

# CHILD SAFE ENVIRONMENT & WELLBEING POLICY

## QUALITY AREA 2 – VERSION 3.3



### 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 heart of all service decisions and actions
- Provide a safe environment for all children that supports their safety, health, and wellbeing
- Promote the cultural safety of all children
- Safeguard all children from harm
- Identify, reduce, and remove risks of child maltreatment, abuse, and neglect
- Intervene when a child may be at risk of maltreatment, abuse, or neglect
- Involve children in matters of child safety, including listening to their views and incorporating their perspectives in creating a safe environment
- Ensure staff are aware of their legal and duty of care obligations to report child maltreatment, abuse, and neglect.
- Respond to requests and share or seek information, where appropriate, to promote child wellbeing and safety and/or manage the risk of family violence.

### POLICY STATEMENT

The safety, health, wellbeing, rights and best interests of every child guide all decisions, actions and practices of Denzil Don Kindergarten staff.

### VALUES

Denzil Don Kindergarten is committed to:

- Upholding 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 safety and wellbeing of trans and gender diverse children and their families in early childhood education and care (ECEC) settings
  - ensuring that LGBTIQ+ families and their children feel welcomed, respected, and included
- Promoting a strong culture of child safety and wellbeing within the service
- Valuing, respecting, and caring for all children
- Fostering opportunities for each child to participate, express their views, and learn and develop
- Always acting in the best interests of each child, with zero tolerance for child maltreatment, abuse, and neglect
- Taking all reasonable steps to ensure the health, safety, and wellbeing of children at all times, while supporting their learning and development
- Actively managing risks of maltreatment, abuse, and neglect, including fulfilling duty of care and legal obligations to protect children from reasonably foreseeable harm
- Continuously improving how the service identifies and responds to risks of child maltreatment, abuse, and neglect, and encouraging the reporting of concerns and appropriate responses to allegations
- Proactively sharing information with relevant authorities, where appropriate, to promoting the wellbeing and/or safety of a child or group of children, in line with their best interests.

### SCOPE

This policy applies to the Approved Provider, all service staff (educational and non-educational), students, volunteers, parents/carers, children, and others attending the programs and activities of Denzil Don Kindergarten.

<b>Parent/Carer Responsibilities Under This Policy:</b>
Treat all children, families, staff, and community members with respect, dignity, and fairness
Value and respect diversity, including differences in culture, identity, ability, religion, gender, and family structure
Demonstrate behaviour that supports the service's zero tolerance of racism, discrimination, and exclusion

Raise any concerns about child safety, wellbeing, or inappropriate behaviour with staff or management in a timely manner
Engage respectfully in complaints, feedback, and resolution processes
Not attend the service while under the influence of alcohol or drugs, or in a way that may compromise safety
Read, understand and follow the service Code of Conduct at all times
Adhere to this policy and all other service policies at all times

<b>Responsibilities:</b> R indicates legislation requirement	Approved provider & persons with management or control	Nominated Supervisor and Person in Day-to-Day Charge	All service staff (educational & non-educational)	Contractors, Volunteers & Students
<b>GOVERNANCE</b>				
Ensure that obligations under the <i>Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations</i> are met (Standard 2)	R	R	√	√
Ensure the safety, rights, and best interests of children remain the paramount consideration in all decisions and actions undertaken in the operation of the service and the delivery of education and care to children	R	R	R	R
Know this policy, and all policies, in particular, the <i>Code of Conduct, Privacy and Confidentiality</i> , and <i>Interactions with Children Policy</i> , and comply with ongoing obligations to act in accordance with them (Standard 11)	R	R	R	R
Ensure that this policy, and its procedures are implemented (Standard 2)	R	R	√	√
Ensure there is a child safety champion who leads discussions, answers questions, and supports child safety and wellbeing (Standard 2)	R	√		
Ensure a public commitment to child safety is published on the service website and displayed at the service premises (refer to Attachment 5A) (Standard 2)	R	√		
Provide leadership that promotes an organisational culture of accountability for child safety, remains open to scrutiny, and supports ongoing review and improvement (Standard 2, 10)	R	√		
Abide by the Code of Conduct Policy (Standard 2)	R	√	√	√
Keep up to date with, and comply with, any relevant changes in legislation and practices related to this policy (Standard 2, 10)	R	√	√	
Contribute to a culture of child safety (Standard 2)	R	√	√	√
Create an environment where all staff feel supported and encouraged to raise concerns, making it normal to report issues (Standard 2, 7)	√	√		
Promote awareness of, and compliance with, the Child Safe Standards when disclosing information to support the wellbeing and safety of a child or group of children (Standard 2, 7)	R	√	√	
Advise staff of current legislation, and their legal and duty of care obligations in relation to child protection (Regulation 84) (Standard 2, 6, 8)	R	√		
Complete and maintain the National Educator Register in the NQAITS for all service staff, volunteers and students (Standard 6, 11)	R	R		
Ensure all staff, contractors, volunteers, and students do not consume alcohol, are not under the influence of alcohol, and are not affected by drugs (Regulations 82, 83) (see <i>Tobacco, Alcohol and Other Drugs Policy</i> )	R	√	√	√

Review this policy with stakeholders ( <a href="#">Standard 10</a> )	R	√	√	√
<b>RISK ASSESSMENT AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT</b>				
Conduct a child safe risk assessment annually to ensure the service meets its child safe obligations ( <a href="#">Standard 2, 9, 10</a> )	R	R	√	√
Implement risk assessments of the environment (physical and online), and equipment ( <i>see eSafety Policy</i> ) to ensure risks to safety, health, and wellbeing are minimised ( <i>National Law: Section 167</i> ) ( <i>see Occupational Health and Safety and Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy</i> ) ( <a href="#">Standard 9</a> )	R	R	√	√
Identify and mitigate risks in online and physical environments without compromising a child's right to privacy, access to information, social connection, and learning opportunities ( <i>see eSafety for Children Policy</i> ) ( <a href="#">Standard 9</a> )	R	√	√	√
Develop risk management strategies that focus on preventing, identifying, and mitigating risk of child maltreatment, abuse, and neglect ( <a href="#">Standard 2, 9</a> )	R	R	R	R
Ensure risk management plans outline the actions the service will take to prevent or reduce each identified risk of child maltreatment, abuse, and neglect ( <a href="#">Standard 2, 9</a> )	R	R	√	√
Actively monitor, review, and evaluate risk management plans ( <a href="#">Standard 10</a> )	R	R	√	√
Undertake child safety and wellbeing reviews and develop an action plan to maintain the Child Safe Standards at the service ( <a href="#">Standard 2, 10</a> )	R	R	R	R
Ensure all child safety and wellbeing incidents are reviewed regularly, with findings thoroughly documented in reports, including lessons from complaints, concerns, and safety incidents ( <a href="#">Standard 7, 10</a> )	R	√	√	√
Ensure continuous improvement in the implementation of the Child Safe Standards at the service, and promote an organisational culture of accountability for child safety that remains open to scrutiny and supports ongoing review and improvement ( <a href="#">Standard 2, 10</a> )	R	R	√	√
<b>RECRUITMENT, AGENCY RELIEF STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS</b>				
Ensure child safety is included in all selection criteria, position descriptions, job advertisements, interview questions, and reference checks ( <a href="#">Standard 6</a> )	R	R		
Conduct recruitment and induction processes for new staff and agency staff in line with this policy (refer to Attachment 1) ( <a href="#">Standard 6</a> )	R			
Screen contractors (agency staff), volunteers, and students in line with their roles and this policy ( <a href="#">Standard 6</a> )	R			
Ensure the safety and wellbeing of children attending the service by maintaining a visitors' record, including contact details, signatures, and arrival and departure times ( <a href="#">Standard 9</a> )	R	√	√	√
Ensure contractors, volunteers, students, parents/carers, and other visitors are not left in sole supervision of individual children or groups of children ( <a href="#">Standard 6</a> )	R	R	√	
Prevent contact, or respond appropriately if it occurs, when the service is notified of a court order prohibiting an adult from contacting an enrolled child ( <a href="#">Standard 2, 9</a> )	R	R	√	
Validate Working with Children Clearance or Victorian Institute of Teaching registration before staff, contractors, volunteers, and students commence working with children ( <i>see Staffing Policy</i> ) ( <a href="#">Standard 6</a> )	R	√		
Notify the Centre Coordinator and the Regulatory Authority within 7 days of any changes to personal circumstances, including a change in mailing address, changes affecting status (such as suspension or cancellation of a Working with Children Clearance or teacher registration), or involvement in disciplinary proceedings ( <a href="#">Standard 6</a> )		R	R	R
Ensure the approved provider notifies the Regulatory Authority of any change to a staff member's Working with Children Clearance status ( <a href="#">Standard 6</a> )	R			

