



## **Providing a Child Safe Environment Policy**

### **Introduction:**

Toukley Preschool has a moral and legal responsibility to ensure that the rights and best interests of the child are paramount and that we will provide training, resources, information and guidance to support this in order to:

- ensure that the health, safety and wellbeing of children at the service is protected at all times;
- ensure that people educating and caring for children at the service act in the best interests of the child;
- protect and advocate the rights of all children to feel safe, and be safe, at all times;
- maintain a culture in which children's rights are respected;
- encourage active participation from families at the service, supporting a partnership approach and shared responsibility for children's health, safety, wellbeing and development.

### **Aim:**

Toukley Preschool will ensure all children have the right to experience quality education and care in an environment that promotes opportunities to thrive with adults who safeguard and advocate for their health, safety, security and wellbeing including the right to:

- be asked to express their views and wishes about matters affecting their lives and to have those views appropriately considered by adults;
- feel and be safe in their interactions with adults and other children and young people; and
- understand, as early as possible, what is meant by 'feeling and being safe'.

### **Implementation:**

#### **The Physical Environment**

In order to promote a safe physical environment we will:

- Ensure all equipment and materials used at the service meet relevant Australian safety standards.
- Conduct daily checks of the environment and equipment
- Remove, repair or replace worn and damaged buildings, structures equipment and resources which may provide a safety risk for children in a timely manner.
- Maintain an equipment maintenance register
- Ensure learning environments are established that provide appropriate child groupings, sufficient space, and include carefully chosen and well-maintained resources and equipment.
- Organise indoor and outdoor spaces to ensure risks to the health and safety are minimised.
- Conduct a risk assessment of the service environment annually to determine any risks to children's health and safety.
- Analyse and evaluate the risks associated with identified hazards.
- Determine appropriate ways to eliminate or control identified hazards.
- Review risk assessments after any serious incident report is made to the Regulatory Authority.
- Ensure smoking is banned within the grounds of, and within four meters of any entrance of an enclosed public space.
- Ensure secure storage of hazardous products including chemicals and medications.

#### **Staffing and Supervision**

- Ensure that sufficient numbers of educators are employed to ensure adequate supervision of children at all times.
- Manage rosters to not only ensure that adequate numbers of educators are on duty to meet ratio and qualification requirements but that duty of care implications are considered to ensure adequate supervision at all times.

- Ensure screening and suitability of staff, volunteers as per the legislation and policy at the time of employment and as part of an ongoing process.
- Respond proactively to emerging staff performance concerns.

### **Child Protection**

- Ensure that all staff including educators, students and volunteers have current working with children checks or equivalent as required by state or territory specific legislation.
- Ensure that all staff are given information and/or training about child protection law and any obligations they have under that law.
- Refer to the Child Protection Policy.
- All educators and volunteers of our service are required to familiarise themselves with child protection legislation in their state and take appropriate measures according to state specific protocols if they have reasonable grounds to suspect a child or young person is at risk of significant harm and have current concern about the safety, welfare or wellbeing of a child or young person.
- All educators and volunteers of our service are Mandatory Reporters and are required to report to the Child Protection Helpline (Phone: 132 111 or eReport at <https://reporter.childstory.nsw.gov.au>) if they have reasonable grounds to suspect a child or young person is at risk of significant harm and have current concern about the safety, welfare or wellbeing of a child or young person.
- The Mandatory Reporter Guide will be used, to guide decision making and determine whether or not to report to the Child Protection Helpline under the new risk of significant harm reporting threshold.
- Staff will undertake training in order to effectively:
  - Make appropriate responses to all disclosures of abuse and any allegation of abuse against staff members of the service
  - understand the responsibilities and processes as a mandatory reporter
  - be able to recognise the factors that increase a child's vulnerability to maltreatment;
  - be aware of the vulnerabilities which may indicate a need to assess, monitor or curtail the behaviour of individuals in relation to children and young people within organisations.
  - staff will implement procedures for releasing children only into the care of authorised persons.

### **Preventing other harms and hazards**

The service will ensure that:

- Risk assessments are conducted regularly for excursions and transportation provided or arranged by the service in conjunction with the service's Excursions and/or Transportation of Children policies.
- Risk minimisation practices are in place for the management of medical conditions in conjunction with the service's Dealing with Medical Conditions policy.
- Emergency evacuation plans specific to the service are implemented in conjunction with the service's Emergency and Evacuation policy.
- If staff consume hot drinks, they are made and consumed away from children

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

**The Approved Provider** will ensure that:

- The service operates in line with the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations 2011 with regard to the delivery and collection of children at all times.
- Ensure all staff have access to relevant professional development.
- Ensure that the Nominated Supervisor and staff members at the service who work with children are advised of current child protection legislation, its application, and any obligations that they may have under that law (Regulation 84).

