

ST JOSEPH'S PRESCHOOL

PROVIDING A CHILD SAFE ENVIRONMENT POLICY



St Joseph's School
PORT LINCOLN
In all things love

Policy Statement

Children's wellbeing and safety are paramount at our service. All children have the right to experience quality education and care in a safe environment.

Background

The Education and Care Service National Regulations require approved providers to ensure their services have policies and procedures in place for providing a child safe environment. The aim of this policy is to ensure the safety, health and wellbeing of children through organisational culture, values and practices that embed a culture of child safety.

NQS

Element	1.1.2	Child-centred -Each child's current knowledge, strengths, ideas, culture, abilities and interests are the foundation of the program.
	1.2.3	Child directed learning - Each child's agency is promoted, enabling them to make choices and decisions that influence events and their world.
	2.2.3	Child Protection - Management, educators and staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities to identify and respond to every child at risk of abuse or neglect.
	3.2.1	Inclusive environment - Outdoor and indoor spaces are organised and adapted to support every child's participation and to engage every child in quality experiences in both built and natural environments
	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
	5.1.2	Dignity and rights of the child - The dignity and rights of every child are maintained
	5.2.1	Collaborative learning - Children are supported to collaborate, learn from and help each other.
	6.1.3	Families are supported - Current information is available to families about the service and relevant community services and resources to support parenting and family wellbeing.
	7.2.1	Continuous improvement - There is an effective self-assessment and quality improvement process in place.
	7.2.3	Development of professionals - Educators, co-ordinators and staff members' performance is regularly evaluated and individual plans are in place to support learning and development

National Law

Section	162A	Persons in day-to-day charge and nominated supervisors to have child protection training
	165	Offence to inadequately supervise children



	166	Offence to use inappropriate discipline
	167	Offence relating to protection of children from harm and hazards
	169	Offence relating to staffing arrangements
	170	Offence relating to unauthorised persons on education and care service premises
	173	Offence to fail to notify certain circumstances to Regulatory Authority
	174	Offence to fail to notify certain information to Regulatory Authority
	175	Offence relating to requirement to keep enrolment and other documents

National Regulations

Reg	12	Meaning of serious incident
	82	Tobacco, drug and alcohol-free environment
	84	Awareness of child protection law
	87	Incident, injury, trauma and illness record
	100	Risk assessment must be conducted before excursion
	102B	Transport risk assessment must be conducted before service transports child
	103	Premises, furniture and equipment to be safe, clean and in good repair
	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
	145	Staff record
	146	Nominated Supervisor
	147	Staff members
	165	Record of visitors
	166	Children not to be alone with visitors
	167	Record of service's compliance
	168	Education and care services must have policies and procedures
	168(2)(h)	Education and care services must have policies and procedures in relation to providing a child safe environment
	170	Policies and procedures to be followed
	171	Policies and procedures to be kept available
	172	Notification of change to policies or procedures
	175(d)(e)	Prescribed information to be notified to Regulatory Authority
	177	Prescribed enrolment and other documents to be kept by approved provider



Related Policies

- Child Protection Policy
- Education, Curriculum and Learning Policy
- Educator and Management Policy
- Excursion Policy
- Governance Policy
- Grievance Policy
- Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy
- Parental Interaction and Involvement in the Service Policy
- Policy and Procedure Review Policy
- Photography Policy
- Privacy and Confidentiality Policy
- Relationships with Children Policy
- Social Media Policy
- Staffing Arrangements Policy
- Technology Usage Policy
- Tobacco, Drug and Alcohol Policy

Implementation

All educators, staff and volunteers are committed to implementing the National Child Safe Principles. The safety, health and wellbeing of children is the number one priority of all staff and volunteers who understand children's safety is a shared responsibility. We have zero tolerance for any form of harm to children and are committed to acting in children's best interests. Our policies and procedures support and inform this commitment, and our leaders regularly review staff and volunteer practices and understanding, prioritising training or taking other relevant action if required.

Our policies and procedures also support and comply with the Education and Care National Law and Regulations, and the National Quality Standard (NQS), whose guiding objective and principles outlined in section 3 include ensuring "the safety, health and wellbeing of children attending education and care services," "the rights and best interest of children are paramount," the principles of equity, inclusion and diversity underlie this Law," "that Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures are valued," and "that the role of parents and families is respected and supported." These objectives and principles are embedded in many of the Laws and Regulations which we must comply with. The Laws, Regulations and NQS elements which are particularly relevant to child safety are listed above.



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Our Providing a Child Safe Environment Policy is available to all families in our policy folder and is part of our regular policy review program.

