

POLICY/PROCEDURE NAME & REVIEW PROCESS	CHILD PROTECTION POLICY -VICTORIA This policy and procedure has been created to provide all stakeholders with clear guidelines and transparency to our practices and procedures. We welcome feedback and input from all stakeholders at any time and this policy is subject to review based on feedback or due date of annual review.
NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD	QUALITY AREA 2- CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND SAFETY 2.2 Safety 2.2.1 Supervision 2.2.2 Incident and emergency management 2.2.3 – Child protection
NATIONAL LAW AND REGULATIONS	84- Awareness of child protection 170-Policies and procedures to be followed 171-Policies and procedures to be kept available 172- Notification of change to policies or procedure 175 (c)(d)(e)-Prescribed information to be notified to the Regulatory Authority 176- Time to notify certain information to Regulatory Authority
RELATED POLICIES and RECORDS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child protection incident record Code of conduct declaration record Child injury on arrival record Staff schedule record Victoria -Child safety and wellbeing policy
SCOPE OF POLICY	This policy applies to all children, educators, staff, families, management, students, volunteers, and visitors at our service.
AIM OF POLICY	To ensure that our service has strong guidelines, procedures, and practices in place regarding child protection and how to recognise it and what the process is for all children who attend our service in order to support their safety, wellbeing, and protection. Our aim is to provide a clear policy, implement the policy, support practices relating to the policy, train staff regarding the policy and maintain and update the compliance of the policy for all our stakeholders.
SERVICE IMPLEMENTATION	<p>Implementation</p> <p>Keeping children safe is everyone's responsibility. It is our obligation to ensure that staff who work with children in the service have clear guidelines and practices that reflect this responsibility. The national framework for protecting Australia's Children 2009- 2020 have adopted the following.</p> <p>6 outcomes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Children live in safe and supportive families and communities. Children and families access adequate support to promote safety and intervene early. Risk factors for child abuse and neglect are addressed. Children who have been abused or neglected receive the support and care they need for their safety and wellbeing. Indigenous children are supported and safe in their families and communities. Child sexual abuse and exploitation is prevented, and survivors receive adequate support. <p>A Royal commission into child abuse concluded on December 15th, 2017, after a 5-year enquiry. The results and recommendations for, in particular childcare services is as such, staff and management must actively manage the risks of child abuse offences being committed against children in their care.</p> <p>This means that staff and management within childcare services will be held accountable for their actions, and they must ensure that they place the safety and welfare of all children primarily. The development of the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations (National Principles) is a key national reform in response to these recommendations.</p> <p>The principles have been endorsed by all commonwealth, state, and territory governments. The National Principles emphasise the importance of culturally safe environments and practices for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander</p>

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Owner	Fishbowl Service Support Pty Ltd				
Policy published	March 2023	Last review date	March 2025	Next review date	May 2026
Service Support Within Reach	Warning -uncontrolled when printed. This document is current at the time of printing and may be subject to change without notice				

families and communities are more likely to access services that are culturally safe and experience better outcomes in such services.

National Principles

National Principles have been adopted by the government in all states and territories across Australia.

The **Child Safe Standards** and **National Principles for Child Safe Organisations** both aim to create environments where children are safe from harm, but they have some key differences in their scope, application, and origin.

National Principles for Child Safe Organisations

Developed by the **Australian Human Rights Commission**, endorsed by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) in response to the **Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse**.

- Provide a **nationally consistent framework** for child safety across all Australian states and territories.
- Designed as best-practice guidelines rather than strict legal requirements (though some jurisdictions integrate them into legislation).
- Broader in scope, applying to all organisations engaging with children, including sports clubs, religious groups, schools, and charities.

Child Safe Standards

- Developed at the **state and territory level** in Australia.
- They vary between states (e.g., Victoria, NSW, and other jurisdictions have their own versions).
- Legally enforceable in some jurisdictions, meaning organisations must comply with them.
- Focus on **practical, specific actions** to protect children in organisations.
- Often linked to regulatory requirements and audits.

