



Providing a child safe environment – preschool procedure

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

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		safe principles ACECQA's policy and procedures guidelines – Providing a child safe environment [PDF 217 KB] Department of Communities and Justice – signs of abuse

Responsibilities

School principal	<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"> the preschool is compliant with legislative standards related to this procedure at all times all staff involved in the preschool are familiar with and implement this procedure all procedures are current and reviewed as part of a continuous cycle of self-assessment. These tasks may be delegated to other members of the preschool team, but the responsibility sits with the principal.
Preschool supervisor	<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"> analysing complaints, incidents or issues and the implications for updates to this procedure reflecting on how this procedure is informed by stakeholder feedback and relevant expert authorities planning and discussing ways to engage with families and communities, including how changes are communicated developing strategies to induct all staff when procedures are updated to ensure practice is embedded.
Preschool teacher(s) and	<p>Preschool teachers and educators are responsible for working with the preschool leadership team to ensure:</p>

educator(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all staff in the preschool and daily practices comply with this procedure • this procedure is stored in the preschool in a way that it is accessible to all staff, families, visitors and volunteers • they are actively involved in the review of this procedure, as required, or at least annually • details of this procedure’s review are documented.
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Procedure

Supervision plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The preschool children are adequately supervised at all times. • A supervision plan is in place to support active supervision, as well as arrangements for specific times of the day that are of higher risk such as arrivals and departures and visits to the school. Please refer to appendix for details of the supervision plan. • 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. During meal break times, preschool staff relieve each other and/or are relieved by teachers from the K-2 school to ensure the required educator to children ratio is maintained. • Staff constantly observe placement of children in the preschool environment and cooperate as well as communicate with each other to ensure supervision of all indoor and outdoor areas, as needed by the location of the children. • To implement the Child Safe Standards: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — any visitors or volunteers are appropriately supervised to safeguard children’s safety — where possible, each staff member remains in the line of sight of other staff members when working with children.
Child protection	<p>Training/Induction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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, at the commencement of each new preschool year. • Preschool educators are encouraged and supported to raise and discuss any child protection concerns they have with their supervisor or principal. • Induction procedures for all volunteers and education students includes their obligation under child protection law to report any risk or suspected risk of harm to a child or young person. • Child wellbeing/protection posters are displayed in the staffroom to remind staff to raise any concerns. Child protection and wellbeing are also constant standing items on weekly team meeting agendas.

Mandatory reporters

- 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.
- 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*.
- Principals must report to NSW Police and/or Child Protection Helpline if the child is at risk of significant harm.

Notification to the Regulatory Authority

- Notification must be to Early Learning (email earlylearning@det.nsw.edu.au or phone 1300 083 698) when:
 - a staff member reasonably believes that physical or sexual abuse of a child has or is occurring at the preschool
 - an allegation or complaint is made that physical or sexual abuse of a child has or is occurring at the preschool

Record keeping

- 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.

<p>Working with children checks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 are stored in the staff folder located in the preschool office • Parents and close relatives volunteering in the preschool do not require a WWCC clearance, but must complete a WWCC Declaration for Child Related Workers, with sections 1, 3 and 4 completed and provide 100 points of proof of identity. • 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 Specified volunteers and require a WWCC clearance to participate in the preschool program.
<p>Child safe culture</p> <p>The safe use of online environments</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. The following practices are implemented continuously at Sefton Infants Preschool:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The preschool makes a public commitment to child safety in the philosophy, family information booklet and newsletters. • Self-assessment and quality improvement processes examine and evaluate the implementation of the child safe standards. • Risk assessment plans are conducted and implemented to prevent and respond to possible risks to child safety. • Locally developed procedures describe processes that maintain child safety. The review of these procedures considers them from a child safety perspective. • Opportunities are provided for parents to share their feedback and have input into preschool decisions, particularly the review of local procedures and the philosophy. • Parents are informed of the actions the preschool takes to ensure child safety. • Parents are provided with information about child safety, including how they can report a child protection concern. This is included in the parent information booklet, as well as the preschool website. • All staff are responsive to children, listening to what they say, believing them and acting on any concerns they have. • 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. • All staff are supported to fulfil their legal obligation as a mandatory reporter through annual training and opportunities to discuss concerns at team meetings. • Complaints are handled in a child-focussed manner and as outlined in the department's Complaint Handling policy. • The preschool's supervision plan describes how higher risk times of the day and activities are more closely supervised. • Children's use of online devices is supervised closely. All devices have child-safe filters installed.

<p>Risk management plan for the preschool environment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A risk assessment plan for the preschool environment is reviewed and updated at least annually or earlier if the need arises. The plan identifies potential risks in both the indoor and outdoor environment, and describes steps taken to reduce or minimise these risks. • All preschool staff are involved in reviewing the plan. Updated plans are communicated at staff meetings and made available in hard copy form in the risk management plan folder and electronically in preschool faculty drive. If a new risk becomes apparent after the review, the principal and preschool teacher are responsible for adding it to the risk plan.
<p>Clean, hygienic and safe environment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. This record is kept on the indoor lectern near the preschool entrance. A roster is developed and displayed with the safety check records to show who will complete the check each day. • 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. • Maintenance tasks required for the General Assistant or external trade services are logged on School Bytes (the school and preschool's online administration system). If an external trades person is required, the School Administration Manager or Officer will log the job on the Department of Education's FM Web. Only contractors with WWCC who have been verified by the NSW Department of Education can complete any maintenance tasks on-site. Tradespeople must first present at the school office for signing in to the school premises and for photo identification checks. • All potentially hazardous products and materials are stored securely and inaccessible to children. The area in which they are stored is labelled as containing <i>hazardous</i> or <i>dangerous</i> materials. For example, cleaning detergents and chemicals and aerosol cans are stored in the preschool staffroom or laundry, which are inaccessible to the children. Medications are stored in the preschool office in secured storage. • 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. • Environmental and equipment cleaning is an ongoing process to ensure the preschool is always safe and hygienic. A cleaning schedule is developed and followed. Please refer to Appendix B for details of cleaning schedule, products and methods, as well as practices for areas such as the sandpit and mud kitchen.

Record of procedure's review

Date of review	12 April 2024
Who was involved	Sharna Labbe, Deana Talevska, Alex Arancibia, May Meesorn-iam.
Key changes made and reason why	Nil
Record of communication of significant changes to relevant stakeholders	<p>Principal: 12 April 2024</p> <p>Staff: 29 April 2024 – Weekly staff meeting</p> <p>Parents: 30 April 2024 – website and community procedure folder updated – message sent via Story Park</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>