

CHILD SAFE ENVIRONMENT POLICY

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC, 1989) 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. Children have the right to be protected from harm, violence, abuse or neglect. When working with children and young people, it is important to understand children's rights and needs.

We are advocates for children and have a strong commitment to child safety and establishing and maintaining a child safe environment. Our Out of School Hours Care Service embeds the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2018) 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.

NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD (NQS)

QUALITY AREA 2: CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND SAFETY		
2.2	Safety	Each child is protected
2.2.1	Supervision	At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from harm and hazard.
2.2.2	Incident and emergency management	Plans to effectively manage incidents and emergencies are developed in consultation with relevant authorities, practiced and implemented.
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.
QUALITY AREA 5: RELATIONSHIPS WITH CHILDREN		
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.

NATIONAL LAWS AND REGULATIONS

EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL REGULATIONS and NATIONAL LAW (Current as of 01/10/2023)	
77	Health, hygiene and safe food practices
82	Tobacco, drug and alcohol-free environment
83	Staff members and family day care educators not to be affected by alcohol or drugs
84	Awareness of child protection law
89	First Aid Kits

93	Administration of Medication
102(A-D)	Transportation of children (risk assessments and authorisations)
103	Premises, furniture and equipment to be safe, clean and in good repair
104	Fencing
105	Furniture, materials and equipment
106	Laundry and hygiene facilities
109	Toilet and hygiene facilities
110	Ventilation and natural light
115	Facilities 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
136	First aid qualifications
155	Interactions with children
158	Children's attendance record to be kept by approved provider
162	Health information to be kept in enrolment record
165	Record of visitors
166	Children not to be alone with visitors
167	Record of service's compliance
168 (h)	Education and care services must have policies- Providing a child safe environment
170	Policies and procedures to be followed
S162 (A)	Persons in day to day charge and nominated supervisors to have child protection training
S165	Offence to inadequately supervise children
S166	Offence to use inappropriate discipline
S167	Offence relating to protection of children from harm and hazards

NSW Child Safe Standards (Current as of 06/11/2023)

NSW Child Safe Standards	
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.

PURPOSE

The Education and Care Services National Regulations outline that Approved Providers and Out of School Hours Care Service (OSHC) has a legal and ethical responsibility to provide a safe and friendly environment where all children are secure, respected, valued and encouraged to reach their full potential. Children's safety and wellbeing is paramount, and we aim to take all practical steps to minimise risk of harm, engendering a healthy and child-safe environment.

SCOPE

This policy applies to children, families, staff, management and visitors of the OSHC Service.

IMPLEMENTATION

Under the Education and Care Services National Regulations the approved provider must ensure that policies and procedures are in place for providing a child safe environment and take reasonable steps to ensure those policies and procedures are followed. (Regulation 168, Regulation 170). The National Law requires management to ensure all children being educated and cared for are adequately supervised and every reasonable precaution is taken to protect children from harm and any hazard likely to cause injury. Our focus is to build a child safe environment which is reflected in our Service policies and procedures and understood and practiced by all educators and staff.

'Child safety is everyone's responsibility.' (A guide to the Child Safe Standards. p.26. 2020)

NATIONAL PRINCIPLES FOR CHILD SAFE ORGANISATIONS

Our OSHC Service is committed to being a child safe organisation and endorses the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, placing the protection of children as a priority of our responsibilities and obligations. The Child Safe Standards recommended by the NSW Department of Education provide

guidance for our Service to ensure our policies and procedures, strategies, and attitudes ensure children's safety is paramount.

Our OSHC Service has a zero tolerance to child abuse, and we are committed to the safety, participation and empowerment of all children. We promote diversity and tolerance and aim to form equitable and positive relationships with children. We ensure children participate in decisions affecting them and listen and respect their suggestions and ideas. We respond to any concerns, disclosures, allegations or suspicions of harm.

We are dedicated in promoting cultural safety for Aboriginal children, cultural safety for children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and to providing a safe environment for children with a disability.

RECRUITMENT

Our OSHC Service maintains a rigorous and consistent recruitment, screening and selection process to ensure the best staff possible based on skills, qualifications, experience and suitability for the position available. All staff participate in robust interviews and have reference checks completed to ensure the applicant's suitability to the role, previous experiences and their commitment to child safe values and practices. All staff are provided with a comprehensive induction process which outlines our Code of Conduct, **policies, procedures, risk assessments**, identifying and responding to child abuse, grievance processes, and work health and safety.

WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECK- POLICE CHECKS

Working in conjunction with the Child Protection Act and National Regulations, the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children is paramount within our Out of School Hours Service and community. A Working with Children Check (WWCC) is a requirement for people who work in child-related work. It involves a national criminal history check and a review of findings of workplace misconduct.