Key Differences

Feature	Child Safe Standards	National Principles
Jurisdiction	State/territory-based	Nationally endorsed
Legal Status	Enforceable in some states	Best-practice guidelines (but may be legislated)
Detail Level	Specific compliance actions	High-level principles
Purpose	Ensure child safety in organisations	Provide a national framework for child safety

Child Safe Standards Victoria

1. Organisations establish a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children and young people are respected and valued.
2. Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance, and culture.
3. Children and young people are empowered about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.
4. Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.
5. Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice.
6. People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.
7. Processes for complaints and concerns are child focused.
8. Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training.
9. Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.
10. Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved.
11. Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people.

Indicators

It is not always easy to recognise that a child is being hurt or is at risk, so abuse is often undetected. There are indicators (signs, symptoms, or clues) that when found, either on their own or in various combinations, can point to abuse, neglect, or family violence.

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Child abuse and neglect refers to any behaviour or treatment by parents, caregivers, other adults, or older adolescents that results in the actual and/or likelihood of causing physical or emotional harm to a child or young person.

Child abuse and neglect is commonly divided into subtypes:

- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Neglect
- Sexual abuse
- Domestic violence

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse can be caused from punching, beating, kicking, shaking, biting, burning, or throwing the child. Physical abuse may also result from excessive or inappropriate discipline or violence within the family and is considered abuse regardless of whether or not it was intended to hurt the child. Physical abuse may be the result of a single episode or of a series of episodes.

Injuries to a child may vary in severity and range from minor bruising, burns, welts or bite marks, major fractures of the long bones or skull, to its most extreme form, the death of a child.

Physical Abuse Indicators

Behavioural indicators can be displayed by a child or by the alleged abuser.

Indicators do not necessarily prove that a child has been harmed. They alert us that abuse may have occurred and that a child may require help or protection. Sometimes indicators can result from life events that do not involve abuse, such as divorce, accidental injury, the arrival of a new sibling etc.

There may be **physical indicators** that a child is being abused.

Some examples of this are:

- Unexplained bruises, welts, cuts, abrasions.
- Unexplained burns.
- Unexplained fractures or disclosures.

There may also be indicators in a child's behaviour that could indicate physical abuse.

Some examples of this are:

- Is wary of adults or of a particular individual.
- Is violent to animals or other children.
- Is dressed inappropriately to hide bruises or other injuries.
- May be extremely aggressive or extremely withdrawn.
- Cannot recall how the injuries occurred or gives inconsistent explanations.

There may be indicators in **adult behaviour** that could indicate physical abuse.

Some examples of this are:

- May be vague about the details of the cause of injury and the account of the injury may change from time to time.
- May blame the accident on a sibling, friend, relative or the injured child.
- Shakes an infant.
- Threats or attempts to injure a child.
- Is aggressive towards a child in front of others.
- May delay in seeking medical attention for a child.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse occurs when a child's emotional, psychological, or social well-being and sense of worth is continually battered.

It can include a pattern of criticising, rejecting, degrading, ignoring, isolating, corrupting, exploiting, and terrorising a child. It may result from exposure to family violence or involvement in illegal or anti-social activities.

Emotional abuse is always present when other forms of abuse occur.

The effects of this form of abuse are not always immediate or visible. The long-lasting effects of emotional abuse may only become evident as a child becomes older and begins to show difficult or disturbing behaviours or symptoms.

Emotional Indicators

There may be physical indicators that a child is being emotionally abused.

Some examples of this are:

- Bed-wetting or bed soiling that has no medical cause.

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- Frequent psychosomatic complaints (e.g., Headaches, nausea, abdominal pains)
- Prolonged vomiting or diarrhoea.
- Has not attained significant developmental milestones.
- Dressed differently from other children in the family.
- Has deprived physical living conditions compared with other children in the family.

There may also be indicators in a child's behaviour that could indicate emotional abuse.

Some examples of this are:

- Suffers from severe developmental gaps.
- Severe symptoms of depression, anxiety, withdrawal, or aggression.
- Severe symptoms of self-destructive behaviour- self harm.
- Overly compliant; too well-mannered; too neat and clean.
- Displays attention seeking behaviours or displays extreme inhibition in play.
- When at play, behaviour may model or copy negative behaviour and language used at home.

