

CHILD SAFE ENVIRONMENT POLICY

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) outline that children and young people have a right to be safe and cared for, no matter where they are or who they are with. Children have the right to be protected from violence, abuse or neglect. When working with children and young people, it is important to understand children's rights and needs.

We are advocates for children and have a strong commitment to child safety and establishing and maintaining a child safe environment. Children's safety and wellbeing are paramount at our Service. Our FDC Service embeds the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations and promotes a culture of safety and wellbeing to minimise the risk of child abuse or harm to children whilst promoting children's sense of security and belonging.

PURPOSE

Clarence Family Day Care has a legal and ethical responsibility to ensure our educators provide a safe and friendly environment where all children are respected, valued and encouraged to reach their full potential. Children's safety and wellbeing is paramount, and we aim to take all practical steps to protect children and young children from harm, ensuring healthy and safe environments. Our robust risk assessments ensure approved Family Day Care residences/and or venues provide children and visitors with an environment that helps to make children feel safe and provides a sense of belonging. We ensure all our FDC educator's residences are free from the use of tobacco, alcohol and illicit drugs.

SCOPE

This policy applies to the Approved Provider, nominated supervisor, employees, coordinator, educators, educator assistants, children, families, and visitors of Clarence Family Day Care Service.

IMPLEMENTATION

Under the Education and Care Services National Regulations the approved provider must ensure that policies and procedures are in place for providing a child safe environment and take reasonable steps to ensure those policies and procedures are followed. (Regulation 168, Regulation 170). The National Law requires management to ensure all children being educated and cared for are adequately supervised and every reasonable precaution is taken to protect children from harm and any hazard likely to cause injury.

KEY TERMS – DEFINITIONS

Child Safe Standards

A list of ten standards that organisations can use to keep children safe from harm and abuse as recommended by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse

Code of Conduct

Lists of dos and don'ts which describe acceptable and non-acceptable behaviour

Disclosure

The process where a child or young person conveys or attempts to convey that they are being or have been abused.

Information sharing

Refers to sharing or exchanging information, including personal information about or related to, abuse in organisational contexts. The terms refer to sharing information between (or within) organisations, as well as sharing information with professionals who provide key services for children.

Mandatory reporter

A person who is required to report known and suspected cases of child abuse and neglect to a nominated government department or agency.

Mandatory reporting

The legislative requirement for selected classes of people to report suspected cases of child abuse and neglect.

Reportable conduct

Certain organisations or entities have legal obligations under Reportable Conduct Schemes to notify and investigate certain allegations of abuse involving a child, when the allegation is against someone they employ, engage or contract in circumstances outlined in the legislation.

Rights of the Child

Human rights belonging to all children, as specified in the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child.

Wellbeing

Sound wellbeing results from the satisfaction of basic needs.

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. The person has been assessed as suitable to work with children; 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.

Definitions sourced from

ACECQA. (2021). Policy and procedure guidelines. *Providing a Child Safe Environment*.

NSW Department of Education (2021). [Guide to the Child Safe Standards for early childhood education and care and outside schools hours care services](#)

COMMITMENT TO THE SAFETY OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE (National Principles 1-10)

Our Family Day Care Service is committed to being a child safe organisation and endorse the National Principles of Child Safe Organisations, placing the protection of children as a priority of our responsibilities and obligations. This focus is reflected in our Service policies and procedures and understood and practiced by all educators in their own homes/or venues.

Our Family Day Care Service takes a 'zero' tolerance approach to child abuse and are committed to raise awareness about the importance of child safety in our environment and the community. Our FDC educators are trained to identify signs and behaviours that may indicate child abuse and thoroughly understand their obligations and responsibilities to respond to incidents, disclosures or suspicions of harm as mandated reporters.

We are dedicated in promoting cultural safety for Aboriginal children, cultural safety for children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and to providing a safe environment for children with a disability. Our FDC Service will not tolerate bullying or harassment. Our priority is to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children and encourage positive relationships.

COMMUNICATION (National Principles 2 and 3)

We aim to build and maintain positive and respectful relationships with children, families and educators of our Service and prioritise a child safe environment. We communicate regularly and clearly with all stakeholders and ensure our policies and procedures are available to employees, volunteers, families and children and young people. (Reg. 170). Feedback and evaluation of our policies and procedures is welcomed through surveys, feedback or discussions with management.

CODE OF CONDUCT (National Principles 4 and 6)

Management, educators, staff, volunteers and students will adhere to our FDC Service's *Code of Conduct Policy*. We will:

- adhere to our *Child Safe Environment Policy*, *Child Protection Policy* at all times
- provide adequate supervision of children at all times
- take reasonable action to protect children and young people for risk of harm
- ensure the service premise is free from the use of tobacco, illicit drugs and alcohol
- be responsible for their own, and others health and safety
- be a positive role model to children and young people
- respect children's privacy and dignity at all times
- listen and respond appropriately to the views and concerns of children and young people
- report any allegations of child abuse to the Approved Provider
- notify the approved provider and/or the regulatory authority within 24 hours of any serious incident or complaint as per the National Regulations
- encourage children and young people to 'have a say' on issues that are important to them.

FDC educators, educator assistants, coordinators, staff and volunteers must:

- not discriminate against any child, because of age, gender, cultural background, race, ethnicity or disability
- not put children at risk of abuse- refusing food/play, making threats, exposing children to inappropriate language or material (movies, internet, photos)

- not develop any 'special' relationships with children or young people that could be seen as favouritism such as the offering of gifts or special treatment.

PARTICIPATION OF FAMILIES, CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE (National Principle 2)

Our FDC Service ensures families are always welcome and feel comfortable asking questions on how we prioritise child safety. We provide a range of opportunities for consultation and collaboration about decisions about their child's safety whilst at our Service including:

- policy and procedure review
- child protection
- allegations/grievance procedures
- sun safety
- written authorisations- parenting orders
- code of conduct
- inclusivity and supporting children with diverse needs.

We promote a respectful, child safe culture where children concerns are always responded to, and children feel empowered to participate in decisions and provide feedback to educators and staff.

RECRUITMENT PROCESS AND WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECK (National Principle 5)

Working in conjunction with the Child Protection Act and National Regulations, the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children is paramount within our Family Day Care Service and community. All staff and engaged educators, undergo an extensive recruitment screening and assessment process including consideration of their suitability for working and caring for children, clearance for a Working with Children Check and checking their criminal history before engagement with the Service. All educators, educator assistants and any family members over the age of 18 living in the residence are required to hold a current Working with Children Check (WWCC).

All educators, educator assistants and family members are subject to ongoing monitoring and relevant new records may lead to the clearance being revoked. The Approved Provider is responsible for the periodic review and maintenance of up-to-date records of Working with Children Check, including the Working with Children Check number and the date on which each clearance expires. WWCC information will be placed in the individual's file and continue to be updated as required.

The Approved Provider is responsible for ensuring all students and volunteers working with a FDC educator, hold a current Working With Children Check (WWCC).

CHILD PROTECTION- REPORTABLE CONDUCT SCHEME (National Principle 6)

Children and young people always have a right to be safe and protected. All FDC educators and management have a legal and moral duty to protect children from harm. It is essential when working with children to be aware of indicators of harm and be able to recognise and report concerns regarding suspected harm or protection concerns. Coordinators, educators and educator's assistants, understand their roles and responsibilities in protecting children from abuse and neglect and maintain up-to-date knowledge of child protection law (Reg 84).

FDC educators:

- will take all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse
- ensure children are never left alone with visitors, volunteers or students
- must be contactable by telephone whilst children are in attendance at the FDC service
- must be available to children at all times they are educated and cared for at the FDC service
- are aware they must not consume alcohol or be affected by alcohol or drugs (including prescription medication) that may impair their capacity to provide education and care

Coordinators or responsible persons in day-to-day charge must complete a course in child protection approved by the Regulatory Authority on an annual basis. All educators must refresh their knowledge about mandatory reporting each year. The Approved Provider will ensure all educators and educator assistants are familiar with the Reportable Conduct Scheme and the types of reportable conduct.

CHILD PROTECTION- ALLEGATIONS AGAINST EMPLOYEES

To protect children and ensure their safety, welfare and wellbeing, the Approved Provider must report allegations or convictions of child abuse and child related misconduct by any educator, staff member or visitor or volunteer to the Child Protection Hotline as part of the Reportable Conduct Scheme. Any allegation will be treated seriously and acted upon by management.

REPORTING AND RESPONDING TO GENERAL COMPLAINTS (National Principle 6)

Feedback from children, families, educators, staff and the wider community is fundamental in creating an evolving Childcare Service working towards the highest standard of care and education. We aim to investigate all complaints and grievances with a high standard of equity and fairness. Our FDC Service believes in procedural fairness and natural justice that govern the strategies and practices, which include:

- The right to be heard fairly
- The right to an unbiased decision made by an objective decision maker
- The right to have the decision based on relevant evidence.

SAFETY CHECKLISTS- ANNUAL ASSESSMENTS

Regular safety checks maintain basic standards of safety within FDC residences or venues. FDC educators will complete the following daily checklists to assist and record inspections of the physical environment where foreseeable risks may be evident and cause harm or injury to a child:

Any findings that require attention will be either dealt with immediately or submitted into the maintenance book depending on priority. Coordinators must be notified of any areas that need immediate attention within the residence or venue.

Annual Risk Assessment

The Approved Provider/Coordinator will conduct an annual risk assessment of each family day care residence and approved venue to ensure that the health, safety and wellbeing of children are protected. The assessment will ensure the FDC residence and approved venue adheres to all regulatory requirements and all equipment (including outdoor play equipment), furniture uphold the Australian Safety Standard where applicable. Whether the equipment carries an Australian Standard marking or not, the approved provider and educator must undertake regular checks for safety purposes.

The premises and all equipment and furniture used within the FDC educator's residence is audited to ensure all aspects are safe, clean and in good repair. FDC educators are aware that toys and equipment need to be checked to ensure they are safe and developmentally appropriate for children. Regular checks occur within the FDC residence to ensure that all toys, furniture and equipment are in good condition and working order.

Records of all assessments will be kept at the FDC principal office and the FDC educator's residence.

SUPERVISION (National Principles 5 & 7)

Children's safety is embedded in our day-to-day practices. FDC educators will provide effective and adequate supervision of children at all times. FDC Educators will employ 'active supervision' strategies within the FDC environment and when transporting children. Consideration will be made for the different ages and abilities of children and the activities that may require different levels of supervision. Sleeping infants and toddlers will be closely monitored at regular intervals and will always be within sight and hearing distance of the FDC educator so a child's breathing, and the colour of their skin can be monitored.

To ensure compliance with regulations, educator to child ratio is 1:7. FDC educators are only permitted to provide education and care to a maximum of 4 children preschool age or under.

RISK ASSESSMENT & RISK ASSESSMENT TOOL (National Principle 8)

It is a legislative requirement that all services implement a risk management system where they identify and manage hazards and risks within the workplace to ensure a child safe environment. Strategies are in place to make sure child safety (through the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations) and Education and Care National Regulations are embedded across our Service. The key principles of risk management include:

1. Identifying all hazards or potential hazards in the service/residence/venue
2. Assess the risk of harm or potential harm for each hazard
3. Control or manage the risk – Risk Rating Matrix
4. Monitor and improve safety – Risk Assessment Action Plan
5. Evaluate and Review

It is the responsibility of the Approved Provider and/or Coordinators to ensure risk assessments are completed where children's safety may be jeopardised and whenever the FDC educator may be organising an excursion/incursion.

Children's safety must be incorporated into everyday practice within the FDC residence and/or venue. Common hazards which may require a risk assessment include:

- cross-Infection and infectious disease
- administration of medication
- anaphylaxis procedures and management
- building and equipment (including storage)
- inadequate space for conducting activities and experiences
- hazardous chemicals
- electrical appliances
- food preparation and storage
- environmental influences such as shade, noise etc
- sun safety
- children's behaviours
- safe rest and sleep practices
- nappy change facilities
- play equipment
- water safety- swimming pools, spas, water
- fire equipment
- pets and/or animals
- supervision of children
- safe transportation of children
- children's activities and experiences
- Work Health and Safety such as manual handling (e.g., safe lifting children from cots and highchairs)
- non-compliance risk
- hot drinks

EMERGENCY AND EVACUATION PROCEDURES

FDC educators will ensure a copy of the emergency and evacuation floor plan is displayed in a prominent position near each exit at the premises. Copies of emergency phone contacts will be readily available.

Educators will rehearse emergency and evacuation procedures at least once every 3 months and ensure all children are involved. Records will be kept for all rehearsals.

STORAGE OF HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES

We reduce the risk of harm to children and educators by using eco-friendly products. FDC educators will endeavour to provide a safe environment ensure necessary chemical and hazardous equipment are safely stored away from children and handled appropriately. FDC educators will keep a register of hazardous chemicals used within their residence, including Safety Data Sheets.

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE AUTHORISATION

National Regulations require FDC educators to keep an accurate record of children's and visitor's arrival and departures with the signatures of the person responsible for verifying the accuracy of the record and the identity of the person collecting the child.

FDC educators will work in collaboration with our *Delivery of children to and Collection from Education and Care Premises Policy* and *Student and Visitors Policy* to ensure children are safe and secure at all times.

To ensure children's safety, FDC educators have a clear understanding of their legal obligation to check identification when a person is collecting a child from their residence/venue. To maintain compliance, parents will provide written authorisation if a person who is not named as an emergency contact on the enrolment form to collect a child from the FDC service.

FDC educators will ensure court orders are strictly adhered to and protect children from any potential

harm.

ONLINE SAFETY (National Principle 8)

Our FDC Service is committed to create and maintain a safe online environment with support and collaboration with FDC educators, families, and community. Our Service ensures backups of important and confidential data is made regularly and either stored securely offline, or online. Software and devices are updated regularly to avoid any breach of confidential information.

