






Early Years - Procedure

Providing a Child Safe Environment

Procedure Number:	D17-384403	Directorate:	Connected Communities
Approval by:	Manager Early Years	Responsible Officer:	Policy and Planning Officer, Strategic Planning and Partnerships Lead
Approval Date:	17/09/2025	Version Number:	2.0
Review Date:	3 years from approval date	Service Type:	    
Related Quality Area or Sector Standard	Quality Area 2 – Children’s Health and Safety Quality Area 7 – Governance and Leadership Child Safe Standards Reportable Conduct Scheme		

Purpose

This procedure outlines how Council Early Years Services will provide a safe, supportive and inclusive environment where Children’s Rights, safety, health and wellbeing are protected and promoted.

Policy Statement

Council Early Years Services is committed to:

- Upholding children’s rights to safety and wellbeing.
- Creating environments that are physically and emotionally safe, inclusive of online environments.
- Embedding children’s safety into our work culture, policies and procedures, and daily practice.
- Always acting in the best interest of each child, with a zero tolerance of child abuse or harm.
- Proactively sharing information with relevant authorities to promote the wellbeing and/ or safety of all children that is consistent with their best interests.
- Fostering opportunities for each child to participate, express their views and to learn and develop.
- Actively managing the risks of abuse or harm to each child, including fulfilling our duty of care and legal obligations to protect children and prevent any reasonable, foreseeable risk of injury or harm.

Scope

This policy and procedure apply to the approved provider, nominated supervisor, persons in day-to-day charge early childhood teachers, educators, staff, additional assistants, Maternal Child Health Nurses, Preschool Field Officers, Playgroup Facilitators, students on placement, volunteers, families, children and others attending the program and activities of Council Early Years Services.

Background

Council Early Years Services are focused on building environments that are child-safe and child-friendly, where children are listened to and feel respected, valued and encouraged to reach their full potential. All children have a fundamental right to be kept safe and protected from harm. Knox City Council is a Child Friendly City, with a zero tolerance of child abuse and a commitment to the ongoing protection of children and their safety.

Child Safe Policy & Reporting Processes

All Early Childhood Staff (along with other staff) must comply with the legal requirements of:

- **Mandatory Reporting** - Mandatory Reporting is the legal requirement for certain professional groups to 'report a reasonable belief of child physical or sexual abuse to Child Protection Authorities'.
- **Child Safe Standards** – organisational standards with outcomes that embed Child Safety.
- **Reportable Conduct Scheme** – a scheme to oversee the allegations of child abuse and misconduct. This requires Council to respond to allegations of child abuse (or child related misconduct) made against their workers, volunteers, and to notify the Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP).

For further information regarding Child Safety and reporting procedures please see the following documents:

- [Child Wellbeing and Safety Policy](#)
- [Child Safe Code of Conduct](#)
- [Child Safe Reporting and Incident Management Procedure](#)
- [Child Safe Process Flowchart](#)

Information Sharing

Three interrelated reforms that support the reduction in family violence and promoting child wellbeing or safety. The reforms are called the Child Information Sharing Scheme (CISS), the Family Violence and Information Sharing Scheme (FVISS), and the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework (MARAM).

For further information on how Early Years uses and complies with these reforms please see the following documents:

- [Information Sharing Scheme for Early Childhood Education Services](#)
- [Information Sharing Record](#)
- [Information Sharing Request](#)
- [Information Sharing Response](#)
- [Information Sharing Complaints](#)

Responsibilities

Approved Provider	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure that obligations under the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations are met.
Nominated Supervisor	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure that the Providing a child safe environment policy and procedures are implemented, the appropriate risk assessments and action plans are completed, and all identified actions are taken to minimise the risks to children's health and safety (also known as a risk minimisation plan).
Person in Day-to-day Charge	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure child protection training has been completed by the relevant persons as required by the service's jurisdiction, as required by section 162A of the National Law.
Responsible Person	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure all educators and staff, volunteers and students, are aware of current child protection legislation, including mandatory reporting requirements and obligations in their state/ territory.
Coordinators and Team Leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide an environment that is free from the use of tobacco, illicit drugs and alcohol and ensure no educators or staff are affected by alcohol or drugs (including prescription medication) so as to impair their capacity to supervise or provide education and care to children in the service.

