CHILD SAFETY AND WELLBEING PROCEDURE

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCR) outline that children and young people have a right to be safe and cared for, no matter where they are or who they are with. When working with children and young people, it is important to understand children's rights and needs. We are advocates for children and aim to maintain a strong commitment to child safety and establishing a child safe environment.

Our Service embeds the Victorian Child Safe Standards and promotes a culture of safety and wellbeing to minimise the risk of child abuse or harm to children whilst promoting children's sense of security and belonging.

Our Service adheres to and aligns with legislative requirements related to taking images or videos of children. (See *Safe Use of Digital Technologies and Online Environments Policy*)

Working in conjunction with the *Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy*, this procedure provides guidance for management and educators to foster and promote a child safe culture and ensure child safe policies and procedures are understood and practiced by all educators and staff.

Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations: *(S.2A, 4, 12, 162A, 162B, 166A, 174B, PART 6A, 188, R.12, 82, 84, 86, 102-106, 109, 115, 122, 123, 136, 155, 162, 165-168, 170 and 172) NQS QA 2, and 5: Element 2.2.1, 2.2.2, 2.2.3 and 5.1.1. Health and Safety and Relationships.*
Related Policy: *Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy*

CHILD SAFE STANDARDS		
1	The approved provider, nominated supervisor and educators will review the Service's *Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy* annually	
2	Families and children will be invited to review the *Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy*	
3	New educators, students and volunteers will be introduced to the *Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy* and *Procedure* during induction and orientation	
4	Educators and staff will refer to the *Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy* for further information on implementation of the Child Safe Standards	
5	A *Statement of Commitment* to providing a Child Safe Environment will be developed in consultation with families, children and educators	

6	The approved provider and nominated supervisor will ensure children's safety, rights and best interests are the paramount consideration for all Service operations, decisions and functions, including all decisions relating to child safety	

COMPLAINTS/ GRIEVANCES		
The approved provider and nominated supervisor will:		
1	review the Service's *Dealing with Complaints Policy* annually, in conjunction with children, families and educators	
2	inform families, children and educators of the *Complaints/ Grievance Procedure* for steps on how to raise any concerns, including concerns around child safety	
3	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	
4	discuss any complaints/issues raised with the complainant within 24 hours of receiving the verbal or written complaint and will investigate and document the complaint or grievance fairly and impartially	
5	notify the regulatory authority within 24 hours of any serious incident or complaint or allegation as per the Education and Care Services National Regulations	
6	ensure the compliant handling process is child focused; children are empowered and supported to provide feedback and speak up about concerns	

STAFFING PROVISIONS		
1	The approved provider, nominated supervisor and educators will review the Service's *Probation, Code of Conduct Policy, Induction and Orientation Policy, Professional Development Policy and Staff Performance Review Policy* annually in consultation with families, children and educators	
2	New educators, staff, students and volunteers will be introduced to the *Probation, Induction and Orientation Policy, Professional Development Policy and Staff Performance Review Policy* during induction and orientation	
3	The *Code of Conduct Policy* will be reviewed annually in consultation with families, children and educators	
4	New educators, students and volunteers will be required to sign acknowledgment that they read and understand the Service *Code of Conduct Staff Acknowledgement*	

5	The approved provider and nominated supervisor will ensure a responsible person is physically present at the Service at all times that children are being educated and cared for	
6	The approved provider and nominated supervisor will ensure that volunteers and students meet any requirements for Working with Children Checks (WWCC)	
7	At no time will volunteers and/or students be left alone with a child or group of children or be included in the educator to child ratio	
8	Each educator will participate in a Performance Review every 12 months which include an opportunity to reflect on the educator's understanding of an adherence to the Code of Conduct and child safe policies and procedures	
9	A *Professional Development Plan* will be developed for each educator and reviewed every 12 months	

RECRUITMENT		
1	The approved provider, nominated supervisor and educators will review the Service's *Recruitment Policy* annually	
2	The approved provider and nominated supervisor will ensure the Child Safe Standards underpin all areas of the recruitment process	
3	All preferred candidates will undergo appropriate pre-employment checks including reference checks, WWCC, prohibition checks and where applicable, National Police criminal history checks, before an offer of employment is recommended	
4	Employees, volunteers or students that are unable to provide a copy of a validated WWCC prior to the start of engagement or employment will not be able to undertake any work-related activity within the Service	
5	WWCC records and verifications will be held for all employees, staff, students and volunteers	
6	Reference checks are conducted for each potential employee	
7	Management will ensure any notifications or concerns regarding a person's WWCC (or equivalent) are recorded and steps are taken immediately to ensure the person is not working directly with children in accordance with directions from the Social Services Regulator (SSR)	
8	The approved provider will ensure prospective employees, current employees, students or volunteers do not hold any prohibition notices, including suspension, supervision or prohibition notices or enforceable undertaking, preventing them from working with children	
9	The approved provider will ensure all prospective employees, students and volunteers complete a Prohibition Notice Declaration during engagement to confirm they are not subject to a prohibition notice.	

10	Prior to engagement or employment of any person at the Service, the approved provider will verify that the individual is not subject to a prohibition notice, via the NQA ITS	
11	Each new employee shall be subject to a Probationary Period of six (6) month	
12	Induction and orientation for new staff, students and volunteers will include relevant information on child safe practices adhering to the Child Safe Standards, Code of Conduct, strategies that identify, assess and minimise risks to children and mandatory reporting procedures	
13	An *Induction Checklist* will be completed for all new employees, students, volunteers and educators	

CHILD PROTECTION		
1	The approved provider, nominated supervisor and educators will review the Service's *Child Protection Policy* annually to ensure awareness of Child Protection practices	
2	New educators, students and volunteers will be introduced to the *Child Protection Policy and Procedure*, including mandatory reporting requirements during induction and orientation. Students and volunteers will be advised of the existence and application of current child protection law and any obligation they may have under that law	
3	The approved provider and nominated supervisor will ensure the nominated supervisor, responsible persons, staff, students and volunteers have completed approved mandatory Child Protection Training, within the prescribed timeframe, (commencing in 2026) to understand the child protection reporting process and use of the online reporting guide per state requirements	
4	The approved provider will ensure the nominated supervisor, educators, staff, volunteers and students who work with children maintain up-to-date information and training related to current child protection law and reporting obligations annually	
5	The approved provider, staff, educators, volunteers and students will complete mandatory child safety training, within the prescribed timeframe, on how to identify, understand, report, and respond to child maltreatment, abuse and harm (commencing in 2026)	
6	The approved provider will ensure that no staff, educators, volunteers or any visitors to the service engage in inappropriate conduct toward a child. Inappropriate conduct will be identified and responded to, and any allegations, suspicions or concerns of inappropriate will be identified and reported	
7	The approved provider and nominated supervisor will ensure a *Child Protection Risk Assessment* is conducted annually and reviewed following an incident involving child safety and wellbeing, including an assessment for areas of improvement	
8	Educators will introduce protection behaviours to children through educational programs. A Risk Assessment will be conducted prior to educational programs regarding protection behaviours implemented.	

9	Information regarding mandatory reporting obligations is shared with families	
10	All educators will be advised of their obligations regarding the Reportable Conduct Scheme	
11	The approved provider and nominated supervisor will ensure all records identified as relevant to child safety and wellbeing (including child sexual abuse that has or is alleged to have occurred), are: • kept for at least 45 years • clear, objective and thorough • maintained in an indexed, logical and secure manner • retained and disposed of in a consistent manner [*Note: recommendation in response to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse*]	
12	Educators, students and volunteers are advised they are required to notify the approved provider, within 72 hours of the event, or within 24 hours of becoming aware of the event, of any changes to their WWCC status, changes to their teacher registration or fit and proper status.	
13	The approved provider will notify the regulatory authority, in writing via the NQA ITS, of any reportable sexual conduct by a nominated supervisor, educator, volunteer or anyone else employed or engaged by the Service	

PHYSICAL AND ONLINE ENVIRONMENT		
The approved provider and nominated supervisor will:		
1	review the Service's *Physical Environment Policy* and *Safe Use of Digital Technologies and Online Environments Policy* annually in conjunction with children, families and educators	
2	introduce the *Physical Environment Policy* and *Safe Use of Digital Technologies and Online Environments Policy* to new educators, students and volunteers during induction and orientation	
3	require educators to adhere to the Service's *Supervision Policy* and floor plan to maintain effective supervision	
4	ensure adequate supervision will be provided when children are being transported. Consideration will be made depending on risk assessments, number, age and ability of children, visibility of children, each child's current activity	
5	ensure the minimum child ratio requirements are met at all times	
6	ensure a daily inspection of the physical premises will be undertaken before children begin to arrive. The *Opening Checklist* and *Outdoor Cleaning/Safety Checklist* will be used as the procedure to conduct these safety checks. A record of these will be kept by the Service.	

7	ensure risk assessments are completed and reviewed every 12 months to ensure risks are minimised and care taken to protect children from harm and hazards	
8	ensure risk assessments are reviewed following an incident involving child safety and wellbeing, including an assessment for areas of improvement	
9	ensure all educators and staff are informed of the *Safe Storage of Hazardous Chemicals Policy* during induction and orientation	
10	ensure the *Hazardous Chemical Register* lists hazardous chemicals used and/or stored within the Service	
11	ensure the *Emergency and Evacuation Policy* and *Procedures* are followed to ensure children are protected from harm during an emergency	
12	ensure educators follow the *Delivery of Children to and Collection from EC Service Premises Policy* to ensure children are only released to an authorised person as named on the child's enrolment form	
13	support online safety for children by adhering to the *Safe Use of Digital Technologies and Online Environments Policy*	
14	ensure management, educators, staff, visitors and volunteers are aware of and strictly adhere to legislative requirements related to taking images or videos of children, including: o adhering to the *Safe Use of Digital Technologies and Online Environments Policy* o only service-issued/approved devices are to be used when taking images or videos of children o personal electronic devices that can take images or videos (such as tablets, phones, digital cameras, smart watches, META glasses) and personal storage and file transfer media (such as SD cards, USB drives, hard drives and cloud storage) are not in the possession of any educator, staff member, visitor or volunteer while providing education and care and working directly with children o ensure educators, staff or volunteers submit a written request if seeking an exemption to use or have in their possession a personal electronic device for essential purposes o strict controls are in place for the appropriate storage and retention of images and videos in accordance with our *Record Keeping and Retention Policy*	
15	ensure the environment free is from the use of tobacco (including vaping) alcohol and illicit drugs in conjunction with the *Tobacco, Drug and Alcohol-Free Policy*	

REVIEW OF PROCEDURE			
Date procedure created	07/03/2026	To be reviewed	March 2027

Approved by	Krystle Hills	Signature	
Procedure reviewed date	Modifications/Changes		
March 2026	New procedure developed following amendments to the Child Safety and Wellbeing (Child safe environment) Policy. Existing guide: Child Safe Standards – Guide (VIC) information merged into this new procedure. Procedure developed for VIC Services		