

CHILD SAFE ENVIRONMENT PROCEDURE

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) outline that children and young people have a right to be safe and cared for, no matter where they are or who they are with. When working with children and young people, it is important to understand children’s rights and needs. We are advocates for children and aim to maintain a strong commitment to child safety and establishing a child safe environment.

Our Service embeds the Victoria Child Safe Standards (VIC) and the Queensland Child Safe Standards and Universal principle (QLD) promotes a culture of safety and wellbeing to minimise the risk of child abuse or harm to children whilst promoting children’s sense of security and belonging. Requirements for the implementation of the recommended Child Safe Standards in each state or territory differ.

Our Service adopts and aligns with the National Model Code and Guidelines for taking images or videos of children. (See *Safe Use of Digital Technologies and Online Environments Policy*).
(Mandatory from 1 September 2025).

Working in conjunction with the *Child Safe Environment Policy*, this procedure provides guidance for management and educators to foster and promote a child safe culture and ensure child safe policies and procedures are understood and practiced by all educators and staff.

Education and Care Services National Law or Regulations: (R.86, 84, 102-106, 109, 115, 122, 123, 136, 155, 162, 165-168(h) and 170) NQS QA 2, and 5: Element 2.2.1, 2.2.2, 2.2.3 and 5.1.1. *Health and Safety and Relationships*.
Related Policy: *Child Safe Environment Policy*

STEP 1: CHILD SAFE STANDARDS		
Victoria Child Safe Standards (VIC) and the Queensland Child Safe Standards and Universal principle (QLD)		
1	The approved provider, nominated supervisor and educators will review the Service’s <i>Child Safe Environment Policy</i> annually	
2	Families and children will be invited to review the <i>Child Safe Environment Policy</i>	
3	New educators, students and volunteers will be introduced to the <i>Child Safe Environment Policy</i> and <i>Procedure</i> during induction and orientation	
4	Educators and staff will refer to the <i>Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy</i> for further information on implementation of the Child Safe Standards [VIC Services only]	

STEP 2: COMPLAINTS/ GRIEVANCES		
1	The approved provider/nominated supervisor and educators will review the Service's <i>Complaints/ Grievance Policy</i> annually	
2	Families, children and educators are informed of the <i>Complaints/ Grievance Procedure</i> for steps on how to raise any concerns, including concerns around child safety	
3	The approved provider/nominated supervisor will ensure educators, staff, volunteers and students are well informed about the different ways children may express concerns, distress and disclose harm as well as the process for responding to disclosures from children- including a complaint that alleges a child is exhibiting sexual behaviours that may be harmful to the child or another child	
4	The approved provider/nominated supervisor will discuss any complaints/issues raised with the complainant within 24 hours of receiving the verbal or written complaint and will investigate and document the complaint or grievance fairly and impartially	
5	The approved provider/nominated supervisor will notify the regulatory authority within 24 hours of any serious incident or complaint as per the Education and Care National Regulations	
6	The compliant handling process is child focused, children are empowered and supported to provide feedback and speak up about concerns	
5	A <i>Statement of Commitment</i> to providing a Child Safe Environment will be developed in consultation with families, children and educators.	

STEP 3: STAFFING PROVISIONS		
1	The approved provider, nominated supervisor and educators will review the Service's <i>Probation, Induction and Orientation Policy, Professional Development Policy and Staff Performance Review Policy</i> annually	
2	New educators, students and volunteers will be introduced to the <i>Probation, Induction and Orientation Policy, Professional Development Policy and Staff Performance Review Policy</i> during induction and orientation	
3	The <i>Code of Conduct Policy</i> will be reviewed annually in consultation with families, children and educators	
4	New educators, students and volunteers will be required to sign acknowledgment that they read and understand the Service <i>Code of Conduct Staff Acknowledgement</i>	
5	The approved provider/nominated supervisor will ensure a Responsible Person is physically present at the Service at all times that children are being educated and cared for	

6	The approved provider/nominated supervisor will ensure that volunteers and students meet any requirements for WWCC	
7	At no time will volunteers and/or students be left alone with a child or group of children or be included in the educator to child ratio	
8	Each educator will participate in a Performance Review every 12 months which include an opportunity to reflect on the educator's understanding of an adherence to the Code of Conduct and child safe policies and procedures	
9	A <i>Professional Development Plan</i> will be developed for each educator and reviewed every 12 months	

STEP 4: RECRUITMENT

1	The approved provider, nominated supervisor and educators will review the Service's <i>Recruitment Policy</i> annually	
2	The approved provider/nominated supervisor will ensure the Victoria Child Safe Standards(VIC) and the Queensland Child Safe Standards and Universal principle (QLD) underpin all areas of the recruitment process.	
3	All preferred candidates will undergo appropriate pre-employment checks including reference checks, Working with Children Checks (WWCC) and, where applicable, National Police criminal history checks, before an offer of employment is recommended	
4	Employees, volunteers or students that are unable to provide a copy of a validated WWCC (or equivalent) prior to the start of engagement or employment will not be able to undertake any work-related activity within the Service	
5	WWCC records and verifications will be held for all employees, staff, students and volunteers	
6	Reference checks are conducted for each potential employee	
7	Management will ensure any notifications or concerns regarding a person's WWCC (or equivalent) are recorded and steps taken immediately to ensure the person is not working directly with children in accordance with directions from the Department of Child Safety (QLD) and Child Protection (VIC)	
8	Each new employee shall be subject to a Probationary Period of six (6) months.	
9	Induction and orientation for new staff will include relevant information on child safe practices adhering to the Victoria Child Safe Standards (VIC) and the Queensland Child Safe Standards and Universal principle (QLD), Code of Conduct, strategies that identify, assess and minimise risks to children and mandatory reporting procedures	
10	A <i>New Employee Induction Checklist</i> will be completed for all new employees	