Families are provided with information about the software program which is password/pin protected and used to share observations, photos, videos, daily reports and portfolios. Passwords/pins are not to be shared with others as per our written agreement.

Written authorisation is requested as part of the enrolment process for children to use computers/tablets; have their photo taken and published as part of promotional marketing or on the app program used by the FDC Service. The identity of a child is not published on any platform.

Only educational software programs and apps that have appropriate content and have been examined prior to allowing their use are used. Children are always supervised using any technology.

CONTINUOUS REVIEW (National Principle 9)

To ensure we maintain a culture of continuous improvement, we will ensure our child safe practices are regularly reviewed, evaluated and improved. We aim to ensure all FDC educators, staff and volunteers understand and effectively implement our policies and procedures to provide a child safe environment. We will regularly review and monitor the effectiveness of our Child Safe policies and procedures and invite children, staff members, families and communities to contribute to their development.

Any updates or revisions will be communicated to all stakeholders. Our *Child Safe Environment Policy* will be reviewed on a regular basis.

CHILD SAFE STANDARDS LEGISLATION/RESOURCES

- The Children's Guardian Amendment (Child Safe Scheme) Bill 2021 came into effect on 1 February 2022 requiring organisations who work with or provide services to children to implement the NSW Child Safe Standards. Compliance and enforcement measures under the Children's Guardian Act commenced from 1 February 2023.
- [Children's Guardian Act 2019](#)
- *Children's Guardian Amendment (Child Safe Scheme) Bill 2021*
- NSW Office of the Children's Guardian [Child Safe Self-Assessment](#)

SOURCE

- ACECQA. (2021). Policy and procedure guidelines. *Providing a Child Safe Environment*.
- Australian Human Rights Commission (2020). *Child Safe Organisations*.
<https://childsafesafe.humanrights.gov.au/>
- Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012
- Children's Health and Safety – An analysis of Quality Area 2 of the National Quality Standard
- Department of Education NSW. Providing a child safe environment
- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010. (Amended 2018).
- Education and Care Services National Regulations. (2011).
- Guide to the National Quality Framework. (2018). (Amended 2020).
- NSW Department of Education (2021). [Guide to the Child Safe Standards for early childhood education and care and outside school hours care services](#)
- NSW Government Office of the Children's Guardian *A guide to the Child Safe Standards*. (2020).
- [United Nations Convention of Rights of the Child, \(1989\). \(UNCRC\)](#)
- Work Health and Safety Act, (2011).

NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD (NQS)

QUALITY AREA 2: CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND SAFETY	
Safety	Each child is protected
Supervision	At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from harm and hazard.

Incident and emergency management	Plans to effectively manage incidents and emergencies are developed in consultation with relevant authorities, practised and implemented.
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.
QUALITY AREA 5: RELATIONSHIPS WITH CHILDREN	
5.1.1	Positive educator to child interactions Responsive and meaningful interactions build trusting relationships which engage and support each child to feel secure, confident and included.

EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL REGULATIONS AND NATIONAL LAW

82	Tobacco, drug and alcohol-free environment
83	Staff members and family day care educators not to be affected by alcohol or drugs
84	Awareness of child protection law
99	Children leaving the education and care service premises
102(A-D)	Transportation of children (risk assessments and authorisations)
103	Premises, furniture and equipment to be safe, clean and in good repair
104	Fencing
105	Furniture, materials and equipment
106	Laundry and hygiene facilities
109	Toilet and hygiene facilities
115	Facilities designed to facilitate supervision
116	Assessments of family day care residence and approved family day care venues
117	Glass
123A	Family day care co-ordinator to educator ratios- family day care service
124	Number of children who can be educated and cared for by family day care educator
136	First aid qualifications
155	Interactions with children
162	Health information to be kept in enrolment record
165	Record of visitors
168 (h)	Providing a child safe environment
169 (2)g	Additional policies and procedures- family day care services
170	Policies and procedures to be followed
274	Swimming pools
S162 (A)	Persons in day-to-day charge and nominated supervisors to have child protection training
S165	Offence to inadequately supervise children
S167	Offence relating to protection of children from harm and hazards

I acknowledge I have received a copy of the Child Safe Environment, v1.1, effective 1 October 2023.

I have read and been informed about the content, requirements, and expectations of the Child Safe Environment at Clarence Family Day Care.

I have received a copy of the policy and agree to abide by the policy as a condition of my engagement with Clarence Family Day Care.

I understand that if I have questions, at any time, regarding the Child Safe Environment, I will re-read the policy, consult with the Nominated Supervisor/Director or the Manager.

Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____