

## Providing a child safe environment – preschool procedure table

National Quality Standard Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations	Associated department policy, procedure or guideline	Reference document(s) and/or advice from a recognised authority
<p><b>NQS: 2.2, 3.1</b></p> <p><b>Law Section: 162A, 165, 166, 167</b></p> <p><b>Regulations: 84, 103, 105, 109, 115</b></p>	<p>Leading and operating department preschool guidelines</p> <p><a href="#">Child Protection policy – Responding to and reporting students at risk of harm</a></p> <p><a href="#">Child Protection – Allegations against employees</a></p> <p><a href="#">Working with Children Check policy</a></p> <p><a href="#">Department web page – Child Protection</a></p>	<p>ACECQA information sheets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Active supervision – Ensuring safety and promoting learning [PDF 910 KB]</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Minimising the risk of children being mistakenly locked in or out of service premises [PDF 478 KB]</a></li> </ul> <p><a href="#">Kidsafe NSW</a></p> <p><a href="#">Implementing the Child Safe Standards – A guide for early childhood education and outside school hours care services [PDF 3.7 MB]</a></p> <p><a href="#">Keeping our kids safe – Cultural safety and the national principles for child safe organisations [PDF 13.1 MB]</a></p> <p><a href="#">ACECQA information sheet – Embedding the national child safe principles</a></p>

National Quality Standard Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations	Associated department policy, procedure or guideline	Reference document(s) and/or advice from a recognised authority
		<p>ACECQA's policy and procedures guidelines –  <a href="#">Providing a child safe environment [PDF 217 KB]</a></p> <p><a href="#">Department of Communities and Justice – signs of abuse</a></p>

## Responsibilities

<b>School principal</b>	<p>The principal as nominated supervisor, educational leader and responsible person holds primary responsibility for the preschool.</p> <p>The principal is responsible for ensuring:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the preschool is compliant with legislative standards related to this procedure at all times</li> <li>all staff involved in the preschool are familiar with and implement this procedure</li> <li>all procedures are current and reviewed as part of a continuous cycle of self- assessment.</li> <li>These tasks may be delegated to other members of the preschool team, but the responsibility sits with the principal.</li> </ul>
<b>Preschool supervisor</b>	<p>The preschool supervisor supports the principal in their role and is responsible for leading the review of this procedure through a process of self-assessment and critical reflection. This could include:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>analysing complaints, incidents or issues and the implications for updates to this procedure</li> <li>reflecting on how this procedure is informed by stakeholder feedback and relevant expert authorities</li> <li>planning and discussing ways to engage with families and communities, including how changes are communicated</li> <li>developing strategies to induct all staff when procedures are updated to ensure practice is embedded.</li> </ul>
<b>Preschool teacher(s) and educator(s)</b>	<p>Preschool teachers and educators are responsible for working with the preschool leadership team to ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>all staff in the preschool and daily practices comply with this procedure</li> <li>this procedure is stored in a way that it is accessible to all staff, families, visitors and volunteers</li> <li>they are actively involved in the review of this procedure, as required, or at least annually</li> <li>details of this procedure's review are documented.</li> </ul>

## Procedure

<b>Supervision plan</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The preschool children are adequately supervised at all times.</li> <li>A supervision plan is in place to support active supervision.</li> <li>The worksite risk assessment makes note of areas and activities which require closer supervision. Supervision of children in the outside area is divided between upstairs and downstairs with one educator always in the upstairs area and one always in the downstairs area when children are in each area. High risk and new/special activities will often require closer supervision, such as the woodwork area or cooking experiences. At drop-off time, one</li> </ul>
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	<p>staff member will be dedicated to welcoming families supervising children as they enter the preschool. Similarly, one staff member will be allocated during pick-up time to supervise families as their sign out and collect their child from preschool.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A staff roster ensures a ratio of one educator for each ten children is maintained at all times the preschool is open, including during planned educator breaks. Preschool educators are relieved by school staff for meal breaks. The handover process includes but is not limited to a discussion and handover sheet that includes information about children in attendance at the time of handover, children with medical conditions, special considerations and experiences occurring at the time.</li> <li>• To implement the Child Safe Standards: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— any visitors or volunteers are appropriately supervised to safeguard children's safety</li> <li>— where possible, each staff member remains in the line of sight of other staff members when working with children.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Child protection</b>	<p><b>Training</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All teaching, non-teaching, ongoing and casual staff complete the department's child protection induction training on commencing with the department, and then mandatory updates annually.</li> <li>• Preschool educators are encouraged and supported to raise and discuss any child protection concerns they have with their supervisor or principal. See Child Protection Policy.</li> </ul> <p><b>Mandatory reporters</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As a mandatory reporter, each staff member, volunteer or education student will inform the principal if they have reasonable grounds to suspect any risk of harm to a child or young person.</li> </ul>

