

CHILD SAFE ENVIRONMENT AND WELLBEING

QUALITY AREA 2 | VERSION 3.0

PURPOSE

This policy provides a clear set of guidelines and procedures for Denzil Don Kindergarten to:

- provide a safe environment for all children which ensures their safety, health and wellbeing
- promote the cultural
- safeguarding of all children
- identify, reduce and remove risks of child maltreatment, abuse and neglect
- intervene when a child may be at risk of maltreatment, abuse and neglect
- involve children in child safety including listening to children and incorporating their views about how to provide a safe environment
- make staff aware of their legal and duty of care obligations to report child maltreatment, abuse and neglect
- responding to requests, sharing and requesting information to promote child wellbeing or safety and/or manage risk of family violence.



POLICY STATEMENT

VALUES

Denzil Don Kindergarten:

- is committed to the rights of all children to feel safe, and be safe at all times, including:
 - promoting the cultural safety and wellbeing of Aboriginal children
 - promoting the cultural safety and wellbeing of children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
 - promoting the safety and wellbeing of children with a disability
 - promoting the (right to) safety and wellbeing of trans and gender diverse children and their families in ECEC settings
 - ensuring that LGBTIQ+ families and their children feel safe and included.
- promotes the culture of child safety and wellbeing within the service
- values, respects and cares for children
- fosters opportunities for each child to participate, express their views and to learn and develop
- acts in the best interests of children and has zero tolerance of child maltreatment, abuse and neglect
- takes all reasonable steps to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of children at all times, whilst also promoting their learning and development
- actively manages the risks of maltreatment, abuse and neglect to each child, including fulfilling our duty of care and legal obligations to protect children and prevent any reasonable, foreseeable risk of injury or harm
- continuously improves the way our service identifies risks of and responds to child maltreatment, abuse and neglect and encourages reporting and improved responses to allegations of child maltreatment, abuse and neglect
- proactively sharing information with relevant authorities to promote the wellbeing and/or safety of a child or a group of children, consistent with their best interests.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all service staff, the Approved Provider, students, volunteers, parents/carers, children and others attending Denzil Don Kindergarten, including during excursions and offsite activities.

RESPONSIBILITIES	Approved provider and persons with management or control	Nominated supervisor and persons in day-to-day charge	All service staff	Parents/carers	Contractors, volunteers and students
R indicates legislation requirement					
Governance					
Ensuring that obligations under the <i>Education and Care Services National Law</i> and <i>National Regulations</i> are met	R	R	√		√
Being aware of this policy, the <i>Code of Conduct Policy</i> , <i>Privacy and Confidentiality Policy</i> and the <i>Interactions with Children Policy</i> and their ongoing obligations to behave in accordance with the policies	R	R	R	R	R
Ensuring that this policy and its processes are implemented	R	R	√		√
Ensuring there is a child safe champion/s who can lead discussions, answer questions and support child safety and wellbeing	R	√			
Ensuring that a public commitment to child safety on the service website and displayed at the service premises (<i>see Attachment 9</i>)	R	√			
Ensuring a statement of Denzil Don Kindergarten's commitment to child safety is included in all promotional material	R				
Providing leadership for an organisational culture of accountability for child safety which is open to scrutiny and continuously reviewed and improved	R	√			
Abiding by the <i>Code of Conduct Policy</i>	R	√	√	√	√
Keeping up to date and complying with any relevant changes in legislation and practices in relation to this policy	R	√	√		
Contributing to an organisational culture of child safety	R	√	√	√	√
Creating an environment where all staff feel supported and encouraged to raise concerns, making it normal to report issues	√	√			
Promoting awareness and compliance with the Child Safe Standards (<i>see Definitions</i>) when disclosing information to promote the wellbeing and safety of a child or group of children	R	√	√		
Advising staff of current legislation, and their legal and duty of care obligations around child protection (<i>Regulation 84</i>)	R	√			
Completing the Arrival Workforce Register (<i>see Sources</i>) to capture information about all relevant employees at the service (including all current full time, part time and casual) who have direct contact with children as part of their usual duties.	R	R			
Ensuring all staff, contractors, volunteers and students do not consume and/or are not under the influence of alcohol or affected by drugs (<i>Regulations 82, 83</i>) (<i>refer to Tobacco, Alcohol and other Drugs Policy</i>)	R		√		√
Reviewing this policy in consultation with stakeholders	R	√	√	√	√
Risk Assessment and Continuous Improvement					

Conducting child safe self-assessment and risk assessment (<i>see Sources</i>) annually to ensure the service is meeting their child safe obligations	R	R	√		√
Implementing risk assessments of the service environment, equipment and online environment (<i>refer to eSafety policy</i>) to ensure risks to safety, health and wellbeing are minimised (<i>National Law: Sections 167</i>) (<i>refer to Occupational Health and Safety and Injury Trauma and Illness Policy</i>)	R	R	√		√
Identifying and mitigating risks in the online and physical environments without compromising a child's right to privacy, access to information, social connections and learning opportunities (<i>refer to eSafety for Children Policy</i>)	R	√	√		√
Developing risk management strategies that focus on preventing, identifying and mitigating risks of maltreatment, abuse and neglect of children	R	R	R		R
Ensuring risk management plans (<i>see Sources</i>) list the actions the service will take to prevent or reduce each identified risk of maltreatment, abuse and neglect of children	R	R	√		√
Monitoring, reviewing and evaluating risk management plans	R	R	R		R
Undertaking child safety and wellbeing reviews and developing an action plan to maintain Child Safe Standards (<i>see Definitions</i>)	R	√	√	√	√
Ensuring all child safety and wellbeing incidents are reviewed regularly, and findings are thoroughly documented in reports and include lessons from complaints, concerns and safety incidents	R	√	√		√
Ensuring continuous improvement in the implementation of the Child Safe Standards (<i>see Definitions</i>) and promoting a service culture of accountability for child safety which is open to scrutiny and is continuously reviewed and improved (<i>see Sources</i>)	R	R	√	√	√
Recruitment, Agency Relief Staff and Volunteers					
Ensuring child safety is included in all selection criteria's, position descriptions, job advertisements, interview questions and reference checks (<i>see Attachment 2</i>)	R	R			
Conducting recruitment and induction processes for new staff and agency staff in line with this policy (<i>see Attachment 2</i>)	R				
Screening contractors (agency staff), volunteers and students in line with their roles and this policy (<i>see Attachment 3</i>)	R				
Keeping a visitors record including contact details, signatures and arrival/departure times of people accessing the kinder	R	√	√		√
Ensuring that contractors, volunteers, students, parents/carers and other visitors to the service are not left with sole supervision of individual children or groups of children	R	R	√		
Ensuring that contact is prevented or responding if it has occurred, when the service has been notified of a court order prohibiting an adult from contacting an enrolled child	R	R	√		
Validating Working with Children Clearance (<i>see Definitions</i>) or Victorian Institute of Teaching Registration before staff, contractors, volunteers and students commence working with children (<i>refer to Staffing Policy</i>)	R	√			
Training					
Ensuring all staff, volunteers and students, are aware of current child protection legislation, including mandatory reporting requirements and obligations	R	R	√		√

Providing appropriate resources and training to assist staff, contractors, volunteers and students to implement this policy (<i>see Sources</i>)	R				
Ensuring appropriate annual training on child safety, including recognising the signs and symptoms of child maltreatment, abuse and neglect, including grooming and manipulative behaviours (<i>see Definitions</i>), knowing how to respond, and understanding responsibilities and processes for reporting (<i>see Attachment 4</i>)	R	R	R		R
Ensuring systems are in place that cover all aspects of child protection training each year (<i>see Source</i>). This includes refresher training and additional professional development where needed. Different roles in the service require specific training: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New staff, volunteers and students on placement will need comprehensive induction and training Leadership group needs training on their specific responsibilities in the service Governance bodies such Committees will also need training on their responsibilities 	R	R	R		R
Developing training (<i>see Sources</i>) for staff and volunteers includes training on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the <i>Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy</i> identifying indicators of child abuse and harm how to support a person making a disclosure about harm to a child how to manage a disclosure of maltreatment, abuse or neglect by a child how to respond to issues of child safety including internal and external reporting requirements, notifying families and carers and managing risks to children how to support cultural safety. 	R	R	√		√
Ensuring the training record (meeting minutes, SRF etc) details the completion of training by staff and volunteers	R	R	√		√
Identifying the potential for child abuse at Denzil Don Kindergarten, and developing and implementing effective prevention strategies	R	R	R		
Using the NQF Child Safe Culture Guide and NQF Online Safety Guides (<i>refer to Sources</i>), including questions to guide reflection on practice to inform training and discussions with staff.	√	√			
Culturally Safe Environment					
Ensuring racism within the service is identified, confronted and not tolerated (<i>see Attachment 10</i>)	R	R	R	R	R
Actively discouraging discrimination against children, families and educators on the basis of culture, gender, age, sexuality, disability or religion.	R	R	R	√	R
Creating a culturally safe environment and meet the needs of Aboriginal children, young people and their families	R	R	R		R
Embedding service strategies that equip all staff to acknowledge and appreciate the strengths of Aboriginal culture and understand its importance to the wellbeing and safety of Aboriginal children and young people	R	R	R		R
Actively supporting and facilitating the participation and inclusion within Denzil Don Kindergarten by Aboriginal children, young people and their families	R	R	R		R

Creating and making available, a public commitment to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children (<i>see Attachment 8</i>)	R	√			
Actively supporting and encouraging a child's ability to express their culture and enjoy their cultural rights	R	√	√		√
Understanding children's diverse circumstances, and providing support and responding to those who are vulnerable	R	√	√		
Supporting the needs and rights of children with disability, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, those who are unable to live at home, who identify as LGBTIQ+ and intersex children	R	R	R		R
Child Safe Pedagogical Practices					
Developing strategies that help children to understand appropriate interactions between educators and children and know who to report to if they see something wrong or makes them feel uncomfortable (<i>refer to Interaction with Children Policy</i>)	√	√	√		√
Providing children with information and feedback about how the service keeps them safe.	√	√	√		√
Supporting children to feel comfortable to talk about body safety and to disclose concerns. Teaching them about respect, dignity and safety from an early age.	√	√	√		√
Offering children access to age-appropriate sexual abuse prevention and protective behaviours programs and to relevant related information	R	R	R		R
Informing children about their rights, including to safety, information and participation	R	R	R		R
Ensuring children have access to information, support and handling complaints through processes that are culturally safe, accessible and easy to understand (<i>refer to Complaints policy</i>)	√	√			
Ensuring that staff and volunteers are attuned to signs of harm and facilitate child-friendly ways for children to express their views, participate in decision-making and raise their concerns	R	R	R		R
Identifying local support agencies for help that is age-appropriate for children and families.	√	√	√		
Information Sharing Schemes					
Communicating to staff about their obligations under the Information Sharing Schemes (<i>see Definitions</i>), and ensuring they read and understand the <i>Privacy and Confidentiality Policy</i>	R	R	√		
Ensuring information sharing procedures abide by the <i>CISS Ministerial Guidelines</i> (<i>see Source</i>) and exercising professional judgment when determining whether the threshold for sharing is met, what information to share and with whom to share it (<i>refer to Privacy and Confidentiality Policy</i>).	R	R	R		
Ensuring confidential information is only shared with relevant authorities to the extent necessary to promote the wellbeing or safety of a child or group of children, consistent with the best interests of that child or those children	R	R	R		
Ensuring when sharing information giving precedence to the wellbeing and safety of a child or group of children over the right to privacy when sharing information under the CISS and the FVISS (<i>refer to Privacy and Confidentiality Policy</i>)	R	R	R		

