

Our Centre is committed to the safety, wellbeing and support of all children and young people. Management, Staff and volunteers will treat all children with the utmost respect and understanding.

Our Centre believes that:

- Children are capable of the same range of emotions as adults.
- Children's emotions are real and need to be accepted by adults.
- A reaction given to a child from an adult in a child's early stages of emotional development can be positive or detrimental depending on the adult's behaviour.
- Children, who preserve, enhance and better understand their body's response to an emotion is more able to predict the outcome from a situation and evade them or ask for help.

It is important that children are able to learn and develop in a safe and supportive environment. The safety, health and wellbeing of children is our number one priority. We have zero tolerance for child abuse and are committed to acting in children's best interests. We will ensure our environment and practices are always safe, consistent with best practice and legislative requirements including the Child Safe Standards.

All Educators, Staff and Volunteers are committed to identifying possible risk and significant risk of harm to children and young people at the Service. We comprehend our duty of care responsibilities to protect children from all types of abuse, and adhere to our legislative obligations at all times.

We aim to implement effective strategies to assist in ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all children. Our Centre will perform proficiently and act in the best interest of the child, assisting them to develop to their full potential in a secure and caring environment by:

- Promoting the safety of children
- Preventing child abuse
- Ensuring effective processes are in place to respond to and report allegations of child abuse
- Creating and maintaining a child safe environment under the National Quality Standard

## Protect Child Safe Standards

From 1 January 2016 all early childhood services are required to comply with the Child Safe Standards. These standards aim to drive continuous improvement, by raising awareness and assisting organisations to create and maintain child safe environments.

## The Standards

Our Centre commits to an environment and practices which are consistent with the Child Safe Standards.

To create and maintain a child safe organisation, each early childhood centre must have in place:

Standard 1: Strategies to embed an organisational culture of child safety, including through effective leadership arrangements

Standard 2: A child safe policy or statement of commitment to child safety

Standard 3: A code of conduct that establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children

Standard 4: Screening, supervision, training and other human resources practices that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing personnel

Standard 5: Processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse

Standard 6: Strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse

Standard 7: Strategies to promote the participation and empowerment of children.



Many of the practices and procedures which support these standards are embedded in our existing policies which are referenced below with additional comment where relevant.

**Standard 1:** *Strategies to embed an organisational culture of child safety, including through effective leadership arrangements*

The Nominated Supervisor embeds a culture of child safety in several ways including:

- Ensuring staff are appropriately qualified and ratios are met
- Ensuring all staff understand their responsibilities under the National Law and Regulations, National Quality Standard (NQS) and the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF)
- Ensuring all staff, visitors and volunteers are aware of and comply with our Code of Conduct
- Organising appropriate information, instruction, training or supervision to staff

Our *Child Protection Policy* outlines our Child Protection Risk Management Strategy:

- Procedures for Reporting and Documenting Abuse or Neglect (also Standard 5)
- Procedures for Managing Breaches
- Information for Families

Under the NQS, children's culture and heritage must be regularly embedded in our learning programs. For example:

- NQS 1.1.1 Curriculum decision making contributes to each child's learning and development outcomes *in relation to their identity, connection with community, wellbeing, and confidence as learners and effectiveness as communicators.*
- NQS 1.1.2 Each child's current knowledge, ideas, *culture*, abilities and interests are the foundation of the program

Additionally educators integrate EYLF Principles and Practices like 'respect for diversity', 'cultural competence' and 'high expectations and equity' into the curriculum to ensure children achieve the learning outcomes related to their identity, connection to their world and sense of wellbeing. Educators do this in numerous ways including:

- Providing resources and information that promote Indigenous and other cultures
- Establishing links with local Indigenous and cultural groups
- Inviting families and community members to visit the centre and complete activities and experiences with the children
- Through intentional teaching strategies promoting Indigenous customs, stories, traditions, history and that of other cultures
- Working with other professionals to assist children with additional needs
- Ensuring all children can participate in learning activities

Records which enable staff to monitor and review incidents, and implement continuous improvement practices, are maintained as required under the National Law and our *Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy*.

