

CHILD SAFE ENVIRONMENT AND WELLBEING

QUALITY AREA 2 | ELAA VERSION 3.0

PURPOSE

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

- ensure the safety, rights and best interests of children are the driving consideration in all decisions made and actions taken at the service.
- 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
- ensure staff are aware of their legal and duty of care obligations to report child maltreatment, abuse and neglect
- responding to requests and 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 the kindergarten setting
 - 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
- always 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 risk 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 risk and responds to child maltreatment, abuse and neglect, and encourages reporting and improved response to allegations of child maltreatment, abuse and neglect
- proactively shares information with relevant authorities to promote the wellbeing and/or safety of a child or 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 service management	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 (<i>Child Safe Standard 2 – 2.3</i>)	R	R	√		√
Ensuring the safety, rights and best interests of children are at the centre of all decisions and actions undertaken in the operation of the service and the delivery of education and care to children.	R	R	R		R
Being aware of this policy, the <i>Code of Conduct Policy, Privacy and Confidentiality Policy</i> and the <i>Interactions with Children Policy</i> and their ongoing obligations to behave in accordance with the policies (<i>Child Safe Standard 11 – 11.4</i>)	R	R	R	R	R
Ensuring that this policy and its processes are implemented (<i>Child Safe Standard 2 – 2.2, 2.3</i>)	R	R	√		√
Ensuring all staff are child safe champions, but that there is a person who can lead discussions, answer questions and support child safety and wellbeing (<i>Child Safe Standard 2 – 2.2, 2.3</i>)	R	√			
Ensuring that a public commitment to child safety on the service website and displayed at the service premises (<i>see Attachment 9</i>) (<i>Child Safe Standard 2 – 2.1</i>)	R	√			
Ensuring an explicit statement of Denzil Don Kindergarten’s Commitment to Child Safety is included in all promotional material and the kindergarten website (<i>Child Safe Standard 2 – 2.1, 6 – 6.1</i>)	R				
Providing leadership for an organisational culture of accountability for child safety which is open to scrutiny and continuously reviewed and improved (<i>Child Safe Standard 2 – 2.2, 2.3, 10 – 10.1</i>)	R	√			
Abiding by the <i>Code of Conduct Policy</i> (<i>Child Safe Standard 2 – 2.4</i>)	R	√	√	√	√
Keeping up to date and complying with any relevant changes in legislation and practices in relation to this policy (<i>Child Safe Standard 2 – 2.3, 10 – 10.1</i>)	R	√	√		
Contributing to an organisational culture of child safety (<i>Child Safe Standard 2 – 2.2</i>)	R	√	√	√	√
Creating an environment where all staff feel supported and encouraged to raise concerns, making it normal to report issues (<i>Child Safe Standard 2 – 2.2, 7 – 7.3</i>)	√	√			
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 (<i>Child Safe Standard 2 – 2.2, 7 – 7.4</i>)	R	√	√		
Advising staff of current legislation, and their legal and duty of care obligations around child protection (<i>Regulation 84</i>) (<i>Child Safe Standard 2 – 2.2, 2.6, 6 – 6.3, 8 – 8.1</i>)	R	√			

Completing and maintaining the Arrival Workforce Register (<i>see Sources</i>) in NQAITS for all educators, as well as volunteers and students, non-educator staff, teachers (regardless of whether they are register or accredited with a teacher registration body) and non-teaching staff who have contact with the children as part of their duties (<i>Child Safe Standard 6 – 6.2, 11 – 11.5</i>)	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>)	R		√		√
Reviewing this policy in consultation with stakeholders (<i>Child Safe Standard 10 – 10.1</i>)	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 (<i>Child Safe Standard 2 – 2.5, 9 – 9.3, 10 -10.1</i>)	R	R	√		√
Implementing risk assessments of the service environment, equipment and online environment (<i>see eSafety policy</i>) to ensure risks to safety, health and wellbeing are minimised (<i>National Law: Sections 167</i>) (<i>see Occupational Health and Safety and Injury Trauma and Illness Policy</i>) (<i>Child Safe Standard 9 – 9.1, 9.3</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>see eSafety for Children Policy</i>) (<i>Child Safe Standard 9 – 9.1, 9.3</i>)	R	√	√		√
Developing risk management strategies that focus on preventing, identifying and mitigating risks of maltreatment, abuse and neglect of children (<i>Child Safe Standard 2 – 2.5, 9 – 9.3</i>)	R	R	R		R
Ensuring risk management plans (<i>see Sources</i>) list the actions the service will take to prevent or reduce identified risk of maltreatment, abuse and neglect of children (<i>Child Safe Standard 2 – 2.5, 9 – 9.3</i>)	R	R	√		√
Monitoring, reviewing and evaluating risk management plans (<i>Child Safe Standard 10 – 10.1</i>)	R	R	R		R
Undertaking child safety and wellbeing reviews and developing an action plan to maintain Child Safe Standards (<i>see Definitions</i>) (<i>Child Safe Standard 2 – 2.3, 10 – 10.1</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 (<i>Child Safe Standard 7 – 7.3, 7.4, 10 – 10.1, 10.2</i>)	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>) (<i>Child Safe Standard 2 – 2.5, 10 – 10.1</i>)	R	R	√	√	√
Recruitment, Agency Relief Staff and Volunteers					
Ensuring child safety is included in all selection criteria, position descriptions, job advertisements, interview questions and reference checks (<i>see Attachment 2</i>) (<i>Child Safe Standard 6 – 6.1</i>)	R	R			
Conducting recruitment and induction processes for new staff and agency staff in line with this policy (<i>see Attachment 1</i>) (<i>Child Safe Standard 6 – 6.1, 6.3</i>)	R				

