

ECEC Policy 33

Child Safe Environment

Approval
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Controlled Document

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Statement

CatholicCare is committed to creating and maintaining child safe environments where the safety, welfare, wellbeing, rights and best interests of children are the primary focus of all decisions and actions. CatholicCare has zero tolerance for child abuse, neglect, grooming or inappropriate conduct toward children. All children are entitled to feel safe, respected, listened to and supported to participate in decisions that affect them.

Child safety is embedded in everyday practice, relationships, supervision, physical environments and governance, and is the shared responsibility of all adults involved with CatholicCare services.

This Policy gives effect to, and must be read in conjunction with, CatholicCare’s overarching *Child Safeguarding Policy* and *Child Safeguarding Code of Conduct*, which define organisation wide expectations for behaviour, prevention, identification and response to harm involving children and young people.

Paramount Consideration

In accordance with the Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations, CatholicCare affirms that the safety, welfare, wellbeing, rights and best interests of each child are the paramount consideration in all decisions, actions and service operations.

Where competing interests arise, including operational pressures, staffing challenges, financial considerations, reputational concerns or personal or professional relationships, the interests of the child must prevail. This includes the identification and management of conflicts of interest in accordance with Section 4 of the National Law.

This principle applies to all aspects of service delivery, including supervision, staffing decisions, risk assessments, responses to concerns or complaints, reporting obligations, and interactions with children and families.

Leadership and staff are required to demonstrate this principle in practice and decision-making at all times.

Creating a Child Safe Culture

CatholicCare is committed to fostering and maintaining a strong child safe culture across all Early Learning Centres (ELC) and Outside School Hours Care (OSHC) services, consistent with CatholicCare Wollongong's overarching Child Safeguarding Policy.

In this context, culture refers to how CatholicCare operates on a day-to-day basis through shared values, beliefs, attitudes and behaviours that guide how adults think, act and make decisions in relation to children's safety, welfare and wellbeing. A child safe culture is not a single practice or document, but is embedded in leadership, relationships, systems and everyday actions.

CatholicCare is committed to culturally safe environments where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, children with disability and all children feel respected, included and safe.

CatholicCare's child safe culture is grounded in the paramountcy principle, ensuring that the safety, welfare, wellbeing, rights and best interests of children are the primary consideration in all decisions and actions.

A child safe culture within CatholicCare ELC and OSHC services is demonstrated through:

- Code of Ethics and Conduct and professional behaviour, where educators, staff, students and volunteers understand and uphold clear expectations for ethical conduct, appropriate boundaries and respectful interactions with children.
- Child Safe Recruitment, Screening and Support, where robust recruitment, screening, induction, supervision and ongoing professional learning ensure that all educators, staff, students and volunteers are suitable, supported and equipped to keep children safe.
- Leadership and accountability, where leaders consistently model child safe behaviours, reinforce the importance of child safety over operational convenience or reputational concerns, and address behaviours or practices that do not align with a child safe culture.

- Relationships and participation, where children are recognised as capable and competent, supported to express their views, ask questions and raise concerns about their safety in developmentally appropriate ways.
- Families and Community Engagement – where families are informed, engaged and supported as partners in promoting child safety and wellbeing, including clear communication about expectations, reporting pathways and roles in safeguarding children
- Policies, procedures and practices, which actively support, maintain and strengthen child safety by providing clear expectations, guidance and accountability across all aspects of service delivery.
- Everyday practice, where child safety is visible in routines, supervision, communication, decision-making and interactions with children and families.
- Risk awareness and management, where potential risks to children’s safety and wellbeing are actively identified, assessed and addressed as part of a proactive and shared approach to safeguarding.

Through this approach, CatholicCare ensures that child safety is not only documented in policy, but is lived and reinforced through the values, behaviours and daily practices of all adults working with children.

Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to:

- Outline how CatholicCare provides and maintains child safe environments across ELC and OSHC services
- Clearly articulate responsibilities for creating, maintaining and promoting child safety
- Embed a consistent, CatholicCare-wide approach that aligns service-level practice with the agency Child Safeguarding framework
- Support compliance with the National Quality Framework, NSW Child Safe Standards and relevant legislation

Scope

This Policy applies to all individuals engaged with CatholicCare ELC and OSHC services, including:

- Children
- Families and carers
- Approved Providers, leadership and Nominated Supervisors
- Educators, employees, agency staff and contractors
- Students, volunteers and visitors

Implementation

Under the Education and Care Services National Regulations the approved provider must ensure that policies and procedures are in place for providing a child safe environment and take reasonable steps to ensure those policies and procedures are followed. 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 all children, young people, educators, staff, families, visitors, volunteers and students.

CatholicCare ensures that the paramouncy principle is actively applied in daily decision-making and practice. Educators, staff and leaders are supported and expected to take timely and appropriate action when risks to a child's safety, welfare or wellbeing are identified, regardless of competing priorities or perceived impacts on service operations.

Implementation of this Policy includes establishing clear roles, responsibilities and accountabilities for maintaining a child safe environment. All educators, staff and leaders are expected to understand and follow child safe practices and to seek guidance or escalate concerns where uncertainty exists.

Approved Providers and persons with management or control, including organisational leaders, are responsible for ensuring that governance arrangements, systems, resources and oversight mechanisms are in place and effectively implemented to support child safe practices across all ELC and OSHC services.

Key Terms-Definitions

Code of Conduct	Together with a code of ethics, the code of conduct helps guide interactions between leadership, educators and staff, as well as informing the service decision-making processes relating to professional standards
Disclosure	The process where a child or young person conveys or attempts to convey that they are being or have been abused.
Inappropriate conduct to a child	any behaviour that a reasonable person would consider to be inappropriate in an education and care service, taking into account the child's age, development, safety, wellbeing and the context of the interaction.
Information sharing	Refers to sharing or exchanging information, including personal information about or related to, abuse in organisational contexts. The

	terms refer to sharing information between (or within) organisations, as well as sharing information with professionals who provide key services for children.
Mandatory reporter	A person who is required to report known and suspected cases of child abuse and neglect to a nominated government department or agency.
Mandatory reporting	The legislative requirement for selected classes of people to report suspected cases of child abuse and neglect.
National Model Code	The National Model Code for Taking Images or Videos of Children while Providing Early Childhood Education and Care (National Model Code) addresses child safe practices for the use of electronic devices while providing early education and care (ECEC).
National Principles for Child Safe Organisations	Reflect ten child safe standards recommended by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse and are the vehicle for giving recommendations relating to the standards.
Reportable conduct	Certain organisations or entities have legal obligations under Reportable Conduct Schemes to notify and investigate certain allegations of abuse involving a child, when the allegation is against someone they employ, engage or contract in circumstances outlined in the legislation.
Rights of the Child	Human rights belonging to all children, as specified in the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child.
Wellbeing	Sound wellbeing results from the satisfaction of basic needs. It includes happiness and satisfaction, effective social functioning and the dispositions of optimism, openness, curiosity, and resilience.
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. The person has been assessed as suitable to work with children; there has been no information that if the person worked with children the person would pose a risk to the children; or the person is not prohibited from attempting to obtain, undertake or remain in child-related employment.

Definitions sourced from ACECQA. (2023). Policy and procedure guidelines. *Providing a Child Safe Environment*. NSW Department of Education (2021). [Guide to the Child Safe Standards for early childhood education and care and outside schools hours care services](#)

Commitment to the safety of Children and Young People (National Principles 1-10)

Our Service is committed to being a child safe organisation and embeds the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, placing the protection of children as a priority of our responsibilities and obligations. The NSW Child Safe Standards provide guidance for our Service to build our capacity as an organisation to prevent and respond to allegations of child abuse and ensure our policies and procedures, strategies and attitudes, ensure children's safety is paramount.

