

EC Policy 6

Providing a Child Safe Environment

Controlled Document

Version:	2.0	Date of approval:	1/03/2022	Date of next review:	1/03/2024
Document Owner:	Michelle Ferrara	Approved by:	Michelle Ferrara		
Reviewed by:	Michelle Ferrara Kate McInerney Monique Bagnall	CELA Tracey Webb			

Statement

Our service provides an environment that ensures the safety, health and wellbeing of children at all times. The welfare and protection of all children is of paramount importance.

Educators will maintain the premises and equipment, adhere to procedures regarding safe practices and operate in line with legislative requirements relating to child protective practices and the Education and Care Services National Law, Regulations and Quality Standard.

Educators will ensure that children are adequately supervised at all times and that every reasonable precaution is taken to protect children from harm and any hazard likely to cause injury or trauma.

Educators and management are aware of their legal responsibility as Mandatory Reporters to take action to protect and support children they suspect may be at significant risk of harm.

Background

To ensure all Educators, Coordinators/Nominated Supervisors and parents are informed of the procedures required by CatholicCare education and care services in relation to providing children with a safe environment.

The Education and Care Services National Regulations require approved providers to ensure their services have policies and procedures in place for providing a child safe environment to minimise risk of harm and hazard to children attending education and care services.

Principles

- All children attending our service are provided with a safe environment.
- Children’s wellbeing is paramount, and children will be actively involved in decision-making to provide an environment that encourages them to reach their potential.
- Management, educators and staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities to identify and respond to every child at risk of abuse or neglect.
- At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from harm and hazard.

THIS DOCUMENT IS UNCONTROLLED WHEN PRINTED

The electronic version of this document is the approved and most current.

[https://catholiccaredow.sharepoint.com/sites/DocumentControlSystem/Policies Procedures Forms/EC 6 Providing a Child Safe Environment .docx](https://catholiccaredow.sharepoint.com/sites/DocumentControlSystem/Policies%20Procedures%20Forms/EC%206%20Providing%20a%20Child%20Safe%20Environment.docx)

Document ID:CCWDSCS-218850103-497

Any feedback please email QR@CatholicCare.dow.org.au

- Procedures to effectively manage incidents and emergencies are in place and regularly rehearsed.
- Nominated supervisors, educators and staff members at the service who work with children, are advised of the existence and application of the current child protection law (or child safe standards, where applicable) and any obligations that they may have under that law.
- Where the program involves simultaneous use of indoor and outdoor environments, educators will effectively supervise children in both environments.

Considerations for the physical environment

- In order to promote a safe physical environment, we will:
- Ensure all equipment and materials used at the service meet relevant Australian safety standards.
- Conduct daily checks of the environment and equipment.
- Remove, repair or replace worn and damaged buildings, structures equipment and resources which may provide a safety risk for children in a timely manner.
- Maintain an equipment maintenance schedule.
- Ensure learning environments are established that provide appropriate child groupings, sufficient space, and include carefully chosen and well-maintained resources and equipment.
- Organise indoor and outdoor spaces to ensure risks to health and safety are minimised.
- Conduct a risk assessment of the service environment on a quarterly basis to determine any risks to children's health and safety.
- Analyse and evaluate the risks associated with identified hazards.
- Determine appropriate ways to eliminate or control identified hazards.
- Review risk assessments after any serious incident report is made to the Regulatory Authority.
- Ensure smoking is banned within the grounds of, and within the legislated distance for our state/territory of any entrance of an enclosed public space.
- Ensure secure storage of hazardous products including chemicals and medications.

Considerations for staffing and supervision

- Ensure that sufficient numbers of educators are employed to ensure adequate supervision of children at all times.
- Manage rosters to not only ensure that adequate numbers of educators are on duty to meet ratio and qualification requirements, but that duty of care implications are considered to ensure adequate supervision at all times.
- Ensure screening and suitability of staff, volunteers as per the legislation and policy at the time of employment and as part of an ongoing process.
- Respond proactively to emerging staff performance concerns.
- In CatholicCare's long day care services, consideration is given to:
 - the age of the children. Generally, the younger the child, the greater the need for an adult to be close by to support them
 - adequate supervision when children are sleeping
- In CatholicCare's OSHC services, consideration is given to
 - balance the need for close supervision with respect for children's age and developing independence

THIS DOCUMENT IS UNCONTROLLED WHEN PRINTED

The electronic version of this document is the approved and most current.

