### Providing a child safe environment procedure

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| National Quality Standard Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations | Associated department policy, procedure or guideline | Reference document(s) and/or advice from a recognised authority |
| NQS: 2.2, 3.1  Law Section: 162A, 165, 166, 167  Regulations: 84, 103, 105, 109, 115 | Leading and operating department preschool guidelines  [Child Protection policy – Responding to and reporting students at risk of harm](https://education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/policies/pd-2002-0067)  [Child Protection – Allegations against employees](https://education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/policies/pd-2005-0263)  [Working with Children Check policy](https://education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/policies/pd-2005-0264)  [Department web page – Child Protection](https://education.nsw.gov.au/student-wellbeing/child-protection) | ACECQA information sheets:   * [Active supervision – Ensuring safety and promoting learning [PDF 910 KB]](https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-01/QA2_ActiveSupervision_EnsuringSafetyAndPromotingLearning.pdf) * [Minimising the risk of children being mistakenly locked in or out of service premises [PDF 478 KB]](https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-01/QA2_MinimisingTheRiskOfChildrenBeingMistakenlyLockedInOrOutOfServicePremises.pdf)   [Kidsafe NSW](https://www.kidsafensw.org/)  [Implementing the Child Safe Standards – A guide for early childhood education and outside school hours care services [PDF 3.7 MB]](https://education.nsw.gov.au/content/dam/main-education/early-childhood-education/working-in-early-childhood-education/media/documents/Guide_Child_Safe_Standards.pdf)  [Keeping our kids safe – Cultural safety and the national principles for child safe organisations [PDF 13.1 MB]](https://www.snaicc.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/SNAICC-VACCA-OCS-ChildSafeReport-LR-with-alt-tags-May2021.pdf)  [ACECQA information sheet – Embedding the national child safe principles](https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-08/InfoSheet_EmbeddingTheNationalChildSafePrinciples_1.pdf)  ACECQA’s policy and procedures guidelines – [Providing a child safe environment [PDF 217 KB]](https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-08/PolicyGuidelines_ProvidingAChildSafeEnvironment.pdf)  [Department of Communities and Justice – signs of abuse](https://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/families/Protecting-kids/reporting-child-at-risk/harm-and-neglect/chapters/signs-of-abuse) |

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| **Staff roles and responsibilities** | |
| **School principal** | The principal as Nominated Supervisor, Educational Leader and Responsible Person holds primary responsibility for the preschool.  The principal is responsible for ensuring:   * the preschool is compliant with legislative standards related to this procedure at all times * all staff involved in the preschool are familiar with and implement this procedure * all procedures are current and reviewed as part of a continuous cycle of self- assessment. * These tasks may be delegated to other members of the preschool team, but the responsibility sits with the principal. |
| **Preschool supervisor** | The preschool supervisor supports the principal in their role and is responsible for leading the review of this procedure through a process of self-assessment and critical reflection. This could include:   * analysing complaints, incidents or issues and what the implications are for the updates to this procedure * reflecting on how this procedure is informed by relevant recognised authorities * planning and discussing ways to engage with families and communities, including how changes are communicated * developing strategies to induct all staff when procedures are updated to ensure practice is embedded. |
| **Preschool educators** | The preschool educators are responsible for working with leadership to ensure:   * all staff in the preschool and daily practices comply with this procedure * this procedure is stored in a way that is accessible to all staff, families, visitors and volunteers * they are actively involved in the review of this procedure, as required, or at least annually * details of this procedure’s review are documented. |
| **Procedure** | |