Our Service has a zero tolerance to child abuse, and we are committed to the safety, participation and empowerment of all children. Our Child Safeguarding Statement demonstrates our responsibility to protect children, uphold their rights, and embed a culture of child safety across all aspects of our operations.

We promote diversity and tolerance and aim to form equitable and positive relationships with children. We ensure children and young people participate in decisions affecting them and listen and respect their suggestions and ideas. We respond to any concerns, disclosures, allegations or suspicions of harm by reporting to the relevant authorities.

Our Service will not tolerate bullying or harassment and our *Behaviour Guidance Policy* and procedure outlines the preventative strategies and supervision implemented by our Service to deal with bullying and help protect children. Our priority is to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children and young people and encourage positive relationships.

Communication (National Principles 2 And 3)

We aim to build and maintain positive and respectful relationships with children, families, staff and educators of our Service and prioritise a child safe environment. We communicate regularly and clearly with all stakeholders and ensure our policies and procedures are available to staff, educators, employees, students, volunteers, families and children and young people. Our policies are available on site at the service on request and via the CatholicCare Wollongong website. We welcome and encourage children, young people and families to share feedback and evaluation of our policies and procedures through surveys, feedback or discussions with leadership.

Participation Of Families, Children and Young People (National Principle 2)

Our Service ensures families are always welcome and feel comfortable asking questions on how we prioritise child safety. We provide a range of opportunities for consultation and collaboration about decisions about their child's safety whilst at our Service including:

- policy and procedure review
- child protection
- Child Safe Standards
- allegations/grievance procedures
- sun safety
- written authorisations- parenting orders
- code of conduct
- inclusivity and supporting children and young people with diverse needs
- use of digital technologies and online environments

We promote a respectful, child safe culture where children and young people's concerns are always responded to and children and young people feel empowered to participate in decisions and provide feedback to educators and staff.

Our Service provides opportunities for conversations with children and young people about their rights and encourages children and young people to speak up if they are feeling unsafe or worried. We provide multiple channels for children and young people to lodge complaints, tailoring these options to their communication preferences based on their

feedback. We work individually with children and young people to determine the type of support they may need in participating in the complaints process.

Code Of Conduct (National Principles 4 And 6)

Leadership, educators, staff, volunteers and students will adhere to our *Code of Ethics and Conduct*. Our *Code of Ethics and Conduct* clearly outlines expectations regarding behaviour and describes the principles, values, and ethical guidelines that guide our staff and stakeholders in their interactions and activities. All educators and staff members are made fully aware that following breaches of the Code of Ethics and Conduct and role responsibilities may result in disciplinary action, which may lead to termination of employment. Individuals can report any concerns they may have about inappropriate actions of any educator, staff, student or volunteer that involves children or young people to leadership, ensuring a prompt and thorough response to maintain a safe and secure environment for all.

Recruitment (National Principle 5)

CatholicCare is committed to ensuring that recruitment, screening and ongoing suitability practices prioritise children's safety, welfare, wellbeing, rights and best interests. Safe recruitment practices are an essential component of maintaining a child safe environment and reducing the risk of harm to children.

The Service ensures that only suitable adults are engaged to work with children through recruitment and screening processes that assess an individual's values, behaviours, experience and commitment to child safe practices. Recruitment and induction processes reinforce CatholicCare's Child Safeguarding framework and Code of Conduct.

All persons engaged by the Service, including educators, staff, students and volunteers, are required to meet child-related screening and suitability requirements and to comply with disclosure obligations relevant to working with children. This includes holding and maintaining a valid Working with Children Check (WWCC) and notifying the Service of any changes to their suitability to work with children.

Where a staff member holds NESAs teacher accreditation, the Service will notify the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESAs) in accordance with legislative requirements, including where a Working with Children Check is cancelled, suspended or subject to change, or where concerns arise regarding the individual's conduct or suitability to work with children.