Screening contractors (agency staff), volunteers and students in line with their roles and this policy (<i>see Attachment 2</i>) (<i>Child Safe Standard 6 – 6.1, 6.2</i>)	R				
Ensuring the safety and wellbeing of children attending the service by maintaining a visitors record including contact details, signatures and arrival/departure times of people accessing the kinder (<i>Child Safe Standard 9 – 9.1</i>)	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 (<i>Child Safe Standard 6 – 6.1, 6.2</i>)	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 (<i>Child Safe Standard 6 – 6.2</i>)	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>see Staffing Policy</i>)	R	√			
Notifying the approved provider and the Regulatory Authority within 7 days of any changes to their personal situation (change of address, circumstances affecting their status such as suspension or cancellation of a WWC clearance or teacher registration, or if they are subject to disciplinary proceedings) (<i>Child Safe Standard 6 – 6.2</i>)		R	R		R
Ensuring the Approved Provider notifies the Regulatory Authority of a change to the staff members WWC status (<i>Child Safe Standard 6 – 6.1, 6.2</i>)	R				
Training					
Ensuring all staff, volunteers and students, are aware of current child protection legislation, including mandatory reporting requirements and obligations (<i>Child Safe Standard 2 – 2.6, 6 – 6.3, 8 – 8.1, 8.2, 8.3</i>)	R	R	√		√
Providing appropriate resources and training to assist staff, contractors, volunteers and students to implement this policy (<i>see Sources</i>) (<i>Child Safe Standard 6 – 6.3, 8 – 8.1, 8.2, 8.3</i>)	R				
Ensuring all staff members (whether or not they work directly with children) and volunteers including students, complete required child protection training within the timeframes of the National Regulations (<i>Child Safe Standard 6 – 6.3, 8 – 8.1, 8.2, 8.3</i>)	R	R	R		R
Ensuring management, all staff members, and volunteers including students, complete mandatory national child safety training within the timeframes of the National Regulations (<i>Child Safe Standard 6 – 6.3, 8 – 8.1, 8.2, 8.3</i>)	R	R	R		R
Ensuring systems are in place that cover all aspects of child protection training annually (<i>see Source</i>). This includes refresher training and additional professional development where needed. Different roles in the service may 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 (<i>Child Safe Standard 8 – 8.1, 8.2, 8.3, 8.4</i>)	R	R	R		R

<p>Developing training (<i>see Sources</i>) for staff and volunteers that incorporates:</p> <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. <p>(<i>Child Safe Standard 6 – 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 6 – 6.3, 8 – 8.1, 8.2, 8.3</i>)</p>	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 (<i>Child Safe Standard 2 – 2.5, 9 – 9.3</i>)	R	R	R		
Using the NQF Child Safe Culture Guide and NQF Online Safety Guides (<i>see Sources</i>), including questions to guide reflection on practice to inform training and discussions with staff (<i>Child Safe Standard 8 – 8.1, 8.2, 8.3, 8.4, 9 – 9.2</i>)	√	√			
Culturally Safe Environment					
Identifying, responding to and reporting inappropriate conduct (<i>see Definitions</i>) in accordance with the <i>Education and Care Services National Law</i> and the <i>Reportable Conduct Scheme</i> , including notifying the Social Services Regulator within required timeframes where a reportable allegation is formed (<i>see Code of Conduct Policy</i>)					
Ensuring racism within the service is identified, confronted and not tolerated (<i>see Attachment 10</i>) (<i>Child Safe Standard 1 – 1.3</i>)	R	R	R	R	R
Actively discouraging discrimination against children, families and educators based on culture, gender, age, sexuality, disability or religion (<i>Child Safe Standard 1 – 1.5, 5 – 5.3</i>)	R	R	R	√	R
Creating a culturally safe environment and meet the needs of Aboriginal children, young people and their families (<i>Child Safe Standard 1 – 1.3, 1.4, 1.5</i>)	R	R	R		R
Embedding strategies within the service 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 (<i>Child Safe Standard 1 – 1.2</i>)	R	R	R		R
Actively supporting and facilitating the participation and inclusion within Denzil Don Kindergarten by Aboriginal children, young people and their families (<i>Child Safe Standard 1 – 1.4</i>)	R	R	R		R
Creating, making available and displaying publicly a commitment to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children (<i>see Attachment 8</i>) (<i>Child Safe Standard 1 – 1.5, 2 – 2.1</i>)	R	√			
Actively supporting and encouraging a child’s ability to express their culture and enjoy their cultural rights (<i>Child Safe Standard 1 – 1.2</i>)	R	√	√		√
Understanding children’s diverse circumstances, and providing support and responding to those who are vulnerable (<i>Child Safe Standard 5 – 5.1</i>)	R	√	√		
Supporting the needs and rights of children with disability, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, those who are	R	R	R		R

