

FOR MORE INFORMATION.



ntacts
Telephone
1300 360 391
1300 655 795
1300 664 977
1800 075 599
1800 020 202
1800 000 551
1800 650 227
1800 675 598

If you are unsure which regional office to call, please see the website below -

http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/for-individuals/children,-families-and-young-people/child-protection/child-protectioncontacts

Child FIRST contacts

http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/for-individuals/children,-families-and-young-people/family-and-parenting-support/family-services/child-first-child-and-family-information,-referral-and-support-teams.



Child Protection and Child Safe Standards Policy

NQS

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

National Regulations

Regs 84 Awareness of chi	
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Aim

All educators and staff at our service take seriously their responsibility to protect children from any type of abuse, and are aware of their roles and responsibilities regarding child protection. While we understand there are legislative obligations we must follow, we believe it is also our responsibility as educators to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all children, and to provide the children at our service with the opportunity to develop to their full potential free from any form of harm and abuse. We will implement a child protection risk management strategy to ensure the safety of children is paramount and the service will always act quickly in the best interests of a child.

Related Policies

Educator and Management Policy Privacy and Confidentiality Policy Record Keeping and Retention Policy Family Law and Access Policy Relationships with Children Policy Tobacco Drug and Alcohol Policy

Related Documentation

Incident Injury Trauma and Illness Record Child Protection Annual Review Educator Induction Processes Educator Appraisal Processes Educator Recruitment Processes Educator Professional Development Processes



Educator Job Descriptions Staff Records Risk Management Plans

Implementation

The Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, educators and staff members will implement a Child Protection Risk Management Strategy to ensure the health, wellbeing and safety of all children at the service.

Child Protection Risk Management Strategy

1. Code of Conduct

The service upholds a Code of Conduct in relation to employers, educators, volunteers, students, families and children to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children (See Educator and Management Policy).

- 2. Recruitment, Selection and Training Procedures include child protection principles. The Approved Provider is responsible for developing recruitment and professional development procedures that ensure all people working at the service do not pose a risk to children and understand how to respond to disclosures or suspicions of harm and abuse. (See Appendix A and Educator and Management Policy "Professional Development Requirements).
- 3. Procedures for Reporting and Documenting Abuse or Neglect
- 4. Procedures for Managing Breaches
- 5. Risk Management for High Risk Activity
- 6. Information for Families



To create and maintain a child safe environment, Cambridge Primary School will comply with the Victorian child safe Standards as outlined below.

Standard 1: Strategies to embed an organisational cultural of child safety, including through effective leadership arrangements

Standard 2: A child safe policy or statement of commitment to child safety

Standard 3: A code of conduct that establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children

Standard 4: Screening, supervision, training and other human resources practices that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing personnel

Standard 5: Processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse

Standard 6: Strategies to identify and reduce or remove the risk of child abuse

Standard 7: Strategies to promote the participation and empowerment of children

3. Procedures for Reporting and Documenting Abuse or Neglect

What is abuse?

Under the Children Youth and Families Act 2005 a child is considered to be in need of protection if:

• The child has been abandoned by their parent(s) and no other suitable person is willing and able to care for the child.



- The child's parent(s) are dead or incapacitated and there is no other suitable person willing and able to care for them.
- The child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, significant harm as a result of physical injury, sexual abuse, emotional or psychological harm and the child's parent(s) have not protected, or are unlikely to protect, the child from that harm.
- The child's physical development or health has been, or is likely to be significantly harmed and the child's parent(s) have not provided or arranged, or are unlikely to provide or arrange, basic care or effective medical, surgical or other remedial care.

Mandated reporters include Approved Providers, Nominated Supervisors and people with "post secondary" qualifications such as educators. Mandatory reporters must make a report to Child Protection as soon as possible after forming a belief on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection from significant harm as a result of physical or sexual abuse, and the child's parents are unwilling or unable to protect the child.

However, all educators and staff members who believe on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection will report abuse and neglect to either Child Protection on **131278** or Child FIRST. Child FIRST contacts are available at http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/for-individuals/children,-families-and-young-people/family-and-parenting-support/family-services/child-first-child-and-family-information,-referral-and-support-teams.

