



Child Safe Reporting Policy



Policy Number	QA2/26	Title	Child Safe Reporting Policy
Revision	N/A	Written By	Nominated Supervisor
Reviewed By	EHOOSH Management Committee	Approved By	EHOOSH Management Committee
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1. Introduction

Children’s safety and wellbeing are paramount at our service and will be fostered through ensuring staff, educators follow our robust reporting procedures.

To help keep children safe, we must create, maintain and improve our child safe reporting practices to ensure they remain effective. Everyone in our organisation must:

- Know **what** to report, **who** to report it to and **how** to report it.
- Report any concerns about the safety or welfare of a child or young person immediately.
- Feel confident that concerns and allegations will be dealt with honestly and fairly.
- Feel confident in reporting unacceptable behaviour around children and young people.
- Ensure the safety and wellbeing of the child is paramount when an allegation is made.

2. What to Report

2.1. Definitions of Harm and Abuse

Psychological abuse

Includes bullying, threatening and abusive language, intimidation, shaming and name calling, ignoring and isolating a child, and exposure to domestic and family violence.

Physical abuse

Includes physical punishment such as pushing, shoving, punching, slapping and kicking, resulting in injury, burns, choking or bruising.

Sexual abuse

Includes the sexual touching of a child, grooming, and production, distribution or possession of child abuse material (often known as pornography).

Grooming

The process where a person manipulates a child or group of children, and sometimes those looking after them, including parents, carers, teachers and leaders. They do this to establish a position of trust so they can then later sexually abuse the child.

Misconduct

Inappropriate behaviour that may not be as severe as abuse, although could indicate that abuse is occurring and would often be in breach of an organisation's Child Safe Code of Conduct*, including showing a child something inappropriate on a phone, having inappropriate conversations with a child or an adult sitting with a child on their lap.

Lack of appropriate care

Includes not providing adequate and proper supervision, nourishment, clothing, shelter, education or medical care.

*Please refer to our [*Child Safe Code of Conduct*](#) for a full list of acceptable and unacceptable behaviours at our organisation.

Note: As a relevant entity, our organisation must also report [reportable conduct](#).

2.2. Types of Complaints

All complaints should be reported. This includes:

- Criminal conduct
- Risk of significant harm (ROSH)
- Disclosures of abuse
- Unacceptable behaviour around children and young people that breaches our Child Safe Code of Conduct
- Suspicion of harm or abuse to a child or young person.
- Reportable conduct

3. Who Can Report

3.1. Making a Complaint

Everyone in our organisation has the right to make a genuine complaint and won't be punished if they do. This includes children and young people, staff members and volunteers. Reporting abuse is mandatory and encouraged – it is never obstructed or prevented.

4. Who to Report to

4.1. Reporting Obligations

Reporting criminal conduct

Contact **NSW Police on 131 444** for anything you consider could be a criminal offence. This includes sexual assault, physical assault, grooming offences, and producing, disseminating or possessing child abuse material.

Note: It is a criminal offence for adults not to report to police if they know or believe that a child abuse offence has been committed. In addition, people employed in child-related work may be subject to a criminal offence if they fail to reduce or remove the risk of a child becoming a victim of child abuse.

Reporting risk of significant harm

Any person who has reasonable grounds to believe that a child or young person is at risk of significant harm (ROSH) can report to the **Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) on 132 111** (this is a 24-hour service).

Mandatory reporters must report to the ChildStory Reporter Community if they have reasonable grounds to suspect a child is at ROSH.

Reporting allegations and convictions

We must notify the Office of the Children’s Guardian of reportable allegations or convictions (that is, reportable conduct). This includes sexual offences, sexual misconduct, ill-treatment of a child, neglect of a child, an assault against a child, failure to protect a child or failure to report if a child has been harmed, as well as any behaviour that causes significant psychological harm to a child.

Reporting breaches of our Child Safe Code of Conduct

All complaints must be reported to our Child Safety Officers.

5. How to Report

5.1. Risk Management Strategies

To ensure the immediate and ongoing safety of the child:

- Establish the welfare and safety of the child and take steps to ensure the child is removed from the risk
- Reassure them and remain calm
- Listen carefully without interrupting
- Don't ask leading questions or any additional questions once you've established there is a genuine concern (to not compromise future investigations by NSW Police or DCJ)
- Support them, reassuring the child that they have done the right thing, that you believe them and that the abuse is not their fault
- Explain what will happen, including timeframes
- Don't make promises you can't keep
- Seek guidance if you are unsure about what to do.

