



Child Safe Environment Policy

Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety

Policy Statement

The National Principles for Child Safe Organisations has been endorsed by all governments in Australia, which give effect to law and regulations relating to the Child Safe Standards and provide guidance on key actions and performance measures in implementing the standards.

Tathra Preschool has a moral and legal responsibility to ensure that the rights and best interests of the child are paramount and that we will provide training, resources, information, and guidance to support this in order to:

- Ensure that the health, safety, and wellbeing of children at the preschool is protected at all times.
- Ensure that people educating and caring for children at the preschool act in the best interests of the child.
- Protect and advocate the rights of all children to feel safe, and be safe, always.
- Maintain a culture in which children's rights are respected.
- Encourage active participation from families at Tathra Preschool, supporting a partnership approach and shared responsibility for children's health, safety, wellbeing, and development.
- Ensure the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations are implemented and regularly reviewed.

Policy Goals

All children have the right to experience quality education and care in an environment that promotes opportunities to thrive with adults who safeguard and advocate for their health, safety, security, and wellbeing including the right to:

- Express their views and wishes about matters affecting their lives and to have those views appropriately considered by adults.
 - Feel and be safe in their interactions with adults and other children and young people.
 - Understand, as early as possible, what is meant by 'feeling and being safe'.
 - The 10 Child Safe Standards guide a culture which adopts strategies and acts to put the interests of children first, to keep them safe from harm.
1. Child safety is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture.
 2. Children participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.
 3. Families and communities are informed and involved.
 4. Equity is upheld and diverse needs are taken into account.
 5. People working with children are suitable and supported.
 6. Processes to respond to complaints of child abuse are child focused.
 7. Staff are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children safe through continual education and training.
 8. Physical and online environments minimise the opportunity for abuse to occur.
 9. Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is continuously reviewed and improved.
 10. Policies and procedures document how the organisation is child safe.

Strategies; How will it be done?

The Physical Environment

In order to promote a safe physical environment, Tathra Preschool will:

- Ensure all equipment and materials used at the preschool meet relevant Australian safety standards.

- Conduct daily checks of the environment and equipment.
- Remove, repair, or replace worn and damaged buildings, structures equipment and resources which may provide a safety risk for children in a timely manner.
- Maintain an equipment maintenance schedule.
- Ensure learning environments are established that provide appropriate child groupings, sufficient space, and include carefully chosen and well-maintained resources and equipment.
- Organise indoor and outdoor spaces to ensure risks to the health and safety are minimised.
- Conduct a risk assessment of the service environment biannually to determine any risks to children’s health and safety.
- Analyse and evaluate the risks associated with identified hazards.
- Determine appropriate ways to eliminate or control identified hazards.
- Review risk assessments after any serious incident report is made to the Regulatory Authority.
- Ensure smoking is banned within the grounds of, and within the legislated distance for our state/territory of any entrance of an enclosed public space.
- Ensure secure storage of hazardous products including chemicals and medications.

Digital Technologies and the Online Environment

All stakeholders have a responsibility to ensure online safety, as their children grow up in digital contexts. Children will be provided information about online safety. Tathra Preschool will following the four fundamental principles and recommended practices:

1. Young children’s relationships with adults and peers’ matter in digital contexts
2. Young children’s health and wellbeing is actively supported in digital contexts.
3. Young children’s citizenship is upheld and fostered in digital contexts .
4. Play and pedagogy promotes young children’s exploration, social interaction, collaboration and learning in digital contexts.

(Source: Early Childhood Australia: Statement on young children and digital technologies)

Staffing and Supervision

- Ensure that sufficient numbers of educators are employed to ensure adequate supervision of children at all times.
- Ensure screening and suitability of staff, volunteers as per the legislation and policy at the time of employment and as part of an ongoing process.
- Respond proactively to emerging staff performance concerns.
- Working with vulnerable people/children check details must be included on volunteer staff records.
- Ensure rigorous induction processes for staff, volunteers and students that embed Child Safe Standards and practices of a child safe culture.

