

# PROVIDING A CHILD SAFE ENVIRONMENT

## PRINCIPLE

Greater Shepparton City Council Children's Services recognises the importance of providing a safe environment for all children attending services. All children have the right to experience quality education and care in an environment that is safe and promotes their health and wellbeing.

## GUIDELINES

### **Children's Services will ensure:**

1. Every reasonable precaution is taken to protect children being educated and cared for by the service, from harm and from any hazard likely to cause harm (*Education and Care Services National Law 167*).
2. All staff are aware of current child safe legislation and their role and responsibilities to respond to every child at risk of abuse or neglect. Refer to the *Child Safe Policy* (includes the *Child Safe Standards*) and *Greater Shepparton City Council Child Safe and Wellbeing* policy.
3. A culture of child safety and wellbeing is promoted within the service. (*Education and Care Services National Regulations 168(h)(i)*).
4. Staff and volunteers identify and mitigate risks in the online and physical environments, without compromising a child's right to privacy, access to information, social connections and learning opportunities. (*Education and Care Services National Regulations 168(h)(ii)*).
5. Every child at the service is adequately supervised. All children must be in sight and/or hearing of an educator at all times and unable to access unsupervised or unsafe areas in the service. Educators must supervise children closely when they are in a situation that presents a higher risk of injury and adjust their levels of supervision depending on the area and the skills, age mix, dynamics and size of the group of children they are supervising (*Education and Care Services National Law - 165*).
6. The educator- to-child ratios are maintained at all times children are being educated and cared for (*Education and Care Services National Regulations 122—124*).
7. There are appropriate procedures in place for the safe delivery and collection of children to the service. Refer to the *Delivery and Collection of Children Policy*.
8. Educators conduct risk assessments for excursions including regular outings, and consider children's safety when leaving the premises. Refer to the *Excursion Policy* (*Education and Care Services National Regulations 100-102*).
9. Child restraints provided in vehicles meet current safety standards and services are up to date and adhere to current legislation on child restraints when transporting children. Refer to the *Transportation Policy*.

10. Parents/guardians have completed enrolment forms including details of authorised nominees, and permission forms for excursions, regular outings, transportation and administration of medication.
11. No child is left alone (or is out of sight of a paid employee) with a visitor, volunteer or student (*Education and Care Services National Regulations 166*). Refer to the *Student, Volunteers and Visitors Policy*.
12. The services premises and all equipment and furniture used in providing the education and care service are safe, clean and in good repair (*Education and Care Services National Regulations 103*).
13. All equipment and materials used at the service meet relevant safety standards and educators follow manufacturing guidelines.
14. Any outdoor space used by children at the service is enclosed by a fence or barrier that is of a height and design that children pre-school age or under cannot go through, over or under it (*Education and Care Services National Regulations 104*).
15. Outdoor spaces provided at the service include adequate shaded areas to protect children from over exposure to ultraviolet radiation from the sun. Refer to the *Sun Protection Policy*, (*Education and Care Services National Regulations 114*).
16. Indoor spaces used by children at the service are well ventilated, have adequate natural light and are maintained at a temperature that ensures the safety and wellbeing of children (*Education and Care Services National Regulations 110*).
17. The location and design of the toilet, washing and drying of hands facilities enable safe use and convenient access by all children (*Education and Care Services National Regulations 109*).
18. For children, who wear nappies, adequate and appropriate hygienic facilities are provided for nappy changing and hand cleansing facilities for educators in the immediate vicinity of the nappy change area are provided (*Education and Care Services National Regulations 112*).
19. Health and hygiene practices are promoted and implemented to prevent cross infection and the spread of infectious diseases. Refer to the *Dealing with Infectious Diseases Policy* and the *Nutrition/Food/Beverages/Dietary Requirements Policy*.
20. Children being educated and cared for by the service are provided with an environment that is free from the use of tobacco, illicit drugs and alcohol (*Education and Care Services National Regulations 82*).
21. All chemicals and potentially dangerous products are stored safely out of reach of children and the storage location appropriately signed.
22. All Safety Data Sheet (SDS) must be valid within five years from date of issue.
23. All chemicals and potentially dangerous products are kept in their original containers, appropriately labelled, used and stored as in accordance with the manufacture's recommendations as stated on the label or within the (SDS).
24. Where decanting a chemical is necessary into a smaller container and the substance is not intended for immediate use, the container must be clearly and durably labelled to ensure correct substance identification and safe handling information.

25. A SDS folder is readily available to all staff/users of chemicals containing the following information:
- A chemical Register(list) of all chemicals stored
  - Current list, hard copies of SDS's for all chemicals and a ChemAlert summary sheet

This includes chemicals used by external parties used within the children's services, ie contracted cleaning staff.

26. Prior to using any chemical all staff have read, understand and follow the safety requirements as indicated within the SDS or on the chemical label.
27. Emergency and evacuation procedures are implemented and practiced. Refer to the *Emergency Situations Policy, (Education and Care Services National Regulations 97)*.
28. Staff members have ready access to an operating telephone or other similar means of communication to ensure immediate communication to and from parents/guardians and emergency situations, (*Education and Care Services National Regulations 98*).

**Related Policies:**

- Child Safe (includes *Child Safe Standards*)
- Delivery and Collection of Children
- Emergency Situations
- Excursions
- Dealing with Infectious Diseases
- Nutrition/Food/Beverages/Dietary Requirements
- Medical Conditions
- Students, Volunteers and Visitors
- Sun Protection
- Water Activities

**National Quality Standards: 2.1; 2.2; 3.1; 4.1;**

**Education and Care Services National Law: 165; 167**

**Education and Care Services National Regulations: 82;84;97-104;110;112; 114;122-124;166;168(h)(i); 168(h)(ii)**

**Children's Services Regulations 2020 – 46;51;53;57;66;67;70;72;73;79; 81;83;90 (Occasional Care only)**

**Sources and Reference Tools:**

- *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004*
- *Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2017*
- *Education and Care Services National Law 2010*
- *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011*
- *Children's Services Regulations 2020*
- *Guide to the National Quality Standards*
- *Child Safe Standards*
- <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/regulation/Pages/childsafes.aspx>
- Vic Roads - <https://www.vicroads.vic.gov.au/safety-and-road.../child-restraints>.

Reviewed: January 2021

Next review due: January 2023 Updated: 1 October 2023 – Legislation requirements – added new guidelines 3 and 4.

*Providing a Child Safe Environment Policy*