



# Child Safe Environment

## Policy

- 1.1 Cheltenham Community Centre (CCC) Children's Services is committed to:
  - a) the rights of all children to feel safe, and be safe at all times
  - b) developing and maintaining a culture in which children feel valued, respected and cared for
  - c) taking all reasonable steps to ensure that the health, safety and wellbeing of children at the service is protected at all times while also promoting their learning and development
  - d) always acting in the best interests of each child
  - e) fulfilling our duty of care obligations under the law by protecting children from any reasonable, foreseeable risk of injury or harm
  - f) zero tolerance of child abuse, and continuously improving the way our service prevents child abuse, and encourages reporting and improved responses to allegations of abuse.
- 1.2 This policy applies to the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, Early Childhood Educators, staff and parents/guardians who wish to enrol or have already enrolled at CCC.
- 1.3 In order to assess whether the values and purposes of this policy have been achieved, we will:
  - a) Welcome feedback from everyone affected by this policy regarding its effectiveness
  - b) Monitor the implementations, compliance, complaints and incidents in relation to this policy
  - c) Keep the policy up to date with current legislation, research, policy and best practice
  - d) Revise the policy and procedures as part of the service's policy review cycle, or as required, and
  - e) Notify parents/guardians at least 14 days before making any changes to this policy or its procedures.

## Procedure

- 2.1 All Educators will:
  - a) Actively supervise children at all times
  - b) Undertake appropriate training and education on child protection, including recognising the signs and symptoms of child abuse, knowing how to respond, and understanding responsibilities and processes for reporting and managing concerns/incidents
  - c) Educate and empower children to talk about events and situations that make them feel uncomfortable
  - d) Ensure that children at the service are not subjected to any form of corporal punishment, or any discipline that is unreasonable or excessive in the circumstances.

- e) 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 CCC
  - f) Informing the Approved Provider of any serious incident at the service.
  - g) Maintain learning environments that provide sufficient space, and include carefully chosen and well-maintained resources and equipment to ensure a safe environment
  - h) Maintain a clean environment daily, and remove tripping/slipping hazards as soon as these become apparent
  - i) Conduct a daily check of the building, ensuring all children are signed out of the service, doors and windows are closed and locked
  - j) Ensure the physical environment at the service is safe, secure and free from hazards for children.
  - k) Conduct risk assessments for excursions and considering children's safety when leaving the service premises
  - l) Ensure all equipment and materials used at the service meet relevant safety standards.
  - m) Implement and practise emergency and evacuation procedures.
  - n) Follow procedures for the safe delivery and collection of children.
  - o) Protect the rights of children and families, and encourage their participation in decision-making.
  - p) Undertake appropriate training and using relevant resources to implement this policy, and
  - q) Keep up to date and complying with any changes in legislation and practices in relation to this policy.
- 2.2 CCC will organise and facilitate regular safety audits of the following:
- a) emergency equipment
  - b) playgrounds and fixed equipment in outdoor environments
  - c) horticultural maintenance
  - d) pest control
- 2.3 Recruitment and induction processes for educators, staff and contractors are in line with this policy.
- 2.4 Volunteers/students, parents/guardians and other visitors to the service will not be left with sole supervision of individual children or groups of children.
- 2.5 If CCC has been notified of a court order prohibiting an adult from contacting an enrolled child, CCC will aim to ensure such contact does not occur while the child is on the service premises.
- 2.6 CCC will offer support to the child and their family, and to educators and staff in response to concerns or reports relating to the health, safety and wellbeing of a child.
- 2.7 CCC will develop cooperative relationships with appropriate services and/or professionals (including Child FIRST) in the best interests of children and their families.
- 2.8 CCC will maintain confidentiality of children, visitors and staff, in line with our Confidentiality Policy.

## **Legislation and regulations**

- 3.1 Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

- *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic), as amended 2011*
- *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic), as amended 2012*
- *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic), as amended 2011*
- *Child Safe Standards (Vic)*
- *Crimes Amendment (Protection of Children) Act 2014 (Vic)*
- *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 (Vic): Sections 165, 166, 167*
- *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 (Vic): Regulations 84, 85, 86, 99, 100, 101, 102, 168(2)(h)*
- *Education Training and Reform Act 2006 (Vic), as amended 2014*
- *Family Law Act 1975 (Cth)*
- *National Quality Standard, Quality Area 2: Children’s Health and Safety*
  - Standard 2.3: Each child is protected
  - Element 2.3.1: Children are adequately supervised at all times
  - Element 2.3.2: Every reasonable precaution is taken to protect children from harm and any hazard likely to cause injury
- *National Quality Standard, Quality Area 3: Physical Environment.*
  - Standard 3.1: The design and location of the premises is appropriate for the operation of a service
  - Element 3.1.1: Outdoor and indoor spaces, buildings, furniture, equipment, facilities and resources are suitable for their purpose
  - Element 3.1.2: Premises, furniture and equipment are safe, clean and well maintained
- *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (Vic)*
- *Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic)*
- *Working with Children Regulations 2006 (Vic)*