unable to live at home, who identify as LGBTIQ+ and intersex children (<i>Child Safe Standard 5 – 5.3</i>)					
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>see Interaction with Children Policy</i>) (<i>Child Safe Standard 3 – 3.1</i>)	√	√	√		√
Providing children with information and feedback about how the service keeps them safe (<i>Child Safe Standard 3 – 3.1</i>)	√	√	√		√
Supporting children to feel comfortable to talk about their development, body safety and to disclose concerns. Teaching them about respect, dignity and safety from an early age (<i>Child Safe Standard 3 – 3.1</i>)	√	√	√		√
Offering children access to age-appropriate sexual abuse prevention and protective behaviours programs and to relevant related information (<i>Child Safe Standard 3 – 3.3</i>)	R	R	R		R
Informing children about their rights, including to safety, information and participation (<i>Child Safe Standard 3 – 3.1</i>)	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>see Complaints policy</i>) (<i>Child Safe Standard 7 – 7.1, 7.3</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 (<i>Child Safe Standard 3 – 3.1, 3.4, 7 – 7.2</i>)	R	R	R		R
Identifying local support agencies for help that is age-appropriate for children and families (<i>Child Safe Standard 4 – 4.2</i>)	√	√	√		
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> (<i>Child Safe Standard 2 – 2.6</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>see Privacy and Confidentiality Policy</i>) (<i>Child Safe Standard 2 – 2.6</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 (<i>Child Safe Standard 2 – 2.6</i>)	R	R	R		
Ensuring when sharing information under the CISS and FVSISS, that the wellbeing and safety of a child or group of children is given precedence over the right to privacy (<i>see Privacy and Confidentiality Policy</i>) (<i>Child Safe Standard 2 – 2.6</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>) (<i>Child Safe Standard 3 – 3.1, 4 – 4.1</i>)	√	√	√		
Being respectful of and having regard to a child’s social, personal 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>) (<i>Child Safe Standard 5 – 5.1, 5.3</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>) (<i>Child Safe Standard 1 – 1.2, 1.4, 1.5</i>)	√	√	√		
Child Safe Reporting					
Taking all child safety issues seriously, respond quickly, and ensure all staff and volunteers have the resources they need (<i>Child Safe Standard 2 – 2.2, 7 – 7.3</i>)	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>) (<i>Child Safe Standard 2 – 2.2, 7 – 7.1, 7.3, 7.4</i>)	R	√	√	√	√
Following processes for responding to and reporting suspected family violence (<i>Child Safe Standard 2 – 2.6, 7 – 7.1, 7.3, 7.4</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>) (<i>Child Safe Standard 2 – 2.6, 7 – 7.1, 7.3, 7.4</i>)	R	R	R		
Following processes for responding to and reporting suspected family violence (<i>see Attachment 4, 5, 6 & 7</i>) (<i>Child Safe Standard 2 – 2.6, 7 – 7.1, 7.3, 7.4</i>)	R	R	R		
Responding to concerns about sexual behaviours, even if they seem typical (<i>see Attachment 5</i>) (<i>Child Safe Standard 2 – 2.6, 7 – 7.1, 7.3, 7.4</i>)	R	R	R		
Fulfilling legal obligations, including mandatory reporting and duty of care obligations (<i>see Definitions</i>) (<i>see Attachment 5</i>) (<i>Child Safe Standard 2 – 2.6, 7 – 7.1, 7.3, 7.4</i>)	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>) (<i>Child Safe Standard 7 – 7.3, 7.4</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 the service (<i>Child Safe Standard 7 – 7.3, 7.4</i>)		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 (<i>Child Safe Standard 4 – 4.2</i>)	√	√	√		
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 the service (<i>Child Safe Standard 4 – 4.2, 7 – 7.3</i>)	√	√	√		
Notifying DE within 24 hours of a serious incident (<i>see Definitions</i>) occurring at the service (<i>Child Safe Standard 7 – 7.4</i>)	R	√			
Notifying DE within 24 hours of becoming aware of a notifiable complaint (<i>see Definitions</i>) or allegation regarding the safety, health and/or welfare of a child at the service (<i>Child Safe Standard 7 – 7.4</i>)	R	√			
Notifying DE within 24 hours of becoming aware of any incident where it is reasonably believed that physical and/or sexual abuse of	R	√			

