

Policy 16

Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

Policy Statement

Wideview Outside School Hours Care Service believes that it is every child's right to be safe and protected from all forms of abuse, violence, or exploitation. It is the legal and moral obligation of all adults who work within our service to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all children in our care. All educators, including casuals, volunteers and students have a duty of care to ensure the safety and protection to all children who access the service's facilities and programs.

The safety and welfare of all children is of paramount importance. Every child and young person have the right to be safe, we strive to create a child safe and child friendly environment where all children are valued and heard, are safe and protected.

We recognise the diversity of all children and young people, including (but not limited to) the needs of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children and young people, and children and young people from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds.

We are committed to child safety and our obligation as Mandatory Reporters as indicated under legislation. We have policies and procedures in place that support our Educators and volunteers to achieve these commitments.

Links to Education and Care Services National Regulations and National Quality Standard

QUALITY AREA 2: CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND SAFETY		
2.2	Safety	Each child is respected.
2.2.1	Supervision	At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from harm and hazard.
2.2.2	Incident and emergency management	Plans to effectively manage incidents and emergencies are developed in consultation with relevant authorities, practiced and implemented.
2.2.3	Child Protection	Management, educators, and staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities to identify and respond to every child at risk of abuse or neglect.

EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL REGULATIONS	
84	Awareness of child protection law
155	Interactions with children
S162 (A)	Persons in day-to-day charge and nominated supervisors to have child protection training

Procedure

If you believe a child is at immediate risk, phone 000.

1. Our children

- 1.1 Will be involved in making decisions, especially about matters that directly affect them. We listen to their views and respect what they have to say and build respectful and trusting relationships.
- 1.2 We promote diversity and acceptance of people from all walks of life and cultural backgrounds, at WOOSHC we -
 - promote the cultural safety, participation, and empowerment of Aboriginal and indigenous children.
 - promote the cultural safety, participation, and empowerment of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds.
 - ensure that children with a disability are safe and can participate equally.

2. Educators and volunteers

- 2.1 All educators employed by the service including management, full time/ part time carers, volunteers and students will be subject to a Working with Children Check carried out by the NSW Commission for Children and Young People. Written approval from the prospective employee will be sought prior to this check being carried out.

2.2 When the service engages incursion contractors, the provider is required to provide a Working with Children check verification, or a Certificate for Self-Employed People. These certificates are issued through the NSW Commission for Children and Young People. Application form and instructions are available on <https://www.acyp.nsw.gov.au/> or <https://ocg.nsw.gov.au/>

2.3 All staff and volunteers must agree to abide by our code of conduct which specifies the standards of conduct required when working with children. Our WOOSHC community are given the opportunity to contribute to the development of the code of conduct.

2.4 For further information refer to WOOSHC staffing Policy.

3. Training and supervision

3.1 Training and education are important to ensure that everyone understands that child safety is everyone's responsibility.

3.2 We aim to train and mentor staff and volunteers to identify, assess, and minimise risks of child abuse and to detect potential signs of child abuse.

3.3 New staff and volunteers will be advised and mentored to ensure they understand WOOSHC's commitment to child safety and that everyone has a role to play in protecting children.

3.4 Any inappropriate behaviour will be reported through appropriate channels, including NSW Communities and Justice, office of the children's guardian and NSW Police, depending on the severity and urgency of the matter.

4. Mandatory Reporting

4.1 A Mandatory Reporter is anybody who delivers services to children as part of their paid or professional work. In OOSH services, mandatory reporters are:

- Educators that deliver services to children
- Management, either paid or voluntary, whose duties include direct responsibility or direct supervision for the provision of these services.

4.2 Educators are mandated to report to Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) if they have current concerns about the safety or welfare of a child relating to section 23 of the NSW Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 Section 23 (1)

- (a) the child's or young person's basic physical, psychological, medical and education needs are not being met or are at risk of not being met,
- (b) the child or young person has been, or is at risk of being, physically or sexually abused or ill-treated,
- (c) the child or young person is living in a household where there have been incidents of domestic violence and are at risk of physical or psychological harm.

4.3 Reports should be treated with strict confidentiality in adherence to the service's Confidentiality Policy and Procedures. Any educator who forms a belief based on reasonable grounds that a child is at risk of harm should discuss their concerns with their Team Leader/ Nominated Supervisor, as he or she may have information the educator is not aware of.

4.4 The Team Leader/ Nominated Supervisor will assist educators in completing the online Mandatory Reporters Guidelines tool (MRG) to determine whether the report meets the threshold for **significant** risk of harm. The MRG is an interactive tool and is available online at: <https://reporter.childstory.nsw.gov.au>

4.5 The report page from the MRG should be downloaded and recorded for future reference regardless of whether further action is recommended.