There may be indicators in **adult behaviour** that could indicate emotional abuse.

Some examples of this are:

- Constantly calls the child names, labels the child, or publicly humiliates the child.
- Continually threatens the child with physical harm or forces the child to witness physical harm inflicted on a loved one.
- Has unrealistic expectations of the child.
- Involves the child in "adult issues," such as separation or access issues.

Neglect

Neglect is a pattern of behaviour which occurs over a period of time and results in impaired functioning or development of a child. It is the failure to provide for a child's basic needs.

Neglect may be:

- Physical - failure to provide necessary basic needs of food, shelter, or warmth.
- Medical - failure to seek, obtain or follow through with medical care for the child.
- Abandonment - leaving a child young person in any situation without arranging necessary care for them and with no intention of returning.
- Neglectful supervision – failure to provide developmentally appropriate or legally required supervision.
- Refusal to assume parental responsibility - unwillingness or inability to provide appropriate care for a child.

Neglect indicators.

There may be physical indicators that a child is being neglected.

Some examples of this are:

- Inappropriately dressed for the weather.
- Extremely dirty or unbathed.
- Inadequately supervised or left alone for unacceptable periods of time.
- Malnourished.
- May have severe nappy rash or other persistent skin disorders or rashes resulting from improper care or lack of hygiene.

There may also be indicators in a child's behaviour that could indicate neglect.

Some examples of this are:

- Demonstrates severe lack of attachment to other adults.
- Poor attendance at childcare or performance at childcare.
- Poor social skills.
- May steal food.
- Is very demanding of affection or attention.
- Has no understanding of basic hygiene.

There may be indicators in **adult behaviour** that could indicate neglect.

Some examples of this are:

- Fails to provide for the child's basic needs, such as housing, nutrition, medical and psychological care.
- Leaves the child home alone.
- Is overwhelmed with own problems and puts own needs ahead of the child's needs.

Sexual Abuse

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Sexual abuse includes acts or behaviours where an adult, older or more powerful person uses a child for a sexual purpose.
While it may involve a stranger, most sexual abuse is perpetrated by someone the child knows and trusts.

It includes any touching for sexual purpose, fondling of breasts, buttocks, genitals, oral sex, sexual intercourse, an adult exposing themselves to the child, or seeking to have a child touch them for a sexual purpose. It also includes voyeurism, photographing children inappropriately, involving the child in pornographic activities or prostitution or using the internet and phone to initiate sexual conversations with children.

Sexual abuse indicators

There may be physical indicators that a child is being sexually abused.

Some examples of this are:

- Torn, stained or bloody underclothing.
- Bruises, lacerations, redness, swelling or bleeding in genital, vaginal or anal area.
- Blood in urine or faeces.
- Sexually transmitted disease.
- Unusual or excessive itching or pain in the genital or anal area.

There may also be indicators in a child's behaviour that could indicate sexual abuse.

Some examples of this in young children are:

- Age-inappropriate sexual play with toys, self, others.
- Bizarre, sophisticated, or unusual sexual knowledge.
- Comments such as "I've got a secret," or "I don't like Uncle."
- Fire lighting by boys.
- Fear of certain places e.g., bedroom or bathroom.

Some examples of this in older children are:

- Eating disorders.
- Promiscuity or prostitution.
- Uses younger children in sexual acts.
- Tries to make self as unattractive as possible.

There may be indicators in **adult behaviour** that could indicate sexual abuse.

Some examples of this are:

- May be unusually over-protective of a child.
- Is jealous of a child's relationships with peers or other adults or is controlling of the child.
- May favour the victim over other children.
- Demonstrates physical contact or affection to a child which appears sexual in nature or has sexual overtones.

Domestic Violence

1 in 4 children are exposed to domestic violence. It is important to note that domestic violence impacts on a child's life. The impact of domestic violence can have long term effects. If family needs assistance advise them to call the **Domestic violence line – 1800 811 811** who can assist them further.