CatholicCare ensures systems are in place to verify, monitor and respond to changes in screening or suitability status, and to take appropriate action where a person is no longer considered suitable to work with children.

Recruitment, screening, Working with Children Checks, induction and ongoing suitability processes are governed by CatholicCare's Recruitment, Child Protection, Staffing Arrangements and supervisory policies, which support the Service's commitment to providing a child safe environment.

Child Protection – (National Principle 6)

CatholicCare is committed to protecting the safety, welfare, wellbeing, rights and best interests of all children and young people. Children and young people have an inherent right to be safe and protected from harm, abuse, neglect and exploitation.

To maintain a child safe environment, CatholicCare ensures that child protection responsibilities are clearly understood and embedded across all service operations. This includes compliance with legislative requirements, alignment with CatholicCare Wollongong's Child Safeguarding framework, and adherence to service policies and professional standards.

All educators, staff, students and volunteers are required to complete the mandatory National Child Safety Training for the Early Childhood Education and Care Sector within required timeframes. This requirement applies to all persons working at the service, whether or not they work directly with children.

Educators, staff, students and volunteers are supported through ongoing training and supervision to understand:

- indicators of harm, abuse and neglect
- their obligations under child protection legislation
- how to respond to concerns in a timely, appropriate and lawful manner.

Through continual education and training, educators and staff are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children safe. Training gives educators and staff confidence to identify, respond and report child abuse. Nominated supervisors and persons in day-to-day charge must complete a mandatory child protection course approved by the regulatory authority and refresher training on an annual basis.

Approved providers, nominated supervisors, educators and staff who are mandatory reporters have a legal obligation to act when they suspect, on reasonable grounds, that a child is at risk of significant harm. Failure to meet mandatory reporting obligations may constitute a breach of legislation.

Child protection responsibilities are reinforced through induction, ongoing professional learning, supervision and reflective practice to ensure all adults are equipped with the knowledge, skills and confidence to keep children safe.

Mandatory Reporting and Child Protection Register

CatholicCare is committed to identifying, responding to, documenting and reporting child safety and child protection concerns in a timely, consistent and accountable manner to ensure children's safety and wellbeing.

Educators, staff, students and volunteers are required to follow CatholicCare Wollongong's *Mandatory Reporting of Harm, Abuse and Neglect Policy* and use the Mandatory Reporting Guide (MRG) decision tree when concerns arise about a child's safety, welfare or wellbeing. The MRG decision tree is accessible directly through the NSW ChildStory Reporter website.

Alongside CatholicCare's policies and procedures CatholicCare Early Childhood and School Age Education and Care services will utilise the NSW Department of Education

Responding to Incidents, Allegations and Complaints Reporting Flowchart to support timely and appropriate escalation, reporting and notification obligations relating to child safety incidents, allegations, complaints and reportable conduct matters.

Reporting Responsibilities

Clear internal reporting and escalation pathways are communicated to ensure staff understand:

- what concerns must be reported
- when a report must be made
- who concerns must be reported to internally
- when and how reports must be made to external authorities.

Reporting requirements, including the use of the MRG decision tree, are included in induction and ongoing training to support confident, timely and appropriate responses to child safety concerns. Policies and procedures are reviewed regularly to ensure reporting information remains current, accurate and practical.

Child Protection Concerns Register

Each service establishes and maintains a confidential *Child Protection Concerns Register* to support consistent documentation, monitoring and appropriate follow up of child safety and child protection matters.

The register includes, at a minimum, records of all child safety and child protection reports made to:

- the NSW Office of the Children’s Guardian (OCG)
- the NSW Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ)
- the NSW Early Learning Commission (via the NQAITS portal)
- NSW Police.

To strengthen child safety practices and support ongoing risk assessment, the register may also record concerns that do not meet the threshold for mandatory reporting but are relevant to a child’s safety or wellbeing, such as concerning observations, behavioural changes or unexplained injuries.

