

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

NQS

Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety		
2.2	Safety	Each child is respected
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, practiced 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

NATIONAL REGULATIONS

Reg	84	Awareness of child protection law
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AIM

The service takes our responsibility to provide a safe and caring environment for all children seriously. We believe that the safety of children is paramount at all times and aims to protect a child's right to be safe from abuse of any kind.

The service also aims to defend the rights of educators to confidentiality if a complaint against them is made and is found to be unsubstantiated. The service will ensure that all parties affected by this policy are made aware of their roles and responsibilities regarding child protection.

The service aims to educate all parties about their roles in child protection and also about signs of abuse and ensure that all requirements of child protection requirements are being met.

NOTIFICATIONS OF ABUSE (FOR TEACHERS)



IF ANYONE AT THE SERVICE HAS SUSPICIONS OF ABUSE, CONSULT
THE **DEPARTMENT OF CHILD PROTECTION**
MANDATORY REPORTING INFORMATION SYSTEM
[HTTPS://MRWEB.DCP.WA.GOV.AU](https://mrweb.dcp.wa.gov.au)



WHEN SOMEONE WITH MANDATORY REPORTING OBLIGATIONS
HAS REASONABLE SUSPICION OF ABUSE THEY NEED TO CONTACT
THE
MANDATORY REPORT SERVICE
1800 708 704 (24 HOURS)
WA POLICE 000 (URGENT MATTERS)



**CONSULT THE SERVICE'S CHILD PROTECTION POLICY
FOR MORE INFORMATION.**

Additional Child Protection Resources	
Information Poster How to recognise	Link to Download and Print https://www.dcp.wa.gov.au/ChildProtection/Documents/HowDoIRecogniseWhenAChildIsAtRiskOfAbuseOrNeglect.pdf
Information Poster Abuse and Neglect Indicators	Link to Download and Print https://www.dcp.wa.gov.au/ChildProtection/Documents/IdentifyingAndRespondingToChildAbuseAndNeglect.pdf
Department of Child Protection Contact Numbers District Offices	Link to View Contact Numbers For Issues that are NOT related to Mandatory Reporting https://www.dcp.wa.gov.au/Organisation/ContactUs/Pages/ContactUs.aspx

STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

Our service fundamentally believes that all children have the right to a life that is free from harm. Our service aims to provide an environment that is free from any type of abuse and foster a child's growth and development as per the individual requirements of each child. Educators at our service are aware of their obligations under the law in regards to the welfare of children and at all times uphold their obligation. In addition to this, our service aims to provide regular training to all educators on child protection issues to ensure that, in the sad event a child has suffered abuse, the service can act quickly in the best interests of the child.

CODE OF CONDUCT

Our service upholds the following code of conduct in relation to employers, educators, volunteers, students, families and children:

For Employers:

- Ensure that all employees are:
 - Clear about their roles and responsibilities regarding child protection.
 - Aware of their obligations to immediately report suspected abuse to the Child Protection Hotline.
 - Aware of the indicators when a child may be at risk of harm or significant harm.
- Provide training and development for all employees in the recognition and reporting of abuse and harm.
- Provide reporting procedures and professional standards for care and protection work.
- Conduct a Working with Children Check for anyone that will be heavily involved with service operations.
- Enable educators to have access to relevant acts, regulations, standards and other resources in order for them to complete their obligations.

For Educators other than teachers:

- Report any situation where they suspect a child is at risk of significant harm to the service coordinator and privately and discreetly document any suspicion of abuse.
- Promote the welfare, safety and wellbeing of children at the service.
- Have an awareness of referral agencies for families where concerns of harm do not meet the significant harm threshold.
- Be aware of obligations as per the Mandatory Reporter guidelines.
- Assist in supporting children and families when liaising with relevant government agencies.
- I will not drink alcohol or use illicit substances while on the service's premises and I will not come to the service while under the influence of alcohol or illicit substances.
- I will not smoke on the service's premises.
- I will not show favouritism towards any child.
- I will develop professional relationships with children and families
- I will refrain from developing close personal relationships with children out of the carer/child relationship.
- I will refrain from using abusive, derogatory or offensive language.

