

PROVIDING A CHILD SAFE ENVIRONMENT

1. Policy statement

Weldon Children's Services is committed to ensuring the safety, wellbeing, and protection of every child in our care. We foster this through a child-safe culture, responsive relationships, engaging experiences, and safe, healthy environments. We take all necessary actions to protect children from abuse, exposure to violence, harm, and neglect, while supporting their confidence, optimism, and positive learning and life outcomes.

We uphold every child's right to quality education and care in a safe environment. Our Providing a Child Safe Environment Policy sets out Weldon Children's Services' expectations, practices, and approach in line with the Child Safe Standards. It promotes a culture of safety and belonging and provides guidance on supervision, the learning environment, and safeguarding children's rights.

We ensure:

- All staff meet their legislative obligations to prevent harm and hazards.
- A culture of child safety and wellbeing is embedded across the service.
- Children are provided with safe physical and online environments.
- Any child at risk of, or experiencing, abuse or neglect is identified and reported promptly to the relevant authorities.

2. Background

The Education and Care Services National Regulations require approved providers to have policies and procedures in place to provide a child-safe environment and minimise risks of harm and hazards. The Education and Care Services National Law 2010 requires that all reasonable precautions are taken to protect children from harm or injury, and that nominated supervisors and staff complete child protection training. Staff must be aware of current child protection laws and their obligations, and management, educators, and staff are responsible for identifying and responding to children at risk of abuse or neglect, while ensuring adequate supervision at all times.

Approved services must protect children from harm and hazards through active supervision and risk minimisation strategies. Clear policies and procedures ensure a safe environment, including the safety of buildings, grounds, equipment, materials, and the storage and use of hazardous substances.

The Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 provides the legislative framework for responding to children at risk of significant harm. Mandatory reporters must report concerns to the Child Protection Helpline, and the NSW Reportable Conduct Scheme supports organisations in responding to allegations against staff or volunteers. Weldon Children's Services ensures compliance with all relevant legislation, including the Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2013, NSW Crimes Act 2000, WHS legislation, National Quality Standards, and Education and Care National Law and Regulations.

A Working with Children Check (WWCC) is required for all staff in child-related roles. Management is responsible for maintaining up-to-date WWCC records, including clearance numbers and expiry dates, to ensure ongoing compliance.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) recognises every child's right to safety and protection from violence, abuse, or neglect. Weldon Children's Services advocates for children's rights and is committed to establishing and maintaining a child-safe environment.

Child Safe Standards guide Weldon Children's Services in promoting a culture of child safety. Our policies, procedures, and practices are aligned with the standards to prevent harm, respond to risks, empower children, and ensure inclusivity, respect, and ongoing improvement in all aspects of child safety and wellbeing.

3. Legislative requirements

Section/Regulation	Description
Education and Care Services National Law 2010 – Section 165	Requires approved providers to adequately supervise children at all times.
Education and Care Services National Law 2010 – Section 167	Requires providers to ensure children's health, safety, and wellbeing, including protection from harm and hazards.
Education and Care Services National Law 2010 – Section 170	Nominated supervisors must ensure compliance with regulatory requirements, including child safety measures.
Education and Care Services National Law 2010 – Section 171	Director's responsibilities include maintaining safety and wellbeing in all aspects of service operations.
Education and Care Services National Law 2010 – Section 174	A Responsible Person must be present at all times, including during excursions and other activities outside the service.
Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 – Regulation 84	Staff members must be suitably qualified, trained, and aware of child protection obligations.
Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 – Regulation 89	Requires records of staff attendance, relevant for ensuring supervision and compliance.
Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 – Regulation 90	Staff authorised to administer medication must be trained, safeguarding children's health.
Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 – Regulation 99	Children leaving premises: parental/guardian authorisation and risk assessment required.

Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 – Regulation 100	Written authorisation from parent or authorised nominee must be obtained for excursions.
Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 – Regulation 102B–102E	Excursion risk assessment, documentation, supervision, and record-keeping to ensure child safety outside premises.
Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 – Regulation 122–123	Authorisations and attendance records must be maintained to support child safety compliance.
Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 – Regulation 136	Policies and procedures must be developed, implemented, and made available to staff and families.
Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 – Regulation 168	Policies and procedures, including those for child safety, must be maintained and adhered to.
Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (NSW)	Requires duty of care to protect children and staff from harm in all environments.
Work Health and Safety Regulation 2017 (NSW)	Outlines hazard management, risk assessment, and safe practices in ECEC environments.
Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 (NSW)	Mandatory reporting obligations for suspected risk of significant harm; promotes child welfare and safety.
Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012 (NSW)	Staff and volunteers must have a valid Working with Children Check.
NSW Crimes Act 1900 – Sections 316–317	Criminalises acts of abuse or neglect against children; mandatory reporting of child-related offences.
Children’s Guardian Act 2019 (NSW) – Reportable Conduct Scheme	Organisations must respond to allegations of abuse or misconduct by employees or volunteers.
National Quality Standard (NQS) – QA2: Children’s Health and Safety	Requires safe environments, supervision, and risk management to protect children.
National Quality Standard (NQS) – QA4: Staffing Arrangements	Staff qualifications, ratios, supervision, and responsibilities for child safety.
Child Safe Standards 1: Child Safe Culture	Establish and embed an organisational culture of child safety.
Child Safe Standards 2: Child Safety Policies	Develop and implement policies and procedures to protect children from harm.
Child Safe Standards 3: Child Safety Training and Supervision	Provide training, supervision, and guidance for staff and volunteers on child safety.
Child Safe Standards 4: Responding to Allegations	Establish processes for responding to allegations of child abuse.
Child Safe Standards 5: Preventing and Responding to Harm	Implement strategies to prevent and respond to child abuse and neglect.
Child Safe Standards 6: (Optional for some states)	[Varies by jurisdiction; often omitted in NSW]

Child Safe Standards 7: Responding to Concerns	Ensure concerns about child safety are identified, assessed, and addressed appropriately.
Child Safe Standards 8: Empowering Children	Empower children to participate, express their views, and be heard.
Child Safe Standards 9: (Optional for some states)	[Varies by jurisdiction; often omitted in NSW]
Child Safe Standards 10: Continuous Improvement	Review, monitor, and improve child safety strategies and practices regularly.
United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)	Recognises children’s right to safety and protection from violence, abuse, or neglect.

4. Principles informed in this policy:

- Children’s wellbeing is paramount, and they are actively involved in decision-making. Educators foster environments that allow children to participate, express their views, and develop to reach their full potential.
- We are committed to promoting cultural safety for Aboriginal children, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and providing a safe environment for children with additional support needs.
- Weldon Children’s Services ensures that the rights and best interests of each child are paramount. We provide training, resources, guidance, and information to protect children’s health, safety, and wellbeing at all times.
- Reasonable precautions and adequate supervision are maintained at all times to protect children from harm and hazards.
- Child safety and wellbeing are embedded in the attitudes, behaviours, and practices of educators through a child-safe and child-friendly environment that is inclusive, transparent, and values all children.
- Keeping families informed is vital. We encourage active participation, facilitate two-way communication, and promote a partnership approach to shared responsibility for children’s safety, wellbeing, and development.
- Weldon Children’s Services has a moral, ethical, and legal responsibility to ensure children are safe. We provide ongoing training, resources, and guidance to support cultural safety and the needs of children with diverse backgrounds or disabilities.
- We are committed to good governance and quality management, continuously improving practices, conducting audits, providing educator training, and embedding the Child Safe Standards.
- All staff and educators are carefully selected, act in the best interests of children, and are equipped through ongoing education and training to maintain a safe and supportive learning environment.