a child or any allegation that sexual or physical abuse of a child has occurred or is occurring at the service (<i>Child Safe Standard 7 – 7.4</i>)					
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				
Knowing the Coordinator and Educational Leader (management team) are the head of the organisation at the service (<i>see Sources</i>) (<i>Child Safe Standard 2 – 2.3</i>)	R				
Notifying the nominated head of the organisation (management team) to the Social Service Regulator and maintaining the currency of this information (<i>Child Safe Standard 2 – 2.3</i>)	R				
Ensuring staff or volunteers that are provided by an Agency are also subject to the reportable conduct scheme (<i>Child Safe Standard 7 – 7.4</i>)	R				
Notifying the Social Services Regulator 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>see Attachment 3 & 4</i>) (<i>Child Safe Standard 7 – 7.4</i>)	R				
Investigating an allegation (subject to police clearance on criminal matters or matters involving family violence), advising the Social Services Regulator who is undertaking the investigation (<i>Child Safe Standard 7 – 7.4</i>)	R				
Managing the risks to children whilst undertaking the investigation (<i>Child Safe Standard 7 – 7.4, 9 – 9.1</i>)	R	√	√		
Updating the Social Services Regulator within 30 calendar days with detailed information about the reportable allegation and any action taken (<i>Child Safe Standard 7 – 7.4</i>)	R				
Notifying the Social Services Regulator of the investigation findings and any disciplinary action taken (or the reasons no action was taken) (<i>Child Safe Standard 7 – 7.4</i>)	R				
Providing support to staff who disclose harm (<i>Child Safe Standard 8 – 8.3</i>)	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 (<i>Child Safe Standard 8 – 8.3</i>)	√	√			
Maintaining confidentiality at all times (<i>see Privacy and Confidentiality Policy</i>) (<i>Child Safe Standard 2 – 2.6</i>)	R	R	R	√	R
Protecting the rights of children and families, and encouraging their participation in decision-making (<i>Child Safe Standard 4 – 4.1</i>)	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>see Occupational Health and Safety and Injury Trauma and Illness Policy</i>) (<i>Child Safe Standard 9 – 9.1, 9.3</i>)	√	√	√		√

Complying with legislated ECT/educator-to-child ratios at all times (<i>National Law: Sections 169, Regulations 123</i>) (see <i>Supervision of Children Policy</i>)	R	R	√		√
Ensuring children are always actively supervised (<i>Regulations 122</i>) (see <i>Supervision of Children Policy</i>) (<i>Child Safe Standard 9 – 9.1, 9.3</i>)	R	R	√		√

PROCEDURES

See [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

See [Attachment 4](#) or ACECQA- 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](#) is that the approved provider must 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 including ensuring adequate supervision at all times as set out in section 167.

The [Education and Care Service National Law](#) also introduced the Paramountcy Principle. This requires that the safety, rights and best interests of children are the paramount consideration in the operation of an educational and care service and in the delivery of education and care to children.

Legislative amendments to the [Education and Care Services National Regulations](#) require the mandatory completion of approved child protection training for all persons who work with children. The requirement extends to all service staff and volunteers including students.

Further amendments mandate nationally consistent child safety training for all service staff, volunteers and students including those who do not work directly with children.

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 all service 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 allows 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](#)).

Early Childhood Teachers are required to be registered with the Victorian Institute of Teaching and are mandatory reporters (*see Definitions*). In addition, all other 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.

Adopting the National Code Model supports Early Childhood services guidelines to meet new regulatory requirements for the safe use of electronics in education and care services, as set by the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority. The updated requirements strengthen safeguards around the use of digital technologies to promote child safety and protect children's privacy.

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 in the lunchroom. 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 the image is no longer needed. The cloud storage is shared and accessed by all staff and is monitored by management. It is owned by Denzil Don Kindergarten. Every classroom has a service owned 'dumb' mobile phone for excursions and emergency use.

