

CHILD PROTECTION AND MANDATORY REPORTING

1. Policy statement

Weldon Children's Services is committed to providing safe, inclusive, and supportive environments where children's safety, wellbeing, and rights are actively protected and promoted. The organisation recognises that children have the fundamental right to feel safe, be heard, and be protected from harm. Weldon Children's Services has zero tolerance for child abuse, neglect, exploitation, or harm in any form.

At Weldon Children's Services, the safety and wellbeing of children is our highest priority and underpins all decisions, practices, and interactions across our services. We are committed to creating a strong culture of child safety in which all children feel respected, valued, empowered, and supported to participate in decisions that affect them.

As a provider of early childhood education, care, and community services, Weldon Children's Services recognises its critical role in safeguarding children and responding appropriately to concerns about their wellbeing. Our services operate within a child-safe framework that prioritises prevention, early identification of risk, and timely response to suspected abuse or neglect.

All staff, educators, volunteers, students, and contractors engaged by Weldon Children's Services share a collective responsibility to protect children and uphold child safe practices. Every individual working within the organisation is expected to act in the best interests of children and maintain a duty of care to ensure children are protected from harm.

Weldon Children's Services ensures that all staff understand their legal and ethical responsibilities regarding child protection and mandatory reporting. Staff are required to remain vigilant to signs of abuse, neglect, or harm and must take immediate and appropriate action where concerns arise.

Weldon Children's Services operates in accordance with the requirements of the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998, which establishes the obligation for certain professionals working with children to act as mandatory reporters when they suspect a child may be at risk of significant harm.

In accordance with this legislation, educators and staff working with children must report concerns where there are reasonable grounds to suspect that a child is experiencing or is at risk of significant harm. This may include concerns relating to physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional or psychological harm, neglect, exposure to domestic and family violence, or cumulative harm.

Weldon Children's Services requires staff to follow the appropriate reporting processes, including the use of the NSW Mandatory Reporter Guide to assess concerns and the reporting of

matters to relevant authorities when required. Staff must also document concerns accurately and maintain strict confidentiality when managing child protection matters.

The organisation recognises that responding to child protection concerns requires sensitivity, professionalism, and a child-centred approach. When children disclose information or concerns about their safety, staff will respond calmly, listen respectfully, and reassure the child that they are being heard and supported. Children will never be pressured to provide information, and their dignity and emotional wellbeing will be respected at all times.

Weldon Children's Services also recognises the importance of building strong, respectful partnerships with families and communities. While the organisation values these relationships, the safety and wellbeing of children will always take precedence where concerns regarding harm arise.

To strengthen safeguarding practices, Weldon Children's Services embeds child safe principles across all aspects of its operations, including recruitment practices, staff training, supervision, service procedures, and organisational leadership. All staff, volunteers, students, and contractors must hold a valid Working With Children Check in accordance with the Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012.

The organisation is committed to ensuring that staff are supported with ongoing training and professional development to recognise indicators of abuse, understand mandatory reporting responsibilities, and respond appropriately to child protection concerns.

Weldon Children's Services also recognises the importance of empowering children by promoting their voices, encouraging respectful relationships, and creating environments where children feel confident to express concerns or seek support.

This policy forms part of Weldon Children's Services' broader commitment to child safety and aligns with the requirements of the Education and Care Services National Law and Education and Care Services National Regulations, as well as national child safe principles and best practice safeguarding standards.

Through strong governance, clear procedures, and a proactive approach to safeguarding, Weldon Children's Services strives to ensure that every child attending our services is protected, supported, and able to thrive in a safe and nurturing environment.

2. Background

Weldon Children's Services recognises that children are among the most vulnerable members of our community and have the right to grow, learn, and play in environments that are safe, nurturing, and free from harm. Children's safety and wellbeing are fundamental to their healthy development, and early intervention is critical to protecting children from abuse, neglect, or exploitation.

The service operates in accordance with New South Wales legislation and national standards governing child protection. This includes the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection)

Act 1998, which outlines mandatory reporting obligations for suspected risk of significant harm, and the Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012, which requires all staff, volunteers, students, and contractors engaged in child-related work to hold a valid Working With Children Check. Weldon Children’s Services also aligns its practices with the Education and Care Services National Law, Education and Care Services National Regulations, and the National Quality Framework (NQF), including the National Quality Standard (NQS) Quality Areas 2 and 7, which emphasise children’s health, safety, and wellbeing and effective governance of educational programs.

