

Child Protection Policy

NOTIFICATIONS OF ABUSE



IF ANYONE AT THE SERVICE HAS SUSPICIONS OF ABUSE, CONSULT THE **DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITIES (CHILD SAFETY SERVICES)** TO ASSESS WHETHER A CHILD IS AT RISK OF SIGNIFICANT HARM.



WHEN SOMEONE WITH MANDATORY REPORTING OBLIGATIONS HAS REASONABLE SUSPICION OF ABUSE THEY NEED TO CONTACT THE **DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITIES (CHILD SAFETY SERVICES)**
1800 811 810

QUEENSLAND POLICE SERVICE 4745 7400



**CONSULT THE SERVICE'S CHILD PROTECTION POLICY
FOR MORE INFORMATION.**

NQS

QA2	2.3.4	Educators, co-ordinators and educators are aware of their roles and responsibilities to respond to every child at risk of abuse or neglect.
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National Regulations

Regs	84	Awareness of child protection law
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Aim

The service takes our responsibility to provide a safe and caring environment for all children seriously. We believe that the safety of children is paramount at all times and aims to protect a child's right to be safe from abuse of any kind.

The service also aims to defend the rights of educators to confidentiality if a complaint against them is made and is found to be unsubstantiated. The service will ensure that all parties affected by this policy are made aware of their roles and responsibilities regarding child protection.

The service aims to educate all parties about their roles in child protection and also about signs of abuse and ensure that all requirements of child protection requirements are being met.

Related Policies

Privacy and Confidentiality Policy

Record Keeping and Retention Policy

Physical Environments (Workplace Safety, Learning and Administration) Policy

Death of a Child Policy

Open Doors Policy

Family Law and Access Policy

Relationships with Children Policy

Tobacco Drug and Alcohol Policy

Who is affected by this policy?

Educators

Families

Child

Management

Child Protection Risk Management Strategy – Statement of Commitment



Management

Statement of Commitment

Our service fundamentally believes that all children have the right to a life that is free from harm. Our service aims to provide an environment that is free from any type of abuse and foster a child's growth and development as per the individual requirements of each child. Educators at our service are aware of their obligations under the law in regards to the welfare of children and at all times uphold their obligation. In addition to this, our service aims to provide regular training to all educators (along with any volunteers, students etc) on child protection issues to ensure that, in the sad event a child has suffered abuse, the service can act quickly in the best interests of the child.

Child Protection Risk Management Strategy – Code of Conduct



Management

Code of Conduct

Our service upholds the following code of conduct in relation to employers, educators, volunteers, students, families and children:

For Employers:

- Ensure that all employees are:
 - Clear about their roles and responsibilities regarding child protection.
 - Aware of their obligations to immediately report suspected abuse to the Child Protection Hotline.
 - Aware of the indicators when a child may be at risk of harm or significant harm.
- Provide training and development for all employees in the recognition and reporting of abuse and harm.
- Provide reporting procedures and professional standards for care and protection work.
- Conduct a Working with Children Check for anyone that will be heavily involved with service operations.
- Report to the Ombudsman any reportable allegations and convictions made against an employee and ensure they are investigated by the Head of the Agency with appropriate actions being taken when the investigation is complete.
- Notify the Commission for Children and Young People of details of employees against whom relevant disciplinary proceedings have been completed and or persons whose employment has been rejected because of a risk identified in employment screening processes.
- Enable educators to have access to relevant acts, regulations, standards and other resources in order for them to complete their obligations.

For Educators:

- Report any situation where they suspect a child is at risk of significant harm to the Child Protection Helpline.
- Promote the welfare, safety and wellbeing of children at the service.
- Have an awareness of referral agencies for families where concerns of harm do not meet the significant harm threshold.
- Be aware of obligations as per the Mandatory Reporter Guide.
- Assist in supporting children and families when liaising with relevant government agencies.
- I will not drink alcohol or use illicit substances while on the service's premises and I will not come to the service while under the influence of alcohol or illicit substances.

- I will not smoke on the service's premises.
- I will not show favouritism towards any child.
- I will refrain from developing close personal relationships with children out of the carer/child relationship.
- I will refrain from using the abusive, derogatory or offensive language.