Responsibility for maintaining, storing and reviewing the *Child Protection Concerns Register* is clearly assigned by the approved provider. The register is managed securely and confidentially, in accordance with privacy requirements and protected disclosure provisions.

Register entries are reviewed to identify trends, patterns or emerging risks, and appropriate actions are taken to reduce risk and strengthen child safe practices across the service.

Support and Protections

CatholicCare is committed to supporting children, families, educators and staff involved in child protection matters. Support is provided in a manner that upholds confidentiality,

promotes wellbeing and ensures individuals are not disadvantaged for raising concerns in good faith.

Protections for individuals who make or may make a protected disclosure are outlined in CatholicCare's *Protected Disclosures (Whistleblower) Policy*.

Supervision and leadership oversight ensure educators and staff are supported throughout reporting processes and understand that safeguarding children is a shared responsibility.

Child Protection-Reportable Conduct Scheme – Allegations Against Employees (National Principle 5)

To protect children and ensure their safety, welfare and wellbeing, leadership is responsive to report allegations or convictions of child abuse and child related misconduct by any staff member or volunteer or contractor to the Office of the Children's Guardian (OCG) NSW as part of the *Reportable Conduct Scheme*.

Our Service will ensure an appropriate level of confidentiality of information relating to the reportable allegations as per the Children's Guardian Act 2019. We take our legislative responsibilities as part of the Reportable Conduct Scheme seriously and will respond to any reportable allegation or conviction against employees or volunteers that may arise.

Reporting And Responding to General Complaints (National Principle 6)

When child safety concerns arise, educators and staff must take immediate action in line with service reporting requirements and legislative obligations. This includes following internal reporting processes and making external reports where required to ensure timely and appropriate responses to child safety risks.

Feedback from children, families, educators, staff and the wider community is fundamental in creating an evolving childcare service working towards the highest standard of care and education.

We ensure educators, staff, volunteers and students are well informed about the different ways children may express concerns, distress and disclose harm as well as the process for responding to disclosures from children- including a complaint that alleges a child is exhibiting sexual behaviours that may be harmful to the child or another child. (ACECQA, 2023.)

The approved provider will place a prominently displayed notice at the entrance or foyer of our Service, providing contact information, including the name and telephone number for lodging complaints. Educators and staff will receive guidance on the complaint/ grievance policy and procedure and the process for reporting complaints during their service induction. Families, children and young people will be advised of the complaint/ grievance policy and procedure and how to report complaints during orientation of enrolment. All grievances and complaints will be treated seriously and as a priority, in accordance with CatholicCare's *Client and Stakeholder Feedback (includes compliments and complaints) Policy* and *Education and Care – Complaint Grievance Procedure*.

Any complaints that allege a breach of the National Law and Regulations or alleges that the

health, safety and wellbeing of a child or young person at the Service may have been compromised will be documented and reported to the regulatory authority within 24 hours. In the event that the child, young person or family is dissatisfied with the complaints process, they are advised they have the option to reach out to the regulatory authority for further assistance.

Physical environment – supervision and safety checklists (National Principles 5 And 7)

Children’s safety is embedded in our day-to-day practices. We ensure effective and adequate supervision is provided to children at all times whilst ensuring educator to child ratios are met at all times. Educators will employ ‘active supervision’ strategies within the Service environment and when participating in excursions or transporting children. We ensure students and visitors are never alone with children whilst at the Service. The physical environment including toilets and nappy change facilities is designed and maintained to facilitate clear supervision of children whilst maintaining their rights and dignity.

Consideration will be made for the different ages and abilities of children and the activities that may require different levels of supervision. Sleeping infants and toddlers will be closely monitored at regular intervals and will always be within sight and hearing distance of educators so a child’s breathing and the colour of their skin can be monitored. Consideration will be provided when older children are using the toilet and bathroom areas, including monitoring and supervision across all areas that children access.