Seeking and considering the views of children and their relevant family members, if appropriate, safe and reasonable to do so, when sharing information under the CISS and the FVISS (<i>see Definitions</i>)	√	√	√		
Being respectful of and having regard to a child's social, individual and cultural identity, the child's strengths and abilities and any vulnerability relevant to the child's safety or wellbeing when sharing information under the CISS and FVISS (<i>see Definitions</i>)	√	√	√		
Promoting a child's cultural safety and recognising the cultural rights and familial and community connections of children who are Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander or both when sharing information under the CISS and FVISS (<i>see Definitions</i>)	√	√	√		
Child Safe Reporting					
Taking all child safety issues seriously, respond quickly, and ensure all staff and volunteers have the resources they need	R	R			
Ensuring procedures for reporting and responding to suspected child abuse or neglect are promoted across the service and regularly reviewed in partnership with all stakeholders (<i>see Attachment 4, 5, 6 & 7</i>)	R	√	√	√	√
Following processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse (<i>see Attachment 4</i>)	R	R	R	√	R
Following processes for responding to and reporting suspected family violence (<i>refer to Family Violence Support policy</i>)	R	R	R		R
Ensuring processes for responding to and reporting are followed when there are significant concerns for the safety, health or wellbeing of a child at the service (<i>see Attachment 4, 5, 6 & 7</i>)	R	R	R		
Responding to concerns about sexual behaviours, even if they seem typical (<i>see Attachment 5</i>)	R	R	R		
Fulfilling legal obligations, including mandatory reporting and duty of care obligations	R	R	R		R
Ensuring that clear and comprehensive notes relating to incidents, disclosures and allegations of child abuse are made and retained (<i>see Attachment 7</i>)	R	R	R	√	R
Notifying the approved provider or management immediately on becoming aware of a concern, complaint or allegation regarding the safety, health and welfare of a child at Denzil Don Kindergarten		R	R	√	√
Maintaining co-operative relationships with appropriate services and/or professionals (including Child FIRST/Orange Door) (<i>see Definitions</i>) in the best interests of children and their families	√	√	√		
Offering support to the child and their family, and to staff in response to concerns or reports relating to the safety, health and wellbeing of a child at Denzil Don Kindergarten	√	√	√		
Notifying DE within 24 hours of a serious incident occurring at the service	R	√			
Notifying DE within 24 hours of becoming aware of a notifiable complaint or allegation regarding the safety, health and/or welfare of a child at the service	R	√			
Notifying DE within 24 hours of becoming aware of any incident where it is reasonably believed that physical and/or sexual abuse of a child or any allegation that sexual or physical abuse of a child has occurred or is occurring at the service	R	√			

Ensuring reporting requirements under the <i>Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Act 2004</i> are made to WorkSafe (<i>see Sources</i>) as soon as is practicable	R				
Identifying who the head of the organisation (Centre Coordinator) (<i>see Definitions</i>) is for Denzil Don Kindergarten (<i>see Sources</i>)	R				
Notifying the nominated head of organisation (<i>see Definitions</i>) to the Commission for Children and Young People and maintaining the currency of the information	R				
Ensuring staff or volunteers that are provided by an Agency are also subject to the reportable conduct scheme	R				
Notifying the Commission for Children and Young People within 3 business days of becoming aware of a reportable allegation (<i>see Definitions</i>), under the Reportable Conduct Scheme (<i>see Definitions</i>) (<i>refer to Attachment 3 & 4</i>)	R				
Investigating an allegation (subject to police clearance on criminal matters or matters involving family violence), advising the Commission for Children and Young People who is undertaking the investigation	R				
Managing the risks to children whilst undertaking the investigation	R	√	√		
Updating the Commission for Children and Young People within 30 calendar days with detailed information about the reportable allegation and any action	R				
Notifying the Commission for Children and Young People of the investigation findings and any disciplinary action taken (or the reasons no action was taken)	R				
Providing support to staff who disclose harm	R	√			
Being aware that staff may have their own trauma, so provide support like an Employee Assistance Program and inform them ahead of meetings about detailed child safety discussions.	√	√			
Maintaining confidentiality at all times (<i>refer to Privacy and Confidentiality Policy</i>)	R	R	R	√	R
Protecting the rights of children and families, and encouraging their participation in decision-making	R	√	√	√	
Physical Environment					
Ensuring the learning environment considers appropriate child groupings, sufficient space, lighting, ventilation and includes carefully chosen and well-maintained resources and equipment (<i>Regulations 103 to 110</i>)	√	√	√		√
Implementing risk assessments of the service environment and equipment to ensure risks to health and safety are minimised (<i>National Law: Sections 167</i>) (<i>refer to Occupational Health and Safety and Injury Trauma and Illness Policy</i>)	√	√	√		√
Complying with the legislated ECT/educator-to-child ratios at all times (<i>National Law: Sections 169, Regulations 123</i>) (<i>refer to Supervision of Children Policy</i>)	R	R	√		√
Ensuring children are always actively supervised (<i>Regulations 122</i>) (<i>refer to Supervision of Children Policy</i>)	R	R	√		√



PROCEDURES

Refer to [Attachment 5](#) for the following procedures:

- Making a report/referral to specialised services
- Managing a disclosure
- Responding to incidents, disclosure and suspicions of child abuse
- Reportable Conduct Scheme

Refer to [Attachment 7](#) or ACECQA- [Child Safety Incident Response Template](#) for the following procedure:

- Documentation for responding to incidents, disclosure and suspicions of child abuse



BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATION

BACKGROUND

A key requirement of the [Education and Care Service National Law Act 210](#) is to ensure every reasonable precaution is taken to protect children being educated and cared for by the service from harm and from any hazard likely to cause injury ([National Law: Section 167](#)). The approved provider must also ensure that each Nominated Supervisor and each person in day-to-day charge of the service has successfully completed the child protection training required by the Department of Education ([National Law: Section 162A](#)).

Under the [Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011](#), the approved provider of an education and care service must ensure that the nominated supervisors and staff members working with children at the service are advised of:

- the existence and application of the current child protection law
- any obligations that they may have under that law (Regulation 84).

Under the [National Quality Standards](#), management and all service staff are required to be aware of their roles and responsibilities to identify and respond to any child at risk of abuse or neglect ([element 2.2.3](#)). At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision must be provided to ensure children are protected from harm and hazard ([element 2.2.1](#)).

Approved providers operating under the [Children's Services Act 1996](#) must ensure that every reasonable precaution is taken to protect children being cared for or educated by the service from harm and from any hazard likely to cause injury ([section 107](#)).

The approved provider, all service staff, contractors, students and volunteers of early childhood services have legal and duty of care obligations to protect children under their supervision and care.

Duty of care obligations require the approved provider, person with management or control, nominated supervisor, persons in day-to-day charge, and staff to take reasonable steps to protect children from injury that is reasonably foreseeable.

In addition, organisations have an organisational duty of care to take reasonable precautions to prevent the abuse of a child by an individual associated with the organisation while the child is under its care, supervision or authority. The Victorian Reportable Conduct Scheme ([see Definitions](#)) seeks to improve organisations' responses to allegations of child abuse and neglect by their workers and volunteers. The scheme is established by the [Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 \(the Act\)](#) and relates to individuals associated with an organisation, including but not limited to committee members, employees, volunteers and contractors.

[The Children, Youth and Families Act 2005](#) provides the legislative basis for the provision of services to vulnerable children, young people and their families, and places children's best interests at the heart of decision-making and service delivery.

In line with the Victorian Government's Roadmap for Reform, Education State reforms and broader child safety initiatives, [Part 6A](#) of the [Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005](#) was proclaimed in September 2018. The Act established the Child Information Sharing (CIS) Scheme, which enables sharing of confidential information between prescribed information sharing entities ([see Definitions](#)) in a timely and effective manner to promote the wellbeing and safety of children. Alongside the CIS Scheme, the [Family Violence Protection Act 2008](#) includes the Family Violence Information Sharing (FVIS) Scheme and the Family Violence Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework, which enables information to be shared between prescribed entities to assess and manage family violence risk to children and adults. It will allow professionals working with children to gain a complete view of the children they work with, making it easier to identify wellbeing or safety needs earlier, and to act on them sooner.

Any person who forms a reasonable belief (*see Definitions*) that a child is in need of protection may report their concerns to Child Protection (*see Definitions*). ECT's are required to be registered with the Victorian Institute of Teaching and are mandatory reporters (*see Definitions*). In addition, all service staff are mandatory reporters.

All mandatory reporters must make a report to Victoria Police and/or Child Protection (*see Definitions*) as soon as practicable if, during their roles and responsibilities they form a reasonable belief that:

- A child is likely to suffer, or has suffered, significant harm because of physical abuse and/or sexual abuse, and
- The child's parents have not protected, or are unlikely protect, the child from harm of that type.

Victorian organisations that provide services to children are required under the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* to ensure that they implement compulsory minimum *Child Safe Standards* to protect children from harm. The standards aim to drive continuous improvement in the way services prevent and report child abuse and respond to allegations of child abuse. Standard 2 requires services to have a child safety and wellbeing policy or statement of commitment to child safety and wellbeing.

Three criminal offences in the *Crimes Amendment (Protection of Children) Act 2014* protect children from child abuse:

- **Failure to disclose:** All adults (not just those working with children) have a legal duty to report information about child sexual abuse to Victoria Police. The offence applies to any adult who forms a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child under 16 and fails to report that information to the Victoria Police.
- **Failure to protect:** The offence applies to people within organisations who hold positions of authority within an education and care service, such as the approved provider, person with management or control, the nominated supervisor or the person in day to day charge and who know of the substantial risk that another adult associated with the organisation may commit a sex offence and they have the power or responsibility to remove or reduce the risk but negligently fail to do so.
- **Grooming offence:** The offence targets predatory conduct by an adult with the intent of committing child sexual abuse. Conduct may include communication, including online communication, with a child under the age of 16 or their parents.

The National Model Code

The National Code Model was recently established to provide Early Childhood services guidelines for managing the taking, storing and retaining of images of children, for the protection of children.

Denzil Don Kindergarten follows all aspects of the National Model Code, at all times.

