

Child Protection Policy

National Quality Standard

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| Area 2 - Children's health and safety | |
| Standard 2.2 | Safety |
| Element 2.2.3 | Child protection: Management, educators and staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities to identify and respond to every child at risk of abuse or neglect. |

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| Area 7 - Governance and leadership | |
| Standard 7.1 | Governance |
| Element 7.1.3 | Roles and responsibilities: Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined, and understood, and support effective decision making and operation of the service. |

Children (Education and Care Services) National Regulations (2011 SI 653):

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| Reg. 84 | Awareness of child protection law |
| Reg. 168 | Education and care service must have policies and procedures |
| Reg. 170 | Policies and procedures to be followed |
| Reg. 171 | Policies and procedures to be kept available |
| Reg. 172 | Notification of change to policies or procedures |

Children (Education and Care Services) National Law (NSW) No 104a of 2010:

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| s 162A | Child protection training |
| s 166 | Offence to use inappropriate discipline |
| s 167 | Offence relating to protection of children from harm and hazard |
| s 174 | Offence to fail to notify certain information to Regulatory Authority |



Links to The Child Safe Standards

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| <p>Standard 1 - Child safety is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture</p> | <p>Child Safety is embedded in the leadership and governance processes through ongoing training, policy implementation, and a commitment to child protection across all levels of the organisation.</p> |
| <p>Standard 5 - People working with children are suitable and supported</p> | <p>Adventure OSHC has a requirement for all staff to undergo comprehensive background checks, such as obtaining a valid Working with Children Check, and training in child protection. This ensures that only suitable individuals work with children, and staff are well-supported in maintaining a safe environment for children.</p> |
| <p>Standard 6 - Processes to respond to complaints of child abuse are child focused</p> | <p>Adventure OSHC has a clear and child-focused response to allegations or concerns of abuse. Employees are trained to report any concerns promptly to management and the relevant authorities, ensuring that the child’s safety is prioritised in all actions taken.</p> |
| <p>Standard 7 - Staff are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children safe through continual education and training</p> | <p>Adventure OSHC ensures that all employees receive regular training on child protection, including mandatory reporting and identifying signs of abuse. This standard is met through the induction process and ongoing professional development to ensure that staff are equipped with the necessary skills to protect children.</p> |
| <p>Standard 10 - Policies and procedures document how the organisation is child safe</p> | <p>The child protection policy itself serves as a document outlining the procedures and steps Adventure OSHC takes to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children. The policy details responsibilities, reporting mechanisms, and the processes for responding to concerns, ensuring a transparent, documented approach to child safety.</p> |

Related Policies:

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| <p>Interactions with Children</p> |
| <p>Family law and access</p> |
| <p>Acceptance and refusal of authorisations</p> |



Policy Statement

Adventure OSHC is deeply committed to ensuring the physical and emotional well-being, safety, and development of all children in our care. Our commitment to 'child wellbeing' is embedded in our service philosophies and guides every aspect of our service. We work collaboratively with educators, families, and the community to provide safe, inclusive environments for children, with a focus on reducing the risk of harm and promoting positive outcomes at all times.

In the event of an incident, we act swiftly and in accordance with child protection legislation to ensure the child's safety and support the welfare of all involved. We link every practice to the **Child Safe Standards** to ensure a holistic approach to child safety in all aspects of our work.

Purpose:

- To **protect children** from any form of significant harm (emotional, physical, sexual abuse, neglect, psychological harm, and other forms of mistreatment).
- To ensure **compliance** with Adventure OSHC policies, ensuring that children are always protected during their time in our care.
- To equip **employees** with a clear understanding of their 'duty of care' and **mandatory reporting** obligations regarding suspected emotional, physical, or sexual abuse, neglect, or psychological harm.
- To make the responsibilities of our **services, families and the greater school community** clear in relation to Child Protection.

Scope:

This policy applies to all employees, including educators, casual staff, volunteers, and external service providers, as well as children under the age of 18 who receive care in our services, and their families. It outlines our approach to child protection, and our shared responsibility in creating a **safe environment** that reflects the **Child Safe Standards**.

Implementation:

MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

- **Ensure Policy Adherence:** Management is responsible for ensuring that this Child Protection Policy is reviewed, up to date, and fully implemented and adhered to by all staff.
- **Training and Induction:** Management will provide comprehensive training and induction for all staff, ensuring they understand their roles and responsibilities



regarding child protection, mandatory reporting, and compliance with the **Child Safe Standards**. Management are also responsible for supporting Educators in identifying the potential risks of child abuse at our services.

- **Monitor Compliance:** Management will regularly review the effectiveness of this policy and ensure compliance across all levels of the service. They will also ensure that any breaches of the policy or concerns related to child protection are promptly addressed.
- **Support Educators:** Management will ensure educators have the necessary support and resources to carry out their child protection duties. This includes regular supervision, feedback, and ensuring all **mandatory reporting** requirements are met. Management will also ensure educators are aware of their responsibilities around maintaining a child safe environment, where children feel able to share their concerns.
- **Support Families:** Management will offer appropriate support to children and families involved in child protection concerns.
- **Liaise with Authorities:** In the case of an incident, management will ensure that any necessary reports to the **NSW Police, Child Protection Helpline, Office of the Children's Guardian and/or the Regulatory Authority** are made in a timely and accurate manner, following all legal and regulatory requirements.