For Families:

- Treat all children at the service equally and respectfully.
- Report any suspicions to the most senior individual on duty when at the service.
- Respect the rights, dignity and worth of every individual, regardless of their abilities, gender, religion or cultural background.
- Respect the decision of employees and teach children to do likewise.
- Focus on encouraging children's efforts and learning.
- Support all efforts to remove any form of abuse in the service and encourage a safe and supportive service environment.
- I will not drink alcohol or use illicit substances while on the service's premises and I will not come to the service while under the influence of alcohol or illicit substances.
- I will not smoke on the service's premises.

For Children:

- We will respect other children and adults at the service.
- We will cooperate and will follow our Classroom Rules.
- We will listen to our Educator's instructions and follow them.
- We will control our temper and talk to an Educator if we are feeling upset.
- We will have a say in what activities we are involved in.
- We will speak to an Educator if we are worried or concerned about something.
- We will not bully other children.
- We will tell an Educator if we see a child bullying another child.

POLICIES AND DOCUMENTATION

Please refer to the following policies and documentation:

- Educators Recruitment Policy
- Professional Development Policy
- Incident Report Form
- Educators Job Descriptions
- Child Protection Annual Review
- Educators Induction Processes
- Educators Appraisal Processes
- Employee Register

RECRUITMENT

The service will keep up-to-date policies on recruiting, selecting, training and managing paid employees and volunteers.

The service is responsible for developing policies and procedures about recruitment, selection, management and training to ensure all individuals working at the service are suitable.

When developing our recruitment strategy, our service will consider the following –

Position Description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • establish an understanding of the roles and expectations for educators to provide a safe and supportive environment for children and young people • become more aware of the tasks required for specific activities • develop requirements of the position • identify training needs
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reduce the risk of harm to children and young people, and • attract and retain educators.
Advertising the Position	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • include a clear statement about your organisation's work practices • include clear, concise details about your organisation • provide brief details about the position and working conditions, and • name a contact person for more information.
Selection Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment of applicant • Interview process • Referee checks
Probationary Period of Employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • set goals • identify training needs, specifically in relation to risk management practices, • provide support to the new employee to be successful in undertaking the role.
Training	<p>Educators should receive training in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identifying, assessing and minimising risks • the organisation's policies and procedures (including the organisation's code of conduct) • compulsory training as required by industry standards or legislation, and • handling a disclosure or suspicion of harm, including reporting guidelines. <p>Training can be formal such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • higher education training and accreditation • training offered by external organisations • training developed and delivered internally, and • on-the-job training meeting key objectives. <p>Training can also be informal such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • inviting police officers or Child Safety educators to meetings to discuss issues in relation to child protection • inviting other professionals to speak at meetings or functions, and • internal mentoring and coaching.
Induction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • your organisation's commitment to an environment that is safe and supportive for children and young people • the standards of behaviour expected as detailed in your code of conduct • your organisation's safe and supportive policies and procedures, and strategies to minimise harm • procedures to follow when a disclosure of harm is received • reporting guidelines in relation to disclosures of harm and suspicions of harm • their own rights and responsibilities, as well as those of children and young people • what to expect if there is an allegation of harm made against them or to them • what constitutes a breach of your organisation's child and youth risk management strategy and the potential consequences • the roles of key individuals in your organisation, and • grievance procedures.

Exit interviews or questionnaires	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> gather information about the effectiveness of the recruitment process identify possible areas for improvement in organisational processes, management, job design, remuneration or career planning and development, receive positive feedback on what is working well in your organisation.
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DEFINITION OF ABUSE / NEGLECT

Allegations of abuse, neglect or assault, including sexual assault, of an enrolled child during a care session

SUSPICION OF HARM

You can suspect harm if:

- you are concerned by significant changes in behaviour or the presence of new unexplained and suspicious injuries.

DISCLOSURE OF HARM

A disclosure of harm occurs when someone, including a child, tells you about harm that has happened or is likely to happen.

Disclosures of harm may start with:

- I think I saw...||
- Somebody told me that...||
- Just think you should know...||
- I'm not sure what I want you to do, but...||

PROCEDURES FOR RECEIVING A DISCLOSURE OF HARM

When receiving a disclosure of harm:

- remain calm and find a private place to talk
- don't promise that you'll keep a secret; tell them they have done the right thing in telling you but that you'll need to tell someone who can help keep them safe
- only ask enough questions to confirm the need to report the matter; probing questions could cause distress, confusion and interfere with any later enquiries, and
- do not attempt to conduct your own investigation or mediate an outcome between the parties involved.

REPORTING GUIDELINES FOR DISCLOSURES OR SUSPICIONS OF HARM

Following are the actions our organisation will take immediately following a disclosure or suspicion of harm.

