

# CHILD SAFE ENVIRONMENT POLICY

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## Mandatory – Quality Area 2

Flemington Childcare Co-operative acknowledges the contribution of Early Learning Association Australia, in the development of this policy.

## PURPOSE

This policy provides a clear set of guidelines and procedures for Flemington Childcare Co-operative to:

- provide a safe environment for all children which ensures their safety, health and wellbeing
- promote the cultural safety of all children
- identify, reduce and remove risks of child abuse
- intervene when a child may be at risk of abuse or neglect
- involve children in child safety including listening to children and incorporating their views about how to provide a safe environment
- make staff aware of their legal and duty of care obligations to report child abuse and neglect

## POLICY STATEMENT

### 1. VALUES

Flemington Childcare Co-operative:

- is committed to the rights of all children to feel safe, and be safe at all times, including:
  - promoting the cultural safety of Aboriginal children
  - promoting the cultural safety of children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
  - promoting the safety of children with a disability
- values, respects and cares for children
- fosters opportunities for each child to participate, express their views and to learn and develop
- always acts in the best interests of each child and has zero tolerance of child abuse
- takes all reasonable steps to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of children at all times, whilst also promoting their learning and development
- actively manages the risks of abuse or harm to each child, including fulfilling our duty of care (refer to *Definitions*) and legal obligations to protect children and prevent any reasonable, foreseeable risk of injury or harm
- continuously improves the way our service identifies risks of and responds to child abuse, and encourages reporting and improved responses to allegations of abuse.

### 2. SCOPE

This policy applies to the Approved Provider, Persons with Management or Control, Nominated Supervisor, Persons in day-to-day Charge, staff, contractors, volunteers, students on placement, parents/guardians, children and others attending the programs and activities of Flemington Childcare Co-operative, including during offsite excursions and activities.

## RESPONSIBILITIES

**The Approved Provider and Persons with Management or Control are responsible for:**

- providing leadership for an organisational culture of accountability for child safety which is open to scrutiny and is continuously reviewed and improved

- advising staff of current child protection legislation, and their legal and duty of care obligations (Regulation 84)
- undertaking child safety reviews and developing an action plan in consultation with staff, parents/guardians and children to maintain Child Safe Standards at Flemington Childcare Co-operative
- conducting recruitment and induction processes for staff in line with this policy (refer to Attachment 2 – Guidelines for the incorporation of child safety into staff recruitment and management)
- screening contractors, volunteers and students in line with their roles (refer to Attachment 3 – Guidelines for the incorporation of child safety into recruitment of contractors and volunteers)
- ensuring that contractors, volunteers, students, parents/guardians and other visitors to the service are not left with sole supervision of individual children or groups of children
- ensuring that contact is prevented or responding if it has occurred, when the service has been notified of a court order prohibiting an adult from contacting an enrolled child
- ensuring staff, and where appropriate, contractors, volunteers and students undertake appropriate training on child safety, including recognising the signs and symptoms of child abuse (refer to *Definitions*), knowing how to respond, and understanding responsibilities and processes for reporting (refer to Attachment 4 – Processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse)
- ensuring procedures for reporting and responding to suspected child abuse or neglect are promoted across the service and regularly reviewed in partnership with staff and parents/guardians, and where appropriate contractors, volunteers, students and children (refer to Attachment 4: Processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse)
- offering support to the child and their family, and to staff in response to concerns or reports relating to the safety, health and wellbeing of a child at Flemington Childcare Co-operative
- maintaining co-operative relationships with appropriate services and/or professionals (including Child FIRST) in the best interests of children and their families
- ensuring processes for responding to and reporting are followed when there are significant concerns for the safety, health or wellbeing of a child at the service (refer to Attachment 5 – Processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse)
- notifying DET within 24 hours of a serious incident (refer to *Definitions*) occurring at the service
- notifying DET within 24 hours in writing of becoming aware of a notifiable complaint (refer to *Definitions*) or allegation regarding the safety, health and/or welfare of a child at the service
- maintaining confidentiality at all times (refer to *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy*)
- reviewing this policy in consultation with staff, volunteers, parents/guardians, and children
- providing appropriate resources and training to assist staff, contractors, volunteers and students to implement this policy (refer to *Sources*)
- protecting the rights of children and families, and encouraging their participation in decision-making
- keeping staff, contractors, parents/guardian, volunteers and students informed of any relevant changes in legislation and practices in relation to this policy
- ensuring all staff, students, contractors, parents/guardians, volunteers and visitors abide by the *Code of Conduct Policy*
- ensuring an explicit statement of Flemington Childcare Co-operative's commitment to child safety is included in all advertising promotion for the organisation.