<b>TRAINING</b>				
Ensure all service staff, volunteers, and students are aware of current child protection legislation, including mandatory reporting requirements and obligations ( <a href="#">Standard 2, 6, 8</a> )	R	R	√	√
Provide appropriate resources and training to assist staff, contractors, volunteers, and students to implement this policy ( <a href="#">Standard 6, 8</a> )	R			
Ensure all staff (educational and non-educational) and volunteers, including students, complete prescribed child protection training within the timeframes set out in the National Regulations ( <a href="#">Standard 6, 8</a> )	R	R	R	R
Ensure all service staff and volunteers, including students, complete mandatory national child safety training within the required timeframes ( <a href="#">Standard 6, 8</a> )	R	R	R	R
Ensure systems are in place that cover all aspects of child protection training each year, including refresher training and additional professional development where required. Different roles within the service require specific training ( <a href="#">Standard 8</a> )	R	R	R	R
Develop training action plans for staff and volunteers that include this policy, identification of indicators of child abuse and harm, how to support a child or adult making a disclosure about harm to a child, how to manage a disclosure of maltreatment, abuse, or neglect, how to respond to child safety concerns, including internal and external reporting requirements, notifying families and carers, and managing risks to children and how to support cultural safety ( <a href="#">Standard 1, 6, 8</a> )	R	R	√	√
Identify potential risks of child abuse at the service and develop and implement effective prevention strategies ( <a href="#">Standard 2, 9</a> )	R	R	R	
<b>CULTURALLY SAFE ENVIRONMENT</b>				
Identify, respond to, and report inappropriate conduct in accordance with the <i>Education and Care Services National Law and the Reportable Conduct Scheme</i> , including notifying the Social Services Regulator within timeframes when a reportable allegation is made ( <i>see Code of Conduct Policy</i> )	R	R	R	R
Ensure racism within the service is identified, addressed, and not tolerated ( <a href="#">Standard 1</a> )	R	R	R	R
Actively discourage discrimination against children, families, and educators on the basis of culture, gender, age, sexuality, disability, or religion ( <a href="#">Standard 1, 5</a> )	R	R	R	R
Create a culturally safe environment and meet the needs of Aboriginal children, young people, and their families ( <a href="#">Standard 1</a> )	R	R	R	R
Embed strategies that equip all staff to acknowledge and value the strengths of Aboriginal culture, and understand its importance to the wellbeing and safety of Aboriginal children and young people ( <a href="#">Standard 1</a> )	R	R	R	R
Actively support and facilitate the participation and inclusion of Aboriginal children, young people, and their families at the service ( <a href="#">Standard 1</a> )	R	R	R	R
Ensure a public commitment to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children is available and displayed for public access ( <a href="#">Standard 1, 2</a> )	R	√		
Actively support and encourage each child's ability to express their culture and enjoy their cultural rights ( <a href="#">Standard 1</a> )	R	√	√	√
Understand children's diverse circumstances, and provide support and appropriate responses for those who are vulnerable ( <a href="#">Standard 5</a> )	R	√	√	
Support the needs and rights of children with disability, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, those unable to live at home, and children who identify as LGBTIQ+ or intersex ( <a href="#">Standard 5</a> )	R	R	R	R
<b>CHILD SAFE PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICES</b>				
Develop strategies that help children understand appropriate interactions between educators and children, and know who to report to if they see	√	√	√	√

something wrong or feel uncomfortable ( <i>see Interaction with Children Policy</i> ) (Standard 3)				
Support children to feel comfortable talking about their development, body safety, and disclosing concerns, and teach respect, dignity, and safety from an early age (Standard 3)	√	√	√	√
Provide children with age-appropriate sexual abuse prevention and protection programs, and relevant related information (Standard 3)	R	R	R	R
Inform children about all of their rights, including safety, information, and participation (Standard 3)	R	R	R	R
Ensure children have access to information, support, and complaints processes that are culturally safe, accessible, and easy to understand ( <i>see Compliments and Complaints Policy</i> ) (Standard 7)	√	√		
Ensure staff and volunteers recognise signs of harm and provide child-friendly ways for children to express their views, participate in decision-making, and raise concerns (Standard 3, 7)	R	R	R	R
<b>INFORMATION SHARING SCHEMES</b>				
Communicate to staff their obligations under the Information Sharing Schemes, and ensure they have read and understood the Privacy and Confidentiality Policy (Standard 2)	R	R	√	
Ensure information sharing procedures comply with the CISS Ministerial Guidelines, and exercise professional judgement 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> ) (Standard 2)	R	R	R	
Ensure confidential information is shared only 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 (Standard 2)	R	R	R	
Ensure the wellbeing and safety of a child(ren) takes precedence over the right to privacy when sharing information under the CISS and FVISS ( <i>see Privacy and Confidentiality Policy</i> ) (Standard 2)	R	R	R	
Seek and consider the views of the child and family members, where appropriate, safe, and reasonable, when sharing information under the CISS and FVISS (Standard 3, 4)	√	√	√	
Respect and consider children's social, individual, and cultural identity, and their strengths, abilities, and any vulnerability relevant to their safety or wellbeing when sharing information under the CISS and FVISS (Standard 5)	√	√	√	
Promote cultural safety and recognise the cultural rights, and familial and community connections of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children when sharing information under the CISS and FVISS (Standard 1)	√	√	√	
<b>CHILD SAFE REPORTING</b>				
Take all child safety issues seriously, respond promptly, and ensure all staff and volunteers have the resources they need (Standard 2, 7)	R	R		
Ensure procedures for reporting and responding to suspected child abuse or neglect are promoted across the service and reviewed regularly in consultation with stakeholders (Standard 2, 7)	R	√	√	√
Follow processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse (Standard 7)	R	R	R	R
Follow processes for responding to and reporting suspected family violence ( <i>see Family Violence Support Policy</i> ) (Standard 2, 7)	R	R	R	R
Ensure reporting and response processes are followed when there are significant concerns for the safety, health, or wellbeing of a child at the service (Standard 2, 7)	R	R	R	

