

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING POLICY

QUALITY AREA 2 – VERSION 1.1



PURPOSE

This policy provides guidelines for Denzil Don Kindergarten to:

- Ensure the service environment is safe, inclusive, and empowering for children, families, educators, staff, volunteers, and visitors.
- Embed social and emotional learning within the educational program (our Wellbeing Program)
- Support families, children, educators, and staff as key partners in mental health initiatives
- Engage in partnerships with community networks

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:

- Supporting children to develop strong social, emotional, and spiritual wellbeing
- Strengthening early childhood teachers' and educators' understanding of wellbeing, including being sensitive to the impacts of abuse and trauma on children
- Providing an educational program that supports children to explore, learn, and engage with health and wellbeing
- Creating an environment that supports, reflects, and promotes positive social, emotional, and spiritual wellbeing.

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.

Parent/Carer Responsibilities Under This Policy:
Provide feedback and contribute to the ongoing development of service policies and practices
Be open to discussion and recommendations regarding referral options and pathways for your child
Read, understand and follow the service Code of Conduct at all times
Adhere to this policy and all other service policies at all times

Responsibilities: 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
Ensure the service staff, families, and children actively participate in the development and implementation of this policy (<i>Child Safe Standards 11</i>)	R			
Ensure service staff and families are informed about policy requirements and provided with opportunities to provide feedback and contribute to development (<i>Child Safe Standards 11</i>)	√	√	√	√

Regularly review the implementation of mental health and wellbeing practices, including analysing complaints, concerns, and incidents, and communicate outcomes to families and the broader community (<i>Child Safe Standards 10</i>)		√	√	
Provide a safe, inclusive, inclusive, and welcoming environment that promotes respect, fairness, and equity, and celebrates diversity (<i>see Code of Conduct Policy & Interactions with Children Policy</i>) (<i>Child Safe Standard 1 & 5</i>)	R	√	√	√
Model respectful interactions with children, families, and colleagues, and demonstrate positive approaches to mental health and wellbeing (<i>see Interaction with Children Policy</i>) (<i>Child Safe Standards 1 & 2</i>)	√	√	√	√
Respect cultural values and expectations relating to health and wellbeing (<i>Child Safe Standard 1</i>)	√	√	√	√
Actively support and promote the participation and inclusion of Aboriginal children and their families (<i>Child Safe Standard 1</i>)	R	√	√	√
Ensure diversity, cultural practices, and mental health and wellbeing considerations are reflected in the implementation of the program (<i>Child Safe Standards 1 & 5</i>)	R	√	√	√
Encourage children to understand and assess risk and involve them in developing guidelines to maintain a safe and healthy environment (<i>Child Safe Standards 3 & 9</i>)		√	√	√
Recognise and respond to each child's unique developmental journey, acknowledging that mental health exists on a continuum (<i>Child Safe Standards 5 – 5.1</i>)	√	√	√	√
Understand children's diverse circumstances and provide appropriate support to those who are vulnerable (<i>Child Safe Standards 5 – 5.1</i>)	√	√	√	√
Make program adjustments to ensure all children are equally protected and supported (<i>see Child Safe Environment and Wellbeing Policy</i>) (<i>Child Safe Standards 5 & 9</i>)	R	√	√	√
Embed social and emotional learning in the program and support children to develop skills to care for their own mental health and wellbeing (<i>service Wellbeing Program</i>) (<i>Child Safe Standards 3 & 9</i>)	R	√	√	√
Include opportunities throughout the program for children to learn about healthy eating, oral health, and the importance of physical activity (<i>see Nutrition, Oral Health and Active Play policy</i>)	R	√	√	√
Provide quiet and reflective spaces for children, educators, and families (<i>our indoor and outdoor Wellbeing Tent and spaces</i>)	√	√	√	√
Implement appropriate programs and practices to support vulnerable children and families, including working collaboratively with relevant services and professionals where required (<i>Child Safe Standards 4 & 5</i>) (<i>refer to Child Safe Environment and Wellbeing</i>)	R	√	√	√
Encourage collaborative, family-centred practice (<i>see Definitions</i>) that supports positive mental health, wellbeing, and active participation of children and their families (<i>Child Safe Standards 3 & 4</i>)	√	√	√	√
Provide families and the broader community with information about mental health, wellbeing, and available support services (<i>Child Safe Standard 4</i>)	√	√		
Establish partnerships with relevant organisations and health professionals to support mental health and wellbeing practices (<i>Child Safe Standard 4</i>)	√	√	√	√
Ensure clear referral options and pathways for children, staff, and families to access mental health and wellbeing support services (<i>see Sources</i>) (<i>Child Safe Standards 4 & 7</i>)	√	√	√	√