| **Adequate supervision** | * The preschool children are adequately supervised at all times. * A supervision plan is in place to support active supervision. It makes note of areas and activities which require closer supervision, as well as arrangements for specific times of the day (arrivals, departures, pack – away) or situations (a sick child needs to be isolated from the group, some children are sleeping). * A staff roster ensures a ratio of one educator for each ten children is maintained at all times the preschool is open, including during planned educator breaks.   + Teachers are relieved for lunch and/or recess by a teacher from the school as per the weekly duty roster.   + SLSOs are relieved for a lunch and recess break by a suitably qualified SLSO or teacher from the school. |
| **Child protection** | **Training**   * All teaching, non-teaching, ongoing and casual staff complete the department’s child protection induction training on commencing with the department, and then mandatory updates annually. * Preschool educators are encouraged and supported to raise and discuss any child protection concerns they have with their supervisor or principal.   + Child protection and code of conduct training occurs on Term 1 staff development days and reviewed as required.   + Weekly preschool meetings include discussions about children and provide regular opportunities for staff to raise concerns about specific children, in addition to informal conversations.   **Mandatory reporters**   * As a mandatory reporter, each staff member, volunteer or education student will inform the principal if they have reasonable grounds to suspect any risk of harm to a child or young person. * The principal will then apply the department’s child protection policy – [Child Protection: Responding to and reporting students at risk of harm](https://education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/policies/pd-2002-0067) * As described in this policy, the principal will use appropriate tools such as the online [Mandatory Reporter Guide](https://reporter.childstory.nsw.gov.au/s/mrg), professional judgement or specialist advice to determine if concerns about the safety, welfare or wellbeing of the child constitutes risk of significant harm. If they do, the principal will report to the NSW Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ). * The principal will let the person who made the report know the action taken. If a staff member believes that the principal has not reported risk of significant harm concerns to the DCJ, they must report directly to DCJ themselves.   **Reportable conduct**   * All staff, volunteers and education students who become aware of an allegation of a child protection nature about themselves or another employee must inform the principal. * On receiving a report of reportable conduct, the principal will apply the department policy – [Child Protection: Allegations Against Employees.](https://education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/policies/pd-2005-0263) * If an allegation involves the principal, the staff member must inform another supervisor or suitable person, such as the Director Educational Leadership (DEL) within that network. * Principals must immediately report allegations against a staff member or volunteer of a child protection nature to Professional and Ethical Standards (PES) using the [PES Reporting guide](https://education.nsw.gov.au/epac/reporting-guide). * PES ensure the department’s statutory responsibilities are met, including notifying the Office of Children’s Guardian of reportable conduct under the *Children's Guardian Act 2019*. * Principals must report to NSW Police and/or Child Protection Helpline if the child is at risk of significant harm.   **Notification to the Regulatory Authority**   * Notification must be to Early Learning (email earlylearning@det.nsw.edu.au or phone 1300 083 698) when: * a staff member reasonably believes that physical or sexual abuse of a child has or is occurring at the preschool * an allegation or complaint is made that physical or sexual abuse of a child has or is occurring at the preschool   **Record keeping**   * Records relating to child sexual abuse that has or is alleged to have occurred within the preschool will be kept for at least 45 years from the date the record was created. |
| **Working with children checks** | * All department staff hold a current *Working with Children Check* valid for paid work and verified by the department. Each staff member’s WWCC number, expiry date and proof of verification is stored in the staff folder. The principal is notified via email when a staff member has 3 months left until their WWCC expires. * Parents and close relatives volunteering in the preschool do not require a WWCC clearance, but must complete a WWCC Declaration for Child Related Workers, with sections 1, 3 and 4 completed and provide 100 points of proof of identity. * Volunteers over the age of 18 who are not parents or close relatives of a child attending the school at which they are volunteering are considered Specified volunteers and require a WWCC clearance to participate in the preschool program. |
| **Child safe culture**  **The safe use of online environments** | **To implement the Child Safe Standards a child safe culture has been established and is maintained,** with children’s health, safety and wellbeing prioritised.   * The preschool makes a public commitment to child safety, for example, in the philosophy, family information booklet or newsletter and display in foyer area. * Self-assessment and quality improvement processes examine and evaluate the implementation of the child safe standards. * Risk assessment plans are conducted and implemented to prevent and respond to possible risks to child safety. * Locally developed procedures describe processes that maintain child safety. The review of these procedures considers them from a child safety perspective. * Opportunities are provided for parents to share their feedback and have input into preschool decisions, particularly the review of local procedures and the philosophy. * Parents are informed of the actions the preschool takes to ensure child safety. * Parents are provided with information about child safety, including how they can report a child protection concern. * All staff are responsive to children, listening to what they say, believing them and acting on any concerns they have. * Staff provide opportunities for children to share their opinions and contribute to decisions that affect them, enabling them to then be able to confidently ‘speak up’ to raise a concern, if needed. * Educators provide opportunities for children to learn about their rights as a child as well as body autonomy. * All staff are supported to fulfil their legal obligation as a mandatory reporter through annual training and opportunities to discuss concerns at team meetings. * Complaints are handled in a child-focussed manner and as outlined in the department’s Complaint Handling policy. * The preschool’s supervision plan describes how higher risk times of the day and activities are more closely supervised. * Children’s use of online devices is supervised closely. All devices have child-safe filters installed. |
| **Risk management plan for the preschool environment** | * A risk assessment plan for the preschool environment is reviewed and updated at least annually. It identifies potential risks in both the indoor and outdoor environment, and describes steps taken to reduce or minimise these risks.   + The plan is reviewed by the preschool educators and preschool supervisor and shared with the principal and WHS Committee, at least annually and as needed in response to changes to the environment or other relevant factors.   + The plan is available in the preschool and is included in the casual folder.   + If a new risk becomes apparent after the review, the preschool educators and preschool supervisor are responsible for adding it to the risk plan. |
| **Clean, hygienic and safe environment** | * A daily safety check of the indoors and outdoors is carried out before children arrive each day. A record is kept of what is checked, signed and dated by the person who carried out the check.   + The record is kept in the cleaning folder.   + It is completed by the SLSO, or the preschool teacher in their absence.   + Notes are made to document how minor issues noted on the safety check have been rectified. * Any hazardous or broken items are rectified or removed from areas the children can access. * If required, preschool maintenance is carried out by the school’s General Assistant.   + Requests for maintenance are recorded in the whole school maintenance request book.   + A general maintenance schedule outlines routine checks and maintenance to be completed each school holidays (termly). The preschool teacher provides this to the General Assistant during Week 9 or 10 of each term.   + WHS issues are reported to the Principal and Deputy Principal through Sentral. Trades people are sourced through FM Web by the Principal or General Assistant as required. * All potentially hazardous products and materials are stored securely and inaccessible to children. The area in which they are stored is labelled as containing *hazardous* or *dangerous* materials.   + All potentially hazardous materials are stored in a locked cupboard in the kitchen, with the exception of paint (which is non-toxic). This includes cleaning products and medications.   + Non-toxic paints are stored in a locked cupboard in the craft area.   + All chemicals are stored on site with their Safety Data Sheet (SDS) attached and all chemicals are recorded within the chemical register. * There are no toxic plants on the preschool site. Before a new plant is introduced to the site, reference is made to [Kidsafe: Grow me safely](https://www.kidsafensw.org/growplantssafely/#plants-to-avoid) to determine if it is safe or not. * Environmental and equipment cleaning is an ongoing process to ensure the preschool is always safe and hygienic.   + There are daily, weekly, termly and an end of year cleaning schedules in place to indicate which items or areas are cleaned when.   + The sandpit is raked weekly with salt added once a month as part of the termly cleaning schedule. The mud kitchen is dusted or hosed off as needed. |

| Record of procedure’s review |
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| **Date of review and who was involved** |
| 4.8.2021. Sally Egan, Rebecca Donaldson, Jessica Le. |
| **Key changes made and reason/s why** |
| Adopted DoE template and created a supervision plan. |
| **Record of communication of significant changes to relevant stakeholders** |
| Communicate supervision plan to staff on duty in the preschool. |

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| Record of procedure’s review |
| **Date of review and who was involved** |
| 10.8.2021. Sally Egan, Rebecca Donaldson, Jessica Le, Neil Bourke. |
| **Key changes made and reason/s why** |
| Added note that principal is notified of WWCCs that are due to expire, and added details regarding the storage of Safety Data Sheets.  Included screening process that volunteers must engage with prior to commencing in the preschool. |
| **Record of communication of significant changes to relevant stakeholders** |
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| Record of procedure’s review |
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| **Date of review and who was involved** |
| 16.06.2022. Sally Egan, Rebeccca Donaldson, Neil Bourke. |
| **Key changes made and reason/s why** |
| Clarified timeline for adding salt to the sandpit and how the General Assistant is provided with the termly cleaning and maintenance schedule. |
| **Record of communication of significant changes to relevant stakeholders** |
| Communicate supervision plan to staff on duty in the preschool.  Place copy of the supervision plan in the outdoor preschool environment for casual staff to reference. |

| Record of procedure’s review |
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| **Date of review and who was involved** |
| 16.06.2023. Sally Egan, Rebecca Donaldson, Neil Bourke, Francesca Peterson, Thi Ngueyn |
| **Key changes made and reason/s why** |
| Removed references to Business Manager – replaced by Principal and Deputy Principal (WHS issues).  Discussed Child Safe Standards, specifically ‘Responding to incidents, disclosures and suspicions of child abuse or harm’, and the ‘Early Childhood Education and Care Reporting Obligations’ pages. A copy of each has been attached to this procedure and provided to each staff member. We have also attached the DoE Preschool and Early Childhood Teachers Reporting Pathway. |
| **Record of communication of significant changes to relevant stakeholders** |
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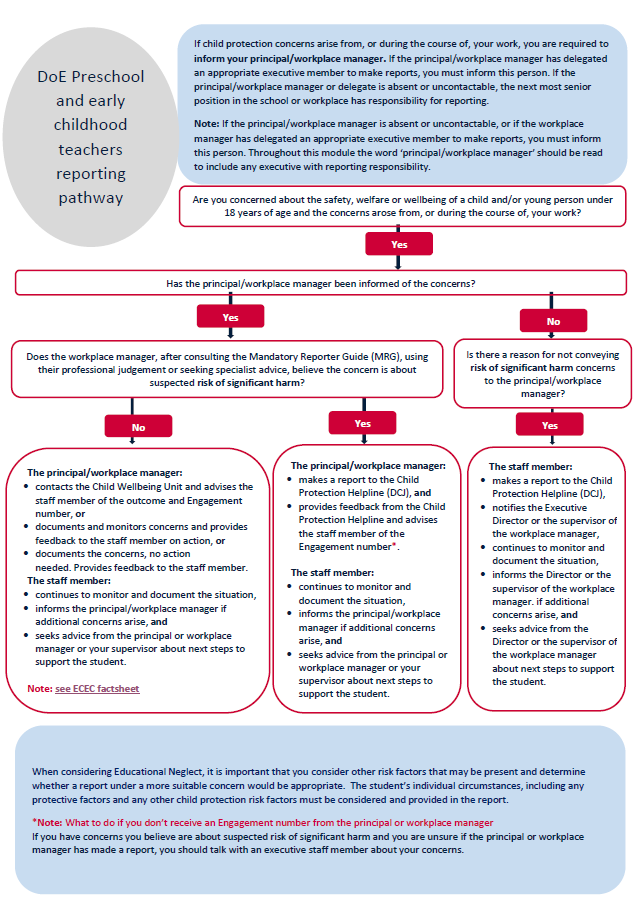
| Record of procedure’s review |
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| **Date of review and who was involved** |
| 07.11.2023 Sally Egan, Rebecca Donaldson, Neil Bourke, Francesca Peterson, Thi Nguyen |
| **Key changes made and reason/s why** |
| Adopted new DoE template with creation of new categories.  Introduced new section entitled Child safe culture and the safe use of online environments.  Revised wording within child protection and working with children checks sections to reflect current DoE practices. |
| **Record of communication of significant changes to relevant stakeholders** |
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| Record of procedure’s review |
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| **Date of review and who was involved** |
| 27.02.2024 Sally Egan, Rebecca Donaldson, Neil Bourke, Shumaila Shoaib, Thi Nguyen |
| **Key changes made and reason/s why** |
| Added that notes of rectification of issues identified in daily safety checks are annotated to show follow up of issue. |
| **Record of communication of significant changes to relevant stakeholders** |
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