

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Highland Grove Preschool is committed to providing a child safe environment where children's safety and wellbeing is supported and children feel respected, valued and encouraged to reach their full potential. We ensure all employees and volunteers understand the meaning, importance and benefits of providing a child safe environment and critically, understand their obligations and requirements as Mandatory Reporters.

At all times, management, staff and volunteers treat children with the utmost respect and understanding. Our Service 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 enhance their understanding of their body's response to a situation are more able to predict the outcome and ask for help or evade a negative situation.

NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD (NQS)

QUALITY AREA 2: CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND SAFETY		
2.2	Safety	Each child is respected.
2.2.1	Supervision	At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from harm and hazard.
2.2.2	Incident and emergency management	Plans to effectively manage incidents and emergencies are developed in consultation with relevant authorities, practiced and implemented.
2.2.3	Child Protection	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 SERVICES NATIONAL REGULATIONS	
84	Awareness of child protection law
155	Interactions with children
175	Prescribed information to be notified to Regulatory Authority
176	Time to notify certain information to Regulatory Authority
S162 (A)	Persons in day to day charge and nominated supervisors to have child protection training

PURPOSE

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 neglect and will adhere to our moral and legislative obligations at all times.

We aim to implement effective strategies to assist in ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all children. Our Service will act in the best interest of each child, assisting them to develop to their full potential in a secure and child safe environment.

SCOPE

This policy applies to management, staff, families, visitors (including contractors) and children of the Service.

WHAT IS CHILD ABUSE?

Child abuse is any action towards a child or young person that harms or puts at risk their physical, psychological or emotional health or development. Child abuse can be a single incident or can be a number of different incidents that take place over time.

In NSW there are eight types of abuse, some of which are further divided into more specific categories:

1. Physical abuse
2. Neglect, incorporates;
 - a. Supervision
 - b. Shelter/environment
 - c. Food
 - d. Hygiene/clothing
 - e. Medical care
 - f. Mental health care
 - g. Education – not enrolled / habitual absence
3. Sexual abuse, incorporates;
 - a. Abuse of a child
 - b. Abuse of a young person
 - c. Problematic sexual behaviour toward others
4. Psychological harm
5. Danger to self or others
6. Relinquishing care
7. Carer concern, incorporates:

- a. Substance abuse
 - b. Mental health
 - c. Domestic violence
8. Unborn child

DEFINITIONS

Maltreatment refers to non-accidental behaviour towards another person, which is outside the norms of conduct and entails a substantial risk of causing physical or emotional harm. Behaviours may be intentional or **unintentional** and include acts of omission and commission. Specifically abuse refers to acts of commission and neglects acts of omission. Note that in practice, the terms child abuse and child neglect are used more frequently than the term child maltreatment.

Risk of Significant Harm (ROSH) refers to circumstances causing concern for the safety, welfare and wellbeing a child or young person present to a significant extent. This means it is sufficiently serious to warrant a response by a statutory authority irrespective of the family's consent.

What is significant is not minor or trivial, and may reasonably be expected to produce a substantial and demonstrably adverse impact on the child's or young person's safety, welfare, or wellbeing.

In the case of an unborn child, what is significant is not minor or trivial and may reasonably be expected to produce a substantial and demonstrably adverse impact on the child.

Reasonable grounds refer to the need to have an objective basis for suspecting that a child may be at risk of abuse and neglect based on:

- Firsthand observation of the child or family
- What the child, parent or other person has disclosed
- What can reasonably be indirect based on observation, professional training and/ or experience

Mandatory reporting is the legislative requirement for selected classes of people to report suspected child abuse and neglect to government authorities.

In NSW, mandatory reporting is regulated by the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 (The Care Act).

Mandatory reporters

All staff have a responsibility to recognise and respond to concerns for safety, welfare and the wellbeing of children and young people, and to report these concerns to management.