- The principal will then apply the department's child protection policy – [Child Protection: Responding to and reporting students at risk of harm](#)
- As described in this policy, the principal will use appropriate tools such as the online [Mandatory Reporter Guide](#), professional judgement or specialist advice to determine if concerns about the safety, welfare or wellbeing of the child constitutes risk of significant harm. If they do, the principal will report to the NSW Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ).
- The principal will let the person who made the report know the action taken. If a staff member believes that the principal has not reported risk of significant harm concerns to the DCJ, they must report directly to DCJ themselves.

#### **Reportable conduct**

- All staff, volunteers and education students who become aware of an allegation of a child protection nature about themselves or another employee must inform the principal.
- On receiving a report of reportable conduct, the principal will apply the department policy – [Child Protection: Allegations Against Employees](#).
- If an allegation involves the principal, the staff member must inform another supervisor or suitable person, such as the Director Educational Leadership (DEL) within that network.
- Principals must immediately report allegations against a staff member or volunteer of a child protection nature to Professional and Ethical Standards (PES) using the [PES Reporting guide](#).
- PES ensure the department's statutory responsibilities are met, including notifying the Office of Children's Guardian of reportable conduct under the *Children's Guardian Act 2019*.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Principals must report to NSW Police and/or Child Protection Helpline if the child is at risk of significant harm.</li> </ul> <p><b>Notification to the Regulatory Authority</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Notification must be to Early Learning (email <a href="mailto:earlylearning@det.nsw.edu.au">earlylearning@det.nsw.edu.au</a> or phone 1300 083 698) when: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a staff member reasonably believes that physical or sexual abuse of a child has or is occurring at the preschool</li> <li>an allegation or complaint is made that physical or sexual abuse of a child has or is occurring at the preschool</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Record keeping</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Records relating to child sexual abuse that has or is alleged to have occurred within the preschool will be kept for at least 45 years from the date the record was created.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Working with children checks</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All department staff hold a current <i>Working with Children Check</i> clearance valid for paid work and verified by the department. Each staff member's WWCC number, expiry date and proof of verification stored in the staff qualification folder.</li> <li>Parents and close relatives volunteering in the preschool do not require a WWCC clearance, but must complete a <a href="#">WWCC Declaration for Child Related Workers</a>, with sections 1, 3 and 4 completed and provide 100 points of proof of identity.</li> <li>Volunteers over the age of 18 who are not parents or close relatives of a child attending the school at which they are volunteering are considered <a href="#">Specified volunteers</a> and require a WWCC clearance to participate in the preschool program.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Child safe culture</b></p> <p><b>The safe use</b></p>	<p>To implement the Child Safe Standards a child safe culture has been established and is maintained, with children's health, safety and wellbeing prioritised.</p>