Respond to concerns about sexual behaviours, even if they appear typical (Standard 2, 7)	R	R	R	
Fulfil legal obligations, including mandatory reporting and duty of care requirements (Standard 2, 7)	R	R	R	R
Ensure clear and comprehensive records of incidents, disclosures, and allegations of child abuse are documented and held (Standard 7)	R	R	R	R
Notify the service management team immediately upon becoming aware of a concern, complaint, or allegation regarding the safety, health, or wellbeing of a child at the service (Standard 7)		R	R	√
Maintain cooperative relationships with appropriate services and professionals (including Child FIRST/Orange Door) in the best interests of children and their families (Standard 4)	√	√	√	
Offer support to the child, their family, and staff in response to concerns or reports relating to child safety, health, and wellbeing at the service (Standard 4, 7)	√	√	√	
Notify the Department of Education (DE) within 24 hours of any serious incident occurring at the service (Standard 7)	R	√		
Notify DE within 24 hours of becoming aware of a notifiable complaint or allegation regarding a child's safety, health, or wellbeing (Standard 7)	R	√		
Notify DE within 24 hours of becoming aware of any incident where there are reasonable grounds to believe physical and/or sexual abuse of a child has occurred or is occurring at the service (Standard 7)	R	√		
Ensure reporting requirements under the Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Act 2004 are met and notify WorkSafe as soon as practicable	R			
Identify the Head of Organisation for the service (Standard 2)	R			
Notify the Social Services Regulator of the nominated Head of Organisation and maintain current records (Child Safe Standard 2)	R			
Ensure staff or volunteers engaged through a labour hire agency are subject to the Reportable Conduct Scheme (Standard 7)	R			
Notify the Social Services Regulator within three business days of becoming aware of a reportable allegation under the Reportable Conduct Scheme (Standard 7)	R			
Investigate allegations (subject to police clearance for criminal or family violence matters) and advise the Social Services Regulator who is conducting the investigation (Standard 7)	R			
Manage risks to children throughout the investigation process (Standard 7,9)	R	√	√	
Provide an update to the Social Services Regulator within 30 calendar days, including detailed information about the reportable allegation and actions taken (Standard 7)	R			
Notify the Social Services Regulator of investigation outcomes and any disciplinary action taken, or reasons no action was taken (Standard 7)	R			
Provide support to staff who disclose harm (Standard 8)	R	√		
Maintain confidentiality at all times (see Privacy and Confidentiality Policy) (Standard 2)	R	R	R	R
Protect the rights of children and families, and encourage their participation in decision-making (Standard 4)	R	√	√	√
<b>PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT</b>				
Implement risk assessments of the service environment and equipment to ensure risks to health and safety are minimised (National Law: Section 167) (see Occupational Health and Safety and Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy) (Standard 9)	√	√	√	√

Develop strategies to manage situations where staff work alone with children (Child Safe Standard 9)	R	√		
Comply with legislated ECT/educator-to-child ratios at all times ( <i>National Law: Section 169; Regulations 123</i> ) (see <i>Supervision of Children Policy</i> )	R	R	√	√

## BACKGROUND & LEGISLATION

### BACKGROUND

Under the *Education and Care Services National Law*, the Approved Provider (Committee of Management) must take every reasonable precaution to protect children from harm and from any hazard likely to cause injury, including always ensuring adequate supervision (*Section 167*).

The *Education and Care Services National Law* also established the Paramountcy Principle, which requires that the safety, rights, and best interests of children are the primary consideration in all aspects of service operation and the delivery of education and care.

The *Education and Care Services National Regulations* mandate the completion of approved child protection training for all individuals working with children (staff and volunteers, including students). Further legislative amendments require nationally consistent child safety training for all personnel, including those who do not work directly with children. This requirement extends to all service staff and volunteers and students.

All service staff, the Approved Provide, contractors, students, and volunteers have legal and duty of care obligations to protect children in their care. This includes taking reasonable steps to prevent foreseeable harm.

In addition, the service has an organisational duty of care to prevent child abuse by individuals associated with the organisation while children are under their supervision. The *Victorian Reportable Conduct Scheme*, established under the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005*, strengthens organisational responses to allegations of child abuse involving staff, volunteers, contractors, and other associated individuals.

The *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* provides the legislative framework for supporting vulnerable children and families, ensuring that children's best interests remain central to decision-making and service delivery. It also also establishes the Child Information Sharing Scheme (CISS), allowing prescribed organisations to share confidential information to promote child wellbeing and safety.

Alongside this, the *Family Violence Protection Act 2008* establishes the Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme (FVISS) and the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework (MARAM). These frameworks enable professionals to share relevant information to assess and manage risks, improving early identification of concerns and coordinated responses.

Any person who forms a reasonable belief that a child needs protection may make a report to Child Protection. Certain professionals are mandatory reporters, including early childhood teachers registered with the Victorian Institute of Teaching, educators with post-secondary qualifications in childcare or education and service management and the Approved Provider.

Mandatory reporters must report to Victoria Police and/or Child Protection as soon as practicable if they form a reasonable belief that:

- a child has suffered, or is at risk of suffering, significant harm from physical and/or sexual abuse; and
- the child's parents have not protected, or are unlikely to protect, the child.

Victorian organisations providing services to children must comply with the Child Safe Standards, which aim to drive continuous improvement in preventing and responding to child abuse. Standard 2 requires services to have a child safety and wellbeing policy or statement of commitment.

The *Crimes Amendment (Protection of Children) Act 2014* establishes three key criminal offences:

- Failure to disclose: all adults must report information about child sexual abuse to Victoria Police.
- Failure to protect: people in positions of authority must act to reduce or remove known risks of child sexual abuse.
- Grooming offence: criminalises predatory behaviour intended to facilitate child sexual abuse, including online communication.

The adoption of the *National Model Code* supports services in meeting regulatory requirements for the safe use of electronic devices. Services must:

- use only approved devices to capture images, video, or audio of children
- limit and risk assess the use of personal devices
- implement secure systems for storing and managing digital information

These measures strengthen child safety, protect children's privacy, reduce the risk of misuse of sensitive information, and promote transparency and trust between services and families.

## LEGISLATION & 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](http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au)
- Commonwealth Legislation – Federal Register of Legislation: [www.legislation.gov.au](http://www.legislation.gov.au)

## DEFINITIONS

The terms defined in this section relate specifically to this policy. For regularly used terms, see the Definitions File located online: <https://denzildonkinder.org.au/policies/> OR in the Policies Folder in the kindergarten office.

**Child abuse:** (in the context of this policy) An act or failure to act by an adult that harms or risks harm to a child's physical or emotional wellbeing. It may occur once or over time and includes all forms below.

- **Physical:** causing or risking physical harm to a child through injury, punishment, or aggressive behaviour.
- **Sexual:** involving a child in sexual activity through power, coercion, or grooming, including exposure to sexual content or contact.
- **Emotional/psychological:** repeated behaviour that harms a child's self-worth or emotional development, such as rejection, threats, or ongoing criticism.
- **Maltreatment:** (in the context of this policy) Harmful treatment or lack of care, including abuse, exposure to family violence, or non-accidental injury.
- **Neglect:** failure to meet a child's basic needs (e.g. food, shelter, medical care, supervision), resulting in harm or risk of harm.
- **Racial, cultural, religious:** behaviour that demeans, excludes, or shows disrespect toward a child based on their race, culture, or religion, either overtly or subtly.

**Inappropriate conduct:** conduct that a reasonable person would consider inappropriate in an education and care service, taking into account 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 cause or 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 behaviour, including both adult to child or between adults in the presence of a child/ren
- filming and 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).

**Child Information Sharing Scheme (CISS):** enables Information Sharing Entities (ISE) to share confidential information about any person to promote the wellbeing and/or safety of a child(ren). The CISS works in conjunction with existing information sharing legislative provisions. All Victorian children from birth to 18 years of age are covered. 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:** promote 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. Child sexual exploitation is a distinct form of child sexual abuse because of this notion of exchange or reward.

**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.

**Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH):** department 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. This may take many forms and might be verbal or non-verbal.

**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:** when someone in a position of authority 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:** 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. Children who witness regular acts of violence have greater emotional and behavioural problems than other children.

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

**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. For stand-alone kindergartens, this will usually be the president or another office bearer who consents to the role.

**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.

**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. Early childhood workers are mandatory reporters and therefore must make a report to Victoria Police and/or Child Protection if 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 and/or the child's parents/carers have not protected, or are unlikely to protect, the child from harm of that type. Mandatory reporters must also follow processes for responding to incidents, disclosures or suspicions of child abuse to fulfil all their legal obligations.

**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:** when someone forms a belief on reasonable grounds that a child or young person needs 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.

**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:** a scheme that strengthens how organisations respond to allegations of child abuse or child-related misconduct by workers and volunteers.

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

**Working with Children Clearance:** is granted to a person under working with children legislation if they have been assessed as suitable to work with children.

## SOURCES & 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](#)
- AECEQA: [Child Safety Incident Response Template](#)
- ACECQA: [NQF Child Safe Culture Guide](#)
- ACECQA: [NQF Online Saft Guide](#)
- ACECQA - [National early childhood work register](#)
- [Australian Human Rights Commission](#)
- [Betrayal of Trust Implementation](#)
- [Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 \(Vic\)](#)
- Child Information Sharing Scheme Ministerial Guidelines: [vic.gov.au/guides-templates-tools-for-information-sharing](http://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 \(CCYP\)](#)
- 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](#)
- 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 Services Regulator: [Reportable Conduct Scheme](#) and [Child Safe Standards](#)
- [The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child](#)
- Victorian Government: [Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme](#)
- Victorian Institute of Teaching: [www.vit.vic.edu.au](http://www.vit.vic.edu.au)
- Working with Children (WWC) Check: [www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au](http://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au)
- WorkSafe Victoria: Guide to Incident Notification: [www.worksafe.vic.gov.au](http://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au)

### RELATED POLICIES

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

- Safe Arrival of Children
- Staffing
- Supervision of Children

## EVALUATION

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

- seek feedback from all parties affected by the policy regarding its effectiveness
- 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
- notify all stakeholders affected by this policy at least 14 days before any significant change is made to the policy or its procedures, unless a lesser period is necessary due to risk ([Regulation 172 \(2\)](#)).

## ATTACHMENTS

- **Attachment 1:** Embedding the Child Safe Standards in service practice, policies and procedures
- **Attachment 2:** Child Safety in recruitment and staff management
- **Attachment 3:** Child safety in recruitment and management of contractors, volunteers and students
- **Attachment 4:** Process for responding to incidents, disclosure and suspicions of child abuse
- **Attachment 5:** Public commitment to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children
- **Attachment 6:** Embedding an environment with zero tolerance for racism
- **Attachment 7:** Our Commitment to Child Safety

## PROCEDURES

- **Procedure 1:** Child Safety Reporting Process
- **Procedure 2:** Four Critical Actions
- **Procedure 3:** Reportable Conduct Scheme
- **Procedure 4:** Handling reports of racism
- **Procedure 5:** Documenting response to suspected child abuse

## AUTHORISATIONS

This policy was adopted by the approved provider of Denzil Don Kindergarten on 14/06/2026.

REVIEW DATE: **14 June 2028**

## ATTACHMENT 1: EMBEDDING THE CHILD SAFE STANDARDS IN SERVICE PRACTICE, POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Denzil Don Kindergarten takes the safety of children seriously and understands that all adults engaging with children at the service have a responsibility to protect them and to identify and manage risks of abuse and harm.

### OUR COMMITMENT TO THE CULTURAL SAFETY OF ABORIGINAL CHILDREN

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

We achieve this by:

- supporting and facilitating the participation and inclusion of Aboriginal children and their families
- delivering an educational program that strengthens children's cultural identity
- encouraging children and families to express their culture and exercise their cultural rights
- embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives within our pedagogy and curriculum
- ensuring the visible representation and acknowledgement of Aboriginal culture throughout the service
- recognising significant cultural events, such as NAIDOC Week and Reconciliation Week
- providing ongoing staff training and professional development in Aboriginal culture and cultural safety
- implementing policies, procedures, and practices that promote a culturally safe and inclusive environment for Aboriginal children, young people, and their families.

### PRACTICE AND POLICY THAT FOSTERS CHILD SAFETY AND WELLBEING

Denzil Don Kindergarten implements the following practices to promote and maintain child safety and wellbeing:

- The *Code of Conduct Policy* outlines clear expectations for appropriate behaviour when service staff, students, volunteers, and other adults engage with children, including during excursions.
- Educators explicitly teach wellbeing strategies to support children to understand, express, and regulate their emotions, promoting positive lifelong wellbeing outcomes.
- Educators facilitate discussions about children's rights, empowering children to express their views and contribute to decision-making. This includes developing a Class Charter that guides respectful interactions.
- Children are taught personal safety and body awareness and are encouraged to speak up if they feel unsafe or uncomfortable, including within the kindergarten program.
- Information gathered during enrolment supports planning for children's diverse needs, including accessing supports such as KIS funding, additional staffing, family meetings, and allied health services.
- The service values and respects children and families from diverse backgrounds.
- Children and families from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, LGBTIQ+ communities, and those living with disability are represented through inclusive resources, language, and practices, including visuals, books, and discussions.
- The educational program, and physical and online environments, reflect the diverse needs, interests, and cultures of the service community and support full participation for all children.
- The program and environment are regularly reviewed to ensure inclusion, with particular attention to supporting children with disability.
- Educators support children to build respectful, positive relationships with peers and adults.
- Staff participate in ongoing professional development to strengthen inclusive practices and cultural safety.
- Children are taught about safe and responsible technology use, including online safety.
- Screen use is limited to educational purposes, such as learning experiences, stories, or movement.
- Personal devices are never used to photograph, video, or audio record children.
- Images of children's faces are never shared beyond the service, including online. Where required, images are modified (e.g. blurred) to protect privacy.
- Educators and staff understand and fulfil their responsibilities in relation to child protection.
- Information sharing and record-keeping requirements are understood and consistently implemented.

### HOW FAMILIES ARE INCLUDED IN CHILD SAFETY AND WELLBEING

Denzil Don Kindergarten recognises families as a child's first and foremost teacher and values their knowledge, perspectives, and contributions. We actively involve families in promoting child safety and wellbeing by:

- Listening, consulting and collaborating with families about their child's development, needs, and learning, and respect their views and decisions.

- Encouraging families to share their culture, interests, and experiences with the children, supporting inclusion and a sense of belonging.
- Providing opportunities for families to offer feedback and suggestions about the service, including:
  - biannual surveys (at a minimum)
  - face-to-face meetings with educators or management
  - email communication
  - the formal complaints process (refer to Complaints Policy)
- Inviting families to be part of service decision-making through surveys and online forms (e.g. feedback on timetables and program planning).
- Communicating procedural or operational changes clearly and promptly, including the reasons for change and intended improvements, and welcome family feedback.
- Providing service tours and pre-commencement information that outline how the service promotes and maintains child safety.
- Sharing wellbeing strategies with families to support consistency between the home and kindergarten environments.

## LEADERSHIP ACTIONS TO PROMOTE CHILD SAFETY AND WELLBEING

Denzil Don Kindergarten embeds the following leadership actions and procedures to promote a strong culture of child safety and wellbeing:

- Zero tolerance for racism and have rigorous processes for identifying and addressing it if it occurs.
- Child safety and wellbeing are embedded within service leadership, governance, and culture. It is championed and modelled, and staff and other stakeholders are reminded/encouraged to report child safety concerns.
- Staff receive regular child safety training. Staff meetings regular discussions about recognising signs of abuse, reporting abuse, and changes to regulatory and legal requirements, policies, and processes.
- All service 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. Service staff understand their requirement to immediately report suspicions and/or concerns of a child being at risk of significant harm to appropriate authorities.
- 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.
- Service 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 each risk is addressed in a timely manner, with considerations of the severity of the risk.
- The effectiveness of child safety and wellbeing across the service is constantly reviewed.
- 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. Noted issues with supervision are addressed immediately.
- Students, volunteers, contractors, and other service visitors are always supervised around children and never left alone with them. They are not allowed to attend to children intimately (ie: change nappies or help children with changing).
- 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 all mandatory reporting training is current, WWC and VIT are current and that staff renew before expiry.
- Service 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 regulations as they occur.
- Staff read and sign the *Code of Conduct Policy* annually.

