SAFE ENVIRONMENTS POLICY

Quality Areas: **NQS 2 – Children's Health and Safety**

Policy Owner: Safety



1.0 Introduction and Purpose

We are committed to providing a safe, inclusive, and supportive environment where every child's rights, safety, and wellbeing are always the highest priority.

We believe all children have the right to feel and be safe, to be treated with respect and dignity, and to be supported to express their views and wishes about matters that affect them. Children are supported to understand, in age-appropriate ways, what it means to feel safe and to develop trusting, positive relationships with adults and other children.

Everyone who educates and cares for children at our centre has a moral and legal responsibility to act in each child's best interests and to protect their health, safety, and wellbeing at all times. We support our team through clear expectations, training, and guidance to ensure children are safeguarded in everyday practice.

We value families as partners and work together with them to create a strong culture of safety, wellbeing, and shared responsibility for children's learning 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:

3.1 Safe Physical Environment and Risk Management

The centre is committed to providing a safe physical environment where children's health, safety, and wellbeing are always the highest priority. A structured risk management approach is applied to identify hazards, assess risk, and implement controls that are **immediate, proportionate, and appropriate to the circumstances**.

3.2 Risk Management Approach (BeSafe Framework)

Risks are managed through a continuous process of hazard identification, risk assessment, control implementation, and review. All identified risks are assessed and classified to determine the required response:

a. **Minor risk** – Low likelihood and low impact; managed through routine supervision and standard controls.

b. **Moderate risk** – Increased likelihood or impact; requires planned controls and increased monitoring.

c. **Major risk** – High likelihood or high impact; requires prompt action to reduce the risk.

d. **Critical risk** – Immediate or severe risk; requires urgent action, including stopping an activity or restricting access until the risk is eliminated or reduced to an acceptable level.

3.3 Hierarchy of Controls

Control measures are selected using the hierarchy of controls to ensure risks are managed as effectively as possible:

1. **Elimination** – Remove the hazard where possible
2. **Substitution** – Replace the hazard with a safer alternative
3. **Engineering controls** – Isolate people from the hazard through physical changes to the environment

4. **Administrative controls** – Implement policies, procedures, training, signage, and supervision
5. **Personal protective equipment (PPE)** – Use PPE where required as a supplementary control

Higher-order controls are prioritised wherever reasonably practicable.

3.4 Risk Assessment and Review
Environmental risk assessments are conducted regularly to identify hazards and determine appropriate controls (ways to reduce risk). Risk assessments are reviewed:

a. At least annually and recommended that these are revisited quarterly to six monthly
b. When new equipment or resources are introduced
c. Following an incident
d. After any notification to the Regulatory Authority
e. When there is a change to the requirements of children or adults, staffing arrangements, the environment or a process

Team members and, where appropriate, children are encouraged to contribute to identifying risks and promoting safe practices.

3.5 Environment, Equipment and Resources
We provide safe, well-maintained, and developmentally appropriate environments that support children's learning, health, safety, and wellbeing. All buildings, structures, equipment, and resources meet relevant safety standards and are regularly monitored. Worn, damaged, or unsafe items are repaired, removed, or replaced in a timely manner.

Each child has access to sufficient furniture, equipment, and age-appropriate resources. All equipment is clean, safe, in good repair, and maintained in accordance with manufacturer instructions. Products and equipment purchased meet Australian Standards and are suitable for commercial use. Our resource workbook *Indoor Permanent Learning Spaces* and *Resource Workbook Outdoor Spaces for Learning* reflect current safe equipment choices and should be used when reviewing equipment purchases. We encourage team members to use marketplace where applicable so that equipment quality can be managed. Dangerous items and hazardous substances are stored securely in locked cupboards and are inaccessible to children.

Open flames are not permitted at the centre, including scented candles, wax melts with candles, or open fires in indoor or outdoor environments.

3.6 Indoor and Outdoor Spaces
Indoor and outdoor spaces are designed and organised to promote safe exploration, effective supervision, and children's learning, development and wellbeing. Environments provide appropriate child groupings, sufficient space, and carefully selected resources that support safe and inclusive practice.

Indoor areas are well ventilated, have adequate natural light, and are maintained at temperatures that ensure children's comfort, safety, and wellbeing. Electrical outlets are fitted with safety plugs, and there is an operating telephone or other suitable means of communication available at all times.

