

CEEC PP POL SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN POLICY

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Related policy documents	Archdiocese Of Brisbane Safeguarding Children And Vulnerable Adults Policy Archdiocese Of Brisbane Code Of Conduct Policy CEEC PP POL Supervision Policy CEEC PP PRO Supervision Procedure Archdiocese of Brisbane Criminal History Screening Policy CEEC SV Performance Standards CEEC GOV POL Governance And Service Management Policy CEEC PP PRO Safeguarding Children Procedure National Catholic Safeguarding Standards
Related legislation	Education And Care National Law Act 2010 Education And Care National Regulations 2014 Education And Care Services National Amendment Regulations 2017 Guide To The National Quality Framework Child Protection Act 1999 Commission For Children And Young People And Child Guardian Act 2000 Commission For Children And Young People Act 1998 Child Protection Amendments – Ombudsmen Act 1974 Guide To Education And Care Services National Law 2010

PURPOSE

Catholic Early EdCare (CEEC), a Directorate of Centacare under the Corporation of Trustees of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Brisbane believes every child has a right to be safe and protected from all forms of abuse, violence or exploitation. All Catholic Early EdCare staff have a duty of care towards children in our care and a legal and moral obligation to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children. Catholic Early EdCare abides by the Archdiocese Of Brisbane Safeguarding Children And Vulnerable Adults Policy, the following policy addresses how this is reflected in child care operations.

SCOPE

This policy applies to staff members as defined in the Education and Care Services National Law Act.

1. POLICY STATEMENT

- 1.1 Catholic Early EdCare is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people accessing our education and care programs.
- 1.2 Catholic Early EdCare acknowledges that the best protection for children is prevention and is committed to ensuring a safe environment for all children.
- 1.3 This policy has been developed to comply with the Education and Care Services National Law 2010 (166-167) and the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 - Regulations 84; 168(2) (h) and Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority – Guide to the National Quality Framework Quality Area 2
- 1.4 All Catholic Early EdCare staff will be trained annually in recognising alerts and indicators of safeguarding matters, including harm or abuse and informed of the importance of following the appropriate regulated and legislated notification procedures when reporting safeguarding matters.
- 1.5 It is the responsibility of Catholic Early EdCare to ensure all staff who work with children are aware of their responsibilities as mandatory reporters under the Child Protection Act 1999 (QLD) (Child Protection (Mandatory Reporting – Mason's Law) Amendment Bill 2016) which states –
 - From 1 July 2017, early childhood education and care professionals are mandated by law to report child safety concerns to the Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women.
- 1.6 To meet this requirement all Catholic Early EdCare staff will be trained in the Catholic Early EdCare Safeguarding Reporting process.
- 1.7 Catholic Early EdCare will ensure the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards are implemented and evident within services

2. NATIONAL CATHOLIC SAFEGUARDING STANDARDS

- 2.1 The National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (2019)
 - are designed to be implemented by all Catholic entities, ministries and organisations across Australia.
 - constitute a framework which articulates requirements for Catholic entities to promote the safety of children through the implementation of policies and activities to prevent respond to and report concerns regarding child abuse.
 - are designed to drive cultural and behavioural change and promote accountability and transparency of Catholic Church leaders and their ministries and entities.
- 2.2 The standards require that Catholic entities, ministries and organisations have:
 1. **Committed leadership, governance and culture** – Child safeguarding is embedded in the entity's leadership, governance and culture;
 2. **Children are safe, informed and participate** – Children are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously ;
 3. **Partnering with families, carers and communities** – Families, carers and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safeguarding;

4. **Equity is promoted and diversity is respected** – Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice;
5. **Robust human resource management** – People working with children are suitable and supported to reflect child safeguarding values in practice;
6. **Effective complaints management** – Processes for raising concerns and complaints are responsive, understood, accessible and used by children, families, carers, communities and personnel;
7. **Ongoing education and training** – Personnel are equipped with knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children safe through information, ongoing education and training;
8. **Safe physical and online environments** – Physical and online environments promote safety and contain appropriate safeguards to minimise the opportunity for children to be harmed;
9. **Continuous improvement** - Entities regularly review and improve implementation of their systems for keeping children safe; and
10. **Policies and procedures support child safety** - Policies and procedures document how the entity is safe for children.