**The Nominated Supervisor and Persons in Day-to-Day Charge are responsible for:**

- keeping up to date and complying with any relevant changes in legislation and practices in relation to this policy
- ensuring continuous improvement in the implementation of the Child Safe Standards in Flemington Childcare Co-operative promoting an organisational culture of accountability for child safety which is open to scrutiny and is continuously reviewed and improved

- ensuring the implementation of strategies to prevent child abuse in consultation with the Approved Provider and staff
- providing appropriate resources and training to assist staff, contractors, volunteers and students to implement this policy (refer to *Sources*)
- ensuring processes for responding to and reporting are followed when there are significant concerns for the safety, health or wellbeing of a child at the service (refer to Attachment 4 – Processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse)
- notifying the Approved Provider or Person with Management or Control immediately on becoming aware of a concern, complaint or allegation regarding the safety, health and welfare of a child at Flemington Childcare Co-operative
- offering support to the child and their family, and to educators and staff in response to concerns or reports relating to the safety, health and wellbeing of a child at Flemington Childcare Co-operative
- making all staff aware of this policy, the Code of Conduct Policy and the Interactions with Children Policy and holding them to account for the behavioural expectations identified.
- implementing and reviewing this policy in consultation with the Approved Provider or Person with Management or Control, educators, staff, contractors and parents/guardians and children
- planning so that no child is left alone (or is out of sight) with a contractor, volunteer, student, parent/guardian or visitor, at the service.

**All staff are responsible for:**

- fulfilling their legal responsibilities and duty of care to protect children and to keep children safe and to maintain their rights
- keeping up to date and complying with any relevant changes in legislation and practices in relation to this policy
- contributing to an organisational culture of child safety
- identifying the potential for child abuse at Flemington Childcare Co-operative, and developing and implementing effective prevention strategies in consultation with the Approved Provider and Person with Management or Control and the Nominated Supervisor and Person in day to day Charge
- following processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse (Attachment 4: Processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse)
- undertaking appropriate training on child protection, including recognising the signs and symptoms of child abuse (refer to *Definitions*), knowing how to respond, and understanding responsibilities and processes for reporting (refer to Attachment 4 – Processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse)
- supporting the maintenance of Child Safe Standards in Flemington Childcare Co-operative in consultation with the Approved Provider and Person with Management or Control and Nominated Supervisor and Person in day to day Charge at the service (refer to Attachment 1 – Child safety review checklist and Attachment 2 – Implementation of Child Safe Standards)
- notifying the Nominated Supervisor, Person in day to day Charge, the Approved Provider or the Person with Management or Control immediately on becoming aware of any concerns, complaints or allegations regarding the safety, health and welfare of a child at Flemington Childcare Co-operative
- offering support to the child and their family in response to concerns or reports relating to the safety, health and wellbeing of a child at Flemington Childcare Co-operative
- co-operating with other services and/or professionals (including Child FIRST) in the best interests of children and their families
- informing families of support services available to them (such as Child FIRST), and of the assistance these services can provide
- conducting activities so that no child is left alone (or is out of sight) with a contractor, visitor, volunteer, student or parent/guardian at the service
- following the Flemington Childcare Co-operative's processes where the service has been notified of a court order prohibiting an adult from contacting an enrolled child

- maintaining confidentiality at all times (refer to *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy*)
- contributing to a review of this policy in consultation with the Approved Provider, Person with Management or Control, Nominated Supervisor and Person in day to day Charge
- educating and empowering children to talk about events and situations that make them feel uncomfortable
- ensuring 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
- using appropriate resources and undertaking training to assist with the implementation of this policy (refer to *Sources*)
- abiding by the service's *Code of Conduct Policy* and *Interactions with Children Policy*.

**Parents/guardians are responsible for:**

- reading and complying with this policy
- reporting any concerns, including in relation to potential child abuse, to the appropriate child protection authorities or the police if immediate police attention is required
- abiding by the service's *Code of Conduct*.

**Contactors, volunteers and students, while at the service, are responsible for following this policy and its procedures.**

## REVIEW

To assess whether the values and purposes of the policy have been achieved, the Approved Provider or Persons with Management or Control will:

- regularly seek feedback from everyone affected by the policy regarding its effectiveness, particularly in relation to identifying and responding to child safety concerns
- monitor the implementation, compliance, complaints and incidents in relation to this policy
- keep the policy up to date with current legislation, research, policy and best practice
- revise the policy and procedures as part of the service's policy review cycle, or as required
- notify parents/guardians at least 14 days before making any changes to this policy or its procedures (Regulation 172(2)).

## ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1: Background, definitions, sources and service policies
- Attachment 2: Guidelines for the incorporation of child safety into staff recruitment and management
- Attachment 3: Guidelines for the incorporation of child safety into recruitment of contractors and volunteers
- Attachment 4: Processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse.