



## **PROVIDING A CHILD SAFE ENVIRONMENT POLICY**

(Required regulation)

### **Policy Statement**

At New Lambton District OOSH (NLDOOSH) our children's safety, security and well-being is our primary responsibility. This responsibility guides and informs our daily practices. One of the primary ways we meet this responsibility is by providing a child safe environment. To do this we will ensure our physical surroundings are safe and free of hazards, that people who come in contact with our children are given guidance on how to interact and that our processes are robust, appropriate and implemented consistently.

Our staff will ensure that our centre and equipment, adhere to safe practices and operate in line with legislative requirements relating to child protective practices and the education and care services National Regulations and Law. Staff and management are aware of their legal responsibility as Mandatory Reporters to take action to protect and support children that they suspect may be at significant risk of harm. Staff will ensure that children are always adequately supervised and that every reasonable precaution is taken to protect children from harm and any hazard likely to cause injury or trauma.

### **Procedures**

#### Child Protection

- a. All staff who are responsible persons will undergo training in relation to child protection and notification at the expense of NLDOOSH. This will ensure that all employees are aware of their reporting obligations in relation to Risk of Significant Harm (ROSH), reportable allegations, criminal offences and relevant procedures, and are provided with relevant support and training. In addition to this all staff, volunteers and students will complete the mandatory child safety training through GECKO on a bi-annual basis. A training register is maintained to ensure all staff training is updated.
- b. All staff members are Mandatory Reporters and therefore any staff member who forms a belief on reasonable grounds that a ROSH, reportable allegation or criminal offence exist should ensure they record the details of the report in a clear objective format.
- c. Staff will liaise with the Nominated Supervisor to discuss procedures that need to be followed.
- d. Reports should be treated with strict confidentiality in adherence to our services Confidentiality Policy.

- e. The Nominated Supervisor will then assist staff in running the online Mandatory Reporters Guidelines (MRG) tool to determine whether the report meets the threshold for significant risk of harm.
- f. If directed by MRG to report to Community Services, staff should report their concerns to the Child Protection Helpline
  - Mandatory Reporters phone 13 36 27
  - Non-Mandatory reporters phone 132 111.
- g. When reporting to the Child Protection Helpline staff should provide as much information as possible which might include child's information, family information, reporter details and outcomes of the MRG.
- h. If the Nominated Supervisor has been advised to but has not reported to Community Services, the staff member is legally responsible to do so.
- i. The centre has two nominated Child Safety Contacts Persons.
- j. The "Child at risk" action flow chart, "Responding to children and young people at risk" and "Responding to incidents, disclosures and suspicions of child abuse" posters are displayed for educators to utilise should they require guidance.

### Security

- a. Only approved educators members will have a key to access the buildings.
- b. A key register will be maintained that indicates the person's receipt of the key, date received and date returned on completion of employment.
- c. Educators will ensure that the building is left in a secure manner before leaving.
- d. Educators will contact the police and the Nominated Supervisor as soon as possible if there has been a disturbance of any kind at the centre.
- e. Once notified of any breach of security, the Nominated Supervisor or an authorised staff member will arrive at the centre and determine what action needs to be taken. They will remain at the centre to liaise with the school principle, and wait until the police arrive and complete any inquiries.

### Hazardous Materials

- a. Low irritant, environmentally friendly sprays are to be used minimally, only where adequate ventilation exists and preferably not in the presence of children.
- b. Educators should be aware of the dangers of cleaning materials and surface sprays. Many children and adults are allergic to aerosol sprays and where possible the use of these should be avoided.
- c. Our centre selects materials/products with minimum toxicity and that are environmentally sound. All chemicals, cleaning materials and insecticides should be stored safely and be

inaccessible to children. They are not to be stored close to food or where the storage of these products might contaminate food.

