and Confidentiality Policy

## POLICY REVIEW

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The review schedule has been developed using a risk assessment methodology with consideration given to sector, industry, and legislative changes.

Date reviewed	Policy changed	Modifications	Next Review Date
May 2018	Yes	Significant changes made to the policy, including the inclusion of legislative changes and Mandatory Reporting Guide changes	March 2019