

Last reviewed: July 2019
Nillumbik Playhouse Policy

Child Safety

POLICY STATEMENT

All children have a right to feel safe and be safe all of the time. Playhouse provides environments and activities that encourage all children to participate in and celebrate their identity. Playhouse fulfils its duty of care obligations under the law by protecting children from any reasonable, foreseeable risk of injury or harm. Playhouse has a zero tolerance of child abuse and exercises its moral and legal responsibilities to ensure that all children are safe in our care. Training, resources, information and guidance are provided to support this.

SCOPE

This policy applies to the Primary Nominee, Approved Nominee, Accepted Nominees, educators, staff, students on placement, contractors, volunteers, parents/guardians, children and others attending the programs and activities of the Playhouse, including during offsite excursions and activities, and any other individual involved in this organisation.

LEGISLATION

Children's Services Regulations 2009 (v10)

Regulation 28; 31-35; 50-59
Regulation 60-72; 90-91

Children's Services Act 1996 (Vic)

Section 11; 26-34; 44

Child Safe Standards

Standard 1-7

Child Safety and Wellbeing Act 2005 (Vic.)

as amended in 2012

Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic)

as amended 2011

Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (Vic)

Working with Children Regulations 2006 (Vic)

Education and Care Services National Regulations

Regulation 16; 73-76; 84-86; 99-102
Regulation 117(A-C); 155-156; 160; 168

National Quality Standard

Standard 2.1-2.2

Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010

Section 12; Part 6 Section 161-175; 189

Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic.)

as amended 2011

Family Law Act 1975 (Cth)

as amended 2008 and 2011

Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic)

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

GOALS / What we are going to do

- Develop and maintain a culture where children feel valued, respected and cared for.
- Promote the cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and the safety of children with a disability.
- Uphold the rights of children through empowerment and participation.
- Take all reasonable steps to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of children attending the service.
- Effectively supervise to protect children from hazards or harm and immediately respond.
- Follow the duty of care and legal obligations under the Victorian Child Safe Standards.

EVALUATION

To ensure continuous improvement, the Primary Nominee will:

- Take feedback from everyone affected by the policy regarding its effectiveness, including children, families and staff.
- Monitor the implementation, compliance, complaints and incidents in relation to this policy.
- Notify Parents/Guardians when making any changes to this policy or its procedures.
- Make updates to the policy as part of the service's policy review cycle, or in response to current legislation, research, policy and best practice updates, or as otherwise required.

RELATED DOCUMENTS

Relevant service policies such as:

Enrolment and orientation	Emergency and evacuation	Interactions with children
Staffing	Child safe environment	Excursions
Dealing with complaints	Governance and management	Delivery & collection of children

RESOURCES

Commission for Children and Young People – Child Safe Standards Guidelines
<https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/assets/resources/A-guide-for-creating-a-child-safe-organisation-v3.0.2.pdf>

Department of Justice
www.justice.vic.gov.au

UN Convention of the Rights of a Child
<http://www.unicef.org/crc/>

Child Wise
<https://www.childwise.org.au/>

Child Protection Crisis Line 131 278 or 1800 212 936.
This hotline operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

National Child Abuse Helpline: 1800 99 10 99.
This helpline operates 9am-5pm, Monday to Friday.

AUTHORISATION

This policy was adopted on 7 August 2019

REVIEW DATE

This policy shall be reviewed in December 2020

PROCEDURES/ How it will be done

Reporting Any person who believes, on reasonable grounds, that a child is in need of protection will make a report.

- All Playhouse staff will fulfil their obligation to notify the Child FIRST Report Line on 9450 0955 as soon as practicable if they have a reasonable suspicion that a child has been, or is being, abused or neglected. Any notifications will be recorded using Council’s Child Safe Incident Report Form.
- In addition to making a report to the Child FIRST, employees and volunteers must also report to Nillumbik’s Child Safety Officer if reasonable suspicion is formed that a child has been, or is being, abused or neglected by another educator, employee, or volunteer.
- Under the provisions of the Reportable Conduct Scheme, Council will notify the Victorian Commissioner for Children and Young People of any serious concern relating to the conduct with a child of any adult associated with the organisation, including employees, students, contractors or volunteers.
- Under the provisions of the Enterprise Agreement (No. 8), management may pursue disciplinary action against any staff member in breach of this policy.

