

# SAFE ENVIRONMENTS POLICY

Quality Areas: NQS 2 – Children’s Health and Safety

Policy Owner: Safety

A light blue speech bubble with a white outline, containing the text 'Why this is important' in a dark blue, cursive font.

Why this is important

## 1.0 Introduction and Purpose

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
- Understand, as early as possible, what is meant by ‘feeling and being safe’
- Knowing our centre 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 team members to undertake their responsibilities
- Ensure that the health, safety, and wellbeing of children at the centre is always protected
- Ensure that people educating and caring for children at the centre act in the best interests of the child
- Maintaining a culture in which children’s rights are respected
- Encouraging active participation from families at the centre and supporting a partnership approach and with shared responsibility for children’s health, safety, wellbeing, and development

## 2.0 Who does this policy apply to:

All Team Members, Children, Families, Board Members, Students and Contractors

## 3.0 What is our Policy:

In order to promote a safe physical environment, we will:

- Ensure all equipment and materials used at the centre meet relevant safety standards
- Remove, repair, or replace worn and damaged buildings, structures equipment and resources which may prove a safety risk for children in a timely manner
- Ensure learning environments are established that provide appropriate child groupings, sufficient space, and include carefully chosen and well-maintained resources and equipment
- Resources are age appropriate and will be set out and available as per manufacturing guidelines
- When introducing new resources and equipment to the environment, an initial risk assessment will be carried out with input by all team members and children.
- Organise indoor and outdoor spaces to ensure risks to the health and safety of everyone are minimised
- Conduct a risk assessment of the centre environment to determine any risks to children’s health and safety and review the risk assessment quarterly
- Analyse and assess the risks associated with identified hazards
- Determine appropriate ways to eliminate or control identified risks

- Review risk assessments after any serious incident occurs or a report is made to a Regulatory Authority
- Ensure smoking is banned within the grounds of, and within four meters of any entrance of an enclosed public space
- Dangerous items must be inaccessible to children, stored in locked cupboards
- Children must be adequately supervised at all times and including meeting ratios set out in the National Law

### **3.1 Smoking, Vaping, Tobacco, Drugs and Alcohol**

The Approved Provider must ensure the environment is free from the use of tobacco, illicit drugs and alcohol, this includes Vaping. The Approved Provider must ensure that the nominated supervisor, educators, team members and volunteers at the centre are not affected by alcohol or drugs (including prescription medication) that may impair their capacity to supervise. The requirements about use of prescription medications do not mean that educators, team members or volunteers who require prescription medication must be excluded, but rather that consideration be given to whether that medication affects the person's capacity to provide education and care to children. Any alcohol, tobacco (including Vaping) or drugs on the centre premises should be kept out of reach of children.

### **3.2 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 team members and volunteers as per the legislation and policy at the time of employment and as part of an ongoing process
- Respond proactively to emerging team members performance concerns.
- Plan for children with special rights / specific learning needs so that strategies reflect their individual needs and manage identified hazards including specific supervision requirements.

### **3.3 Child Protection**

All team members and volunteers at our centre are Mandatory Reporters and are required to report 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.

Team Members will undertake training in order to effectively:

- Make appropriate responses to all disclosures of abuse and any allegation of abuse against team members of the centre
- 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

### **3.4 Determining if the Environment is Safe**

To determine if an environment is safe for children and adults, team members will need to use the risk management framework to determine the likelihood an incident or injury could occur and what are the consequences to this space or experience provided to the children. After completing the risk assessment and the results are moderate, high or critical, a risk assessment must be completed to reduce the likelihood and consequences of possible injury or incident.

Once measure have been decided, complete the risk matrix again, to determine outcome, if the outcomes remain moderate to critical, further actions must be completed to reduce possible harm. If the likelihood or consequence is

low or very low, then planned measures still need to be in place, but the experience can go ahead ensuring all other regulatory compliance is upheld.

### **3.5 Indoor and Outdoor Spaces and Fencing**

- Complete regular safety checks of the indoor environment and equipment throughout the day.
- Check all indoor areas, including sleep areas for any problems or hazards likely to cause injury. If a problem or hazard is identified take the required action eg make the area safe, fix it if you can, report it to a CLT member, call the facilities help desk
- Ensure chemicals are stored securely at all times and are inaccessible to children
- Indoor spaces must be well ventilated, have adequate natural light and maintained at a temperature that ensures the safety and wellbeing of children
- There is an operating telephone or other means of communication, to communicate and receive calls
- There is an adequate area available at the centre for conducting the administrative functions, discussions with families and conducting private conversations
- The centre has access to laundry facilities and procedures for dealing with soiled clothing, nappies, and linen, including hygienic facilities for storage prior to their disposal or laundering
- Safety plugs are in all electrical outlets
- Check the playground each time before children are taken into the playground. Complete and sign the Playground Checklist for each outdoor space
- Any outdoor space used by children must be enclosed by a fence or barrier that is of such height and design that, children of pre-school age and under, cannot go through, over or under it
- Conduct playground checks before children enter to ensure no containers or pooling of water is accessible to children unless directly supervised
- The outdoor space provides adequate shaded spaces to protect children from overexposure to ultraviolet radiation from the sun
- The service complies with the Sun Safety Policy at all times to ensure all children and staff are protected against the harmful effects of the sun's heat and UVR
- Complete opening and closing checklist each day