Through conducting risk assessments, we assess and manage risks in the physical environment collaborating with children to develop behaviour guidelines for play including adventurous play to ensure their safety. Educators have a sound understanding of their duty of care and responsibilities in ensuring a child safe environment.

Educators conduct regular safety checks to maintain basic standards of safety within our Service. We believe that child safety is a shared responsibility at all levels within our Service. Children are encouraged to speak up about their safety and the safety of their friends by telling an educator if they feel unsafe in a particular situation or environment.

Educators and staff implement child safe procedures outlined in the *Safe Use of Digital Technologies and Online Environments Policy* to ensure children are always supervised and never left unattended whilst using any electronic devices. The physical environment, layout and design ensure it supports child-safe practices when children are engaged in using technology and regular audits are conducted to identify any potential risks to children’s safety. All electronic devices are password protected with access for staff only.

Child Protection Risk Assessments

CatholicCare undertakes regular and service specific child protection risk assessments to identify potential risks to children’s safety, welfare and wellbeing.

Child protection risk assessments consider risks associated with physical environments, routines and transitions, supervision practices, interactions and relationships, excursions and transportation, and the use of digital technologies or online communication practices.

These assessments identify control measures to mitigate identified risks and are used to inform decision making, supervision arrangements, staffing, environment design and daily practice to ensure children's safety and wellbeing remain paramount.

Child protection risk assessments are reviewed regularly, including following incidents, concerns, or changes to service operations, and contribute to continuous improvement in child safe practices across the service

Risk Assessment and Risk Assessment Tool (National Principle 8)

CatholicCare is committed to protecting the safety, welfare and wellbeing of every child and young person through a proactive and systematic approach to child safe risk management. Risk management is a key component of CatholicCare's child safe culture and is embedded into governance, leadership and everyday practice.

Risk management responsibilities are shared across the organisation. Educators, staff, students and volunteers are expected to understand, follow and contribute to child safe risk management practices in accordance with CatholicCare policies and procedures.

CatholicCare has developed a Child Safe Risk Management Plan which is reviewed at least annually, and in consultation with each service, to identify shared risks, service-specific risks and emerging risks. Risk management outcomes inform decision-making, supervision strategies, staffing arrangements, environment design and continuous improvement to ensure children's safety and wellbeing remain paramount.

It is a legislative requirement that leadership, staff and educators implement a risk management system where they identify and manage hazards and risks within the workplace to ensure a child safe environment. Strategies are in place to make sure child safety is embedded across our Service through compliance with the Education and Care National Regulations and the National Principles for Child Safety – Child Safe Standards.

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 or any transportation of children. Risk assessments must be approved by the nominated supervisor prior to any excursion taking place. Children's safety must be incorporated into everyday practice within the Service.

Emergency and evacuation procedures (National Principle 8)

The Approved Provider/Nominated Supervisor will ensure that copies of the emergency and evacuation floor plan is displayed in prominent positions near each exit of the Service premises, including indoor and outdoor learning areas. All staff and educators are familiar with emergency evacuation procedures and regulatory requirements. Rehearsals for emergency and evacuation procedures, including lock downs, are conducted at least once every 3 months. Records will be kept for all rehearsals.

Arrival and departure authorisation (National Principle 1 And 8)

Our Service prioritises children's safety at all times. Staff and educators will only release children to an authorised person as named on the child's enrolment form. The service will request families provide current court orders, and parenting plans to ensure our records are

up to date.

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 or young person.

Educators will work in collaboration with our *Delivery of children to and Collection from Education and Care Premises Policy*, *Safe Arrival of Children Policy* and *Student, Volunteer and Visitors Policy* to promote a culture of child safety and wellbeing in the Service.

To ensure children's safety, staff and educators have a clear understanding of their legal obligation to check identification when a person is collecting a child. To maintain compliance, parents will provide written authorisation if they authorise a person who is not on their emergency contact form to pick up their child from the ECEC Service. Educators and staff will ensure court orders are strictly adhered to and protect children from any potential harm.

