



# Child Safe Environments Policy

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## BACKGROUND

All children have the right to be safe at home, at school and in their Early Learning service. The provision of safe environments for children is essential to prevent injury and enable them to grow and develop. The management and staff of each service have a duty of care to provide a safe environment.

## POLICY STATEMENT

Holy Family Catholic School Early Learning service is committed to the provision of a healthy environment in which children can grow and be safe. Educators have an obligation to all children attending the service and are committed to defend their right to care and protection. To support this right and to ensure children's protection, the service complies with the procedures set down under the Child and Young Person (Safety) Act 2017 when dealing with any allegations of abuse or neglect of children.

## HOW THE POLICY WILL BE IMPLEMENTED

### 1. Physical environment

Our Service will ensure the premises; furniture and equipment are safe, clean and in good repair. An annual self-assessment for monitoring and maintaining the premises, furniture and equipment ensures that:

- For each child in care there is a minimum of 3.25 square metres of unencumbered indoor play space that is suitable for children.
- For each child in care there is at least 7 square metres of outdoor space that is suitable for children.
- Indoor areas are well ventilated, have adequate natural light and are maintained at a comfortable temperature.
- There are adequate, developmentally and age-appropriate toilet, hand washing and hand drying facilities, located and designed to enable safe use by children with convenient access from both indoor and outdoor play spaces.
- The service has adequate facilities for safe handling, preparation, storage and disposal of food and beverages.
- There is a capacity to provide effective supervision of all designated areas.

### 2. Supervision

Educators will use their professional judgment when providing supervision to children, in addition to Early Learning requirements for adult to child ratios. The amount and intensity of supervision of children will vary depending on:

- the degree of risk associated with the experience.
- the age, development and ability of children.
- the location of the experience (eg community- or school-based).

Our Services ensures that:

- Educators effectively supervise children at all times
- Educators will monitor the children's health and well-being.

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- Visitors to the service will be closely monitored and not be left alone to supervise individual or groups of children.
- Educators supervising children's daily departure from the Service will be familiar with the authorised person collecting them.
- If Educators are required to move away from actively supervising, they will make sure that they are replaced by another educator.

### 3. Tobacco, drug and alcohol-free environment

Our Services ensures that:

- All children are educated and cared for in an environment free from the use of tobacco, illicit drugs and alcohol.
- The nominated supervisor, educators and volunteers of the service are not affected by alcohol when on the premises when the service is operating.
- The nominated supervisor, educators and volunteers of the service are not affected by drugs that adversely affect that person's ability to educate and care for children when on the premises when the service is operating.

### 4. Child protection

Our Service ensures that:

- All adults who are working or volunteering in programs for children must undergo Criminal History Screening.
- Child And Young Person (Safety) Act 2017 requires employees and volunteers to notify the Child Abuse Report Line (131 478) if they suspect, on reasonable grounds, that a child has been or is being abused or neglected. This responsibility is part of the broad duty of care that educators and volunteers have towards the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.
- All employees must complete and maintain the Responding to Risks of Harm, Abuse and Neglect - Education and Care training prior to working with children.
- Mandatory Notification Guidelines are available and must be read and understood by the employees, Approved Provider and the Advisory Committee. These guidelines are also available to families.
- Employer and employee obligations in relation to allegations of child abuse are included in the educator's handbook. These obligations are specifically detailed to support new educators at the beginning of their employment.
- As mandated notifiers, employees are required to attend approved training in relation to mandatory notification of child abuse.
- The service ensures families are aware that the service Nominated Supervisor, educators and volunteers are mandated notifiers under the Act.

Further information is available in the Holy Family Catholic School Early Learning Child Protection Policy.

### 5. Persons & visitors entering the premises

Our service ensures that:

- Any person that comes onto the premises that is not recognised by staff will be asked for identification and reason for them being on the premises.
- Any person that comes to the services for collecting a child must be aged older than 18 years.
- Staff will ensure that the person collecting a child is a person authorised on the child's record. Staff will contact parents should a non-authorised person enter the premises to collect a child.
- Any person or visitor that comes onto the premises will not be left alone with children at any time.

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- Visitors are to sign in and out of the service and provide a reason for their visit and proof of their identity.
- Regular visitors working with children such as providing entertainment during Vacation Care will require a Working With Children Check to provide services.
- Visitors will be monitored by staff whilst on the premises.
- The premises will be checked regularly, in particular the toilets, to ensure the safety of the children.

## 6. Animals

Although animals are not a necessary part of the program, we acknowledge their importance in fostering children's capacity to understand and respect the natural environment and the interdependence between people, plants, animals and land. Educators will consider the risks versus the benefits of including animals in the education program. The presence of animals in Early Learning will be managed by educators to ensure that the safety and wellbeing of children, families, educators and animals is maintained at all times.

- Checks will be made regarding individual children's allergies before considering an animal in the Service.
- Children will be reminded about the hygiene practices required after handling any animal and educators will ensure that this is maintained.
- All animals will be located away from any food or food preparation areas.
- All animals, which are kept in the Service, shall be maintained in a clean and healthy condition and all hygiene procedures will be followed regarding cleaning and disposal of waste.
- All animals, which are kept in the Service, will be provided with adequate nourishment and health care.
- Educators will ensure that everyone in the Service will treat all animals with respect and in a humane way at all times.
- Children will be supervised at all times when interacting with pets and animals.

## 7. Dangerous products

Our Service ensures that:

- Non-hazardous and non-toxic products, where possible should be used.
- Any hazardous or toxic cleaning products should be stored in a lockable cupboard or child-safety proof cupboard.
- In the interest of children's health, educators are encouraged to use environmentally friendly products at the service, wherever possible.

## 8. Identifying potential hazards

Educators should carry out regular checks to identify and remove hazards, or where possible, to manage safety risks. Steps to be taken:

- Identify the hazard that may cause illness or injury,
- Assess the risk, and
- Control the risk.

The service is committed to:

- Ensuring that children are actively supervised at all times.
- For older children, it is important to balance the need for close supervision with respect for their age and developing independence.
- supervised when visiting and returning from the toilets
- supervision of children's transportation to and from the Early Learning service.

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- Considering the design and arrangement of children's environments to support active supervision.
- Using supervision skills to reduce or prevent injury or incident to children and adults.
- Guiding educators to make decisions about when children's play needs to be interrupted and redirected.
- Supporting educators and their care-giving strategies.
- Educators providing consistent supervision strategies.
- Acknowledging and understanding when supervision is required for high risk experiences and/or the ratio of adults to children needs to be increased.
- Assessing all activities and, when something is identified as a high-risk experience, strategies are developed to minimise the risk according to the group of children. It is understood there is a shared legal responsibility and accountability between, and a commitment by, all educators to implement the service's policies, procedures and practices.

## RESOURCES/REFERENCES

- Quality Area 2 – Children's health and safety
- Quality Area 7 – Leadership and Service Management
- Education and Care Services National Regulations (2011) R 84
- Education and Care Services National Law Act (2010) S 168(2)(h), S 165
- [Protective practices for staff in their interactions with children and young people](#)
- [Child and Young Person \(Safety\) Act 2017](#)

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