In addition to legislative compliance, Weldon Children’s Services is committed to embedding child safe principles into all aspects of service delivery. This reflects the organisation’s understanding of contemporary best practice, which recognises that creating a culture of safety requires proactive prevention strategies, staff training, supervision, responsive policies, and strong partnerships with families and the community.

The service acknowledges that child protection is a shared responsibility. All staff, educators, and volunteers play a vital role in identifying, responding to, and reporting concerns regarding the safety and wellbeing of children. The service also recognises the importance of empowering children to participate in decisions affecting them, listening to their views, and ensuring they feel respected, safe, and valued.

This background underpins Weldon Children’s Services’ commitment to safeguarding children, providing a framework for proactive child protection practices, early intervention, and mandatory reporting. It reflects the service’s broader mission to support children’s growth and development in a safe, inclusive, and supportive environment.

3. Legislative requirements

Legislation / Standard / Authority	Section / Clause	Description
Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 (NSW)	Section 23	Establishes mandatory reporting obligations for certain professionals when they have reasonable grounds to suspect a child is at risk of significant harm.
Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 (NSW)	Section 24	Provides guidance on the duty of care for children and reporting procedures for suspected abuse or neglect.
Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012 (NSW)	Part 2, Sections 10–11	Requires all persons working in child-related roles to obtain a valid Working With Children Check (WWCC) clearance.
Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012 (NSW)	Part 3, Section 15	Sets out offences and penalties for engaging in child-related work without proper clearance.

Office of the Children’s Guardian	N/A	Regulates Working With Children Checks, maintains the child protection register, provides guidance on child safe organisations, and ensures compliance with the NSW Child Safe Standards.
Education and Care Services National Law (Australia)	Section 165	Requires the approved provider to notify regulatory authorities of serious incidents affecting children.
Education and Care Services National Law (Australia)	Section 167	Requires the approved provider to ensure staff are aware of child protection responsibilities, including identifying and responding to risks of harm.
Education and Care Services National Regulations (Australia)	Regulation 84	Specifies staff qualifications and training requirements to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children.
Education and Care Services National Regulations (Australia)	Regulation 161	Requires adequate supervision of children to protect them from harm while in care.
Education and Care Services National Regulations (Australia)	Regulation 168	Requires services to maintain policies and procedures, including child protection and mandatory reporting policies.
Education and Care Services National Regulations (Australia)	Regulation 175	Requires staff induction and ongoing training, including child protection awareness and mandatory reporting procedures.
Mandatory Child Protection Training (NSW Government)	N/A	Requires all educators and staff to complete government-endorsed Mandatory Child Protection Training (Levels 1–3) to understand child abuse risks, reporting obligations, and child safe practices; refresher training is required every two years.
NSW Child Safe Standards	Standards 1–10	Sets requirements for child-safe organisations, including leadership, governance, risk management, culturally safe practices, staff recruitment, child empowerment, and family engagement. Weldon Children’s Services aligns its policies and procedures with these standards.
National Quality Standard (NQS)	QA 2.2	Requires children to be protected from harm and hazard; health, safety, and wellbeing practices must be embedded in daily routines.
National Quality Standard (NQS)	QA 7.1	Governance supports the operation of a quality service, including regulatory compliance and risk management in child protection.

4. Principles informed in this policy:

Child Safety is Paramount

- The safety, wellbeing, and best interests of children are the highest priority in all decisions, actions, and organisational practices.

Zero Tolerance of Abuse and Neglect

- Weldon Children’s Services has a zero-tolerance approach to physical, emotional, sexual abuse, neglect, and any form of exploitation.

Mandatory Reporting

- All staff, volunteers, students, and contractors have a legal and ethical obligation to report any suspected risk of significant harm to a child in accordance with NSW legislation.

Duty of Care

- All personnel have a responsibility to take reasonable steps to protect children from foreseeable risk of harm and to maintain safe environments.

Legislative and Regulatory Compliance

- Practices comply with the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998, Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012, Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations, and other relevant child protection legislation.

NSW Child Safe Standards

- The service aligns with the 10 Child Safe Standards, promoting leadership, governance, culturally safe practices, child empowerment, family and community engagement, and continuous improvement.

Confidentiality and Privacy

- Child protection concerns, disclosures, and reports are handled with strict confidentiality, and information is shared only with authorised persons and relevant authorities.

Early Intervention and Prevention

- Proactive measures are taken to prevent harm, identify risks early, and respond promptly to concerns regarding a child’s safety or wellbeing.

Child-Centred Approach

- Children’s views, rights, and voices are respected, and they are empowered to participate in matters affecting them in a manner appropriate to their age and development.

Partnership with Families and Communities

- Weldon Children’s Services collaborates with families and communities to support child safety while ensuring that children’s wellbeing always remains the priority.