## ATTACHMENT 2: CHILD SAFETY IN RECRUITMENT AND STAFF MANAGEMENT

At Denzil Don Kindergarten, the following processes outline our commitment to embedding child safety in the recruitment and management of staff. These practices aim to maximise the safety of children and deter unsuitable or inappropriate individuals from seeking employment at our service.

### Recruitment

- A statement of the service's commitment to maintaining a child safe environment is included in all job descriptions and advertisements.
- Job descriptions clearly outline roles, responsibilities, and accountability.
- A requirement for a current Working with Children Check (WWCC), Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) registration, and/or a criminal history check is included in all job advertisements.
- Interviews are conducted in person by the Centre Coordinator and Educational Leader and. Questions are behaviour and example based, with example of past actions in relevant situations required.
- Questions relating to relationships with children are values-based and consider professional boundaries, resilience, motivation, teamwork, accountability, and ethics.
- Interview questions align with the key selection criteria.
- Referee checks are conducted by an external HR company, using questions tailored by management.
- Qualifications are verified.
- The NQAITs public portal is checked to ensure applicants are not prohibited persons.
- Criminal history checks may be undertaken where required.

### Induction

- Orientation and induction include information about values, expectations, attitudes, and workplace practices relating to maintaining a child safe environment.
- New staff are provided with all policies with a lens on understanding of the Child Safe Environment and Wellbeing Policy, Code of Conduct Policy, Use of Digital Technologies and Online Environment, Interaction with Children Policy, Complaints Policy, Children's Bathroom Policy and Staffing Policy
- Regular staff meetings are held with management.
- All staff receive training and education on child safety and child protection.
- Resources and support are provided to ensure a child safe environment.

### Ongoing Supervision and Management

- Regular meetings are held between staff and management, with child safety a standing agenda item.
- Staff receive supervision to ensure clear role expectations, appropriate support, and ongoing performance monitoring.
- Performance reviews include assessment of each staff member's contribution to maintaining a child safe environment.
- Ongoing training is provided in child safety, child protection, and inclusive practices.
- Resources and support continue to be made available to staff.
- A Staff Currency Register is maintained to track VIT registration, WWCC, Mandatory Reporting certificates, First Aid qualifications, and other compliance requirements. Staff are reminded to update these before expiry.
- Staff holding a WWCC with a Negative Notice are not permitted to undertake child-related work.

## **ATTACHMENT 3: CHILD SAFETY IN RECRUITMENT AND MANAGEMENT OF CONTRACTORS, VOLUNTEERS AND STUDENTS**

The following guidelines and processes for the recruitment and management of contractors, volunteers and students demonstrate Denzil Don Kindergarten's commitment to maximising the safety of children and deterring unsuitable or inappropriate individuals from engaging with our service.

### **Recruitment and Engagement**

- The nature of the work or tasks undertaken by contractors, volunteers and students is assessed to determine whether a position description is required.
- Consideration is given to whether a formal screening or recruitment process is appropriate based on the role and associated risks to children.
- A valid Working with Children Check (WWCC), or applicable exemption, is required for all individuals engaged in child-related work involving direct contact (whether physical face-to-face, verbal and/or written (including email)).

### **Induction and Orientation**

- Contractors, volunteers and students are informed of relevant policies and procedures as part of their orientation. These may include Child Safe Environment and Wellbeing Policy, Code of Conduct, Interaction with Children Policy and Complaints Policy.
- Expectations regarding child safety, professional conduct and appropriate behaviour are clearly outlined.

### **Supervision and Child Safety Practices**

- Appropriate supervision is provided to ensure clarity of roles, responsibilities and expectations.
- Contractors, volunteers, students and visitors are not permitted to be alone with children under any circumstances.
- Open discussions are held regarding child safety and wellbeing, including how the service prevents, identifies and responds to safety concerns.
- Ongoing support is provided to reinforce safe practices and promote a culture of child safety.

## ATTACHMENT 4: PROCESS FOR RESPONDING TO INCIDENTS, DISCLOSURE AND SUSPICIONS OF CHILD ABUSE

All service staff must act if they form a reasonable belief or suspicion that a child has been, or is at risk of being, abused. All concerns about a child's wellbeing must be taken seriously, even if they do not appear to be related to abuse.

If staff are uncertain whether they have sufficient grounds to form a reasonable belief, they must seek advice from management, DFFH Child Protection, Child FIRST and Victoria Police.

If a member of staff forms a reasonable belief, they are legally required to make a report to Child Protection and/or Victoria Police, regardless of any differing advice from management or other staff members.

Staff must follow the steps set out in the *Department of Education's Four Critical Actions for Early Childhood Services: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse* flowchart.

The service must maintain comprehensive records of child safety concerns or complaints, detailed descriptions of incidents, actions taken and reports made and required follow-up actions

These records must be stored in line with the *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy*. Staff must maintain confidentiality, sharing information only when it supports the safety and wellbeing of a child. Parent/Carer consent is not required to make a report where abuse is suspected.

### RESPONDING TO CONCERNS ABOUT THE WELLBEING OF A CHILD

Staff must remain vigilant and responsive to concerns about a child's wellbeing, including circumstances where:

- There are significant concerns about a child's wellbeing or development
- Parents/Carers lack the capacity to support the child's physical, emotional, or cognitive development
- There is family conflict or breakdown
- The family is under pressure due to illness, substance misuse, disability, or bereavement
- The family is young, isolated, or unsupported
- The family is experiencing significant social or economic disadvantage

### REFERRAL TO CHILD FIRST OR ORANGE DOOR

A referral to Child FIRST or Orange Door must be made when:

- There are significant wellbeing concerns, and
- The child is not in immediate need of protection

Orange Door provides support to:

- Women, children, and young people experiencing family violence
- Families needing assistance with child wellbeing and care

**Referral ensures families are connected to appropriate services to support safety and wellbeing.**

### REPORTING TO DFFH CHILD PROTECTION

Staff must contact DFFH Child Protection where there are significant protective concerns, and:

- Parents/carers are unable or unwilling to protect the child

This includes concerns that:

- Seriously impact the child's safety, stability, or development
- Are persistent and entrenched
- Involve a parent who cannot or will not protect the child
- Suggest the family is unlikely to engage with support services

Examples include abandonment, parental incapacity, or death, extreme risk-taking behaviour, and potential harm to an unborn child.

### REPORTING TO VICTORIA POLICE

Staff must contact Victoria Police (000) immediately if:

- A child's **immediate safety is at risk**, or
- A child is engaged in **serious, illegal, or high-risk behaviour** that poses danger to themselves or others

## RESPONDING TO CONCERNS ABOUT SEXUAL BEHAVIOURS

All service staff play an important role in making professional judgements regarding sexualised behaviour involving children. Not all sexual behaviour involving children poses a risk to their safety; some behaviours may be age-appropriate and part of expected development.

Informed judgements regarding sexualised behaviour help to ensure the health, safety, and wellbeing of children by supporting healthy sexual development (age-appropriate sexualised behaviour) and protecting children from harm or abuse (inappropriate or problematic sexualised behaviour). In some cases, problematic sexualised behaviour involving children may fall within reporting requirements.

If you form a reasonable belief that a child is displaying problematic sexualised behaviour, you must take reasonable steps to protect them by following the *Four Critical Actions*.

## MANAGING A DISCLOSURE

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

### Strategies include:

- Let the child talk about their concerns in their own time and in their own words
- Give the child your full attention, sufficient time, and a quiet space, and be a supportive and reassuring listener
- Remain calm and use a neutral, non-judgemental tone
- Comfort the child if they are distressed
- Record the child's disclosure accurately, using the child's own words
- Tell the child that they have done the right thing by telling you and that what happened is not their fault
- Let the child know that you will act on this information and that you will need to share it with others who can help keep them safe
- It is the role of DFFH Child Protection and Victoria Police to investigate. Do not ask leading, investigative, or intrusive questions as this may impact the child and/or investigation.