For Families:

- Treat all children at the service equally and respectfully.
- Report any suspicions to the most senior person on duty when at the service.
- Respect the rights, dignity and worth of every person, regardless of their abilities, gender, religion or cultural background.
- Respect the decision of employees and teach children to do likewise.
- Focus on encouraging children's efforts and learning.
- Support all efforts to remove any form of abuse in the service and encourage a safe and supportive service environment.
- I will not drink alcohol or use illicit substances while on the service's premises and I will not come to the service while under the influence of alcohol or illicit substances.
- I will not smoke on the service's premises.

For Children:

- We will respect other children and adults at the service.
- We will cooperate and will follow our Classroom Rules.
- We will listen to our Educator's instructions and follow them.
- We will control our temper and talk to an Educator if we are feeling upset.
- We will have a say in what activities we are involved in.
- We will speak to an Educator if we are worried or concerned about something.
- We will not bully other children.
- We will tell an Educator if we see a child bullying another child.

Child Protection Risk Management Strategy – Policies and Documentation



Management

Policies and Documentation

Please refer to the following policies and documentation:

- Child Protection Policy
- Educators Recruitment Policy
- Professional Development Policy
- Incident Report Form
- Employee Register
- High Risk Activity Risk Management Plan

Child Protection Risk Management Strategy – Recruitment, Selection, Management and Training of Educators and Volunteers



Recruitment

The service will keep up-to-date policies on recruiting, selecting, training and managing paid employees and volunteers.

The service is responsible for developing policies and procedures about recruitment, selection, management and training to ensure all persons working at the service are suitable.

When developing our recruitment strategy, our service will consider the following –

Position Description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • establish an understanding of the roles and expectations for educators to provide a safe and supportive environment for children and young people • become more aware of the tasks required for specific activities • develop ‘requirements of the position’ (sometimes referred to as selection criteria) • identify training needs • reduce the risk of harm to children and young people, and • attract and retain educators.
Advertising the Position	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • include a clear statement about your organisation’s safe and supportive work practices • include clear, concise details about your organisation • provide brief details about the position and working conditions, and • name a contact person for more information.
Selection Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment of applicant • Interview process • Referee checks
Probationary Period of Employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • set goals • identify training needs, specifically in relation to risk management practices, and • provide support to the new employee to be successful in undertaking the role.
Training	<p>Educators should receive training in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identifying, assessing and minimising risks • the organisation’s policies and procedures (including the organisation’s code of conduct) • compulsory training as required by industry standards or legislation, and • handling a disclosure or suspicion of harm, including

	<p>reporting guidelines.</p> <p>Training can be formal such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • higher education training and accreditation • training offered by external organisations • training developed and delivered internally, and • on-the-job training meeting key objectives. <p>Training can also be informal such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • inviting police officers or Child Safety educators to meetings to discuss issues in relation to child protection • inviting other professionals to speak at meetings or functions, and • internal mentoring and coaching.
Induction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • your organisation's commitment to an environment that is safe and supportive for children and young people • the standards of behaviour expected as detailed in your code of conduct • your organisation's safe and supportive policies and procedures, and strategies to minimise harm • procedures to follow when a disclosure of harm is received • reporting guidelines in relation to disclosures of harm and suspicions of harm • their own rights and responsibilities, as well as those of children and young people • what to expect if there is an allegation of harm made against them or to them • what constitutes a breach of your organisation's child and youth risk management strategy and the potential consequences • the roles of key people in your organisation, and • grievance procedures.
Exit interviews or questionnaires	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • gather information about the effectiveness of the recruitment process • identify possible areas for improvement in organisational processes, management, job design, remuneration or career planning and development, and • receive positive feedback on what is working well in your organisation.

Child Protection Risk Management Strategy – Concerns of Abuse / Neglect



Management

Definitions

Harm may be categorised in the following types:

- *physical abuse*, for example, beating, shaking, burning, biting, causing bruise or fractures by inappropriate discipline, giving children alcohol, drugs or inappropriate medication
- *emotional or physiological abuse*, for example, constant yelling, insults, swearing, criticism, bullying, not giving children positive support and encouragement
- *neglect* for example, not giving children sufficient food, clothing, enough sleep, hygiene, medical care, leaving children alone or children missing school, and
- *sexual abuse or exploitation*, for example, sexual jokes or touching, exposing children to sexual acts or pornography or having sexual intercourse with a child or young person under 16 years of age (even if the child appears to have consented).

Suspicion of harm

You can suspect harm if:

- you are concerned by significant changes in behaviour or the presence of new unexplained and suspicious injuries.

