

Child Safe Policy



Purpose

All children at Bottleforest Long Day Care have a right to feel safe, protected and included.

This policy is part of our organisation's ongoing commitment to protecting the children in our care from harm and abuse. It:

- outlines the child safe practices our organisation has put in place to minimise the risks to child safety
- sets out what is required from staff, including volunteers and others who interact with our organisation, so they know what is expected from them to keep children safe.

Our commitment to child safety

At Bottleforest Long Day Care we commit to the safety and wellbeing of every child in our care. Please read our Statement of Commitment to Child Safety, which is available on our website <https://bottleforestldc.com.au/> and is displayed via the QR code located in the office foyer.

Our organisation ensures services and activities are inclusive of all children, including children with diverse needs.

Scope and audience for this policy

The policy describes what is required from all staff and volunteers in the organisation when taking part in any activities, services and events that involve children.

Responsibilities for children's safety

Everyone in our organisation is expected to carry out the requirements specific to their role to keep children safe. This includes:

- upholding our organisation's commitment to child safety
- reading, signing and upholding the behaviours set out in our Child Safe Code of Conduct
- meeting requirements across all other child safe policies and procedures, including child safe recruitment practices and risk management
- taking part in our regular reviews of our child safe documents
- reporting all breaches of our policies or any allegations of child harm or abuse, and meeting all external reporting obligations

- completing all child safe training.

Please contact Suzie (Approved Provider) or Alisha (Nominated Supervisor) with any of your child-safety related questions or concerns.

Active participation of children, families and communities

- All our child-related policies and procedures are easily accessible on our website for everyone who accesses our services and events, including children, parents, carers and community members.
- Children, parents and carers from diverse backgrounds and circumstances are encouraged to provide feedback on our child-related policies and procedures, including our Child Safe Code of Conduct that describes acceptable and non-acceptable behaviours and our Child Safe Risk Management Plan.
- We provide opportunities for children to provide feedback to our management, board or committee on what makes them feel safe, supported and included.

Definitions of harm and abuse

General definitions

Psychological abuse (also known as emotional abuse)

This includes bullying, threatening and abusive language, intimidation, shaming and name calling, ignoring and isolating a child, and exposure to domestic and family violence.

Physical abuse

This includes physical punishment, such as pushing, shoving, punching, slapping and kicking, resulting in injury, burns, choking or bruising.

Sexual abuse

This includes the sexual touching of a child, grooming, and production, distribution or possession of child abuse material.

Grooming

This is a process where a person manipulates a child or group of children and sometimes those looking after them, including parents, carers, teachers and leaders. They do this to establish a position of 'trust' so they can then later sexually abuse the child.

Misconduct

This is inappropriate behaviour that may not be as severe as abuse, but could indicate that abuse is occurring and would often be in breach of an organisation's Child Safe Code of Conduct. This could include showing a child something inappropriate on a phone, having inappropriate conversations with a child or an adult sitting with a child on their lap inappropriately.

Lack of appropriate care

This includes not providing adequate and proper supervision, nourishment, clothing, shelter, education or medical care.

What the policy covers

Transporting children

Best practice is to always have two adults travelling with children. If this is not possible, a suitable arrangement must be made between the organisation and the parents of the children. If a child is alone with an adult in a car they must sit on the back seat. Every child should be accounted for at the end of a journey.

Social media use and online communication

Staff and volunteers must never communicate privately with children online or on social media. Any necessary online communication should include the child's parent or carer in the correspondence.

Photography and the use of images

Photos and videos of children can only be taken with the permission of parents or carers which we seek via our enrolment form on Hub Hello. Bottleforest will not use photos that include children's faces or larger parts of their bodies other than their hands and arms on websites or social media pages. It is unacceptable for staff or volunteers to take photos or videos of children, other than their own, on personal devices, or to share images without permission. We have a strict policy Technology and Screen Time policy that follows the guidelines set out in the National Model Code.