According to the *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998*, mandated reporters (including people employed in children's services and unpaid managers of these services) must make reports if they suspect on *reasonable grounds* a child is at risk of significant harm because:

- the child's basic physical or psychological needs are not being met or are at risk of not being met
- the parents or other caregivers have not arranged and are unable or unwilling to arrange for the child to receive necessary medical care
- the parents or other caregivers have not arranged and are unable or unwilling to arrange for a school age child to receive an education
- the child has been, or is at risk of being physically or sexually abused or ill-treated
- the child is living in a household where there have been incidents of domestic violence and they are at risk of serious physical or psychological harm
- the parent's or other caregiver's behaviour means the child has suffered or is at risk of suffering serious psychological harm

Source: Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection Act) NO 157 Chapter 3 > Part 2 > Section 23

CHILD STORY REPORTER

Mandatory reporters in **NSW** should use the Mandatory Reporter Guide (MRG) if they have concerns that a child or young person is at risk of being neglected or physically, sexually or emotionally abused. The MRG assists in providing mandatory reporters with the most appropriate reporting decision. It is not designed to determine whether the matter constitutes risk of significant harm (ROSH). This is done at the Child Protection Helpline through the Screening and Response Priority (SCRPT) tool.

The MRG supports mandatory reporters to:

- determine whether a report to the Child Protection Helpline is needed for concerns about possible abuse or neglect of a child (including unborn) or young person
- identify alternative ways to support vulnerable children, young people and their families where a mandatory reporter's response is better served outside the statutory child protection system

It is recommended that mandatory reporters complete the MRG on each occasion they have risk concerns, regardless of their level of experience or expertise. Each circumstance is different, and every child and young person is unique.

Helpline caseworkers will make determinations on reports received from mandatory reporters using SCRPT in conjunction with additional information which may not be available to mandatory reporters.

Mandatory reporters can call the NSW Child Protection Helpline on 132 111 (24 hours a day, 7 days a week).

For more information on Child Story Reporter, refer to:

<https://reporter.childstory.nsw.gov.au/s/>

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

INDICATORS OF ABUSE

There are common physical and behavioural signs that may indicate abuse or neglect. The presence of one of these signs does not necessarily mean abuse or neglect. Behavioural or physical signs which assist in recognising harm to children are known as indicators. The following is a guide only. One indicator on its own may not imply abuse or neglect. However, a single indicator can be as important as the presence of several indicators. Each indicator needs to be deliberated in the perspective of other indicators and the child's circumstances. A child's behaviour is likely to be affected if he/she is under stress. There can be many causes of stress and it is important to find out specifically what is causing the stress. Abuse and neglect can be single incidents or ongoing, and may be intentional or unintentional.

General indicators of abuse and neglect may include:

- Marked delay between injury and seeking medical assistance
- History of injury
- The child gives some indication that the injury did not occur as stated
- The child tells you someone has hurt him/her
- The child tells you about someone he/she knows who has been hurt
- Someone (relative, friend, acquaintance, and sibling) tells you that the child may have been abused.

NEGLECT

Child neglect is the continuous failure by a parent or caregiver to provide a child with the basic requirements needed for their growth and development, such as food, clothing, shelter, medical and dental care, and adequate supervision. Some examples are:

- Inability to respond emotionally to the child
- Child abandonment

- Depriving or withholding physical contact
- Failure to provide psychological nurturing
- Treating one child differently to the others

Indicators of Neglect in children

- Poor standard of hygiene leading to social isolation
- Scavenging or stealing food
- Extreme longing for adult affection
- Lacking a sense of genuine interaction with others
- Acute separation anxiety
- Self-comforting behaviours, e.g. rocking, sucking
- Delay in development milestones
- Untreated physical problems

PHYSICAL ABUSE

Physical abuse is when a child has suffered, or is at risk of suffering, non-accidental trauma or injury, caused by a parent, caregiver or other person. Educators will be particularly aware of looking for possible physical abuse if parents or caregivers:

- Make direct admissions about fear of hurting their children
- Have a family history of violence
- Have a history of their own maltreatment as a child
- Make repeated visits for medical assistance

Indicators of Physical Abuse

- Facial, head and neck bruising
- Lacerations and welts
- Explanations are not consistent with injury
- Bruising or marks that may show the shape of an object
- Bite marks or scratches
- Multiple injuries or bruises
- Ingestion of poisonous substances, alcohol or drugs
- Sprains, twists, dislocations
- Bone fractures
- Burns and scalds