## RESPONDING TO INCIDENTS, DISCLOSURES AND SUSPICIONS OF CHILD ABUSE

To make a report to Child Protection, a staff member must have formed a reasonable belief that a child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, significant harm as a result of abuse or neglect, and that the child's parent has not protected, or is unlikely to protect, the child from that harm.

All service staff will follow the *Four Critical Actions* as soon as they witness an incident, receive a disclosure and/or form a reasonable belief that a child has been, or is at risk of being, abused.

## CHILD PROTECTION IN EARLY CHILDHOOD: PRIVACY AND INFORMATION SHARING

The Child Information Sharing Scheme (CISS) and the Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme (FVISS) enable professionals working with children to gain a more comprehensive understanding of a child's circumstances. This supports the early identification of wellbeing and safety concerns and enables timely and appropriate responses.

Privacy laws permit staff to share a child's personal and health information where necessary to support the service's functions and the safety and wellbeing of children.

### Permitted Information Sharing

Staff may share relevant information to enable the service to:

- Provide and support the child's education, including planning for individual needs and addressing any barriers to learning
- Support the child's social and emotional wellbeing and overall health
- Fulfill duty of care obligations to the child, other children, staff, and visitors
- Make reasonable adjustments for a child with a disability, including medical conditions or mental health needs
- Maintain a safe and secure environment for all children, staff, and visitors

### Information Sharing Following a Report

Following a report to DFFH Child Protection, Victoria Police, and/or ChildFIRST, the service must:

- Consult with the management team before disclosing information about the report, or about the child and their family, to another Information Sharing Entity, except:
  - in urgent situations involving verified Victoria Police or DFFH Child Protection workers, and/or
  - where the information is required to protect the immediate safety of a child

- Seek consent from the child and/or their parents/carers before sharing information with any person other than authorised authorities or relevant service staff, provided that seeking consent does not place the child or another person at risk

## **ATTACHMENT 5: 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 the participation and inclusion of Aboriginal children, young people, and their families within our service
- Promoting the safety, participation, and empowerment of Aboriginal children
- Providing an educational program that strengthens Aboriginal children's culture, identity, and sense of belonging
- 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, discrimination, or questioning
- Supporting Aboriginal children to maintain connections to their kinship ties, land, and Country
- Supporting opportunities for Aboriginal children to learn about their cultural heritage, including being taught their cultural heritage by Elders.
- Facilitating ongoing Aboriginal cultural awareness and cultural safety training and education for staff.
- Establishing and maintaining policies, procedures, systems, and practices that create a culturally safe, inclusive, and respectful environment for Aboriginal children, young people, and their families.

## ATTACHMENT 6: EMBEDDING AN ENVIRONMENT WITH ZERO TOLERANCE FOR RACISM

### HOW WE ACHIEVE THIS

#### Prevention and Education

##### Staff Training and Professional Development

- Facilitating regular training on cultural competence, anti-racism, and cultural safety
- Encouraging staff to individually access and participate in professional learning that promotes inclusion
- Maintaining a zero-tolerance approach to behaviours that exclude others, including actively addressing and 'calling out' behaviours that may be offensive, exclusive, or harmful
- Encouraging staff and children to respectfully challenge and speak up about unfair or discriminatory behaviour
- Developing and maintaining a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) in collaboration with all staff

##### Curriculum and Environment

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives are embedded within our pedagogy and daily practice
- Educators develop an Acknowledgement of Country with their group of children
- Discussions around days of cultural significance for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are celebrated and discussed with the children.
- The Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander, and Pride flags are displayed throughout the service
- The achievements and contributions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, past and present are celebrated and acknowledged at the service
- Aboriginal words and symbols are taught in a respectful way, and with permission
- Resources that reflect diverse identities, cultures, and ways of being are displayed across the service
- Age-appropriate discussions about Australia's history, diversity and difference (including of family structures), gender equality and challenging stereotypes are facilitated with the children.
- Diversity is actively promoted and celebrated in meaningful and intentional ways. Celebrations that may be hurtful or exclusionary – such as Australia Day, Mother's/Father's Day – are replaced with inclusive alternatives
- Harmony Day is celebrated annually, to recognise and honour diversity

##### Identification

- All staff and adults participating in the program (including volunteers, students, and allied health professionals) must take immediate action and report any instances of racism they observe or experience, including during excursions
- Staff are supported to recognise both subtle and overt forms of racism
- Educators facilitate safe, age-appropriate discussions to help children understand and identify when children/adults are not acting in a way that is fair or inclusive to others.

##### Responding to Incidents

Reports of racism may be made verbally or in writing to the Centre Coordinator, Educational Leader, any staff member, or a member of the Committee of Management.

Refer to the [Complaints Policy](#) for further information.

# Denzil Don Kindergarten's Commitment to Child Safety

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.

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 demonstrate our commitment to the 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 and families living with disability. *(Standard 1, 5)*
- Ensuring that LGBTIQ+ children and families feel safe, respected, and included at all times. *(Standard 1,5)*
- Fostering a welcoming and inclusive culture where every child feels valued, respected and able to fully participate. *(Standard 1,2)*

### Empowering and listening to children

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

- Involving children in decision-making and supporting them to share their views, ideas and feelings, including what makes them feel unsafe or uncomfortable. *(Standard 2,3)*
- Building strong, respectful relationships that support children to feel safe and connected. *(Standard 2,3)*
- Engaging children in discussions about the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child*, empowering them to understand their rights, and that their voice matters and can shape decisions at kindergarten, and their world beyond. *(Standard 2,3)*
- Listening to and acting on children's concerns, disclosures, allegations and indicators of harm with sensitivity and in line with policies and procedures. *(Standard 2,3,7)*

### Respecting and listening to families

We value families as their child's first and foremost teacher and building strong, respectful partnerships with them by:

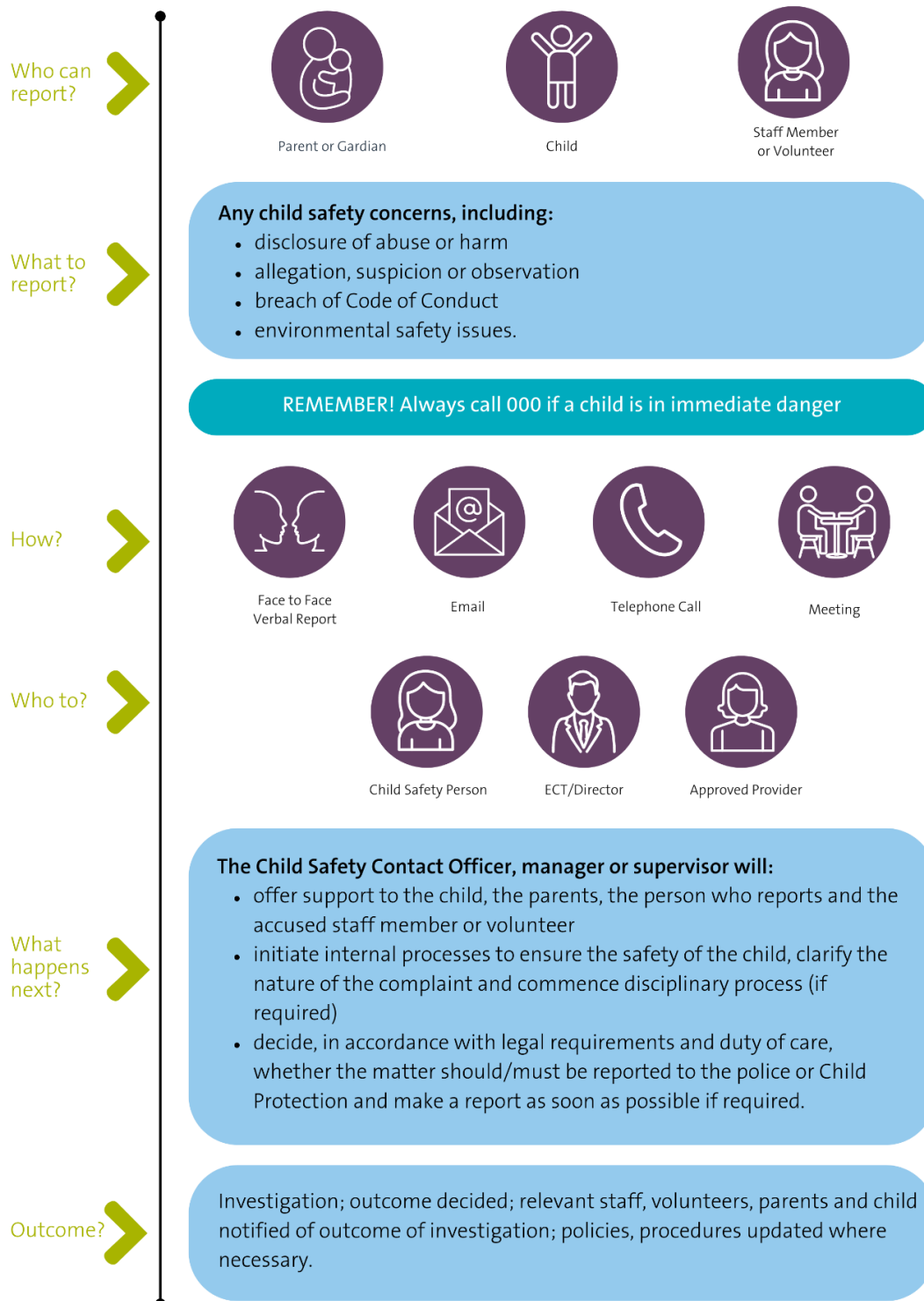
- Providing a welcoming and inclusive environment for all families. *(Standard 1,4)*
- Collaborating with families on their child's development, learning and wellbeing. *(Standard 4)*
- Actively and regularly seeking feedback on practice, programs, policies and procedures. *(Standard 4,8)*
- Respecting diversity of culture and parenting practice while prioritising children's safety and best interests. *(Standard 1,4,5)*

### Meeting our responsibility to keep children safe

We uphold our duty of care and legal obligations through embedded, consistent child safe practices:

- Providing environments that support children's safety, health, wellbeing, learning and development. *(Standard 5,9)*
- Promoting an open culture where staff, volunteers and service partners are confident to identify and report risk of harm. *(Standard 2,6)*
- Adhering to and enforcing our *Code of Conduct* at all times. *(Standard 2,6)*
- Recognising and responding to signs of harm and supporting staff to engage in safe, appropriate conversations with children. *(Standard 6,7)*
- Ensuring all staff understand and follow clear procedures for reporting suspected child abuse, including documentation and follow-up. *(Standard 6,7,11)*
- Actively identifying, assessing and minimising risks in physical and online environments. *(Standard 5,9)*
- Meeting duty of care obligations to prevent foreseeable harm or injury. *(Standard 5,9)*
- Involving children in creating and maintaining safe environments, including developing a *Class Charter*. *(Standard 2,3,9)*
- Implementing rigorous recruitment, induction and supervision to ensure only safe and suitable people work with children. *(Standard 6)*
- Maintaining accessible, child-focussed complaint processes that are understood by children and families. *(Standard 7)*
- Responding promptly and appropriately when children express discomfort, concern or risk. *(Standards 2,7)*
- Continuously reviewing, reflecting on and improving our practices to strengthen child safety and wellbeing. *(Standard 8)*
- Embedding child safety into daily practice, decision-making and service operations. *(Standard 10)*
- Ensuring all policies and procedures are clearly documented, accessible and consistently implemented. *(Standard 10,11)*

## PROCEDURE 1: 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.

## PROCEDURE 2: FOUR CRITICAL ACTIONS

### ACTION 1: Respond to the Emergency

If a child has been abused or is at immediate risk of harm:

1. Ensure Immediate Safety
  - Separate the child from the alleged perpetrator and any others involved.
  - Ensure all parties remain supervised by a staff member.
2. Provide Urgent Medical Assistance (if required)
  - Administer first aid.
  - Call 000 for an ambulance and follow instructions from emergency personnel.
  - Call 000 for urgent police assistance if there is an immediate threat.
3. Nominate a staff contact person to act as the contact for police and authorities.
4. Preserve Evidence
  - Protect the environment and any relevant items (e.g. clothing, objects).
  - Avoid disturbing potential evidence.
  - Ensure potential witnesses remain available until authorities arrive.

Staff must contact Victoria Police (000) immediately if a child's safety is at immediate risk, or a child is engaged in serious, illegal, or high-risk behaviour that poses danger to themselves or others.

### ACTION 2: Report to Authorities

Once immediate safety concerns are addressed, report as soon as possible. Failure to report physical or sexual abuse may constitute a criminal offence.

#### If Abuse is Suspected Within the Family or Community

1. Report to DFFH Child Protection if the child:
  - Needs protection from abuse, or
  - Is at risk of significant harm affecting safety, stability, or development.
2. All suspected sexual abuse (including grooming) must be reported to Victoria Police.
3. Notify management/the Approved Provider.
4. Notify the Regulator: The Centre Coordinator must notify VECRA within 24 hours.

If you believe that a child is not subject to abuse, but you hold significant concerns for their wellbeing you must act. This may include making a referral or seeking advice from Child FIRST, DFFH Child PROTECTION or Victoria Police.

#### If Abuse is Suspected Within the Service (staff member, contractor, volunteer, or committee member)

1. Contact Victoria Police through the local police station.
2. Report to DFFH Child Protection if you are a mandatory reporter.
3. Notify management/the Approved Provider.
4. Notify Early Childhood Regulatory Authority within 24 hours and the Social Services Regulator (SSR) within 3 business days
5. Assign Contact Person for liaison with Child Protection and Police and to seek advice regarding parent /carer communication.

### ACTION 3: Contact Parents/Carers

1. Consult Authorities First: seek advice from Victoria Police or DFFH Child Protection before contacting parents/carers.
2. Do NOT Contact Parents If:
  - They are suspected of the abuse.
  - Contact may increase risk to the child.
  - It may interfere with an investigation.
3. When Appropriate contact parents/carers sensitively and promptly, ideally on the same day.
4. Parents must be notified within 24 hours if the incident occurred at the service (unless advised otherwise).

Notifying parents/carers enables them to protect the child from further harm and / access necessary support.

### ACTION 4: Provide Ongoing Support

1. Ensure Child Feels Safe by maintaining a supportive and secure environment.
2. Work with Parents/Carers to establish regular communication and develop and review support strategies.
3. Engage Professionals such as allied health or trauma specialists where appropriate.
4. Develop a Safety Plan
  - Especially if the risk originates from within the service.
  - Implement actions to prevent further harm.

## PROCEDURE 3: REPORTABLE CONDUCT SCHEME

The Approved Provider (Committee of Management) must ensure that all reporting obligations are met by the service when a reportable allegation arises.

The Centre Coordinator is responsible for completing these obligations, including the following:

### Three-Day Notification Requirement

Within three (3) business days of becoming aware of a reportable allegation, the following information must be provided to the Social Services Regulator:

- Name of the worker or volunteer involved
- Date of birth of the worker or volunteer
- Police report details (if applicable)
- Organisation contact details (service Coordinator and/or Nominated Supervisor)
- Name of the Head of the Organisation
- Initial advice outlining the nature of the allegation

### Thirty-Day Follow-Up Requirement

Within thirty (30) calendar days of becoming aware of the reportable allegation, the following additional information must be provided:

- Details of the allegation
- Details of the service's response to the allegation
- Details of any disciplinary or other action taken or proposed
- Any written response from the worker/volunteer about the allegation and/or proposed disciplinary action.