Domestic violence can affect children in the following ways but are not limited to:

- Behavioural problems
- Poor academic outcomes.
- Learning difficulties
- Low self-esteem.
- Ongoing anxiety and depression.
- Eating and sleeping disturbances.
- Physical symptoms, such as headaches and stomach aches.
- May be aggressive towards friends.
- Use bullying behaviour or become a target of bullying.

Who is mandated to report?

Mandatory reporters in Victoria, are people who deliver the following services, wholly or partly, to children as part of their paid or professional work:

- Family violence.
- Registered medical practitioners.

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- Nurses, including midwives.
- Victorian police officers.
- Registered teachers and school principals.
- Out of home care workers (excluding voluntary foster and kinship carers)
- Early childhood workers.
- Youth justice workers.
- Registered psychologists.
- School counsellors.
- People in religious ministry.

What must be reported?

Mandatory reporting is the legislative requirement for selected classes of people to make a report to child protection and/or Victoria police where they form a reasonable belief, that a child has been or is at risk of significant harm, as a result of physical or sexual abuse, and the child's parents have not protected or are unlikely to protect the child from that abuse.

It is a criminal offence to fail to report in these circumstances. In Victoria (Vic) mandatory reporting is regulated by the *children youth and families act 2005*.

Reportable

- You have received a disclosure from a child about abuse or neglect.
- You have observed indicators of abuse or neglect.
- You have been made aware of harm via your involvement in the community external to your professional role.

Reportable Conduct: VIC (to Commission within 3 days of becoming aware of)

There are five types of 'reportable conduct':

- Sexual offences committed against, with or in the presence of a child.
- Sexual misconduct committed against, with or in the presence of a child.
- Physical violence against, with or in the presence of a child.
- Any behaviour that causes significant emotional or psychological harm to a child.
- Significant neglect of a child.

Under the Failure to Disclose offence, *any adult* must report to Victoria Police if they believe that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child under the age of 16.

A report must be made to DFFH Child Protection if the mandatory reporter forms a belief on reasonable grounds the child is:

- In need of protection due to child abuse.
- At risk of being, harmed (or has been harmed) and the harm has, or is likely to have an impact on the child's safety, stability, or development.

Approved provider / Nominated supervisor will contact their local DFFH Child Protection intake provider to report concerns.

- Northern Division intake: 1300 664 977
- South Division Intake: 1300 655 795
- East Division intake: 1300 360 391
- West Division intake- Metropolitan: 1300 664 977
- West Division intake- Rural and regional: 1800 075 599

There are Four critical Actions for responding to Child abuse.

1. Responding to an Emergency.
2. Reporting to Authorities.
3. Contacting Parent / carers.
4. Providing Ongoing Support (please refer to PROTECT booklet for further information available Treasure Chest)

1. Responding to an Emergency

If a child disclose abuse or you have been made aware of abuse the first step is to ascertain if the child is in immediate danger.

- Separate the alleged victim and others involved, ensuring all parties are supervised by a service staff member.
- Alert Nominated Supervisor.
- Arrange or attend to child with medical assistance/ first aid if required.
- Call 000 for an ambulance if required.

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- Contact police 000
- Preserve any evidence/the environment/ witnesses must not discuss the incident with others.

2. Reporting to Authorities

- POLICE - In Victoria you must report all instances of child abuse which are led by a staff member, contractor or volunteer, or child to Victoria Police.
- REPORT TO MANAGEMENT You must report to your approved provider or licensee.
- NOTIFY THE REGULATOR- All child abuse allegations must be reported On the NQAITS portal.

3. Contacting parents/ Authorities

You must consult with DHHS Child Protection or Victoria Police to determine what information can be shared with parents/ carers. They may advise:

- Not to contact parents/carers, in circumstances where the parents are alleged to have engaged in the abuse, or the child is a mature minor and does not wish for their parent/carer to be contacted OR
- Contact the parents/carers and provide agreed information as soon as possible for licensed and approved services it is a requirement that parents/ carers be notified within 24 hours if the suspected abuse occurred at the service.

