

# SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN PROCEDURE



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## POLICY AND PHILOSOPHY

We ensure all children in our care are safe and protected from all forms of harm. We have zero tolerance for all forms of abuse and are committed to safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults. Our procedures clearly outline reporting requirements and role responsibilities for compliance with legislation Child Protection Act 1999, National Child Safe Principles, and the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards.

Policy Sponsor: Operations

Document Type: Procedure

Applicable To: Catholic Early EdCare

Approved By: Director, Catholic Early EdCare

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# CHILD CONCERN

## 1.1

Mandatory reporting requirements are outlined in the Child Protection Act 1999. Mandatory reporters are required to report concerns about a child who may have experienced **significant physical or sexual abuse**.

### **SECTION 13E OF THE ACT CURRENTLY DEFINES MANDATORY REPORTERS AS:**

- ☐ Doctors;
- ☐ Registered nurses;
- ☐ Teachers;
- ☐ Police officers with child protection responsibilities;
- ☐ Child Safety employees and employees of licensed care services;
- ☐ Employees of the Public Guardian; and
- ☐ **Early childhood education and care professionals.**

## 1.2

### **CATHOLIC EARLY EDCARE AND BRISBANE CATHOLIC EDUCATION MAINTAIN A MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING IN REGARDS TO THE EXCHANGE OF STUDENT INFORMATION:**

- ☐ Where an incident has occurred at either a BCE School or OSHC;
- ☐ Involving two BCE Students who attend OSHC and the same BCE School together;
- ☐ A report has been made to the Relevant State Authority;
- ☐ The Principal or Service Leader will, after obtaining the consent of the Relevant State Authority, completed the **Exchange of Student Information Template**; and
- ☐ File the form securely and confidentially.

## 1.3

### **IF A CATHOLIC EARLY EDCARE EMPLOYEE SUSPECTS A CHILD HAS BEEN HARMED, OR IS AT RISK OF HARM, THIS INFORMATION MUST BE REPORTED.**

Educators will:

- ☐ Talk to the Service Leader about their concerns.

## 1.4

### **IF THE CHILD HAS NOT BEEN HARMED, OR IS NOT AT RISK OF HARM, SERVICE LEADERS WILL:**

- ☐ Complete a Guardian Report (if an incident has occurred);
- ☐ Complete an Individual Support Plan (if the concern is behaviour related);
- ☐ Continue to monitor child for ongoing changes; and
- ☐ Consider referral to:
  - [Family and Child Connect](#)
  - [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Family Wellbeing Services](#)

## 1.5

### **IF THE CHILD HAS BEEN HARMED, OR IS AT RISK OF HARM, SERVICE LEADERS WILL:**

- ☐ Complete a [Safeguarding Children Form](#);
- ☐ Email the completed form with the Online Child Protection Guide to [ceec.safeguarding@catholicearlyedcare.qld.edu.au](mailto:ceec.safeguarding@catholicearlyedcare.qld.edu.au); and
- ☐ Contact Safeguarding for any additional questions or support in completing the **Safeguarding Children Form**.



