

# **CHILD SAFE POLICY**

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## **1. POLICY STATEMENT**

Styles Street is committed to providing a safe and inclusive environment for our children where they are protected from harm and abuse. The purpose of this policy is to identify and document how our service upholds the rights of the child and prevents behaviour that may be harmful to children. The Child Safe Standards guide and inform our practice, policies, procedures and codes of conduct. We use the Child Safe Standards to underpin how we keep children safe and guide appropriate behaviour and encourage all staff, both paid and volunteer, to create, maintain and improve a child safe environment. This policy applies to all staff, children, families, volunteers, students and visitors of the service and concerns all activities that relate to children. Our leadership team promotes reporting any breach of our policies, procedures and codes of conduct, and will act to ensure the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children are upheld.

## **2. COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFETY**

Styles Street Children's Community Long Day Care Centre is committed to the safety and empowerment of every child in our care and wider community. At our core, we value social, emotional, and physical wellbeing as the ultimate foundation for quality engagement in learning and life and maintain respect within all of our relationships and interactions. Our service is committed to providing an environment that fosters, health, development, culture, spirituality, self-respect, and dignity, free from violence and exploitation.

All children have the right to experience quality education and care in an environment that promotes opportunities to thrive with adults who safeguard and advocate for their health, safety, and wellbeing. Our service has a moral and legal responsibility to ensure that the rights and best interests of the child are paramount and provide training, resources and information and guidance to support this to all stakeholders. We have a zero tolerance of child abuse, and all educators, teachers and volunteers of our service are mandatory reporters who are required by law to report suspected child abuse and neglect to Government authorities, including the Department of Communities and Justice Child Protection Helpline (Phone: 132 111). All allegations and safety concerns will be treated seriously and in alignment with our policies and procedures.

Styles Street supports a partnership approach with families and acknowledges our shared responsibility for children's health, safety, wellbeing and development. We advocate for families to have active communication and participation in our programs. Along with families, Styles Street values the voice of the child. We aim to provide children ample, ongoing opportunities to express their views around matters which effect their lives and consider these in a respectful, serious matter. Together, we create a culture and environment which has the best interests of children at heart.

We are committed to the cultural and linguistic safety of all children, with acknowledgment and recognition of the gap of access to early education and care affecting Aboriginal children. At Styles



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Street we are also committed to providing and maintaining safe environments for children who experience disability. We promise our children and the wider community that we will celebrate all children for the differences and put immense value on diversity.

### **3. STRATEGIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION**

#### **Children's Participation**

Through active participation children are given opportunities to feel empowered to have their say and inform decision making. Participation contributes to empowerment as it builds children's confidence, not just in themselves but in different environments or organisations they connect with. To support children's participation, we actively listen to children's ideas, concerns, thinking and feelings and make appropriate changes based on what they share. It is critical that we provide children with a space where they can talk to caring and trusted adults about what makes them feel safe or unsafe. We value children as capable and competent learners and by supporting and planning for their learning through their interests we are empowering them to recognise that their ideas are valued, and they actively contribute to their world.

#### **Recruitment**

We are committed to hiring suitable people to work with the children who attend our centre. This includes:

- a requirement that all child-related roles hold a verified and current Working with Children Check (WWCC)
- Reference checks are provided and called prior to being considered for a position.
- Complying with our Child Protection and Staff Code of Professional Conduct policies
- Induction and mentoring is provided to all new employees

#### **Complaints Management and Reporting**

All complaints and allegations should be reported. This includes:

- Criminal conduct
- Risk of significant harm
- Disclosures of abuse
- Unacceptable behaviour around children that breaches our Staff Code of Professional Conduct policy
- Suspicion of harm or abuse to a child
- Reportable conduct

Everyone in our service has the right to make a genuine complaint and won't be punished if they do. This includes children, staff members, students and volunteers. Reporting abuse is mandatory and encouraged – it is never obstructed or prevented.

### **4. RELATED DOCUMENTS**

The following policies support and contribute to our approach to being child safe:

- Staff Code of Professional Conduct
- Child Protection Policy
- Child Safe Risk Management Plan
- Child Safe Recruitment Policy

### **5. 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 annually and

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after any critical incidents, to ensure continuous improvement of our child safe practices and that we keep up to date with relevant legislation and industry requirements.

Families and staff are essential stakeholders in the policy review process will be supplied with the policy and communicated to about changes. We encourage families to be actively involved in this process.

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.

### **6. LEGISLATION AND CONSIDERATIONS**

- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
- National Quality Standard for Early Childhood Education and Care 2011
- Children's Guardian Act 2019
- Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012
- Child Protection (Working with Children) Regulation 2013
- Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998
- Crimes Act 1900
- Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Regulation 2012
- Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) (Child Employment) Regulation 2015
- Disability Inclusion Act 2014
- Anti-Discrimination Act 1977
- United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child
- Child Safe Standards

### **7. REFERENCES AND OTHER SOURCES**

- Child Safe Standards - <https://ocg.nsw.gov.au/child-safe-scheme/implementing-child-safe-standards>

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