Use of devices connected to the internet and used for the collection of photos and videos

- Only service issued or approved devices will be used in the centre when taking images or videos of the children. All devices will be connected to the same network and google account so search history is linked and no cloud photo storage will be used. When internal storage is full photos will be deleted or stored on a portable storage device within the service.
 - Anyone who is engaged in the service in any capacity (including students) are not to have personal devices that can take images or photos on their person whilst with the children.
 - Permission will be collected from families upon enrolment forms so that we can upload photos or videos of children to Hubhello – photos that include children will not be put on our social media or websites. Students who need photos of children for their studies will require written consent from a parent or guardian and any relevant photos will be emailed via the email attached to the centre tablet.
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Physical contact

Physical contact with children should be kept to only appropriate contact, young children do require comfort from Educators and this comfort may be given through hugs, hand holding and appropriate physical contact. Everyone involved in the organisation is expected to have healthy physical boundaries with children.

Gifts and benefits

Staff and volunteers must never give gifts to children, or bestow benefits of any kind to a child.

Gifts from families – we understand that families like to show their appreciation to Educators with gifts, gifts from families to Educators should be shared and not of high value or exchanged in private. Educators are encouraged to disclose gifts of a higher value.

Secondary employment

Staff members must declare any secondary employment and make sure there are no conflicts of interest associated with the employment.

Out of hours contact with children

Staff and volunteers must let us know about any out-of-hours contact they have with children in our care. It is unacceptable for staff or volunteers to participate in the lives of children outside the organisation without a valid reason. Professional boundaries with the children in our care must be maintained at all times.

Illness and injury management

Injuries must be reported to the first aid officer on duty and first aid administered in a safe space within lines of sight of other adults.

Educators' role in child protection

- Ensure children are supervised at all times.
- Share your concerns with the service supervisors and collaborate with relevant colleagues.
- After looking at the mandatory report guide (MRG) consider whether it is appropriate to at first continue our relationship and reports or to immediately call the mandatory reporter line.
- Report any situation where they suspect a child is at risk of significant harm to the Child Protection Helpline.
- 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 children and young persons (care and protection) act 1998 (NSW).
- Ensure child protection qualifications are current and up to date and participate to refresher training every 12-24 months or as regulations change.
- Educators must leave their personal devices in their bags. Educators can not have photos of any children at the service on their device, unless signed consent from families and supervisor is collected for use in an assessment.
- 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 or vape on the service's premises.
- I will not show favouritism towards any child.
- 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.

Reporting requirements for different types of concerns or incidents

Child Safe Reporting Policy

Our Child Safe Reporting Policy sets out requirements and procedures for complaints, allegations, disclosures and reports, and external reporting obligations.

Action for educators to take

When educators suspect that a child is a significant risk of harm (outside of the service) they are encouraged to recognise the indicators or cues (physical indicators, changes in behaviour, psychological indicators etc). (Appendix 1)

Educators should discuss their concerns with fellow educators and supervisors. Educators should also respond to children disclosure in a calm and respectful manner.

Records should be kept confidential and include the date, time and any information about the findings. Body maps may be used to pictorially document where injury has occurred, photos of children's genitals must never be taken.

Reports will be made to the relevant organisations - the child protection hotline and where required to police.

Abuse that occurs at the service

All Educators 18 years and older will not be employed at the service without a current working with children check and the service induction process will highlight our zero tolerance to child abuse and explaining their roles in relation to child protection.

Educators should report any indicators of abuse to the nominated supervisor or authorised supervisor as soon as possible.

An investigation will be conducted, the staff member will be stood down pending the findings of the investigation.

Where abuse has occurred at the service the authorised persons must report the abuse to the child protection hotline, the child guardian and the NQAITS. If the abuse is of a sexual or serious physical nature it must also be reported to the police.

As per the Children's guardian act 2019 (NSW) the owner/Authorised Supervisor will report the allegations, offences or convictions of child abuse against a worker to the Children's Guardian within 24 hours and investigate.

Other related child safe documents

Bottleforest Long Day Care has a range of other key documents that relate to child safety. These can be accessed at via our enrolment pack and website, and include:

Statement of Commitment to Child Safety

Our public commitment to prioritising child safety across our organisation.

Child Safe Code of Conduct

Guides the day-to-day behaviours of adults interacting with children at the organisation.

Child Safe Recruitment, Induction and Training Policy

Sets out what is involved in the recruitment process and the procedures to be followed before a person is considered for a role at the organisation. This includes the verification of their Working with Children Check. It also outlines what is involved in the induction process for new recruits and any further training requirements.

Child Safe Risk Management Plan

Describes the specific risks at the service that could affect children's safety and identifies the protective strategies used to lower each risk.

