

Acorn Child Care Centres Policies and Procedures



Child Protection and Risk Management

Background

Child abuse and neglect consist of an act of commission or omission that endangers or impairs a child's physical or emotional health and development.

Given the high number of children in early childhood education and care services, it is highly likely that staff will encounter a child they suspect has experienced harm or neglect. It is also possible that staff may encounter a child they suspect has been harmed by a person at the Service.

In Queensland, legislation requires staff to report suspected harm to a child by a person in the Service. While staff are not mandated to report suspected harm to children that occurs to the child while the child is not at the Service, they are encouraged to uphold the wellbeing and safety of children at all times by seeking immediate support from appropriate staff within the Service and/or from the Department of Child Safety/Police.

Policy statement

The Service seeks to create a safe and supportive environment for the children who attend the Service and for their families. To this end, the Service ensures that processes are in place to identify harm or suspected harm to a child and that the Service's response is lawful, professional and immediate. The Policy is informed by the Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian's *Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy Tool (n.d.)*.

Strategies and practices

- The Service is committed to providing a safe and supportive environment for children where adults treat them with understanding, dignity and respect at all times, and listen to their concerns. The Service's Statement of Commitment is displayed in the foyer. QA 4.2.1, 5.2.3
- The Service has developed and implemented its own Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy for interactions with children. The Code applies to staff, educators, students, volunteers and visitors to the Service, and each is given a copy of the Code. QA 2.3.4
- This Policy is explained to all staff, educators, students and volunteers before they commence at the Service. At that time, they are given the opportunity to ask any questions needed to clarify their understanding. They are then asked to sign the Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy. The original signed is kept on the staff file and a signed copy is returned to the staff member. QA 2.3.4, 7.1.2
- Child protection and child safety information is displayed on notice boards, and brochures are made available to parents, staff and other interested parties. QA 2.3.4
- The Service has clear procedures for recruiting, selecting and screening suitably qualified and experienced staff. No one commences at the Service without producing a current Blue Card or evidence that an application for the card is currently being processed. Staff who have not applied through the Service, but through another organisation, must complete an Authorisation to Confirm a Valid Card/Application. The Nominated Supervisor maintains a

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Staff Summary Sheet which clearly indicates the expiry dates of Blue Cards for all staff members. Staff are informed that it is an offence not to notify the Service of any change in the criminal history or police information they have previously provided to the Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian in obtaining their card. QA 4.2.1, 7.1.5, 7.3.2

- The Nominated Supervisor interviews all students and volunteers before agreeing to their placement at the Service, and records their Blue Card details. Students and volunteers are informed that it is an offence not to notify the Service of any change in the criminal history or police information they have previously provided to the Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian in obtaining their card. QA 2.3.4, 7.1.2, 7.1.5
- The Service provides educators with ongoing professional development in child protection, and the topic is regularly discussed in team meetings. Each year, Child Safety Officers from the Department of Communities (Child Safety Services) and/or Police Officers are invited to speak at team meetings on issues relating to child protection. Information provided includes Abuse – Types and Indicators. Training needs are documented in a Training and Study Record – Educator, and monitored. QA 2.3.4, 7.2.2
- Any suspicion of harm to a child occurring at the Service is to be immediately reported to the Nominated Supervisor. If the Nominated Supervisor is the subject of the complaint, the report may be made to the Approved Provider or directly to the Regulatory Authority. The Nominated Supervisor/Approved Provider will report the incident to the Regulatory Authority. Reasonable grounds for suspecting harm include:
 - You witness the harm
 - A child tells you they have been harmed by someone at the Service
 - Someone else (e.g. another child, staff member, parent, outside person) tells you that a child has been harmed by a person at the Service. QA 2.3.4
- The Service has developed Harm – Guidelines for Handling Disclosure to help staff, educators, students and volunteers, when faced with a disclosure from a child, to respond professionally and in the best interests of the child. Any disclosure of harm must be immediately reported to the Nominated Supervisor who will ensure that correct procedures are followed. QA 2.3.4
- Staff who suspect that a child may be experiencing harm or neglect when not at the Service are to follow the Harm – Guidelines for Handling a Suspicion. These Guidelines include immediately informing the Nominated Supervisor, completing an Expression of Concern Form, and maintaining confidentiality as detailed in the Service's Confidentiality Agreement. QA 2.3.4
- Educators intentionally teach children Protective Behaviours, after informing parents. QA 2.3.4
- The Service involves staff, educators and parents when compiling the Risk Management Plan for High Risk Activity or Special Event. QA 2.3.4

