



## Child Safe Environment Policy

### NQS

QA2	2.3.4	Educators, co-ordinators and staff members are aware of their roles and responsibilities to respond to every child at risk of abuse or neglect.
QA5	5.1	Respectful and equitable relationships are developed and maintained with each child.
QA5	5.2	Each child is supported to build and maintain sensitive and responsive relationships with other children and adults.

### Regulations

Regs	76	Information about educational program given to parents
	84	Awareness of child protection law
	85	Incident, illness, trauma, injury policies and procedures
	86	Notification to parents of incident, injury, illness and trauma
	168	Education and care services must have policies and procedures

### Aim

- The kindergarten aims to create an environment that minimises the risk of children being harmed in any way whilst at the kindergarten.
- The kindergarten aims to protect all staff from the possibility that allegations of child maltreatment could be falsely made against them, as a result of their work at the kindergarten.
- The kindergarten aims to inform and educate all stakeholders about their roles in child protection and signs of abuse and ensure that all requirements of child protection under the regulations are met.
- The kindergarten believes it has a responsibility to its employees to defend their right to confidentiality unless allegations of abuse against them are substantiated.

# Implementation

## The Site

- The kindergarten will ensure clear observation of child occupied areas through the following means:
  - Reviewing overall educator/staff supervision within the kindergarten to ensure all child occupied areas can be viewed by more than one educator/staff member at all times.
  - Placement of reflective mirrors (where possible) to assist in supervision.
  - Ensuring furniture/equipment is positioned in a way that all areas are visible.
  - Ensuring that both gates to the kindergarten are locked at all times during session.
  
- All visitors ring a bell at the gate for access and will be approached by a staff member who will unlock the gate and escort them in.
- All visitors will be required to sign in and out. All visitors will require to communicate their reason to be on site.
- Visitors such as prospective parents wanting to view the kindergarten for possible future enrolment will have a staff member with them to show them around the kindergarten.
- Appointments will only be made with people who have a valid reason for being at the kindergarten.
- All people who perform duties at the service, (paid or unpaid), will be required to present a current criminal record check (as required, in keeping with current DCSI regulations) before being allowed on the premises. (i.e. Governing Council members, work experience students, regular volunteers etc.)

## Recruitment and employment of educators/staff

- The kindergarten will ensure all educators/staff working with children provide a current criminal record check and all other mandatory requirements as required by the Department of Education and Child Development.
- All information obtained through criminal record screening will be treated in strict confidence and only used to determine suitability for employment by the service.
- Within the educator/staff recruitment process the applicant's knowledge and experience of child protection issues will be determined.
- Prior to any appointment or offer of employment, the applicant's referees will be contacted to determine:
  - details of the applicants previous employment
  - any history regarding child protection issues
  
- The applicant's employment record will be checked in regard to the reasons for breaks in service, the reasons for any change of employment, and to ensure that the references provided are linked to recent employment.

All new educators/employees will be oriented to the service's child protection policies and procedures and educator/staff code of conduct. Whenever possible new educators/employees will have a period of time to work alongside current educators/staff to familiarise themselves with the children, families, other educators/staff and service procedures.
- All educators/employees are provided with statements that describe the daily tasks and responsibilities of their position, and identify lines of reporting and who they are responsible to.

### **Supervision of children**

- Children will be supervised at a level appropriate to the age and needs of the children, the program, time of day and associated risks and in accordance with the Education and Care Services National Regulations.
- Supervision of children away from the main play areas (i.e. bathrooms, toilets, cubbies, quiet areas, etc.) is monitored.
- Rosters are planned to ensure appropriate supervision of children is maintained and educator:child ratios are maintained in accordance with the requirements of the Education and Care Services National Regulations.
- Higher levels of supervision will be needed when older and younger children are playing together. Educators will be aware that children have had different life experiences and are at different developmental stages.
- Individual children will only be released from the service to authorised people.

### **Supervision and support of educators/staff**

- Child protection issues are discussed regularly at educator/staff meetings. Educators/staff are encouraged to share any observations or concerns in regard to child and educator/staff protection risks. Resolutions are sought to eliminate risks, and management is advised of the issues and current strategies to resolve them.
- The service's educator/staff performance management system addresses educator/staff performance in relation to child protection.
- Visitors or trades people will not be left alone with children at any time.
- Volunteers and community service students are supervised by the kindergarten staff whilst engaged with activities at the kindergarten.
- Grievances will be dealt with in accordance with the service's educator/staff grievance procedure.
- Any allegations of child abuse or neglect made against an educator/staff member will be treated with strict confidentiality whilst taking immediate action to protect children at risk in consultation with the relevant child protection authority.

### **Professional Development**

- The Department of Education and Child Development requires all educators/staff to undertake the 'Reporting to Abuses and Neglect' (RAN) training on child protection organised by relevant authorities with access to the Protective Practices document for staff working or volunteering in education and care settings (DECD 2011). Every educator requires their training to be current with updates done every three years.
- All educators/staff are regularly reminded about the service's policies, procedures, and confidentiality requirements in regard to child protection and issues are discussed at educator/staff meetings.

### **Children's education and empowerment**

Educators will foster children's self-esteem and positive self-image through their interactions and relationships with children.

- The service's behaviour code will be followed to positively guide children's appropriate behaviour.
- Educators will encourage children to be assertive (i.e. learn when to stand up for themselves and say no when appropriate), and to communicate their needs and concerns. This may be done through role play, storytelling, puppets etc.
- Educators will role model assertive behaviour and language.

- Educators will build relationships with all children based on trust, and will empower children to discuss what is 'safe' and who may be a 'safe' person to talk to.

#### **Information for families**

- The kindergarten will make available to all families information on establishing a protective environment, and the Protective Behaviours Curriculum.
- Educators will be available to discuss any issues with parents/guardians/families.
- The kindergarten's policy on establishing a protective environment will be made available to families.

#### **Reporting procedures**

- Mandatory reporting requirements in line with the with child protection law and the DECD procedures for reporting.

#### **Source**

Adapted from the PSC Alliance IPSP Policy on Establishing a Protective Environment

#### **Review**

This policy will be reviewed on a 3 yearly basis by the kindergarten staff and the Governing Council.