Related legislation, regulations and standards

Bottleforest Long Day Care has to understand and comply with a number of NSW child protection laws and schemes. These include:

- NSW Child Safe Scheme
- *Children's Guardian Act 2019*
- *Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012*
- Child Protection (Working with Children) Regulation 2013
- *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998*
- Legislative Context
- As Early Child Educators we are Mandatory Reporters and are required by law to report suspected child abuse and neglect to government authorities.
- The Children and young persons (care and protection) act 1998 NSW states that Mandatory Reporters have a legal requirement to report a child under 16 years who is "at risk or likely to be at risk of significant harm" to the Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ). Categories of harm include: sexual abuse, physical abuse, serious psychological harm, neglect, pre-natal, domestic violence, education and medical neglect.
- The Crimes act 1990 (316A) states that is a legal requirement for any adult who know, believes or reasonably ought to know that a child abuse offence has been committed against a child under 18 years to report the offence to the Police. The Crimes act 1990 (43B) states that it is a legal requirement for an employee, volunteer, contractor or leader working in an organisation reduce or remove the risk of a child under 18 years being a victim of child abuse.
- The Children's guardian act 2019 (NSW) states that it is a legal requirement for the owner/Authorised Supervisor to report allegations, offences or convictions of child abuse against a worker to the Children's Guardian within 7 days and investigate and report within 30days.
- The education and care service national regulations state that child abuse should be reported to NQAITS. Regulation 84 states that educators must complete refresher training every 12-24 months or as legislation changes. All responsible persons must hold CHCPRT001 qualification. Services are required to have child safe policies and procedures (regulation 168) and records must be kept for 25years as per regulation 183.
- The child protection (working with children) act 2012 states it is legal requirement for worker/volunteers to be cleared to work with children prior to commencement by obtaining a Working with Children Check (WWCC).

Child Story Reporter

- The Mandatory Reporter Guide supports mandatory reporters in NSW to determine whether a report to the Child Protection Hotline is needed for concerns about possible abuse, and provided alternative ways to support vulnerable children and young people.
- <https://reporter.childstory.nsw.gov.au/s/>

- Child Protection Helpline 132 111

Next review date

March 2026 or earlier if there are any critical incidents

This sample template was developed by the NSW Office of the Children's Guardian.

For more free child safe resources, visit ocg.nsw.gov.au/our-resources.

Appendix 1

Follows are some examples of indicators or cues to be aware of when identifying child abuse. They are not limited to this list

Physical abuse

Indicators may be physical or behavioural and include:

- Bite marks
- Bruises
- Burns
- Broken bones
- Hair missing in tufts
- No or little emotion when hurt
- Regression
- Overly compliant, shy, withdrawn, passive
- History of injury which is vague, bizarre or variable
- Threatening to hurt a child

Domestic violence

Indicator include:

- Isolating a victim from family and friends
- Controlling their access to money
- Diminishing their self-esteem
- Preventing them from practising their religious beliefs
- Intimidating them
- Threatening them

Emotional abuse

Categories include: terrorising, rejecting, isolating, ignoring and corrupting. Indicators may be physical or behavioural and include:

- Depression
- Symptoms of stress
- Toileting accidents
- Psychosomatic complaints
- Overly compliant or passive behaviour
- Overly shy or withdrawn
- Low self esteem
- Aggressive or delinquent behaviour
- Constant criticism, belittling, teasing of a child or young person, or ignoring or withholding praise or affection
- Excessive or unreasonable demands

Neglect

Categories include: physical, mental, educational, supervisory and abandonment. Indicators may be physical or behavioural and include:

- Poor personal hygiene
- Lack of adequate or suitable clothing
- Constantly hungry or malnutrition
- Lack of medical or dental care
- Constant fatigue
- Frequent lateness, early arrival or reluctance to leave
- Lack of supervision appropriate to age
- Parent is emotionally unavailable

Sexual abuse

Indicator may be physical or behavioural and include:

- Knowledge of sexual behaviour inappropriate to age
- Sudden unexplained fears
- Toileting accidents
- Bruises or bleeding from external genitalia, vagina or anus regions
- Signs of pain, itching or discomfort in the anal or genital area
- Depression, withdrawal or suicide
- Threat of sexual abuse
- Exposing a child to prostitution or child pornography or using a child or young person from pornographic purposes.