A report to Child Protection will be made if:

- the harm or risk of harm has a serious impact on the child's immediate safety, stability or development
- the harm or risk of harm is persistent and entrenched and is likely to have a serious impact on the child's immediate safety, stability or development
- The child's parents cannot or will not protect the child from harm.

A report to Child FIRST will be made if concerns about the child have a low to moderate impact on the child and the immediate safety of the child is not compromised. Some of these concerns may include:

- family conflict or family breakdown
- young or isolated families
- Significant parenting problems that may be affecting the child's development.

A step by step guide to making a report to Child Protection or Child FIRST is available on the Victorian Department of Human Services website at

http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0003/582591/flowchart-mandatory-reporting-27-5-10.pdf

A person may form a belief on **reasonable grounds** that a child is in need of protection after Becoming aware that a child's health, safety or wellbeing is at risk and the child's Parents are unwilling or unable to protect the child. For example:

- a child states that they have been physically or sexually abused
- a child states that they know someone who has been physically or sexually Abused (sometimes the child may be talking about themselves)



- someone who knows the child says they has been physically or sexually abused
- a child shows signs of being physically or sexually abused
- a staff member is aware of persistent family violence or parental substance misuse, psychiatric illness or intellectual disability that is impacting on the child's safety or development
- a staff member observes indicators of abuse, including non-accidental or unexplained injury, persistent neglect, poor care or lack of appropriate supervision
- a child's actions or behaviour place them at risk of significant harm and the child's parents are unwilling or unable to protect the child.

Responsibilities

The Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, educators and staff members must:

- Be able to recognise indicators of abuse (see Appendix B).
- Take anything a child says seriously and follow up their concerns.
- Allow children to be part of decision-making processes where appropriate.
- Understand they are mandatory reporters (Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor and qualified staff) of physical and sexual abuse in children where parents are unwilling or unable to protect a child and they must report this abuse to Child Protection on **131278**.
- Understand they must report to Child Protection **131278** or Child FIRST (both available 24 hours/7 days a week) if they believe on reasonable grounds a child has, is or is likely to suffer abuse and neglect.
- Educators and staff members should make the reports with the assistance or support of the Nominated Supervisor.
- Contact the police on 000 if there is an immediate danger to a child and intervene immediately if it is safe to do so.
- Connect families with referral agencies through Child FIRST. Family consent will be sought before making referrals.
- Promote the welfare, safety and wellbeing of children at the service.
- Prepare accurate records to assist investigations of abuse or suspected abuse by Child Protection or Child FIRST. Accurate records record exactly what happened, was thought to have happened or potentially could happen.
- Understand that allegations of abuse and neglect against them are treated in the same way as allegations of harm against other people (see "Allegations against Service Personnel").

The Approved Provider and Nominated Supervisor must also:

- ensure that all employees are:
 - Clear about their roles and responsibilities regarding child protection.



- aware of their obligations to immediately report cases where they believe on reasonable grounds a child has or is experiencing abuse and neglect including sexual abuse.
- Aware of the indicators showing a child may be at risk of abuse or neglect.
- Provide training and development for all educators and staff in the recognition and reporting of harm.
- Provide reporting procedures and professional standards to safeguard children and protect the integrity of educators and staff.
- Inform all stakeholders of the actions or inactions that form a breach of the child protection risk management strategy and the potential outcomes of breaching the strategy.
- Manage any breaches of the child protection risk management strategy.
- Conduct a Working with Children Check (WWCC) for all educators, staff and volunteers unless the person meets the criteria for exemption from a WWCC. Further information is available at http://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au/
- Provide access to relevant acts, regulations, standards and other resources to help educators, staff and volunteers meet their obligations.
- Ensure records of harm or suspected harm are kept in line with our Privacy and Confidentiality Policy.

Allegations against Service Personnel

Allegations of abuse or suspected abuse against educators, staff members, and volunteers, the Nominated Supervisor or Approved Provider are treated in the same way as allegations against other people. However, under the legislation any allegation of abuse by the Approved Provider, staff member, educator or visitor to an education and care service must immediately be reported directly to Victoria Police on 000.

Educators will make the report with the assistance or support of the Nominated Supervisor. If the Supervisor is involved in the harm then the Approved Provider or most senior educator will assist in notifying Child Protection or Child FIRST.