Staff are not permitted to use personal devices in the presence of children. This includes to take photos, make or take phone calls, SMS or check messages. Phones are stored in staff bags or lockers, or in the office. All classrooms have a service-owned and managed iPad for performing required work such as taking photos for documentation. All ECT's have a service-issued computer for completion of required work such as planning and documentation. Any images taken of children for documentation is backed up to the cloud and deleted as soon as their need has passed. The cloud storage is shared and accessed by all staff and is monitored by management. It is owned by Denzil Don Kindergarten.

LEGISLATION AND STANDARDS

Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

- Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)
- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)
- Child Wellbeing and Safety (Information Sharing) Amendment Regulations 2020
- Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic)
- Child Safe Standards (Vic)
- Crimes Amendment (Protection of Children) Act 2014 (Vic)
- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 (Vic): including but not limited to Sections 165, 166, 167
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 (Vic): including but not limited to Regulations 84, 85, 86, 99, 100, 101, 102, 168(2) (h), 145, 146, 149, 150
- Education Training and Reform Act 2006 (Vic) (As amended in 2014)
- Family Law Act 1975 (Cth)
- Family Violence Protection Amendment (Information Sharing) Act 2017
- National Quality Standard, including Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety
- Reportable Conduct Scheme administered by the Commission for Children and Young People (Vic)

- Worker Screening Act 2020
- Worker Screen Regulations 2021 (Vic)
- Wrongs Act 1958 (Vic)

The most current amendments to listed legislation can be found at:

Victorian Legislation – Victorian Law Today: www.legislation.vic.gov.au

Commonwealth Legislation – Federal Register of Legislation: www.legislation.gov.au



DEFINITIONS

The terms defined in this section relate specifically to this policy. For regularly used terms, refer to the Definitions file in the Policy Folder in the kindergarten office, or on our website.

Child abuse (or abuse or neglect): (in the context of this policy) refers to an act or omission by an adult that endangers or impairs a child's physical and/or emotional health or development. Child abuse can be a single incident but often takes place over time. Abuse, neglect and maltreatment (*see Definitions*) are generic terms used to describe situations in which a child may need protection. Child abuse includes any and all of the following:

Physical abuse: when a child suffers or is likely to suffer significant harm from an injury inflicted by a parent/guardian, caregiver or other adult. The injury may be inflicted intentionally or be the consequence of physical punishment or the physically aggressive treatment of a child. Physical injury and significant harm to a child can also result from neglect by a parent/guardian, caregiver or other adult. The injury may take the form of bruises, cuts, burns or fractures, poisoning, internal injuries, shaking injuries or strangulation.

Sexual abuse: when a person uses power or authority over a child, or inducements such as money or special attention, to involve the child in sexual activity. It includes a wide range of sexual behaviour from inappropriate touching/fondling of a child or exposing a child to pornography, to having sex with a child and grooming with the intent of committing child sexual abuse.

Emotional and psychological abuse: when a child's parent/carer repeatedly rejects the child or uses threats to frighten the child. This may involve name calling, put downs or continual coldness from the parent/carer to the extent that it significantly damages the child's physical, social, intellectual or emotional development.

Neglect: the failure to provide a child with the necessities of life, such as food, clothing, shelter, medical attention or supervision, to the extent that the child's health and development is, or is likely to be, significantly harmed.

Family violence: when children and young people witness or experience the chronic, repeated domination, coercion, intimidation and victimisation of one person by another through physical, sexual and/or emotional means within intimate relationships. Contrary to popular belief, witnessing episodes of violence between people they love can affect young children as much as if they were the victims of the violence. Children who witness regular acts of violence have greater emotional and behavioural problems than other children.

Racial, cultural, religious abuse: conduct that demonstrates contempt, ridicule, hatred or negativity towards a child because of their race, culture or religion. It may be overt, such as direct racial vilification or discrimination, or covert, such as demonstrating a lack of cultural respect (attitude and values) and awareness (knowledge and understanding) or failing to provide positive images about another culture.

Bullying: repeated verbal, physical, social or psychological behaviour that is harmful and involves the misuse of power by an individual or group towards one or more persons. Bullying occurs when one or more people deliberately and repeatedly upset or hurt another person, damage their property, reputation or social acceptance.

Child Information Sharing Scheme (CISS): enables Information Sharing Entities (ISE) (*see Definitions*) to share confidential information about any person to promote the wellbeing and/or safety of a child or group of children. The CISS works in conjunction with existing information sharing legislative provisions. All Victorian children from birth to 18 years of age are covered. Unborn children are only captured when there has been a report to Child First or Child Protection. Consent is not required from any person when sharing under CISS. The CISS does not affect reporting obligations created under other legislation, such as mandatory reporting obligations under the *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005*.

Child Safe Standards: promotes the safety of children, prevent child abuse, and ensure organisations have effective processes in place to respond to and report all allegations of child abuse.

Child sexual exploitation: when a child is manipulated or coerced to participate in a sexual activity in exchange for, or the promise of, an incentive. This can include incentives such as food, accommodation, clothing, drugs, alcohol, cigarette or money. It can also include incentives such as love, affection, or safety. Child sexual exploitation is a distinct form of child sexual abuse because of this notion of exchange or reward.

Child sex offender: Someone who sexually abuses children, and who may or may not have prior convictions.

Child protection: the whole-of-community approach to the prevention of harm to children. It includes strategic action for early intervention, for the protection of those considered most vulnerable and for responses to all forms of abuse.

Child protection notification: a notification to the Child Protection Service by a person who believes that a child is in need of protection.

Child Protection Service (also referred to as Child Protection): The statutory child protection service provided by the Victorian Department of Families, Fairness and Housing to protect children and young people at risk of abuse and neglect. This service also works closely with Family Services (including Child FIRST) to support the assessment and engagement of vulnerable children and families in community-based services. Code of conduct: A set of rules or practices that establish a standard of behaviour to be followed by individuals and organisations. A code of conduct defines how individuals should behave towards each other and towards other organisations and individuals in the community (*refer to Code of Conduct Policy*).

Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH): The department is responsible for child protection, prevention of family violence, housing, disability, multicultural affairs, LGBTIQ+ equality, veterans, and the offices for Women and Youth.

Disclosure: (In the context of this policy) refers to a process by which a child conveys or attempts to convey that they are being or have been sexually abused, or by which an adult conveys or attempts to convey that they were sexually abused as a child. This may take many forms and might be verbal or non-verbal. Nonverbal disclosures using painting or drawing, gesticulating, or through behavioural changes, are more common among young children and children with cognitive or communication impairments. Children may also seek to disclose sexual abuse through emotional or behavioural cues, such as heightened anxiety, withdrawal or aggression.

Failure to Disclose: Failure to disclose is when an adult does not report information they have about child sexual abuse to the police. In Victoria, all adults have a legal obligation to report this information, not doing so is a criminal offence.

Failure to Protect: Failure to protect is when someone in a position of authority (such as a staff member or leader in an organisation) knows that a child is at risk of sexual abuse and has the power to reduce or remove that risk but does not take reasonable action.

Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme (FVISS): enables the sharing of relevant information between authorised organisations to assess or manage risk of family violence.

Grooming: Grooming is when an adult builds a relationship with a child, their family, or community to gain trust for the purpose of sexually abusing the child. It often involves manipulation, secrecy, and gradual boundary-breaking to make the child (and sometimes others) less likely to recognise or report the abuse.

Head of organisation: (under the Reportable Conduct Scheme) are required to have systems in place to prevent reportable conduct within their organisation, and systems to enable staff to make reportable allegations. The head of organisation has the powers of the employer. At Denzil Don Kindergarten, the head of organisation is the Centre Coordinator.

Information Sharing Entities (ISE): are authorised to share and request relevant information under the Child Information Sharing Scheme and the Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme (the Schemes) and required to respond to requests from other ISE's. All ISE's are mandated to respond to all requests for information.

Maltreatment: (in the context of this policy) refers to physical and/or emotional mistreatment, and/or lack of care of the child. Examples include sexual abuse, the witnessing of family violence and any non-accidental injury to a child.

Mandatory reporting: the legal obligation of certain professionals and community members to report when they believe, on reasonable grounds, that a child is in need of protection from harm. A broad range of professional groups are identified in the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 as 'mandatory reporters', including:

- all educators with post-secondary qualifications in the care, education or minding of children and employed or engaged in an education and care service or a children's service
- all proprietors, nominees of a children's service, approved providers, and nominated supervisors of an education and care service.

- educators registered with the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT).
- mandated staff must make a report to Victoria Police and/or Child Protection as soon as is practicable if, during performing their professional roles and responsibilities, they form a belief on reasonable grounds that:
 - a child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, significant harm as a result of physical and/or sexual abuse (refer to Definitions) and
 - the child's parents/carers have not protected, or are unlikely to protect, the child from harm.

Mandatory reporters must follow processes for responding to incidents, disclosures or suspicions of child abuse to fulfil all their legal obligations (*see Attachment 5: Processes for responding to incidents, disclosure and suspicions of child abuse*).

Negligence: doing, or failing to do something that a reasonable person would, or would not do in a certain situation, and which causes another person damage, injury or loss as a result

Organisational duty of care: the statutory duty organisations have to take reasonable precautions to prevent sexual and/or physical abuse of a child.

Orange Door: A free service for adults, children and young people who are experiencing or have experienced family violence and families who need extra support with the care of children

Offender: A person who mistreats and/or harms a child or young person.

Perpetrator: A person who mistreats and/or harms a child or young person.

Reasonable belief/reasonable grounds: a person may form a belief on reasonable grounds that a child or young person is in need of protection after becoming aware that the child or young person's safety, health or wellbeing is at risk and the child's parents/carers are unwilling or unable to protect them. There may be reasonable grounds for forming such a belief if:

- a child or young person states that they have been physically or sexually abused
- a child or young person states that they know someone who has been physically or sexually abused (sometimes the child may be referring to themselves)
- someone who knows the child or young person states that the child or young person has been physically or sexually abused
- a child shows signs of being physically or sexually abused
- the person is aware of persistent family violence or parental substance misuse, psychiatric illness or intellectual disability or other factors that are impacting on the child or young person's safety, stability or development
- the person observes signs or indicators of abuse, including non-accidental or unexplained injury, persistent neglect, poor care or lack of appropriate supervision
- a child's/young person's actions or behaviour may place them at risk of significant harm, and the parents/carers are unwilling or unable to protect the child.

Reportable allegation: any allegation that an employee (including agency/relief staff or contractor provided by a labour hire agency), volunteer or student has committed child abuse

Reportable Conduct Scheme: aims to improve oversight of how organisations respond to allegations of child abuse and child-related misconduct by their workers (including agency/relief staff or contractor provided by a labour hire agency), and volunteers. There are five types of 'reportable conduct':

- sexual offences committed against, with or in the presence of a child
- sexual misconduct committed against, with or in the presence of a child
- physical violence against, with or in the presence of a child
- any behaviour that causes significant emotional or psychological harm to a child
- significant neglect of a child.

