

CHILD SAFE ENVIRONMENT POLICY

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child outline that children and young people have a right to be safe and cared for, no matter where they are or who they are with. When working with children and young people, it is important to understand children’s rights and needs.

We are advocates for children and have a strong commitment to child safety and establishing and maintaining a child safe and child friendly environment.

NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD (NQS)

QUALITY AREA 2: CHILDREN’S HEALTH AND SAFETY		
2.2	Safety	Each child is protected
2.2.1	Supervision	At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from harm and hazard.
2.2.2	Incident and emergency management	Plans to effectively manage incidents and emergencies are developed in consultation with relevant authorities, practised and implemented.
2.2.3	Child protection	Management, educators and staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities to identify and respond to every child at risk of abuse or neglect.

EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL REGULATIONS

EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL REGULATIONS	
168 (h)	Providing a child safe environment

RELATED POLICIES (Primary policies supporting a child safe environment)

Arrival and Departure Policy Child Protection Policy Excursion Policy	Health and Safety Policy Supervision Policy
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PURPOSE

Our Service has a legal and ethical responsibility to provide a safe and friendly environment where all children are respected, valued and encouraged to reach their full potential. We aim to take all practical steps to protect children from harm, ensuring a healthy and safe environment.

SCOPE

This policy applies to children, families, staff, management and visitors of the Service.

IMPLEMENTATION

The National Law requires management to ensure all children being educated and cared for are adequately supervised and every reasonable precaution is taken to protect children from harm and any hazard likely to cause injury. Our focus is to build a child safe environment which is reflected in our Service policies and procedures and understood and practiced by Educators and Staff.

SAFETY CHECKLISTS

Regular safety checks maintain basic standards of safety within our Service. Educators will complete the following daily checklists to assist and record inspections of the physical environment where foreseeable risks may be evident and cause harm or injury to a child:

- Indoor Safety Checklist
- Outdoor Safety Checklist

Any findings that require attention will be either dealt with immediately or submitted into the maintenance book depending on priority.

STORAGE OF HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES

We reduce the risk of harm to children and educators by using eco-friendly products. Our Service will endeavour to provide a safe environment where necessary chemical and hazardous equipment are safely stored away from children and handled appropriately.

Management and Educators will keep a register of hazardous chemicals used at the Service, including Safety Data Sheets.

EQUIPMENT, FURNITURE & MAINTENTANCE RECORD

There are several factors that can contribute to a hazard, such as a deprived program, insufficient supervision and dilapidated equipment. To ensure a child safe environment free from hazards, we have implemented practices and continue to monitor Service policies and procedures that uphold Australian Safety Standards.

The premises and all equipment and furniture used within the Service are audited to ensure all aspects are safe, clean and in good repair. We understand that hazards are specific to developmental stages; Educators are aware that toys and equipment need to be checked to ensure they are safe and developmentally appropriate for children. Regular checks occur within the Service to ensure that all toys, furniture and equipment are in good condition and working order.

RISK ASSESSMENT & RISK ASSESSMENT TOOL

It is a legislative requirement that Management and Educators implement a risk management system where they identify and manage hazards within the workplace to ensure a child safe environment.

The key principles of risk management include:

1. Identifying all hazards in the workplace
2. Assess the risk of each hazard
3. Control or manage the risk
4. Monitor and improve safety

It is the responsibility of all staff and educators at the Service to complete a risk assessment where children's safety may be jeopardised and when organising an excursion/incursion. Common hazards within the Service which may require a risk assessment include:

- Cross-Infection and Infectious Disease
- Building and Equipment (including storage)
- Inadequate space for conducting activities and experiences
- Hazardous Chemicals
- Electrical appliances
- Food preparation and Storage
- Environmental influences such as shade, noise etc

- Fire equipment
- Pets and/or animals
- Inadequate supervision of children
- Children's activities and experiences
- Work Health and Safety such as manual handling
- Non-Compliance risk
- Hot drinks

WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECK

Working in conjunction with the Child Protection Act and National Regulations, the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children is paramount within our Service and Community. A Working with Children Check (WWCC) is a requirement for people who work in child-related work. It involves a national criminal history check and a review of findings of workplace misconduct.

The result of a Working with Children Check is either a clearance to work with children and is valid for five years, or a bar against working with children. Cleared applicants are subject to ongoing monitoring and relevant new records may lead to the clearance being revoked.

Management is responsible for the periodic review and maintenance of up to date records of employees' Working with Children Check, including the Working with Children Check number and the date on which each clearance expires. Once an employee provides their WWCC clearance, management will verify the clearance to ensure that it is valid and current. The WWCC will be placed in the individual's file and continue to be updated as required.

CHILD PROTECTION

Children and young people always have a right to be safe and protected. All educators and management have a legal and moral duty to protect from harm. It is essential when working with children to be aware of indicators of harm and be able to recognise and report concerns regarding suspected harm or protection concerns. Staff are given information and training about child protection law and any obligations they have under that law.

To comply with legislation and provide a child safe environment, educators will keep up to date with child protection requirements; this includes adhering to the Child Protection Policy, updating Child Protection Training as required, and completing the Child Protection Assessment on an annual basis.

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE AUTHORISATION

National Regulations require our Service to keep a record of children and visitor's arrival and departures, with the signatures of the person responsible for verifying the accuracy of the record and the identity of the person collecting the child.

Educators will work in collaboration with our Arrival and Departure Policy and Student and Visitors Policy to ensure children feel safe and secure. To ensure children's safety, Educators have a clear understanding of their legal obligation to check identification when a person is picking up a child. To maintain compliance, parents and educators will complete an [alternate pick up form] if they authorise a person who is not on their emergency contact form to pick up their child.

SOURCE:

ACECQA

Children's Health and Safety – An analysis of Quality Area 2 of the National Quality Standard

Child Protection Act

Education and Care National Regulation

National Law

National Quality Standard

DOCUMENT CONTROLS:

MALLEE KIDS CHILD CARE POLICY	
Reference Number	HSW2
Version	v1.0
Responsible Officer	General Manager Corporate & Community
Date Adopted	September 2019
Review Date	September 2020

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History			
Date	Author	Revision	Nature of Change
Sep 2019	Matthew Morgan		New Policy Created
Publication			
<p>This is a policy of the District Council of Karoonda East Murray for the operation of the Mallee Kids Child Care service and will be available for inspection at Mallee Kids Child Care at 12 North Terrace, Karoonda or via the service website, www.malleekids.com.au .</p>			