

CHILD SAFE STANDARDS RESPONSE POLICY

PURPOSE

We want children who participate in our program to have a safe and happy experience. We support and respect our children, their families and our workers

BACKGROUND

Our policy guides workers (paid and volunteer) on how to behave when interacting and engaging with children in our organisation. The policy focuses on how we can build and maintain a child safe environment which is inclusive, transparent and promotes children's participation. We have a comprehensive Child Protection Policy that we defer to within this policy. This policy aims to address the directions from the Child Safe Standards, particularly Standard 10 which aims to ensure policies and procedures are championed by leaders, localised, understood by staff and clearly communicated.

CHILDREN'S PARTICIPATION

Our organisation supports the active participation of children in the programs, activities and services we offer. We provide a range of ways to allow children to provide feedback or raise concerns. We listen to their views, respect what they say and involve them when we make decisions, especially about matters that will directly affect them.

RECRUITMENT

- Our organisation will maintain a rigorous and consistent recruitment, screening and selection process.
- Our practices to achieve this will include screening candidates through face to face interviews, trials, references and Working with Children Checks.
- Orientate every working adult to our Child Protection Policy and our Child Safe Policy and the Child Safe Standards, Keep Them Safe (A shared approach to child wellbeing) protocols and Mandatory Reporter responsibilities and ensuring their regular review of these.

COMPLAINTS MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

Reporting to - Department of Family and Community Services/NSW Ombudsman/Office of the Children's Guardian.

*For full reporting processes please refer to our Child Protection Policy

- We are committed to ensuring all educators and staff, have a full understanding of their responsibilities as Mandatory Reporters and are supported in fulfilling these.

The organisational procedures for children and workers to raise concerns or complaints are as detailed below:

Mandatory Reporter Guide (MRG) -the MRG supports mandatory reporters to:

- determine whether a report to the Child Protection Helpline is needed for concerns about possible abuse or neglect of a child (including unborn) or young person.
- identify alternative ways to support vulnerable children, young people and their families where a mandatory reporter's response is better served outside the statutory child protection system.

It is recommended that mandatory reporters complete the MRG on each occasion they have risk concerns, regardless of their level of experience or expertise. Each circumstance is different and every child and young person is unique

As Mandatory Reporters all educators and staff are required to report to the Child Protection Helpline (Phone: 132 111) if they have reasonable grounds to suspect a child or young person is at risk of significant harm and have current concerns about the safety, welfare or wellbeing of a child or young person where the concerns arise during or from their work.

There are two ways mandatory reporters can make a child protection report:

- By eReport through the ChildStory Reporter website.
- By calling the Child Protection Helpline on 132 111. It is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- Our Child Safety Contact Person is the Nominated Supervisor who is appointed to manage all complaints.

Our Child Safety Contact Person and team will follow the procedure listed below when managing complaints:

The Nominated Supervisor will:

- Support staff through the process of documenting and reporting current concerns of children at risk of significant harm; and
- Provide all staff and educators with clear guidelines around documentation and a template to support this.

Educators and staff will:

- Make a record of the indicators observed that have led to the belief that there is a current risk of harm to a child or young person. Information on indicators of risk of harm are outlined in the NSW Mandatory Reporters Guide which is accessible at Childstory reporter or The NSW Department of Communities and Justice.

(a) <https://reporter.childstory.nsw.gov.au/s/>

(b) <https://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/families/Protecting-kids/mandatory-reporters/how-to>

(c) <https://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/families/Protecting-kids/mandatory-reporters/what-when-to-report/chapters/mandatory-reporter-guide>

(d) <https://www.dcj.nsw.gov.au/>

- Discuss any concerns with the Nominated Supervisor of the service.
- Advise the Nominated Supervisor of their intention to make a report to the Child Protection Helpline (132 111);
- Advise the Nominated Supervisor when a report has been made to the Child Protection Helpline.

Training, support and supervision of workers

- We promote respect, fairness and consideration for all workers
- All team members have a senior team member assigned to mentor, support and supervise their work.
- All new team members will receive a copy of all child safe policies and procedures and a more senior worker will set up a meeting to discuss the policies and allow the new worker to ask questions and clarify their understanding
- Child safe is a standing agenda item at meetings and workers are encouraged to ask questions and contribute to the continuous improvement of child safe policies, procedures and practices in the workplace.

Other legislation, industry standards and supporting policies:

- Child Protection (Working With Children) Act 2012
- Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998
- A Guide to the Child Safe Standards
- Interactions with Children Policy
- Behaviour Intervention & Support Policy
- Sun Protection Policy
- Staff Recruitment Policy
- Confidentiality & Privacy Policy
- Food & Nutrition Policy
- Nappy Change Procedure
- Toileting Policy
- Injuries & Accidents Policy
- Code of Conduct
- Team Vision and Values
- Complaints Policy

Communication

- We will hold information sessions for team members, volunteers and students.
- Our policy will be discussed during induction sessions for all new staff, volunteers and students.

- Children and parents joining our program/s will receive a copy of the Policy, Code of Conduct and Dealing with Complaints process.
- Parents will receive a copy of the Parent's Guide to Child Protection Issues.

Review

The policy and guidelines will be reviewed every two years and incorporate comments and suggestions from our range of stakeholders (including team members, children and families).

Date: Developed 22 November, 2021 by M Duffy-Fagan

Reviewed: 10 August 2023 by K Hewat

Source: Office of Children's Guardian
www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au