## 1.6

### FOR THE PURPOSES OF REPORTING:

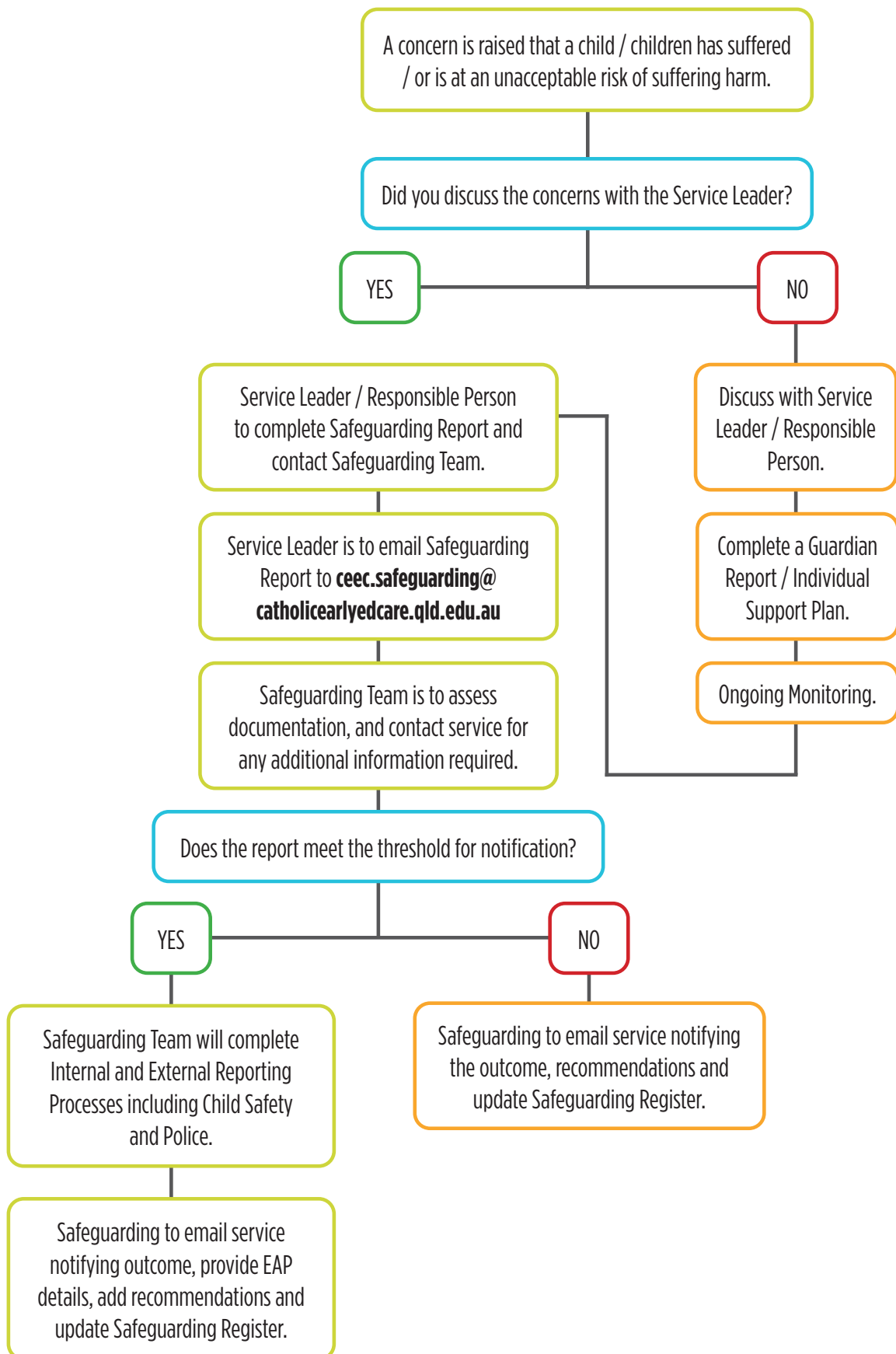
- ☐ Harm is any detrimental effect of a significant nature on the child's psychological or emotional wellbeing.
- ☐ Harm can be caused by a single act, omission or circumstance, or a series or combination of acts.

## 1.7

### A MEMBER OF SAFEGUARDING WILL:

- ☐ Assess the the information provided in the **Safeguarding Children Form**, using the Online Child Protection Guide if required and/or seek additional contextual information to include in assessment.
- ☐ If the **Safeguarding Children Form** does not meet the threshold for reporting, Safeguarding will inform the service of the outcome and document on the Safeguarding Register and provide further recommendations, including behaviour report and ongoing monitoring.
- ☐ If the Safeguarding Report meets the threshold for reporting, Safeguarding will complete:
  - ☐ External reporting requirements including Regional Intake Service, Police, ACECQA, Brisbane Catholic Education (if appropriate), Parish (if appropriate);
  - ☐ Internal reporting to Director, Catholic Early EdCare, Office for Safeguarding Services (if required), and General Manager, Catholic Early EdCare.
- ☐ Save all correspondence (emails, phone calls) and documentation including **Safeguarding Children Form**, Online Child Protection Guide and any further supporting documents including behaviour reports, file notes in G Drive under the service suburb and name of the child.