DOCUMENTING A SUSPICION OF HARM

If you or others have concerns about the safety of a child, record your concerns in a non-judgmental and accurate manner as soon as possible. If a parent explains a noticeable mark on a child, record your own observations as well as accurate details of the conversation. If you see unsafe or harmful actions towards a child in

your care, intervene immediately, provided it is safe to do so. If it is unsafe, call the police for assistance.

DOCUMENTING A DISCLOSURE OF HARM

Complete an incident report form or record the details as soon as possible so that they are accurately captured. Include:

- time, date and place of the disclosure
- 'word for word' what happened and what was said, including anything you said and any actions that have been taken, and
- date of report and signature.

If you need to take notes as the person is telling you, explain that you are taking a record in case any later enquiry occurs.

REPORTING THE DISCLOSURE OR SUSPICION OF HARM TO AUTHORITIES

Our organisation will not conduct its own enquiries in relation to the disclosure or suspicion of harm or try to come to an agreement between the parties involved. The individual who receives a disclosure or suspects harm is to contact the relevant authority to ensure information provided is comprehensive and accurate.

Report the matter to (please note a written report must also be lodged using the website listed on page one of this policy):

When you contact the Department, the Duty Officer will gather and record information that you provide and decide how best to respond. The type of information that the officer will gather includes:

You may need to fill out form online and then submit to the duty officer, they will then contact the centre to ask questions below.

- details about the child/young person and family
- the reasons you are concerned
- the immediate risk to the child
- whether or not the child or family has support
- what may need to happen to make the child safe
- your contact details, so that the officer can call you to obtain further information if required or to provide feedback.

ACTIONS FOLLOWING A DISCLOSURE OF HARM

Support and counselling will be offered to all parties involved.

THE INDIVIDUAL AGAINST WHOM THE ALLEGATION HAS BEEN MADE

If the individual responding to the allegation of harm is a member of the organisation, you may need to review their duties. If they continue to interact/work with children, ensure that they are appropriately supervised at all times. You may want to seek legal advice as to the extent to which that individual can carry out duties in the organisation.

PROCEDURES TO MINIMISE HARM TO CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Our organisation works to minimise harm to children and young people by acting in a manner that supports their interests and wellbeing, by:

- making sure that children know that it is their right to feel safe at all times
- teaching them about acceptable and unacceptable behaviour in general
- letting them know who is and who is not an employee in the organisation

- allowing them to be a part of decision-making processes
- making sure they are safe by monitoring their activities and ensuring their environment meets all safety requirements
- taking anything a child or young person says seriously and following up their concerns
- letting them know there is no secret too awful, no story too terrible, that they can't share with someone they trust
- teaching them about appropriate and inappropriate contact in a manner appropriate to their age and level of understanding
- teaching children and young people to say 'no' to anything that makes them feel unsafe
- encouraging them to tell educators of any suspicious activities or individuals, and
- listening to children and young people and letting them know that educators are available for them if they have any concerns.

HOW CAN ABUSE AND NEGLECT BE RECOGNISED?

Behavioural or physical signs which assist in recognising child abuse are known as indicators. A single indicator can be as important an indicator as the presence of several indicators. A child's behaviour is likely to be affected if he/she is under stress. There can be many causes of stress, including child abuse, and it is important to find out specifically what is causing the stress.

PHYSICAL ABUSE

Physical abuse occurs when a child is severely and/or persistently hurt or injured by an adult or a child's caregiver. It may also be the result of putting a child at risk of being injured. Some examples are:

- hitting, shaking, punching
- burning and scolding
- excessive physical punishment or discipline
- attempted suffocation
- shaking a baby

Possible signs of physical abuse are:

- broken bones or unexplained bruises, burns, welts
- the child is unable to explain an injury or the explanation is vague
- dehydration or poisoning
- the child is unusually frightened of a parent or caregiver
- arms and legs are covered by clothing in warm weather
- when parents delay getting medical assistance for their child's injury
- brain damage through shaking or hitting.

SEXUAL ABUSE

Sexual abuse occurs when a child is exposed to, or involved in, sexual activity that is inappropriate to the child's age and developmental level. It includes circumstances where the child has less power than another individual involved, is exploited or where the child has been bribed, threatened, or coerced. It also includes situations where there is a significant difference between the developmental or maturity level of the child and another individual involved. Some examples are:

- letting a child watch or read pornography

- allowing a child to watch sexual acts
- fondling the child's genitals
- having oral sex with a child
- vaginal or anal penetration
- using the internet to find a child for sexual exploitation.