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- Any breach of this Child Protection and Risk Management Policy – action or inaction – will be investigated according to the Breach Management Plan. QA 2.3.4
- The Service’s *Child Protection and Risk Management Strategy Policy* is reviewed at least annually. As part of the annual review, a Child Protection and Risk Management Strategy – Survey is distributed to staff, educators and parents for their contributions. QA 7.2.3

Additional safe practices for babies

- . No additional practices required.

Responsibilities of parents

- To report any suspicion of harm to a child occurring at the Service to the Nominated Supervisor immediately.

Links to other policies

- Educator Professionalism and Ethics Policy
- Privacy and Confidentiality Policy
- Relationships with Children Policy
- Staffing Policy
- Students, Volunteers and Visitors Policy

Links Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011, National Quality Standard 2011

Regs	84	Awareness of child protection law
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QA	2.3.4	Educators, coordinators and staff members are aware of their roles and responsibilities to respond to every child at risk of abuse or neglect
	4.2.1	Professional standards guide practice, interactions and relationships
	5.2.3	The dignity and rights of every child are maintained at all times
	7.1.2	The induction of educators, co-ordinators and staff members is comprehensive
	7.1.5	Adults working with children and those engaged in management of the service or residing on the premises are fit and proper
	7.2.2	The performance of educators, co-ordinators and staff members is evaluated and individual development plans are in place to support performance improvement
	7.2.3	An effective self-assessment and quality process is in place

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	7.3.2	Administrative systems are established and maintained to ensure the effective operation of the service
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Sources

- Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian. (2013). *Authorisation to confirm a valid card/application*. <http://www.ccypcg.qld.gov.au/pdf/bluecard/forms/13-849-031-Authorise-to-confirm-valid-card-MAY13.pdf> accessed 21 November 13
- Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian. (n.d.). *Creating safe and supportive service environments for children and young people: Child Management and Risk Strategy Toolkit*. <http://www.ccypcg.qld.gov.au/pdf/bluecard/rmst/RMS-toolkit-update-081012.pdf> accessed 21 November 2013
- Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian. (2012). *Your obligations*. <http://www.ccypcg.qld.gov.au/bluecard/employees/yourobligations.html> accessed 21 November 2013
- Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian. (2011). *Do I need a blue card or exemption card*. <http://www.ccypcg.qld.gov.au/bluecard/volunteers/doineedbluecard.html> accessed 13 June 2013
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011.
- Fraser, E. (2005). *Protecting children from harm: The Blue card*. http://www.ccypcg.qld.gov.au/pdf/publications/speeches/speeches_05/Ministerial-Fellowship.pdf accessed 21 November 2013
- Guide to the National Quality Standard 2011
- NAPCAN. (n.d.). *Listening to children*. <http://napcan.org.au/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/listeningtochildren.pdf> accessed 21 November 2013

Further reading and useful websites

- Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian – <http://www.ccypcg.qld.gov.au/index.aspx>
- Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services – Child Safety Services. (2013). *Child safety service centre*. <http://www.communities.qld.gov.au/childsafety/about-us/contact-us> accessed 21 November 2013

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- Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services (Child Safety Services) – <http://www.communities.qld.gov.au/childsafety/child-safety-services>
- Office of the Australian Information Commissioner – <http://www.oaic.gov.au/>
- Queensland Police Service – <http://www.police.qld.gov.au/>

15/03/2016							
15/04/2017							
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