Each centre provides:

- An adequate area for administrative functions
- Appropriate spaces for discussions with families, teams and private conversations
- Access to laundry facilities and hygienic procedures for managing soiled clothing, nappies, and linen, including safe storage prior to disposal or laundering

3.7 Fencing, Outdoor Safety and Sun Protection
All outdoor spaces used by children are securely enclosed by fencing or barriers of appropriate height and design to prevent children of preschool age and under from going through, over, or under them.

Outdoor areas are checked before children enter (throughout the day) to ensure they are free from hazards, including containers or pooling water, unless directly supervised. Adequate shaded areas are provided to protect children from overexposure to ultraviolet

radiation, and the service complies with the Sun Safety Policy at all times to protect children and team members from the harmful effects of sun and heat.

3.8 Safety Checks and Ongoing Monitoring
The centre applies a proactive approach to monitoring environments throughout the day. Regular safety checks are conducted in all indoor and outdoor areas, including sleep and playground spaces. Identified hazards are addressed promptly by making the area safe, rectifying the issue where possible, or reporting it to the Centre Leadership Team or Facilities Help Desk.

The following checks are completed to support ongoing safety:

- *Daily opening and closing checklists*
- *Playground checks* before each use, with checklists completed and signed
- Ongoing environmental checks throughout the day

3.9 Cleaning and Maintenance
The centre maintains a clean, hygienic, and well-maintained environment to protect children's health, safety, and wellbeing. Cleaning practices are carried out in accordance with manufacturer instructions and established cleaning schedules.

Cleaning products are prepared and used safely. Chemical solutions are made fresh to ensure correct dilution and effectiveness and are not topped up or reused. Bleach solutions are only used in clearly labelled flip-top bottles and are not used in spray bottles. Cleaning equipment, including buckets, are emptied immediately after use and never left in areas accessible to children.

Daily cleaning tasks are completed in line with the approved cleaning checklist and monitored by the Centre Leadership Team.

3.10 Health, Hygiene and Infection Control
Effective health, hygiene, and infection control practices to minimise the risk of illness and the spread of infectious diseases are implemented at all times. Reasonable steps are taken to prevent infection, and families and team members are notified as soon as practicable when an infectious disease occurs at the centre.

Adequate, age-appropriate toilet, washing, and drying facilities are available to support children's personal hygiene and independence. Medication, including prescription, pharmacy-only, and over-the-counter medication, is not administered to a child without appropriate written authorisation from the child's family or a person with legal authority to consent.

The management of medical conditions, allergies, and specific health care needs is outlined in the *Medical Conditions Policy*. All team members are informed of, and required to follow, the procedures set out in that policy.

3.11 Food Preparation and Storage
Food is handled, prepared, and stored using safe practices in accordance with the centre's Food Safety Program. Required food safety records, including temperature logs and related documentation, are completed accurately and maintained as part of routine practice.

All team members involved in food handling have completed the relevant food safety training as prescribed by state-based legislation, and this training is kept current in accordance with regulatory requirements.

To reduce risk to children, team members prepare and consume their own food and hot drinks away from children. Hot food and beverages are not prepared, carried through, or consumed in learning spaces or in areas where children are present.

3.12 Alcohol, Drugs, Smoking and Fitness for Work
The environment is free from the use of tobacco, illicit drugs and alcohol, including vaping. All team members and volunteers must not be affected by alcohol, drugs, or medications (including prescription medication) in a way that may impair their capacity to safely supervise, educate, and work with children and adults.

This requirement does not mean that educators, team members or volunteers who require prescription medication or who have a medical condition (including mental health conditions) are excluded from the workplace. Rather, consideration must be given to whether a person's health or medication may impact their capacity to perform their role safely and meet their duty of care obligations.

Team members are expected to proactively manage their health and wellbeing and to notify centre leadership if a medical condition, medication, or change in circumstances may impact the safety of children, colleagues, or themselves. Any concerns regarding a

person's capacity to safely perform their role will be addressed respectfully, confidentially, and in line with workplace health and safety obligations.

Where concerns arise, team members are encouraged to escalate these to the Nominated Supervisor, Approved Provider, or other designated leader so that appropriate support, adjustments, or risk management strategies can be put in place.