We also display the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Responsibilities of the Principal/Nominated Supervisor

- to provide a safe preschool environment which ensures that children are protected
- to ensure staff understand the definitions of child abuse and neglect and carry out their legal obligations, responsibilities and correct procedures when notifying suspicion of child abuse and neglect
- to support staff directly involved with the handling of disclosure and notification
- to ensure in consultation with the School Board and parents that policies and organisational procedures provide children with a safe preschool environment
- to ensure that the way staff and children relate is based on mutual respect and consideration
- to ensure that behavioural practices respect the dignity of children
- to ensure knowledge of and compliance with custody orders and restraining orders
- to ensure appropriate confidentiality of information concerning children in cases of suspected abuse or neglect
- to securely store all records of Mandatory Notification

Responsibilities of Staff

- to treat children with dignity and respect, to act with propriety, provide duty of care and protect children in their care
- to participate in training and development opportunities which provide knowledge and skills in mandatory notification
- to recognise that they are a mandated notifier and therefore required to report suspected child abuse to the Child Abuse Report Line on 131478 or via the online reporting system eCARL
- to inform and work with the Principal in completing a Mandatory Notification unless the Principal is under suspicion
- to comply with the Documenting Notifications Standards
- to provide a physically and psychologically safe environment for children
- to teach students skills and understanding which will empower them to achieve and maintain personal safety
- to assist students to develop positive, responsible and caring attitudes and behaviours which recognise the rights of all people to be safe and free from both harassment and abuse

Physical Environment

Children's safety is embedded in our day-to-day practices. We ensure effective and adequate supervision is provided to children at all times. Educators will employ 'active supervision' strategies within the service environment and when participating in excursions or transporting children. Consideration will be made for the different ages and abilities of children and the activities that may require different levels of supervision.



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Staff understand the physical environment can provide opportunities for harm to occur and implement supervision practices that reduce this risk. Where possible, physical environments are altered to increase natural lines of sight while respecting a child's right to privacy, and their need for risky play, as outlined in Sandseter's categories of risky play. There is an increased focus on higher-risk activities such as during events, transitions and excursions. This is reflected in our risk assessments, including those required under the National Regulations prior to conducting excursions or transporting children.

Through conducting risk assessments, we assess and manage risks in the physical environment collaborating with children to develop behaviour guidelines for 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 will complete daily checklists to assist and record inspections of the physical environment where foreseeable risks may be evident and cause harm or injury to a child. Any findings that require attention will be either dealt with immediately or submitted into the maintenance data log, located on the school intranet, depending on priority.

Emergency and Evacuation Procedures

Management 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 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, in conjunction with the school.

Online Safety

Our Preschool is committed to creating and maintaining a safe online environment with support and collaboration with staff, families and community. Management ensures anti-virus and internet security systems are installed to block access to unsuitable web sites, newsgroups and chat rooms.

Written authorisation is requested as part of the enrolment process for children to have their photo taken and published as part of promotional marketing. The identity of a child is not published on any platform without consent.

Only educational software programs and apps that have appropriate content and have been examined prior to allowing their use are used in the Preschool. Children are always supervised using any technology.



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Storage of Hazardous Substances

Our Preschool will provide a safe environment where necessary chemical and hazardous equipment are safely stored away from children and handled appropriately.

Management and educators will keep a register of hazardous chemicals used at the Preschool, including relevant Safety Data Sheets (SDS).

Equipment and Furniture Maintenance

To ensure a child safe environment free from hazards, we have 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 Preschool 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 Preschool to ensure that all toys, furniture and equipment are clean and in good condition and working order.

Guidelines for Implementation

We seek to develop education and care practices which:

- ensure a safe environment for children at St Joseph's Preschool, including regular surveillance of indoor and outdoor spaces to identify and rectify any risks, hazards, maintenance, hygienic or security issues
- support children to gain confidence in their identity and develop their capabilities and strengths
- respect the diverse and special needs of children
- are sensitive and responsive to changes in behaviour which may be indicative of abuse

Provide training and development opportunities to:

- ensure staff understand their obligations and responsibilities as mandated notifiers and develop appropriate procedures
- provide the skills, knowledge and understanding of personal safety programs for students and enable them to continually build on this

Develop partnerships between the staff, parents and the community which:

- promote safe environments for our children wherever they are
- are based on effective communication
- promote community understanding of personal safety programs
- acknowledge and provide for diversity



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Develop mandatory reporting systems which are clear and understood by all staff so that they:

- are provided with clear written information relevant to their employment
- know about support mechanisms in the school
- are able to participate in training and development

Provide programs which support children to:

- develop knowledge, skills and understanding to achieve and maintain personal safety
- participate in a range of programs which respond to their individual needs and interests
- develop positive, responsible and caring attitudes and behaviours which recognise the rights of all people to be safe and free from both harassment and abuse

Review policy practices and procedures so that:

- mandated reporting staff training records are kept and regularly updated
- support mechanisms for preschool personnel notifying are regularly communicated
- Preschool personnel are informed of any changes to legislation, policy and procedures

Any questions about child safety or this Policy may be directed to a Responsible Person at the service (the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor or Person in Day to Day Charge). If employees, volunteers and families have concerns about the Approved Provider or Nominated Supervisor's ability to provide or maintain a child safe environment, they should first discuss their concerns with another Responsible Person who will investigate and if substantiated contact the Child Abuse Report Line (CARL) on 131 478, the SA Regulatory Authority on 1800 882 413, or the Police on 000 for advice. Employees, volunteers and families may contact these organisations directly if they believe the Responsible Person has not taken appropriate action.

Source

- Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Act 2016
- Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017
- Early Years Learning Framework
- Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations
- National Principles for Child Safe Organisations
- National Quality Standard UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by Management, Employees, Families and Interested Parties