The most current amendments to listed legislation can be found at:

- Victorian Legislation – Victorian Law Today: <http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/>
- Commonwealth Legislation - Federal Register of Legislation: <https://www.legislation.gov.au>

3.2 Legislation requires early childhood teachers to be registered with the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) (from 30 September 2015). They are obligated to undertake mandatory reporting of any concerns of child abuse. Please refer to the **Child Protection Policy** for guidelines in relation to mandatory reporting of child-related concerns, or child abuse.

## Definitions

4.1 **Child protection:** The term used to describe the whole-of-community approach to the prevention of harm to children. It includes strategic action for early intervention and protection of those considered most vulnerable, and for responses to all forms of abuse.

- 4.2 **Child Protection Service (also referred to as Child Protection):** The statutory child protection service provided by the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services, tasked with protecting children and young people at risk of abuse and neglect. This service also works closely with Family Services (including Child FIRST) to support the assessment and engagement of vulnerable children and families in community-based services. See: <http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/for-service-providers/children,-youth-andfamilies/child-protection>.
- 4.3 **Corporal punishment:** physical punishment
- 4.4 **Duty of care:** A common law concept that refers to the responsibilities of organisations and staff to provide people with an adequate level of protection against harm and all reasonably foreseeable risk of injury. In the context of this policy, duty of care refers to the responsibility of education and care services and their staff to provide children with an adequate level of care and protection against foreseeable harm and injury
- 4.5 **Serious incident:** A children's service is required to notify the Department when a serious incident occurs at the service. A serious incident is defined as:
- the death of a child while being cared for or educated by the service (section 29C(a))
  - any incident involving injury or trauma to a child while being cared for or educated by the service requiring the
  - attention of a registered medical practitioner; or
  - admission to a hospital (section 29C[b]).
  - a child being cared for or educated by the service appears to be missing or otherwise unaccounted for or appears to have been taken or removed from the service contrary to the regulations (section 29C(c))
  - any incident requiring attendance by emergency services (section 29C(d) and regulation 90[2]).
  - A children's service must notify the relevant regional office by telephone within 24 hours of the incident, followed by written notification as soon as practicable (regulation 90[1]). Written notification is to be provided by using the Serious Incident Notification form available at:  
[www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/regulation/Pages/vcsforms.aspx](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/regulation/Pages/vcsforms.aspx)

## Sources and related policies

### 5.1 Sources:

ACECQA <https://www.acecqa.gov.au/nqf/national-law-regulations/national-regulations>

Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic) available at:  
<http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/>

Child Protection and Child Safe Standards (PROTECT)  
<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/health/childprotection/Pages/default.aspx>

Child safe standard 2: Example statement of commitment to child safety.  
[https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/programs/health/protect/ChildSafeStandard2\\_ExampleStatement.pdf](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/programs/health/protect/ChildSafeStandard2_ExampleStatement.pdf)

National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.  
[https://humanrights.gov.au/sites/default/files/National%20Principles%20for%20Child%20Safe%20Organisations.pdf?\\_ga=2.251996681.1442166629.1602467693-2062018429.1602467693](https://humanrights.gov.au/sites/default/files/National%20Principles%20for%20Child%20Safe%20Organisations.pdf?_ga=2.251996681.1442166629.1602467693-2062018429.1602467693)

Protecting children and young people from abuse is our responsibility Department of Education and Training resources:

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/health/protect/Pages/default.aspx>

Understand your obligations -

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/professionals/health/childprotection/Pages/ecunderstanding.aspx#link0>

## 5.2 Services policies

- Child protection policy
- Interactions with children
- Water safety
- Excursions and outings
- Confidentiality policy and Guidelines
- Dropping and picking up children
- Illness or Injury
- Dealing with infectious diseases
- Parent complaint procedure
- Sun smart
- OH&S
- Workplace health and safety
- Emergency & evacuation
- Behaviour guidance

### Revision History

Date	Revision	Revised by
14/10/2020	Created	Leanne Lee-Ack
25/10/2020	Reviewed for consistency with CCC Policy & Procedure Manual	Catriona O'Neill

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