Any alcohol, tobacco products (including vaping devices), or drugs on the centre premises must be kept out of reach of children at all times. The centre maintains a smoke-free environment, with smoking prohibited within the grounds and within four metres of entrances to enclosed public spaces.

3.13 Staffing Arrangements, Supervision and Safety Controls

The centre ensures staffing arrangements support effective supervision, child safety, and compliance with the National Law and Regulations. Children are adequately supervised at all times, including school age children, with educator-to-child ratios and qualification requirements consistently maintained.

Sufficient numbers of suitably qualified educators are employed and rostered to ensure effective supervision across all areas of the centre. At all times that the centre is in operation there is a Responsible Person on duty and at least one team member who holds a current first-aid qualification. Rosters are planned with consideration of duty of care responsibilities, including visibility, environmental risks, and the need for increased vigilance in areas that are less visible or more difficult to supervise.

To ensure all children are safe and accounted for, team members physically check all areas of the centre, including learning spaces, sleep areas, outdoor environments, and storage sheds. All team members who work with children are aware of the Child Safe Standards and understand their safeguarding obligations and responsibilities.

At least two team members are present at the centre at all times. Where a child remains at the service after the nominated closing time, two team members will remain on site with the child until they are collected in accordance with the *Arrivals and Departures Policy*.

Team members ensure accurate sign-in and sign-out records are completed for all children to support supervision, safety, and accountability.

For more specific information about adequate supervision refer to the *Adequate Supervision Policy*.

3.14 Child Protection and Child Safety

All team members 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:

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

b. Understand the responsibilities and processes as a mandatory reporter

c. Be able to recognise the factors that increase a child's vulnerability to maltreatment

d. 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

3.15 Incidents and Emergencies

All centres have and Emergency Management Plan (EMP) and Evacuation Diagrams to support safe evacuation. The EMP documents procedures to manage incidents and emergencies and to protect the safety and wellbeing of children, team members, and visitors. All team members are familiar with emergency drill requirements, and these are practiced regularly.

An up-to-date risk register is maintained to support proactive risk management. An appropriate number of clearly identifiable and accessible first aid kits are provided, and at least one team member with a current First Aid and CPR qualification is present at the centre at all times.

Incident management procedures are followed whenever a child, team member, or visitor is injured or becomes ill. Families or emergency contacts are notified as soon as practicable, and an incident report is completed in BeSafe on the day the incident occurs. At all times, the Delivery and Collection of Children Policy is followed to ensure children are only released into the care of authorised persons.

3.16 Excursions and Regular Outings

The centre applies a thorough risk management approach to all excursions and regular outings. A documented risk assessment is completed, and required authorisations are obtained from families before any excursion occurs.

All excursions are conducted in accordance with the *Regular Outings and Excursions Policy* and the *Transportation Policy*. Where excursions involve swimming pools or environments near water, the *Water Safety Policy* is strictly followed.

3.17 Visitors

The centre manages visitor access to ensure the safety and security of all children, families, and team members. All visitors must be verified and are only permitted access with appropriate authority. The visitor log must be completed on arrival and departure in accordance with centre procedures.

Parents, guardians, and other adults are expected to behave respectfully and appropriately while on centre premises. The centre reserves the right to ask any person to leave if their behaviour is abusive, harassing, or places children, families, or team members at risk. This includes any conduct that disrupts the safe and supportive environment of the centre or breaches centre policies.

4.0 Responsibilities

4.1 The Approved Provider will:

1. Ensure that all team members who work with children are advised of current child protection mandatory reporting requirements, their application, and any obligations that they may have under that Law
2. Ensure that there is a risk-based framework is implemented that identifies, assesses, and manages hazards and incidents, applies proportionate controls, and protects the health, safety, and wellbeing of children, staff, and visitors
3. 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
4. Ensure all team members and educators have the necessary skills and knowledge to meet this expectation
5. Ensure there are systems, processes and strategies to correct any areas that do not provide a safe environment for children
6. Ensure there is an accountability system in placed to ensure all safety checks, practice drills etc are completed as per relevant policies
7. Identify and provide appropriate resources and training to assist educators, staff, contractors, visitors, volunteers, and students to implement this policy
8. 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 children are adequately supervised at all times
3. 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
4. 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.