Staff Education and Competence

- All staff are trained in recognising and responding to abuse, mandatory reporting, and child safe practices, including completion of government-mandated child protection training.

Transparency and Accountability

- Leadership and staff are accountable for ensuring that child protection policies and procedures are implemented, monitored, and continuously improved.

Cultural Safety and Inclusion

- All children, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and children with additional needs, are protected and supported in a culturally safe and inclusive environment.

Children Exhibiting Sexualised Behaviours

Weldon Children’s Services recognises that children may sometimes exhibit sexualised behaviours. While some behaviours may be age-appropriate exploration, others may indicate that a child has been exposed to or experienced sexual abuse or exploitation.

The service is committed to:

1. Identifying Concerns

- Staff are trained to observe and recognise sexualised behaviours that are unusual, harmful, or inappropriate for the child’s age and developmental stage.
- Examples may include persistent sexual play with peers, knowledge of sexual acts inappropriate for age, or coercive or aggressive sexual behaviours.

2. Immediate Response

- Ensure the safety of all children involved.
- Separate children if necessary, while maintaining respect, dignity, and confidentiality.
- Avoid interrogating the child or attempting to investigate the cause of the behaviour themselves.

3. Mandatory Reporting

- Any concern that a child is exhibiting sexualised behaviour that may indicate abuse, or any disclosure of sexual abuse, must be reported immediately through the **mandatory reporting pathways**:
 - NSW Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) – Child Protection Helpline: 132 111
 - Police if the situation is an immediate threat or a criminal offence is suspected
- Staff must also follow the service’s internal reporting procedure to notify the Nominated Supervisor / Director.

4. Documentation

- Record detailed, factual observations of the behaviour, including dates, times, and context.
- Avoid using judgmental or interpretive language; stick to objective descriptions.

5. Support and Follow-Up

- Work with parents, carers, and relevant agencies to ensure appropriate support and intervention for the child exhibiting the behaviour.
- Implement strategies to maintain the safety and wellbeing of all children.
- Access professional guidance from child protection specialists, psychologists, or sexual assault services when required.

6. Confidentiality

- All information about children exhibiting sexualised behaviours or any disclosures must remain strictly confidential and only shared with authorised personnel and relevant authorities.

5. Key terms

Term	Meaning	Source
Child	Any person under the age of 18 years.	Children and Young Persons (Care and

		Protection) Act 1998 (NSW)
Child Protection	Measures and practices designed to safeguard children from abuse, neglect, and exploitation, and to ensure their safety, wellbeing, and rights.	Education and Care Services National Law, Child Safe Standards
Mandatory Reporter	A professional or worker who is legally required to report any reasonable suspicion that a child is at risk of significant harm.	Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 (NSW), Section 23
Reasonable Grounds / Suspicion	The belief that a child may be at risk of significant harm based on observations, disclosure, or other evidence, which would lead a reasonable person to form the same suspicion.	Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 (NSW), Section 23
Risk of Significant Harm (ROSH)	A situation where a child's health, safety, or wellbeing is at risk from abuse, neglect, or other harm, to a degree that requires intervention.	Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 (NSW)
Abuse	Includes physical, sexual, emotional/psychological abuse, and neglect.	Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 (NSW)
Sexualised Behaviours	Behaviours exhibited by children that are sexual in nature, may be age-inappropriate, harmful, or indicative of prior exposure to abuse.	NSW Child Protection Best Practice Guidelines
Disclosure	When a child communicates, verbally or non-verbally, that they have been harmed or are at risk of harm.	Education and Care Services National Regulations 168(2)(a)
Nominated Supervisor / Director	The staff member responsible for day-to-day management of the service and the point of contact for child protection concerns.	Education and Care Services National Law 162
Approved Provider	The organisation or entity responsible for ensuring the service complies with the National Law, Regulations, and child protection requirements.	Education and Care Services National Law 7
Working With Children Check (WWCC)	A clearance issued by the Office of the Children's Guardian for individuals working with children, ensuring they are suitable to engage in child-related work.	Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012 (NSW)
Child Safe Standards (CSS)	Ten principles established by the NSW Government to create organisations that are safe for children, including governance, empowerment, risk management, and staff recruitment.	NSW Child Safe Standards, Office of the Children's Guardian
Mandatory Child Protection Training	Government-endorsed training for educators and staff that outlines child protection responsibilities, recognition of abuse, and reporting procedures.	NSW Government Education & Communities
Confidentiality	The ethical and legal duty to protect personal and sensitive information relating to children, families, and reports of harm.	Privacy Act 1988, Education and Care Services National Regulations 181