Working with Children (WWC) Check: is a legal requirement under the Worker Screening Act 2020 for those undertaking paid or voluntary child-related work in Victoria.

Working with Children Clearance: A WWC Clearance is granted to a person under working with children legislation if:

- they have been assessed as suitable to work with children
- there has been no information that, if the person worked with children, they would pose a risk to them
- they are not prohibited from attempting to obtain, undertake or remain in child-related employment.



SOURCES AND RELATED POLICIES

SOURCES

- ACECQA: [National Model Code - Taking images in early childhood education and care](#)
- ACECQA: [Risk Assessment and Management Tool](#)
- ACECQA: NQF Child Safe Culture Guide self-assessment and risk assessment: www.acecqa.gov.au
- AECEQA: [Child Safety Incident Response Template](#)
- ACECQA: [NQF Child Safe Culture Guide](#)
- ACECQA: [NQF Online Saft Guide](#)
- Australian Human Rights Commission: [National Children's Commissioner](#)
- Australian Human Rights Commission: www.humanrights.gov.au
- Betrayal of Trust Implementation: www.justice.vic.gov.au
- Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic): www.legislation.vic.gov.au
- Child Information Sharing Scheme Ministerial Guidelines: www.vic.gov.au/guides-templates-tools-for-information-sharing
- Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP): [Generic learning or training action plan and training materials](#)
- Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP): [Head of organisation](#)
- Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP): [Risk Assessment and Management template](#)
- Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP): [Sample learning or training action plan](#)
- Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP): [Short Guide to the Child Safe Standards](#)
- Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP): www.ccyp.vic.gov.au
- Department of Education: [Mandatory Reporting eLearning Module](#)
- Department of Education: [Early Childhood Workforce Register](#)
- Early Learning Association Australia: [Child Safe Reporting Guide](#)
- Quality Assessment and Regulation Division: [Early Childhood Guidance on the Child Safe Standards](#)
- SNAICC: [Keeping Our Kids Safe: Cultural Safety and the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations](#)
- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child: www.unicef.org
- Victorian Government: [DE Service Agreement Requirements 2024-2028](#)
- Victorian Government: [Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme](#)
- Victorian Institute of Teaching: www.vit.vic.edu.au
- Working with Children (WWC) Check: www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au
- WorkSafe Victoria: Guide to Incident Notification: www.worksafe.vic.gov.au

RELATED POLICIES

- Acceptance and Refusal of Authorisations
- Behaviour Support
- Code of Conduct
- Complaints
- Delivery and Collection of Children
- eSafety for Children
- Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness
- Inclusion and Equity
- Safe Use of Digital Devices and Online Environment
- Interactions with Children
- Mental Health and Wellbeing
- Occupational Health and Safety
- Participation of Volunteers and Students
- Privacy and Confidentiality
- Safe Arrival of Children
- Staffing
- Supervision of Children



EVALUATION

To assess whether the values and purposes of the policy have been achieved, the Approved Provider will:

- regularly seek feedback from everyone affected by the policy regarding its effectiveness, particularly in relation to identifying and responding to child safety concerns
- monitor the implementation, compliance, complaints and incidents in relation to this policy
- keep the policy up to date with current legislation, research, policy and best practice
- revise the policy and procedures as part of the service's policy review cycle, or as required
- notifying all stakeholders affected by this policy at least 14 days before making any significant changes to this policy or its procedures, unless a lesser period is necessary due to risk ([Regulation 172 \(2\)](#)).



ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1: How the child safe standards are embedded in service practice, policies and procedures at Denzil Don Kindergarten
- Attachment 2: Incorporation of child safety into recruitment and management of staff
- Attachment 3: Incorporation of child safety into recruitment of contractors, volunteers and students
- Attachment 4: Child Safety Reporting Process
- Attachment 5: Responding to incidents, disclosure and suspicions of child abuse
- Attachment 6: Four critical actions for early childhood services
- Attachment 7: Documenting response to suspected child abuse
- Attachment 8: Public commitment to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children
- Attachment 9: Our Commitment to Child Safety
- Attachment 10: Embedding an environment with zero tolerance for racism (including addressing it)



AUTHORISATION

This policy was adopted by the approved provider of Denzil Don Kindergarten on 22/8/2025.

REVIEW DATE: 22 / AUGUST / 2027

ATTACHMENT 1: HOW THE CHILD SAFE STANDARDS ARE EMBEDDED IN SERVICE PRACTICE, POLICIES AND PROCEDURES AT DENZIL DON KINDERGARTEN

Denzil Don Kindergarten takes the safety of children seriously and understands that every person who engages with children attending the service has a role to play in keeping them safe and identifying and managing risks of child abuse and harm.

OUR COMMITMENT TO THE CULTURAL SAFETY OF ABORIGINAL CHILDREN

Denzil Don Kindergarten is committed to providing a culturally safe environment where the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children are respected and valued.

- We actively support and facilitate the participation and inclusion of Aboriginal children and their families.
- We provide an educational program that strengthens Aboriginal children's culture and identity.
- We actively support and encourage Aboriginal children and their families to express their culture and enjoy their cultural rights.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives are embedded in our pedagogy and are a permanent focus within our curriculum.
- Visual representation and acknowledgement of Aboriginal culture is present across the service.
- Important cultural celebrations and events such as NAIDOC and Reconciliation Week are acknowledged in the program.
- We facilitate regular training and education on Aboriginal culture and cultural safety.
- We have established policies, procedures, systems and processes to create a culturally safe and inclusive environment that meets the needs of Aboriginal children, young people and their families.

PRACTICE AND POLICY THAT FOSTERS CHILD SAFETY AND WELLBEING

- The *Code of Conduct* Policy guides educators, staff, students, volunteers, and other adults participating in Denzil Don Kindergarten programs, including excursions, with clear behaviour expectations when engaging with children.
- Wellbeing strategies are intentionally taught to assist children in understanding and regulating their emotions. Children are guided to identify and name emotions and choose a regulation strategy to support their self-regulation. This strategy promotes positive life-long outcomes for wellbeing.
- Educators facilitate discussions with children that focus on their rights and empower them to understand that their voice is important and will shape decisions made in the classroom and the service more broadly. For example, all groups write a *Class Charter* that sets out expectations of how the group will engage with one another.
- Children are taught personal safety and body-safe awareness and empowered to speak out when they don't like the way a child or adult is interacting with them or if they feel unsafe. They are encouraged to raise any concerns they have, including about the kindergarten program.
- Information collected from families during the enrolment process assists in preparing for diverse needs and providing appropriate support for those children. Support accessed may include KIS funding, additional staffing, meetings with the family, allied health engagement, etc.
- Children and families from diverse and unique backgrounds are valued and respected at the service.
- Children and families of culturally diverse, linguistically diverse, and/or LBGTQIA+ backgrounds and children or families living with a disability are represented in the program in many ways, including visuals (flags, posters), books, language (ie, translated resources, non-gendered language), discussions, and more.
- The educational program, physical environment, and online environment reflect the diverse needs, interests, and cultures of the children and families accessing the service and ensure that all children can participate fully.
- The program and environment are regularly assessed to ensure they are inclusive for all, with a particular focus on children living with a disability.
- Children are supported and guided to build strong, respectful relationships with peers, educators and other staff.
- Staff regularly participate in professional development about how to support inclusion and cultural safety.
- Children are intentionally taught about responsible use of technology and involved in discussions about online safety and how to stay safe when using the internet.
- The use of screens in the program is restricted to education and learning, stories, or movement.
- Personal devices are never used to photograph, video or audio record children for documentation.
- Photos of children's faces are never shared online, including in the class Journal (faces are blurred or covered).
- Educators and staff understand their roles and responsibilities regarding child protection.
- Information-sharing and record-keeping requirements are understood and met by all.

HOW FAMILIES ARE INCLUDED IN CHILD SAFETY AND WELLBEING

We listen and collaborate with families regarding their child's development, needs, and education. We know families are the child's first and foremost teachers and respect their views and opinions.

- Families are encouraged to express their ideas and culture with opportunities to come and share their culture or interests with the children.
- Families are encouraged to provide feedback and suggestions about the service. Various methods for providing feedback are offered, including biannual surveys (at a minimum), face-to-face meetings with teaching teams and/or management, email, or (in the case of complaints) through a formal complaints process (refer to the *Complaints Policy*).

- Families are encouraged to provide input on service decisions via online forms and surveys (eg, setting the timetable).
- Service procedural changes are communicated to families promptly and clearly, explaining why the change was made and how it will improve service operations. Family feedback about the change is welcomed.
- Service tours and pre-start information describe how the service communicates and ensures the safety of children.
- Service wellbeing strategies are shared with families to ensure continuity between the service and home.

ACTIONS AND PROCEDURES EMBEDDED BY LEADERSHIP TO PROMOTE CHILD SAFETY AND WELLBEING

- We have zero tolerance for racism and have embedded processes for identifying and addressing it if it occurs.
- Child safety and wellbeing are embedded in service leadership, governance, and culture.
- Child safety is championed and modelled, and staff and other stakeholders are encouraged to report child safety concerns.
- Staff receive regular child safe training. Staff meetings include regular discussions about how to recognise signs of abuse, report abuse, and changes to regulatory and legal requirements, policies, and processes.
- All staff, students and volunteers receive a thorough induction before working with children. This includes information about service values, expectations, and practices that help maintain a child safe environment.
- Clear reporting processes and procedures are in place to ensure the safety of all children, staff and service stakeholders. Educators and staff understand their requirement to immediately report to appropriate authorities when they believe a child is at risk of significant harm.
- Suspected abuse is always reported to relevant bodies and authorities within the required timeframes.
- An environment of open and direct conversation is modelled and encouraged, and children, families, staff, and other adults know they can voice their views and ask questions.
- Educators and staff are given the tools to perform regular environment (indoor and outdoor) risk assessments and take action to manage identified risks. Identified environmental risks are discussed at staff meetings, and a staff member is assigned to address each risk.
- The effectiveness of child safety and wellbeing across the service is reviewed as a team, at least annually.
- High-quality, active, and engaged supervision of children is expected across the service. Annual supervision training is provided and revisited throughout the year if necessary. Issues with supervision are addressed immediately.
- Students, volunteers, contractors, and other service visitors are always supervised around children and never left alone with a child(ren).
- Confidentiality is respected when dealing with cases of suspected child abuse and neglect. Case details and the identity of the child and their family are only shared with those directly involved in managing the child's situation. Educators and staff understand confidentiality requirements.
- Recruitment processes are robust, including thorough screening of candidates: a commitment to child safety is included in job advertisements, child safety questions are asked during interviews, at least two reference checks are obtained, and a Working with Children Check, VIT, Mandatory Reporting certificate and other relevant paperwork is obtained before a candidate is engaged to help ensure the appropriate person is recruited for the role.
- A *Staff Currency Register* is maintained to ensure WWCC cards, Mandatory Reporting training, certificates, and the Victorian Institute of Training (VIT) are current and renewed before expiry.
- Educators, staff, volunteers, and students know service policies, particularly the *Child Safe Environment and Wellbeing Policy*, *Code of Conduct Policy*, *Complaints Policy*, and *Staffing Policy*.
- Staff are advised of policy updates and changes to regulation as they occur.
- Staff are asked to read and sign the *Code of Conduct Policy* annually.