Disclosure of harm

A disclosure of harm occurs when someone, including a child, tells you about harm that has happened or is likely to happen.

Disclosures of harm may start with:

- —I think I saw...
- —Somebody told me that...
- —Just think you should know...
- —I'm not sure what I want you to do, but...

Procedures for receiving a disclosure of harm

When receiving a disclosure of harm:

- remain calm and find a private place to talk
- don't promise that you'll keep a secret; tell them they have done the right thing in telling you but that you'll need to tell someone who can help keep them safe
- only ask enough questions to confirm the need to report the matter; probing questions could cause distress, confusion and interfere with any later enquiries, and
- do not attempt to conduct your own investigation or mediate an outcome between the parties involved.

Reporting guidelines for disclosures or suspicions of harm

Following are the actions our organisation will take immediately following a disclosure or suspicion of harm.

Documenting a suspicion of harm

If you or others have concerns about the safety of a child, record your concerns in a non-judgmental and accurate manner as soon as possible. If a parent explains a noticeable mark on a child, record your own observations as well as accurate details of the conversation. If you see unsafe or harmful actions towards a child in your care, intervene immediately, provided it is safe to do so. If it is unsafe, call the police for assistance.

Documenting a disclosure of harm

Complete an incident report form or record the details as soon as possible so that they are accurately captured. Include:

- time, date and place of the disclosure
- 'word for word' what happened and what was said, including anything you said and any actions that have been taken, and
- date of report and signature.

If you need to take notes as the person is telling you, explain that you are taking a record in case any later enquiry occurs.

Reporting the disclosure or suspicion of harm to authorities

Our organisation will not conduct its own enquiries in relation to the disclosure or suspicion of harm or try to come to an agreement between the parties involved. The person who receives a disclosure or suspects harm is to contact the relevant authority to ensure information provided is comprehensive and accurate.

Report the matter to:

- Department of Communities (Child Safety Services) on free-call 1800 811 810, or
- Queensland Police Service 07 4745 7400

Actions following a disclosure of harm

Support and counselling will be offered to all parties involved.

Processes for those involved in the report

The child or young person

The children and young people involved should be offered appropriate counselling and support.

The person who made the report

Under Section 22 of the Child Protection Act 1999, a person who reports suspected child abuse is protected from civil or criminal legal actions and is not considered to have broken any code of conduct or ethics.

Details of the person who made the report are to be kept completely confidential and will not be made available to the family of the child or young person, or the person against whom the allegation has been made.

The person against whom the allegation has been made

If the person responding to the allegation of harm is a member of the organisation, you may need to review their duties. If they continue to interact/work with children, ensure that they are appropriately supervised at all times. You may want to seek legal advice as to the extent to which that person can carry out duties in the organisation.

Procedures to minimise harm to children and young people

Our organisation works to minimise harm to children and young people by acting in a manner that supports their interests and wellbeing, by:

- making sure that children know that it is their right to feel safe at all times
- teaching them about acceptable and unacceptable behaviour in general
- letting them know who is and who is not an employee in the organisation
- allowing them to be a part of decision-making processes
- making sure they are safe by monitoring their activities and ensuring their environment meets all safety requirements
- taking anything a child or young person says seriously and following up their concerns
- letting them know there is no secret too awful, no story too terrible, that they can't share with someone they trust
- teaching them about appropriate and inappropriate contact in a manner appropriate to their age and level of understanding
- teaching children and young people to say 'no' to anything that makes them feel unsafe
- encouraging them to tell educators of any suspicious activities or people, and
- listening to children and young people and letting them know that educators are available for them if they have any concerns.

When receiving a disclosure of harm:

- remain calm and find a private place to talk
- don't promise that you'll keep a secret; tell them they have done the right thing in telling you but that you'll need to tell someone who can help keep them safe
- only ask enough questions to confirm the need to report the matter; probing questions could cause distress, confusion and interfere with any later enquiries, and
- do not attempt to conduct your own investigation or mediate an outcome between the parties involved.