# CHILD CONCERN PROCESS





# WHERE POLICE OR CHILD SAFETY **REQUEST TO INTERVIEW A CHILD IN OUR CARE**

## **2.1**

### **SERVICE LEADERS MUST:**

- ☐ Notify Safeguarding and Portfolio Manager immediately to inform them of the request from Police or Child Safety to interview a child at the service premise;
- ☐ Ensure a 'Record of Interview' is completed by the visiting authorities on arrival at the service;
- ☐ Provide a copy of the Record of Interview to Safeguarding.

## **2.2**

### **SAFEGUARDING WILL:**

- ☐ Notify the General Manager, Governance and Performance:
  - If the interview is being conducted under the authority of section 17 of the Child Protection Act 1999, then the interview may proceed without parental consent.
  - If the interview is being conducted under any other authority, the interview must not proceed without parental consent.

## **2.3**

### **THE GENERAL MANAGER, GOVERNANCE AND PERFORMANCE WILL NOTIFY:**

- ☐ The CEEC Director; and
- ☐ Director Governance and Risk

# ADULT CONCERN

## 3.1

### WHERE A CONCERN IS RAISED ABOUT A STAFF MEMBER OR SOMEONE IN THE SERVICE, EDUCATORS WILL:

- ☐ Document the concerns in the Safeguarding Children Form.
- ☐ Contact Safeguarding to discuss concerns identified.
- ☐ Complete the **Safeguarding Children Form** and email it to **ceec.safeguarding@catholicearlyedcare.qld.edu.au**