Maintaining accurate attendance records and robust accountability practices supports the paramouncy principle by ensuring children are accounted for at all times, particularly during transitions and emergency situations.

Online Safety (National Principle 8)

CatholicCare Wollongong's IT Department maintains anti-virus and network security systems, including internet filtering to block unsuitable content. The Nominated Supervisor and educators are responsible for ensuring safe use of technology at the service, including supervision and requesting additional restrictions where required.

Our Service ensures backups of important and confidential data is made regularly and either stored securely offline, or online. Software and devices are updated regularly to avoid any breach of confidential information.

Families are provided with information about our software program which is password protected and used to share observations, photos, videos, daily reports and portfolios. Passwords are not to be shared with others as per our written agreement.

Written authorisation is requested as part of the enrolment process for children to use computers/tablets; have their photo taken and published as part of promotional marketing or on the app program used by the Service. The identity of a child is not published on any platform.

All staff and educators have knowledge of and adhere to legislative requirements and not use, or have access to, any personal electronic devices, including mobile phones or smart watches used to take images or videos when educating and caring for children at the Service. Only Service supplied or issued and registered electronic devices are used and strict controls are in place to ensure the appropriate storage and retention of images and video of children.

Storage Of Hazardous Substances (National Principle 8)

Our Service will endeavour to provide a safe environment where necessary chemical and

hazardous equipment are safely stored away from children and handled appropriately. Leadership, staff and educators will keep a register of hazardous chemicals used at the Service, including relevant Safety Data Sheets (SDS). To maintain a safe environment for children, regular audits and checklists are conducted.

Equipment, Furniture and Maintenance Record (National Principle 8)

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, our Service has 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.

Related policies

- Administration of First Aid Policy
- Behaviour Guidance Policy
- CatholicCare Child Safeguarding Policies
- Child Safe Recruitment, Induction and Training
- Client and Stakeholder Feedback (includes compliments and complaints) Policy
- Code of Ethics and Conduct
- Delivery of Children to, and Collection from Education and Care Services Premises Policy
- Emergency Evacuation Policy
- Interactions with Children Families and Staff Policy
- Lockdown Policy
- Medical Conditions Policy
- Protected Disclosures Policy
- Safe Transportation Policy
- Safe use of digital technologies and online environments Policy
- Sleep and Rest Policy
- Smoke-Free and Vape-Free Environment Policy (WHS)
- Student, Volunteer and Visitors' Policy
- Sun Safety Policy

Related resources

- NSW Department of Education – Responding to Incidents, Allegations and Complaints Reporting Flowchart
- CHILD SAFE STANDARDS LEGISLATION NSW
- [Children's Guardian Act 2019](#)
- Children's Guardian Amendment (Child Safe Scheme) Bill 2021
- [Child Protection \(Working with Children\) Act 2012](#)
- Office of the Children's Guardian [Child Safe Self-Assessment](#)
- [Office of the Children's Guardian. Child Safe Standards](#)
- [NSW Department of Education. Child Safe Standards](#)

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 Safety and Protection	Leadership, educators and staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities regarding child safety, including the need to identify and respond to every child at risk of abuse or neglect
QUALITY AREA 5: RELATIONSHIPS WITH CHILDREN		
5.1.1	Positive educator to child interactions	Responsive and meaningful interactions build trusting relationships which engage and support each child to feel secure, confident and included.