ATTACHMENT 2: INCORPORATION OF CHILD SAFETY INTO THE RECRUITMENT AND MANAGEMENT OF STAFF

The following processes detail our incorporation of child safety into recruitment and management of staff at Denzil Don Kindergarten. They show our commitment to maximising the safety of children and deterring unsuitable and inappropriate persons from attempting to work at our service.

When recruiting:

- A statement of Denzil Don Kindergarten's commitment to maintaining a child safe environment is included in all job descriptions and job advertisements.
- Job description clearly outlines responsibilities and accountability
- Requirement for a current Working with Children Check (WWCC) or Victorian Institute of Teaching registration and a criminal history check is included in job advertisements.
- Interviews are in-person with the Educational Leader and Coordinator. Questions are behaviour-based and ask the interviewee to provide examples of their past behaviour in specific situations relevant to the job being applied for.
- Questions regarding relationships with children are values-based and include a consideration of issues such as professional boundaries, resilience and motivation, teamwork, accountability and ethics
- Questions are based on key selection criteria.
- Referees are checked by an external HR company. All referees must have observed the applicant working with children.
- Qualifications are verified.
- The NQA IT System public portal to check if an applicant is a prohibited person.
- A criminal history check can be undertaken.

Induction

- Orientation and induction cover information about values, attitudes, expectations and workplace practices in relation to maintaining a child safe environment
- Information provided to the new staff member on commencing work at the service includes *Child Safe Environment and Wellbeing Policy, Code of Conduct Policy, eSafety for Children, Use of Digital Technologies and Online Environment, Interaction with Children, Complaints Policy and Staffing Policy*. Check their understanding of these documents in follow-up conversations.
- New staff must update their organisation details with the Victorian Government Service Victoria online portal <https://service.vic.gov.au/find-services/work-and-volunteering/working-with-children-check/update-your-working-with-children-check-details> and provide proof of update upon commencement.
- Regular meetings are held between staff members and the management team
- All staff support one another with advice and mentoring. A community of learners is modelled
- Training and education with regard to child safety and child protection is provided for all staff
- Resources and support are provided for all staff to ensure a child safe environment.

Ongoing Supervision and Management

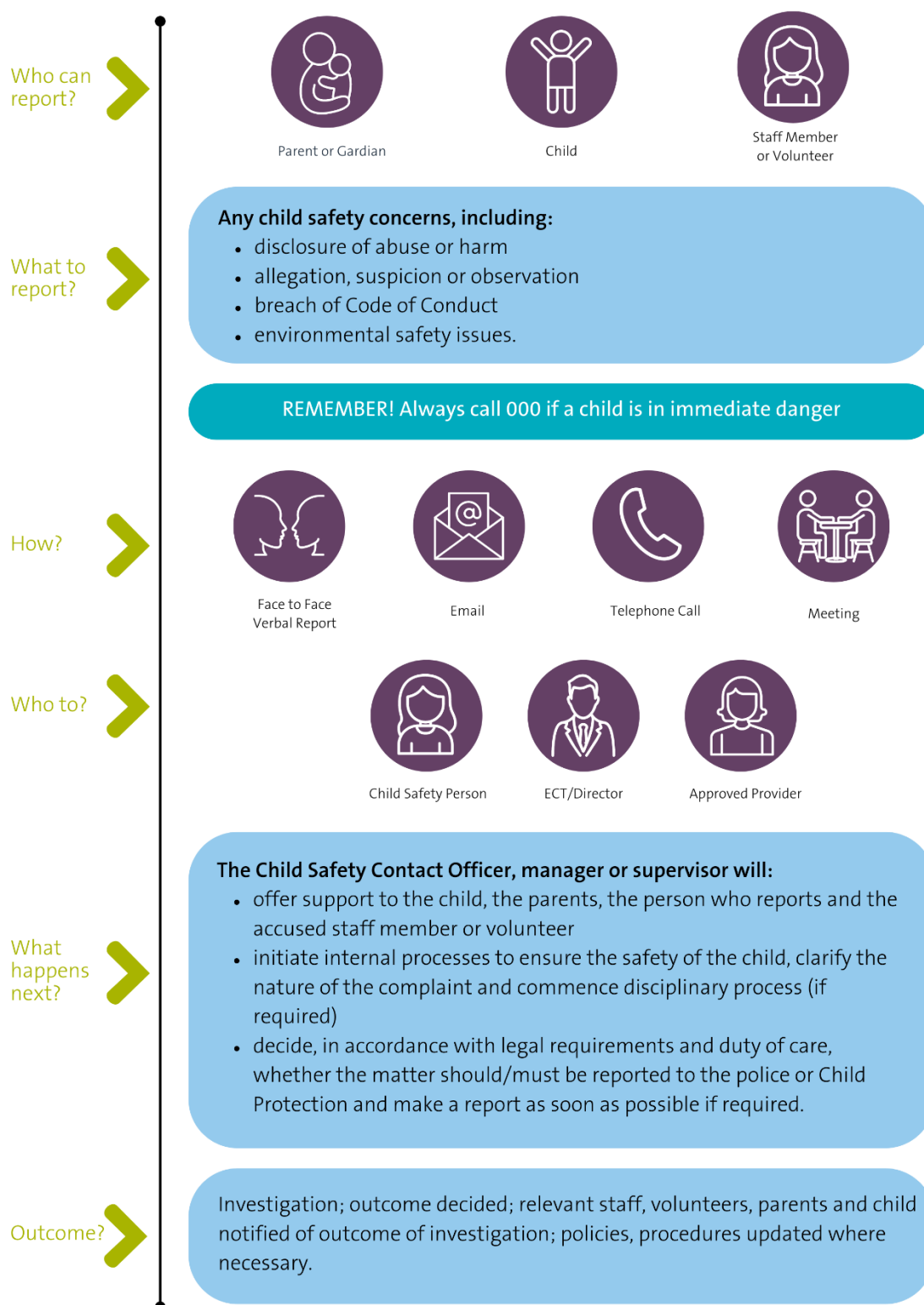
- Regular meetings are held between staff and management, and child safety is a regular item on the agenda
- Provide supervision to ensure clear expectations about the role, adequate support as well as on-the-job monitoring of their performance
- Performance reviews consider the staff member's contribution to creating a child safe environment
- Regular training and education regarding child safety, child protection and inclusive practices is provided for all staff
- Resources and support are provided for all staff to ensure a child safe environment
- A Staff Currency Register is maintained including VIT registrations, WWC checks, Mandatory Reporting certificates, first aid etc remain current. All staff are given reminders and asked to provide updated information before its expiry.
- Ensure no staff have a WWC check with a Negative Notice. If this occurs, they are not allowed to do child-related work.

ATTACHMENT 3: INCORPORATION OF CHILD SAFETY INTO THE RECRUITMENT AND MANAGEMENT OF CONTRACTORS, VOLUNTEERS AND STUDENTS

The following processes for the recruitment and management of contractors (external people engaged to perform a role for the kindergarten – plumbers, electricians, repairs people etc, volunteers and students demonstrates Denzil Don Kindergarten’s commitment to maximising the safety of children and deterring unsuitable and inappropriate persons from attempting to work, volunteer or be on student placement at our service.

- Assessing the nature of the work or task being undertaken by contractors, volunteers and students to determine whether a position description is required
- Consider whether a screening or recruitment process is relevant to the role and the risks to children
- Ensure a valid Working with Children Check or an exemption applies for people engaged in ‘direct contact’ in child-related work, including physical contact, face to face contact, oral, written or electronic communication.
- Inform contractors, volunteers and students of policies relevant to their role as part of their orientation to the service
- Provide supervision to ensure clear expectations about the role and responsibilities
- Contractors, volunteers or students (or visitors) are never left alone with children
- Have conversations about child safety and wellbeing and how the service maintains and responds to issues of safety with contractors, volunteers and students.

ATTACHMENT 4: CHILD SAFETY REPORTING PROCESS



This flowchart is adapted from the Commissioner for Children and Young People, Victoria, Flowchart: Child Safety Reporting Process, Flowchart: Child Safety Reporting Process.

ATTACHMENT 5: RESPONDING TO INCIDENTS, DISCLOSURE AND SUSPICIONS OF CHILD ABUSE

Staff must act if they form a reasonable belief or have a suspicion that a child has been or is at risk of being abused.

Regardless of the suspected cause, all safety concerns must be taken seriously and acted on, including concerns about a child's wellbeing when it does not appear to be the result of abuse.

The following actions must be taken:

- Seek advice from management, DFFH Child Protection, Child First and/or Victoria Police if unsure if they have sufficient grounds to form a reasonable belief.
- If they hold a reasonable belief that a child has been or is at risk of being abused, regardless of the advice of the management or another staff member, they must make a report to Child Protection and/or Victoria Police.
- Follow the steps outlined in the Department of Education's Four Critical Actions for Early Childhood Services: [Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse](#) flowchart ([see Attachment 4](#)).
- Keep comprehensive records of child safety concerns or complaints, evidence of actions taken, reports made to statutory authorities or professional bodies, and any follow-up actions to be completed. The records must be stored in the *Complaints Register* and must meet the conditions of the *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy*.
- Maintain privacy and disclose information when it promotes the safety or wellbeing of a child. Parents/carers are not required to give permission to make a report when abuse is suspected.

RESPONDING TO CONCERNS ABOUT THE WELLBEING OF A CHILD

WHEN TO REPORT WELLBEING CONCERNS TO CHILD FIRST (FAMILY REFERRAL AND SUPPORT)

A referral to Child FIRST or Orange Door ([refer to Definitions](#)) should be made if a staff member has significant concerns for a child's wellbeing and the **child is not in immediate need of protection**, such as when:

- Significant concern for a child's wellbeing
- Parents/carers lacking the skill to support their child's physical, emotional and cognitive development, which may be affecting the child's development
- There is family conflict, including a family breakdown
- There is family pressure due to physical or mental illness in the family, substance misuse, disability or bereavement
- Families are young, isolated and/or unsupported
- Families are experiencing significant social or economic disadvantage, adversely impacting their child's care and/or development.

Orange Door is a free service for women, children and young people experiencing family violence, or families who need assistance with the care and wellbeing of children to access the services they need to be safe and supported. Both services ensure that vulnerable children, young people and their families are linked effectively into relevant services.