EDUCATOR RESPONSIBILITIES

- **Understand and Follow the Policy:** Educators must familiarise themselves with the Child Protection Policy and adhere to its guidelines, ensuring they understand the importance of their role in protecting children from harm.
- **Reporting Concerns:** Educators are **mandatory reporters** and are required to immediately report any concerns of abuse, neglect, or any other form of harm to the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor or their Service Coordinator, and document their observations accurately.
- **Ongoing Education and Training:** Educators will participate in regular training and professional development to stay informed about child protection legislation and best practices in ensuring child safety.
- **Observe and Document:** Educators must actively monitor children for signs of abuse or neglect, and document any concerns in line with the service's policies. If they witness any behaviors that may indicate harm, they must report it promptly.
- **Take Children's Concerns Seriously:** Educators must openly listen to children where they are disclosing instances of possible abuse or neglect and take these disclosures seriously. Concerns of all children will be taken seriously, no matter their background or needs.
- **Maintain Confidentiality:** All educators must respect the confidentiality of any reports or concerns and only share relevant information with authorised personnel, ensuring the child's safety is prioritised.
- **Promote a Child-Safe Environment:** Educators should create a positive, respectful, and supportive environment that fosters children's well-being and empowers them



to voice concerns about their safety. They should, at all times, adhere to Adventure OSHC's Interactions with Children policy.

FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES

- **Collaborate with the Service:** Families are encouraged to be active participants in their child's wellbeing by engaging with the service and supporting the implementation of child protection practices.
- **Notify Concerns:** Families should feel comfortable discussing concerns regarding their child's safety with the service. If families have any concerns regarding potential harm or neglect, they should raise these concerns immediately with the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor or Service Coordinator.
- **Foster Open Communication:** Families are encouraged to maintain open lines of communication with educators and management, particularly regarding changes in the child's behavior or any factors outside the service that may impact the child's safety and wellbeing.
- **Support Reporting Obligations:** Families must support the service in meeting its mandatory reporting obligations and understand the legal requirements involved in child protection matters.
- **Model Safe Practices:** Families can help model and reinforce safe behaviors at home, including respecting boundaries and teaching children about their right to feel safe and speak up when something is wrong.

MAKING A REPORT

As **mandatory reporters**, employees are required to report **suspected cases** of abuse, neglect, or harm, and must use the **Mandatory Reporter Guide (MRG)** and the **eReport - Child Story Reporter** for guidance.

IMPORTANT THINGS TO NOTE:

- When making a report, you don't need to be able to prove that the abuse or neglect has occurred. You only need to have reasonable grounds/suspicion for your belief.
- There is no need to get permission from a parent/guardian to make a report. You do not need to inform a parent/guardian that a report is being made.
- No matter the outcome of the report, you won't be held legally responsible so long as you made the report with honest intention.
- The person making the report will be kept confidential, unless they choose to tell the child or family, provide written consent for disclosure, or the court decides that it is necessary information.



Signs or Indicators of Harm

- **Physical indicators of physical, sexual, emotional abuse, or neglect may include, but are not limited to:** bruises, burns, sprains, bites, cuts, fractures, chronic hunger, malnutrition, poor hygiene, and inappropriate clothing.
- **Behavioral signs of physical, sexual, emotional abuse, or neglect may include, but are not limited to:** fear or mistrust of adults, anxiety about going home or fear of parents, distress when other children cry or yell, excessive friendliness with strangers, passivity and compliance, frequent headaches or stomach pains, unusual sexual behavior for the child's age, frequent rocking, sucking, or biting, difficulty sleeping, withdrawal, aggression, demanding behavior, high levels of anxiety, delayed speech, regressing to younger behaviors, and persistent tiredness or falling asleep.
- Other indicators may include disclosures made by the child or others, or reports from related agencies (e.g., the school where the service is located).

Forming a professional judgement

When deciding on whether or not to make a report, consider the following:

- What are the warning signs that you have observed?
- Do you know of any background information on the family/if they are currently receiving support from external agencies?
- Have you consulted with your management team to get a second opinion?
- Is the child's safety or wellbeing at risk, or is there evidence of harm affecting their development or emotional state?

Gathering Information

Where there has been a verbal disclosure or there are obvious signs:

- Listen to the child without judgement. If you ask questions, ensure they are open ended and not leading. Ensure the child knows they have done the right thing by telling you.
- If the child is in immediate danger, phone 000. If they are suffering from an injury that requires medical attention, provide first aid or ensure they receive medical treatment.
- As soon as possible, write down what the child has said, and date and sign it. Keep this confidential other than sharing with necessary members of management.
- Ensure you are not accusatory to anyone named in the disclosure.
- Speak with your Service Coordinator or Area Manager to determine next steps **as soon as any immediate health and safety concerns have been addressed**. Where necessary, use the Mandatory Reporter Guide (MRG) alongside your management team to determine if a report to the Child Protection Helpline is necessary.
- A report can be made via the eReport - Child Story Reporter online or by calling the Child Protection Helpline on 13 21 11.



