



Child Safe Environment Policy

Policy first issued	16 th November 2016
Current review date	19 th July 2023
Personnel responsible	Childcare Operations

NQS 2 Children's Health and Safety

NQS

QA 2	2.2.3	Management, educators and staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities to identify and respond to every child at risk of abuse or neglect.
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National Regulations

Regs	84	Awareness of child protection law
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Aim

The Eltham College Foundation Ltd and our Little Flyers Learning Centres are committed to child safety. We want the children in our care to be safe, happy and empowered. We support and respect all children, as well as our staff and volunteers.

Related Policies

Additional Needs Policy
Child Protection Policy
Educator and Management Policy
Staff Induction Policy
Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy
Social Media Policy
Staffing Arrangements Policy
Technology Usage Policy

Centre Values

- Little Flyers is committed to the safety, participation and empowerment of all children.
- We have zero tolerance of child abuse, and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated very seriously and consistently with our robust policies and procedures.
- We have legal and moral obligations to contact authorities when we are worried about a child's safety, which we follow rigorously.
- Little Flyers is committed to preventing child abuse and identifying risks early, and removing and reducing these risks.
- We have excellent human resources and recruitment practices for all staff and volunteers.
- Little Flyers is committed to regularly training and educating our staff and volunteers on child abuse risks.
- We support and respect all students, as well as our staff and volunteers. We are committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, the cultural safety of children from culturally and / or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for children with a disability.
- We have specific policies, procedures and training in place that support our leadership team, staff and volunteers to achieve these commitments.
- If you believe a child is at immediate risk of abuse phone 000.

Children

This policy is intended to empower children who are vital and active participants at all Little Flyers Learning Centres. We involve them when making decisions, especially about matters that directly affect them. We listen to their views and respect what they have to say.

We promote diversity and tolerance, and people from all walks of life and cultural backgrounds are welcome. In particular, we;

- Promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children
- Promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children from culturally and / or linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- Ensure that children with a disability are safe and can participate equally.

Staff and Volunteers

This policy guides our staff and volunteers on how to behave with children attending our Little Flyers Learning Centres. All of our staff and volunteers must agree to abide by our code of conduct which specifies the standards of conduct required when working with students. All staff and volunteers, as well as students and their families, are given the opportunity to contribute to the development of the code of conduct. Safety information and policy requirements regarding a child safe environment are included in our induction and orientation process.

Professional Learning and Supervision

Professional learning and supervision is important to ensure that everyone at our Little Flyers Learning Centres understands that child safety is everyone's responsibility.

Our culture aims for all staff and volunteers (in addition to parents / carers and children) to feel confident and comfortable in discussing any allegations of child abuse or child safety concerns. Staff and volunteers are trained to identify, assess, and minimise risks of child abuse and to detect potential signs of child abuse.

We also support our staff and volunteers through ongoing supervision to:

- Develop their skills to protect children from abuse
- Promote the cultural safety of the Aboriginal children, the cultural safety of children from linguistically and / or diverse backgrounds, and the safety of children with a disability.

New employees and volunteers will be supervised regularly to ensure they understand our organisation's commitment to child safety and that everyone has a role to play in protecting children from abuse, as well as checking that their behaviour towards children is safe and appropriate (please refer to our 'Code of Conduct' for further detail). Any inappropriate behaviour will be reported through appropriate channels, including the Department of Health and Human Services and Victoria Police, depending on the severity and urgency of the matter.

Recruitment

- We take all reasonable steps to employ skilled people to work with the children in our care. We develop selection criteria and advertisements which clearly demonstrate our commitment to child safety and an awareness of our social and legislative responsibilities. Little Flyers Learning Centres understand that when recruiting staff and volunteers we have ethical, as well as legislative obligations.
- We actively encourage applications from Aboriginal people, people from culturally and / or linguistically diverse backgrounds and people with a disability.
- All people engaged in child-related work, including volunteers, are required to hold a Working with Children Check and to provide evidence of this.
- We carry out reference checks and, where appropriate, police record checks to ensure that we are recruiting the right people. Police record checks are used only for the purposes of recruitment and are discarded after the

recruitment process is complete. We do retain our own records (but not the actual criminal record) if an applicant's criminal history affected our decision making process.

- If during the recruitment process a person's records indicate a criminal history then the person will be given the opportunity to provide further information and context.
- 100 points of identification is required for all people engaged in child-related work, including volunteers (Appendix A).