**Standard 2:** *A Child Safe Policy or statement of commitment to child safety*

This policy is available to all families, as part of our regular policy review program.

**Standard 3:** *A Code of Conduct that Establishes Clear Expectations for Appropriate Behaviour with Children*

The *Code of Conduct Policy* sets out clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children. For example, all staff and volunteers will:

- Implement activities and experiences that are age appropriate, culturally sensitive and inclusive
- Comply with all centre policies, including those which protect children from harm, abuse and neglect
- Refrain from developing close personal relationships with children outside work
- Refrain from using abusive, derogatory or offensive language



- Not favour any particular child.

The Code also provides the following examples of appropriate interactions with children

- Use of YouTube, social media and technology to support age appropriate curriculum
- Physical contact to soothe children, build trusting relationships, demonstrate learning and skills and assist children with additional needs
- Families and visitors will not have physical contact with children at the centre that are not their own unless a staff member is present.

*Our Interactions with Children, Families and Staff Policy* and *Respect for Children Policy* also contains clear guidelines on appropriate behaviour with children as discussed under Standard 6.

All Families and Visitors wishing to undertake Volunteer Work at Brunswick Crèche & Day Nursery must read and sign the *Families and Visitors Code of Conduct Form*, and returned before any duties takes place within the centre. All Parents read and sign the Code of Conduct and return it with the Enrolment Form upon commencement.

**Standard 4:** *Screening, Supervision, Training and other Human Resources Practices that Reduce the Risk of Child Abuse by New and Existing Personnel*

Our Policies and Procedure:

- Code of Conduct
- Employment of Educators
- Grievance Policy (Staff)
- In-service & Staff Development Policy
- Management Committee Policy
- Relief Staff Policy
- Students and Volunteers Policy

These Policies details our commitment to the professional development and performance management of all staff. It explains, for example, that the Nominated Supervisor will complete an annual performance appraisal for all staff, as well as for new staff after 3 months service.

Appraisals are used to ensure staff are aware of their duties and responsibilities and to identify training needs which include child safety practices. The Nominated Supervisor will ensure funds are set aside for training in the annual budget.

Child protection training may cover the definition of abuse, how to identify abuse and reduce risks, including for children with disabilities, inappropriate behaviour between children and inappropriate behaviour between children and adults. Training may occur through a recognised face to face or on-line training course, mentoring and at staff meetings.

These Policy also outlines orientation practices to ensure new or returning staff are aware of current centre policies and procedures, and relevant legislative requirements including their child protection obligations. Training is undertaken where required.

Our *Employment of Educators* contains recruitment and selection procedures which reduce the risk of child abuse by staff. The procedures cover position descriptions, advertising, interviews, and selection of candidates. For example:

- Position descriptions will clearly describe the expectations for staff to provide a safe and supportive environment for children (also Standard 1)
- Job advertisements will state applicants need to have a clear Working With Children Check
- Applicants will be questioned on their understanding of child safety and child protection, and permission is obtained to contact referees



Our *Staffing Arrangements Policy* sets out the required ratios of staff to children, staff qualifications and the requirement for the Nominated Supervisor to read a person's Working With Children Check before the person is employed or works as a volunteer at the centre (unless exemptions apply).

**Standard 5:** *Processes for Responding to and Reporting Suspected Child Abuse*

Our *Child Protection Policy* contains clear procedures for responding to and reporting suspected abuse and neglect, including allegations of abuse made against staff members. Where staff members are involved, the Approved Provider or Nominated Supervisor must review the person's duties, and if they continue to interact with children while the allegation is investigated, ensure they are appropriately supervised at all times.

The Policy outlines appropriate interactions and behaviour if staff receive a disclosure of abuse from a child or adult, and contains information for families about the way staff teach children about protective behaviour.

