



## Providing a Child Safe Environment Policy

**Aim:**

Maryland Care and Early Education Centre has a morale and legal responsibility to ensure the rights and best interest of each individual child are paramount. We will:

- Ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of children at the service is protected at all times
- Ensure that staff educating and caring for children at the service act in the best interest 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
- Work in partnership with families as a share responsibility for children’s health, safety, wellbeing and development
- Ensure adequate supervision of children at all times
- Encourage, promote and facilitate safe risky play
- To ensure every reasonable precaution is taken to protect all children who is being educated and cared for at the service from any harm and hazard likely to cause injury

**Legislative requirements / Sources:**

**Education and Care Services National Law & Regulations 2011**

<b>82</b>	Tobacco. Drug and alcohol-free environment
<b>83</b>	Staff members are family day care educators not be affected by alcohol and drugs
<b>84</b>	Awareness of child protection law
<b>99</b>	Children leaving the education and care premises
<b>103</b>	Premises, furniture and equipment to be safe, clean and in good repair
<b>115</b>	Premises designed to facilitate supervision
<b>122</b>	Educators must be working directly with children and included in ratios
<b>123</b>	Educator to child ratios – centre-based services
<b>158</b>	Children’s attendance record to be kept by approved provider
<b>165</b>	Record of visitors
<b>168 (2)(h)</b>	Providing a child safe environment
<b>168 (2)(h) (i)</b>	The promotion of a culture of child safety and wellbeing within the service

<b>168 (2)(h)(ii)</b>	The safe use of online environments at the service
<b>176</b>	Time to notify certain information to Regulatory Authority

**National Law:**

<b>162A</b>	Child protection training
<b>165</b>	Offence to inadequately supervise children
<b>166</b>	Offence to use inappropriate behaviour
<b>167</b>	Offence relating to protection of children from harm and hazards

**National Quality Standards:**

<b>QA2</b>	<b>Children’s health and safety</b>
<b>2.2</b>	<b>Safety – Each child is protected</b>
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, practised and implemented
2.2.3	Children 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
<b>QA3</b>	<b>Physical Environment</b>
<b>3.1</b>	<b>Design – The design of the facilities is appropriate for the operation of the service</b>
3.1.1	Fit for purpose- outdoor and indoor spaces, building, fixtures and fittings are suitable for their purpose, including supporting access for every child
3.1.2	Upkeep – premises, furniture and equipment are safe, clean and well maintained
<b>3.2</b>	<b>Use – the service environment is inclusive, promotes competence and supports exploration and play-based learning</b>
3.2.1	Inclusive environment - Outdoor and indoor spaces are organised and adapted to support every child’s participation and to engage every child in quality experiences in both built and natural environments
<b>QA7</b>	<b>Governance and Management</b>
<b>7.1</b>	<b>Governance – Governance supports the operation of a quality service</b>
7.1.1	Management systems – systems are in place to manage risk and enable the effective management and operation of a quality service
<b>7.2</b>	<b>Leadership – Effective leadership builds and promotes a positive organisational culture and professional learning community</b>
7.2.1	Continuous improvement – there is effective self-assessment and quality improvement process in place

**Sources:**

- Australian Child Protection Legislation
- Privacy Act 1988
- Convention Rights of the Child

- Early Childhood Australia statement on young children and digital technologies
- Child Safe Standards
- Kids Safe

**Related Policies:**

- Child Protection
- Supervision of Children
- Accident, Emergencies and Critical Incident
- Interactions with Children
- Work Health & Safety
- Determining Responsible Person
- Child Safe Code of Conduct

<b>Implementation:</b>
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**Supervision**

**The Approved Provider will:**

- Ensure sufficient numbers of educators are employed to maintain adequate supervision of children at all times
- Adopt policies and procedures to protect children being educated and cared for by the service from harm and from any hazard likely to cause injury

**The Nominated Supervisor will:**

- Draw up rosters to ensure that adequate numbers of educators are on duty to meet ratio and qualification requirements and to ensure adequate supervision of children at all times
- Engage casual staff as appropriate
- Ensure staff are aware of the need for adequate supervision of children at all times. This may include the development of supervision charts for outdoor or indoor area and the implementation of play spaces. Play spaces allow educators to spread themselves around the playground in different areas providing adequate supervision of all areas and allowing children to be engaged in an experience when separating from families.
- Ensure policies and procedures adopted to protect children being educated and cared for by the service from harm and from any hazard or likely to cause injury are implemented and that all staff are aware of these policies and procedures
- Ensure policies and procedures are kept up to date with relevant changes in legislation and practices
- Ensure there is a Responsible Person is rostered on throughout the day and their name and photo is displayed in the foyer
- Ensure volunteers and students are aware of confidentiality and outline what their roles and responsibilities are while at the service