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, see 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:

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.*

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.*

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.*

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.*

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.*

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.*

Inappropriate conduct: Conduct that a reasonable person would consider inappropriate in an educational and care service, considering any of the following circumstances:

- Whether the conduct aligns with generally accepted education and care practice
- The child’s age and developmental stage
- Whether the conduct is likely to result in harm (including emotional, psychological, or physical harm) or injury to a child or children
- Whether the conduct is sexual, aggressive or violent.

In deciding if the conduct is inappropriate, it does not matter if:

- The child consented (agreed to the conduct, either by directly expressing their consent or implying consent through their actions)
- The person subjecting the child to the conduct believes the child has consented
- The person subjecting the child to the conduct is related to the child.

Subjecting a child to inappropriate conduct can occur in a number of ways including but not limited to:

- In-person via words or behaviours including both adult to child or between adults in the presence of children
- Filming or capturing images or recordings
- As a single occasion or as part of a pattern over time
- Either directly or indirectly (for example, exposure to inappropriate language or conversations or leaving inappropriate material accessible to children)
- Online
- As an omission (for example, deliberately excluding a child)

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 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 (*see 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 and Educational Leader (management team).

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 (see 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*).

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

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.



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
- ACECQA: [Child Safety Incident Response Template](#)
- ACECQA: [NQF Child Safe Culture Guide](#)
- ACECQA: [NQF Online Safety Guide](#)
- ACECQA: National early childhood work register
- 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: Child safe practices for digital technologies and personal electronic devices
- Department of Education: Mandatory national child safety training
- Department of Education: [Mandatory Reporting eLearning Module](#)
- Department of Education: [Early Childhood Workforce Register](#)
- Early Learning Association Australia: [Child Safe Reporting Guide](#)
- SNAICC: [Keeping Our Kids Safe: Cultural Safety and the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations](#)
- Social Service Regulator: Reportable Conduct Scheme
- Social Service Regulator: Child Safe Standards
- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child: www.unicef.org
- 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
- 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 \(2\)](#)).
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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 01/03/2026.

REVIEW DATE: 01 / MARCH / 2028

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 LBGQTQIA+ 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 (see 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 the services commitment to maintaining a child safe environment is included in all job descriptions and job advertisements
- Job descriptions clearly outline 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 with questions to be asked fine tuned by service management.
- Qualifications are verified.
- NQAITs public portal to check if an applicant is a prohibited person.
- A criminal 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.
- All-staff meetings are held between staff members and the management team
- Training and education regarding 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