Possible signs of sexual abuse include when a child:

- acts in a sexualised way that is inappropriate to his/her age
- creates stories, poems or artwork about abuse
- has pain, bleeding or swelling in his/her genital area
- starts doing things they have grown out of such as crying a lot, bed wetting or soiling, clinging to caregiver
- has nightmares or sudden unexplained fears
- has a sexually transmitted infection or is pregnant.

EMOTIONAL ABUSE

Emotional abuse occurs when an adult harms a child's development by repeatedly treating and speaking to a child in ways that damage the child's ability to feel and express their feelings. Some examples are:

- constantly putting a child down
- humiliating or shaming a child
- not showing love, support or guidance
- continually ignoring or rejecting the child
- exposing the child to family and domestic violence
- threatening abuse or bullying a child
- threats to harm loved ones, property or pets.

Possible signs of emotional abuse include when a child:

- is very shy, fearful or afraid of doing something wrong
- displays extremes of behaviour for example from being very aggressive to very passive
- is not able to feel joy or happiness
- is often anxious or distressed
- feels worthless about life and themselves
- has delayed emotional development.

PSYCHOLOGICAL ABUSE

Psychological abuse is repeatedly treating and speaking to a child in ways that damage the child's perceptions, memory, self esteem, moral development and intelligence. Some examples are:

- constantly belittling, shaming and humiliating a child
- calling the child names to minimise their self-worth
- threatening a child
- keeping a child isolated from other individuals or friends
- constantly ignoring a child
- encouraging a child to act inappropriately.

Possible signs of psychological abuse include when a child:

- feels worthless, unloved, unwanted
- feels dumb
- has difficulties remembering or recognising information
- has difficulties paying attention
- has difficulty knowing what actions are right or wrong

- is highly anxious.

CHILD NEGLECT

Neglect is when children do not receive adequate food or shelter, medical treatment, supervision, care or nurturance to such an extent that their development is damaged or they are injured. Neglect may be acute, episodic or chronic. Some examples are:

- leaving a child alone without appropriate supervision
- not ensuring the child attends school, or not enrolling the child at school
- infection because of poor hygiene or lack of medication
- not giving a child affection or emotional support
- not getting medical help when required.

Signs of neglect in children include:

- untreated sores, severe nappy rash
- bad body odour, matted hair, dirty skin
- being involved in serious accidents
- being hungry and stealing food
- often being tired, late for school or not attending school
- feeling bad about themselves
- when a baby does not meet physical and development milestones without there being underlying medical reasons.

The presence of indicators such as those described may alert us to the possibility that a child is being abused. It is important that anyone who has concerns that a child or young person is in need of protection contacts a local Child Protection Service for assistance and advice.

MANAGING BREACHES

This plan outlines the steps to be taken following a breach of the child and youth risk management strategy in order to address the breach in a fair and supportive manner.

DEFINITION

A breach is any action or inaction by any member of the organisation, including children and young individuals that fail to comply with any part of the strategy. This includes any breach in relation to:

- statement of commitment to the safety and wellbeing of children and the protection of children from harm
- code of conduct for interacting with children and young people;
- procedures for recruiting, selecting, training and managing paid employees and volunteers
- policies and procedures for handling disclosures or suspicions of harm, including reporting guidelines
- policies and procedures for implementing and reviewing the children and youth risk management strategy and maintaining an employee register
- risk management plans for high risk activities and special events, and
- strategies for communication and support.

All stakeholders are to be made aware of the actions or inactions that form a breach as well as the potential outcomes of breaching the child and youth risk management strategy.

PROCESSES TO MANAGE A BREACH OF THE CHILD AND YOUTH RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

Breaches will be managed in a fair, unbiased and supportive manner. The following will occur:

- all individuals concerned will be advised of the process
- all individuals concerned will be able to provide their version of events
- the details of the breach, including the versions of all parties and the outcome will be recorded
- matters discussed in relation to the breach will be kept confidential, and
- an appropriate outcome will be decided.


SUITABLE OUTCOMES FOR BREACHES

Depending on the nature of the breach, outcomes may include:

- emphasising the relevant component of the child and youth risk management strategy, for example, the code of conduct
- providing closer supervision
- further education and training
- mediating between those involved in the incident (where appropriate)
- disciplinary procedures if necessary, or
- reviewing current policies and procedures and developing new policies and procedures if necessary.

