



Child Safe Environments

Children's Services Policy No 2.4

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Aim

The centre will provide and maintain a safe environment for the children, families and staff of the centre.

Background information

Services that provide for the care and education of children are busy and fast paced environments. It is essential that staff and educators are aware of potentially dangerous areas, actions, materials and resources that are required to operate a service.

When assessing the safety of an education and care service, staff are to consider all aspects of the indoor and outdoor environments, supervision of children, as well as the types of materials and resources that are provided for use with the children.

Relevant legislation

- [Education and Care Services National Regulations](#)
- [Education and Care National Regulations Amendment Regulations 2025](#)
- [Children's Guardian Act 2019](#)
- [NSW Work Health and Safety Regulation 2017](#)
- [NSW Work Health and Safety Act 2011](#)
- [Children \(Education and Care Services\) National Law \(NSW\)](#)

Note: This policy should be read in conjunction with policies

- 1.3 – Child Protection
- 2.5 – Prevention of Sleeping Accidents
- 2.6 – Occupational Immunisation Policy (Staff)
- 2.7 – Infection Control
- 2.8 – Hand Washing
- 2.9 – Nappy Changing and Toileting
- 2.10 – Chemicals
- 2.11 – Sun Protection
- 2.12 – Water Safety
- 2.13 – Safe Transportation of Children
- 2.19 – Critical Incidents
- 3.2 – Excursions
- People and Culture Policy 116 – Work Health and Safety
- Smoking and Vaping Policy

Resources:

- SafeWorkNSW – [Early childhood education and care](#)
- NSW Department of Education – [Providing a child safe environment](#)
- [NSW Office of the Children's Guardian – resources](#)
- National Alliance – [Work Health and Safety in Education and Care Services](#)
- Red Nose Saving Little Lives, [What is a Safe Cot](#)
- [Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority - National Quality Standard](#)
 - **Quality Area 2:**
 - Standard 2.2 - Element 2.2.1, Element 2.2.2 and Element 2.2.3;
 - **Quality Area 3:**
 - Standard 3.1 - Element 3.1.1, Element 3.1.2;
 - Standard 3.2 - Element 3.2.1 and Element 3.2.2; and
 - **Quality Area 4:**
 - Standard 4.1 - Element 4.1.1.

Note: In this policy “staff” and “educators” refers to staff employed within Children’s Services by Willoughby City Council.

Any persons, whether staff, families or visitors, using the Centre’s facilities will adhere to the centre’s Child Safe Environments Policy.

Arrival and departure of children – [Regulation 102AAB – Safe arrival of children policies and procedures](#) and [102AAC – Risk assessment for the purpose of safe arrival of children policies and procedures](#)

- Staff are to ensure that daily safety checks at the service have been conducted prior to the arrival of children.
- Ipad is to be located in an accessible place for parents/carers to sign children in and out.
- Parents/carers must electronically sign children in and out of the service.
- Staff are to ensure that they monitor the arrival of children, and are available to receive the child from the parent/guardian.
- Staff are to conduct a roll call during the morning and afternoon periods to ensure that all children have been signed in and accounted for.
- Staff are to ensure that they monitor the departure of children and are aware which children remain in their care.
- Staff are to ensure that only authorised persons collect a child enrolled in the service (Children’s Services Policy 1.8 - Authorised Contact Persons).

Attendance records – [Regulation 158 – Children’s attendance record to be kept by approved provider](#)

- The attendance record must be electronically, confirmed by either the person who delivers the child to the centre/the Nominated Supervisor or an educator at the time the child is delivered to the service.
- Where a child is in attendance but not signed in by an authorised person delivering/collecting them to/from the service, staff/educators are to sign in the child into the service, highlight the child’s name to indicate for the parents/authorised persons to co-sign the attendance.
- Staff are to ensure that at the end of the day all areas of the centre, including cot rooms (Long Day Care), indoor and outdoor areas, bathrooms and storerooms are thoroughly checked by two primary contact staff members to ensure no child remains at the premises after the service is closed.
- The two primary contact staff members are to check that all children have been collected and signed out.

Supervision of children – [Regulation 115 – Premises designed to facilitate supervision](#)

- The supervision of the children is to remain the focal point of all staff throughout each day.
- Staff are to adhere, at all times, to the ratios of staff to child as set out in the Education and Care Services National Regulations.
- The Long Day Care (LDC) service will apply these ratios as “in centre” or “in visual sight” ratios. Therefore, staff who are on the premises but not in visual sight of the children (e.g. on a break) are not to be included in the ratios.
- Staff are to ensure that they are supervising children at all times, including during sleep time, having regard to the child’s age, physical and intellectual development and to the activities in which they engage.
- Staff are to refer to Children’s Services Policy 2.12 - Water Safety Policy for further information on supervising water activities.