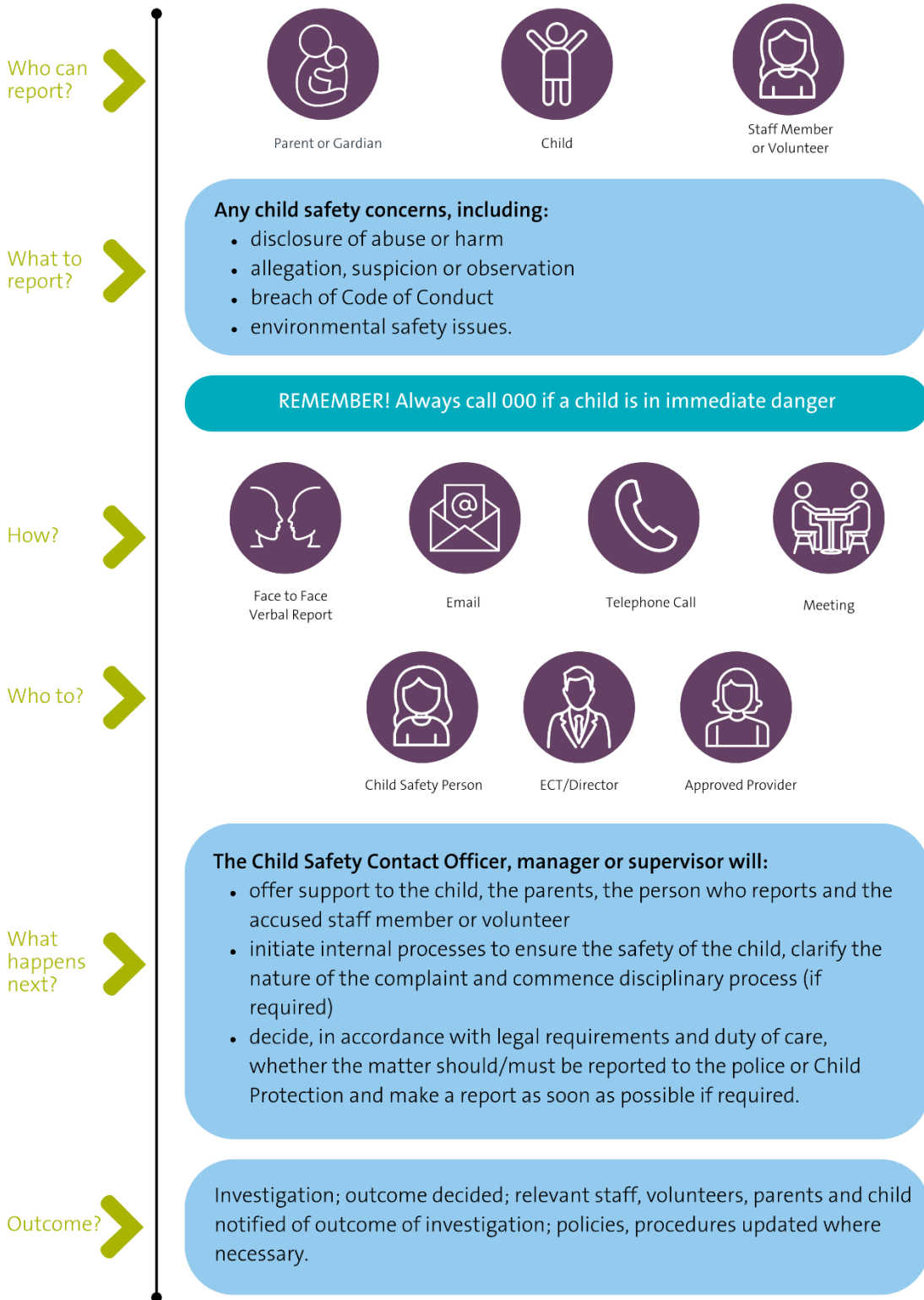
- Regular meetings are held between staff and management, and child safety is a regular item on the agenda
- Provide supervision to ensure clear expectations about the role, adequate support as well as on-the-job monitoring of their performance.
- Performance reviews consider the staff member's contribution 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, WWCC 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 WWCC 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.
- Considering whether a screening or recruitment process is relevant to the role and the risks to children.
- Ensuring 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.
- Informing contractors, volunteers and students of policies relevant to their role as part of their orientation.
- Providing supervision to ensure clear expectations about the role and responsibilities.
- Ensuring contractors, volunteers or students (or visitors) are never left alone with children.
- Having 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: PROCESS FOR 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).
- Maintain 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.
- **Note that** 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 (see 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:

- There are significant concerns for a child's wellbeing
- Parents/carers lack 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, impacting their child's care and/or development.

WHEN TO MAKE A REFERRAL TO ORANGE DOOR

Orange Door is a free service for women, children and young people who are 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 to relevant services, which may be the best way to connect them with the services they need.

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.
- 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 someone else.

WHEN TO REPORT WELLBEING CONCERNS TO DFFH CHILD PROTECTION

In addition to reporting suspected abuse to appropriate authorities you should contact DFFH Child Protection if you have significant protective 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 Actions** listed below.

MANAGING A DISCLOSURE

It is very important to validate a child's disclosure, by listening to the child, taking them seriously, and responding and acting on the disclosure by implementing the services reporting procedures.

Strategies include:

- Let them talk about their concerns in their own time and their own words.
- Give them your 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 and non-judgemental tone.
- Comfort the child if they are distressed (seek permission before comforting the child with 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 need to let other people know so that they can help them.

It is the role of DFFH Child Protection and Victoria Police is to investigate. **DO NOT** take any steps to investigate. Avoid asking investigative or invasive questions that may cause the child to withdraw and impede an investigation. Avoid going over the 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 (*see 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, disclosure 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
- Identifying 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 needs 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 VECRA within 24 hours** of the incident, or the time they become aware of the incident. **Notification must be made via NQAITS.**

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

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

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

REPORT to DFDH Child Protection (as a mandatory reporter)

NOTIFY MANAGEMENT.

The Centre Coordinator must **NOTIFY VECRA within 24 hours** of the incident, or the time they become aware of the incident. **Notification must be made via NQAITS.**

The Centre Coordinator must **NOTIFY the Social Services Regulator (SSR) within 3 business days** of becoming aware of the allegation.

A contact person must also be nominated for future liaison with Child Protection and Victoria Police, as well as seeking advice about contacting parents/carers.

ACTION 3: CONTACTING PARENTS/CARERS

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

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

- The parents are alleged to have engaged in the abuse
- A disclosure to the parent/carers 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
- Engaging allied health professionals with expertise in addressing child abuse and trauma to support the service to design and implement support strategies
- establishing 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 Social Service Regulator 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**.