Our response to cases of abuse will be culturally sensitive. For example we will engage with families and/or community members to improve our understanding of cultural behaviours and inform our responses.

**Standard 6:** *Strategies to Identify and Reduce or Remove the Risk of Abuse*

Our *Respect for Children Policy* contains extensive guidelines and examples about positive interactions with children to promote their self esteem, and positive behaviour guidance. The Policy also clearly states that staff will not isolate, intimidate or subject children to corporal punishment to guide behaviour. Instead staff may take actions which include:

- Ignoring negative behaviour and praising positive behaviour
- Using key words with signing and visuals to help children with communication difficulties
- Using minimal steps in directions and allowing time for children to understand
- Using terminology that children understand
- Providing opportunities for exercise which can calm anxious or agitated children
- Intentionally teaching behaviours
- Putting themselves in the child's position to try and understand where the behaviour came from

Our *Visitors Policy* sets out the practices which will be followed for visitors to the centre:

- Visitors will never be left alone with children and will always supervised by staff
- Visitors must have or obtain a child protection clearance (unless exempt) before being allowed into the centre
- Specialists or professionals engaged to support a child will only be allowed to visit and engage with the child if written authorisation has first been obtained from the child's parents

Our *Technology Media Policy* requires technology only be used to support children's learning, that only age appropriate websites will be accessed and that staff will directly supervise children when they are on-line. Children will view 'G' rated videos only.

Our *Social Networking Policy* contains a number of measures designed to ensure children's privacy and wellbeing. For example:

- Staff will not post any information or photos from the centre on personal social media accounts
- Staff will not use their personal camera or phones to take photos or video while at the centre
- The Nominated Supervisor must obtain authorisation from a child's parents before posting any photos of their child on a centre social media account or website

**Standard 7:** *Strategies to Promote the Participation and Empowerment of Children*



The National Quality Standard (NQS) promotes children’s agency and participation in many ways. We are required to meet the following NQS Elements for example:

- 1.1.2 Each child’s current knowledge, ideas, culture, abilities and interests are the foundation of the program
- 1.1.3 The program, including routines, is organised in ways that maximise opportunities for each child’s learning
- 1.1.5 Every child is supported to participate in the program
- 1.1.6 Each child’s agency is promoted, enabling them to make choices and decisions and to influence events and their world
- 5.1.1 Interactions with each child are warm, responsive and build trusting relationships

Together with the EYLF, the NQS requires educators be responsive to children’s ideas, interests and needs. For example EYLF principle ‘Partnerships with Families’ and EYLF Practice ‘Responsiveness to Children’ promote respectful and reciprocal relationships with children based on deep understanding of their interests, community and culture. Educators view children as active participants and decision makers. These types of relationships empower children to voice their views, ideas and concerns.

Staff will regularly discuss children’s rights with children, including their right to make decisions about their body and privacy, that they have a right to feel safe at all times, to recognise signs that they do not feel safe, and that staff are available for them if they have any concerns (discussed further in our *Child Protection Policy*)

Our *Interactions with Children, Families and Staff Policy* and *Respect for Children Policy* contains extensive guidelines on the inclusion and agency of all children. For example staff will:

- Allow children to be as independent as possible, try things for themselves and experience the consequences of their choices while considering the risk and benefit to others.
- Ensure curriculum is generated mainly from children’s ideas and interests
- Promote and value cultural diversity and equity for all children, families and colleagues

Our *Supporting Children’s Individual Needs - Additional Needs Policy* indicates we welcome children with additional needs (including children from diverse cultural backgrounds) and will design or adapt the environment to ensure every child can participate and achieve meaningful learning outcomes. We will work with professionals, families and children to ensure that learning environments are suitable and implement plans or instructions.

Any questions about child safety or this Policy may be directed to the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor or Certified Supervisor in day to day charge of the centre. If you have any concerns about the way these managers address or respond to child safety issues, you may contact the Child Protection Hotline on 131 278, the Department of Education and Training (Children’s Services ) on 1300 307 415 or the Police on 000.

