**Child Safety Environment Policy 2022**

**Updates in Yellow**

**Links Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011, National Quality Standard 2011**

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| Regulation | 103 | Premises, furniture and equipment to be safe, clean and in good repair |
| Regulation | 104 | Fencing and security |
| Regulation | 105 | Furniture and equipment |
| Regulation  | 120 | Educators who are under 18 to be supervised |
| Regulation | 168 | Education and care facilities must have policies and procedures  |
| Regulation | 173 | Prescribed Information to be displayed |

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|  NQS | QA2.1.3 | Healthy eating and physical activity are promoted and appropriate for each child |
| NQS | QA2.2.1 | At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from harm and hazard |
| NQS | QA3.1.1 | Outdoor and indoor spaces, buildings, fixtures and fittings are suitable for their purpose, including supporting the access of every child |
| NQS | QA3.1.2 | Premises, furniture and equipment are safe, clean and well maintained  |

**Background**

The Service recognises that Children have the right to be safe. The physical environment plays a critical role in keeping children safe, particularly as they are often unable to identify risks and dangers for themselves. In early education and care services, the buildings, furniture and equipment must meet initial service approval requirements and, after that, be kept safe, clean and well-maintained so that unintentional injuries to children and adults in the service are minimised.

“Organisations and people working with children in NSW share responsibility for keeping children safe. Applying the Standards makes it easier for children, parents, carers and staff to share their understanding of child safety across different settings. The Standards promote consistency across care environments.”

**Policy statement**

This Policy outlines the roles and responsibilities of the Approved Provider, staff and educators in maintaining a safe environment free from risk of harm and abuse for children and adults at the Service.

**Strategies and practices**

* The Service’s building, facilities, furniture and equipment meet licensing requirements and those of all relevant national and state regulatory bodies, local council, and the National Construction Code 2019.
* Play equipment has been installed strictly according to manufacturers’ instructions. All fixed and moveable playground equipment meets the Australian Standards AS 4685.1-6 and maintained in accordance with AS 4685.0:2017 Playground Equipment and surfacing.
* Synthetic impact attenuating surfaces used as playground surfacing will need to be tested post installation then every 3 years to verify ongoing compliance with Australian Standards ([AS 4422:2016 Playground Surfacing](https://www.standards.org.au/standards-catalogue/sa-snz/consumer/cs-005/as--4422-colon-2016)**).**
* If loose fill surfacing is used as playground surfacing, materials which are tested and comply with Australian standard (AS 4422:2016 Playground Surfacing). A certificate of compliance will be obtained from the supplier and kept as a part of your playground safety management system. Loose fill surfacing is to be installed at a depth of 300mm and inspected routinely, ensuring it is maintained at no less than 200mm in depth.
* All toys meet Australian and New Zealand Standard AS/NZS 8124 Part 6 (ISO 8124-4:2014, MOD) Safety of toys - Swings, slides and similar activity toys for indoor and outdoor family domestic use; are age appropriate, well maintained and have non toxic finishing.
* Before introducing new activities or equipment into an environment, one must conduct a risk/benefit assessment to determine if all implications have been considered.
* The Service employs a handyman to repair equipment when necessary. A Maintenance Book is used to record the details of repairs. No item is used after repair until the Nominated Supervisor has checked and approved the repair.
* Educators complete a Safety Check List – Outdoor Daily and a Safety Check List – Indoor Daily before the Service opens to ensure the environment is safe for children. Each Friday morning after the check is completed, the lists are taken to the main office to be filed.
* In order to determine the safe air and surface temperatures for children to play on different outdoor equipment and surfaces, educators use hand check “touch”, to measure the surface temperature of outdoor equipment at various times of the day. The data gathered is recorded on RPs Kinderloop all day checklist form.
* Staff maintain a clean and healthy sandpit by cleaning the sandpit weekly in accordance with the Service’s Sandpit Cleaning Procedure, and then completing the daily opening checklist.
* During gastro outbreak the sandpit is not accessible to the public, See the sandpit cleaning procedure for further details.
* Should any matter requiring immediate attention be identified during the educators’ checks, educators complete a Hazard Report Form and place it the designated place for the Nominated Supervisor’s immediate attention and if applicable removed from the children’s access.
* The Service is safe, clean and well maintained. Refer to the Service’s *Cleaning Policy*.
* The Nominated Supervisor in conjunction with the area manager conducts a comprehensive Service safety audit every three months, and documents it. This audit covers all play areas, approaches to the Service, outdoor environments, kitchen, laundry and other utility areas, fences and general maintenance items. Any items requiring attention are recorded in the Maintenance Book, and the audit document filed.
* Yearly, the Service engages an external expert to conduct a compliance and safety audit of every aspect of the Service’s building and facilities.