The SSR provides guidance on the processes and documentation required when making a report: see <https://www.vic.gov.au/reportable-conduct-scheme>

3 business day notification	30 calendar day update	Advice on investigation	Outcome of investigation	Advice on investigation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Name of the worker or volunteer - Date of birth - Police report - Service contact details - Head(s) of service's name - Initial advice on the nature of the allegation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Details of the allegation - Details of the service response to the allegation - Details of any disciplinary or other action proposed - Any written response from the worker or volunteer about the allegation and the proposed disciplinary or other action proposed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Name of investigator - 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 request further documents from management

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 SERVICE 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 act if they suspect, or are witness to, any form of child abuse.
- The flowchart: Four Critical Actions for early childhood services. Responding to incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse, provides a summary of the critical actions to take.
- Early Childhood Online Learning: this e-learning module supports all early childhood professionals to respond effectively to children whose safety, health or wellbeing may be at risk.

Commission for Children and Young People: <https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/>

Social Services Regulator: <https://www.vic.gov.au/social-services-regulator>

ATTACHMENT 6: FOUR CRITICAL ACTIONS FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES

FOUR CRITICAL ACTIONS FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES

Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicious 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.*

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.

* 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.acscqa.gov.au/national-quality-agenda-it-system or by contacting 1300 307 415.

* Sexual offending, involving children 10 years and over.

* Licensed services operate under the Children's Services Act 1996 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.

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 parents/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

<p>DHHS CHILD PROTECTION</p> <p>AREA</p> <p>North Division 1300 864 9777</p> <p>South Division 1300 655 795</p> <p>East Division 1300 360 391</p> <p>West Division (Rural) 1800 075 599</p> <p>West Division (Metro) 1300 864 9777</p> <p>AFTER HOURS</p> <p>After hours, weekends, public holidays 13 127 8</p> <p>CHILD FIRST</p> <p>www.dhs.vic.gov.au</p> <p>VICTORIA POLICE</p> <p>000 or your local police station</p>	<p>QUALITY ASSESSMENT AND REGULATION DIVISION</p> <p>NORTH WESTERN</p> <p>Loddon Mallee (03) 5440 3111</p> <p>Northern Metropolitan (03) 8397 0372</p> <p>SOUTH-EASTERN</p> <p>Gippsland Area (03) 5127 0400</p> <p>Southern Metropolitan (03) 87 65 5787</p> <p>NORTH-EASTERN</p> <p>Eastern Metropolitan 1300 651 9400</p> <p>Hume (03) 8392 9500</p> <p>SOUTH-WESTERN</p> <p>Barwon South West (03) 5225 1001</p> <p>Western Metropolitan (03) 8397 0246</p> <p>Grampians (03) 5337 8444</p>
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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: <i>ARE ALL IMPACTED CHILDREN SAFE AND NOT IN IMMEDIATE DANGER? IF A CHILD IS IN IMMEDIATE DANGER, REPORT IMMEDIATELY TO VICTORIA POLICE AT 000</i>

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

FOUNDATIONS 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.

<p>CURRENT SAFETY AND WELLBEING OF THE CHILD</p> <p>IS THE CHILD SAFE FROM ABUSE AND HARM? <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> YES <i>IF NO, CONSIDER THE NEED TO MAKE A FURTHER REPORT</i></p> <p>DOES THE CHILD HAVE ANY WELLBEING ISSUES THAT ARE NOT CURRENTLY BEING ADDRESSED? <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> YES <i>IF SO, CONSIDER HOW THESE CAN BE ADDRESSED AND CAPTURED WITHIN A STUDENT SUPPORT PLAN</i></p>	
<p>CURRENT WELLBEING OF OTHER CHILDREN WHO MAY BE IMPACTED BY THE ABUSER</p> <p>ARE THERE ANY OTHER CHILDREN WHO MAY BE IMPACTED BY THE ABUSER? <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> YES</p> <p>ARE SO, HAVE THEIR WELLBEING NEEDS BEEN MET? <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> YES</p>	
<p>CURRENT WELLBEING OF IMPACTED STAFF MEMBERS</p> <p>DOES THE STAFF MEMBER WHO MADE THE REPORT/WITNESSED THE INCIDENT, FORMED A SUSPICION OR RECEIVED A DISCLOSURE REQUIRE SUPPORT? <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> YES</p> <p>IF SO, HAS IT BEEN RECEIVED? <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> YES</p>	
<p>REVIEW OF ACTIONS TAKEN</p> <p>HAVE STAFF FOLLOWED THE FOUR CRITICAL ACTIONS FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES, INCLUDING RESPONDING TO INCIDENTS DISCLOSED FOR SUSPICION OF CHILD ABUSE?</p>	
<p>Was an appropriate decision made in relation to when to act? <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> YES</p> <p>Could the suspected abuse have been detected earlier? <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> YES</p> <p>ACTION 1</p> <p>Did staff take appropriate action in an emergency? <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> YES</p> <p>ACTION 2</p> <p>Was a report made to the appropriate authorities and internally? <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> YES</p> <p>Were subsequent reports made if necessary? <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> YES</p>	<p>ACTION 3</p> <p>Did the service contact parents/carers as soon as possible? <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> YES</p> <p>Have the parents/carers continued to engage if appropriate? <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> YES</p> <p>ACTION 4</p> <p>Has the service provided adequate ongoing support for the child? <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> YES</p> <p>Have any complaints been received? <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> YES</p> <p>If yes, have they been resolved? <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> YES</p>