The Nominated Supervisor or Approved Provider:

- Will complete an Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Record and notify the Regulatory Authority within 24 hours of making the report to Child Protection or Child FIRST.
- Will provide appropriate support for any educator or staff member who has an allegation made against them.
- Will protect the identity of educators/staff members against whom unsubstantiated complaints have been made will be protected.
- Will review the person's duties, and if they continue to interact with children, ensure they are appropriately supervised at all times.
- May seek legal advice about restricting that person's work activities.



Documentation

Documenting a *suspicion* of abuse and neglect

If educators have concerns about the safety of a child they will:

- Record their concerns in a non-judgmental and accurate manner as soon as possible.
- Record their own observations as well as accurate details of any conversation with a parent (who may for example explain a noticeable mark on a child).
- Not attempt to conduct their own investigation.
- document as soon as possible so the details are accurately captured including:
 - time, date and place of the suspicion
 - full details of the suspected abuse
 - date of report and signature.

Documenting a *disclosure* of abuse and neglect

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...||

When receiving a disclosure of abuse and neglect educators, staff members, the Nominated Supervisor or Approved Provider will:

- remain calm and find a private place to talk
- not promise to keep a secret
- tell the child/person they have done the right thing in revealing the information but that they'll need to tell someone who can help keep the child safe
- only ask enough questions to confirm the need to report the matter because probing questions could cause distress, confusion and interfere with any later enquiries
- not attempt to conduct their own investigation or mediate an outcome between the parties involved.
- document as soon as possible so the details are accurately captured including:
 - time, date and place of the disclosure
 - 'word for word' what happened and what was said, including anything they said and any actions that have been taken
 - date of report and signature.

Notifications of abuse and neglect

The person making a notification of abuse or suspected abuse will make a record of the answers to the following:

• name of person they spoke to.



- what the next step in the process is.
- what advice will be sent to confirm the report has been made.
- If there is any further action they need to take.

Confidentiality

It is important that any notification remains confidential, as it is vitally important to remember that no confirmation of any allegation can be made until the matter is investigated. The individual who makes the complaint should not inform the person they have made the complaint about. This ensures the matter can be investigated without prior knowledge and contamination of evidence.

Safeguards for reporters

Reports made to Child Protection or Child FIRST are kept confidential. Under the *Children Youth and Families Act 2005* if the report is made in good faith:

- the report will not breach confidence or standards of professional conduct
- the report can't incur civil or criminal liability
- the identity of the person making the report is protected. (However the Court may grant leave to reveal the person's identity if the evidence is critically important.)

A report is also an exempt document under the *Freedom of Information Act* 1982.

4. **Procedures for Managing Breaches**

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

Definition

All educators and staff working with children have a duty of care to support and protect children. A duty of care is breached if a person:

- does something that a reasonable person in that person's position would not do in a particular situation
- fails to do something that a reasonable person in that person's position would do in the circumstances
- acts or fails to act in a way that causes harm to someone the person owes a duty of care.

A breach is also any action or inaction by any member of the service, including children and young people, that fails to comply with any part of the strategy including any breach of:

• a statement of commitment to the safety of children and their protection from harm



- a code of conduct for interacting with children
- 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 child protection risk management strategy
- risk management plans for high risk activities and special events
- strategies for communication and support.

Processes to manage a breach of the child protection risk management strategy

The Nominated Supervisor or Approved Provider will manage breaches in a fair, unbiased and supportive manner:

- 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
- 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 protection 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
- reviewing current policies and procedures and developing new policies and procedures if necessary.

5. Risk Management Plan for High Risk Activity

In addition to workplace health and safety concerns, a child risk management strategy should analyse the risk of 'harm' to children. See Appendix C for a risk Management template.

6. Information for Families

Our Child Protection Risk Management Strategy

Creating safe and supportive service environments for children is everyone's business. Our service is committed to ensuring children are kept safe from harm. We will initiate and maintain ongoing planning and commitment to a safe and supportive environment so children:



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

We have a written child protection risk management strategy to protect the children in our service from harm, and to ensure we have a safe and supportive environment for children by identifying and minimising risks.