TEMPLATE RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR HIGH RISK ACTIVITY

In addition to occupational health and safety concerns, a child and youth risk management strategy should analyse the risk of 'harm' to children and young people.

STEP 1	STEP 2	STEP 3	STEP 4	STEP 5	STEP 6
Describe the activity <i>Identify all elements of the event from beginning to end</i>	Identify Risks <i>Something that could happen that results in harm to a child or young person</i>	Analyse the Risk <i>(Likelihood/Consequence)</i>	Evaluate the Risk <i>The level of risk</i>	Manage the Risk <i>Assess the options</i>	Review <i>Nominate who will review after the event/activity</i>
Child Protection Risk Management Strategy – Information for Families					 Management

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS AND CARERS

OUR ORGANISATION'S CHILD AND YOUTH RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

Creating safe and supportive service environments for children and young people is everyone's business. Our organisation is committed to providing the highest standard of service to children and young people and ensuring they are kept safe from harm.

In order to create a safe and supportive service environment for children and young people, organisations must initiate and maintain ongoing planning and commitment.

Services and activities are provided in a safe and supportive environment so children and young people:

- feel safe and protected from harm
- help plan activities and make decisions
- are consulted and respected, and
- have their best interests considered and upheld.

This service is required to have a written child and youth risk management strategy to protect the children and young people in our organisation from harm. The strategy will help ensure our organisation is a safe and supportive service environment for children and young people, by identifying and minimising risks. Screening employees and volunteers through the blue card system is part of the strategy.

The child and youth risk management strategy addresses the following elements:

- a statement of commitment
- a code of conduct for interacting with children and young people
- procedures for recruiting, selecting, training and managing paid employees and volunteers
- policies and procedures for handling disclosures or suspicions of harm, including reporting guidelines
- a plan for managing breaches of the child and youth risk management strategy
- policies and procedures for implementing and reviewing the child and youth risk management strategy and maintaining an employee register for blue cards
- risk management plans for high-risk activities and special events, and
- strategies for communication and support.

As a parent/carer, it is important for you to understand the policies and procedures that form the child and youth risk management strategy. A copy of the strategy is attached for your information and comment.

TEACHING PROTECTIVE BEHAVIOUR WITH CHILDREN

We aim to teach children -

- to recognise their feelings and express them verbally.
- to express their feelings both verbally and non-verbally.
- that they can choose to change the way they are feeling.
- that they have a right to feel safe at all times.
- to recognise the signs when they do not feel safe and when they need to be alert and think clearly.
- the difference between 'fun' scared that is the feeling of adventure and appropriate risk taking and dangerous scared that is not ok.
- to use their own skills to feel safe.

BELIEFS

Our service believes -

- That children are capable of the same range of emotions as adults are.
- That children's emotions are real and need to be accepted by adults.
- That a response given to a child from an adult in a child's early stages of emotional development can be hugely positive or detrimental depending on the adult's reaction.

- That children are very in touch with their bodies reactions to their emotions.
- That children who retain, enhance and better understand their body's response to an emotion are more able to foresee the outcome out a situation and avoid them or ask for help.

SOURCES

Community and Disability Services Ministers' Conference (2005). *Creating safe environments for children: Organisations, employees and volunteers: National framework*. Retrieved April 27, 2010, from

http://www.ocsc.vic.gov.au/downloads/childsafe_framework.pdf

Community and Disability Services Ministers' Conference (2005). Schedule: Guidelines for building the capacity of child-safe organisations. *Creating safe environments for children: Organisations, employees and volunteers: National framework*. Retrieved April 27, 2010, from

http://www.ocsc.vic.gov.au/downloads/childsafe_sched01.pdf

UNICEF (n.d.). *Fact sheet: A summary of the rights under the Convention on the Rights of the Child*. Retrieved April 27, 2010, from

http://www.unicef.org/crc/files/Rights_overview.pdf

Children and Community Services Amendment (Reporting Sexual Abuse of Children) Act 2008

provisions to the Children and Community Services Act 2004

Education and Care Services National Regulations 2012

Early Years Learning Framework

REVIEW

The policy will be reviewed annually.

The review will be conducted by:

- Management
- Employees
- Families
- Interested Parties

Last reviewed; February 2023

Next up for review; February 2024