3. CATHOLIC EARLY RESPONSIBILITIES

- 3.1 Catholic Early EdCare Management and staff have a legal responsibility as 'mandatory reporters' to take action to protect and support children and vulnerable adults.
- 3.2 Catholic Early EdCare expects that all staff who participate in a child care and education service will commit to implementing risk management strategies for safeguarding children and vulnerable adults. All staff are expected to respond to any suspicion that a child or young person has been abused or harmed, or is at significant risk of suffering abuse or harm by reporting their concerns to the Responsible Person in Charge
- 3.3 Catholic Early EdCare will support its educators, staff and volunteers to confidently carry out their responsibilities in this regard by providing appropriate guidelines and training materials
- 3.4 All staff employed by the service, including management, full time / part time carers, volunteers and students will be subject to a Working with Children Check
- 3.5 Catholic Early EdCare acknowledges the reporting of safeguarding matters are highly sensitive, and should be dealt with in a considered, consistent, professional and confidential manner.

4. CATHOLIC EARLY EDCARE STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES

- 4.1 Service Directors/Coordinators are responsible for ensuring staff who have contact with children and young people have training and access to relevant information, so they are aware of their responsibilities.
- 4.2 Staff responsibilities are to -
 - Ensure adequate supervision of children and adherence to Archdiocese of Brisbane Code of Conduct to ensure that harm does not occur to children in care

- Respond appropriately to any suspicions that a child has been / or is at significant risk of being harmed or abused by reporting their concerns to the Responsible Person in Charge immediately
 - Be aware of the different types of child abuse and harm and the warning signs that can indicate a child has been abused or harmed
 - Be aware of the reporting process and the information required for reporting purposes.
 - Be aware of the legislative responsibility to maintain confidentiality of specific information that relates to children in care and, the protection provided by legislation for people who report their concerns about a child to either the Department of Child Safety (Qld) and/or the Queensland Police Service.
- 4.3 All Catholic Early EdCare staff will consistently provide a safe environment which ensures the wellbeing of children in their care through -
- Ensuring there is a safe physical environment as far as is reasonably foreseeable.
 - Actively supervising children to ensure they are protected from -
 - physical injury
 - harassment and other non-physical harm to the child, whether caused by other children, staff, parents, or any other person
 - Supervising all areas where children are present
 - Ensuring no person is alone at the service with a child, except in an emergency or where otherwise approved
 - Ensuring that Staff caring for children away from the main operational area are provided with well-maintained and appropriate communication equipment such as walkie talkies and/or Catholic Early EdCare mobile phones
- 4.4 The Director/Coordinator and/or responsible person will ensure the safety and wellbeing of children as far as reasonably practical through -
- Requiring that all staff and management adhere to the Archdiocese of Brisbane POL Code of Conduct Policy
 - Ensuring that employment and training plans for educators and other staff are followed so that the service employs suitable people and conducts adequate workplace inductions
 - Obtaining written parental permission for children to be photographed at the service
 - Ensuring that all educators, staff and volunteers at the service comply with legal requirements to apply for and hold a Working with Children Blue Card under the Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian Act 2000
 - As the Approved Provider, Catholic Early EdCare will comply with the requirements under the Education and Care National Law - Sections 20 (172) and the National Regulations: Regulation 179, and in this capacity will ensure that each Service and its staff are aware of all legislative requirements and changes relating to the protection of children specifically relating to the Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 and Regulations 2011, CCYPCG Act 2000 and other relevant legislation.

5. REPORTING/NOTIFICATION

- 5.1 To ensure that the confidentiality of all parties involved is maintained, matters relating to safeguarding children must be referred to the Area Manager.
- 5.2 All Safeguarding Children Reporting is to be completed within a 24 hour timeframe in order to meet legislative requirements
- 5.3 The person who reports the matter is not responsible for investigation to a stage where conclusions can be made.
- 5.4 Staff members are not to undertake investigations beyond satisfying themselves that they have reasonable grounds to suspect that a child has been harmed or may be at risk of being harmed.
- 5.5 Any staff that forms a belief based on reasonable grounds that a child is at risk of harm should discuss their concerns with the Responsible Person in Charge as he or she may have information the staff member is not aware of, and ensure they record the details of the report in a clear objective format.
- 5.6 Once a report has been made, the staff member is not required to take further action, beyond the requirement to continue to exercise a proper duty of care.
- 5.7 Reports should be treated with strict confidentiality in adherence to the Catholic Early EdCare’s relevant confidentiality policy and procedures.
- 5.8 The Approved Provider has a requirement to notify the regulatory authority about incidents, complaints and changes to information. The timeframes are outlined below:

Incidents and Complaints		
Section 174(2)(c) Regulation 175(2)(d)	Any incident where the approved provider reasonably believes that physical or sexual abuse of a child or children has occurred or is occurring while the child is being educated and cared for by the service	Within 7 days
Section 174(2)(c) Regulation 175(2)(e)	Allegations that physical or sexual abuse of a child or children has occurred or is occurring while the child is being educated and cared for by the service	Within 7 days

- 5.9 It is essential that support and the opportunity to debrief are offered to any educator/staff member who hears or reports disclosures of abuse. Access to the Employee Assistance Program should also be offered.