Child Protection

- Ensure that all staff including educators, students and volunteers have current working with children checks as required by state or territory specific legislation.
- Ensure that all staff are given information and/or training about child protection law and any obligations they have under that law.
- All staff should be familiar with the Child Protection Policy.
- All educators and volunteers of Tathra Preschool are required to familiarise themselves with child protection legislation in their state/territory and take appropriate measures according to state/territory specific protocols if they have reasonable grounds to suspect a child or young person is at risk of significant harm and have current concern about the safety, welfare or wellbeing of a child or young person.
- *Complaint handling policies* include policies and procedures for managing complaints about children exhibiting harmful sexual behaviours.
- *Complaint handling policies* and procedures are child focussed, in accordance with the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations
- Staff will undertake regular training to effectively:
 - » Make appropriate responses to all disclosures of abuse and any allegation of abuse against staff members of the service.
 - » Understand the responsibilities and processes as a mandatory reporter.

- » Be able to recognise the factors that increase a child's vulnerability to maltreatment.
- » Be aware of the vulnerabilities which may indicate a need to assess, monitor or curtail the behaviour of individuals in relation to children and young people within organisations.
- » Staff will implement procedures for releasing children only into the care of authorised persons.

Preventing other harms and hazards

Tathra Preschool will ensure that:

- At a governance level, Approved Providers/Nominated Supervisors identify and manage risk that align with the Child Safe Standards. (See risk management tips from the Office of the Children's Guardian) [Resources | Office of the Children's Guardian \(nsw.gov.au\)](https://www.octg.nsw.gov.au/resources)
- Risk assessments are conducted for excursions and transportation provided or arranged by the service in conjunction with the service's Excursion policy.
- Risk minimisation practices are in place for the management of medical conditions in conjunction with the service's Dealing with Medical Conditions policy.
- Emergency evacuation plans specific to the service are implemented in conjunction with the service's Emergency and Evacuation policy.
- If staff consume hot drinks, they are made and consumed away from children.
- If a staff member works alone, careful consideration has been given to the ability of that individual to meet regulatory and child protection requirements.

Roles and Responsibilities

Approved Provider will:

- Ensure the service operates in line with the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations with regard to the delivery and collection of children at all times.

- Ensure all staff have access to relevant professional development.
- Ensure that the Nominated Supervisor and staff members at the service who work with children are advised of current child protection legislation, its application, and any obligations that they may have under that law (Regulation 84).

Nominated Supervisor will:

- Ensure screening and suitability processes are maintained to meet policy and legislated requirements.
- Ensure Child Safe standards are embedded within the Preschool organisation .
- Identify and provide appropriate resources and training to assist staff, contractors, visitors, volunteers, and students to implement this policy (refer to Sources).
- Keep up to date and complying with any relevant changes in legislation and practices in relation to this policy.
- Cooperate with other services and/or professionals in the best interests of children and their families.
- Ensure that families are made aware of support services available to them and of the assistance these services can provide.
- Ensure that all staff who work with children are supported to implement this policy in the service.
- Protect the rights of children and families and encourage their participation in decision-making at the service.

Educators will:

- Act in accordance with the obligations outlined in this policy and be familiar with the 10 Child Safe Standards.

- Raise concerns when barriers or threats to the protection of children and young people's safety and wellbeing are identified, including through the conduct of other adults at the site/service.
- Keep up to date and comply with any relevant changes in legislation and practices in relation to this policy.
- Follow all record keeping requirements.
- Undertake appropriate training and education on child protection.
- Identify any potential for risk and harm to a child at the service. Develop and implement effective prevention strategies in consultation with the approved provider and the nominated supervisor.
- Co-operate with other services and/or professionals in the best interests of children and their families.
- Inform families of support services available to them, and of the assistance these services can provide.
- Ensure that no child is left alone (or is out of sight) with a contractor, visitor, volunteer, student or parent/guardian at the service.
- Implement the procedures for reporting suspected child abuse.
- Notify the nominated supervisor or the approved provider immediately on becoming aware of any concerns, complaints or allegations regarding the health, safety and welfare of a child at the service.
- Offer support to the child and their family, and to other staff in response to concerns or reports relating to the health, safety and wellbeing of a child at the service.
- Maintain confidentiality at all times.
- Adhere to all preschool policies.