- Promote a culture of child safety and wellbeing that underpins all aspects of the service's operations, to reduce risk to children (including the risk of abuse).
- Follow and support all staff, visitors, students, volunteers and contractors to comply with the [eSafety, Digital Technology and Use of Personal Devices in Early Years Procedure](#) to ensure the safe use of online environments at the service.
- Follow and support all staff to comply with [The National Model Code](#) and prohibition of staff using personal digital devices that can capture an image, video or recording of a child (including storage devices) whilst working directly with children.
- Ensure policies and procedures promote equity and respect diversity for the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. See [Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Procedure](#).
- Support, guide or train staff or volunteers to understand, respect and value Aboriginal culture, and to understand the importance of this to the wellbeing and safety of Aboriginal children.
- Ensure copies of the policy and procedures are readily accessible to nominated supervisors, coordinators, educators and staff, and available for inspection. Staff must know where to access policy and procedures.
- Meet staff to child ratios in ECEC Services to ensure adequate supervision.
- Communicate with educators and staff about their responsibilities and any changes to policies, procedures and legislation.
- Support educators and staff to uphold the service's culture of child safety and wellbeing.
- Regularly monitor child protection training schedules and ensure all educators and staff are up to date with their training.
- Approved Providers to use the Determining Nominated Supervisor and Responsible Person Present Procedure whilst completing recruitment for nominated supervisors and other staff for ECEC Services.
- Collect legislative required documentation and induct new staff, volunteers or students using the allocated Induction Forms.
- To routinely check Working with Children Checks (WWCC), Victorian Institute of Teaching Registration (VIT) and First Aid Qualifications.
- Collect information and follow reporting processes for responding to reasonable beliefs of child abuse, or allegations of child abuse from a staff member.
- Ensure the safety and wellbeing of children attending the service by keeping a visitors' record, including signatures and arrival/departure times.
- Complete child protection training as required by the service's jurisdiction, as required by section 162A of the National Law.
- Implement Food Safety Plans, Medical, Allergy, Preference Anaphylaxis Plans with the required Risk Assessments by following the [Asthma Management Procedure](#), [Anaphylaxis Procedure](#), [Medical \(Allergy\) and Food Safety Plan](#).
- Ensure all staff maintain legislative required and accredited training in child protection, first aid, CPR, Asthma and Anaphylaxis training.
- Ensure screening, recruitment and induction processes for educators, staff, students, and contractors are in line with Council Policy. Which will include

Criminal History Checks and Working With Children Checks (WWCC) where Child Protection legislation training, including for Mandatory Reporting requirements and obligations.

- Follow and support educators to comply with family/parenting/court orders that outline a child's custody.
- Implement and practice emergency management evacuation and drills as regulated every 3 months.
- Where required, apply for the necessary state or government funding to further support a child's safety or inclusion at the early years site.
- Collate and store incident and illness report in a safe location. Use these reports to inform changes to daily practice to inform safer practices.
- Reviewing this policy in consultation with stakeholders.
- Ensuring when sharing information giving precedence to the wellbeing and safety of a child or group of children over the right to privacy when sharing information under the CISS and the FVISS.
- Providing appropriate procedures for the safe delivery and collection of children (*refer to Delivery and Collection of Children Procedure*).

Early Childhood Teachers

- Be aware of current child protection legislation, including the mandatory reporting requirements and obligations.

