

# Work Health & Safety Policy

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*Our Service is committed to creating and maintaining a safe and healthy environment for its staff, children, families, and visitors. We strive to make our workplaces as free of foreseeable risks as is reasonably practical while remaining true to our vision and mission*

## National Quality Standards (NQS)

<b>Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety</b>	
<b>2.3.2</b>	Every reasonable precaution is taken to protect children from harm and any hazard likely to cause injury

## Education and Care Services National Regulations

<b>Children (Education and Care Services) National Law NSW</b>	
<b>168</b>	Policies and procedures are required in relation to health and safety

## PURPOSE

Our objective is to protect the health, safety and welfare of children, families, educators and visitors within the Service whilst being conscious of moral and legal obligations. We aim to go beyond compliance with all relevant legislation and work towards best practice to ensure a safe work environment. Our Service is committed to continuous improvement in all areas of workplace health, safety and wellbeing

## SCOPE

This policy applies to children, families, staff, management and visitors of the Service.

## IMPLEMENTATION

We believe that the provision of a safe working and learning environment for children, families, staff and visitors is an integral and essential responsibility during the Service operation.

### Management is committed to:

- Providing all employees with a safe and healthy working and learning environment
- Promoting dignity and respect within the Service and take action to prevent and respond to bullying in its workplace.
- Implementing a strategic approach to health and safety by using measurable objectives to monitor performance
- Supporting and promoting health and wellbeing
- Providing return to work programs to facilitate safe and durable return to work for employees
- Meaningful consultation with employees regarding work health and safety issues

- Providing staff with appropriate information, training and guidance to facilitate a safe and productive work and learning environment
- Providing an effective and accessible safety management procedure for all employees to guide safe working and learning in all workplaces.
- Reporting incidents and accidents in accordance with National Regulations and Service policy requirements to ensure action can be taken to manage the incident or accident, prevent further incident and accidents and provide support where required.
- Providing a program of continuous improvement through engaging with industry, new technology and reviewing and updating policies and procedures.

#### The Nominated Supervisor and Educators will ensure:

- Service policies and procedures are being followed and adhered to
- Workplace incidents are reported and investigated to ascertain the circumstances of the incident or accident, and take appropriate action to prevent further incidents from occurring.
- Comply with any reasonable instruction or lawful direction, including wearing personal protective equipment supplied by the employer as required.
- Report any incidents and hazards, and participate in training and consultation with the support of management.
- That the health and safety of children, families and visitors of the Service are not at risk of harm
- They observe, implement and fulfill the responsibilities under the current Work Health and Safety Act
- They Follow the correct manual handling procedures
- They take practical steps for their own health and safety and of others affected by their actions at work
- Work areas are safe and help reduce accidents to themselves and others
- Management and/or WHS Officer of any incidents and accidents in the work place as soon as practicable
- All safety checklists are implemented as required on a regular basis
- Correct record keeping procedures for incidents and accidents etc. Including the Quality Improvement Plan and WHS Reporting folder are followed
- To report any potential and actual hazards in the work place to the WHS officer
- Children's equipment is regularly checked
- Supervise children at all times
- Store all dangerous chemicals appropriately
- Keep children out of kitchen areas
- Ensure all power points have safety plugs
- Do not have hot drinks around children
- Shut and lock all gates behind you
- Clean up all spills immediately (to prevent slipping)

### Families and visitors are to:

- Take reasonable care of their own health and safety
- Report health and safety issues and participate in consultation in work health and safety affecting them
- Follow Service policies and procedures in relation to work health and safety

### Health and Safety Representatives

Our educators and staff will designate Health and Safety Representatives. If a request is made for a Health and Safety Representative, the Approved Provider/Nominated Supervisor will:

- Initiate consultation with workers about the number of Health Safety Representatives required
- Give all educators and staff the chance to nominate a Health and Safety Representatives and to choose in order to determine if there is more than one contender.
- Notify workers of the outcome of the consultation as soon as possible.

The Approved Provider/Nominated Supervisor must keep a current list of all Health and Safety Representatives and display a copy at the workplace.