Families will:

- Read and comply with this policy.
- Report any concerns, including in relation to potential for child abuse, to the Nominated Supervisor.

Monitor, Evaluation and Review

This policy will be monitored to ensure compliance with legislative requirements and unless deemed necessary through the identification of practice gaps, the preschool will review this Policy every 3 years. Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is continuously reviewed and improved.

Families and staff are essential stakeholders in the policy review process and will be given opportunity and encouragement to be actively involved.

In accordance with R. 172 of the Education and Care Services National Regulations, the preschool will ensure that families of children enrolled at the preschool are notified at least 14 days before making any change to a policy or procedure that may have significant impact on the provision of education and care to any child enrolled at the Preschool; a family's ability to utilise the preschool; the fees charged or the way in which fees are collected

Relevant Legislation

- Education and Care Services National Law: Sections 162A, 165, 166, 167
- Education and Care Services National Regulations: Regulations 82, 83, 84, 99, 103, 115, 122, 123, 158-159, 165, 168(2)(h), 175, 176
- Australian Child Protection Legislation
<https://aifs.gov.au/cfca/publications/australian-child-protection-legislation>
- Australian Privacy Principles – www.oaic.gov.au
- Privacy Act 1988 (Privacy Act) – www.oaic.gov.au/law/act

Guidelines, Standards and Frameworks

- National Quality Standard, Quality Area 2: Children’s Health and Safety – Standard 2.2
- National Quality Standard, Quality Area 3: Physical Environment – Standard 3.1, 3.2
- National Quality Standard, Quality Area 7: Governance and Leadership – Standard 7.1, 7.2
- Office Of the Children’s Guardian <https://ocg.nsw.gov.au/resources>
- Download the [**Guide to the Child Safe Standards for early childhood education and care and outside school hours care services \(PDF, 7.5MB\)**](#)
- Quality Area 2: Children’s Health and Safety

Sources and References

- Office of the Australian Information Commissioner – www.oaic.gov.au
- Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) – www.acecqa.gov.au
- ACECQA’s Guide to the National Quality Framework
- Australian Institute of Family Studies: Pre-employment screening: Working With Children Checks and Police Checks - <https://aifs.gov.au/cfca/publications/pre-employment-screening-working-children-checks-and-police-checks>
- Childsafety Australia – www.childsafetyaustralia.com.au
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child – www.unicef.org.au
- The Supporting young children’s rights: Statement of intent (2015-2018) – www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au
- Australian Human Rights Commission – www.humanrights.gov.au
- Australian Childhood Foundation – www.childhood.org.au

Related Policies

- Child protection
- Incidents, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy
- First Aid Policy
- Confidentiality and Privacy policy
- Enrolment and Orientation

- Excursions
- Grievances and Complaints Policy
- Health Hygiene and Infection Control
- Medication and Medical Conditions
- Guiding Children’s Behaviour Policy
- Staff Induction Policy
- Staff Appraisal Policy
- Staff Immunisation Policy
- Interaction with Children Policy
- Arrivals and Departures Policy
- First Aid Policy
- Emergency Procedures Policy
- Sun Protection Policy
- Water Safety Policy
- Incident, Injury, Trauma, Illness Policy
- Work Health and Safety Policy
- Nutrition Policy
- Staff, Student, Volunteer Induction Policy

Updated

April 2024

Review Date

2027 or when procedure, practice or legislation changes.