4. Provide Ongoing Support

- Staff at the service should take reasonable steps to make a child feel safe and supported whilst they are attending the service.
- The Approved Provider/ Nominated Supervisor should also consider providing support for children impacted by abuse. E.g., referral to wellbeing professionals.

Please note: If you believe that a child is not subject to abuse, but you still hold significant concerns for their wellbeing you must still act. This may include making a referral or seeking advice from Child FIRST (in circumstances where the family are open to receiving support), or to DHHS Child Protection or Victoria Police.

Disclosure of harm procedure.

If an educator suspects child abuse, they must immediately report their suspicions to the nominated supervisor/ approved provider and then the child will be supported through the following procedure: However, if a child is deemed to be at immediate risk the Police must be called immediately.

- Move to a suitable environment, free of distractions.
- Stay calm and patient—let the child speak at their own pace.
- Let the child to use their own words—avoid asking leading questions.
- Don't quiz the child about details of the abuse.
- Don't be afraid of saying the "wrong" thing. Listening supportively is more important than what you say.
- Reassure the child that it is OK that they have told you what's been happening.
- Address any concerns about the child's safety.
- Reassure the child that he or she is not at fault.
- Respect that the child may only reveal some details.
- Acknowledge the child's bravery and strength.
- Avoid making promises you can't keep—manage the child or young person's expectations.
- Explain to the child or young person that in order for them to be safe you will need to report their experience to someone else.
- Report immediately to your nominated supervisor.
- Keep the child with you if they don't want to be left alone.
- While everything is fresh in your mind document it on the **child protection incident record** recording their concerns in a non-judgmental and accurate manner as soon as possible -It is recommended that ECEC services use '[responding to suspected child abuse: template for all Victorian early childhood services](#)'
- It is important to note that once you have reported this doesn't relieve you of your duty of care for the child.
- Staff must keep confidentiality at all times and follow advice regarding disclosing information to the family as per four critical actions.

Protection

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The Child Protection Act 1999 offers the following protections for mandatory reporters when you provide information about a child who may need protection, or an unborn child who may need protection.

- Your identity will not be disclosed unless the disclosure of your identity is permitted under limited exceptions.
- You cannot be held legally liable (for example, for criminal prosecution or a civil suit for defamation or breach of privacy) if you are acting honestly and reasonably.
- You cannot be held professionally liable (for example, for disciplinary action) if you are acting honestly and reasonably.

In the event of an allegation of abuse against a staff member

Accusations of abuse or suspected abuse against educators, staff members, and volunteers, the nominated supervisor or approved provider will be treated in the same way as allegations against other people.

- If an accusation is made against a staff member it must be reported immediately to the nominated supervisor or approved provider.
- In the event that the nominated supervisor is involved in the abuse then the report must be made to the approved provider.

Any person involved in the service is a mandatory reporter if they suspect someone involved in the service of abuse of a child then they must follow the procedure as per below:

- It is important that any notification remains confidential, as it is vitally important to remember that no confirmation of any allegation can be made until the matter is investigated.
- At no time should the notifier inform the individual they have made the notification. This is to ensure that the matter can be investigated without prior knowledge and contamination of evidence.
- When an allegation is received, the approved provider needs to conduct an immediate investigation. An employee would be stood down whilst this investigation is conducted.

Whilst the investigation is being conducted it is important to consider the following:

- Record all findings and document on the **child protection incident report** and complete the Protect Recording Template. (available treasure chest or online [EarlyChildhood_ReportingTemplate.pdf \(education.vic.gov.au\)](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/EarlyChildhood/ReportingTemplate.pdf))
- Take all allegations of abuse seriously and clarify what is being alleged with the person who is making the allegation.
- Assess whether or not a child or young person is at risk of significant harm.

Investigation procedure

Approved provider / nominated supervisor will.