Interactions with children

Staff are to ensure that all their interactions with children are appropriate. In order to provide a ‘child safe’ environment staff are also to refer to the following policies:

- 1.3 - Child Protection;
- 1.5 - Code of Conduct;
- 1.4 - Compliments and Complaints Handling;
- 2.13 - Safe Transportation of Children; and
- 2.17 - Guiding Children’s Behaviour.

Indoor environments

Kitchen area - Long Day Care

- Children in the LDC setting are not permitted in the kitchen area of an education and care service.
- The door to the kitchen area is to remain closed and display a sign informing children, staff and parents/carers that children are not permitted in this area.
- Where the service wishes to partake in cooking experiences with the children, this is to be conducted in a clean area of the service, separate to the kitchen facilities.

Kitchen area - Out of School Hours Care

- Children may participate in the preparation of food within the kitchen facility under the direct supervision of staff and for appropriately determined safe activities.
- Children are not permitted in the kitchen facility when there is hot liquid involved in the preparation of food. In addition, the children are not permitted to remove any hot food from microwaves, ovens or any other heating device.

Children’s bathrooms - Long Day Care

- Staff are to supervise children in bathrooms.
- Staff are to encourage children to wash and dry hands immediately to reduce the spread of infection and reduce the opportunity for water spills.
- When there is evidence of water on the floor staff are to erect a hazard sign and mop up the spill.
- Whilst the services have a professional contractor to clean children’s bathroom facilities each evening, the bathrooms are required to be cleaned once during the day. This is to reduce the spread of germs and also to ensure that the area remains free of hazards.
- Staff are to follow the procedure of each service when undertaking the cleaning of the bathrooms.

- The door to the nappy change area is to remain closed and a sign displayed informing children, staff and parents/carers that children are not permitted in this area.

Children's bathrooms - Out of School Hours Care

- Staff are to check the bathroom facilities each day prior to the children arriving at the service.
- Staff are to be aware of the movements of children accessing the service bathrooms and maintain awareness of other adults who may be in the service vicinity.
- When there is evidence of water on the floor, staff are to erect a Hazard sign and mop up the spill.

Fire Exits and equipment

- Early shift (Long Day Care) staff are to ensure that all doors are unlocked and that designated fire exits are accessible and unobstructed.
- Fire extinguishes, fire hoses and fire blankets must remain accessible at all times.
- Staff **are not** to place items in front of fire equipment.
- Fire equipment located in the Long Day Care and Out of School Hours Care (OOSH) services will be inspected every 6 months.
- Staff will conduct emergency evacuation procedures on a regular basis and at least every 3 months with all children in the service. Staff will keep a record of such evacuations drills and evaluate the effectiveness of such drills.

Children's resources

- When staff are setting up the play environment they are to inspect resources for age suitability and condition.
- Staff are to remove any damaged or broken toys from use immediately.
- Children's equipment and furniture needs to be cleaned on a regular basis and toys that are mouthed are to be cleaned after each use.
- Staff are to store children's scissors out of reach. Children who are using scissors are to be supervised.
- Staff are to ensure that the environment is kept neat and tidy and to undertake cleaning as required, such as craft tables.
- Staff are to use designated cloths used for particular purposes, i.e. bathroom, craft mess and meal times.

Store rooms

- Children are not permitted in storerooms and storerooms are to be kept locked when not in use in LDC. Store rooms may be made accessible to children in OOSH services where OOSH staff determine the storerooms to be safe enough for children to access.
- Staff are to store heavier items on the ground or close to the ground to prevent injury.
- Staff are to keep this area tidy and free of hazards.
- LDC staff are not permitted to keep personal items, with the exception of their hat, in the storerooms. This includes bags, food, medication, mobile phone and coffee.
- Staff in OOSH services may store their belongings in the store room only in the event that they are stored out of reach of children.

Sleep Rooms - LDC

- Cots/stretchers must meet the [Australian Standards for cots \(AS/NZS2172.2003\)](#) to prevent [Sudden Unexpected Death in Infancy \(SUDI\)](#).
- Cots/stretchers are to be cleaned regularly and be separate from other cots/stretchers to reduce chances of cross infection.

- Cots/stretcher beds are to be set up in a head to toe formation to reduce the chance of cross infection and with sufficient space between the cots/stretcher beds.
- Cots/stretcher beds are to be set up to allow adult and child access between the beds.
- Cots to be cleaned and clean bedding applied if cots are shared across the week.
- Children will be allocated an individual cot/stretcher bed for each day they attend.

Laundry

- Children are not permitted in the laundry and the room is to be locked at all times.
- Any chemicals or hazardous materials within this area are to be stored in a locked cupboard, or locked room.
- Staff are to keep this area clean and tidy to reduce the risk of injury to self and others.