WHEN TO REPORT WELLBEING CONCERNS TO VICTORIA POLICE

In addition to reporting suspected abuse to appropriate authorities, you must contact Victoria Police on 000 if the:

- child's immediate safety is compromised
- child is partaking in any risk-taking activity that is illegal and extreme in nature or poses a high risk to their safety, or the safety of somebody else.

WHEN TO REPORT WELLBEING CONCERNS TO DFFH CHILD PROTECTION

Staff will report to DFFH Child Protection if they have significant concerns for the wellbeing of a child and the **parents/carers are unable or unwilling to address the concerns**. This includes concerns that:

- Have a serious impact on a child's safety, stability or development (including abandonment, death or incapacity, extreme risk-taking behaviour, or harm to an unborn child)
- Are persistent and entrenched and likely to have a serious impact on a child's safety, stability or development
- Relate to parents/carers who cannot or will not protect the child from significant harm
- Include a belief that the family will be reluctant and uncooperative in seeking assistance.

RESPONDING TO CONCERNS ABOUT SEXUAL BEHAVIOURS

All early childhood staff play an important role in making informed professional judgements regarding sexualised behaviour involving children.

Not all sexual behaviour involving children poses a risk to their safety. It may be [age-appropriate and expected sexualised behaviour](#).

Informed judgements regarding sexualised behaviour help to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of children by:

- supporting healthy sexual development (age-appropriate sexualised behaviour)
- protecting them from harm or abuse (inappropriate or problem sexualised behaviour).

In some cases, [problematic sexualised behaviour](#) involving children may fall within reporting requirements.

If you have formed a reasonable belief that the child is displaying problematic sexualised behaviour, you must take reasonable steps to protect them by following the **Four Critical Action** listed below.

MANAGING A DISCLOSURE

If a child makes a disclosure to a staff member, the staff member will validate the disclosure by listening, taking the disclosure seriously, responding to the disclosure, and acting on it by implementing the service reporting procedures.

The following strategies are recommended when receiving a disclosure from a child:

- Let them talk about their concerns in their own time and their own words
- Give them full attention, time and a quiet space in which to do this and be a supportive and reassuring listener
- Remain calm and use a neutral, non-judgmental tone
- Comfort them if they are distressed (seek permission to touch)
- Record the child's disclosure using their words
- Assure the child that telling you is the right thing to do and that what has happened is not their fault
- Let them know that you will act on this information and that you will need to let other people know so that they can help them.

The role of DFFH Child Protection and Victoria Police is to investigate. DO NOT ask invasive questions that may cause the child to withdraw and impede an investigation. Avoid going over information repeatedly.

RESPONDING TO INCIDENTS, DISCLOSURE AND SUSPICIONS OF CHILD ABUSE

To make a report to child protection, a staff member must have formed a reasonable belief (*refer to Definition*) that a child has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm because of abuse or neglect and that their parent/carer has not protected or is unlikely to protect the child from harm of that type.

ALL early childhood service staff must follow the **Four Critical Actions** as soon as they witness an incident, discloser or form a reasonable belief that a child has or is at risk of being abused.

FOUR CRITICAL ACTIONS

ACTION 1: RESPONDING TO AN EMERGENCY

If a child has just been abused or is at immediate risk of harm you must take reasonable steps to protect them.

These include:

- separating the alleged victim and others involved, ensuring all parties are supervised by a service staff member
- arranging and providing urgent medical assistance where necessary by:
 - administering first aid assistance
 - calling 000 for an ambulance and following any instructions from emergency service officers/paramedics
 - calling 000 for urgent police assistance if the person who is alleged to have engaged in the abuse poses an immediate risk to the health and safety of any person
- you should also identify a contact person at the service for future liaison with police
- taking reasonable steps to preserve evidence, such as the environment, clothing, other items, and potential witnesses until the police or other relevant authorities arrive on the premises.

ACTION 2: REPORTING TO AUTHORITIES

Once immediate health and safety concerns have been addressed, staff must report all incidents, suspicions and disclosures of child abuse as quickly as possible. Failure to report physical and sexual child abuse may amount to a criminal offence.

IF THE SOURCE OF SUSPECTED ABUSE IS FROM WITHIN THE FAMILY OR COMMUNITY:

- **REPORT** to **DFFH CHILD PROTECTION** if a child is considered to be in need of protection from abuse and/or at risk of harm (or has been harmed), and the harm has had or is likely to have a serious impact on their safety, stability or development.

REPORT all instances of suspected sexual abuse (including grooming) to **VICTORIA POLICE**.

NOTIFY MANAGEMENT.

The Centre Coordinator must **NOTIFY THE REGULATOR** via the DE via the NQAITS system.

If it is believed a child is not subject to abuse but there is significant concerns for their wellbeing, you must act. This may require making a referral or seeking advice from Child FIRST (when the family is open to receiving support), DFFH Child PROTECTION, or Victoria Police.

IF THE SOURCE OF SUSPECTED ABUSE IS FROM WITHIN THE SERVICE:

REPORT to **VICTORIA POLICE** via your local police (where appropriate, they will refer you to the local Sexual Offences and Child Abuse Investigation Team)

NOTIFY MANAGEMENT.

The Centre Coordinator must **NOTIFY THE REGULATOR** via the DE via the NQAITS system.

The Centre Coordinator must **NOTIFY** the **COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE (CCYP)** within **three** business days of becoming aware of the allegation (*refer to Reportable Conduct Scheme*).

NOMINATE Centre Coordinator or Educational Leader as the contact person for future liaisons with Child Protection and Victoria Police, and for seeking advice about contacting parents/carers.

ACTION 3: CONTACTING PARENTS/CARERS

The service will consult Victoria Police or DFFH Child Protection to determine what information can be shared with parents/carers.

You will be advised not to contact the parents in circumstances where:

- the parents are alleged to have engaged in the abuse
- a disclosure to the parent/carer may subject the child to further abuse
- the notification is likely to adversely affect the investigation of the incident by the relevant authorities.

Where advised to be appropriate, the service will make sensitive and professional contact with parents/carers as soon as possible on the day of the incident, disclosure or suspicion.

In many cases where it is suspected that a child has been, or is at risk of being abused, it is extremely important that parents/carers are notified as soon as practicable. This enables parents/carers to take steps to:

- prevent or limit their child's exposure to further abuse.
- ensure that their child receives the support that they require.

It's also a requirement under the National Quality Framework that parents be contacted within 24 hours, if the suspected abuse occurs whilst a child is at an education or care service. However, there are some circumstances where contacting parents/carers may place a child at greater risk.

ACTION 4: PROVIDING ONGOING SUPPORT

We will take reasonable steps to make a child feel safe and supported whilst they are attending the service. We will consider, if appropriate:

- establishing regular communication with the child's parent/carer to plan support strategies and discuss the child's progress, and the success of any support strategies
- engage allied health professionals with expertise in addressing child abuse and trauma to support the service to design and implement support strategies
- establish a safety plan, in instances where the abuse has been led by a person within the service, and/or visiting the service to mitigate risk of further abuse.

THE REPORTABLE CONDUCT SCHEME

The Approved Provider must notify the Commission for Children and Young People (The Commission) of a reportable allegation (*see Definitions*) within **three** business days of becoming aware of an allegation. The Approved Provider must provide certain detailed information about the allegation and their proposed response within **30 calendar days**.

3-business day notification	30-day calendar update	Investigation advice	Investigation outcomes	Additional documents
<ul style="list-style-type: none">* Date of birth* Police report* Organisation contact details* Name of head of organization* Initial advice on the nature of the allegation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">* Details of allegation* Your response to the allegation* Details about any disciplinary/other action proposed* Any written response from the worker or volunteer about the allegation and the proposed disciplinary action or other action(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">* Investigators name* Contact details* As soon as practicable	<ul style="list-style-type: none">* Copy of findings and finding reasons* Details about any disciplinary or other action proposed* Reasons for taking or not taking action* As soon as practicable	<ul style="list-style-type: none">* The Commission may request further documents from the head of the organisation

The Commission provides guidance on the processes and documentation required when making a report: refer to <https://ccyp.vic.gov.au>

CHILD PROTECTION IN EARLY CHILDHOOD: PRIVACY AND INFORMATION SHARING

The Child Information Sharing Scheme, and the Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme allow professionals working with children to gain a complete view of the children they work with, making it easier to identify wellbeing or safety needs earlier, and to act on them sooner.

Following a report to DFFH Child Protection, Victoria Police and/or ChildFIRST you should:

- consult with your approved provider before disclosing information about the report and the child and their family to another information sharing entity (except to verified Victoria Police and DFFH Child Protection workers in very urgent situations and/or if the information is required to protect the safety of that child) and/or
- seek consent from a child or their parents/carers before disclosing information about the report and the child and their family to anyone other than authorities and service staff members (provided this does not place the child or another person at risk).

PRIVACY LAWS ALLOW STAFF TO SHARE A CHILD'S PERSONAL AND HEALTH INFORMATION TO ENABLE THE SERVICES TO:

- provide and support the education of the child, plan for individual needs and address any barriers to learning
- support the social and emotional wellbeing and health of the child
- fulfil duty of care obligations to the child, other children, staff and visitors
- make reasonable adjustments if the child has a disability, including a medical condition or mental illness
- provide a safe and secure workplace.

RESOURCES

Department of Education PROTECT Portal: www.vic.gov.au/protect

The Department of Education's PROTECT portal provides tools and resources to assist professionals and early years services to respond to child abuse or potential child abuse, including:

Early Childhood Guidance: This section supports early childhood providers to take action if they suspect, or are witness to, any form of child abuse.

Early Childhood Online Learning: This eLearning Module supports all professionals in early childhood settings to increase their capacity to respond effectively to children whose safety, health or wellbeing may be at risk.

Commission for Children and Young People: www.ccyp.vic.gov.au

ATTACHMENT 6: FOUR CRITICAL ACTIONS FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES

FOUR CRITICAL ACTIONS FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES

Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse



It is strongly recommended that ALL early childhood service staff follow these Four Critical Actions as soon as they witness an incident, or form a reasonable belief that a child has, or is at risk of being abused. This means acting even when you're not sure and have not directly witnessed the abuse (e.g. if another person tells you about the abuse). A reasonable belief is a deliberately low threshold. This enables authorities to investigate and take action.

Following these actions will support you to:

- best protect children in your care
- meet your legal obligations and Duty of Care.¹
- It is also strongly recommended that you use the Responding to Suspected Child Abuse Template to keep clear and comprehensive notes. MCH services may opt to use this form, but must still utilise their existing information management systems.

1 RESPONDING TO AN EMERGENCY

If there is no risk of immediate harm, go to Action 2.

If the child is at immediate risk of harm you must ensure their safety by:

- separating alleged victim and others involved
- administering first aid
- calling 000 for urgent medical and/or police assistance to respond to immediate health or safety concerns
- identifying a contact person at the service for future liaison with police

Where necessary you may also need to maintain the integrity of the potential crime scene and preserve evidence.