## The Principles

Three overarching principles are embedded into each standard to ensure that organisations are aware of, and consider that some groups of children and young people may be particularly vulnerable, and may face extra challenges in reporting abuse.

These principles are:

- Promoting the cultural safety of Aboriginal children
- Backgrounds
- Promoting the safety of children with a disability.

For more information, refer to:

Cultural safety of Aboriginal children: <https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/assets/resources/tipsheet-cultural-safety-aboriginal-children.pdf>



Cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds:

<https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/assets/resources/tipsheet-safety-children-cult-ling-diverse.pdf>

Safety of children with a disability: <https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/assets/resources/tipsheet-safety-children-disability.pdf>

Our Centre strongly opposes any type of abuse against a child and endorses high quality practices in relation to protecting children. To ensure best practice, all educators will attend approved Child Protection training certified by a registered training organisation. Educators will continue to keep up to date, by completing Child Protection Awareness Training annually, ensuring they keep up to date with their current responsibilities as Mandatory Reporters.

**NOTE:** The reporter is not required to prove that abuse has occurred.

*Management/Nominated Supervisor will ensure:*

- The Nominated Supervisor of the Centre and any certified supervisor in day-to-day charge of the Centre have successfully completed a course in child protection approved by the Regulatory Authority.
- All employees and volunteers are:
  - Clear about their roles and responsibilities regarding child protection.
  - Aware of their requirements to immediately report cases where they believe a child is at risk of significant harm to the appropriate authority.
  - Aware of the indicators showing a child may be at risk of harm or significant risk of harm.
- To provide training and development for all educators, staff and volunteers in child protection
- To provide educators with a reporting procedure and professional standards to safeguard children and protect the integrity of educators, staff and volunteers.
- To validate a Working with Children Check for all educators, staff and volunteers unless the person meets the criteria for exemption from a WWCC. See exemption information at <http://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au/home/about+the+check/who+needs+a+check/exemptions/>
- To provide access to relevant acts, regulations, standards and other resources to help educators, staff and volunteers meet their obligations.
- Records of abuse or suspected abuse are kept in line with our Privacy and Confidentiality Policy.
- To notify the Child Protection Services within 30 days of becoming aware of any allegations and convictions for abuse or neglect of a child made against an employee or volunteer and ensure they are investigated and appropriate action taken.
- To notify Child Protection Services of details of employees against whom relevant disciplinary proceedings have been completed or people whose employment has been rejected because of a risk identified in employment screening processes.
- To notify the regulatory authority as soon as practicable of any incident where you reasonably believe that physical and/or sexual abuse of a child has occurred or is occurring while the child is being educated and cared for by the Service
- To notify the regulatory authority as soon as practicable of any allegation that sexual or physical abuse of a child has occurred or is occurring while the child is being educated and cared for by the Service.

| Reporting Authority          | Contact Details  |
|------------------------------|--|
| Department of Human Services | Child Protection Crisis Line (urgent concerns)<br>Ph. 13 12 78<br>Ph. 1800 212 936<br><br>National Child Abuse Helpline:<br>Ph. 1800 99 10 99 (9am-5pm AEST) |