PSYCHOLOGICAL ABUSE

Psychological harm occurs where the behaviour of the parent or caregiver damages the confidence and self-esteem of the child, resulting in serious emotional deficiency or trauma. In general, it is the frequency and duration of this behaviour that causes harm. Some examples are:

- Constant or excessive criticism, condescending, teasing of a child or ignoring or withholding admiration and affection
- Excessive or unreasonable demands
- Persistent hostility, severe verbal abuse, and rejection
- Belief that a specific child is bad or 'evil'
- Using inappropriate physical or social isolation as punishment
- Exposure to domestic violence
- Intimidating or threatening behaviour.

Indicators of psychological abuse

- Feeling of worthlessness about them
- Inability to value others
- Lack of trust in people and expectations
- Lack of 'people skills' necessary for daily functioning
- Extreme attention seeking behaviours
- Extremely eager to please or obey adults
- May take extreme risks, is markedly disruptive, bullying, or aggressive
- Other behavioural disorders (disruptiveness, aggressiveness, bullying)
- Suicide threats (in young people)
- Running away from home.

SEXUAL ABUSE

Sexual abuse is when someone involves a child in a sexual activity. Children are often bribed or threatened physically and psychologically to make them participate in the activity. Sexual abuse includes:

- Exposing the child to the sexual behaviours of others
- Coercing the child to engage in sexual behaviour with other children or adults
- Verbal threats of sexual abuse
- Exposing the child to pornography

Indicators of Sexual Abuse

- The child describes sexual acts
- Direct or indirect disclosures

- Age inappropriate behaviour and/or persistent sexual behaviour
- Self-destructive behaviour
- Regression in developmental achievements
- Child being in contact with a suspected or known perpetrator of sexual assault
- Bleeding from the vagina or anus
- Injuries such as tears to the genitalia

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE/CARER CONCERN

Domestic violence, or intimate partner violence, is a violation of human rights. It involves violent, abusive or intimidating behaviour carried out by an adult against a partner or former partner to control and dominate that person.

Domestic violence causes fear, physical, and/or psychological harm. It is most often violent, abusive, or intimidating behaviour. Living with domestic violence has a profound effect upon children and young people and therefore constitutes a form of child abuse. (*The NSW Domestic and Family Violence Action Plan, June 2010*)

Indicators of Domestic Violence

The child may:

- Demonstrate aggressive behaviour
- Develop phobias & insomnia
- Experience anxiety
- Show signs of depression
- Have diminished self esteem
- Demonstrate poor academic performance and problem-solving skills
- Have reduced social skills including low levels of empathy
- Show emotional distress
- Have physical complaints

NOTE THAT ONLY THE FREQUENTLY REQUIRED CATEGORIES HAVE BEEN INCLUDED HERE. FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ON INDICATORS PLEASE REFER TO THE *RESOURCES FOR INDICATORS OF ABUSE AND NEGLECT* SECTION OF THIS POLICY.

WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECK

People working or volunteering with children in New South Wales must, by law, have a Working with Children Check (WWCC). The Office of the Children's Guardian provides checks of workers and volunteers to organisations, contributing to creating safe environments for children and other vulnerable people.

A WWCC Check is an assessment of whether a person poses an unacceptable risk to children. As part of the process, the Office of the Children's Guardian will look at criminal history, child protection information and other information.

Working with Children Checks are valid for five years. Cleared applicants are subject to ongoing monitoring and relevant new records may lead to the clearance being revoked. If new information about a person means they pose a risk to children's safety, that person's check will be re-assessed and, if necessary, they will be prohibited from working with children. The Office of the Children's Guardian will inform both the person affected and any organisations they're linked to about the change in status.

Organisations need to be registered with the Office of the Children's Guardian to verify employees WWCC. Working With Children Checks must be verified BEFORE the employee begins working with children.

DEFINITIONS

Mandatory reporting is the legislative requirement for selected classes of people to report suspected child abuse and neglect to government authorities. In NSW, mandatory reporting is regulated by the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 (The Care Act).