STEP 5: CHILD PROTECTION		
1	The approved provider, nominated supervisor and educators will review the Service's <i>Child Protection Policy</i> annually	
2	New educators, students and volunteers will be introduced to the <i>Child Protection Policy and Procedure</i> , including mandatory reporting requirements during induction and orientation. Students and volunteers will be advised of the existence and application of current child protection law and any obligation they may have under that law.	
3	Educators will complete training (if applicable) to understand the child protection reporting process and use of the online reporting guide per state requirements	
4	The approved provider/nominated supervisor will ensure the nominated supervisor and responsible persons have completed mandatory Child Protection Training	
5	The approved provider will ensure the nominated supervisor, educators, staff, volunteers and students who work with children maintain up-to-date information and training related to current child protection law and reporting obligations annually	
6	Educators will introduce protection behaviours to children through educational programs. A Risk Assessment will be conducted prior to educational programs regarding protection behaviours implemented.	
7	Information regarding mandatory reporting obligations are shared with families	
8	All educators will be advised of their obligations regarding the Reportable Conduct Scheme	
9	<p>The approved provider/ nominated supervisor will ensure all records identified as relevant to child safety and wellbeing (including child sexual abuse that has or is alleged to have occurred), are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • kept for at least 45 years • clear, objective and thorough • maintained in an indexed, logical and secure manner • retained and disposed of in a consistent manner. <p>[Note: this is a recommendation in response to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse]</p>	

STEP 6: PHYSICAL AND ONLINE ENVIRONMENT		
1	The approved provider, nominated supervisor and educators will review the Service's <i>Physical Environment Policy</i> and <i>Safe Use of Digital Technologies and Online Environments Policy</i> annually	
2	New educators, students and volunteers will be introduced to the <i>Physical Environment Policy</i> and <i>Safe Use of Digital Technologies and Online Environments Policy</i> during induction and orientation	

3	Educators are required to adhere to the Service's <i>Supervision Policy</i> and floor plan to maintain effective supervision	
4	Adequate supervision will be provided when children are being transported. Consideration will be made depending on risk assessments, number, age and ability of children, visibility of children, each child's current activity.	
5	Our Service will ensure the minimum child ratio requirements are met at all times	
6	A daily inspection of the physical premises will be undertaken before children begin to arrive. The <i>Opening Checklist</i> and <i>Outdoor Cleaning/Safety Checklist</i> will be used as the procedure to conduct these safety checks. A record of these will be kept by the Service.	
7	Risk assessments are completed and reviewed every 12 months to ensure risks are minimised and care taken to protect children from harm and hazards	
8	All educators and staff are informed of the <i>Safe Storage of Hazardous Chemicals Policy</i> during induction and orientation	
9	The <i>Hazardous Chemical Register</i> lists hazardous chemicals used and/or stored within the Service	
10	The <i>Emergency and Evacuation Policy</i> and <i>Procedures</i> are followed to ensure children are protected from harm during an emergency	
11	Educators are to follow the <i>Delivery of Children to and Collection from EEC Service Premises Policy</i> to ensure children are only released to an authorised person as named on the child's enrolment form	
12	Online safety for children is supported by the <i>Safe Use of Digital Technologies and Online Environments Policy</i>	
13	<p>The approved provider will ensure management, educators, staff, visitors and volunteers are aware of and strictly adhere to the National Mode Code and Guidelines including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ adhering to the <i>Safe Use of Digital Technologies and Online Environments Policy</i> ○ only service-issued/approved devices are to be used when taking images or videos of children ○ personal electronic devices that can take images or videos (such as tablets, phones, digital cameras, smart watches, META glasses) and personal storage and file transfer media (such as SD cards, USB drives, hard drives and cloud storage) are not in the possession of any educator, staff member, visitor or volunteer while providing education and care and working directly with children ○ ensure educators, staff or volunteers submit a written request if seeking an exemption to use or have in their possession a personal electronic device for essential purposes ○ strict controls are in place for the appropriate storage and retention of images and videos in accordance with our <i>Record Keeping and Retention Policy</i> 	

14	The approved provider will ensure the environment free is from the use of tobacco (including vaping) alcohol and illicit drugs	
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The template above is a guide – and may vary from service to service

REVIEW OF PROCEDURE			
Date procedure created		To be reviewed	
Approved by		Signature	
Location of procedure	Team Room		
Procedure reviewed date	Modifications/Changes		
September 2025	Procedure reviewed, reference to National Model Code included. Reference to ensuring a tobacco, vaping, alcohol and illicit drug free environment included.		