



Child Safe Environments

Children's Services Policy No 2.4

Date issued: April 2009

Replaces issue/policy: Occupational Health and Safety

Date effective: April 2009

Date revised and updated: March 2012; May 2013; April 2015; November 2015, February 2017; and May 2019

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 for staff and educators to be 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 and educators 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 Amendment Regulations (modified July 2018)
- Work Health and Safety Act 2011
- Work Health and Safety Regulations 2011
- Children (Education and Care Services National Law Application) Act 2010

Note: This policy should be read in conjunction with policies

- 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
- Human Resources Policy 8.01 – Work Health and Safety

In this policy "staff" refers to staff employed by Willoughby City Council and Educators registered with Council's Family Day Care Scheme.

Resources:

- Work Health and Safety in Education and Care Services, Child Australia, 2012
- Occupational Health and Safety, Community Child Care Resource Sheet, 2014
- SafeWork NSW
- NSW Office of the Children's Guardian – SAFE series resources
- National Quality Standards – 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; Quality Area 4, Standard 4.1, Element 4.1.1.
- Red Nose Saving Little Lives, A Safe Cot <https://rednose.com.au/article/what-is-a-safe-cot>

Practices: 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

- Staff are to ensure that daily safety checks at the service have been conducted prior to the arrival of children.
- Ipad to be located in an accessible place for families to sign children in and out
- Parents/guardians 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.
- 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).

Signing Children's Attendance Records

- The attendance record must be electronically confirmed by either the person who delivers the child to the centre/the family day care educator's home, or by the person who collects the child from the centre/the family day care educator's home; 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.

Long Day Care & Out Of School Hours Care

- Staff are to ensure that at the end of the day all areas of the service, including cot rooms, 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 signed out and collected.

Family Day Care

- Educators are to sign the attendance record, or roll book to indicate that the check has been completed and that all children have been signed out and collected by an authorised person.

- All services are to display a sign located at the entry of the service and it is to be visible from the outside. At least one 'after hours' emergency phone number is to be displayed.

Supervision of Children (All Services)

- 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.
- Long Day Care Services 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 policy 1.5 – Code of Conduct as well as policies 1.3 – Child Protection, 1.4 Compliments and Complaints Handling, 2.13 – Safe Transportation of Children and 2.17 Guiding Children's Behaviour.

Indoor environments

Kitchen areas:

Long Day Care

- Children in Long Day Care settings 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/guardians 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.

Family Day Care

- Where an Educator is unable to provide a secure gate to the kitchen area of the home they are to ensure that all poisonous substances are out of reach of children and in a lockable cupboard.
- Drawers and cupboards that contain dangerous objects are to be fitted with child proof locks. Children are to be taught that they are not to play in the kitchen area.
- Where Family Day Care staff believe it is possible for the kitchen area of an educator's home to be gated, the educator is to provide and erect a safety gate whenever there are children in his/her care.

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 display a sign informing children, staff and parents/guardians that children are not permitted in this area.

Family Day Care

- Educators are required to supervise children when in the bathroom.
- Educators are to provide childproof locks on cupboards and drawers that contain potentially dangerous hazards.
- Educators are to ensure that the bathroom facility is well maintained and cleaned on a daily basis.

Out of School Hours Services

- Due to the shared nature of these facilities 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.
- Where the service operates in a shared public venue, staff are to erect signs notifying the public that they are not able to access the bathroom facilities during service operating hours.
- 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 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 Long Day Care, OOSH services and the Family Day Care Coordination Unit office will be inspected every 6 months.
- Fire equipment in the homes of Family Day Care Educators is to be inspected every 6 months and after any use as required by the Education and Care Services Regulation
- 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. For Family Day Care Educators, Emergency evacuation plans are to be displayed at each entry door of the home that is accessible to children and one procedure to be displayed at each exit of the house.

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 and FDC. 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.
- Long Day Care 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:

- Cots/stretcher beds must meet the Australian Standards for cots (AS/NZS2172.2003) to prevent SUDI.
- Cots/stretcher beds are to be cleaned regularly and be separate from other cots/stretcher beds to reduce chances of cross infection.
- Cots/stretchers 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 for each day they attend.

Laundry:

- Children are not permitted in the laundry and the room is to be locked at all times.
- In Family Day Care, children may access the laundry room if it has been made safe to do so and has been listed on the Educator's Self-Risk Assessment as accessible.
- 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. In Family Day Care, Educators can document in their maintenance book whilst waiting for the repair to be carried out.
- Any hazards identified are to be removed from use.

Staff are to report any need for maintenance in the maintenance register.

- Staff should refer to the individual service for outdoor safety checklist.
- Work Health and Safety Audits.
- Community Life Unit will conduct internal safety audits of education and care services to determine any underlying areas of need.
- 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.