Educators and all other staff

- Notify the responsible person, collect information and follow reporting processes for responding to reasonable beliefs of child abuse, or allegations of child abuse from a staff member.
- Maintain confidentiality.
- Ensure that obligations under the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations are met.
- Follow and comply to the [eSafety, Digital Technology and Use of Personal Devices in Early Years Procedure](#) to ensure the safe use of online environments at the service, and how to comply with using only service issued devices to capture images, videos or recordings of children.
- Follow and comply with [The National Model Code](#) and prohibition of staff using personal digital devices that can capture an image, video or recording of a child (including storage devices) whilst working directly with children.
- Only use service issued devices to capture images, videos or recordings of children or completing work on children's learning and development.
- Follow Food Safety Plans, Medical, Allergy, Preference Anaphylaxis Plans with the required Risk Assessments by following the [Asthma Management Procedure](#), [Anaphylaxis Procedure](#), [Medical \(Allergy\)](#) and [Food Safety Plan](#).
- Know the individual needs and action plans for the children in your care.
- Maintain legislative required and accredited training in child protection, first aid, CPR, Asthma and Anaphylaxis training.
- Monitor and maintain staff to child ratios in ECEC services to ensure adequate supervision of children, follow [Supervision of Children Procedure](#).
- Provide an environment that is free from the use of tobacco, illicit drugs and alcohol by following the [Tobacco, Vape and Smoke Free Environment](#).
- All staff, agency staff, students, volunteers to be aware of and follow supervision plans (Indoor and Outdoor), and that this is included in the induction process.

- All staff to follow relevant Information Sharing MARAM procedure when agencies provide an Information Sharing Request as per the MARAM guidelines.
- Complete ongoing risk assessments and apply risk minimisation strategies.
- Ensure all visitors sign/out of the service.
- Actively supervise children through positioning, purposeful engagement, scanning, observing and responding to children's dynamic supervision needs to reduce the risk of children being harmed.
- Ensure children wear protective footwear that is appropriate to the surroundings and weather.
- Ensure children have access and support to use Personal Protective equipment such as bicycle helmets, gloves for gardening or goggles for woodwork.
- Reduce the risk to a child's safety by ensuring the safety of their physical environment by conducting safety checklists on the building, equipment, storage, chemical storage, record keeping of dangerous substances (MDSD Sheets).
- Follow the [Chemical Hazardous Materials Procedure](#) in keeping children safe from chemicals and hazardous materials.
- In relation to Family Court Orders, take reasonable effort to prohibit an adult from contacting or collecting the child from the early year's service.
- Seek permission from parents or guardians on Administration of medication, Excursions/Incursions/Regular outings, capturing images or videos.
- Complete risk assessments for Incursions/Excursions/Routine Outings/Service Events as per [Excursions, Incursions, Routine Outings and Service Events Procedure](#).
- Follow the *Water Safety* and *Severe Weather Procedure* to protect children from harm.
- Engage children in road safety awareness discussions to prepare for outings and while in attendance at excursions.
- Provide general information to parents about child road safety, for example using child restraints, driveway safety and being a safe role model.
- Embed body awareness and body safety into curriculums that supports children to learn how to respond to behaviours from others that could harm them.
- Follow the Relationships with Children Procedure building safe and secure attachments with children.
- Empower children to reach bodily autonomy at their own pace.
- Practice emergency management evacuation and drills as regulated every 3 months.
- Follow procedures for the safe delivery and collection of children. (*refer to Delivery and Collection of Children Procedure*).
- Provide an environment where diversity is genuinely valued and is reflected in the daily programs and practice.
- Create a culturally safe environment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Providing a Child Safe Environment



	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promote equity and respect diversity for the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people. See Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Procedure.• Complete regular audits on sleep environments and sleep checks on children as per Sleep and Rest Procedure, Sleep and Rest Risk Assessment, Sleep and Rest Physical Check.• Document children's illness and injuries via the incident report form the and comply with the Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Procedure.
Parents and Guardians	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Park in the allocated parking, follow car park rules to keep all adults and children safe.• Provide Child Enrolment information, inclusive of authorised nominees for collection of the child along with providing relevant information in relation to medical needs, preferences or court orders.• Work in collaboration with Early Years staff on children's health, development and wellbeing.• Educating children in inclusive and positive behaviours.• Provide feedback when this policy is reviewed.
Contractors	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Follow the Participation of Students and Volunteers Procedure.
Volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sign in and out of the building.
Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Never be alone or left alone with a child or children.• Students and Volunteers to complete KCC Induction process.• Students and Volunteers to complete Child Protection and Child Safe Training before commencing at the service.• Notify the responsible person of any reasonable belief if a child has suffered abuse, or allegations of child abuse by a staff member.• Comply with the eSafety, Digital Technology and Use of Personal Devices in Early Years Procedure to ensure the safe use of online environments at the service, and how to comply with using only service issued devices to capture images, videos or recordings of children. Please see The <i>National Model Code</i> for Contractor specific information.• To protect children from harm provide an environment that is free from the use of tobacco, illicit drugs and alcohol by following the Tobacco, Vape and Smoke Free Environment.