Provide staff with access to ongoing professional development and mental health and wellbeing resources, including guidance on when and how to refer children for additional support (<i>see Sources</i>) (<i>Child Safe Standards 5</i>)	√	√		
Include mental health and wellbeing information and policy in staff induction and orientation (<i>Child Safe Standard 6</i>)	R	√		
Support educators to implement trauma-informed practice (<i>see Definitions</i>) through resources, guidance, and training (<i>Child Safe Standards 5 & 8</i>)	√	√		
Promote leadership practice that provides ongoing a supportive work environment that minimises stress and cares about staff wellbeing (<i>Child Safe Standards 2 & 6</i>)	√	√		
Support educators and staff to understand and care for their mental health and wellbeing (<i>see Occupational Health and Safety Policy</i>)	R	√		
Use evidence-based strategies that promote positive and responsible behaviour, and prevent and respond to unsafe or hurtful behaviour (<i>see Child Safe Environment and Wellbeing Policy</i>) (<i>Child Safe Standards 7</i>)	R	√	√	√
Implement strategies to promote positive conflict resolution and to prevent and respond to bullying, discrimination, and harassment (<i>see Compliments and Complaints Policy</i>) (<i>Child Safe Standards 1 & 9</i>)	R	√		

BACKGROUND & LEGISLATION

BACKGROUND

Many young Australians experience mental health challenges that can have lifelong impacts. Approximately one in seven children aged 4 to 17 experiences a mental health condition each year.

Children's mental health and wellbeing encompass their emotions, experiences, and developing ability to understand, manage, and express feelings. It also includes the relationships they form and their capacity to build secure, positive connections. A strong sense of wellbeing supports children to develop confidence and optimism, maximises their learning potential, strengthens relationships, and contributes to positive lifelong outcomes.

Early intervention plays a critical role in improving children's mental health. Positive mental health in early childhood provides a strong foundation for successful transition into adolescence and adulthood. Early childhood education and care services therefore have a significant responsibility in promoting children's mental health and wellbeing, with practices that can have lasting impacts on life-long outcomes.

The Early Years Learning Framework supports and enriches children's learning from birth to 5 years, with **Outcome 3** focussing on children's wellbeing. The framework guides educators to create learning environments that promote both physical and psychological development.

Trauma-informed practice is an essential component of early childhood education and care. It recognises and responds to the impact of trauma on young children by prioritising safe, supportive, and nurturing environments where children feel secure. By understanding and responding to the unique needs of children who have experienced trauma, educators can reduce potential negative impacts, build resilience, and support healthy emotional and cognitive development. This compassionate and informed approach strengthens children's mental health and wellbeing by supporting emotional regulation, fostering a sense of safety, and developing positive coping strategies.

Under Child Safe Standard 8, staff and volunteers must receive appropriate training and support to effectively implement child safety and wellbeing policy. This requirement aligns with **Child Safe Standards 1 and 5**, which emphasise the importance of equipping staff and volunteers with the knowledge and skills to create and maintain safe environments for children and young people.

LEGISLATION & STANDARDS

Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

- National Quality Standard: Quality Area 2
- The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia
- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011

- Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework

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 located online: <https://denzildonkinder.org.au/policies/> OR in the Policies Folder in the kindergarten office.

Family-centred practice:

- Is shaped by families’ understanding of their child to support shared decision-making about their learning and development
- Creates a welcoming and culturally inclusive environment, where all families are encouraged to participate in and contribute to children’s learning and development
- Actively engages families and children in planning children’s learning and development
- Provides feedback to families on each child’s learning and provide information about how families can further advance children’s learning and development at home and in the community.

Trauma Informed Practice: a strengths-based framework where trauma survivors are seen as individuals, who have experienced extremely abnormal situations and who manage the best as they can.

SOURCES & RELATED POLICIES

SOURCES

- [Alannah and Madeline Foundation](#), Trauma Informed Practice A guide to early Childhood Organisations:
- [Be You. Beyond Blue](#)
- [BlackDog Institute](#)
- [Child First and family services](#)
- [Commission for Children and Young People, Child Safe standards](#)
- [Cancer Council Victoria, Achievement Program](#)
- Department of Education and Training and Early Childhood Australia: [Wellbeing webinars](#)
- [Early Childhood Australia, Code of Ethics](#)
- [Early Childhood Resource Hub, Trauma-informed practice](#)
- Headspace: www.headspace.org.au
- [KidsMatter](#)
- [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child](#)
- Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority: [The Wellbeing Practice Guide](#)

RELATED POLICIES

- Child Safe Environment and Wellbeing
- Code of Conduct
- Educational Program
- Interaction with Children
- Nutrition, Oral Health and Active Play
- Occupational Health and Safety
- Privacy and Confidentiality

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

NIL

AUTHORISATIONS

This policy was adopted by the approved provider of Denzil Don Kindergarten on 26/05/2026.

REVIEW DATE: 26 / MAY / 2028