<p><b>of online environments</b></p>	<p>Practices that do this include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The preschool references child safety in the philosophy.</li> <li>• Self-assessment and quality improvement processes examine and evaluate the implementation of the child safe standards.</li> <li>• Risk assessment plans are conducted and implemented to prevent and respond to possible risks to child safety.</li> <li>• Locally developed procedures describe processes that maintain child safety. The review of these procedures considers them from a child safety perspective.</li> <li>• Opportunities are provided for parents to share their feedback and have input into preschool decisions, particularly the review of local procedures and the philosophy.</li> <li>• Parents are informed of the actions the preschool takes to ensure child safety.</li> <li>• Parents are provided with information about child safety, including how they can report a child protection concern.</li> <li>• All staff are responsive to children, listening to what they say, believing them and acting on any concerns they have.</li> <li>• Staff provide opportunities for children to share their opinions and contribute to decisions that affect them, enabling them to then be able to confidently 'speak up' to raise a concern, if needed.</li> <li>• All staff are supported to fulfil their legal obligation as a mandatory reporter through annual training and opportunities to discuss concerns at team meetings.</li> <li>• Complaints are handled in a child-focussed manner and as outlined in the department's Complaint Handling policy.</li> <li>• The preschool's supervision plan describes how higher risk times of the day and activities are more closely supervised.</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children's use of online devices is supervised closely. All devices have child-safe filters installed.</li> </ul>
<b>Risk management plan for the preschool environment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A risk assessment plan for the preschool environment is reviewed and updated annually. It identifies potential risks in both the indoor and outdoor environment, and describes steps taken to reduce or minimise these risks. Preschool educators in consultation with executive staff review and update this plan each year, and more often if necessary, when new risks arise. This will be viewed by all staff working in the preschool by reading through the risk assessment folder.</li> </ul>
<b>Clean, hygienic and safe environment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A daily safety check of the indoors and outdoors is carried out before children arrive each day. A record is kept of what is checked, signed and dated by the person who carried out the check. After each check is completed, it is stored in a labelled folder, which is kept in a locked cabinet in the preschool office. A roster of who will complete which checks each day is located above the staff craft sink in the preschool classroom.</li> <li>Any hazardous or broken items are rectified or removed from areas the children can access. If required, preschool maintenance is carried out by the school's General Assistant.</li> <li>When preschool maintenance is required, it is recorded in the General Assistant's logbook, located in the primary school staffroom. If the General Assistant cannot fix the problem, they will let the school office know, and office staff will organize tradespeople to attend to the job. As soon as a job has been lodged, preschool educators will be informed of the time tradespeople will attend to ensure any necessary arrangements are made to help them complete their work.</li> <li>All potentially hazardous products and materials e.g., cleaning detergents and chemicals, and aerosol cans are stored securely and are inaccessible to children. The area in which they are stored is labelled as containing hazardous or dangerous materials and</li> </ul>



	<p>includes the top locked cupboards in staff preschool kitchen and locked preschool indoor storeroom.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are no toxic plants on the preschool site. Before a new plant is introduced to the site, reference is made to Kidsafe: Grow me safely to determine if it is safe or not.</li> <li>• Environmental and equipment cleaning is an ongoing process to ensure the preschool is always safe and hygienic. See Appendix 1.</li> </ul>
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## Record of procedure's review

<b>Date of review</b>	6/11/23
<b>Who was involved</b>	Preschool team
<b>Key changes made and reason why</b>	Transferred to new DOE format
<b>Record of communication of significant changes to relevant stakeholders</b>	<p>Principal: participated in review, handed updated copy</p> <p>Staff: participated in review, updated copy in staffroom policy folder</p> <p>Parents: participated in review, updated copy on website</p> <p>Please note, parents must be notified at least 14 days prior to a change that may have a significant impact on their service's provision of education and care or a family's ability to use the service.</p>
<b>Date of review</b>	8/9/23
<b>Who was involved</b>	preschool team, whole school staff team

<b>Key changes made and reason why</b>	Added section about protecting children in an online environment in accordance with the Child Safe Standards
<b>Record of communication of significant changes to relevant stakeholders</b>	Principal:  Staff:  Parents:  Please note, parents must be notified at least 14 days prior to a change that may have a significant impact on their service's provision of education and care or a family's ability to use the service.
<b>Date of review</b>	17/5/23
<b>Who was involved</b>	preschool team, whole school staff team, children, and families
<b>Key changes made and reason why</b>	Requirements for parent volunteers has changed to completing a new declaration document as well as providing government issued ID that displays current address
<b>Record of communication of significant changes to relevant stakeholders</b>	Permanent school staff will be alerted to changes during next school staff meeting. Casual teachers will be alerted to read local procedures folder on next commencement day of work with staff alerting them to changes.
<b>Date of review</b>	4/5/22
<b>Who was involved</b>	preschool team, whole school staff team, children, and families

<b>Key changes made and reason why</b>	Transferred to new DOE format.
<b>Record of communication of significant changes to relevant stakeholders</b>	Permanent school staff will be alerted to changes during next school staff meeting. Casual teachers will be alerted to read local procedures folder on next commencement day of work with staff alerting them to changes.