Considerations for safe environments:

- Children’s health, safety, and wellbeing are integral to all decision-making and embedded in Weldon’s leadership, governance, and culture.
- The premises, equipment, and furniture are regularly audited to ensure safety, cleanliness, and good repair.

- Educators ensure toys and equipment are developmentally appropriate, safe, and in working order, with regular safety checks conducted.
- Procedures for managing incidents and emergencies are implemented, rehearsed, and reviewed as outlined in our Emergency and Evacuation Policy.
- Rigorous recruitment, screening, and induction processes ensure all staff are qualified, experienced, and committed to child safe values.
- Centre buildings, playgrounds, and equipment are maintained to meet Australian Safety Standards, ensuring play spaces are fit for purpose.
- Children are protected from hazards posed by products, plants, objects, animals, and people in the environment.
- All equipment and materials comply with relevant Australian Safety Standards.
- Risk assessments are conducted and updated regularly, with hazards analysed and controlled to minimise risk to children.
- Daily safety checks are conducted, and damaged equipment or resources are repaired or replaced promptly.
- Indoor and outdoor spaces are organised to minimise risks to children’s health and safety.
- Smoking is prohibited on service grounds and within legislated distances from entrances.
- Health, hygiene, and safe food practices are maintained, with secure storage to prevent pests and vermin.
- Children are released only to custodial parents/guardians or authorised persons.
- Effective hand hygiene, exclusion of unwell individuals, cleaning, immunisation, and health programs minimise the transmission of illness.
- Medication is administered and stored in accordance with instructions, policies, and procedures.
- Sleep, rest, and relaxation practices follow Red Nose Safe Sleeping Guidelines and relevant service procedures.
- Daily sun safety strategies are implemented as per Cancer Council guidelines.
- Dangerous chemicals, materials, or equipment are kept inaccessible to children.
- Safe transportation policies and procedures are consistently followed for excursions and bus travel.
- Children are encouraged to share concerns and participate in decisions regarding their health, safety, and wellbeing.
- Families are regularly provided with child health and safety information and supported in their parenting.
- Cleaning is conducted thoroughly and regularly to maintain a hygienic environment, resources, and equipment.
- When using dangerous chemicals, substances, medicines, or equipment, the least hazardous options are chosen, with Safety Data Sheets followed for storage, use, and first aid.

Considerations for safeguarding:

- Weldon Children’s Services has zero tolerance for child abuse and is committed to the safety, participation, and empowerment of all children. We promote diversity, inclusion, and positive relationships, ensuring children’s views are respected and incorporated into decisions that affect them.

- All children are provided with a safe environment, both physically and online, supported by a strong child-safe culture embedded in service practices.
- Nominated supervisors, educators, staff, volunteers, and students are informed about child protection laws, Child Safe Standards, and their obligations under these requirements.
- We actively identify and manage risks of abuse or harm to children, fulfilling our duty of care and legal obligations to prevent foreseeable injury or harm.
- Weldon supports proactive information-sharing with relevant authorities to safeguard the wellbeing and safety of individual children or groups of children.
- We promote children's rights and voices by embedding personal safety education and encouraging children to participate in discussions about safe environments.
- Educators listen to children and consider their ideas on how to maintain a safe and supportive environment.
- Educators respond appropriately to requests to share information when necessary to promote child wellbeing, safety, or manage risks related to family violence.

Considerations for supervision:

- Children's safety is embedded in day-to-day practices, with effective and adequate supervision provided at all times. Educators use active supervision strategies in all environments, including excursions and transportation, considering children's ages, abilities, and support needs.
- Sleeping infants and toddlers are closely monitored at regular intervals, remaining within sight and hearing of educators to ensure their breathing and wellbeing.
- Risk assessments are conducted to manage environmental hazards, and educators collaborate with children to develop behaviour guidelines, including for adventurous play. Educators understand their duty of care and responsibilities for maintaining a child-safe environment.
- Regular safety monitoring checks are conducted to maintain high safety standards. Children are encouraged to speak up about their own safety or the safety of peers.
- Increased supervision is implemented during high-risk activities, such as excursions near water or other hazards.
- Supervision levels are adjusted according to age and ability, balancing support, safety, privacy, and autonomy. Younger children require closer adult proximity, while older children are given more independence under safe supervision practices.
- For school-age children, supervision considers toilet use, transitions between school and OSHC, and safe transport to and from the service.
- Supervision is supported by the physical design of premises, staff-to-child ratios, and educator practices.
- When programs involve simultaneous indoor and outdoor use, educators ensure children are effectively supervised in both spaces.

5. Key terms

Term	Meaning	Source
ACECQA – Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority	The independent national authority that works with all regulatory authorities to administer the National Quality Framework, including the provision of guidance, resources, and services to support the sector to improve outcomes for children.	acecqa.gov.au
Mandatory reporting	The legislative requirement for selected classes of people to report suspected child abuse and neglect to government authorities.	State/territory-based child protection legislation
Reasonably believes	Believes on grounds that are reasonable in the circumstances.	Schedule 3, Child Protection Act 1999 (Queensland)
Reasonable grounds	Suspect that a child may be at risk of significant harm based on your observations of the child or what has been reported to you about a child.	Schedule 3, Child Protection Act 1999 (Queensland)
Reasonably suspects	Suspects on grounds that are reasonable in the circumstances.	Schedule 3, Child Protection Act 1999 (Queensland)
Responsible person	In relation to an education and care service, means a person referred to in section 162(1)(a) to (c) of the Education and Care Services National Law.	National Law
Reportable conduct	Certain organisations or entities have legal obligations under Reportable Conduct Schemes. Under these Schemes, certain organisations or entities are required to notify and investigate certain allegations (reportable allegations) of abuse involving a child, when the allegation is against someone they employ, engage or contract in circumstances outlined by the legislation.	State/territory-based child protection legislation
Rights of the child	Human rights belonging to all children, as specified in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.	Guide to the NQF
Sexualised behaviours	Actions, language, or expressions by a child that are sexual in nature, age-inappropriate, or indicate exposure to sexual content or abuse. These behaviours may include inappropriate touching, sexual talk, or imitation of adult sexual behaviours.	Adapted from: NSW Child Protection Policy Guidelines; Keeping Them Safe: Child Protection Curriculum (NSW Department of Education)
Wellbeing	Sound wellbeing results from the satisfaction of basic needs – the need for tenderness and affection; security and clarity; social recognition; to feel competent; physical needs and for meaning in life. It includes happiness and	Guide to the NQF

	satisfaction, effective social functioning and the dispositions of optimism, openness, curiosity, and resilience.	
Working directly with children	A person is working directly with children at a given time if at that time the person: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is physically present with the children, and • is directly engaged in providing education and care to the children. 	National Regulations
Working with children / Working with vulnerable people check (WWCC/WWVP)	A notice, certificate or other document granted to, or with respect to, a person under a working with children law to the effect that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the person has been assessed as suitable to work with children; or • there has been no information that if the person worked with children the person would pose a risk to the children; or • the person is not prohibited from attempting to obtain, undertake or remain in child-related employment. 	National Law

6. Links to other policies

The following policies may be linked to this policy:

- Delivery children to, and collection from, education and care service premises
- Emergency and evacuation
- Incident, injury, trauma, and illness
- Interactions with children
- Dealing with medical conditions in children
- Nutrition, food and beverages, dietary requirements
- Sun protection
- Water safety
- Sleep and rest for children
- Safe transportation of children
- Excursions.

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 assistants 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 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:	November 2023	
Review Date	Assignee	Notes
January 2026	Lauren Roberts	Updated policy statement. Updated background (and added Child Safe standards). Updated Legislative Requirements. Added sexualized behaviour to key terms. Updated principles and structured to condense key/important information.