Approved Provider reporting requirements about children in an education and care service

Under the National Law and Regulations, the approved provider must [notify the regulatory authority](#) of any:

- serious incidents
- complaints
- circumstances at the service which pose a risk to the health, safety or wellbeing of children
- any incident or allegation that physical or sexual abuse of a child or children has occurred or is occurring while the child or children are being educated and cared for by the service.

Serious Incidents

You must notify the [regulatory authority](#) within **24 hours** of becoming aware of a serious incident (Section 174(2)(a) and Regulation 176(2)(a). A serious incident (regulation 12) is defined as any of the following:

Report within 24 Hours

- **Death of a child** while being educated and cared for by the service or following an incident while being educated and cared for by the service
- **Any incident involving a serious injury or trauma to a child** while that child is being educated and cared for, which:
 - a reasonable person would consider required urgent medical attention from a registered medical practitioner; or
 - the child attended or ought reasonably to have attended a hospital e.g. broken limb*
- Any **incident involving serious illness of a child** while that child is being educated and cared for by a service for which the child attended, or ought reasonably to have attended, a **hospital** e.g. severe asthma attack, seizure or anaphylaxis*

NOTE: In some cases (for example rural and remote locations) a General Practitioner conducts consultations from the hospital site. Only treatment related to serious injury, illness or trauma is required to be notified, not other health matters.
- Any emergency for which **emergency services** attended

NOTE: This means an incident, situation or event where there is an imminent or severe risk to the health, safety or wellbeing of a person at an education and care service. It does not mean an incident where emergency services attended as a precaution.
- A child appears to be **missing or cannot be accounted for** at the service
- A child appears to have been **taken or removed** from the service in a manner that contravenes the National Regulations
- A child is mistakenly **locked in or locked out of the service** premises or any part of the premises.

Complaints Report within 24 hours	Any complaint alleging that a serious incident has occurred while the child is educated and cared for or complaints alleging that the Law has been contravened (Section 174(2)(b)). This includes any complaints about the physical or sexual abuse of a child while being educated and care for at a service.
Prescribed Matters – Physical and or Sexual abuse of a child Report within 24 hours	As an approved provider, you must notify the regulatory authority within 24 hours (or within 24 hours of becoming aware) of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any incident where you reasonably believe that physical and/or sexual abuse of a child has occurred or is occurring at the service (Regulation 175(2)(d), Regulation 176(2)(bb)) • Any allegation that sexual or physical abuse of a child has occurred or is occurring at the service (Regulation 175(2)(e), Regulation 176(2)(bc)).
Any circumstances that pose a risk to the health, safety or wellbeing of a child Report within 7 days	You must notify the regulatory authority within 7 days of becoming aware of a circumstance arising at the service that poses a risk to the health, safety or wellbeing of a child (Regulation 175(2)(c), Regulation 176(2)(c)).

More information regarding notifications to the quality authority and NQA ITS can be found [here](#)

Related References

- [Community Plan \(2021–31\)](#)

Providing a Child Safe Environment



- [Council Health and Wellbeing Plan \(2025-2029\)](#)

Related Policies & Procedures

- [Asthma Management Procedure](#)
- [Anaphylaxis Management Procedure](#)
- [Chemical Hazardous Materials Procedure](#)
- [Delivery and Collection of Children Procedure](#)
- [Supervision of Children Procedure](#)
- [Relationships and Interactions with Children Procedure](#)
- [eSafety, Digital Technology and Use of Personal Devices in Early Years Procedure](#)
- [Excursions, Incursions, Routine Outings and Service Events Procedure.](#)
- [Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Procedure](#)
- [Food Safety Plan](#)
- [Early Years Code of Conduct](#)
- [Medical \(including Allergy\) Management Procedure](#)
- [Knox City Council – Child Safe and Wellbeing Policy](#)
- [Supervision of Visitors Procedure](#)
- [Staffing Arrangement Policy](#)
- [Knox City Council Staff Code of Conduct](#)
- [Knox City Council Child Safe Code of Conduct](#)
- [Knox City Council Disciplinary Policy and Procedure](#)
- [Knox City Council Child Safe Reporting and Incident Management Procedure](#)
- [Tobacco, Vape and Smoke Free Environment](#)