Copy and paste the last 4 rows to the bottom of the table each time a new review is completed.

## Appendix 1

### Preschool Resources Cleaning Regime

When?	What?	How	Who?
<b>Daily</b>	Paint brushes, paint pots, glue brushes, glue pots if emptied, craft resources	Detergent & water	Staff
	Easels	Detergent & water	Staff
	Lunch tables and chairs	Detergent & water	Staff
	Food trolley	Detergent and water	Staff
	Sensory toys	Detergent and water	Staff
	Resources placed in children's mouths or handled by sick students	Disinfectant, Detergent, water	Staff
	Sensory toys	Detergent and water	Staff
	Floors	Vacuum, Mop	Contract cleaner
	Children's Bathroom (also during the day, as needed)	Mop Warm soapy water and disinfectant	Staff/Contract cleaner
	Outdoor Equipment - checked for spiders, cobwebs, wasps' nests etc	Daily outdoor safety checklist	Staff
	Bins Emptied	Daily	Contract cleaners
<b>Weekly</b>	Outdoor area	Sweep, hose	Staff
	Home corner furniture and resources	Disinfectant, Detergent, water	Staff

	Puzzles	Disinfectant, wipes	Staff
	Paint smocks	Water and detergent	Staff and rostered parents
	Play dough	New batch	Staff and children
	Sandpit	Racked and sprayed with disinfectant	Staff
<b>Monthly</b>	Garbage bins (inside and lids)	Disinfectant	Staff
	Dress up clothing/cushions/sheets (more often if required)	Detergent and water	Rostered parent
<b>Per Term</b>	Fridge	Detergent and water	Staff
	Rafters	Detergent and water	Cleaning contractor
<b>Per semester</b>	Staff kitchen cupboards	Detergent and water	Staff
	Shed and resources contained inside shed	Sweep, dust, detergent and water	Staff
<b>Annual</b>	All toys	Disinfectant, Detergent, water	Staff
	Furniture (tables, chairs, shelving)	Disinfectant, Detergent, water	Staff
	Carpets	Steam cleaned	Contract cleaners
	Pest control	Undertaken when children are not on premises	Contract pest control
	Gutters	Undertaken when children are not on premises	Contract cleaners/GA

## **Appendix 2**

# **Child Protection Policy: Responding to and reporting students at risk of harm**

Sets out roles and responsibilities of staff in relation to child protection including training, reporting on safety, and supporting children and young people, as well as monitoring, evaluation and reporting requirements.

## **1. Policy statement**

**1.1** Education has an important role to support children and young people and to identify where problems arise that may put their safety, welfare or wellbeing at risk.

**1.2** All staff have a responsibility to report risk of harm concerns about children and young people, within their roles, and to provide support to children and young people.

**1.3** Child protection reforms introduce an obligation for government and non-government agencies to coordinate decision making and delivery of services.

## **2. Audience and applicability**

**2.1** All departmental employees, including those in state and network offices, and schools.

## **3. Context**

**3.1** The NSW Government recognises that care and protection for children and young people is a shared responsibility. It begins with parents, but when government support becomes necessary, it is not the sole responsibility of community services but a collective responsibility.

Keep Them Safe: A shared approach to child wellbeing provides the framework for parents, communities, government and non-government agencies to work together to support children and families.

## 3.2. Legislation

**3.2.1** Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998; Crimes Act 1900, Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998.

Other relevant legislation:

Privacy And Personal Information Protection Act 1998; Health Records And Information Privacy Act 2002; Commission for Children and Young People Act 1998; Ombudsman Act 1974, Education Act 1990

## 4. Responsibilities and delegations

### 4.1. Principals and workplace managers

#### 4.1.1. Training

- ensure all staff have participated in an initial child protection induction and an update during the past year.
- ensure all staff are aware of the indicators of abuse and neglect of children and young people.
- ensure all staff are aware of their obligation to advise the principal or workplace manager of concerns about the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children and young people that arise during the course of their work.
- ensure that all staff are aware of their mandatory obligation to report suspected risk of significant harm and of the procedures for doing so.