- Interview relevant witnesses and gather relevant documentation.
- Provide a letter of allegation to the accused staff member.
- Provide the employee with the opportunity to provide a response to the allegations either in writing or at interview.
- Inform the employee of the preliminary finding in writing and provide them with a further opportunity to respond or make a further submission prior to the matter moving to final findings.
- Consider any response provided by the employee.
- Decide on disciplinary action, if any, to be taken against the accused.
- The steps outlined above may need to be varied on occasion to meet circumstances. For example, it may be necessary to take different steps based on the advice of the department of communities or crisis care.
- The employee may have an appropriate support person with them during the interview process. Such a person is there for support only and as a witness to the proceedings and not as an advocate or to take an active role.

What information will be provided to the employee?

- That an allegation has been made against them (at the appropriate time in the investigation)
- Of the substance of the allegation or of any preliminary finding and any final finding.

The employee does not automatically have the right to:

- Know or have confirmed the identity of the person who made the allegation.
- Be shown the content of the office of children's guardian notification form or other investigation material that reveals all information provided by other employees or witnesses.

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The employer will ensure that:

- They give the employee a reasonable opportunity to respond before a final decision is made.
- Will always ensure that confidentiality is kept.
- Records about allegations of reportable conduct against employees will be kept in a secure area.
- No employee may comment to the media about an allegation of reportable conduct.

Each member of the team plays an important role in the implementation of each policies guidelines, and they are outlined as below but not limited to the following:

The Approved Provider

- Will ensure specified systems are in place for preventing, detecting, and responding to reportable allegations or convictions.
- Must as soon as practicable after receiving the reportable allegation/conviction, arrange for it to be investigated/determined.
- Will complete the investigation within a reasonable time, having regard to the principles of procedural fairness and the mandatory considerations.
- Must only provide information about the allegation, the progress of the investigation and the finding and action taken to the alleged victim and their parent/carer if DHHS or the police advise that it is in the best interests of the child to do so.
- Must ensure an appropriate level of confidentiality of information relating to reportable allegations and only disclose information about the allegations in circumstances permitted by the Act or other legislation.
- Will ensure that obligations under the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations are met.
- Will ensure they take reasonable steps to ensure that the nominated supervisor, educators, staff, and volunteers follow the policy and procedures.
- Will ensure they provide the nominated supervisor, educators, staff and volunteers the documentation to perform their role, follow policy, procedure, and document according to regulatory and service requirements.
- Will ensure that adequate induction process is provided to all staff to ensure they have time to read and understand policies and procedures and seek further information if unsure.
- Will ensure that the nominated supervisor and staff are equipped with ongoing professional development and training they require to comply with this policy.
- Will encourage feedback from stakeholders regarding the policy's effectiveness, particularly in relation to identifying and responding to child safety concerns.
- Will ensure the policy is kept up to date with current legislation, research, and best practice.