- d. If materials/products are identified as hazardous/dangerous a Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) is to be obtained from the manufacturer. If the item is labelled as non-hazardous/non- dangerous the OH&S officer will use their professional judgement to decide if the MSDS is required.
- e. Should any pests or vermin be identified then action should be taken to rid the centre of the problem by initially using non-chemical methods such as physical removal, maintaining a clean environment and the use of any non-chemical products.
- f. Staff should always read the label before using any cleaning materials or chemicals and are to be aware of appropriate first aid.

### Environment

- a. The indoor and outdoor environments of our centre are tobacco, illicit drugs, vaping substances and devices and alcohol free zones. Signs are displayed prominently in the building.
  - b. The centres comply with the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) regarding the number of children we are licensed to enroll.
  - c. We will ensure that, for each child being educated and cared for by the service, the premises have at least 7 square metres of unencumbered outdoor space.
  - d. During wet weather conditions, activities are arranged in undercover areas and designated indoor spaces.
  - e. Separate areas in our indoor environments will be provided for:
    - sign in/out area
    - first aid kit and equipment
    - preparation of food/drink
    - staff and families to talk in confidence
    - office area: phone, copier etc
    - cleaning equipment
    - toilet with hand basin, soap dispenser and paper towel
    - creative and other activities
    - large and small group activities
    - homework area
    - quiet space for children who are feeling unwell
    - display of children's activities and work.
  - f. Children's play equipment is easily accessible and a variety of activities available.
  - g. Walkways are easily definable and maintained through the buildings.
  - h. Children's bags and hats are properly stored out of walkways and play areas.
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- i. Areas are set up to ensure that appropriate supervision can be maintained at all times.
- j. Outdoor areas will be inspected for any dangerous objects/items before children are permitted to play in the area. If any dangerous objects/items are found, they will be safely disposed of by staff.
- k. NLDOOSH will endeavor to ensure the outdoor environment is an inviting place for children to play and learn and provides opportunities for creative expression. They will be set up in a variety of ways to encourage participation and allow children to play in large/small groups or by themselves.
- l. Children are only permitted to play where they can see an educator. Clear boundaries are set and enforced. Children are to be with an educator when leaving the boundaries.
- m. Adequate shade is provided and the centre has a “no hat, play in the shade” policy. Activities are set up in shaded areas where possible and eating areas are shaded.
- n. In the case of the outside temperature being below 6°C, children will be encouraged to stay indoors.
- o. Children will be encouraged to play in well lit areas after dark and staff will ensure outdoor areas are well lit by dark or will escort children to our inside spaces for indoor play.
- p. Various risk assessments relating to child protection are carried out within our service to ensure the safety, security and well being for children, families, staff, students and volunteers.

#### Information Exchange

- a. NLDOOSH aims to provide effective information exchange between other prescribed bodies in relation to the safety, welfare, or wellbeing of a child/ren or young person/s. Chapter 16A, Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 allows for the exchange of information between prescribed bodies without any community services involvement.
- b. Staff must not use or disclose information for any purpose that is not associated with the safety, welfare or wellbeing of the child or young person.
- c. Under Provision Chapter 16A prescribed bodies can only share obtained information with other bodies in relation to the safety, welfare and wellbeing of the child/ren or young person/s.
- d. Information can be shared if it relates to:
  - a child or young person’s history or circumstances
  - a parent or other family member
  - people having a significant or relevant relationship with a child or young person
  - the other organisations’ dealings with the child or young person, including past support or service arrangements.

- e. Our service is not required to disclose information under Chapter 16A where we believe the information would prejudice a criminal investigation or coronial inquest, endanger a person's life or is not in the public interest.
- f. The reporter's details cannot be exchanged without their permission unless it is required as part of the investigation of a serious offence alleged to have been committed against a child or young person even if a report has been made to a Child Wellbeing Unit or directly to the Community Services Helpline.