A Health and Safety Representatives can:

- Inspect the workplace as directed by management
- Be present at an interview with a worker that the HSR represents (with their consent) and the Approved Provider/Nominated Supervisor or an inspector about health and safety issues
- Monitor compliance measures by the Approved Provider/Nominated Supervisor
- Enquire into any risk to the health or safety of workers at the Service

Our Service will ensure Health and Safety Representatives are:

- Never prevented from carrying out any of their duties
- Able to give people assisting them access to the workplace
- Can take paid leave to attend to their health and safety duties
- Can take paid leave to attend an initial work health and safety course or annual refresher training approved by the regulator within 3 months of their request to attend. The service will pay the course costs and reasonable expenses
- Can access any resources, facilities and assistance that they reasonable require to undertake their duties.

Health and Safety Representatives are elected for 12 months unless they leave the Service, are disqualified or, resign. They are not personally liable for anything done, or not done, in good faith while carrying out their role.

## Duty of Care

A duty of care is the legal obligation to provide reasonable care while performing any acts or making any omissions that could foreseeably harm others.

The duty encompasses a wide range of matters, including (but not limited to):

- Provision of adequate supervision
- Ensuring grounds, premises and equipment are safe for children's use
- Implementing strategies to prevent bullying and
- Providing medical assistance (if competent to do so), or seeking assistance from a medically trained person to aid a child who is injured or becomes ill at the Service

The Approved Provider and Nominated Supervisor will ensure all practical steps are taken to certify the health and safety of all educators, staff, volunteers, children, their families and any other people impacted by the Service operations. This includes ascertaining and eliminating or decreasing all realistically foreseeable hazards and providing suitable training and instruction for employees to ensure health and safety. Educators, staff and volunteers will also take reasonable care for their own health and safety, ensuring their conduct does not adversely affect the health and safety of other people

## Manual Handling

Our Service refers to the Manual Handling Code of Practice as part of our commitment to ensure a best practice approach. All staff members are required to undertake Workplace Health and Safety Training that will continue to be updated to ensure safety.

Educators are at risk of work related ergonomic injuries, particularly back injuries, through carrying children, bending, reaching and not using adult sized furniture.

To prevent this, Educators are to be attentive to:

- Use adult height utilities and equipment, including sinks and change tables
- Use small chairs with good back support instead of squatting or bending for interaction with children
- Use an adult feed chair for feeding infants, or sit in a low chair with good back support at child level
- Use drop sides on cots
- Use beds that are light weight and stackable with washable mattresses
- Have shelving, filing cabinets and storage cupboards at a suitable height to avoid stretching to reach them
- Use child sized ladders for nappy changing
- Where possible kneel rather than bend to avoid back problems
- Carry children only when necessary, in the correct way - with one arm under the child's buttocks and the other arm supporting the child's back. At the same time hold the child facing you, as close to your body as possible. Try to avoid carrying a child on your hip because this will strain your back
- Be careful to lift with a balanced and comfortable posture when lifting awkward loads
- Minimise the need to reach above shoulder level and use a step ladder

- Avoid extended reaching forward e.g. leaning into low equipment boxes. Share the load if the equipment is heavy, long or awkward.
- Ask for help and organise a team lift when sliding, pulling or pushing equipment
- Use equipment and furniture that can be moved around safely, easily and as comfortable as possible
- Place lighter items higher on shelves
- Lift furniture using at least two or more people
- Where possible arrange children's activities, sleep around furniture, and equipment to minimise manual handling
- Minimise lifting of children by having steps/foot stools/ladders in areas where lifting of children is likely to be needed, such as nappy change rooms

### **Hazardous Materials**

We strive to minimise the health and safety risks associated with the handling and storage of hazardous materials. We adopt a risk management strategy that enables practices that minimise the risk of harm, injury or illness caused by any hazardous material.

As far as is reasonably practical, our Service will:

Provide the least hazardous chemical, product or equipment for the task without jeopardising hygiene.

Ensures that staff, contractors, students and visitors are protected from both short- and long-term health effects of hazardous substances and processes.

Ensures all staff, contractors, visitors and students have access to Safety Data Sheets and adequate training on the safe use and storage of all hazardous substances prior to any exposure to those substances.

Ensures that non-toxic plants are planted within the workplace and undertake regular garden and grounds maintenance to minimise the risk of toxic plants within the grounds and premises.

### **Source**

- Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2014).
- Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2015,
- ECA Code of Ethics.
- Guide to the National Quality Standard.
- Work Health and Safety Act
- Work Health and Safety Regulations
- Staying Healthy in Child Care 5<sup>th</sup> Edition

### **Review**

Policy Review Date
July 2019