General indicators of abuse and neglect

- marked delay between injury and seeking medical assistance
- history of injury
- the child gives some indication that the injury did not occur as stated
- the child tells you someone has hurt him/her
- the child tells you about someone he/she knows who has been hurt
- someone (relative, friend, acquaintance, sibling) tells you that the child may have been abused

Indicators of Neglect in children

- poor standard of hygiene leading to social isolation
- scavenging or stealing food
- extreme longing for adult affection
- lacking a sense of genuine interaction with others

- acute separation anxiety
- self comforting behaviours, e.g. rocking, sucking
- delay in development milestones
- untreated physical problems

Indicators of Neglect in parents and caregivers

- failure to provide adequate food, shelter, clothing, medical attention, hygiene or leaving the child inappropriately without supervision
- inability to respond emotionally to the child
- child abandonment
- depriving or withholding physical contact
- failure to provide psychological nurturing
- treating one child differently to the others

Indicators of Physical Abuse in children

- facial, head and neck bruising
- lacerations and welts
- explanations are not consistent with injury
- bruising or marks that may show the shape of an object
- bite marks or scratches
- multiple injuries or bruises
- ingestion of poisonous substances, alcohol or drugs
- sprains, twists, dislocations
- bone fractures
- burns and scalds

Indicators of Physical Abuse in parents and caregivers

- direct admissions from parents about fear of hurting their children
- family history of violence
- history of their own maltreatment as a child
- repeated visits for medical assistance

Indicators of Emotional Abuse in children

- feeling of worthlessness about them
- inability to value others
- lack of trust in people and expectations
- extreme attention seeking behaviours
- other behavioural disorders (disruptiveness, aggressiveness, bullying)

Indicators of Emotional Abuse in parents and caregivers

- constant criticism, belittling, teasing of a child or ignoring or withholding praise and affection

- excessive or unreasonable demands
- persistent hostility, severe verbal abuse, rejection and scape-goating
- belief that a particular child is bad or “evil”
- using inappropriate physical or social isolation as punishment
- exposure to domestic violence

Indicators of Sexual Abuse in children

- they describe sexual acts
- direct or indirect disclosures
- age inappropriate behaviour and/or persistent sexual behaviour
- self destructive behaviour
- regression in development achievements
- child being in contact with a suspected or know perpetrator of sexual assault
- bleeding from the vagina or anus
- injuries such as tears to the genitalia

Indicators of Sexual Abuse in parents, caregivers of anyone else associated with the child

- exposing the child to sexual behaviours of others
- suspected of or charged with child sexual abuse
- inappropriate jealousy regarding age appropriate development of independence from the family
- coercing the child to engage in sexual behaviour with other children
- verbal threats of sexual abuse
- exposing the child to pornography

Indicators of Domestic Violence in children

- show aggressive behaviour
- develop phobias & insomnia
- experience anxiety
- show symptoms of depression
- have diminished self esteem
- demonstrate poor academic performance and problem solving skills
- have reduced social competence skills including low levels of empathy
- show emotional distress
- have physical complaints

Child Protection Risk Management Strategy – Managing Breaches



This plan outlines the steps to be taken following a breach of the child and youth risk management strategy in order to address the breach in a fair and supportive manner.

Definition

A breach is any action or inaction by any member of the organisation, including children and young people, that fails to comply with any part of the strategy. This includes any breach in relation to:

- statement of commitment to the safety and wellbeing of children and the protection of children from harm
- code of conduct for interacting with children and young people;
- procedures for recruiting, selecting, training and managing paid employees and volunteers
- policies and procedures for handling disclosures or suspicions of harm, including reporting guidelines
- policies and procedures for implementing and reviewing the children and youth risk management strategy and maintaining an employee register
- risk management plans for high risk activities and special events, and
- strategies for communication and support.

All stakeholders are to be made aware of the actions or inactions that form a breach as well as the potential outcomes of breaching the child and youth risk management strategy.

Processes to manage a breach of the child and youth risk management strategy

Breaches will be managed in a fair, unbiased and supportive manner. The following will occur:

- all people concerned will be advised of the process
- all people concerned will be able to provide their version of events
- the details of the breach, including the versions of all parties and the outcome will be recorded
- matters discussed in relation to the breach will be kept confidential, and
- an appropriate outcome will be decided.

Suitable outcomes for breaches

Depending on the nature of the breach, outcomes may include:

- emphasising the relevant component of the child and youth risk management strategy, for example, the code of conduct
- providing closer supervision
- further education and training
- mediating between those involved in the incident (where appropriate)
- disciplinary procedures if necessary, or
- reviewing current policies and procedures and developing new policies and procedures if necessary.