Management is responsible for the periodic review and maintenance of up to date records of employees' Working with Children Check, including the Working with Children Check number and the date on which each clearance expires. Once an employee provides their WWCC clearance, management will verify the clearance to ensure that it is valid and current. The WWCC will be placed in the individual's file and continue to be updated as required.

CHILD PROTECTION- REPORTABLE CONDUCT SCHEME

Children and young people always have a right to be safe and protected. To comply with legislation and ensure a child safe environment, educators are provided with training and ongoing supervision to ensure they understand that *child safety is everyone's responsibility*.

Nominated Supervisors, Responsible persons, Coordinators, educators and other staff are mandatory reporters and must make reports if they suspect on reasonable grounds, a child is at risk of significant harm. All staff are provided with up-to-date training about child protection law and their obligations under this law and to ensure they are confident in following the reporting guidelines within NSW and adhere to our *Child Protection Policy*.

Through continual education and training, educators and staff are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children safe. Training gives educators and staff confidence to identify, respond and report child abuse.

Child protection- Allegations Against Employees

To protect children and ensure their safety, welfare and wellbeing, management is responsive to report allegations or convictions of child abuse and child related misconduct by any staff member or volunteer or contractor to the Office of the Children's Guardian (OCG) as part of the *Reportable Conduct Scheme*.

Our OSHC Service will ensure an appropriate level of confidentiality of information relating to the reportable allegations as per the Children's Guardian Act 2019. We take our legislative responsibilities as part of the Reportable Conduct Scheme seriously and will respond to any reportable allegation or conviction against employees or volunteers that may arise.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT- SUPERVISION AND SAFETY CHECKLISTS

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.

To ensure compliance with regulations, we will only include educators in the educator to child ratio who are working directly with the children and ensure a current roster and a sign on/sign off record are

available to verify this. Staff rosters and routines ensure adequate supervision of children is always provided.

Through conducting risk assessments, we assess and manage risks in the physical environment collaborating with children to develop behaviour guidelines for play including adventurous play to ensure their safety. Educators have a sound understanding of their duty of care and responsibilities in ensuring a child safe environment.

Regular safety checks maintain basic standards of safety within our OSHC Service venues. We believe that child safety is a shared responsibility at all levels within our OSHC 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.

STORAGE OF HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES

We reduce the risk of harm to children and educators by using eco-friendly products. Our OSHC Service will endeavour to provide a safe environment where necessary chemical and hazardous equipment are safely stored away from children and handled appropriately.

EQUIPMENT, FURNITURE & MAINTENANCE RECORD

There are several factors that can contribute to a hazard, such as a deprived program, insufficient supervision and dilapidated equipment. 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 venue of our OSHC Service, and all equipment and furniture used within the service are audited to ensure all aspects are safe, clean and in good repair. We understand that hazards are specific to developmental stages of children. Educators are aware that toys and equipment need to be checked to ensure they are safe and developmentally appropriate for school aged children from Kindergarten to Year 6. Regular checks occur within the OSHC Service to ensure that all toys, furniture and equipment are in good condition and working order.

RISK ASSESSMENT & RISK ASSESSMENT TOOL

It is a legislative requirement that all services implement a risk management system where they identify and manage hazards and risks within the workplace to ensure a child safe environment. The key principles of risk management include:

1. Identifying all hazards or potential hazards in the service/residence/venue
2. Assess the risk of harm or potential harm for each hazard
3. Control or manage the risk – Risk Rating Matrix
4. Monitor and improve safety – Risk Assessment Action Plan
5. Evaluate and Review

It is the responsibility of Coordinators or Responsible persons in day-to-day charge to complete a risk assessment where children's safety may be jeopardised and when organising an excursion/incursion.

Children's safety must be incorporated into everyday practice within the OSHC Service.

Common hazards which may require a risk assessment include:

- cross-infection and infectious disease
- administration of medication
- anaphylaxis procedures and management
- building and equipment (including storage)
- inadequate space for conducting activities and experiences
- hazardous chemicals
- electrical appliances
- food preparation and storage
- environmental influences such as shade, noise etc
- sun safety
- children's behaviours
- water safety
- fire equipment
- pets and/or animals
- inadequate supervision of children
- children's activities and experiences
- Work Health and Safety such as manual handling
- non-compliance risk
- hot drinks
- transportation of children (regular outing and regular transportation)
- excursions

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.

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE AUTHORISATION

Our OSHC Service prioritises children's safety at all times. We will only release children to an authorised person as named on the child's enrolment form. We request families provide current court orders, and parenting plans to ensure our records are up to date.

National Regulations require our OSHC Service to keep a record of children and visitor's arrival and departures, with the signatures of the person responsible for verifying the accuracy of the record and the identity of the person collecting the child.