The child protection risk management strategy consists of:

- a code of conduct for interacting with children.
- procedures for recruiting, selecting, training and managing paid employees and volunteers, including screening procedures through working with children checks.
- procedures for handling disclosures or suspicions of harm, including reporting guidelines
- procedures for managing breaches of the strategy
- risk management plans for high-risk activities and special events
- strategies for communication and support.

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

Educating Children about Protective Behaviour

We aim to teach children:

- about acceptable and unacceptable behaviour, and appropriate and inappropriate contact in a manner suitable to their age and level of understanding
- That they have a right to feel safe at all times.
- to say 'no' to anything that makes them feel unsafe
- The difference between 'funs' scared that is appropriate risk taking and dangerous scared that is not ok.
- To use their own skills to feel safe.
- To recognise signs that they do not feel safe and need to be alert and think clearly.
- That there is no secret too awful, no story too terrible, that they can't share with someone they trust.
- That educators are available for them if they have any concerns.
- To tell educators of any suspicious activities or people.
- To recognise and express their feelings verbally and non-verbally.
- That they can choose to change the way they are feeling.



Beliefs

Our service believes that:

- Children are capable of the same range of emotions as adults.
- Children's emotions are real and need to be accepted by adults.
- 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.
- Children are very in touch with their bodies' reactions to their emotions.
- Children who retain, enhance and better understand their body's response to an emotion are more able to foresee the outcome out 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.*

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.*

Children, Youth and Families Act 2005

The Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005

Depart of Human Services Child Protection, Dept of Education and Early Childhood Development, Licensed Children's services and Victorian Schools "Protecting the Safety and Wellbeing of Children and Young People"

Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011

Early Years Learning Framework

Review

The policy will be reviewed annually by the Out of School Hours Care subcommittee of School Council.

Ratification Date	Review Date	Version Number	Date Produced
July 2020	Year 2021	4	October 2015

Appendix A



Educator Recruitment Procedures

Name:

Date:

Service Name:

Recruitment Process

- The Approved Provider will oversee and approve the recruitment process:
 - Ensuring there is a documented position description for the vacant position that is accurate and current.
 - o arranging for the position to be advertised
 - o ensuring there is a standard list of interview questions for all applicants
 - o reviewing the applications that have been received and making a short list of applicants
 - o arranging suitable interview times with the shortlisted applicants
 - Contacting referees for the most suitable candidate(s). A Telephone reference Check Template is attached.
 - Making an offer of employment in writing which the applicant must sign as an acceptance of the offer. The applicant must sign a contract of employment containing the specific terms and conditions of employment. A base Employment Contract is attached.
 - Notifying unsuccessful applicants by letter, telephone or email.
- Recruitment and selection decisions will be made by the Approved Provider.

Job Description

Every position must have a position description which:

- summarises the job and describes the tasks,
- Details the key selection criteria which is to be addressed.
- Clearly describes the expectations for educators/staff members to provide a safe and supportive environment for children.

Advertising

• Positions will be advertised on Recruitment Online and, at the discretion of the Approved Provider, may be advertised through other recruitment platforms such as Seek.

The Job Advertisement

The job advertisement will be written in clear, concise and non-discriminatory language and will contain:



- the title of the position
- a summary of the role and conditions of employment
- the key selection criteria for candidates to address
- information about what applicants should provide with their applications
- clear, concise details about our Service
- advice that the successful applicant will need to undergo a successful Working With Children Check
- the name of a contact person
- the closing date for receipt of applications
- a statement that the Service is an Equal Opportunity Employer

Interviews/Selection of Candidates/Offer of Employment

The Approved Provider will form a panel based on the principles of merit and equity (gender representation and at least one panel member that has been trained by the merit protection board) to conduct the interview. The format of the interview will be:

- advise the applicant about the position and the Service
- ask the applicant questions that have been prepared by the panel that relate to the key selection criteria
- answer any questions the applicant may have
- advise the applicant about the next steps in the selection process
- contact the applicant's nominated referees and, if need be, non-nominated referees (having first informed the applicant that the panel may be contacting outside of the listed referees)
- Contacting the preferred applicant, by telephone, with an offer of employment. The successful applicant must sign a contract of employment containing the specific terms and conditions of their employment
- Contacting the unsuccessful applicants, by telephone
- Filing in a selection panel report for each applicant
- Feedback provided by the panel chair to any applicant who seeks this, two weeks after the process has been completed.