Relevant Legislation

EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL LAW AND NATIONAL REGULATIONS	
S. 2A	Paramount consideration—safety, rights and best interests of children
S. 3A	Paramount consideration
S. 4	How functions to be exercised
S. 5	Meaning of serious incident
S.5AA	Meaning of inappropriate conduct
S.162A	Child protection training Offence relating to child protection training
S. 162B	Child safety training
S.165	Offence to inadequately supervise children
S.166	Offence to use inappropriate discipline
S.166A	Offence to subject child to inappropriate conduct Offences relating to inappropriate conduct
S.167	Offence relating to protection of children from harm and hazards
S. 174AA	Educators and other staff members of education and care services to notify certain information
S. 174AB	Approved provider must notify Regulatory Authority of event under section 174AA

Part 6A	Devices in education and care services
S. 178	Suspension of education and care by certain persons
S. 178A	Supervision of certain persons providing education and care
S. 188	Offence to engage person to whom prohibition notice applies
12	Meaning of a serious incident
82	Environment to be free from tobacco, vaping devices, vaping substances, drugs and alcohol
83	Staff members and family day care educators not to be affected by alcohol or drugs
84	Awareness of child protection law
99	Children leaving the education and care service premises
102AAB	Safe arrival of children policies and procedures
102AAC	Risk assessment for the purposes of safe arrival of children policies and procedures
102B	Transport risk assessment must be conducted before service transports child
102C	Conduct of risk assessment for transporting of children by the education and care service
102D	Authorisation for service to transport children
102E	Children embarking a means of transport—centre-based service
102F	Children disembarking a means of transport—centre-based service
103	Premises, furniture and equipment to be safe, clean and in good repair
104	Fencing
105	Furniture, materials and equipment
106	Laundry and hygiene facilities
109	Toilet and hygiene facilities
115	Premises designed to facilitate supervision
122	Educators must be working directly with children to be included in ratios
123	Educator to child ratios- centre based services
136	First aid qualifications
145	Staff record
149	Volunteers and students
155	Interactions with children
162	Health information to be kept in enrolment record
167	Record of service's compliance
168	Education and care service must have policies and procedures

170	Policies and procedures to be followed
171	Policies and procedures to be kept available
172	Notification of change to policies or procedure
175	Prescribed information to be notified to regulatory authority

Sources

- Australian Children’s Education & Care Quality Authority. (2025). Policy and procedure guidelines. [Providing a Child Safe Environment](#).
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- Australian Government. Department of Skills. (2022). [Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia.V2.0, 2022](#)
- Australian Human Rights Commission (2020). *Child Safe Organisations*. <https://childsafe.humanrights.gov.au/>
- [Children \(Education and Care Services\) National Law \(NSW\)](#)
- [Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010](#).
- [Education and Care Services National Regulations](#). (Amended 2025)
- NSW Department of Education (2021). [Guide to the Child Safe Standards for early childhood education and care and outside schools hours care services](#)
- [United Nations Convention of Rights of the Child, \(1989\). \(UNCRC\)](#)

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.
- 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.
- CatholicCare Wollongong will ensure educators, staff, students and volunteers have access to ongoing professional learning, reading and child safety resources.
- Relevant information, updates and materials will be regularly shared through CatholicCare (CCW) electronic platforms and communication channels to support

continuous improvement in child safe practices.

Consequences of Policy Violations:

Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment or contract. The severity of the consequences will depend on the nature and impact of the violation, as determined by CatholicCare Wollongong. People and Culture will review each case individually to determine appropriate actions based on the circumstances.

Policy created/ reviewed

Date	Major, Minor or Administrative	Description of Revision(s)
April 2026	Major	New policy

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

This policy will be reviewed periodically to ensure its effectiveness and relevance. Any necessary updates or modifications to ensure compliance with legislative and standard requirements will be communicated to all employees, contractors, and representatives of CatholicCare Wollongong.

Other situations may include:

- Following an incident, to identify gaps and strengthen data protection measures.
- adoption of new tools or systems.
- mergers, restructuring, or shifts in services that impact on current processes.
- As part of routine evaluations to ensure policies remain effective and aligned with best practices.
- If client/s provide feedback or complaints, prompting a review for improvement.
- When inefficiencies or errors are identified.

The agency will formally review this Policy every three years as part of the policy's known life cycle period.