[https://catholiccaredow.sharepoint.com/sites/DocumentControlSystem/Policies Procedures Forms/EC 6 Providing a Child Safe Environment .docx](https://catholiccaredow.sharepoint.com/sites/DocumentControlSystem/Policies%20Procedures%20Forms/EC%206%20Providing%20a%20Child%20Safe%20Environment.docx)

Document ID:CCWDSCS-218850103-497

Any feedback please email QR@CatholicCare.dow.org.au

- the location of children's toilets and how children will be supervised when visiting and returning from the toilets
- supervision during the transition between school and the outside school hours care (OSHC) service
- supervision of children's transportation to and from the OSHC service.

Considerations for child protection

- Ensure that all staff including educators, students and volunteers have current working with children checks.
- Ensure that all staff are given information and/or training about child protection law and any obligations they have under that law.
- All educators and volunteers of our service are required to familiarise themselves with child protection legislation and take appropriate measures according to NSW specific protocols if they have reasonable grounds to suspect a child or young person is at risk of significant harm and have current concern about the safety, welfare or wellbeing of a child or young person.
- Staff will undertake training in order to effectively:
 - make appropriate responses to all disclosures of abuse and any allegation of abuse against staff members of the service
 - understand the responsibilities and processes as a mandatory reporter
 - be able to recognise the factors that increase a child's vulnerability to maltreatment
 - be aware of the vulnerabilities which may indicate a need to assess, monitor or curtail the behaviour of individuals in relation to children and young people within organisations
- staff will implement procedures for releasing children only into the care of authorised persons.
- Refer to the CatholicCare Wollongong CS 16 Child Safeguarding policy and Child Protection and the Risk of Significant Harm reporting procedure.

Considerations for preventing harm and hazards

The service will ensure that:

- Risk assessments are conducted regularly for excursions and transportation provided or arranged by the service in conjunction with the service's Excursions and/or Transportation of Children policies.
- Risk minimisation practices are in place for the management of medical conditions in conjunction with the service's Dealing with Medical Conditions policy.
- Emergency evacuation plans specific to the service are implemented in conjunction with the service's Emergency and Evacuation policy.
- If staff consume hot drinks, they are made and consumed away from children.
- If a staff member works alone, careful consideration has been given to the ability of that individual to meet regulatory and child protection requirements.

Considerations for security of the service

- Entry and lock up procedures are developed to ensure staff safety entering and exiting the premises.
- Key and digital security supports controlled distribution and supports safe practices to minimise risk.

THIS DOCUMENT IS UNCONTROLLED WHEN PRINTED

The electronic version of this document is the approved and most current.

[https://catholiccaredow.sharepoint.com/sites/DocumentControlSystem/Policies Procedures Forms/EC 6 Providing a Child Safe Environment .docx](https://catholiccaredow.sharepoint.com/sites/DocumentControlSystem/Policies%20Procedures%20Forms/EC%206%20Providing%20a%20Child%20Safe%20Environment.docx)

Document ID:CCWDCS-218850103-497

Any feedback please email QR@CatholicCare.dow.org.au

- Security is reinforced with design of premises, signage, workplace instructions and engagement of security providers.

Considerations for Toileting and Nappy change

In addition to meeting children’s physical needs, nappy changing, and toilet training is an important time to:

- support children’s agency to develop an understanding and control of their own bodily functions
- give children your full attention and build respectful, trusting and caring relationships
- interact with children using verbal and nonverbal communication
- build children’s understanding of what is happening now and promote their ability to predict what will happen next in the routine
- help children to develop and extend their self-help skills.
- Ensure toileting and nappy change routines are conducted in ways that maintain hygiene standards, with interactions that are warm and responsive and support children's learning.

Key Resources

- National Quality Standard – Quality Area 6, Quality Area 2 Guide to the National Quality Framework (ACECQA) National Quality Standard 2018 (ACECQA)
- Child Care Provider handbook (Department of Education, Skills and Employment)
- Child Protection Helpline 132 111
- NSW Department of Communities and Justice Mandatory Reporting Guidelines <https://reporter.childstory.nsw.gov.au/s/>
- The Child Wellbeing and Child Protection – NSW Interagency Guidelines
- Keeping Them Safe Initiatives <https://www.theirfuturesmatter.nsw.gov.au/about-us/other-reforms/keep-them-safe/keep-them-safe-initiatives>
- Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia (EYLF) and
- My Time, Our Place: Framework for School Age Care in Australia
- CatholicCare Policies and Procedures

Links to other policies

- Delivery and Collection of Children from the Service
- Emergency and evacuation
- Accident, Incident, Injury, Trauma, and Illness
- Interactions with children
- Dealing with Medical Conditions Policy including procedures and guidelines for Asthma, Anaphylaxis, Diabetes and Epilepsy
- Nutrition, food and beverages, dietary requirements
- Sun protection
- Water safety
- Rest, Respite and Sleep
- Transport and Road Safety
- Excursions