#### 4.1.2. Reporting

- use appropriate tools to inform decision making, such as the online Mandatory Reporter Guide, professional judgment or specialist advice, where there are concerns about risk of harm.
- determine whether concerns about the safety, welfare or wellbeing of children or young people constitute risk of significant harm and, if they do, report these to Family and Community Services.
- seek advice from the Child Wellbeing Unit where there is uncertainty about whether concerns amount to risk of significant harm.
- contact the Child Wellbeing Unit about the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children and young people where:
  - there are concerns about risk of harm, that do not meet the threshold of significant harm but are not trivial.
  - the Mandatory Reporter Guide indicates this should be done.
  - a case has been reported to Family and Community Services and did not meet the risk of significant harm threshold.
  - there is an observable pattern of cumulative harm that does not meet the threshold of significant harm.

### **4.1.3. Supporting children and young people**

- establish effective systems in their workplace for:
  - child protection concerns to be identified in the course of the work of staff, reported and action taken, where appropriate, so vulnerable children and young people are supported.
  - reasonable steps to be taken to coordinate decision making and coordinate services to children and young people and their families with other local service providers, if required.
  - collaborative work with other agencies for the care and protection of children and young people in ways that strengthen and support the family and in a manner that respects the functions and expertise of each service provider.
- exchange relevant information to progress assessments, investigations and case management as permitted by law.
- use best endeavours in responding to a request for a service from Family and Community Services provided that the request is consistent with departmental responsibilities and policies.

## **4.2. Employees**

### **4.2.1. Training**

- participate in a child protection induction and in annual updates. This includes all staff – principals, workplace managers, teaching and non-teaching staff, part-time, temporary and casual staff and those who join during the year.

### **4.2.2. Reporting**

- adhere to mandatory procedures for conveying risk of harm concerns to the principal or workplace manager.
- adhere to mandatory procedures for reporting risk of significant harm to Family and Community Services.
- ensure, where they have reported any risk of significant harm concerns to the principal or workplace manager, that the principal or workplace manager has reported those concerns to Family and Community Services.
- report directly to Family and Community Services if they believe the principal or workplace manager has not reported risk of significant harm concerns to Family and Community Services, and they still have concerns about risk of significant harm.
- ensure that any relevant information that they become aware of, subsequent to a report being made to Family and Community Services or following contact with the Child Wellbeing Unit, is provided to Family and Community Services or the Child Wellbeing Unit respectively. If the additional information forms concerns about risk of significant harm a report must be made to Family and Community Services.

### **4.2.3. Supporting children and young people**

- cooperate with reasonable steps to coordinate service delivery and decision-making with other relevant service providers.





- avoid undertaking any investigation of the circumstances giving rise to a report where risk of significant harm has been reported, without the express prior approval of the relevant Family and Community Services case officer.
- inform students, including apprentices or trainees, of their right to be protected from abuse and of avenues of support if they have concerns about abuse.

## **5. Monitoring, evaluation and reporting requirements**

**5.1** Principals and workplace managers must maintain a workplace register of staff participation in annual updates and of inductions of new staff, or they must sight individual records of staff inductions. This applies to all staff including non-teaching staff, part-time, temporary and casual staff.

**5.2** A record is to be kept of reports to Family and Community Services as confirmation that mandatory reporting requirements have been met. The report reference number should be recorded.

**5.3** The record and related papers are to be retained by principals or workplace managers in secure storage and kept confidential. These records are to be provided to any successor.

**5.4** Where a reference number has been provided by the Child Wellbeing Unit it must be recorded and kept.

**5.5** If serious safety issues remain after a report has been made to, and accepted by, Family and Community Services, principals or workplace managers will refer the matter to the departmental regional officer responsible for student services so the case can be taken up at a senior level within Family and Community Services.

## **6. Contact**

Leader, Child Protection Services ph (02) 9269 9454.