**Educators will:**

- Actively supervise children within the indoor and outdoor environments at all times. Ensure all areas of the playground/ rooms are supervised by an Educator.
- Inform the Nominated Supervisor whenever supervision is inadequate within their room to ensure the health and safety of all children
- Ensure no child is left alone (or is out of sight) with a visitor, volunteer, student, parent or guardian at the service

**Organisation of Rooms and Environments****The Approved Provider will:**

- Make sufficient allowances within budgets to allow for the replacement of worn and damaged equipment and resources which may provide a safety risk for children
- Make sufficient allowances within the budget to allow for the adequate maintenance of all indoor and outdoor environments

**The Nominated Supervisor will:**

- Organise rooms and groupings to enable adequate supervision of children to minimise the risk to children
- Organise repairs and maintenance to equipment and environments in a timely manner
- Ensure smoking is banned within the grounds of, and within the legislated distance for NSW of any entrance or enclosed public space
- Ensure learning environments provide adequate child groupings, sufficient space, and include carefully chosen and well maintained resources and equipment
- Ensure secure storage of hazardous products including chemicals and medications

**Educators and staff will:**

- Organise indoor and outdoor spaces to ensure risks to children's health and safety are minimised
- Ensure the supervision of all children in the outdoor area as we are a mixed age play centre through a supervision plan and play spaces.
- Inform the Nominated Supervisor and document in the maintenance book the repairs and maintenance needed to ensure the health and safety of the children
- Ensure secure storage of hazardous products including chemicals and medications

## **Risk Assessments**

A risk assessment is a legislative requirement that service implement a risk management plan to identify hazards and risks to ensure a child safe environment as well as the benefits of the risk. They key principles of a risk assessment include:

- Identifying all hazards or potential hazards
- Assess the risk of harm or potential harm for each hazard
- Control or manage the risk – Risk matrix
- Monitor and improve safety – action plan
- Evaluate and review

### **The Approved Provider will:**

- Provide a child safe environment

### **The Nominated Supervisor will:**

- Select a member of staff to be the WH&S Officer. They will conduct a risk assessment of the service environment on a monthly basis to determine any risks to children’s health and safety
- 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 Department of Education and Communities
- Review accident, injury, incident data
- Collaborate with staff and educators to develop a first aid plan for the service (i.e. Identification of first aid qualified staff, contact details of emergency services and other emergency contacts and response procedures following an illness or incident)
- Support educators in completing risk assessments and sign off on these once discussed and approved

### **Educators and staff will:**

- Undertake risk assessments in the environment when needed in order to plan safe experiences for children
- Report any risks or hazards within the service to the Nominated Supervisor as soon as possible and document in the Maintenance folder and/or the WH&S folder to be fixed in a timely manner
- Complete daily safety checklists on both the indoor and outdoor environments
- Risk assessments are conducted for excursions and transportation arranged

## **Child Protection**

The Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, Educators and Staff will comply with the requirements of Maryland Care & Early Education Centre's child protection policy to ensure the minimisation of children's risk of harm.

We will also:

- Ensure that all staff including educators and volunteers have a current WWCC (working with children check)
- Ensure all staff are given information and/or training around child protection law and obligations they have under that law
- Ensure all staff are aware of our Child Safe Code of Conduct and abide by this code
- When responding to complaints of child abuse and other concerns it is a child-focused approach ensuring the child is the main priority
- Follow the complaints policy and procedure when managing allegations that a child is exhibiting sexual behaviors
- Staff will undertake training to:
  - Understand their responsibility as a mandatory reporter
  - Make appropriate responses to disclosures of abuse
  - Be able to recognise factors that increase a child's vulnerability

## **Digital Technologies and the Online Environment**

The staff at Maryland Care and Early Education Centre will have access to The Early Childhood Australia Statement on young children and digital technologies and follow the four fundamental principles and recommended practices:

1. Relationships
2. Health and wellbeing
3. Citizenship
4. Play and pedagogy

<b>Review:</b>
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This policy is the intellectual property of Maryland Care & Early Education Centre and is created with consultation of staff and families attending the service. This policy will be reviewed annually. This policy is available in other languages upon request.

Last Review: April 2024

Next Review: April 2025