**The Nominated Supervisor** will:

- Provide all staff and educators working directly with children with access to the Mandatory Reporter Guide to assist them in their reporting.

- Provide all staff and educators working directly with children with access to the Child Wellbeing and Child Protection NSW Interagency Guidelines.
- Ensure screening and suitability processes are maintained to meet policy and legislated requirements.
- Identify and provide appropriate resources and training to assist staff, contractors, visitors, volunteers and students to implement this policy.
- Keep up to date and complying with any relevant changes in legislation and practices in relation to this policy.
- Co-operate with other services and/or professionals in the best interests of children and their families.
- Ensure that families are made aware of support services available to them and of the assistance these services can provide.
- Ensure that all staff who work with children are supported to implement this policy in the service.
- Protect the rights of children and families, and encouraging their participation in decision-making at the service.

**Early Childhood Educators and Responsible Persons** will:

- Act in accordance with the obligations outlined in this policy.
- Raise concerns when barriers or threats to the protection of children and young people's safety and wellbeing are identified, including through the conduct of other adults at the site/service.
- Keep up to date and complying with any relevant changes in legislation and practices in relation to this policy.
- Follow all record keeping requirements.
- Undertake appropriate training and education on child protection.
- Identify any potential for risk and harm to a child at the service and develop and implement effective prevention strategies in consultation with the approved provider and the nominated supervisor.
- Co-operate with other services and/or professionals in the best interests of children and their families.
- Inform families of support services available to them and of the assistance these services can provide.
- Ensure that no child is left alone (or is out of sight) with a contractor, visitor, volunteer, student or parent/guardian at the service.
- Implement the procedures for reporting suspected child abuse.
- Notify the nominated supervisor or the approved provider immediately on becoming aware of any concerns, complaints or allegations regarding the health, safety and welfare of a child at the centre.
- Offer support to the child and their family, and to other staff in response to concerns or reports relating to the health, safety and wellbeing of a child at the centre.
- Maintain confidentiality at all times.
- Adhere to all service policies.

**Families:** will

- Read and comply with this policy.
- Report any concerns, including in relation to potential for child abuse, to the Nominated Supervisor.

**Evaluation**

Families and staff are essential stakeholders in the policy review process and will be given opportunity and encouragement to be actively involved.

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In accordance with R. 172 of the Education and Care Services National Regulations, the service will ensure that families of children enrolled at the service are notified at least 14 days before making any change to a policy or procedure that may have significant impact on the provision of education and care

to any child enrolled at the service; a family's ability to utilise the service; the fees charged or the way in which fees are collected.

Legislative Requirements:

- ◁ Education and Care National Law Act 2010: Sections 162A, 165, 166, 167
- ◁ Education and Care National Regulations 82, 83, 84, 99, 103, 115, 122, 123, 158-159, 165, 168(2)(h), 175, 176
- ◁ Australian Child Protection Legislation [aifs.gov.au/cfca/publications/australian-childprotectionlegislation](http://aifs.gov.au/cfca/publications/australian-childprotectionlegislation)
- ◁ Australian Privacy Principles – [www.oaic.gov.au](http://www.oaic.gov.au)
- ◁ Privacy Act 1988 (Privacy Act) – [www.oaic.gov.au/law/act](http://www.oaic.gov.au/law/act)

Links to National Quality Standard:

- ◁ National Quality Standard, Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety – Standard 2.2
- ◁ National Quality Standard, Quality Area 3: Physical Environment – Standard 3.1, 3.2
- ◁ National Quality Standard, Quality Area 7: Governance and Leadership – Standard 7.1, 7.2

Sources:

- ◁ Office of the Australian Information Commissioner – [www.oaic.gov.au](http://www.oaic.gov.au)
- ◁ Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) – [www.acecqa.gov.au](http://www.acecqa.gov.au)
- ◁ ACECQA's Guide to the National Quality Framework
- ◁ Australian Institute of Family Studies: Pre-employment screening: Working With Children Checks and Police Checks - [aifs.gov.au/cfca/publications/preemployment-screening-working-children-checks-and-police-checks](http://aifs.gov.au/cfca/publications/preemployment-screening-working-children-checks-and-police-checks)
- ◁ Childsafety Australia – [www.childsafetyaustralia.com.au](http://www.childsafetyaustralia.com.au)
- ◁ United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child – [www.unicef.org.au](http://www.unicef.org.au)
- ◁ The Supporting young children's rights: Statement of intent (2015-2018) – [www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au](http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au)
- ◁ Australian Human Rights Commission – [www.humanrights.gov.au](http://www.humanrights.gov.au)
- ◁ Australian Childhood Foundation – [www.childhood.org.au](http://www.childhood.org.au)

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