Serious Incident	Any event that results in, or could result in, significant harm to a child while in care, including injury, abuse, or serious misconduct.	Education and Care Services National Law 174 & National Regulations 176
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6. Links to other policies

The following policies may be linked to this policy:

- Code of Conduct Policy
- Positive Behaviour Guidance Policy
- Recruitment Policy
- Adequate Supervision of Children Policy
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy
- Dealing with Complaints Policy
- Privacy and Confidentiality Policy
- Emergency Policy

7. Induction and ongoing training

- Induction and ongoing training will be implemented, focusing on this policy and related procedures.
- Information will be shared with relief/ casual and educator on induction and as relevant to the environments that they are working in, their shift responsibilities and the children in their care.
- Procedures and clear expectations about conducting assessments are part of Nominated Supervisor/Responsible Person and educator induction training, and regularly reviewed at staff meetings.

8. Monitoring, evaluation and review

This policy will be monitored to ensure compliance with legislative requirements and unless deemed necessary through the identification of practice gaps, the service will review this Policy every two years.

Families and staff are essential stakeholders in the policy review process and will be given opportunity and encouragement to be actively involved.

In accordance with R. 172 of the Education and Care Services National Regulations, the service will ensure that families of children enrolled at the service are notified at least 14 days before making any change to a policy or procedure that may have significant impact on the provision of education and care to any child enrolled at the service; a family's ability to utilise the service; the fees charged or the way in which fees are collected.

Policy created:	April 2025	
Review Date	Assignee	Notes
February 2026	Lauren Roberts	Updated principles that inform this policy Updated procedures
March 2026	Lauren Roberts	Inclusion of mandatory child safety training Creation of responding to concern or disclosure procedure. Creation of mandatory reporting procedure.

PROCEDURE

Responding to concern or disclosure	
Legislation	Act: 165, 167, 174, 174A
Regulations	Regs: 84, 168, 170, 171, 172, 176
Quality Areas	QA: 2.2, 6.1, 7.1.2
Child Safe Standards	CSS: 1,2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10
Recognise Indicators or Concerns	<p>Staff must remain vigilant and aware of indicators that a child may be at risk of significant harm.</p> <p>Concerns may arise from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical signs of injury or neglect • Changes in behaviour or emotional wellbeing • Age-inappropriate sexualised behaviour • Disclosure made by a child • Information provided by another child, family member, or professional • Observations of family interactions or environmental risks • Exposure to domestic and family violence • Concerns relating to parental mental health, substance misuse, or neglect <p>Indicators may include but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • unexplained injuries • persistent fearfulness or withdrawal • extreme behavioural changes • poor hygiene or inadequate clothing • repeated hunger • sexual knowledge beyond developmental level <p>Staff must not dismiss or minimise concerns.</p>

<p>Ensure immediate safety</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If a child is in immediate danger or at risk of serious harm, staff must: • Ensure the child is safe. • Remove the child from immediate danger where appropriate. • Notify the Nominated Supervisor or Director immediately. • Contact NSW Police (000) if urgent intervention is required. • The safety and wellbeing of the child must always be prioritised.
<p>Respond appropriately to a disclosure</p>	<p>If a child discloses abuse or harm:</p> <p>Staff must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • remain calm and listen carefully • believe the child • reassure the child they did the right thing by telling someone • allow the child to speak freely • avoid asking leading or investigative questions • avoid making promises that cannot be kept (e.g. “I won’t tell anyone”) <p>Staff should only ask minimal clarifying questions if necessary, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Can you tell me what happened?” • “When did this happen?” <p>Staff must not investigate the disclosure themselves.</p>
<p>Document observations immediately</p>	<p>Staff must record concerns as soon as possible.</p> <p>Documentation must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • date and time of observation or disclosure • the child’s name • exact words used by the child where possible • factual description of injuries or behaviour • context in which the concern arose • names of witnesses if applicable • actions taken by staff <p>Documentation must be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • factual • objective • free from personal opinions or assumptions <p>Records must be stored securely and confidentially.</p>

<p>Inform the Nominated supervisor</p>	<p>The staff member must notify the Nominated Supervisor or Director immediately after forming a concern.</p> <p>The purpose of this step is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure the service follows correct reporting procedures • provide support to the reporting staff member • determine appropriate next steps using the Mandatory Reporter Guide <p>However, informing a supervisor does not remove the legal responsibility of the mandatory reporter.</p>
<p>Created/ reviewed: March 2026</p>	<p>Review responsibility: Approved Provider</p>