Mandatory reporters

Mandatory reporters are people who deliver the following services, wholly or partly, to children as part of their paid or professional work:

- Health care (e.g., registered medical practitioners, specialists, general practice nurses, midwives, occupational therapists, speech therapists, psychologists, dentists and other allied health professionals working in sole practice or in public or private health practices)
- Welfare (e.g., social workers, caseworkers and youth workers)
- Education (e.g., teachers, counsellors, principals)
- Children's services (e.g., childcare workers, family day carers and home-based carers)
- Residential services (e.g., refuge workers)
- Law enforcement (e.g., police)
- Disability services- disability support workers and personal care workers
- Registered psychologists providing a professional service as a psychologist
- A person in religious ministry or a person providing religious-based activities to children

All staff have a responsibility to recognise and respond to concerns for safety, welfare and the wellbeing of children and young people, and to report these concerns to management.

According to the *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998*, mandated reporters (including people employed in children's services and unpaid managers of these services) must make reports if they suspect on *reasonable grounds* a child is at risk of significant harm. Mandatory reporters must make a report to the Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) for any of the reasons below:

- the child's basic physical or psychological needs are not being met or are at risk of not being met
- the parents or other caregivers have not arranged and are unable or unwilling to arrange for the child to receive necessary medical care
- the parents or other caregivers have not arranged and are unable or unwilling to arrange for a school age child to receive an education (in accordance with the Education Act 1990)
- the child has been, or is at risk of being physically or sexually abused or ill-treated
- the child is living in a household where there have been incidents of domestic violence and they are at risk of serious physical or psychological harm
- the parent's or other caregiver's behaviour means the child has suffered or is at risk of suffering serious psychological harm

Source: Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection Act) NO 157 Chapter 3 > Part 2 > Section 23 & Communities & Justice Mandatory reporters: How to make a child protection report

Maltreatment refers to non-accidental behaviour towards another person, which is outside the norms of conduct and entails a substantial risk of causing physical or emotional harm. Behaviours may be intentional or **unintentional** and include acts of omission and commission. Specifically abuse refers to acts of commission and neglects acts of omission. Note that in practice, the terms child abuse and child neglect are used more frequently than the term child maltreatment.

Risk of Significant Harm (ROSH) refers to circumstances causing concern for the safety, welfare and wellbeing a child or young person present to a significant extent. This means it is sufficiently serious to warrant a response by a statutory authority irrespective of the family's consent. Mandatory reporters should report their concern to the Child Protection Helpline within 24 hours.

What is significant is not minor or trivial and may reasonably be expected to produce a substantial and demonstrably adverse impact on the child's or young person's safety, welfare, or wellbeing. In the case of an unborn child, what is significant is not minor or trivial and may reasonably be expected to produce a substantial and demonstrably adverse impact on the child.

Immediate Risk of Significant Harm (IROSH) is a term used in the Mandatory Report Guide to tell reporters that they must report *immediately* to Communities & Justice.

Reasonable grounds refer to the need to have an objective basis for suspecting that a child may be at risk of abuse and neglect based on:

- Firsthand observation of the child or family
- What the child, parent or other person has disclosed

- What can reasonably be indirect based on observation, professional training and/ or experience

CHILDSTORY REPORTER COMMUNITY

If a child is at immediate risk and police or medical assistance is required, educators/staff must contact emergency services immediately on 000.

Mandatory reporters in **NSW** should use the online Mandatory Reporter Guide (MRG) if they have concerns that a child or young person is at risk of being neglected or physically, sexually or emotionally abused. The MRG assists in providing mandatory reporters with the most appropriate reporting decision.

The MRG supports mandatory reporters to:

- determine whether a report to the Child Protection Helpline is needed for concerns about possible abuse or neglect of a child (including unborn) or young person
- identify alternative ways to support vulnerable children, young people and their families where a mandatory reporter's response is better served outside the statutory child protection system

It is recommended that mandatory reporters complete the MRG on each occasion they have risk concerns, regardless of their level of experience or expertise. Each circumstance is different, and every child and young person is unique.