It is the Child Safety Officer’s role to conduct a risk assessment after receiving an allegation,

to ensure the safety of all people involved and maintain the integrity of the investigation.

5.2. Procedural Fairness, Including Privacy and Confidentiality

Any allegation of abuse will be treated in a fair, transparent and timely manner. Workers subject to an allegation will be notified when a disciplinary hearing will take place and what will occur at the hearing. We follow the obligations defined under the *Privacy Act 1988* (Commonwealth), and relevant reportable conduct investigations are conducted with the OCG's Reportable Conduct Directorate.

Additionally:

- All information is recorded on our reporting form for complaints and allegations.
- All reporting forms for complaints and allegations are stored securely and only accessed by those in the organisation with responsibility for oversight of the investigation.
- Information may be exchanged under Chapter 16A of the Child and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998, with other agencies who have responsibilities relating to the safety, welfare or wellbeing of children or young people.
- Our organisation maintains the privacy of those involved in accordance with our obligations under the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998.
- If an incident is found to be substantiated, likely outcomes or responses will be determined by the Approved Provider or from advice given by relevant authorities (police, DCJ or OCG).

5.3. Complaint Process

Once a complaint has been made, use this step-by-step process to make sure it's appropriately followed up:

- If necessary, steps taken to remove child from harm
- In emergencies call 000
- Conduct a Risk Assessment to mitigate risk
- Incident recorded in the allegation/complaint form
- Assessment of allegation/complaint
- When any employment-related child protection concern is raised about an employee, it must be assessed to ensure it constitutes a reportable allegation. If the assessment determines the alleged conduct meets the definition of reportable conduct.
 - Child Protection (DCJ) Use service Childstory MRG reporter (immediately)
 - NSW Regulatory Authority (within 24 hours)

- Call NSW police assistance on 131 444 (within 24 hours)
- Report to the Child Safe Sub Committee
- Reportable Conduct Scheme -office of the children’s Guardian (within 7 days)
- Investigation conducted, keeping everyone involved and up to date with what’s happening
- Offering ongoing support to the child as needed
- Reviewing the incident and updating the organisation’s child safe policies, if necessary

5.4. Incident

Report the alleged conduct to the Nominated Supervisor or in their absence the Responsible Person in Charge/and or the Committee Child Safety Team.

If the complaint is about the Nominated Supervisor report to the Committee Child Safety Team (check the ‘*Child Safe Standards*’ project on Basecamp for details).

5.5. Risk Assessment

The risk will be identified and responded to.

Risk strategies will be put in place to reduce immediate risk.

6. How we Publicise our Child Safe Reporting Policy

To ensure everyone in our organisation is aware of our *Child Safe Reporting Policy* and their reporting obligations we:

- Display important information on our website and *Family Handbook*
- Display important information from our *Child Safe Reporting Policy* that describes what to report, who to report to and how to report, including fact sheets, brochures and posters to staff.
- Provide staff with training opportunities so they understand our processes for complaints and allegations.
- Create and promote age and ability-appropriate programs for children and young people that explain what do if they feel sad, angry or concerned.

7. Review Date

This policy will be reviewed annually and after any critical incidents, to ensure continuous improvement of our child safe practices and that we keep up to date with relevant legislation and industry requirements.

Children and young people have an opportunity to provide feedback on the policy and complaint handling.

8. Legislation

Crimes Act 1900

Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998

Children's Guardian Act 2019 (NSW)

Privacy Act 1988 (Commonwealth)

Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998

9. Legislative Requirements

Regulation 84

Awareness of child protection law

Regulation 168

Education and care service must have policies and procedures

10. Relevant Service Policies

- *Child Safe Policy*
- *Supervision Policy*
- *Child Protection Policy*
- *Child Safe Environment Policy*
- *Safe Transportation of Children Policy*
- *Excursion Policy*
- *Child Safe Code of Conduct*
- *Interactions with Children Policy*
- *Providing a Child Safe Environment Policy*

Revision Chronology

Version Number	Date	Reason for Change
1.0	June 2024	Endorsed by OOSH executive committee