6. MANDATORY REPORTING

- 6.1 Under the Child Protection Act 1999, mandatory reporters are:
 - teachers
 - doctors
 - registered nurses
 - police officers with child protection responsibilities
 - a person performing a child advocate function under the Public Guardian Act 2014

- early childhood education and care professionals, from 1 July 2017.
- 6.2 Under legislation – Child Protection Act 1999, Mason’s Law 1 July 20 (mandatory reporting obligation for Early Childhood Education and Care professionals) Early Childhood Education and Care professionals who are defined as mandatory reporters are :
- Approved Providers
 - Nominated Supervisors
 - Educators (other than volunteers or an individual under the age of 18)
- 6.3 Staff are mandated to report if they have current concerns about the safety or welfare of a child as per legislative requirements.

7. INVESTIGATION OF ALLEGATIONS OF CHILD ABUSE

- 7.1 If a safeguarding incident occurs or is suspected to have occurred in a Catholic Early EdCare service it is not the responsibility of persons within that service to determine whether the allegation is true or false. Complete the Safeguarding Children Report Form so an assessment can be made about the appropriate reporting requirements
- 7.2 Depending on the nature of the allegations and the extent of the situation Department of Education (QLD) (also known as ECEC – Early Childhood Education and Care), the Department of Child Safety (QLD), and the Queensland Police Service will determine the manner in which the matter will be investigated.

8. CONFIDENTIALITY

- 8.1 All Safeguarding matters are to be treated as confidential. The Area Manager, senior line manager are designated as the primary contacts for any safeguarding incidents. Confidentiality protects all individuals involved -
- the alleged victim
 - the alleged offender
 - the person making the notification

9. RISK MANAGEMENT APPROACH

- 9.1 The principles of risk management must be applied to all safeguarding matters. Risk Assessments must be conducted on all activities undertaken by the service including, but not limited to the following areas:
- Environmental e.g. Access to toilets, Records Management (security of records, etc.)
 - Appropriateness of excursion venues etc.
 - Human e.g. paid and unpaid staff;
 - Other people (parents, workers at excursion sites, delivery drivers, unauthorised visitors, etc.)
 - Appropriate and stringent supervision of children in care etc.

- Equipment e.g. Electronic Information Systems (mobile phones, digital cameras, internet access, etc.)
- Safety of transport
- Standard of play equipment etc.

9.2 The Risk Assessment Template is to be used to document all risk assessments and control measures undertaken in order to ensure the safety of children. All risk assessments are to be forwarded to the Work Safe advisor.

10. WHERE POLICE OR CHILD SAFETY REQUEST TO INTERVIEW A CHILD IN OUR CARE

- 10.1 CEEC or a Service Leader may receive a request from the Police or Child Safety to interview a child at the service premise
- 10.2 Service Leaders are to follow the CEEC PP PRO Safeguarding Children Procedure and are to complete a CEEC PP FORM Record of Interview.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

- CEEC PP FORM Record of Interview
- CEEC PP FORM Safeguarding Children Report

COMPLIANCE

Breaches of this policy will be dealt with under Centacare’s misconduct provisions, as stated in the Employment Guidelines Code of Conduct.

IMPLEMENTATION

Centacare will place this policy on the Archdiocesan Intranet (AI). Directors and managers are responsible for ensuring that the appropriate communication of policies and supporting documents to staff has occurred. All staff are responsible for understanding and complying with this policy. Contact the Policy Sponsor for further interpretation of this policy.

DEFINITIONS

N/A	
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11. RECORD KEEPING

- 11.1 Catholic Early EdCare will maintain all records as required by AOB and Centacare policies and procedures relating to record keeping
- 11.2 All Catholic Early EdCare Services are required to maintain all records in their Service folder on the L:\ drive.

- 11.3 All Catholic Early EdCare Services will adhere to Division 3 – Information and record keeping requirements, Education and Care Services National Regulations; specifically Subdivision 4 – Confidentiality and Storage of Records (181, 182, 183, 184).
- 11.4 Catholic Early EdCare will ensure all privacy provisions are implemented in relation to record keeping in accordance with the Archdiocese of Brisbane (AOB) privacy statement and AOB privacy policy available on the AI portal this extends to storing records in a secure and confidential manner.
- 11.5 Service records will be maintained (stored and preserved) in conditions suitable to the length of time they need to be kept and made available for use. This applies regardless of the format of the records or the media they are stored on.
- 11.6 Catholic Early EdCare will coordinate the removal, archiving and disposal of records as required.