The MRG provides eight different decision trees to assist reporters to match the concerns identified. The decision trees include:

9. Physical abuse
10. Neglect, incorporates
 - a. Supervision
 - b. Shelter/environment
 - c. Food
 - d. Hygiene/clothing
 - e. Medical care
 - f. Mental health care
 - g. Education – not enrolled / habitual absence
11. Sexual abuse, incorporates
 - a. Abuse of a child
 - b. Abuse of a young person
 - c. Problematic sexual behaviour toward others
12. Psychological harm
13. Danger to self or others
14. Relinquishing care

15. Carer concern, incorporates

- a. Substance abuse
- b. Mental health
- c. Domestic violence

16. Unborn child

<https://reporter.childstory.nsw.gov.au/s/mrg>

Mandatory reporters will be provided with an outcome that advises on the best course of action. A *Decision Report* can be generated and kept on record at the service. Depending upon the outcome, reporters can submit a child protection report (eReport) directly through the *ChildStory Reporter Community* website or contact the Child Protection Helpline immediately on 132 111.

[see: *NSW Child Protection MRG Support Guide- Child Care Centre Desktop*]

IMPLEMENTATION

Our Service strongly opposes any type of abuse against a child and endorses high quality practices in relation to protecting children. Educators have an important role to support children and young people and to identify concerns that may jeopardise their safety, welfare, or wellbeing. To ensure best practice, all permanent educators will attend approved Child Protection training certified by a registered training organisation. Educators will continue to maintain current knowledge of child protection and Mandatory Reporter requirements by completing Child Protection Awareness refresher training every 3 years.

The Approved Provider/ Nominated Supervisor will ensure:

- any person in day-to-day charge of the Service has successfully completed a course in child protection approved by the Regulatory Authority
- all permanent educators have completed a course in child protection approved by the Regulatory Authority and a refresher course will be completed every 3 years.
- all educators', staff, health professionals (who are visiting for 6 or more times) and volunteers' Working with Children Checks are validated unless the person meets the criteria for exemption from a WWCC. See exemption factsheet at <http://www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au/child-safe-organisations/working-with-children-check/apply>
- all employees and volunteers are:
 - provided with a copy of the current Child Protection policy as part of the induction process at the Service
 - aware of their mandatory reporting obligations and responsibilities to report suspected risk or significant risk of harm to the NSW Child Protection Helpline on **132 111**

- aware of indicators showing a child may be at risk of harm or significant risk of harm.
- educators are provided with a reporting procedure and professional standards to safeguard children and protect the integrity of educators, staff and volunteers.
- access is provided to all staff regarding relevant legislations, 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 regulatory authority through the NQA-ITS (within 7 days) of any incident where it is reasonably believed 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 through the NQA-ITS (within 7 days) 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.
- the Office of the Children’s Guardian is notified within 7 business days of becoming aware of any allegations and/or convictions of abuse or neglect of a child made against an employee or volunteer and ensure they are investigated, and appropriate action taken.

Educators will:

- contact the police on 000 if there is an immediate danger to a child and intervene if it is safe to do so
- comprehend their obligations as mandatory reporters and their requirement to report any situation where they believe, on reasonable grounds, that a child is at risk of significant harm to the Child Protection Helpline on **132 111** (available 24 hours/7 days a week).
- report to the Director immediately if there are any concerns about a child’s wellbeing and prior to making a notification
- be able to recognise indicators of abuse
- respect what a child discloses, taking it seriously and follow up on their concerns through the appropriate channels.
- have completed initial Child Protection Certificate, and a refresher course every 3 years, to understand the child protection reporting process and use of the Mandatory Reporter Guide (MRG) <https://reporter.childstory.nsw.gov.au/s/mrg>
- refer families to appropriate agencies where concerns of harm do not meet the threshold of significant harm. These services may be located through CWU (Child Wellbeing Units) or/and FRS (Family Referral Services) at <http://www.keepthemsafe.nsw.gov.au> Family consent will be sought before making referrals.
- promote the welfare, safety, and wellbeing of children at the Service
- allow children to be part of decision-making processes where appropriate