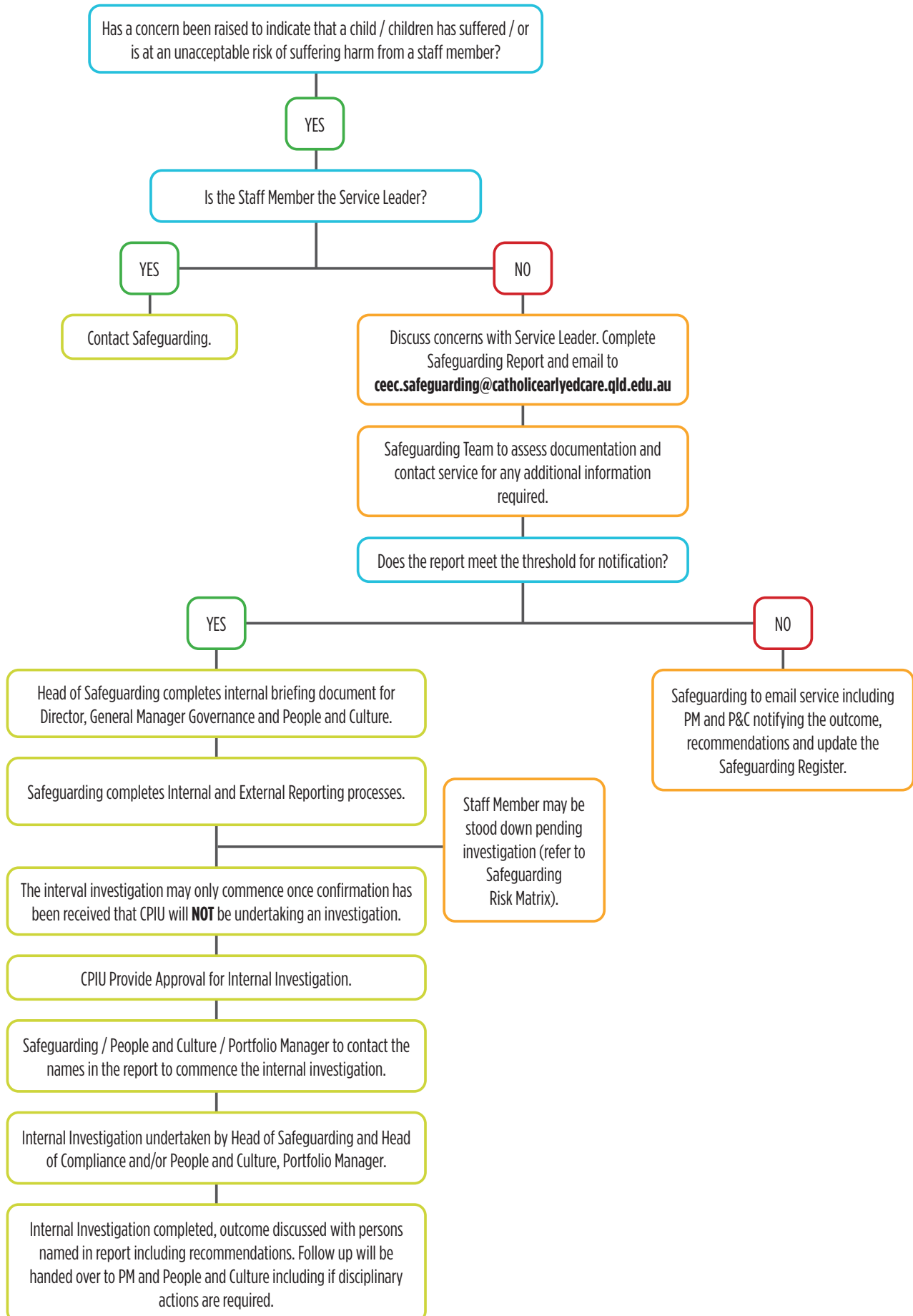
## 3.2

### SAFEGUARDING WILL:

- ☐ Review all documentation, complete the internal and external reporting actions including notification to Regional Intake Service and Queensland Police (CPIU).
- ☐ Consult with the appropriate Managers, including General Manager Governance and Performance, Director Catholic Early EdCare, People and Culture, and Portfolio Managers.
  - *In some cases, an internal investigation will not take place until the CPIU has given approval for an internal investigation to commence.*
- ☐ Contact the individual/s named in the report in collaboration with People and Culture Manager, once clearance is received by CPIU.
- ☐ The individual may be stood down during this time whilst internal / external investigations are being completed. If the report is in relation to an educator, the Service Leader as direct line manager will complete the stand down with guidance from Safeguarding, People and Culture. If the report is in relation to the Service Leader, the Portfolio Manager as the direct line manager will complete the stand down. The individual/s will be referred to EAP to access support if needed. Head of Safeguarding and Head of Compliance will conduct an internal investigation including interviews with individuals and witnesses. Head of Safeguarding will maintain carriage of the investigation.
- ☐ The Head of Safeguarding and the Head of Compliance will conduct the internal investigation. This may be in consultation with other relevant stakeholders including People and Culture or Portfolio Manager.
- ☐ Meet with the individual/s and People and Culture at the conclusion of the investigation to discuss outcomes and actions to be taken.
- ☐ Once the Safeguarding Investigation is completed, the Portfolio Manager and People and Culture will meet the individual to implement actions to be taken including if any disciplinary actions are required.



# STAFF MEMBER CONCERN PROCESS



## SEXUAL BEHAVIOURS IN CHILDREN

### 4.1

**IF A CONCERN OR COMPLAINT IS RAISED IN REGARDS TO A CHILD WHO ATTENDS THE SERVICE EXHIBITING SEXUAL BEHAVIOURS THAT MAY BE HARMFUL TO THEMSELVES OR OTHER CHILDREN, THE RESPONSIBLE PERSON IN CHARGE WILL:**

- ☐ Follow the Child Concern process outlined above, as the concern/complaint raises indicators of harm (Section 1: Process and Indicators).

## ONLINE SAFEGUARDING

### 5.1

**EDUCATORS WILL:**

- ☐ Be aware of the types of harm that occur in online environments;
- ☐ Be aware of the information shared, about themselves and others;
- ☐ Be aware of the types of online harm and risk for children, young people and vulnerable adults;
- ☐ Follow the same safeguarding principles, and reporting processes whether a concern occurs online or offline.



# CONCERNS RAISED BY PARENTS OR CARERS

## 6.1

### IF A PARENT OR CARER IDENTIFIES A CONCERN RELATING TO A STAFF MEMBER OR A CHILD ATTENDING THE SERVICE, THE RESPONSIBLE PERSON IN CHARGE WILL:

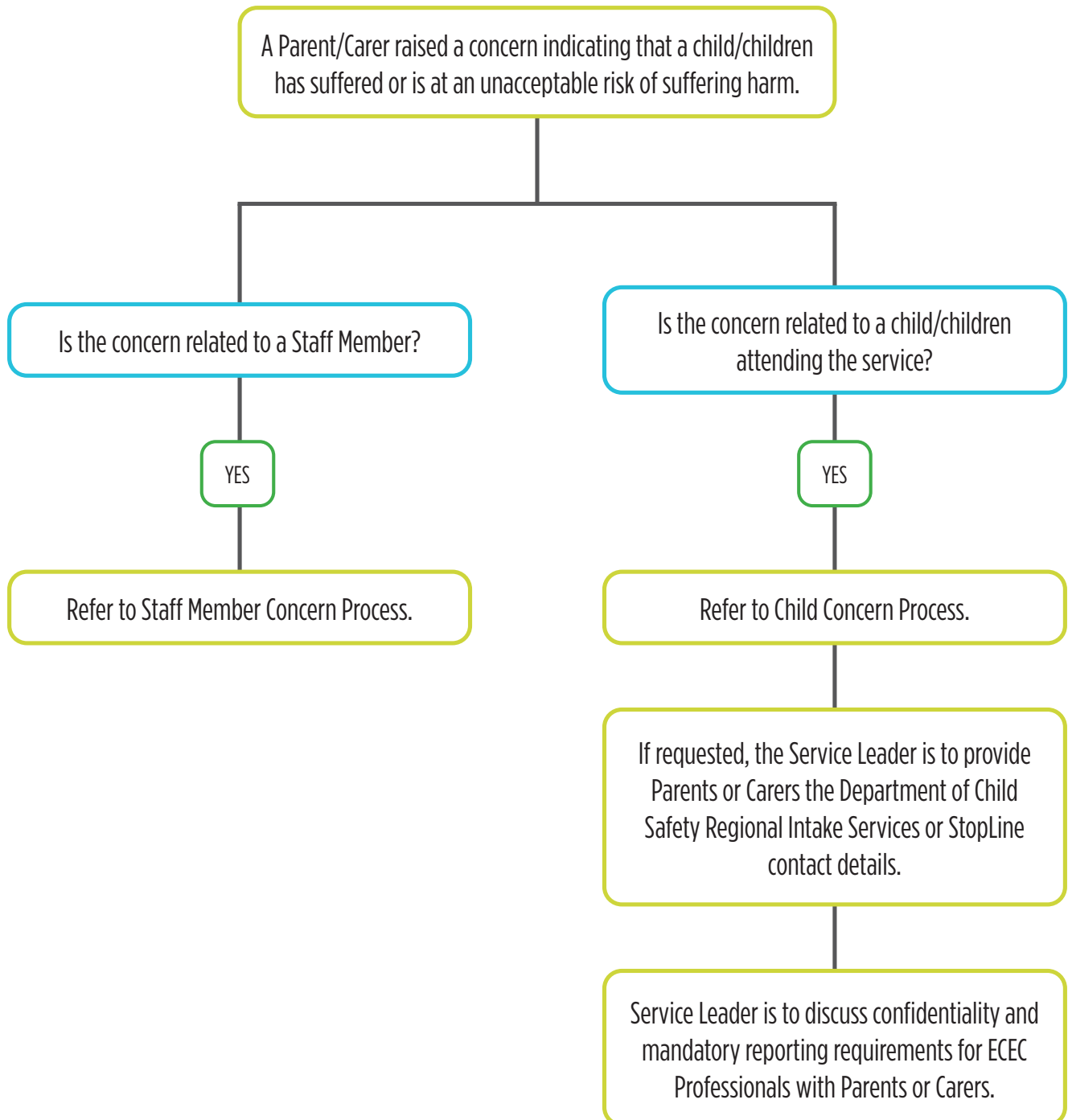
- ☐ Follow the **Adult Concern** process outlined above if the concern is in relation to a staff member.
- ☐ Follow the **Child Concern** process outlined above if the concern is in relation to a child attending the service.
  - If requested, provide Parents or Carers with reporting options, including [Department of Child Safety Regional Intake Services](#) or [StopLine](#) contact details.
- ☐ Discuss with Parents or Carers mandatory reporting requirements for Early Childhood Professionals and that our Safeguarding Children Procedure will be followed.
- ☐ Complete the Safeguarding Children Form and email it to **ceec.safeguarding@catholicearlyedcare.qld.edu.au**