Outdoor environments

- Staff are to conduct an outdoor safety checklist each day prior to allowing the children into the outdoor environment.
- The outdoor safety check is to include assessing the safety of the perimeter fence and child proof locks on the gates (where relevant).
- The perimeter fence of a licenced education and care service is to be of a height and design that prevents children from scaling or crawling under it and must inhibit or impede intruders from entering the premises.
- Gates at the services are to be designed to prevent children from gaining access to or leaving premises unsupervised (where relevant).
- Staff are to check the perimeter fence and assess the structure for any damage and ensure that the children are not able to climb over or crawl under the fence or gates where the education and care service is enclosed by a perimeter fence.
- Where damage or obstructions are found, staff are to immediately take action to rectify the issue. Staff are to also lodge a hazard report accordingly.
- Any hazards identified are to be addressed/removed from use.
- Staff are to report any need for maintenance via a CSR in TechOne.
- Staff should refer to the individual service for outdoor safety checklist.
- Work Health and Safety Audits are to be conducted in conjunction with the WHS team.
- Council's Work Health and Safety Committee conduct scheduled audits of education and care sites usually as an unannounced visit and will provide the service with a written report of any areas of identified concern.
- Each service is to develop a procedure for reporting and recording maintenance issues.

Online environments

Our services are committed to supporting the safe, responsible, and appropriate use of digital technologies and online environments. While children's access to the internet within the service is limited and carefully supervised, we recognise the importance of teaching children about safe and respectful online behaviours from an early age.

Key principles we promote regarding online safety include:

- **Supervised access** – Any use of online resources (e.g., educational websites, apps) occurs under direct supervision of staff.
- **Age-appropriate content** – Digital materials are carefully selected to ensure they are suitable for children's age, developmental stage, and learning needs.

- **Privacy and personal information** – Children are taught the importance of not sharing personal details online.
- **Respectful behaviour** – We encourage positive, respectful communication and help children understand that the same values apply in digital environments as in face-to-face interactions.
- **Digital balance** – Screen time is limited and integrated into the program in a purposeful way that supports learning, creativity, and development.

Our responsibilities include:

- Following the guidelines of the [Australian eSafety Commissioner](#) and relevant education authorities regarding children's online safety.
- Ensuring all devices used at the service have appropriate security settings and filters enabled.
- Supporting families by providing information about online safety practices they can use at home.

Electronic Devices

[The National Model Code for Taking Images or Videos of Children while Providing Early Childhood Education and Care](#) (National Model Code) addresses child safe practices for the use of electronic devices while providing early childhood education and care (ECEC).

Only service issued devices should be used to take images/videos of children – with the written consent of parents/carers.

All personal electronic devices that can take images or videos (such as tablets, phones, digital cameras, and smart watches) are not be in the possession of any person while providing education and care and working directly with children. ** Any exceptions to this should be for limited, essential purposes that are authorised in writing (or through another means if written authorisation is not reasonably practicable) by the approved provider of the service, and where that access does not impede the active supervision of children.

- Exemptions will apply where necessary, staff are to discuss with their Nominated Supervisor.
- Staff are to complete the Exemption Form.

Refer to [The National Model Code for Taking Images or Videos of Children while Providing Early Childhood Education and Care](#) for the list of essential purposes use of a personal electronic device whilst working.

Staff using smartwatches are to remove them and put them in their lockers for the duration of their working day.

Children using smartwatches are to hand these in to staff for the duration of their care period, these will be safely locked away. Should parents/carers need to contact a child, they can contact centre staff via the centre landline.

Alcohol, smoking and vaping – [Regulation 82 - Tobacco, drug and alcohol-free environment](#)

Alcohol and other drugs

Employees unfit for work due to alcohol or other drug use put themselves and other people in the workplace at risk of harm. This is the case whether the drugs were taken outside of work or in the workplace.

No member of staff is permitted to commence their work day if they are under the influence of alcohol, as alcohol can impair their abilities and may harm children.

Smoking and vaping

All council facilities, including out education and care centres are smoke free environments. In NSW the [Smoke-free Environment Act 2000](#) states that smoking is banned within 4 metres of a pedestrian entrance of exit from a public building. This also applies to vaping.

Smoking and the use of e-cigarettes are banned:

- In all enclosed public areas
- On public transport, including on platforms and at public transport stops
- Within 10 metres of children's play equipment in outdoor public places
- At public swimming pools
- At spectator areas at sports grounds or other recreational areas used for organised sport
- Within 4 metres of a pedestrian access point to a public building
- In commercial outdoor dining areas
- In cars with a child under the age of 16 years in the vehicle
- Where "No Smoking" signs are installed

There is no safe level of exposure to second-hand tobacco smoke. This is the smoke which smokers exhale after inhaling from a lit cigarette and the smoke emitted from a burning cigarette. In adults, breathing second-hand tobacco smoke can increase the risk of heart disease, lung cancer and other lung diseases.

For children, inhaling second-hand tobacco smoke is even more dangerous. This is because children's airways are smaller, and their immune systems are less developed. These differences make children more likely to suffer health problems due to second-hand smoke such as bronchitis, pneumonia and asthma.

Staff that smoke or vape are asked to do so during their breaks and well away from the centre, from staff and children.