- prepare accurate records recording exactly what happened, conversations that took place and what was observed to pass on to the relevant authorities to assist with any investigation.
- understand that allegations of abuse or suspected abuse against them are treated in the same way as allegations of abuse against other people
- NOT investigate suspicion of abuse or neglect but collect only enough information to substantiate concerns and pass on to the Child Protection Helpline or appropriate authority.
- Be responsive and proactive in developmentally appropriate ways to support children's agency in protective behaviours. Educators will implement programs using up to date research and tools and resources, including Office of the Children's Guardian 'Safe Series'.

DOCUMENTING A SUSPICION OF HARM

If educators have concerns about the safety of a child they will:

- record their concerns in a non-judgmental and accurate manner as soon as possible using the centre's Child Protection Observation Template where possible.
- record their own observations as well as precise details of any discussion with a parent (who may for example explain a noticeable mark on a child).
- not endeavour to conduct their own investigation
- document as soon as possible so the details are accurate including:
 - child's personal details (name, address, DOB, details of siblings)
 - time, date and place of the suspicion
 - full details of the suspected abuse
 - date of report and signature

DOCUMENTING A DISCLOSURE

A disclosure of harm emerges when someone, including a child, tells you about harm that has happened or is likely to happen. When a child discloses that he or she has been abused, it is an opportunity for an adult to provide immediate support and comfort and to assist in protecting the child from the abuse. It is also a chance to help the child connect to professional services that can keep them safe, provide support and facilitate their recovery from trauma. Disclosure is about seeking support and your response can have a great impact on the child or young person's ability to seek further help and recover from the trauma.

When receiving a disclosure of harm, the educator will:

- remain calm and find a private place to talk
- not promise to keep a secret
- tell the child/person they have done the right thing in revealing the information but that they'll need to tell someone who can help keep the child safe

- only ask enough questions to confirm the need to report the matter because probing questions could cause distress, confusion and interfere with any later enquiries
- not attempt to conduct their own investigation or mediate an outcome between the parties involved.
- document as soon as possible, where possible on the Child Protection Observation template, so the details are accurately captured including:
 - time, date and place of the disclosure
 - ‘*word for word*’ what happened and what was said, including anything they (the staff member/educator) said and any actions that have been taken
 - date of report and signature.

In addition, an educator receiving a disclosure from a child will:

- give the child or young person their full attention
- maintain a calm appearance
- reassure the child or young person it is right to tell
- accept the child or young person will disclose only what is comfortable and recognise the bravery/strength of the child for talking about something that is difficult
- let the child or young person take his or her time
- let the child or young person use his or her own words
- not make promises that can't be kept. For example, never promise that you will not tell anyone else
- honestly tell the child or young person what you plan to do next
- not confront the perpetrator.

CONFIDENTIALITY

It is important that any notification remains confidential, as it is vitally important to remember that no confirmation of any allegation can be made until the matter is investigated. The individual who makes the notification should not inform the suspected perpetrator (if known). This ensures the matter can be investigated without contamination of evidence or pre-rehearsed statements. It also minimises the risk of retaliation on the child for disclosing.

Protection for reporters

All reporters are protected against retribution for making or proposing to make a report under amendments to the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 effective 1 March 2020. The identity of the reporter is protected by law from being disclosed, except in certain exceptional circumstances. Provided the report is made in good faith:

- The report will not breach standards of professional conduct
- The report cannot lead to defamation and civil and criminal liability

- The report is not admissible in any proceedings as evidence against the person who made the report
- A person cannot be compelled by a court to provide the report or disclose its contents
- The identity of the person making the report is protected.

A report is also an exempt document under the *Freedom of Information Act 1989*.

BREACH OF CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

All educators and staff working with children have a duty of care to support and protect children. A duty of care is breached if a person:

- does something that a reasonable person in that person's position would not do in a particular situation
- fails to do something that a reasonable person in that person's position would do in the circumstances or
- acts or fails to act in a way that causes harm to someone the person owes a duty of care.