Educators will work in collaboration with our *Arrival and Departure Policy* and *Student and Visitors Policy* to ensure children feel safe and secure at all times.

CODE OF CONDUCT

Management, coordinators, educators, staff, volunteers and students will adhere to our Service's Code of Conduct Policy. We will:

- provide adequate supervision of children at all times
- take reasonable action to protect children and young people for risk of harm
- ensure the service premise is free from the use of tobacco, illicit drugs and alcohol
- adhere to our *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy*
- not discriminate against any child, because of culture, race, ethnicity or disability
- be responsible for their own, and others health and safety
- be a positive role model to children
- respect children's privacy and dignity at all times
- not put children at risk of abuse- refusing food/play, making threats, exposing children to inappropriate language or material (movies, internet, photos)
- report any allegations of child abuse to the Approved Provider as mandatory reporter
- notify the approved provider and/or the regulatory authority within 24 hours of any serious incident or complaint as per the National Regulations

ONLINE SAFETY

Our OSHC Service is committed to create and maintain 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.

Our OSHC Service ensures backups of important and confidential data is made regularly and either stored securely offline, or online. Software and devices are updated regularly to avoid any breach of confidential information.

Written authorisation is requested as part of the enrolment process for children to use computers/tablets; have their photo taken and published as part of promotional marketing or on the app program used by the service. The identity of a child is not published on any platform.

Personal mobile phones are not used to take photos or video of children at the Service.

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

CONTINUOUS REVIEW

To ensure we maintain a culture of continuous improvement, we will ensure our child safe practices are regularly reviewed, evaluated and improved. We aim to ensure all educators, staff and volunteers understand and effectively implement our policies and procedures to provide a child safe environment at our OSHC Service.

We will regularly review and monitor the effectiveness of our Child Safe policies and procedures and invite children, staff members, families and communities to contribute to their development. Any updates or revisions will be communicated to all stakeholders.

FAMILIES

Our OSHC Service ensures families are always welcome and feel comfortable asking questions on how we prioritise child safety. We provide a range of opportunities for consultation and collaboration about decisions about their child's safety whilst at our Service including:

- policy and procedure review
- child protection
- allegations/grievance procedures
- sun safety
- written authorisations- parenting orders

- code of conduct
- inclusivity and supporting children with diverse needs.

Out of Bound Areas:

- **Definition of Out-of-Bound Areas:**
 - Out-of-bound areas are spaces within the premises that are not designated for children's access due to safety concerns or potential hazards.
- **Identification and Signage:**
 - Clearly mark out-of-bound areas with visible signage indicating that access is restricted to adults only. Use age-appropriate symbols or language to convey the message effectively to children.
- **Kitchen:**
 - The kitchen area is strictly off-limits to children due to various hazards such as sharp objects, hot surfaces, and potentially harmful chemicals.
 - Ensure that child-proof locks are installed on kitchen cabinets and drawers containing sharp utensils, cleaning supplies, or any other hazardous materials.
 - Educate staff and volunteers about the importance of maintaining vigilance in keeping the kitchen area inaccessible to children at all times.
- **Storage Shed:**
 - The storage shed is designated as an out-of-bound area for children due to potential risks associated with storing tools, equipment, and other items that may pose dangers such as sharp edges, heavy objects, or chemicals.
 - Implement measures to secure the storage shed with locks or barriers to prevent unauthorised access by children.
 - Regularly inspect the shed to ensure that it is properly maintained and free from any hazards that could compromise child safety.
- **Office Space:**
 - The office space is restricted to adults only to maintain confidentiality of sensitive information, ensure a conducive working environment, and prevent potential accidents involving office equipment.
 - Install child-proof locks on office doors or utilise access control systems to restrict entry to authorized personnel only.
 - Establish clear guidelines for staff members regarding the supervision of children near office areas to prevent accidental entry and ensure their safety.
- **Monitoring and Enforcement:**
 - Regularly monitor out-of-bound areas to ensure compliance with the policy and promptly address any breaches or safety concerns.
 - Conduct periodic reviews of the policy to assess its effectiveness and make necessary adjustments based on evolving safety requirements or feedback from stakeholders.
- **Staff Training and Awareness:**
 - Provide comprehensive training to staff, volunteers, and any other relevant personnel regarding the importance of maintaining out-of-bound areas, identifying potential hazards, and enforcing safety protocols.
 - Foster a culture of responsibility and accountability among all individuals involved in the care and supervision of children to prioritize their safety at all times.
- **Communication with Parents/Guardians:**
 - Communicate the policy on out-of-bound areas clearly to parents/guardians through written materials, orientation sessions, or digital platforms to ensure their understanding and cooperation.

- Encourage parents/guardians to reinforce the importance of respecting out-of-bound areas with their children and support the implementation of safety measures within the premises.