Child Safe Standards:

* Child safe standards should be implemented into the culture of the Service, throughout the policies and procedures and instilled into the minds of all who enter the childcare Service. Have a child safe environment is more than the physical and what is surrounding the children but also who is working with and around the children.
* Child Safety is embedded in the service leadership, governance and culture
* Children participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously
* Equity is upheld and diverse needs are taken into account
* People working with children are suitable and supported
* Processes to respond to complaints of child abuse are child focused
* Staff are trained and equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children safe
* Physical and online environments minimise the opportunity for abuse to occur
* Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is continuously reviewed and improved

Policies and procedures document how the organisation is child safe.

* Educators are trained in child protection and Services provide a Protective Behaviour/Child protection program which is available for all staff working with children.
* Educators are aware and respond appropriately to child behaviours which are linked to abuse.
* Educators should be fully aware of their reporting obligations when a child is at risk of abuse or harm or when a child discloses information to them.
* The Service needs to consider what procedures and policies are in place to identify, respond to and report child abuse whether in the service or not. The Service will need to look at preventative measures such as awareness through training and staff meetings.
* The Service should have a reporting log of harm for any disclosure or harm done to children.
* Children have a voice in the service and are encouraged to share what makes them feel safe and also unsafe. They are to share their opinions on policies, procedures and any decisions that affect them.
* Children should always be within proximity to educators where they can hear and or see children at all times.
* Never leave volunteers, visitors or families alone with children and never leave unqualified staff or educators under the age of 18 alone with children while at the education and care Service.

**Additional safe practices for babies**

* All equipment (e.g. cots, high chairs, prams) used by babies is regularly cleaned and serviced.
* Mouthed toys are set aside for cleaning every single time its mouthed by a baby.
* Unused baby dummies are placed in a container labelled with the child’s name/inside of child’s bag.

**Responsibilities of parents**

* To ensure their children do not drop items along pathways, halls and entry areas when entering or leaving the Service.
* To ensure that they close the gates and doors securely behind them whilst checking no child is following them as they move into and out of the building and rooms.
* To drive slowly and carefully in and around the driveways and car park areas as children may be moving through those spaces with parents.
* Be aware of the signage across the service pertaining to allergies and anaphylaxis.
* Parents need to report the Responsible person any misconduct of educators including being aggressive or inappropriate toward a child.

**Procedures and forms**

* Hazard Report Form
* Maintenance Book
* Safety Checklist – Indoor Daily
* Safety Checklist – Outdoor Daily including surface temperature check on RP checklist on Kinderloop
* Sandpit Cleaning Procedure
* Sandpit Cleaning Register (part of opening outdoor checklist)
* Safety CL-Mid day

**Links to other policies**

* Cleaning Policy
* Dangerous Products, Plants, Vermin and Objects Policy
* Supervision Policy

**Sources**

* Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
* Guide to the National Quality Framework 2018 (September 2020 Update): Section 4 – Operational Requirements [https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-09/Guide-to-the-NQF-September-2020.pdf accessed 30 December 2020](https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-09/Guide-to-the-NQF-September-2020.pdf%20accessed%2030%20December%202020)
* Office of the Children’s Guardian<https://www.ocg.nsw.gov.au/child-safe-organisations/training-and-resources/child-safe-standards>

**Further reading and useful websites** *(Consistent with the approach of the National Quality Framework, the following references have prioritised efficacy and appropriateness to inform best practice, and legislative compliance over state or territory preferences.)*

* **Kidsafe.(2022) playground hazards.**
* **Standards Australia- office of the children’s guardian.** [**https://www.ocg.nsw.gov.au/child-safe-organisations/training-and-resources/child-safe-resources/child-safe-training**](https://www.ocg.nsw.gov.au/child-safe-organisations/training-and-resources/child-safe-resources/child-safe-training)

**Policy review**

The Service encourages staff and parents to be actively involved in the annual review of each of its policies and procedures. In addition, the Service will accommodate any new legislative changes as they occur and any issues identified as part the Service’s commitment to quality improvement. The Service consults with relevant recognised authorities as part of the annual review to ensure the policy contents are consistent with current research and contemporary views on best practice.

**Amendment History**

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| **Version** | **Amendment** | **Date Amended/feedback provided** |
| Safety Environment policy  | Policy changed to ACA policy- Dr AbbeyNQS & Regulations AddedReview- responsibility of the parents added, strategies-dot points added, Updated references, policy name change Update to incorporate Child safety standards, playground safety, parental responsibilities Review- Staff review KS-created Sandpit sanitizing procedure and changed wording- sandpit cleaning is part of opening checklist.  | September 2020 November 2021April 2022 Olivia & Kelly(Policy review form)June 2022 Mackenzie, Maryam, MinaAugust 2022 Amy |
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| Date: | 6th of June 2022 |
| Version: | 2020/04 |
| Last Amended By: | Julia Koti  |
| Next Review: | July 2023 |
| Position: | Approved Provider/Director |
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This policy will be updated to ensure compliance with all relevant legal requirements every year. Appropriate consultation of all stakeholders (including staff and families) will be conducted on a timely basis. In accordance with Regulation 172 of the *Education and Care Services National Regulation*, families of children enrolled will be notified at least 14 days and their input considered prior to any amendment of policies and procedures that have any impact on their children or family.