REPORTABLE CONDUCT SCHEME-ALLEGATIONS AGAINST EMPLOYEES, VOLUNTEERS or STUDENTS (or contractors)

The Approved Provider has the legislative obligation under the *Reportable Conduct Scheme* to notify the *Office of the Children's Guardian* (OCG) of reportable allegations and convictions against their employees (including volunteers and contractors), investigate the allegation and advise the Office of the outcome.

All staff members have an obligation to report relevant allegations of a child protection nature as part of the Reportable Conduct Scheme to the Approved Provide. (or OCG). This reportable conduct may have occurred either within work hours or outside work hours. A child is anyone under the age of 18 at the time of the alleged conduct occurred. Educators will let the centre Director know if they have an allegation of reportable conduct.

The Children's Guardian Act 2019 defines reportable conduct as:

- a sexual offence has been committed against, with or in the presence of a child
- sexual misconduct with, towards or in the presence of a child
- ill-treatment of a child
- neglect of a child
- an assault against a child
- an offence under s43B (failure to protect) or s 316A (failure to report) of the Crimes Act 1900; and
- behaviour that cause significant emotional or psychological harm to the child

In addition, the Approved Provider (in our case, the centre Director) must take appropriate action to prevent reportable conduct by employees. The *Children's Guardian Act 2019*, effective 1 March 2020, defines the head of an organisation as a '**relevant entity**'. An approved education and care service is listed at Schedule 1 of the Act as an 'entity'.

The Approved Provider must notify the Children's Guardian within seven (7) business days and conduct an investigation into the allegations. [7-day notification form](#) [Reportable Conduct Directorate: \(02\) 8219 3800. \(Monday – Friday\)](#)

A final report of the investigation must be ready to submit within 30 calendar days or provide information about the progress of the investigation to the Children's Guardian. [30 Day interim report form](#)

The Approved Provider must send a report to the *Office of the Children's Guardian* that enables the Office of the Children's Guardian to determine whether the investigation was completed satisfactorily and whether appropriate action was or can be taken. The Approved Provider must ensure an appropriate level of confidentiality of information relating to the reportable allegations as per the Act or other legislation. The heads of relevant entities (in this case, our centre director) have obligations under section 57 of the Act to disclose 'relevant information' to the following persons unless they are satisfied that the disclosure is not in the public interest:

- a child to whom the information relates
- a parent of the child
- if the child is in out-of-home care- an authorised carer that provides out-of-home care to the child.

See: <https://www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au/child-safe-organisations/reportable-conduct-scheme/fact-sheets> for further information.

The Children's Guardian will monitor the entity's response and may conduct their own investigation.

see: <https://www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au/child-safe-organisations/training-and-resources/webinars-and-face-to-face-training> for further information and training

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT/REFLECTION

Our *Child Protection Policy* will be updated and reviewed annually in consultation with families, staff, educators and management.

EDUCATING CHILDREN ABOUT PROTECTIVE BEHAVIOUR

Our program will utilise the 'Safe Series' and educate children:

- about acceptable and unacceptable behaviour, and what is appropriate and inappropriate contact at an age appropriate level and understanding
- about their right to feel safe at all times
- to say 'no' to anything that makes them feel unsafe or uncomfortable
- about how to use their own knowledge and understanding to feel safe
- to identify feelings that they do not feel safe
- the difference between 'good' and 'bad' secrets
- that there is no secret or story that cannot be shared with someone they trust
- that educators are available for them if they have any concerns
- to tell educators of any suspicious activities or people
- to recognise and express their feelings verbally and non-verbally
- that they can choose to change the way they are feeling.

RESOURCES FOR INDICATORS OF ABUSE OR NEGLECT

<https://www.communities.qld.gov.au/disability/preventing-responding-abuse-neglect-exploitation/identifying-abuse-neglect-exploitation/indicators-signs>

<http://det.wa.edu.au/childprotection/detcms/inclusiveeducation/child-protection/public/recognising-abuse/indicators-of-abuse.en?cat-id=1337568>

<https://education.nsw.gov.au/student-wellbeing/child-protection/child-protection-policy-guidelines/resources>

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REVIEW

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