Key Terms

Term	Meaning	Source
ACECQA – Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority	The independent national authority that works with all regulatory authorities to administer the National Quality Framework, including the provision of guidance, resources and services to support the sector to improve outcomes for children.	Acecqa.gov.au
Mandatory reporting	The legislative requirement for selected classes of people to report suspected child abuse and neglect to government authorities.	Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 No 157 Crimes Act 1900 No 40
Responsible person	In relation to an education and care service, means a person referred to in section 162(1)(a) to (c) of the Education and Care Services National Law.	National Law
Reportable conduct	Certain organisations or entities have legal obligations under Reportable Conduct Schemes. Under these Schemes, certain organisations or entities are required to notify and investigate certain allegations (reportable allegations) of abuse involving a child, when the allegation is against someone they employ, engage or contract in circumstances outlined by the legislation.	Children’s Guardian Act 2019 No 25
Rights of the child	Human rights belonging to all children, as specified in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.	Guide to the NQF
Wellbeing	Sound wellbeing results from the satisfaction of basic needs – the need for tenderness and affection; security and clarity; social recognition; to feel competent; physical needs and for meaning in life. It includes happiness and satisfaction, effective social functioning and the dispositions of optimism, openness, curiosity and resilience.	Guide to the NQF
Working directly with children	A person is working directly with children at a given time if at that time the person: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is physically present with the children, and • is directly engaged in providing education and care to the children 	National Regulations
Working with children check (WWCC)	A notice, certificate or other document granted to, or with respect to, a person under a working with children law to the effect that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the person has been assessed as suitable to work with children; or • there has been no information that if the person worked with children the person would pose a risk to the children; or 	National Law Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012 No 51

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the person is not prohibited from attempting to obtain, undertake or remain in child-related employment. 	
--	--	--

Relevant Legislation

Section	Regulation Description
Section 165	Offence to inadequately supervise children
Section 166	Offence to use inappropriate discipline
Section 167	Offence relating to protection of children from harm and hazards
Regulation 82	Tobacco, drug and alcohol-free environment
Regulation 83	Staff members and family day care educators not to be affected by alcohol or drugs
Regulation 84	Awareness of child protection law
Regulation 103	Premises, furniture and equipment to be safe, clean and in good repair
Regulation 115	Premises designed to facilitate supervision
Regulation 122	Educators must be working directly with children to be included in ratios
Regulation 123	Educator to child ratios – centre-based services
Regulation 167	Record of service’s compliance
Regulation 168	Education and care services must have policies and procedures
Regulation 170	Policies and procedures to be followed
Regulation 171	Policies and procedures to be kept available
Regulation 172	Notification of change to policies or procedures
Regulation 175 (d)(e)	Prescribed information to be notified to Regulatory Authority

- Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998
- Ombudsman Act 1974 No 68
- Advocate for Children and Young People Act 2014 No 29
- Children’s Guardian Act 2019 No 25

Induction and ongoing training

- Induction and ongoing training will be implemented, on commencement and during staff meetings as required, focusing on this policy and related procedures.
- The provision of a safe environment, will be reviewed, monitored and recorded, as prescribed in the attached procedures.

- Information will be shared with relief/ casual educators on induction and as relevant to the environments that they are working in, their shift responsibilities and the children in their care.
- Induction & Accountability – employees, volunteers are given CS 16 Child Safeguarding Policy as part of their induction to CatholicCare. They are required to provide written acknowledgement that they have read, understood and agree to abide by CatholicCare’s Child Safeguarding Policy, the Code of Ethics and Conduct and any program specific Codes. An overview of Child Safeguarding is presented at the compulsory agency Orientation Day for new employees

Policy created/ Reviewed

Date	Major, Minor or Administrative	Description of Revision(s)
May 2019		New Policy
February 2020	Major	Updated legislation and key resource details, amended formatting, updated information and added new information
June 2021	Major	New Policy

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

This policy will be monitored to ensure compliance with legislative requirements and unless deemed necessary through the identification of practice gaps, the service will review this Policy every two years.

Families and staff are essential stakeholders in the policy review process and will be given opportunity and encouragement to be actively involved.

In accordance with R. 172 of the Education and Care Services National Regulations, the service will ensure that families of children enrolled at the service are notified at least 14 days before making any change to a policy or procedure that may have significant impact on the provision of education and care to any child enrolled at the service; a family’s ability to utilise the service; the fees charged or the way in which fees are collected.