Exit Interviews

If an employee resigns, management will undertake an exit interview with the person to:

- 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.
- Receive positive feedback on what is working well.



Appendix B

Indicators of Harm

There are many indicators of harm to children. Behavioural or physical signs which assist in recognising harm to children are known as indicators. The following is a guide only. One indicator on its own may not imply abuse or neglect. However a single indicator can be as important as the presence of several indicators. Each indicator needs to be considered in the context of other indicators and the child's circumstances. A child's behaviour is likely to be affected if he/she is under stress. There can be many causes of stress and it is important to find out specifically what is causing the stress. Abuse and neglect can be single incidents or ongoing, and may be intentional or unintentional.

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

Physical Abuse

Physical indicators include:

- Bruises, burns, sprains, dislocations, bites, cuts
- Fractured bones, especially in an infant where a fracture is unlikely to occur accidentally
- Poisoning
- Internal injuries
- Bald patches where hair has been pulled out

Possible behavioural indicators include:

- Showing wariness or distrust of adults
- Wearing long sleeved clothes on hot days (to hide bruising or other injury)
- Demonstrating fear of parents and of going home
- Becoming fearful when other children cry or shout
- Being excessively friendly to strangers
- Being very passive and compliant
- Not reacting or showing little emotion when hurt
- Showing little or no fear when threatened



- Often being absent
- Showing regressive behaviour such as bed-wetting
- Often feeling sad or crying

Sexual Abuse

A child is sexually abused when any person uses their authority or power over the child to engage in sexual activity. This can include exploitation through pornography or voyeurism. Sexual abuse is not usually identified through physical indicators. Often the first sign is when a child tells someone they trust that they have been sexually abused. However the presence of sexually transmitted diseases, pregnancy, or vaginal or anal bleeding or discharge may indicate sexual abuse.

Physical indicators include:

- Injury to the genital or rectal area
- Vaginal or anal bleeding or discharge
- Discomfort in toileting
- Inflammation and infection of genital area
- Bruising
- Frequent urinary tract infections

One or more of these behavioural indicators may be present:

- Child telling someone that sexual abuse has occurred
- Complaining of headaches or stomach pains
- Experiencing problems with schoolwork
- Displaying sexual behaviour or knowledge which is unusual for the child's age
- Showing behaviour such as frequent rocking, sucking and biting
- Experiencing difficulties in sleeping
- Having difficulties in relating to adults and peers
- Drawing or telling stories that are sexually explicit
- Showing regressive behaviour such as bed-wetting

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse happens when a child is repeatedly rejected, isolated or frightened by threats or by witnessing family violence. It also includes hostility, derogatory name-calling and putdowns or persistent coldness from a person to the extent the child's emotional development and behaviour is at serious risk of being impaired. There are few physical indicators, although emotional abuse may cause delays in emotional, mental, or even physical development.

Physical indicators include:

- Speech disorders
- Delays in physical development
- Failure to thrive

Possible behavioural indicators include:



- Displaying low self esteem
- Tending to be withdrawn, passive, tearful
- Displaying aggressive or demanding behaviour
- Being highly anxious
- Showing delayed speech
- Acting like a much younger child, eg. soiling, wetting pants
- Displaying difficulties in relating to adults and peers
- Showing mental or emotional displays
- Having overly high standards and a fear of failure

Neglect

Physical indicators include:

- Frequent hunger
- Malnutrition
- Poor hygiene
- Inappropriate clothing, eg. Summer clothes in winter
- Left unsupervised for long periods
- Medical needs not attended to
- Abandoned by parents

Possible behavioural indicators include:

- stealing food or gorging when food is available
- staying at school outside school hours
- often being tired, falling asleep in class
- abusing alcohol or drugs
- displaying aggressive behaviour
- not getting on well with peers
- poor socialising habits
- withdrawn, listless, pale and thin

The presence of indicators such as those described may alert us to the possibility that a child is being abused. It is important that anyone who has concerns that a child or young person is in need of protection contacts a local Child Protection Service for assistance and advice.

Family Violence

Family violence, either threatened or actual, occurs within a family, including physical, verbal, emotional, psychological, sexual, financial and social abuse. Child Protection must be informed when there are strong indicators that family violence is placing a child at significant risk if danger.



Appendix C

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