Relevant Legislation and Standards

- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)
- Child Wellbeing and Safety Regulations 2017 (Vic)
- Commission for Children and Young People Act 2012 (Vic)
- Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act (Vic) 2006
- Crimes Amendment (Protection of Children) Act 2014
- Victorian Child Safe Standards (updated 1 July 2022)
- National Principles for Child Safe Organisations (2019)
- Victorian Reportable Conduct Scheme
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
- National Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Child Sexual Abuse 2021-2030
- Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics
- Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 (Vic)
- Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)
- Disability Act 2006 (Vic)

Definitions

Providing a Child Safe Environment



Term	Meaning
Child Abuse	All forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power *Source WHO
Child Information Sharing Scheme (CISS)	Enables (ISE) to share confidential information about any person to promote the wellbeing and/or safety of a child or group of children. The CISS works in conjunction with existing information sharing legislative provisions. All Victorian children from birth to 18 years of age are covered.
Duty of Care	Duty of care is a legal concept that refers to your responsibility to adequately protect children in your care from harm. It applies to all staff members within any early childhood service in Victoria.
Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme (FVISS)	Enables the sharing of relevant information between authorised organisations to assess or manage risk of family violence.
Harm	The impact experienced by the child as a result of the parent/caregivers action or inaction; it is the detrimental impact on a child's physical, psychological and emotional wellbeing and development *Source Recognising Child Abuse, Harm and Exploitation
Information Sharing	Delegated job roles 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. A broad range of professional groups are identified in the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 as 'mandatory reporters
Reportable Conduct Scheme	Aims to improve oversight of how organisations respond to allegations of child abuse and child-related misconduct by their workers (including agency/relief staff or contractor provided by a labour hire agency), and volunteers.
Working with Children (WWC) Check	Is a legal requirement under the Worker Screening Act 2020 for those undertaking paid or voluntary child-related work in Victoria.

Please see [Early Years Quality System Glossary and Definitions](#) for further glossary and definitions.

Charter of Human Rights

This policy has been assessed against and complies with the [Charter of Human Rights & responsibilities Act 2006](#). The [Simplified Version of the United Nations Convention of the Rights](#) of the Child has also been considered.

Equity Impact Assessment Statement

This Procedure has been assessed through the Equity Impact Assessment Checklist & Inclusive Language Guide. The following groups have been considered in how their lived experience is considered and respected in the creation of documents for the Quality document system (Woman, Men, Young people/children, LGBTQI+ Communities and Gender Diverse People, First Nations People, People with Disabilities including Mental Health, Culturally and Linguistically Diverse People, low-income households & Senior Communities).

Staff: For all related Early Years Policies and Procedures, please refer to [Early Years Team Site](#) and [Quality Documents Page](#). All staff working for Knox City Council Early Years Services are required to read and understand all Knox City Council Early Years Policies and Procedures.

Families: For all related Early Years Policies and Procedures, please refer to [Council's website](#). We strongly recommend all families enrolling in Knox City Council Early Years Services read the Knox City Council Early Years Services Policies and Procedures

Administrative Updates

From time to time, circumstances may change leading to the need for minor administrative changes to this procedure. Where an update does not materially alter this policy, such a change may be made administratively. Examples of minor administrative changes include changes to names of Council departments or positions, change to names of Federal or State Government departments or a minor amendment to legislation that does not have material impact. Where any change or update may materially change the intent of this policy, it must be considered by Council.

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:

Version Updates

<u>v#</u>	<u>Date</u>	Section	Changes (Brief)
V 2.0	10/09/2025	Whole document	Updated to include provisions for The National Model Code and outline use of Personal devices whilst working directly with children; Information sharing reforms and new reporting timelines.