A step-by-step guide to making a report to Child Protection or Child FIRST

Protective concerns
You are concerned about a child because you have:

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

At all times remember to:

- record your observations
- follow appropriate protocols
- consult notes and records
- consult with appropriate colleagues if necessary
- consult with other support agencies if necessary

STEP 1	RESPONDING TO CONCERNS	STEP 2	FORMING A BELIEF ON REASONABLE GROUNDS	STEP 3	MAKING A REFERRAL TO Child FIRST	STEP 4	MAKE A REPORT TO CHILD PROTECTION
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. If your concerns relate to a child in need of immediate protection; or you have formed a belief that a child is at significant risk of harm*. Go to Step 4 2. If you have significant concerns that a child and their family need a referral to Child FIRST for family services. Go to Step 3 3. In all other situations Go to Step 2. <p><small>* Refer to Appendix 2: Definitions of child abuse and indicators of harm in the Protocol – <i>Protecting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people</i></small></p>		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consider the level of immediate danger to the child. Ask yourself: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Have I formed a belief that the child has suffered or is at risk of suffering significant harm? YES / NO and b) Am I in doubt about the child's safety and the parent's ability to protect the child? YES / NO 2. If you answered yes to a) or b) Go to Step 4 3. If you have significant concerns that a child and their family need a referral to Child FIRST for family services. Go to Step 3 		<p>Child Wellbeing Referral</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Contact your local Child FIRST provider. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See over for contact list for local Child FIRST phone numbers. 2. Have notes ready with your observations and child and family details. 		<p>Mandatory/Protective Report*</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Contact your local Child Protection Intake provider immediately. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See over for contact list for local Child Protection phone numbers. • For After Hours Child Protection Emergency Services, call 131 278. 2. Have notes ready with your observations and child and family details. <p><small>* Non-mandated staff members who believe on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection are able to report their concerns to Child Protection</small></p>

The Primary Nominee will:

- Ensure each Nominee of the Playhouse has successfully completed child protection training.
- Ensure Nominees of the Playhouse who works with children are advised of the existence and application of the current child protection law in Victoria and understands their obligations under that law.
- Ensure policies and procedures are in place and followed in relation to providing a child safe environment.

The responsible person/nominated supervisor will:

- Take all reasonable steps to ensure that only Fit and Proper Persons undertake work with children, including reading a current assessment notice (Working with Children Check) before a person becomes an employee or is engaged as a staff member.
- Support staff to uphold Council's Code of Conduct, including instructing all staff involved in work with children on expectations for appropriate behaviour with children.
- Support all staff to understand their role in keeping children safe, including their reporting responsibilities.
- Ensure child/staff ratios are maintained and educators implement effective supervision strategies.
- Afford educators opportunities to participate in professional development to build their capacity to protect children, including undertaking Child Protection training and accessing to relevant resources and information through organisations such as Child Wise and the Commission for Children and Young People.
- Provide families with a copy of this policy upon enrolment.
- Listen to and act upon any concerns that children, young people or their families raise.
- Ensure only appropriate persons visit Playhouse (see Child Safe Environment policy).

The educators will:

- Observe when a child appears to be at risk of harm arising from abuse or neglect and will act immediately to protect and preserve the safety and wellbeing of the children in their care.
- Provide adequate supervision for children at all times:
 - Educators respond immediately, particularly when a child is distressed or in a hazardous situation.
 - Educators know where children are at all times and monitor their activities actively and diligently.
- Support children to understand their rights.
- Promote and encourage children’s participation in decision making.
- Value and respect children’s opinions.
- Seek children’s views about what makes them feel safe and unsafe at Playhouse. Listen to and act upon any concerns that children raise.
- Establish an environment of trust and inclusion that enables children to ask questions and speak up if they are worried or feel unsafe.
- Provide a culturally safe environment for all children, with special consideration given to Aboriginal children, children from culturally and or linguistic diverse backgrounds and children with a disability.

Parent/Guardians will:

- Provide all details requested to maintain an accurate child enrolment record including:
 - Any court orders provided to Playhouse relating to the powers, duties, responsibilities or authorities of any person in relation to the child or access to the child.
 - The language used in the home and any family cultural practices relevant to the inclusion of children.
- Notify the Primary Nominee or an educator of any issue that may affect a child’s health, safety or wellbeing when participating in the programs at Playhouse.