| Jurisdictional Contacts   | Contact Details |
|---|-----------------|
| <b>North Division</b><br>Banyule, Buloke, Darebin, Campaspe, Central Goldfield, Gannawarra, Greater Bendigo, Hume, Loddon, Macedon Ranges, Mildura, Moreland, Mount Alexander, Nillumbik, Swan Hill, Whittlesea, Yarra.   | 1300 664 977    |
| <b>South Division</b><br>Bass Coast, Baw Baw, Bayside, Cardinia, Casey, East Gippsland, Frankston, Glen Eira, Greater Dandenong, Kingston, Latrobe, Mornington Peninsula, Port Phillip, South Gippsland, Stonnington, Wellington.   | 1300 655 795    |
| <b>East Division</b><br>Alpine, Benalla, Boroondara, Greater Shepparton, Indigo, Knox, Manningham, Mansfield, Maroondah, Mitchell, Moira, Monash, Murrindindi, Strathbogie, Towong, Wangaratta, Whitehorse, Wodonga, Yarra Ranges.  | 1300 360 391    |
| <b>West Division - Rural and regional only</b><br>Ararat, Ballarat, Colac-Otway, Corangamite, Glenelg, Golden Plains, Greater Geelong, Hepburn, Hindmarsh, Horsham, Moorabool, Moyne, Northern Grampians, Pyrenees, Queenscliffe, Southern Grampians, Surf Coast, Warrnambool West Wimmera, Yarriambiack. | 1800 075 599    |

**Source:** Australian Children’s Education & Care Quality Authority. (2014). Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law Education and Care Services National Regulations 2015, ECA Code of Ethics. Guide to the National Quality Standard. Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012 Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998, Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (as amended 2014) (Vic), The Commission for Children and Young People Act 2012, Failure to Disclose 2014, Failure to Protect 2015, The Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic), Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic), Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic) Family Law Act 1975 (Cth), State of Victoria (Department of Education and Training). (2017). *Early childhood guidance: Identifying signs of child abuse*. Retrieved from [www.education.vic.gov.au](http://www.education.vic.gov.au), Community and Disability Services Ministers' Conference (2005). *Creating safe environments for children: Organisations, employees and volunteers: National framework*. , Community and Disability Services Ministers' Conference (2005). Schedule: Guidelines for building the capacity of child-safe organisations. *Creating safe environments for children Organisations, employees and volunteers: National framework*. The Commission for Children and Young People Act 1998, Early Years Learning Framework, National Quality Standard. <https://aifs.gov.au/cfca/publications/mandatory-reporting-child-abuse-and-neglect>, ACT Government <http://www.legislation.act.gov.au/a/2008-19/default.asp> National Comparison of Child Protection Systems <https://aifs.gov.au/cfca/publications/national-comparison-child-protection-systems>, Reporting abuse and neglect <https://aifs.gov.au/cfca/publications/reporting-abuse-and-neglect> Mandatory Reporting <https://aifs.gov.au/publications/families-policy-and-law/14-mandatory-reporting-laws> Revised National Quality Standard [http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0003/582591/flowchart-mandatory-reporting-27-5-10.pdf](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/582591/flowchart-mandatory-reporting-27-5-10.pdf), <http://providers.dhhs.vic.gov.au/creating-child-safe-organisations> of the Department of Health and Human Services’ Service Providers website: < <http://providers.dhhs.vic.gov.au/creating-child-safe-organisations>>, [Child safe standards page](http://providers.dhhs.vic.gov.au/child-safe-standards) of the Department of Health and Human Services’ Service Providers website: <http://providers.dhhs.vic.gov.au/child-safe-standards>. *An Overview to the Victorian child safe standards*, has information to help organisations understand the requirements of each of the child safe standards, including examples of measures organisations can put in place, a self-audit tool and a glossary of key terms: < <http://providers.dhhs.vic.gov.au/child-safe-standards>>

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**National Quality Standard – NQS****Quality Area 2: Children’s Health and Safety**

|       |  |  |
|-------|--|--|
| 2.2   | <b>Safety</b>                            | Each child is respected  |
| 2.2.1 | <b>Supervision</b>                       | At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from harm and hazard                                 |
| 2.2.2 | <b>Incident and emergency management</b> | Plans to effectively manage incidents and emergencies are developed in consultation with relevant authorities, practiced and implemented         |
| 2.2.3 | <b>Child Protection</b>                  | Management, educators and staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities to identify and respond to every child at risk of abuse or neglect |

**Education and Care Service National Regulations**

|     |                                   |
|-----|-----------------------------------|
| 84  | Awareness of child protection law |
| 273 | Course in child protection        |