## 6.2

### SAFEGUARDING WILL:

- ☐ Complete internal and external reporting processes as required.
- ☐ Provide the outcome to the service.
- ☐ Document the outcome on the Safeguarding Register.

# PARENT/CARER CONCERN PROCESS





# ROLES AND **RESPONSIBILITIES**

## APPROVED PROVIDERS

(Including Leadership and Management Teams)

- ☐ Ensure all obligations under the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations are met.
- ☐ Ensure that the Providing Child Safe Environments Policy, Procedures, and Safeguarding Children Procedure are implemented.
- ☐ Ensure the inclusion of policies and procedures for managing complaints alleging that a child is exhibiting harmful sexual behaviours.
- ☐ Ensure all educators and staff have undertaken current child protection legislation training, including on mandatory reporting requirements and obligations.
  - ☐ If not, develop a plan to ensure training is undertaken in a suitable timeframe.
  - ☐ Safeguarding to update staff via toolbox talks in relation to any changes to the current Child Protection legislation.
- ☐ Take reasonable steps to ensure that nominated supervisors, educators, and staff follow the Providing Child Safe Environments Policy, Procedures and Safeguarding Children Procedure are implemented.
- ☐ Safeguarding to provide regular training and education to educators including responding to child protection worries, protective behaviours, trauma informed education, repairing relationships with families when a child protection notification has been made.
- ☐ Ensure that copies of the policy and procedures are readily accessible to nominated supervisors, co-ordinators, educators and staff, and available for inspection.
- ☐ Notify families at least 14 days before changing the policy or procedures if the changes will:
  - Affect the fees charged or the way they are collected.
  - Significantly impact the service's education and care of children.
  - Significantly impact the family's ability to utilise the service.
- ☐ Offer support and the opportunity to debrief to any educator/staff member who hears or reports disclosures of abuse. Access to the Employee Assistance Program should also be offered.