### **3.6 Children's Learning and Development**

- Age-appropriate learning experiences / resources are provided for children to ensure their safety and wellbeing
- In accordance with the Safe Sleep, Rest and Relaxation Policy reasonable steps are taken to ensure that a child's need for sleep and rest are met, having regard to each child's age and development
- Consideration is given to how children are grouped

### **3.7 Furniture, Equipment and Resources**

- Each child must have access to sufficient furniture, equipment, and developmentally appropriate resources
- Equipment is safe, clean and in good repair and maintained in accordance with the manufactures instructions
- All products and equipment purchased meet Australian Standards and are designed for commercial use

### **3.8 Cleaning and Maintenance**

- Prepare all cleaning products according to the manufacturer's instructions. Spray bottles should not be topped up with water but made up fresh to ensure the correct dilution of chemical
- Bleach solution should only be used in flip top bottles and never in spray bottles
- Complete the tasks listed on the cleaning checklist daily

- Ensure cleaning buckets are emptied immediately after use and are not left in areas accessible to children

### 3.9 Food Preparation and Storage

- Safe practices are used for handling, preparing and storing food in accordance with the Food Safety Program
- Team members prepare and consume their own hot food and drinks away from children. Team members food and hot drinks must not be prepared in, taken into or carried through a learning space or where children are present
- Complete all food temperature logs and other food safety documentation required in the food safety program

### 3.10 Staffing Arrangements

- Two team members must be at the centre at all times
- In accordance with the Supervision Policy, all children, including school age children must be adequately supervised and educator to child ratios maintained at all times
- Be aware of any corners or areas that are less visible and may be a hazard, providing extra vigilance in hard to supervise spaces
- Team members and volunteers must not consume alcohol or be affected by alcohol or drugs (including prescription medications) that may impair their capacity to provide education and care
- Two team members must remain at the centre with a child who is collected after the nominated closing time
- Opening and closing tasks such as cleaning, preparing early learning environments must not compromise the adequate supervision of children
- Team members must ensure all children are signed in and out of the centre

### 3.11 Incidents and Emergencies

- The centre has appropriate lock down, evacuation and other emergency procedures
- An up-to-date risk register is maintained
- An appropriate number of first aid kits are provided that are easily recognisable and readily accessible
- A minimum of (1) team member with a current First Aid and CPR qualification will be in attendance at all times
- Relevant incident management procedures must be followed in the event that a child, team member or visitor is injured or becomes ill. The parent or emergency contact must be notified as soon as possible. An incident report must be made on BeSafe on the day the incident occurred
- All team members are familiar with the Emergency Drill requirement
- The delivery and collection of children policy is followed to ensure children are only released into the care of authorised persons
- If children have not been collected by closing time, follow the Managing the collection of children procedure. Closing team members must not leave the centre before all children have been collected by the family or authorised person
- Physically check each area to ensure that all children are accounted for, including sleep areas, outdoor areas and storage sheds
- All team members who work with children are aware of the child safe standards and understand their obligations and responsibilities

### 3.12 Excursions

- A risk assessment is completed for all excursions and required authorisations are obtained from families
- The Water Safety Policy is followed for all excursions to swimming pools or near water
- The Regular Outing and Excursion Policy along with the Transportation Policy is followed

### 3.13 Health and Hygiene

- Adequate health and hygiene and infection control practices are implemented
- Reasonable steps are taken to prevent the spread of infectious diseases and ensure that families and team members are notified of the occurrence of an infectious disease as soon as possible
- Medication (including prescription, pharmacy only and over the counter) must not be administered to a child without authorisation by the family or a person with authority to consent to medication administration for the child
- The Medical Conditions Policy sets out practices for dealing with the management of medical conditions, specific health care needs and allergies. All team members are informed about the practices that must be followed
- Adequate, developmentally and age-appropriate toilet, washing and drying facilities are available for use by children at the centre

### 3.14 Visitors

- Visitors must be verified, and access only provided with appropriate authority
- The visitors log must be completed