The Nominated Supervisor

- Will ensure all potential staff are screened prior to employment – confirming previous roles, interviewing previous employees, confirming qualifications, such as sighting original certification.
- Will ensure that all staff engaged in child-related work, including volunteers, are required to hold a relevant Working with Children Check and provide evidence of this check prior to employment.
- Must conduct online requirements for confirming WWCC and maintain a staff schedule that is current and up to date by revising it at least twice annually.
- Must provide staff with a **code of conduct declaration** and a thorough **position description**.
- Will have successfully completed a course in child protection approved by the regulatory authority.
- Will ensure that all staff participate in initial child protection and continually update their knowledge at least annually.
- Will be aware of indicators showing a child may be at risk of harm or significant risk of harm.
- Will be aware of the [Four Critical Actions](#) to follow when responding to incidents, disclosures and suspicions of child abuse.
- Will be aware that they are instrumental in ensuring that the Commission is notified within three (3) business days of becoming aware of a reportable allegation made against an employee or volunteer using online forms found at <https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/reportable-conduct-scheme/about-reporting-allegations/>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will ensure all employees are provided with training and ongoing supervision to ensure they understand that child safety is everyone's responsibility, and they adhere to the National Principals for Child Safe Organisations. Will participate in annual child protection training and be aware of Child Information Sharing, Family Violence Reforms and Family Violence Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Management Framework (MARAM) Will adhere to and implement the obligations under the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations. Will ensure they take reasonable steps to ensure that the educators, staff, and volunteers follow the policy and procedures. Will ensure they provide the educators, staff and volunteers the documentation to perform their role, follow policy and procedure and ensure they are checking the documentation according to regulatory and service requirements. Will ensure that a rigorous recruitment process is completed, and a thorough induction process is provided to all staff to ensure they have time to read and understand policies and procedures and seek further information if unsure. Will ensure that the staff are supported with ongoing professional development and training they require to comply with this policy. Will encourage feedback from stakeholders and staff regarding the policy's effectiveness, particularly in relation to identifying and responding to child safety concerns. Will ensure the policy is kept up to date with current legislation, research, and best practice. Will conduct regular staff meetings to address policy compliance with legislation, policy implementation, changes to policy and or collect feedback for annual review of policy. <p>Educators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will ensure that if a parent arrives at the service with a child that has any visible injuries that the educator will ask that the parent completes a child injury on arrival record. Will ensure that they participate in initial child protection and continually update their knowledge at least annually. Will ensure that they understand and commit to mandatory reporting and if in any doubt refer their concerns to the nominated supervisor. Will adhere to and implement the obligations under the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations. Will ensure they take reasonable steps to follow the service policy and procedures and seek advice or further support if unsure. Will ensure they complete and document any related records regarding the implementation of this policy and practice requirements of the service. Will attend any ongoing professional development, staff meetings and training they require to comply with this policy and practice requirements of the service. Will provide feedback to the nominated supervisor or approved provider regarding the policy's effectiveness, particularly in relation to identifying and responding to child safety concerns. Will provide feedback regarding policy review when required.
REGULATION IMPLEMENTATION	The following procedures outline and support all stakeholders to understand and implement the regulatory guidelines of this policy.
In regard to Regulation 84- awareness of child protection.	<p>Approved Provider will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that nominated supervisor and all educators and staff at the service are aware of the current child protection law in the provider's jurisdiction and understand their obligations under that law. Ensure that nominated supervisor and all educators and staff are aware that it is an offence under the National Law to subject a child being educated and cared for by an approved service to any form of corporal punishment, or any discipline that is unreasonable in the circumstances. Be committed to ensuring that nominated supervisor and staff follow all Victorian government procedures to protect children within the service. Ensure that nominated supervisor and staff are aware of their commitment to child protection, their mandatory obligation and ensure there are clear procedures in place for reporting suspected child abuse as per this policy.

Policy Name	CHILD PROTECTION POLICY - VICTORIA			Policy Version	V.3
Owner	Fishbowl Service Support Pty Ltd				
Policy published	March 2023	Last review date	March 2025	Next review date	May 2026
Service Support Within Reach	Warning -uncontrolled when printed. This document is current at the time of printing and may be subject to change without notice				