4.6 If directed by the MRG to report to DCJ, educators should report their concerns to the Child Protection Helpline:

Mandatory Reporters phone 13 36 27
Non-Mandatory reporters' phone 132 111

- 4.7 Once a report is made to the Helpline no further report needs to be made unless new information comes to hand.
- 4.8 If new information presents concerning the child or young person run the MRG tool again Where concerns do not meet the significant harm threshold, the MRG tool may guide you to 'Document and continue the relationship'. This requires the service to continue to support, provide services, and coordinate assistance and referral for the child and their family. For assistance with referral information. - Family Services <https://dcj.nsw.gov.au/> or <https://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/>

5. Information exchange

- 5.1 To provide effective support and referral it may be necessary to exchange information with other prescribed bodies including government agencies or non-government organisations and services.
- 5.2 The NSW Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 has been amended (2009) to include chapter 16A Information Exchange. Under Chapter 16A NSW Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998, educators will exchange information that relates to a child or young person's safety, welfare, or wellbeing, whether the child or young person is known to Community Services and whether the child or young person consents to the information exchange.
- 5.3 The information requested or provided **must** relate to the safety, welfare, or wellbeing of the child. Information includes:
 - A child or young person's history or circumstances
 - A parent or other family member, significant or relevant relationship
 - The agency's work now and in the past
- 5.4 Where information is provided in good faith and according to legal provisions, under section 29 & section 245G NSW Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998; reporters cannot be seen as breaching professional etiquette or ethics or as a breach of professional standards. There can be no liability for court action.

6. Where a complaint is made about an Educator or someone in the service

- 6.1 Should an incident occur that involves a child being put at risk of harm from an educator, volunteer, trainee or person visiting the service, this is regarded as '**reportable conduct**' and necessitates such conduct being reported to the NSW Ombudsman within 30 days.
- 6.2 Where the allegation is made to an educator or member of management the facts as stated will be recorded in writing, using an Incident Report template that includes dates, times, names of person/s involved, name of person making allegation and the person making the report. This report should be kept on record and treated as strictly confidential.
- 6.3 If the Nominated Supervisor is suspected, then management should be informed.
- 6.4 The relevant forms together with information and assistance are available online at <https://ocg.nsw.gov.au/> The person making the report should follow the advice of the Ombudsman's Departmental Officers.
- 6.5 For the protection of both the children and the educator involved, the educator should be encouraged to take leave or be removed from duties involving direct care and contact with children, until the situation is resolved.
- 6.6 Support should be provided to all involved. This support can be given in the form of counselling or referral to an appropriate agency.

7. Removal and Assumption of Care by Department of Communities and Justice

- 7.1 Department of Communities and Justice (an agency within the NSW Government) and NSW Police have the legal authority to remove children from their parents' responsibility where:
 - There are reasonable grounds to believe that the child or young person is at significant risk of harm
AND
 - The risk is immediate.

7.2 Section 34 of the Children and young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1988 (the Act) authorises DCJ to take whatever action necessary to safeguard or promote the safety, welfare and well-being of a child or young person who needs care or protection.

7.3 Staff will follow the procedure for removal of care.

- DCJ should contact WOOSHC to seek approval from the Nominated Supervisor or the Certified Supervisor on duty to collect the child and advise about the need to remove the child from the service, including the names of the representatives and the proposed arrival time (DCJ may be assisted by Police).
- Do not contact the child’s parent/s to advise them about the removal of the child.
- Contact the Nominated supervisor if not on duty immediately to advise them that a child will be removed from care by DCJ representatives and details provided.
- If there has not been a prior call Certified Supervisor on duty should:
 - Confirm the identification of the representatives (formal ID)
 - Record the names and contact details of the representatives and the names of any Police in attendance.
 - Request that they sign the visitor in/out book.
 - If there is any doubt about the identity of the DCJ representatives the Certified Supervisor on duty or, if the removal is taking place outside office hours, contact the Child Protection Helpline on 133627 (the mandatory reporting number).

7.4 If the parent contacts and/or arrives at the service for information they should be directed to contact the Department of Communities and Justice, or to call the Child Protection Helpline on 132111. Where possible a caseworker should remain at the service to inform the parent.

7.5 Educators or parents can also contact the Complaints Unit on 1800 000 164 if they have a complaint in relation to the removal.

Sources, further reading and useful websites

- Australian Children’s Education & Care Quality Authority. (2014).
- My Time, Our Place: Framework for School Age Care in Australia (2011).
- Child Story <https://reporter.childstory.nsw.gov.au>
- Office of the children guardian <https://ocg.nsw.gov.au/>
- Department of Communities and Justice Services <https://dcj.nsw.gov.au/>
- NSW Commission for Children and Young People <https://www.acyp.nsw.gov.au/>
- Child Protection Helpline 13 36 27
- NSW Ombudsman <https://www.ombo.nsw.gov.au/>

Policy review information –

The Service encourages staff and parents to be actively involved in the annual review of each of its Policies and Procedures. In addition, the Service will accommodate any new legislative changes as they occur, and any issues identified as part the Service’s commitment to quality improvement. The Service consults with relevant recognised authorities as part of the annual review to ensure the policy contents are consistent with current research and contemporary views on best practice.

Review Date	Date completed	By Whom	Collaborated	Comment
July 2020	July 2020	Brandi (Manager)	Staff Committee Parents	
Aug 2021	Aug 2021	Brandi (Manager)		
Aug 2022	Feb 2022	Brandi (Manager)		
July 2022	Aug 2023	Brandi (Manager)		