

## WK - CHILD SAFE ENVIRONMENT POLICY

At Wonder Kidz, we hold our children's care, safety, and well-being as a central and fundamental responsibility of our programs. Wonder Kidz has a moral, legal, and mission-driven responsibility to create a nurturing environment where our children are respected, and they are safe and feel safe.

### POLICY RATIONALE

This policy provides clear guidelines to strengthen the safety of all children attending our programs. The policy has considered the Victorian Child Safe Standards with supporting efforts to drive cultural change to protect children from abuse. This policy provides standards for:

- Creating safe environments where children can participate in all programs and experiences in safety and comfort.
- Ensuring all staff members have adequate knowledge of risk identification, safety and emergency procedures for supervision and advocacy of children in our care.
- Ensuring all staff understand and comply with policies and procedures for reporting child safety concerns per legislation and regulations.

### POLICY STATEMENT

We are committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torre Strait Islander children and children from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALO) backgrounds. Wonder Kidz has committed to being a child-safe organisation.

In actioning this commitment, Wonder Kidz have established policies designed for the safety of children. In line with our stance against child abuse, we will treat all child abuse, allegations and/or child safety breach seriously. Wonder Kidz staff know our expectations and consequences outlined in our policies, procedures, induction, and training programs.

Our team supports the seven child safe standards and promotes these with staff, families, and children through the induction and ongoing training processes. These seven standards are:

- **Standard 1:** Strategies to embed an organisational culture of child safety, including through effective leadership arrangements.
- **Standard 2:** A child-safe policy or statement of commitment to child safety.
- **Standard 3:** A code of conduct that establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children.
- **Standard 4:** Screening, supervision, training, and other human resources practices that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing personnel.
- **Standard 5:** Process for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse.

- **Standard 6:** Strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse.
- **Standard 7:** Strategies to promote the participation and empowerment of children.

#### Our Wonder Team:

This policy informs all staff of Wonder Kidz's expectations in interacting and caring for children. All our team must agree to abide by our Code of Conduct. The Code of Conduct specifies the expected standards all Wonder Kidz staff must adhere to when working with children. All staff, children, and their families can contribute to developing the Code of Conduct. All staff members wear an easy-to-recognize Wonder Kidz Uniform so all children can quickly and confidentially identify staff.

#### Visitors to the service:

Designated service staff will always supervise any visitors to the service. Each visitor must identify themselves and why they are at the service. If the team feel that their presence is not appropriate, they can:

1. Ask the visitor to leave immediately.
2. If an unauthorised visitor refuses to leave the service when asked, the Police will be contacted for support to remove the unauthorised person.

*In such as case, children will be moved to a safe place to wait for Police support or a lockdown procedure will be enacted, whichever action is deemed by the person in day-to-day charge to be more effective in protecting the health, safety and wellbeing of children and Staff.*

3. Wonder Kidz management will be notified immediately of this incident.

#### Training and Supervision

We have a deep commitment to staff training. We acknowledge that training and education are critical to ensuring all staff understand that child safety is everyone's responsibility. Wonder Kidz culture encourages all staff, parents, carers and, most of all, children to feel confident and comfortable to discuss any allegations of child abuse and/or child safety concerns. Wonder Kidz's staff training programs include the identification and appropriate responses and risk mitigation strategies for child abuse. Wonder Kidz supports staff through ongoing supervision to:

- Develop skills necessary for the protection of children in our care from abuse
- Promote the cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children; promote the cultural safety of children from CALD backgrounds; and the safety and inclusion of children with disability.

New employees are supervised to ensure Wonder Kidz's commitment to the message of child safety being everyone's responsibility is a lived commitment. Supervision of new staff and volunteers also allows monitoring of behaviours towards children and ongoing learning to increase safety and appropriate interactions.

Wonder Kidz's commitment means that any behaviour threatening the safety of children will be reported through appropriate channels, including the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and the Police, depending on the severity and urgency of the matter.

### Procedures

- Staff actively supervise all children attending Wonder Kidz programs and ensure appropriate indoor and outdoor positioning to ensure maximum supervision for children in our care.
- Staff ensure that all children are made aware of program activities' location and the program schedules through visuals and social stories designed during program preparations.
- Staff guide program experiences and implement daily routines to ensure children are supervised, supported and safe.
- Wonder Kidz Manager assesses the suitability of the physical environment before Wonder Kidz's commitment to any venue. The duty supervisor reassesses the environment daily for risk of harm or hazard to children.
- Staff complete a daily safety checklist during the program to ensure that hazards, risks, and concerns are noted and appropriately addressed.
- Staff assist in maintaining a space that is as safe as possible.
- Staff ensure that any other person/s visiting or present at the service supports achieving a physically and emotionally secure environment for all children. Any persons not supporting a child-safe climate are asked to leave.
- Staff maintain an appropriate ratio to children. Person/s visiting the program during operating times are encouraged to make appointments to ensure these ratios are kept.
- Staff are especially vigilant when the environment includes water hazards. Rigorous risk assessments are completed before such activities. All Staff read and abide by said risk assessments.
- Where water activities are scheduled, Staff inform children of boundary areas and behavioural expectations before the commencement of activities. Staff will reflect on the swimming ability consent documents, signed by each child's parent/guardian, to ensure children are placed in appropriate groupings for swimming.
- Staff provide current Working with Children Checks and relevant other qualifications (Asthma, Anaphylaxis, First Aid, CPR) training to ascertain fitness and propriety of Staff.
- Wonder Kidz ensures that the nominated supervisor in day-to-day charge and all staff at the service who work with children are advised of any existing child protection orders.
- All staff are made aware of any court orders related to child protection through our registration forms.
- Wonder Kidz provides an environment free from tobacco, illicit drugs and alcohol for all staff and children. All staff at each service comply with and uphold the tobacco, illegal drugs, and alcohol-free environment. Staff will observe for the presence of a public smoking or drinking member when outside of the approved indoor spaces and, if necessary, will return to a smoke/alcohol-free area

or the approved indoor space.

- Wonder Kidz provides a "Quiet Rest area" for children to assess at any given time throughout the day.

#### REFERENCES:

ACECQA National Quality Framework Resource Kit (2012)

Quality Area 2 - Children's health and safety

Quality Area 7 - Leadership and Service Management

Education and Care Services National Regulations (2011) R 84

Education and Care Services National Law Act (2010) S 168(2)(h), S 165

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