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure nominated supervisor and staff keep up to date and comply with any relevant changes in legislation and practices in relation to this policy. Ensure practices are in place to ensure that all educators, staff, volunteers, and students hold a current Working with Children Check prior to commencement of employment. Ensure the nominated supervisor updates child protection annually. Ensure that no volunteers/students, parents/guardians, and other visitors to the service are left alone individual children or groups of children. Ensure that when the service has been notified of a court order prohibiting an adult from contacting an enrolled child, such contact does not occur while the child is on the service premises. Ensure nominated supervisor, educators, staff, volunteers, and students undertake appropriate training and education on child protection, including recognising the signs and symptoms of child abuse know how to respond, and understand processes for reporting and managing concerns/incidents. Ensure the nominated supervisor understands their obligation of reporting any suspected harm or abuse of a child to the regulatory authority. Ensure that the child safe standards and procedures are implemented, the appropriate risk assessments and action plans are completed, and all identified actions are taken to minimise the risks to children's health and safety. Ensure all staff have undertaken current child protection legislation training, including mandatory reporting requirements and obligations in Victoria. Ensure that there is a plan for training to be undertaken in a suitable timeframe and updated annually.
In regard to regulation 170- Policies and procedures to be followed.	<p>Approved Provider will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that all staff and volunteers are made aware of regulatory policies and procedures by ensuring that this forms a part of the induction process. Ensure probationary reviews will be conducted once new staff are appointed at the 3- month and 6-month mark to ensure that they are following policy and procedure and to review and revise regulatory policies. Ensure staff meetings will be conducted on a regular basis to allow for review of policy and procedure and further training and revision of procedural practices in relation to policy and procedure. Ensure annual review and revision of policies and procedures will be conducted, and all educators will be given the opportunity for input.
In regard to Regulation 171- Policies and procedures to be kept available.	<p>Approved Provider will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that policies and procedures are available to all staff and the location and availability will form a part of the induction process. Ensure policies will be available on request for all staff members to have access when required. Ensure policies will be available when required for staff members to download copies and/or print out if required in order to complete assignments or to form part of their research and/ or update their knowledge. Ensure policies will be available for all stakeholders when requested and when updating.
In regard to Regulation 172- Notification of change to policies or procedures	<p>Approved Provider will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure staff meetings will be conducted on a regular basis to allow for review of policy and procedure, provide further training and allow for input if required in relation to policy and procedure. Ensure stakeholders will be invited to provide feedback for policies and procedures at any time, not just on annual review but will also be invited to add feedback at review time or after an event that may require change to policy or procedure. Ensure policies and procedures will be emailed or put on display in the foyer for stakeholders to have the ability to provide feedback. Ensure feedback will be considered from stakeholders and educators and may result in a change in policy. Ensure policy and procedure may be changed at any time if there has been an incident in the service that has required a change to be implemented for the safety and health of children and or educators.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure in the event of a change to a policy after feedback or a situation that occurs, we will provide 14 days' notice to all stakeholders before the change takes effect.
In regard to Regulation 175(c)(d)(e)- Prescribed information to be notified to the Regulatory Authority and Regulation 176	<p>Approved Provider will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that any incident that poses a risk to the health, safety, or wellbeing of a child at the service will be notified to the regulatory authority. (c) Ensure that any incident where an approved provider believes that a child has been physically or sexually abused at the service must be reported to the regulatory authority. (d) Ensure that any allegations that a child has been physically or sexually abused at the service must be notified to the regulatory authority. (e) Ensure that a full investigation occurs, and all due processes are completed as per this policy. Disciplinary actions will be put in place as a result of the outcome if required if the accused is deemed to be found guilty.
CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT	<p>We are dedicated to the ongoing improvement of our practices and procedures through the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conducting regular reviews and updates of this policy with all stakeholders. Actively seeking feedback from children, families, and staff members. Providing targeted skill development and training for staff when areas for improvement are identified or when gaps in policy and procedure implementation are observed.
KEY TERMS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stakeholder - a person or group of people who have an interest in a business a person such as an employee or customer. They have a sense of responsibility toward it and an interest in its success. Child- Child - In Victoria is a person under the age of 16 years. Child Abuse- “the harming (whether physically, emotionally, or sexually), ill-treatment, abuse, neglect or deprivation of any child or young person.” Child in need of protection -A child who has suffered significant harm, is suffering significant harm, or is at an unacceptable risk of suffering significant harm and does not have a parent able and willing to protect them from harm. Working with Children Check (WWCC) - A notification granted to an employee under a working with children law to the effect that: - the employee has been assessed as suitable to work with children and that there has been no information that if the person worked with children the person would pose a risk to the children and confirmation that the person is not prohibited from attempting to obtain, undertake or remain in child-related employment.
WE GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGE THE FOLLOWING SOURCES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Australian Children’s Education & Care Quality Authority. ACECQA Child Safe Organisations – National Principles Code of Ethics Education and Care Services National Regulations. Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010. EarlyChildhood_ReportingTemplate.pdf (education.vic.gov.au) Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations. Guide to the National Quality Framework. National Quality Standard. https://www.vic.gov.au/about-the-orange-door Royal Commission into institutional responses to child sexual abuse. United Convention on the Rights of the Child Victorian state Government- Child protection in early childhood (PROTECT) (education.vic.gov.au)

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