#### Prescribed Bodies

- a. A prescribed body is an organisation specified in section 248(6), Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 or in clause 7, Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Regulation 2000. "Prescribed bodies" under the legislation are:
  - NSW Police
  - government departments or a public authority
  - government schools or registered non-government schools or a TAFE
  - public health organisations or private hospitals
  - private fostering organisations or private adoption organisations
  - organisations that provide residential child care or a child care service under the Act
  - any other organisations that have direct responsibility for, or supervision of, the provision of healthcare, welfare, education, children's services, or law enforcement, to children
  - The Family Court of Australia (with Community Services only for the purposes of section 248 but not Chapter 16A)
  - Commonwealth Department of Human Services (with Community Services only for the purposes of section 248 but not Chapter 16A)
  - Commonwealth Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Aboriginal Affairs (with Community Services only for the purposes of section 248 but not Chapter 16A).

#### Supporting our children's participation

- a. We support and promote active participation of children at our centre. Educators listen to each child's views and respects what they have to say involving our children when making decisions.
- b. Both our outdoor and indoor environments are safe, secure and stimulating where children have access to a variety of activities in which they are encouraged to explore, create, experiment and express themselves.

#### Supporting staff, volunteers and students

- a. Our centres promote respect, fairness and consideration for all staff, volunteers and students and expect everyone to adhere to our centres *Interactions with Children* policy.

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- b. Our centre maintains Child/Educator ratio and appropriate supervision. All educators undergo child safety training and educators who are Responsible Persons undergo Child Protection training.
- c. No educator is to be left in a 1 on 1 situation with a child out of sight of other educators.

#### Recruitment

- a. Our centres maintain a consistent recruitment, screening and selection process. Applications undergo an interview where essential child focused questions are discussed. If the applicant responds appropriately, reference checks are followed.
- b. All staff employed by NLDOOSH including management, full-time/part-time carers, volunteers and students will be subject to a Working with Children Check carried out by the NSW Commission for Children and Young People.
- c. When NLDOOSH engages a self-employed individual to provide services, the provider is required to provide a Certificate for Self-Employed People. This certificate ensures verification that the person employed is not banned by law from working with children. These certificates are issued through the NSW Commission for Children and Young People.
- d. All new staff, volunteers and students will read and become familiar with our *Interactions with Children, Staffing and Complaints Policies and our Supervision Staff Procedure..*

#### Communication

- a. Our policies and procedures are discussed during induction sessions for all new staff, volunteers and students. Communication of our policy to parents is done via our website and policy folder. Different policies are displayed throughout the year for parents to read.
- b. Regular staff meetings and training continually communicates our policies between staff
- c. A review of this policy is completed every 18 months taking into consideration the comments and suggestions from children, parents, Educators, volunteers and students.

#### Determining the Responsible Person.

- a. A Responsible Person will be on duty at all times.
- b. The Nominated Supervisor will allocate a Responsible Person for each session. If for any reason the Nominated Supervisor is absent, the Nominated Supervisor will nominate a Responsible Person in their absence.
- c. A labelled picture of the Responsible Person will be on display for families and visitors on our notice boards and the Responsible Person will sign in and be identified on the sign in sheet at each session.

#### Safe use of Online Environments

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- a. NLDOOSH is a device free service, however at times we use the internet as a teaching tool. In these instances the children are fully supervised by an educator to ensure only the relevant website is viewed.
- b. In the case where games on a device are used as a de-escalation technique for behaviour management an educator will be with the child until they calm and then pack the device away.

## Considerations

Name	Reference
Education and Care Services National Regulations	150, 155, 156, 168,
National Quality Standard	2.3, 7.1
Other NLDOOSH policies/ documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child Protection Policy</li> <li>• Staff Practices Manual</li> <li>• Supervision Staff Procedure</li> <li>• Child Safe Standards</li> <li>• Safe use of Digital Technologies and Online Environments</li> <li>• Electronic Device Use and Social Media Agreement</li> <li>• Related Risk Assessments</li> </ul>
Other	National Law 2010 section 162

## Policy status

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Policy Owned By	New Lambton District OOSH Inc