Mandatory Report	
<p>Legislation Regulations Quality Areas Child Safe Standards</p>	<p>Act: 165, 167, 174, 174A Regs: 84, 168, 170, 171, 172, 176 QA: 2.2, 6.1, 7.1.2 CSS: 1,2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10</p>
<p>Steps</p>	<p>Step 1 – Access the Mandatory Reporter Guide Open the online Mandatory Reporter Guide provided by the NSW Department of Communities and Justice. The guide can be accessed through the NSW ChildStory website. Select: “Start a New Decision Tree” The guide will ask a series of structured questions designed to determine whether the concern meets the threshold for reporting Risk of Significant Harm (ROSH).</p> <p>Step 2 – Select the Primary Concern Choose the category that best describes the concern, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical abuse • Sexual abuse • Psychological harm • Neglect • Exposure to domestic violence • Parent/carer substance abuse • Parent/carer mental health concerns • Child exhibiting harmful sexual behaviours <p>Choose the category that most closely reflects the main concern.</p> <p>Step 3 – Work Through the Decision Tree</p>

	<p>Answer each question carefully and honestly. Questions may ask about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the severity of harm • how often the behaviour occurs • whether the child is currently safe • whether there is escalation of risk • whether there are protective adults • whether siblings may also be at risk <p>It is important to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • answer based on known facts • avoid speculation • consult with the Nominated Supervisor if needed <p>The decision tree may take 10–20 minutes to complete.</p> <p>Step 4 – Review the MRG Outcome Once completed, the Mandatory Reporter Guide will generate one of several outcomes:</p> <p>Outcome 1 – Report to Child Protection Helpline This means the concern meets the threshold for Risk of Significant Harm. You must submit a report to the NSW Department of Communities and Justice. The MRG will provide an option to generate a report summary.</p> <p>Outcome 2 – Refer to Child Wellbeing Unit or Support Services This means the concern does not meet ROSH threshold, but support services may be needed. Staff should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • discuss the matter with the Nominated Supervisor • consider referral to family support services • continue monitoring the child <p>Outcome 3 – Document and Monitor The concern does not currently meet the reporting threshold. Staff must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • document the outcome • continue observing the child • repeat the MRG if concerns escalate <p>Step 5 – Generate the MRG Report Summary If the outcome requires reporting: Select: “Create Report” or “Generate Summary” The system will produce a MRG Decision Report containing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • summary of concerns • answers provided • the decision outcome <p>This document should be saved or printed and attached to the service’s internal child protection record.</p> <p>Step 6 – Submit an eReport</p>
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	<p>If the outcome is Report to Child Protection Helpline, staff should lodge an eReport through the ChildStory Reporter Portal. Enter the following information:</p> <p>Child Details</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • full name • date of birth • gender • address • cultural identity (if known) <p>Parent / Caregiver Details</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • names • relationship to child • contact information <p>Risk Information</p> <p>Provide detailed information including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what has been observed • what the child disclosed (use the child's exact words if possible) • any injuries observed • previous concerns or incidents • risk factors in the home • whether other children may be at risk <p>Attach the MRG Decision Report summary if available.</p> <p>Step 7 – Submit the Report</p> <p>Review all entered information carefully. Once satisfied, submit the eReport through the portal. After submission:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a report confirmation number will be generated • record this number in the service's documentation <p>Step 8 – Notify the Nominated Supervisor</p> <p>The staff member must inform the Nominated Supervisor or Director that a report has been made. Provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • confirmation number • summary of concerns • documentation completed <p>This ensures the service can maintain appropriate internal records.</p> <p>Step 9 – Record and Store Documentation</p> <p>The following must be securely stored:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • written observations • disclosure notes • MRG decision summary • copy of eReport submission • confirmation number <p>All documentation must remain strictly confidential.</p>
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	<p>Step 10 – Continue to Support the Child Following a report: Educators must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • continue to provide a safe and supportive environment • maintain normal routines where possible • avoid discussing the report with the child • document any additional concerns <p>Further reports may be required if new information arises.</p>
<p>Related policies/ procedures</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Code of Conduct Policy • Providing a Child Safe Environment Policy • Positive Behaviour Guidance Relationships Policy • Adequate Supervision of Children Policy • Recruitment Policy • Dealing with Complaints and Grievances Policy • Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy • Emergency and Evacuation Policy • Inclusion and Equity Policy • Interactions with Children Policy • Governance and Management Policy
<p>Implemented by:</p>	<p>Approved Provider Nominated Supervisor/Responsible Person Educator</p>
<p>Created/ reviewed: March 2026</p>	<p>Review responsibility: Approved Provider</p>