5. Discard faulty resources and contact manufacturer to report accordingly
6. 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.
7. Encourage children to assess their environments for risks they determine to them, supporting navigation of risky play.
8. Organise/facilitate regular safety audits of the following:
    a. Emergency equipment; playgrounds and fixed equipment in outdoor environments; cleaning services; horticultural maintenance; pest control
9. 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
10. Ensure that all contractors/visitors/students and volunteers sign in to the visitor's log
11. Ensure that all contractors/ visitors/students and volunteers are never left alone with children
12. Ensure the physical environment at the centre is safe, secure and free from hazards for children
13. Conduct risk assessments for excursions and considering children's safety when leaving the centre premises
14. Ensure all equipment and materials used at the centre meet relevant safety standards
15. Ensure that where buses are used these enable children to be appropriately restrained
16. Implement, practise, document and evaluate emergency and evacuation procedures
17. Ensure there are appropriate procedures in place for the safe delivery and collection of children
18. 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
19. Identify and provide appropriate resources and training to assist educators, staff, contractors, visitors, volunteers, and students to implement this policy
20. 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

4.3 Team Members will:

1. Maintain learning environments that provide sufficient space, and include carefully chosen and well- maintained resources and equipment that meet relevant safety standards to ensure a safe environment
2. Maintain a regular cleaning schedule for all equipment to avoid cross-infection
3. Maintain a clean environment daily, and remove trip/slip hazards as soon as these become apparent
4. 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
5. Actively supervise children at all times and raise any concerns related to staffing to the lead educator, Responsible Person or Centre Manager to ensure ratios are maintained at all times
6. Educate and empower children to talk about events and situations that make them feel uncomfortable
7. Ensure the physical environment at the centre is safe, secure and free from hazards for children and adults
8. Conduct risk assessments for excursions, routine outings or incursions and that documents risk with children's safety when leaving the centre premises
9. 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
10. Remove or make inaccessible any faulty resources immediately
11. Ensure appropriate risk assessments are in place for identified hazards. Where a new risk is identified, a risk assessment must be developed, documented using Guardian's Risk Assessment template
12. Support children to assess and understand risks within their environment, and for guiding them to engage in risky play in a safe, developmentally appropriate manner
13. Ensure that where child restraints in vehicles are provided such as buses that children are appropriately retrained
14. Have a thorough knowledge and know where and how to access their centres EMP so they are able to Implement, practice, document and evaluate emergency and evacuation procedures
15. Ensure there are appropriate procedures in place for the safe delivery and collection of children

16. 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 in accordance with the *Child Protection and Mandatory Reporting Policy*
17. Ensure that they are not under the influence of alcohol or drugs, must be smoke and vape free, and must not consume alcohol or drugs anywhere on the centre premises
18. Ensure that if they have concerns that another team member may be under the influence of alcohol or drugs or is not complying with smoke and vape free requirements, they must immediately report this to the Nominated Supervisor
19. Only be permitted to smoke if:
    a. They are outside the workplace at least four metres from the entrance of the centre
    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
    e. That they change their outer clothing before returning to work, especially if they work with babies.
20. Implement this policy and seek advice where you do not understand what is required or unsure how this relates to your role
21. Always maintain confidentiality

4.4 Families will:

1. Report any concerns, including in relation to potential for child abuse, to the Nominated Supervisor or Responsible Person
2. Alert a team member if notice a hazards or are hurt or injured
3. Refrain from using their digital devices when in a learning space
4. Refrain from smoking, vaping or drinking whilst in the centre and in accordance with this policy

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

The most important documents I need are:	**Other supporting documents will include:**
Code of Conduct	Guardian Essential Standards Guardian Way page
Risk Management Policy	Child Protection and Mandatory Reporting
Risk Assessment Form	Child Safe Standards
Transportation Policy	I protect Children Cards
Transportation Procedure	Emergency Management Guardian Way page
	Medical Conditions Guardian Way page
	Incident Management Guardian Way page
	Food and Nutrition Guardian Way page

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 Safey Acts and Regulations

8.0 Source

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 103	Premises, furniture, and equipment to be safe, clean and in good repair
Regulation 123	Educator to child ratios – centre-based services
Regulation 165	Record of visitors
Regulation 166	Children not to be alone with visitors
Regulation 168	Education and care services must have policies and procedures
Regulation 170	Policies and procedures to be followed

Policy owner	Chief Quality and Curriculum Officer		**Content author**	National Safety and Compliance Manager	
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