¹ In Victoria there are a range of legal obligations which set out the actions you must take if you suspect a child has, or is at risk of being abused. Some of these obligations apply differently across the range of licensed, approved and other early child services and can vary depending on your role within the service. For further information on how these obligations apply to you see the Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Early Childhood Services.

2 REPORTING TO AUTHORITIES

As soon as immediate health and safety concerns are addressed you must report all incidents, suspicions and disclosures of child abuse as soon as possible. Failure to report physical and sexual child abuse may amount to a criminal offence.

Q: Where does the source of suspected abuse come from?

WITHIN THE SERVICE

VICTORIA POLICE
You must report all instances of child abuse which are led by a staff member, contractor or volunteer, or child* to Victoria Police.

REPORT TO MANAGEMENT
You must report to your approved provider or licensee.

NOTIFY THE REGULATOR
Licensed or approved early childhood services must also report to their Quality Assessment and Regulation Division.

Notifications may be made at www.qasrqa.gov.au/national-quality-assessment-system or by contacting 1300 307 415.

* Sexual offending, involving children 10 years and over.
* Licensed services operate under the Children's Services Act 1998 and approved services operate under Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010.

WITHIN THE FAMILY OR COMMUNITY

DHHS CHILD PROTECTION
You must report to DHHS Child Protection if a child is considered to be:

- in need of protection from child abuse
- at risk of being harmed (or has been harmed) and the harm has, or is likely to have a serious impact on the child's safety, stability or development.

VICTORIA POLICE
You must also report all instances of suspected sexual abuse (including grooming) to Victoria Police.

If you believe that a child is not subject to abuse, but you still hold significant concerns for their wellbeing you must still act.

This may include making a referral or seeking advice from Child FIRST in circumstances where the family are open to receiving support, or to DHHS Child Protection or Victoria Police.

REPORT TO MANAGEMENT
You must report to your approved provider or licensee.

NOTIFY THE REGULATOR
Approved and licensed early childhood services must notify the Quality Assessment and Regulation Division of any serious incidents, circumstances, or complaints which raise concerns about the safety, health and wellbeing of a child being educated and cared for by a service.

Notifications may be made at www.qasrqa.gov.au/national-quality-assessment-system or by contacting 1300 307 415.

3 CONTACTING PARENTS/CARERS

You must consult with DHHS Child Protection or Victoria Police to determine what information can be shared with parents/carers. They may advise:

- not to contact parents/carers (e.g. in circumstances where the parents are alleged to have engaged in the abuse, or the child is a mature minor and does not wish for their parent/carer to be contacted)
- to contact the parents/carers and provide agreed information as soon as possible for licensed and approved services it is a requirement that parents/carers are notified within 24 hours if the suspected abuse occurred at the service)

4 PROVIDING ONGOING SUPPORT

Your service should take reasonable steps to make a child feel safe and supported whilst they are attending the service.

Your service should also consider providing support for children impacted by abuse. E.g. referral to wellbeing professionals. MCH nurses should follow the MCH Service Practice Guidelines to determine appropriate support.

You must follow the Four Critical Actions every time you become aware of a further instance or risk of abuse. This includes reporting new information to authorities.

CONTACT

DHHS CHILD PROTECTION AREA

North Division 1300 864 8777
South Division 1300 855 795
East Division 1300 980 391
West Division (Rural) 1800 075 599
West Division (Metro) 1300 864 8777

AFTER HOURS

After hours, weekends, public holidays 13 1278

CHILD FIRST

www.chf.vic.gov.au

VICTORIA POLICE

000 or your local police station

QUALITY ASSESSMENT AND REGULATION DIVISION

NORTH WESTERN
Loddon Mallee (03) 5440 3111
Northern Metropolitan (03) 8397 0372

SOUTH-EASTERN
Gippsland Area (03) 5127 0400
Southern Metropolitan (03) 87 85 5787

NORTH-EASTERN
Eastern Metropolitan (03) 851 940
Hume (03) 8392 9500

SOUTH-WESTERN
Sanmon South West (03) 5225 1001
Western Metropolitan (03) 8397 0248
Grampians (03) 8337 8444

ATTACHMENT 7: DOCUMENTING RESPONSE TO SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE

Completing this form must not impact reporting times. If a child is in immediate danger immediately contact Victoria Police on 000.

When completing this form, provide as much factual information as possible. This information will be critical and may be sought at a later date if the matter is the subject of Court proceedings.

STAFF MEMBER LEADING THE RESPONSE

NAME:

ROLE AT THE SERVICE:

SERVICE ADDRESS:

RELATIONSHIP TO CHILD:

CRITICAL ACTION 1: IMMEDIATE RESPONSE TO AN INCIDENT

RESPONDING TO AN EMERGENCY

DID THE CHILD REQUIRE FIRST AID? PROVIDE DETAILS IF 'YES'.

WHO ADMINISTERED THIS? (NAME AND ROLE)

DID THE CHILD REQUIRE FURTHER IMMEDIATE MEDICAL ASSISTANCE?

CURRENT LOCATION AND SAFETY STATUS: *ARE ALL IMPACTED CHILDREN SAFE AND NOT IN IMMEDIATE DANGER? IF A CHILD IS IN IMMEDIATE DANGER, REPORT IMMEDIATELY TO VICTORIA POLICE AT 000*

DETAILS OF ALLEGED VICTIM

CHILD'S DETAILS

NAME:

BIRTH SEX:

GROUP ENROLLED IN:

DATE OF BIRTH:

RESIDENTIAL ADDRESS:

PARENT/CARER NAME/S:

PARENT/CARER CONTACT:

LANGUAGE (S) SPOKEN BY CHILD:

DISABILITIES, MENTAL OR PHYSICAL HEALTH ISSUES:

CHILD'S BACKGROUND

CULTURAL AND/OR RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND:

PREVIOUS HISTORY OR INDICATORS OF SUSPECTED ABUSE:

FAMILY BACKGROUND

FAMILY COMPOSITION (IF KNOWN): *LIST PARENTING/CARE ARRANGEMENTS AND SIBLING NAMES AND AGES*

ANY OTHER PEOPLE LIVING WITH THE CHILD (IF KNOWN):

DISABILITY, MENTAL OR PHYSICAL HEALTH ISSUES IN THE FAMILY (IF KNOWN):

LIKELY REACTION TO A REPORT BEING MADE (IF KNOWN):

DETAILS OF THE INCIDENT, DISCLOSURE OR SUSPICION

GROUND'S FOR YOUR BELIEF THAT A CHILD HAS BEEN OR IS AT RISK OF ABUSE

INDICATORS OR INSTANCES WHICH LED YOU TO BELIEVE THAT A CHILD(REN) IS SUBJECT TO ABUSE OR AT RISK OF ABUSE:

DETAIL DISCLOSURES OR INCIDENTS OR SUSPICIONS (INCLUDE NAMES, TIMES AND DATES). DOCUMENT THE CHILD'S EXACT WORDS AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE. INCLUDE SPECIFIC DETAILS ON WHAT LED YOU TO FORM A REASONABLE BELIEF THAT A CHILD HAS BEEN OR IS AT RISK OF BEING ABUSED.

PHYSICAL INDICATORS OF ABUSE:

BEHAVIOURAL INDICATORS OF ABUSE:	
ANY PATTERNS OF BEHAVIOUR OR PRIOR CONCERNS LEADING UP TO AN INCIDENT, DISCLOSURE OR SUSPICION:	
DETAILS OF PERSONS ALLEGED TO HAVE COMMITTED THE ABUSE (IF KNOWN)	
NAME:	
BIRTH SEX:	DATE OF BIRTH:
RELATIONSHIP TO CHILD:	
ADDRESS:	
CONTACT DETAILS:	

CRITICAL ACTION 2: REPORTING

REPORTING TO AUTHORITIES
<p>TICK THE AUTHORITIES YOU HAVE REPORTED TO:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> VICTORIA POLICE <input type="checkbox"/> DHHS CHILD PROTECTION <input type="checkbox"/> CHILD FIRST <input type="checkbox"/> DECISION NOT TO REPORT <p>If you have decided not to report, detail your reasons below. Also, include any follow-up actions you have undertaken.</p>
DATE AND TIME OF REPORT:
NAME OF PERSON REPORTED TO:
OUTCOMES FROM THE REPORT:

REPORTING INTERNALLY

PROVIDE DETAILS OF YOUR DISCUSSION WITH SERVICE MANAGEMENT

DATE AND TIME OF REPORT:

NAME OF MANAGER(S) REPORTED TO:

DISCUSSION OUTCOMES:

PROVIDE DETAILS OF YOUR NOTIFICATION TO THE REGULATOR

THE QUALITY ASSESSMENT AND REGULATORY DIVISION (QARD) MUST BE NOTIFIED OF AN INCIDENT AT THE SERVICE AND/OR IF THE HEALTH, SAFETY OR WELLBEING OF A CHILD HAS BEEN COMPROMISED WHILST ATTENDING THE SERVICE.

DATE AND TIME OF REPORT:

NAME OF PERSON(S) THE INCIDENT WAS REPORTED TO:

DISCUSSION OUTCOMES:

CRITICAL ACTION 3: CONTACTING PARENTS/CARERS

ACTIONS TAKEN (ALLEGED VICTIM)

PROVIDE DETAILS OF YOUR DISCUSSION WITH PARENTS/CARERS (IF APPROPRIATE):

YOU MUST CONSULT WITH VICTORIA POLICE AND/OR DHHS CHILD PROTECTION TO DETERMINE IF IT IS APPROPRIATE TO CONTACT PARENTS; IF IT IS DEEMED APPROPRIATE, PARENTS MUST BE CONTACTED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE (WITHIN 24 HOURS OF THE INCIDENT, DISCLOSURE OR SUSPICION).

HAVE YOU SOUGHT ADVICE FROM DHS CHILD PROTECTION OR VICTORIA POLICE?

☐ NO

☐ YES

IS IT APPROPRIATE TO CONTACT THE PARENT/CARER

☐ NO

☐ YES

PROVIDE REASONS IF IT IS NOT APPROPRIATE TO CONTACT PARENT/CARER:

IF CONTACTING PARENT/CARER, PROVIDE THE FOLLOWING DETAILS:

NAME OF STAFF MEMBER MAKING THE CALL:

NAME OF PARENT/CARER RECEIVING THE CALL:

DISCUSSION OUTCOMES:

CRITICAL ACTION 4: PROVIDING ONGOING SUPPORT

ACTIONS TAKEN (ALLEGED VICTIM)

PROVIDE DETAILS OF YOUR DISCUSSION WITH PARENTS/CARERS (IF APPROPRIATE):

YOU MUST CONSULT WITH VICTORIA POLICE AND/OR DHHS CHILD PROTECTION TO DETERMINE IF IT IS APPROPRIATE TO CONTACT PARENTS; IF IT IS DEEMED APPROPRIATE, PARENTS MUST BE CONTACTED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE (WITHIN 24 HOURS OF THE INCIDENT, DISCLOSURE OR SUSPICION).