## 4.0 Responsibilities

### 4.1 The Approved Provider will:

1. Ensure that the Nominated Supervisor and team members at the centre who work with children are advised of current child protection legislation, its application, and any obligations that they may have under that Law
2. Provide employees with an induction that includes information about the risk assessment process and Workplace Health and Safety obligations and responsibilities, and how this links to child safety
3. Expect all employees to follow all policies and procedures relating to child safety and will provide ongoing education and training to ensure all team members and educators have the necessary skills and knowledge to meet this expectation
4. Ensure there are systems. Processes and strategies to correct any areas that do not provide a safe environment for children
5. Ensure there is an accountability system in place to ensure all safety checks, practice drills etc are completed as per relevant policies
6. Ensure that the Nominated Supervisor, educators, and all team members at the centre who work with children are aware that it is an offence to subject a child to any form of corporal punishment, or any discipline that is unreasonable or excessive in the circumstances
7. Implement and review this policy in consultation with the Nominated Supervisor, educators, staff, contractors, and parents/guardians
8. Identify and provide appropriate resources and training to assist educators, staff, contractors, visitors, volunteers, and students to implement this policy
9. Protect the rights of children and families, and encouraging their participation in decision-making
10. Ensure the Nominated Supervisor, educators, staff, contractors, volunteers, and students are kept informed of any relevant changes in legislation and practices in relation to this policy.

### 4.2 The Centre Manager / Nominated Supervisor (NS) will:

1. Provide all team members and educators working directly with children with a copy of the relevant child protection resources to assist them in their reporting

2. Ensure that all educators and team members who work with children are aware of this policy, and are supported to implement it in the centre
3. Protect the rights of children and families, and encouraging their participation in decision-making at the centre
4. Ensure that all children are adequately supervised at all times
5. Ensure learning environments are established that provide sufficient space, and include carefully chosen and well-maintained resources and equipment that will help enhance the quality of children's learning and experiences
6. Ensure resources that are purchased are age appropriate, used in ways only as outlined in manufacturing guidelines and a risk assessment is conducted prior to introducing the new item to any environment.
7. Discard faulty resources and contact manufacturer to report accordingly
8. Ensure Risk assessments are carried out on a quarterly basis (if necessary, more frequently) and should be recorded on Guardian's Risk Assessment. New Risk assessments or changes will always be communicated to all team member and available.
9. Encourage children to assess their environments for risks they determine to them, supporting navigation of risky play.
10. Organise/facilitate regular safety audits of the following:
  11. Emergency equipment; playgrounds and fixed equipment in outdoor environments; cleaning services; horticultural maintenance; pest control
  12. Ensure that all cupboards/rooms are labelled accordingly, including those that contain chemicals and first aid kits, and that child-proof locks are installed on doors and cupboards where contents may be harmful
  13. Ensure that all contractors/visitors sign in to the visitor's log book
  14. Ensure that all contractors/ visitors are never left alone with children
  15. Ensure the physical environment at the centre is safe, secure and free from hazards for children
  16. Conduct risk assessments for excursions and considering children's safety when leaving the centre premises
  17. Ensure all equipment and materials used at the centre meet relevant safety standards
  18. Ensure the centre is up to date with current legislation on child restraints in vehicles if transporting children
  19. Implement, practise, document and evaluate emergency and evacuation procedures
  20. Ensure there are appropriate procedures in place for the safe delivery and collection of children
  21. Assess and plan for the individual needs of children and ensure that where children require specific support strategies to minimise risks that these are identified and detailed on the centre risk assessment.
  22. Identify and provide appropriate resources and training to assist educators, staff, contractors, visitors, volunteers, and students to implement this policy
  23. Ensure that all educators and team members at the centre who work with children are aware that it is an offence to subject a child to any form of corporal punishment, or any discipline that is unreasonable or excessive in the circumstances
  24. Implement and review this policy in consultation with the Nominated Supervisor, educators, team members and parents/guardians
  25. Keep up to date and complying with any relevant changes in legislation and practices in relation to this policy.

#### 4.3 Team Members will:

1. Act in accordance with the obligations outlined in this policy
2. Maintain learning environments that provide sufficient space, and include carefully chosen and well-maintained resources and equipment to ensure a safe environment
3. Maintain a regular cleaning schedule for all equipment to avoid cross-infection
4. Maintain a clean environment daily, and removing tripping/slipping hazards as soon as these become apparent
5. Conduct a daily check of the building, ensuring all children are signed out of the centre, doors and windows are closed and locked, and appliances are switched off etc. A written record of the daily check should be kept, signed by an educator, and filed for future reference
6. Actively supervise children at all times and ensure ratios are maintained at all times
7. Educate and empower children to talk about events and situations that make them feel uncomfortable
8. Ensure the physical environment at the centre is safe, secure and free from hazards for children