- Ensure the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations are embedded within Providing Child Safe Environments Policy, Procedures and Safeguarding Children Procedure and supporting documents.
- Recognise 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)



## NOMINATED SUPERVISORS AND RESPONSIBLE PERSONS

- ☐ Implement the Providing Child Safe Environments Policy, Procedures and Safeguarding Children Procedure.
- ☐ Ensure all educators and staff are aware of current child protection legislation, including the mandatory reporting requirements and obligations.
- ☐ Meet educator to child ratios to ensure adequate supervision.
- ☐ Ensure all educators and volunteers know where to access the Providing Child Safe Environments Policy, Procedures and Safeguarding Children and how to contact Safeguarding.
- ☐ Ongoing communication with educators and staff about their responsibilities and any changes to policies, procedures and legislation.
- ☐ Regularly monitor child protection training schedules and ensure all educators and staff are up-to date with their training.
- ☐ Ensure the safety and wellbeing of children attending the service by keeping a visitors' record, including signatures and arrival/ departure times.
- ☐ Ensure staff who have contact with children and young people have training and access to relevant information, so they are aware of their responsibilities.
- ☐ Require that all staff and management adhere to the **Archdiocese of Brisbane Code of Conduct Policy** and **CEEC Child Safe Code of Conduct**.
- ☐ Display National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.
- ☐ Ensure that employment and training plans for educators and other staff are followed and include elements to support safeguarding and child safe environments.
- ☐ Ensure the service employs suitable people and conducts adequate workplace inductions.
- ☐ Obtain written parental permission for children to be photographed at the service.
- ☐ Ensure 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, including keeping a working record of current expiry of licenses and qualifications.

- ☐ Ensure the confidentiality of all parties involved is maintained, and matters relating to safeguarding children must be referred to Safeguarding.
- ☐ Ensure all staff who work with children are aware of their responsibilities of new laws regarding Failure to Report, and Failure to Protect:
  - All adults must report sexual offending against children to the police unless they have a reasonable excuse.
  - Adults in an institutional setting (e.g. a school, church or sporting club) must protect children from the risk of a sexual offence being committed against them.



## EDUCATORS

- ☐ Be aware of current child protection legislation, including the mandatory reporting requirements and obligations.
- ☐ Implement the Providing Child Safe Environments Policy, Procedures and Safeguarding Children Procedure.
- ☐ Maintain current accredited child protection training.
- ☐ Monitor and maintain staff to child ratios to ensure adequate supervision of children.
- ☐ Keep a visitors' record, including signatures and arrival and departure times.
- ☐ Ensure adherence to Archdiocese of Brisbane Code of Conduct.
- ☐ Respond to any suspicions that a child has been / or is at significant risk of being harmed or abused by reporting concerns to the Responsible Person in Charge immediately.
- ☐ Be aware of the different types of child abuse and harm and the warning signs.
- ☐ Be aware of the reporting process and the information required.
- ☐ Maintain confidentiality.
- ☐ Ensure a safe physical environment as far as is reasonably foreseeable.
- ☐ Actively supervise 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.
- ☐ Effectively supervise children's access to technology to ensure safe online environments as far as is reasonably foreseeable.
- ☐ Ensure no person is alone at the service with a child, except in an emergency or where otherwise approved.
- ☐ Ensure children understand the process for raising complaints or concerns on matters important to them,
- ☐ Understand Safeguarding Children Reporting is to be completed within a 24 hour timeframe.
- ☐ Understand the person who reports the matter is not responsible for investigation.
- ☐ Not 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.



## FAMILIES

- ☐ Provide written permission, or refusal, for children to be photographed at the service.
- ☐ Share information with staff that may impact on a child's wellbeing or safety.
- ☐ Provide current copies of any custody related matters and advise of any changes as soon as practicable.
- ☐ Engage in discussions with staff when required about children's behaviours, support plans and support, where needed, consistent strategies.

## MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW

- ☐ Centacare will place this policy on the Archdiocesan Intranet (AI). Service Leaders 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.
- ☐ Summary information about fees and related procedures will be included in the CEEC information handbooks.
- ☐ Educators and families will be invited to participate in the review of this procedure.
- ☐ Changes to this document will be shared with families and educators.
- ☐ Ongoing training opportunities for Service Leaders and Responsible Persons in Charge will be provided using a range of learning platforms. Videos of some Xplor processes are available on [AI](#).
- ☐ Contact the Policy Sponsor for further interpretation of this policy.