### Following the 30-Day Follow-Up

Following submission, the Social Services Regulator may:

- Review the Information: assess whether the service's response is appropriate and adequate
- Request Further Information: require additional documentation, clarification, or updates.
- Monitor or Investigate: monitor the service's investigation or conduct an independent investigation.
- Determine Outcome: outcomes may include:
  - Confirmation that the matter has been appropriately managed
  - Recommendations for improvement
  - Directions to implement changes to policies or practices
  - Compliance or enforcement action where obligations are not met.

### Ongoing Obligations

The Centre Coordinator must:

- Provide ongoing updates to the Regulator as required
  - Maintain accurate and complete records of the allegation, investigation and decisions and actions taken.
- Ensure continued protection and support for any affected child
- Implement and monitor any required corrective actions or improvements.

## PROCEDURE 4: HANDLING REPORTS OF RACISM

Reports of racism can be made verbally or in writing to the Centre Coordinator, Educational Leader, staff member or a member of the Committee of Management.

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

1. Address the racism immediately, ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all individuals involved
2. Conduct a thorough investigation, involving all relevant parties and witnesses
3. Document the incident in the *Complaints Register*, including actions taken and outcomes
4. Provide appropriate support to all impacted individuals, including access to counselling if required
5. Inform families of those involved about the incident and the steps being taken
6. Apply appropriate consequences where racist behaviour is substantiated
7. Monitor the situation to ensure and/or prevent further incidents from occurring.
8. Review and update policies and procedures as required.

### Staff-Related Matters and Escalation

The Centre Coordinator will notify the **Committee of Management** where appropriate, including when the matter involves a staff member

### Where a Staff Member is Involved

1. The Committee may establish a **complaints subcommittee** to investigate the matter
2. The staff member may be:
  - Reassigned to non-contact duties, or
  - Required to take leave during the investigation
3. Leave arrangements (paid or unpaid) will be determined based on circumstances, employment law, and external advice where required

### Outcomes

1. If a staff member is found to have engaged in racist behaviour, disciplinary action will be taken in accordance with service policies and employment obligations. This may include:
  - Additional training or coaching
  - Removal from direct contact with children
  - Formal warning
  - Suspension
2. External advice and support may be sought from:
  - Fair Work
  - Department of Education (DE)
  - Early Learning Association Australia (ELAA)
  - Human Resources professionals or other relevant regulatory bodies
3. The Committee of Management will be involved in decisions relating to disciplinary action.

## PROCEDURE 5: DOCUMENTING RESPONSE TO SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE

### STAFF MEMBER LEADING THE RESPONSE

NAME:

ROLE AT THE SERVICE:

SERVICE ADDRESS: 256 Union Street, Brunswick West

RELATIONSHIP TO CHILD:

### CRITICAL ACTION 1: IMMEDIATE RESPONSE TO AN INCIDENT A

#### RESPONDING TO AN EMERGENCY

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

WHO ADMINISTERED FIRST AID? (NAME AND ROLE):

DID THE CHILD REQUIRE FURTHER IMMEDIATE MEDICAL ASSISTANCE?

CURRENT LOCATION AND SAFETY STATUS? I.e: are all impacted children safe from immediate danger? If a child is in immediate danger, call Victoria Police on 000 immediately

#### INFORMATION OF ALLEGED VICTIM

##### CHILD'S DETAILS

NAME:

BIRTH SEX:

DATE OF BIRTH:

GROUP:

RESIDENTIAL ADDRESS:

PARENT/CARER NAME/S:

PARENT/CARER CONTACT NUMBER:

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 INCIDENT, DISCLOSURE OR SUSPICION

### FOUNDATIONS FOR YOUR BELIEF THAT A CHILD HAS BEEN OR IS AT RISK OF ABUSE

LIST INDICATORS OR INSTANCES WHICH LED YOU TO BELIEVE THAT A CHILD(REN) ARE SUBJECT TO, OR AT RISK OF, ABUSE: Detail any disclosures or incidents or suspicion including names times and dates documenting a child's exact words as far as possible include specific detail here on what led you to form a reasonable belief that a child has been or is in risk of being abused

ANY PHYSICAL INDICATORS OF ABUSE:

ANY 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:

MOBILE NUMBER:

## CRITICAL ACTION 2: REPORTING

### REPORTING TO AUTHORITIES

CIRCLE THE AUTHORITIES YOU HAVE REPORTED TO:

VICTORIA POLICE      DHHS CHILD PROTECTION      CHILD FIRST      DECISION NOT TO REPORT

If you have decided not to report, detail your reasons below. Also, include any follow-up actions you have undertaken.

### PROVIDE DETAILS OF YOUR REPORT

DATE:

TIME:

AUTHORITY:

NAME OF PERSON SPOKEN TO:

OUTCOMES FROM THE REPORT:

### REPORTING INTERNALLY

#### PROVIDE DETAILS OF YOUR DISCUSSION WITH SERVICE MANAGEMENT

TIME:

DATE:

NAME:

DISCUSSION OUTCOMES:

NOTIFICATION TO THE REGULATOR: The service must notify QARD if there is an incident at the service and/or the health safety or wellbeing of a child has been compromised while attending the service.

TIME:

DATE:

NAMES:

NOTIFICATION 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 DEEMED APPROPRIATE, PARENTS MUST BE CONTACTED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE (WITHIN 24 HOURS OF THE INCIDENT, DISCLOSURE OR SUSPICION).

HAVE YOU SOUGHT ADVICE FROM DFHH CHILD PROTECTION OR VICTORIA POLICE?  YES  NO

IS IT APPROPRIATE TO CONTACT PARENT/CARER(S)?  YES  NO

List 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

**PLANNED ACTIONS:** include details on what follow-up actions have been taken to support the child eg: referral to specialised services

FOLLOW UP ACTIONS:

SUPPORT:

REFERRALS:

## PROCESS OF REVIEW

TO BE COMPLETED 4-6 WEEKS AFTER AN INCIDENT, SUSPICION OR DISCLOSURE OF ABUSE

### SAFETY AND WELLBEING

#### CURRENT SAFETY AND WELLBEING OF THE CHILD

IS THE CHILD SAFE FROM ABUSE AND HARM?  YES  NO

If not consider the need to make a further report

DOE A CHILD HAVE ANY WELLBEING ISSUES THAT ARE NOT CURRENTLY BEING ADDRESSED?  YES  NO

If so, consider how these can be addressed and captured within a child support plan

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

ARE THERE ANY OTHER CHILDREN WHO MAY BE IMPACTED BY THE ABUSER?  YES  NO

IF SO, HAVE THEIR WELLBEING NEEDS BEEN MET?  YES  NO

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

DOES THE STAFF MEMBER WHO MADE THE REPORT/WITNESSED THE INCIDENT, FORMED A SUSPICION OR RECEIVED A DISCLOSURE REQUIRE ANY SUPPORT?  YES  NO

IF SO, HAS THIS BEEN RECEIVED?  YES  NO

### REVIEW OF ACTIONS TAKEN

Have staff followed *The 4 critical actions for early childhood services: Responding to incidents disclosure for suspicion of child abuse?*

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

YES  NO

Could the suspected abuse have been detected earlier?

YES  NO

#### ACTION 1

Did the staff take appropriate actions in an emergency?

YES  NO

#### ACTION 2

Was a report made to the appropriate authorities and internally?

YES  NO

What where subsequent reports made if necessary?

YES  NO

#### ACTION 3

Did the service contact the parent carers as soon as possible?

YES  NO

Have the parents continued to engage if appropriate?

YES  NO

#### ACTION 4

Has the service provided adequate ongoing support for the child?

YES  NO

Have any complaints been received?

YES  NO

Have the complaints been resolved?

YES  NO

### CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Consider and list actions that can be taken to build your capacity to identify and respond to child offending in the future: