

2.5 Reporting of Child Abuse Policy

The service abides by the guiding principles of the Child Protection Act 1999 that the safety, wellbeing, and best interests of a child are paramount, and that a child has a right to be protected from harm or risk of harm.

The Child Protection Act 1999 requires certain professionals, referred to as 'mandatory reporters', to make a report to Child Safety, if they form a reasonable suspicion that a child has suffered, is suffering or is at an unacceptable risk of suffering significant harm caused by physical or sexual abuse, and may not have a parent able and willing to protect them.

The Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 require an Approved Provider to notify the Regulatory Authority of information in respect of prescribed matters including incidents where the Approved Provider reasonably believes that physical and/or sexual abuse of a child has occurred or is occurring while a child is cared for at an education and care service, or, an allegation that sexual abuse of a child has occurred or is occurring while a child is being educated and cared for at a service. [National Regulation 175(2)(d) &(e)].

Relevant Laws and other Provisions

The laws and other provisions affecting this policy include:

- Education and Care Services National Law Act, 2010 and Regulations 2011
- Child Protection (Mandatory Reporting— Mason's Law) Amendment Act 2016
- Family and Child Commission Act 2014
- Child Protection Act 1999 and Regulations 2000
- Duty of Care
- NQS (National Quality Standard) Area: 2.3; 4.2; 5.1, 5.2; 7.1, 7.2, 7.3.
- Policies: 2.2 - Statement of Commitment to the Safety and Wellbeing of Children and the Protection of Children from Harm, 2.10 - Reporting Guidelines and Directions for Handling Disclosures and Suspicions of Harm, 8.4 – Educator Professional Development and Learning.

Procedures

Approved Providers, Nominated Supervisors, Responsible Persons, and Educators are Mandatory Reporters.

The Mandatory Reporters at our school age care service will report reasonable suspicions or disclosures of harm to the Department of Child Safety.

Mandatory reporters should also report to Child Safety a reasonable suspicion that a child needs protection caused by any other form of abuse or neglect.

Individuals who are volunteers or under 18 years of age are not mandatory reporters.

Educators who are Mandatory Reporters may give information about their reportable suspicion to the Nominated Supervisor of our service to enable the Nominated Supervisor to take appropriate action.

To help with decision making and the need to report, the service will access and refer to the online guide from the Department of Child Safety

<https://secure.communities.qld.gov.au/cpguide/engine.aspx>

Where concerns do not reach the threshold for reporting to Child Safety, the family, with their consent, may be referred to Family and Child Connect for support (13FAMILY /13 32 64).

The Approved Provider will ensure that all educators have appropriate and up to date information and training regarding the services child protection policies, current Child Protection Laws and Regulations including the current mandatory reporting obligations.

Relevant educators will record all details and objective observations immediately. This record is to be kept separate from any incident book and is to remain confidential. Information will be shared with the school Principal.

All persons involved in a case of suspected child abuse will be treated with sensitivity and respect, and all information to the case will remain confidential [see Policy 10.8 - Information Handling (Privacy and Confidentiality)].

For matters in relation to National Regulation 175 (2)(d)&(e), the Nominated Supervisor as the representative of the Approved Provider will notify the Regulatory Authority via the National Quality Agenda IT System (NQA IT System) within 24 hours of an incident (<https://portal.nqaits.gov.au/>). Where/if the NQA IT System is not accessible the Regulatory Authority will be contacted.

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