HAVE YOU SOUGHT ADVICE FROM DHS CHILD PROTECTION OR VICTORIA POLICE?

☐ NO

☐ YES

IS IT APPROPRIATE TO CONTACT THE PARENT/CARER

☐ NO

☐ YES

PROVIDE REASONS IF IT IS NOT APPROPRIATE TO CONTACT PARENT/CARER:

IF CONTACTING PARENT/CARER, PROVIDE THE FOLLOWING DETAILS:

NAME OF STAFF MEMBER MAKING THE CALL:

NAME OF PARENT/CARER RECEIVING THE CALL:

DISCUSSION OUTCOMES:

REVIEW OF THE PROCESS

Complete this review 4-6 WEEKS after an incident, suspicion or disclosure of abuse in conjunction with management.

CURRENT SAFETY AND WELLBEING OF THE CHILD

IS THE CHILD SAFE FROM ABUSE AND HARM?

☐ NO ☐ YES

IF NO, CONSIDER THE NEED TO MAKE A FURTHER REPORT

DOES THE CHILD HAVE ANY WELLBEING ISSUES THAT ARE NOT CURRENTLY BEING ADDRESSED?

☐ NO ☐ YES

IF SO, CONSIDER HOW THESE CAN BE ADDRESSED AND CAPTURED WITHIN A STUDENT SUPPORT PLAN

CURRENT WELLBEING OF OTHER CHILDREN WHO MAY BE IMPACTED BY THE ABUSER

ARE THERE ANY OTHER CHILDREN WHO MAY BE IMPACTED BY THE ABUSER?

☐ NO ☐ YES

ARE SO, HAVE THEIR WELLBEING NEEDS BEEN MET?

☐ NO ☐ YES

CURRENT WELLBEING OF IMPACTED STAFF MEMBERS

DOES THE STAFF MEMBER WHO MADE THE REPORT/WITNESSED THE INCIDENT, FORMED A SUSPICION OR RECEIVED A DISCLOSURE REQUIRE SUPPORT?

☐ NO ☐ YES

IF SO, HAS IT BEEN RECEIVED?

☐ NO ☐ YES

REVIEW OF ACTIONS TAKEN

HAVE STAFF FOLLOWED THE FOUR CRITICAL ACTIONS FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES, INCLUDING RESPONDING TO INCIDENTS DISCLOSED FOR SUSPICION OF CHILD ABUSE?

Was an appropriate decision made in relation to when to act?

☐ NO ☐ YES

Could the suspected abuse have been detected earlier?

☐ NO ☐ YES

ACTION 1

Did staff take appropriate action in an emergency?

☐ NO ☐ YES

ACTION 2

Was a report made to the appropriate authorities and internally?

☐ NO ☐ YES

Were subsequent reports made if necessary?

☐ NO ☐ YES

ACTION 3

Did the service contact parents/carers as soon as possible?

☐ NO ☐ YES

Have the parents/carers continued to engage if appropriate?

☐ NO ☐ YES

ACTION 4

Has the service provided adequate ongoing support for the child?

☐ NO ☐ YES

Have any complaints been received?

☐ NO ☐ YES

If yes, have they been resolved?

☐ NO ☐ YES

ATTACHMENT 8: PUBLIC COMMITMENT TO THE CULTURAL SAFETY OF ABORIGINAL CHILDREN



This template was reviewed by Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated

Denzil Don Kindergarten is committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children

We are committed to:

- actively supporting and facilitating participation and inclusion of Aboriginal children, young people and their families at our service
- the safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children
- providing an educational program that strengthens Aboriginal children's culture and identity
- actively supporting and encouraging Aboriginal children to express their culture and enjoy their cultural rights
- supporting Aboriginal children and their families to identify as Aboriginal without fear of retribution or questioning
- supporting Aboriginal children to maintain connection to their kinship ties, land and country
- supporting Aboriginal children to be taught their cultural heritage by Elders
- facilitating regular training and education on Aboriginal cultural and cultural safety
- establishing policies, procedures, systems and processes to create a culturally safe and inclusive environment and meet the needs of Aboriginal children, young people and their families.

Denzil Don Kindergarten's Commitment to Child Safety

Denzil Don Kindergarten recognises the critical role we play in keeping children safe from harm.

The protection of children is the responsibility of everyone working at, and connected to our service including staff, families, volunteers, support workers, and anyone welcomed into the kindergarten space.

We have zero tolerance toward child abuse.

We are committed to keeping children safe at all times.

We understand Child Safety is an ongoing action and shared responsibility.

We are proudly CHILD-FIRST; placing children at the heart of everything we do: our practice, programming, policies, processes and decision-making.

We demonstrate our commitment to Child Safe Standards by:

Promoting inclusion and diversity:

- ♦ Prioritising the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and children living with disability.
- ♦ Promoting the safety and wellbeing of trans and gender diverse children and their families.
- ♦ Ensuring that LGBTQ+ families and their children feel safe and included at all times.
- ♦ Actively fostering an inclusive environment where every child feels respected and valued, promoting the cultural safety and wellbeing of Aboriginal children.

Empowering and listening to children:

- ♦ Involving children in decision-making and supporting them to share their views.
- ♦ Recognising the importance of respectful relationships in helping children to feel safe at kindergarten.
- ♦ Engaging children in discussions about the **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child**, empowering them to understand that their voice matters and can shape decisions at kindergarten and their world beyond.
- ♦ Listening to children and taking their concerns, allegations, and indicators seriously, responding with care whilst following service policies and processes.

Respecting and listening to families:

- ♦ Providing a welcoming and inclusive environment for all families.
- ♦ Collaborating with families regarding their child's development, wellbeing and education and respecting them as their child's first and foremost teacher.
- ♦ Seeking regular family feedback on our service, policies and processes.
- ♦ Respecting diversity of cultures and parenting practices whilst always prioritising children's safety.

Meeting our responsibility to keep children safe:

- ♦ Providing a safe environment that promotes children's safety, health, wellbeing and learning and development.
- ♦ Fostering a culture of openness that supports all staff and those working in partnership with Denzil Don Kindergarten to safely and confidently disclose risk of harm to children.
- ♦ Understanding and complying with the service *Code of Conduct* which outlines appropriate and expected behaviours from those interacting with the children attending Denzil Don Kindergarten.
- ♦ Understanding our obligation to respond to and report child abuse to the appropriate authorities. Staff are aware of signs of harm and are confident to facilitate a conversation so a child can safely voice their concerns.
- ♦ We have processes in place to report suspicions of child abuse and staff know how to access and follow these processes.
- ♦ Involving children in creating and maintaining a safe and equitable environment at kinder. This includes writing a *Group Charter* together.
- ♦ Actively managing and minimising the risk of abuse or harm to children, including fulfilling our duty of care and legal obligation to protect children and prevent any reasonable, foreseeable risk of injury or harm.
- ♦ Maintaining effective recruitment processes to ensure only safe and suitable people work with the children and ensuring high standards of active supervision of all staff and people working with the children, at all times.
- ♦ Continuously reviewing and reflecting on the way we identify risk and respond to child abuse, and encouraging staff to report allegations of abuse.
- ♦ Continuously reviewing our practices, reflecting critically on how we identify and respond to risk, and making changes when children express discomfort or concern.
- ♦ We are proudly a child-first service—placing children's rights, needs, wellbeing, and safety at the forefront of everything we do and every decision we make. By listening to children's voices and considering the impact of service decisions on them, we foster an environment of openness where children's safety is placed at the forefront.

ATTACHMENT 10: EMBEDDING AN ENVIRONMENT WITH ZERO TOLERANCE FOR RACISM

Denzil Don Kindergarten has zero tolerance for racism and exclusion and is dedicated to promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion.

HOW DO WE DO THIS?

Through Prevention and Education

Regular staff training and professional development:

- Conducting regular training on cultural competence and anti-racism.
- Staff individually access and participate in training that promotes inclusion
- With zero-tolerance to behaviours that might exclude others – ‘calling out’ behaviour that may be exclusive, offensive or hurtful to others and encouraging others, including the children, to do the same.
- With a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), written by all staff.

Curriculum and environment

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives are an intentional focus in our pedagogy, ensuring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives are embedded in our curriculum and can be seen in daily practice.
- Educators write an Acknowledgement of Country with their group.
- Acknowledging and opening discussion around days of cultural significance to Aboriginal Peoples.
- Displaying the Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and Pride flags throughout the service.
- Celebrating the success of Aboriginal People – past and present.
- Teaching and using Aboriginal words and symbols in the classroom (following approval).
- Displaying and providing posters, books, and toys that reflect the diverse ways of being in the world.
- Age-appropriate class discussions about Australia’s history and past.
- Age-appropriate discussions about different ways of being – family structures, the importance of being your true self, challenging gendered stereotypes, etc
- Actively and intentionally discussing and celebrating difference with the children.
- Not celebrating days that may be hurtful to others, such as Australia Day, Mother's and Father's Day

Identification and Reporting

All staff and people attending programs and activities at Denzil Don Kindergarten (such as volunteers, students, and allied health workers) **must take immediate action and report any instances of racism they observe or experience, including during excursions.**

Staff are educated about the subtle and overt forms of racism and how to report them.

Process for Reporting Racism

Reports of racism can be made verbally or in writing to the Centre Coordinator, Educational Leader, staff member or a member of the Committee of Management. For further information, please refer to the [Complaints Policy](#).

The following steps must be taken when racism is witnessed or reported:

- Address the racism immediately, ensuring the safety and well-being of those involved.
- A thorough investigation of the incident or report will be undertaken and will involve all parties and witnesses.
- The incident will be documented in the [Complaints Register](#), including actions and outcomes (refer to the [Complaints Policy](#)).
- Support will offered/provided to all impacted individuals, including counselling if needed.
- Families of those involved will be contacted to inform them of the incident and the steps being taken.
- Appropriate consequences will be applied to those found responsible for racist behaviour.
- The situation will be monitored to ensure no further incidents occur.
- Policies and procedures will be updated as necessary.
- In some instances, the Centre Coordinator will notify the Committee of Management. This includes if it involves a member of staff.
 - Reports involving a staff member may require the Committee to form a complaint subcommittee to investigate further and decide on appropriate actions for the person accused/involved.
 - It may be necessary for the staff member to be removed from working with children while the investigation takes place. They may be given non-contact duties or asked to take leave (whether it is sick leave or leave without pay will be determined by circumstance and employment law – advice may be obtained).
 - If the staff member is found to be at fault, disciplinary action will be taken as appropriate. It may include training, coaching, removal from contact with children, a written warning or suspension from the role.
 - Support may be obtained from FairWork, the Department of Education (DE), ELAA, external Human Resources support, and/or other regulatory or advice bodies.
 - Committee will always be involved in decisions made around appropriate disciplinary action decisions for staff.