9. Conduct risk assessments for excursions and consider children's safety when leaving the centre premises
10. Ensure all equipment and materials used at the centre meet relevant safety standards
11. Ensure resources that are purchased are age appropriate, used in ways only as outlined in manufacturing guidelines and a risk assessment is conducted prior to introducing the new item to any environment.
12. Discard faulty resources and contact manufacturer to report accordingly
13. Ensure Risk assessments are carried out on a quarterly basis (if necessary, more frequently) and should be recorded on Guardian's Risk Assessment. New Risk assessments or changes will always be communicated to all team member and available.
14. Encourage children to assess their environments for risks they determine to them, supporting navigation of risky play.
15. Ensure the centre is up to date with current legislation on child restraints in vehicles if transporting children
16. Implement, practice, document and evaluate emergency and evacuation procedures
17. Ensure there are appropriate procedures in place for the safe delivery and collection of children
18. Ensure that children at the centre are not subjected to any form of corporal punishment, or any discipline that is unreasonable or excessive in the circumstances
19. Implement and review this policy in consultation with the Nominated Supervisor, educators, team members, contractors and parents/guardians
20. Respect that all Centres are alcohol, drug and smoke free environments, and not consume alcohol or drugs in any areas of the Centre
21. Only be permitted to smoke if:
  - a. They are outside the workplace
  - b. It is in their scheduled and approved breaks
  - c. They are not wearing their guardian uniform
  - d. They take particular care to wash their hands thoroughly before returning to work
22. That they change their outer clothing before returning to work, especially if they work with babies. This is because second-hand smoke can linger in clothing for several hours. Babies and children are still exposed to this smoke even after adults have finished their cigarette.
23. Identify and provide appropriate resources and training to assist educators, team members, contractor, visitors, volunteer, and students to implement this policy (refer to sources)
24. Protect the rights of children and families, and encourage their participation in decision-making
25. Keep up to date and comply with any changes in legislation and practices in relation to this policy
26. Always maintain confidentiality

#### 4.4 Families will ensure that:

1. Read and comply with this policy
2. Report any concerns, including in relation to potential for child abuse, to the Nominated Supervisor or PIDTDC
3. Understand and know all employees of Guardian are mandatory reporters and have an obligation under the Child Protection Law to report any significant signs of abuse or neglect
4. Remind families that smoking is not permitted in any areas of the Centre or within four metres of an entrance to a Centre. 'No smoking' signs will be posted to discourage smoking
5. Abide by the centre's Code of Conduct.

## 5.0 Definitions

**Centre Manager / Nominated Supervisor (NS)** is the Team Member appointed into the Centre Manager (Nominated Supervisor) role with the alternative being the Responsible Person who is in charge

## 6.0 Tools and Resources



<p><b>The most important documents I need are:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Code of Conduct</li> <li>Risk Management Policy</li> <li>Risk Assessment Form</li> <li>Transportation Policy</li> <li>Transportation Procedure</li> </ul>	<p><b>Other supporting documents will include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Guardian Essential Standards</a> Guardian Way page</li> <li><a href="#">Child Protection and Mandatory Reporting</a></li> <li><a href="#">Child Safe Standards</a></li> <li><a href="#">I protect Children Cards</a></li> <li><a href="#">Emergency Management</a> Guardian Way page</li> <li><a href="#">Medical Conditions</a> Guardian Way page</li> <li><a href="#">Incident Management</a> Guardian Way page</li> <li><a href="#">Food and Nutrition</a> Guardian Way page</li> </ul>
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**7.0 Additional Information**

Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010  
 Education and Care Services National Regulations 2018  
 Guide to the National Quality Framework 2018  
 Health and Safety Acts and Regulations

**8.0 Source**

Act Section 162A	Child protection training
Act Section 165	Offence to inadequately supervise children
Act Section 166	Offence to use inappropriate discipline
Act Section 167	Offence relating to protection of children from harm and hazards
Regulation 82	Tobacco, drug, and alcohol-free environment
Regulation 83	Staff members and family day care educators not to be affected by alcohol or drugs
Regulation 84	Awareness of child protection law
Regulation 103	Premises, furniture, and equipment to be safe, clean and in good repair
Regulation 115	Premises designed to facilitate supervision
Regulation 122	Educators must be working directly with children to be included in ratios
Regulation 123	Educator to child ratios – centre-based services
Regulation 145	Staff record
Regulation 165	Record of visitors
Regulation 166	Children not to be alone with visitors
Regulation 167	Record of service’s compliance
Regulation 168	Education and care services must have policies and procedures
Regulation 170	Policies and procedures to be followed
Regulation 171	Policies and procedures to be kept available
Regulation 172	Notification of change to policies or procedures
Regulation 175 (d)(e)	Prescribed information to be notified to Regulatory Authority

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<b>Date published</b>	1/04/2024	<b>Document version</b>	V1.0	<b>Revision due date</b>	1/04/2026

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