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

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 of Aboriginal culture and cultural heritage.
- Establishing policies and, procedures, systems and processes to create a culturally safe and inclusive environment and meet the needs of Aboriginal children, young people and their families.



The writing of this commitment to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children was guided by the VAEAI

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 place children at the heart of everything we do: our practice, curriculum, policies, processes and decision-making.

We demonstrate our commitment to Child Safe Standards by:

Promoting inclusion and diversity

We actively nurture an environment that celebrates inclusion and embraces the diversity of all children and families by:

- ♦ Prioritising the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and children living with disability.
- ♦ Ensuring that LGBTIQ+ families and their children feel safe, respected, and included at all times.
- ♦ Fostering a welcoming, inclusive culture where every child feels valued, respected and able to participate full.

Empowering and listening to children

We respect children as active participants in their own learning, wellbeing and safety by:

- ♦ Involving children in decision-making and supporting them to share their views, ideas and feelings.
- ♦ Recognising that strong, respectful relationships help children feel safe and connected.
- ♦ 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 beyond.
- ♦ Listening to children and taking their concerns, disclosures, allegations, and indicators seriously, responding with sensitivity and in accordance with our policies and procedures.

Respecting and listening to families

We acknowledge families as children's first and most important teachers and are committed to building strong, respectful and collaborative partnerships with them by:

- ♦ Providing a welcoming and inclusive environment for all families.
- ♦ Collaborating with families regarding their child's development, learning and wellbeing.
- ♦ Regularly seeking family feedback about our service, policies and processes.
- ♦ Respecting diversity of culture and parenting practices while always prioritising the safety and best interests of children.

Meeting our responsibility to keep children safe

We uphold our duty of care and legal obligations by embedding clear, consistent and effective child safety practices across all aspects of our service:

- ♦ Providing an environment that supports children's safety, health, wellbeing, learning and development.
- ♦ Fostering a culture of openness where all staff and those working in partnership with us, feel safe to confidently disclose risk of harm.
- ♦ Understanding and complying with our service *Code of Conduct* which outlines expected behaviours from all persons interacting with our children.
- ♦ Recognising and responding to signs of harm, and ensuring staff are confident and supported to facilitate safe conversations with children who voice concerns.
- ♦ Ensuring staff understand how to respond to and report suspected child abuse to the appropriate authorities, and embedding clear processes for reporting and follow-up.
- ♦ Involving children in establishing and maintaining a safe and inclusive environment for all, including writing a *Class Charter*.
- ♦ Actively assessing, managing and minimising risks of harm or abuse, including meeting our duty of care obligations to prevent foreseeable injury or harm.
- ♦ Maintaining rigorous recruitment, induction and supervision practices to ensure only safe and suitable people work with children.
- ♦ Continuously reviewing and reflecting on our practice, improving how we identify and respond to risks, and making changes when children express discomfort or concern.

Our Commitment to Child Safety is informed by the 11 Child Safe Standards:

Child Safe Standard 1: Organisations establish a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identifies and experiences of Aboriginal children and young people are respected and valued

Child Safe Standard 2: Child Safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture

Child Safe Standard 3: Children and young people are empowered about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously

Child Safe Standard 4: Families and communities are informed, and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing

Child Safe Standard 5: Equity is upheld, and diverse needs respected in policy and practice

Child Safe Standard 6: People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice

Child Safe Standard 7: Processes for complaints and concerns are child focused

Child Safe Standard 8: Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ingoing education and training.

Child Safe Standard 9: Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed

Child Safe Standard 10: Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved

Child Safe Standard 11: Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people

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.

Through 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.
- Celebrating *Harmony Day* every year, in recognition and honour the importance and beauty of diversity.

Identification

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 it.

Educators facilitate safe, age-appropriate discussions that help children explore and understand diversity and difference.

Responding to Incidents

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 see 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 (see 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.