By adhering to these guidelines and maintaining a proactive approach towards ensuring child safety, we aim to create a secure environment where children can thrive and develop to their fullest potential.

Cleaning Procedures

- **Safety Precautions:**
 - Children are not to be present in rooms during cleaning activities involving mopping of floors and wiping down tables to prevent potential exposure to cleaning chemicals, burns from hot water or equipment, or slips and falls on wet surfaces.
- **Designated Cleaning Times:**
 - Schedule cleaning activities during times when children are not present in the room or designate specific times for cleaning when children are engaged in activities in other areas of the premises.
- **Educator Responsibility:**
 - Educators are responsible for ensuring that children are safely moved to designated areas away from cleaning activities before commencing any cleaning tasks.
- **Clear Communication:**
 - Clearly communicate the cleaning schedule and procedures to all staff members to ensure consistency in implementing safety measures and minimising risks to children.
- **Child Supervision:**
 - While children are relocated to other designated areas during cleaning, ensure adequate supervision by educators or staff members to maintain a safe and engaging environment for the children.
- **Use of Child-Safe Cleaning Products:**
 - Utilise child-safe cleaning products and ensure proper dilution and handling according to manufacturer instructions to minimise any risk of chemical exposure or skin irritation.
- **Proper Ventilation:**
 - Ensure proper ventilation in cleaning areas to reduce exposure to cleaning fumes and promote a healthy indoor environment for children and staff members.
- **Emergency Preparedness:**
 - Educators should be trained in emergency response procedures in case of accidental exposure to cleaning chemicals or other cleaning-related incidents involving children.
- **Regular Monitoring:**
 - Regularly monitor cleaning practices and areas to ensure compliance with safety protocols and address any potential hazards or concerns promptly.
- **Documentation and Review:**
 - Maintain records of cleaning schedules, safety procedures, and any incidents related to cleaning activities for documentation and review during internal audits or inspections.

By implementing these measures and adhering to the cleaning policy, we prioritise the safety and well-being of children in our care while maintaining a clean and hygienic environment conducive to their learning and development.

First Aid Procedures

- **First Aid Certification Requirement:**
 - All educators working with Bateau Bay Out-of-School Hours (OOSH) program are required to possess a valid and up to date first aid certification.
- **Qualification Standards:**
 - Educators hired by Bateau Bay OOSH undergo rigorous screening processes to ensure they meet the qualification standards, including possessing a recognised first aid certification.
- **Regular Refresher Courses:**
 - Bateau Bay OOSH mandates that all educators undergo annual refresher courses in first aid to maintain their competency and ensure they are equipped with the latest techniques and knowledge in responding to medical emergencies.
- **Emergency Preparedness:**
 - Educators are trained to promptly respond to medical emergencies that may arise during all activities or any other program-related events, ensuring the safety and well-being of all children under their care.
- **Immediate Assistance:**
 - In the event of an accident or injury, educators with first aid training are immediately available to provide necessary assistance, including administering first aid, contacting emergency services if required, and notifying parents or guardians.
- **Safety Culture:**
 - Bateau Bay OOSH fosters a culture of safety and preparedness by prioritising the continuous training and development of educators in first aid skills, thus creating a child-safe environment where children can thrive with confidence.
- **Documentation and Compliance:**
 - Records of educators' first aid certifications, including dates of training and expiration, are meticulously maintained to ensure compliance with regulatory standards and to facilitate timely renewal of certifications.
- **Regular Review and Updates:**
 - Bateau Bay OOSH conducts regular reviews of its first aid training policies and procedures to identify areas for improvement and ensure alignment with best practices in child safety and emergency preparedness.

By prioritizing the training and certification of educators in first aid, Bateau Bay OOSH demonstrates its unwavering commitment to maintaining a child-safe environment where the well-being and safety of children are paramount.

REVIEW

POLICY REVIEWED BY	Charmayne Nathan	Director	12/01/2022
POLICY REVIEWED BY	Charmayne Nathan	Director	27/02/2024
POLICY REVIEWED	JANUARY 2022	NEXT REVIEW DATE	JANUARY 2023

POLICY REVIEWED	PREVIOUS MODIFICATIONS	NEXT REVIEW DATE
FEBRUARY 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rewrite policy highlighting Out of bound areas, Cleaning Procedures & First Aid Expectations. 	FEBRUARY 2026
NOVEMBER 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rewrite of policy to include National Principles for Child Safe Organisations Relevant sections added to reflect Child Safe Standards and refer to guiding policies additional sources added Additional law/regulations added- ACECQA Guidelines to Policy and Procedure document (June 2021) additional information re: supervision and rosters sources checked for currency 	NOVEMBER 2021

All staff first aid qualified

Mandatory termly meetings