Where you are unsure:

- Take notes, record what you have seen or heard, and sign and date the entries. Continue this practice, ensuring notes are only shared with necessary individuals.
- Seek advice from your management team. Compare any notes or observations with colleagues.
- Seek support from external agencies such as local health services.

Speaking with parents/carers:

- Concerns should only be shared with families/carers where this will not increase a risk to the child. Where sexual or other serious abuse is suspected, this concern will not be shared with the family and an immediate report will be made.
- Where concerns are shared with families, this should be done in the presence of the Nominated Supervisor or Approved provider, discussed confidentially and in a sensitive manner. Notes should be taken so that the situation can be monitored.

Reporting Allegations of Reportable Conduct:

If an **employee** is subject to an allegation of **reportable conduct** (e.g., abuse, misconduct), Adventure OSHC will:

- Seek guidance from the **NSW Office of the Children's Guardian** and follow appropriate protocols for investigation.
- Maintain a focus on ensuring the **best interests of the child** are always prioritised and actions are taken to protect children from harm.
- Any reportable allegation or conviction involving a staff member, volunteer or contractor must be reported **within 7 business days**.

Support for Families and Children:

In line with the **Child Safe Standards**, Adventure OSHC will continue to support children and families by providing information about external **support services** and offering guidance when required, ensuring their **wellbeing** is always at the forefront of our practice.

Reporting to the relevant authorities

As soon as immediate health and safety concerns are addressed, you must report all incidents, allegations and complaints. Failure to report assault or child sexual abuse may amount to a criminal offence under the Crimes Act 1900. Depending on the circumstances,



reports to multiple authorities may be required. Reporting requirements can differ based on where the alleged abuse occurred:

At a service:

- *Report to management*

You must report to your approved provider.

- *NSW Police*

You must report all instances (alleged or witnessed) of child abuse, including assault or sexual abuse (including grooming).

- *NSW Department of Communities and Justice (Child Protection Helpline)*

As a mandatory reporter, you must report if a child is considered to be at risk of significant harm - reporter.childstory.nsw.gov.au/

- *NSW Department of Education*

Services must report incidents, allegations or complaints to the department through NQA ITS at acecqa.gov.au/national-quality-agenda-it-system

Services can use the National Decision Tree acecqa.gov.au/notify to help determine whether a notification is required and the timeframe in which that notification should be made.

- *NSW Office of the Children's Guardian (Reportable Conduct Scheme)*

Any reportable allegation or conviction involving a staff member, volunteer or contractor must be reported within 7 business days.

At home or in the community:

- *NSW Police*

All adults in NSW are required to report information to police if they know, believe or reasonably ought to know that a child has been physically or sexually abused (including grooming) to NSW Police.

- *NSW Department of Communities and Justice (Child Protection Helpline)*

As a mandatory reporter, you must report if a child known to you is considered to be at risk of significant harm.

- *Report to management*



If the child attends the ECEC service at which you work, you should notify the approved provider so your service can consider any follow up actions or relevant supports as needed.

Debrief and Critical Reflection

After every critical incident, staff will be provided with the support they need. Staff and management will critically reflect on the incident confidentially and use this to inform changes to policies, procedures, practices and risk assessments.

Key Contact Information for Reporting and Support:

NSW Police

- Contact Triple Zero (000) in an emergency
- If not an emergency, make a report by calling or attending your local Police station
- For general enquiries, call the Police Assistance Line on 131 444
- If you are unsure if it is a criminal matter, speak with your supervisor. If in doubt, report the matter to your local Police.

NSW Department of Communities and Justice (Child Protection)

- Use the NSW Mandatory Reporter Guide at reporter.childstory.nsw.gov.au/s/mrg
- Call the Child Protection Helpline on 132 111

NSW Department of Education

- Make a report at acecqa.gov.au/national-quality-agenda-it-system
- If unsure call 1800 619 113 or email ececd@det.nsw.edu.au

NSW Office of the Children's Guardian (Reportable Conduct Scheme)

- Call (02) 8219 3800 or email reportableconduct@kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au



Sources:

- Education and Care Services National Regulations (2011 SI 653)
- National Quality Standards
- The Child Safe Standards
- NSW Department of Education

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| Reviewed | 2 February 2023 - Minor changes (format, business name change) |
| Reviewed | 11 September 2023 - Minor changes (formatting), related policies added |
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| Reviewed | March 2025 - Format change, policy updated to align with Child Safe Standards. More info added on signs and indicators, making a report, support for families. |
| Reviewed | April 2025 - additional information regarding timeline for reporting, reporting to relevant authorities, debrief and critical reflection, key contacts |
| Next review | October 2025 |