

PROVIDING A CHILD SAFE ENVIRONMENT POLICY

Rationale

Pied Piper 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

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 safety standards.
- Remove, repair or replace worn and damaged buildings, structures equipment and resources which may provide 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.

Statutory Legislation and Considerations

- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011: 99, 158, 168(2)(f)
- Links to National Quality Standard: 2.3



- Organise indoor and outdoor spaces to ensure risks to health and safety are minimised.
- 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.

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

- All educators and volunteers of our preschool are Mandatory Reporters and are required to report to the Child Protection Helpline (Phone: 133 627 or eReport at: <https://kidsreport.facs.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;

The Approved Provider will:

- Ensure 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 ensuring 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 a copy of 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 (Working With Children Check).
- Identify and providing appropriate resources and training to assist staff, contractors, visitors, volunteers and students to implement this policy
- Keep up to date and comply 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 Certified Supervisors 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 comply 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 developing and implementing 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 etc.

- Offer support to the child and their family, and to other and staff in response to concerns or reports relating to the health, safety and wellbeing of a child at the etc.
- 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

POLICY AVAILABILITY

The Providing a Child Safe Environment Policy will be readily accessible to all staff, families and visitors, and ongoing feedback on this policy will be invited.

REVIEW

Management and staff will monitor and review the effectiveness of the Providing a Child Safe Environment Policy regularly. Updated information from relevant authorities will be incorporated as needed.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- Community Child Care Co-operative Sample Policy

Policy prepared by: Trudy Magus Date: October 2015		
Policy ratified by Management Committee		
Signed:	Title:	Date:
Signed:	Title:	Date:
Projected Review Date: October 2017		
Recorded as: Providing a Child Safe Environment Policy (My Documents/Policies/Current and Updated Policies)		