Child Protection Risk Management Strategy – Template Risk Management Plan for High Risk Activity



In addition to occupational health and safety concerns, a child and youth risk management strategy should analyse the risk of 'harm' to children and young people.

STEP 1	STEP 2	STEP 3	STEP 4	STEP 5	STEP 6
Describe the activity <i>Identify all elements of the event from beginning to end</i>	Identify Risks <i>Something that could happen that results in harm to a child or young person</i>	Analyse the Risk <i>(Likelihood/Consequences)</i>	Evaluate the Risk <i>The level of risk</i>	Manage the Risk <i>Assess the options</i>	Review <i>Nominate who will review after the event/activity</i>

Child Protection Risk Management Strategy – Information for Families



Management

Information for parents and carers

Our organisation's child and youth risk management strategy

Creating safe and supportive service environments for children and young people is everyone's business. Our organisation is committed to providing the highest standard of service to children and young people and ensuring they are kept safe from harm.

In order to create a safe and supportive service environment for children and young people, organisations must initiate and maintain ongoing planning and commitment.

In a safe and supportive environment, services and activities are provided so children and young people:

- feel safe and protected from harm
- help plan activities and make decisions
- are consulted and respected, and
- have their best interests considered and upheld.

In accordance with the *Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian Act 2000*, Croydon Child Care Centre is required to have a written child and youth risk management strategy to protect the children and young people in our organisation from harm. The strategy will help ensure our organisation is a safe and supportive service environment for children and young people, by identifying and minimising risks. Screening employees and volunteers through the blue card system is part of the strategy.

The child and youth risk management strategy addresses the following elements:

- a statement of commitment
- a code of conduct for interacting with children and young people
- procedures for recruiting, selecting, training and managing paid employees and volunteers
- policies and procedures for handling disclosures or suspicions of harm, including reporting guidelines
- a plan for managing breaches of the child and youth risk management strategy
- policies and procedures for implementing and reviewing the child and youth risk management strategy and maintaining an employee register for blue cards
- risk management plans for high-risk activities and special events, and
- strategies for communication and support.

As a parent/carer, it is important for you to understand the policies and procedures that form the child and youth risk management strategy. A copy of the strategy is attached for your information and comment.

Teaching Protective Behaviour with Children

We aim to teach children -

- to recognise their feelings and express them verbally.
- to express their feelings both verbally and non-verbally.
- that they can choose to change the way they are feeling.
- that they have a right to feel safe at all times.
- to recognise the signs when they do not feel safe and when they need to be alert and think clearly.
- the difference between 'fun' scared that is the feeling of adventure and appropriate risk taking and dangerous scared that is not ok.
- to use their own skills to feel safe.

Beliefs

Our service believes -

- That children are capable of the same range of emotions as adults are.
- That children's emotions are real and need to be accepted by adults.
- That a response given to a child from an adult in a child's early stages of emotional development can be hugely positive or detrimental depending on the adult's reaction.
- That children are very in touch with their bodies reactions to their emotions.
- That children who retain, enhance and better understand their body's response to an emotion are more able to foresee the outcome of a situation and avoid them or ask for help.

Sources

Community and Disability Services Ministers' Conference (2005). *Creating safe environments for children: Organisations, employees and volunteers: National framework*. Retrieved April 27, 2010, from http://www.ocsc.vic.gov.au/downloads/childsafe_framework.pdf

Community and Disability Services Ministers' Conference (2005). Schedule: Guidelines for building the capacity of child-safe organisations. *Creating safe environments for children: Organisations, employees and volunteers: National framework*. Retrieved April 27, 2010, from http://www.ocsc.vic.gov.au/downloads/childsafe_sched01.pdf

UNICEF (n.d.). *Fact sheet: A summary of the rights under the Convention on the Rights of the Child*. Retrieved April 27, 2010, from http://www.unicef.org/crc/files/Rights_overview.pdf

Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian - <http://www.ccypcg.qld.gov.au/bluecard/risk-management.html>

Child Protection Act 1999

Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian Act 2000

Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011

Early Years Learning Framework

Review

The policy will be reviewed annually.

The review will be conducted by:

- Management
- Employees
- Families
- Interested Parties

Policy Updated: 15 July 2013

Approved by: _____
William F Kerwin
Chief Executive Officer
Croydon Shire Council

Approval Date: 31 July 2013

Date of Policy Review: September 2013

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