Fair Procedures for Personnel

The safety and wellbeing of children is our primary concern. We are also fair and just to personnel. The decisions we make when recruiting, assessing incidents, and undertaking disciplinary action will always be thorough, transparent, and based on evidence.

We record all allegations of abuse and safety concerns using our incident reporting form, including investigation updates. All records are securely stored.

If an allegation of abuse or a safety concern is raised, we provide updates to children and families on progress and any actions we take as an organisation.

Privacy

All personal information considered or recorded will respect the privacy of the individuals involved, whether they be staff, volunteers, parents or children in our care, unless there is a risk to someone's safety. We have safeguards and practices in place to ensure any personal information is protected. Everyone is entitled to know how this information is recorded, what will be done with it and who will have access to it.

Legislative Responsibilities

Our Centres take our legal responsibilities seriously, including:

- Failure to disclose: Reporting child sexual abuse is a community-wide responsibility. All adults in Victoria who have a reasonable belief that an adult has committed a sexual offence against a child under 16 have an obligation to report that information to the police.
- Failure to protect: People of authority in our organisation will commit an offence if they know of a substantial risk of child sexual abuse and have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk but negligently fail to do so.
- Any personnel who are mandatory reporters must comply with their duties.

Risk Management

In Victoria, organisations are required to protect children when a risk is identified (see information about failure to protect above). In addition to general occupational health and safety risks, we proactively manage risks of abuse to the children in our care.

We have risk management strategies in place to identify, assess, and take steps to minimise child abuse risks, which include risks posed by physical environments (for example, any doors that can lock), and online environments (for example, no staff or volunteer is to have contact with a child via social media).

Regular Review

This policy will be reviewed each year and following significant incidents if they occur. We will ensure that families and children have the opportunity to contribute. Where possible we will do our best to work with local Aboriginal communities, culturally and / or linguistically diverse communities and people with a disability.

Allegations, Concerns and Complaints

Our Centres take all allegations seriously and we have practices in place to investigate thoroughly and quickly. Our staff and volunteers are trained to deal appropriately with allegations.

We work to ensure all children, families, staff and volunteers know what to do and who to tell if they observe, abuse or are a victim, and if they notice inappropriate behaviour.

We all have a responsibility to report an allegation of abuse if we have a reasonable belief that an incident took place (see information about failure to disclose above).

If an adult has a reasonable belief that an incident has occurred, then they must report the incident. Factors contributing to reasonable belief may be:

- A child states they or someone they know has been abused (noting that sometimes the child may in fact be referring to themselves).
- Behaviour consistent with that of an abuse victim is observed.
- Someone else has raised a suspicion of abuse but is unwilling to report it.
- Observing suspicious behaviour.

Fair Procedures for Personnel

Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011

National Quality Standard

Victorian Child Safe Standards

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

An overview of the Victorian Child Safe Standards Department of Health and Human Services

Review

The policy will be reviewed annually. The review will be conducted by:

- Management
- Employees
- Families
- Interested Parties

Last reviewed: 19.07.2023

Date for next review: July 2024

Appendix A

Acceptable identification documents

All staff, contractors and volunteers are required to produce 100 points of identification documentation.

At least one primary identification document and one or more secondary identification documents from the list below must be provided.

Primary Identification Documents	Points
Full birth certificate (or change of name certificate)	70
Current passport	70
Passport which was not cancelled and was current within the preceding two years	70
Citizenship certificates	70
Diplomatic documents and official documents issued to refugees	70

Secondary Identification Documents	Points
Identification card issued by a tertiary education or authorised deposit taking institution (e.g. bank, credit union) where you have been a customer for at least 12 months	40
Letter from an acceptable referee who has known you for at least 12 months	40
Public service identification which includes your photograph and signature	40
Licence issued under Australian law which includes your photograph and signature (e.g. driver's licence)	40
Social security card which includes your photograph and signature	40
Mortgage documents	35
Land titles office document	35
Letter from someone who employed you within the last two years that confirms your name and address	35
Municipal Council Rates Notice	35
Credit Card statement	25
Medicare Card	25
Telephone account	25
Electoral roll compiled by the Australian Electoral Office	25
Records of public utility (e.g. gas, electricity etc.)	25
Statement from a primary, secondary or tertiary education institution that you attended in the last 10 years that confirms your name and address	25
Records from a professional or trade association (e.g. club, school, union etc.) that confirms your name and address	25