



**PATERSONIA**  
A **LEARNING** ADVENTURE

## PROVIDING A CHILD SAFE ENVIRONMENT POLICY

Policy number	5.8	Version	1
Drafted by	Nicole Crook	Approved by Board on	Feb 2018
Responsible person	Nicole Crook	Scheduled review date	Feb 2019

### INTRODUCTION

Patersonia provides an environment that ensures the safety, health and wellbeing of children at all times. The welfare and protection of all children is of paramount importance. Educators will maintain the premises and equipment, adhere to procedures regarding safe practices and operate in line with legislative requirements relating to child protective practices and the Education and Care Services National Regulations and Law. Educators and management are aware of their legal responsibility as Mandatory Reporters to take action to protect and support children they suspect may be at significant risk of harm. Educators will ensure that children are adequately supervised at all times and that every reasonable precaution is taken to protect children from harm and any hazard likely to cause injury or trauma (National Quality Standards 2.3.1 & 2.3.2).

### PURPOSE

This policy outlines the steps management and educators should follow to ensure the safety of educators and children at Patersonia.

### POLICY

#### Managing the Facility

##### Security:

- Only approved educators and management members will be given a key to the premises.
- A key register will be maintained that indicates the person's receipt of the key, date received, and date returned on completion of employment or completion of term as member of Management. This policy will be consistent with any policy of the Landlord.
- Extra keys will only be cut after agreement by the management and a record will be made in the key register.

- All important documents will be kept in a lockable place and access will only be permitted by approved staff and management members or approved volunteers.
- There will be no cash of the premises.
- Educators will ensure that the building is left in a secure manner before leaving and all windows, cupboards, safe, and other relevant areas are locked. All heating and lighting is off and all doors properly secured.
- Educators will inform the police and the Board as soon as possible if there has been a break in of any kind.
- Educators will remain on the premises until the police arrive or inform them of what to do.

**Buildings, equipment and maintenance:**

- Equipment will be chosen to meet the children's developmental needs and interests. There will be sufficient access to furniture, materials and developmentally appropriate equipment suitable for the education and care for each child.
- Service premises and all equipment and furniture will be maintained in a safe, clean condition and in good repair at all times.
- Children will be provided with adequate, developmentally and age-appropriate toilet, washing and drying facilities. These will enable safe use and convenient access by children.
- There must be no damaged plugs, sockets, power cords or extension cords.
- Electrical appliances will be in good working order.
- Electrical circuit breakers will be installed and be maintained.
- Provision will be made in the budget for regular maintenance and repair work.
- Management will develop a list of fully licensed and insured trade's persons, which is made available to educators. This list will be reviewed on an annual basis.
- All trades people are required to meet the same child protection standards as volunteers if work is to be conducted while children are present.
- All contractors should have their own public liability insurance.
- The service and equipment will be regularly checked to ensure that they are in a good and safe condition, comply with relevant Australian Standards and have appropriate soft-fall surfacing maintained.
- Equipment will be regularly washed and cleaned.
- Recycled craft materials should be checked for potential hazards.
- Educators should ensure safe handling of all tools if used as part of any activity.
- Families will be encouraged to notify educators of any safety issues they observe.

- Anything that requires maintenance is to be reported to the Manager as soon as possible.
- Faulty equipment should be removed or protection placed around any dangerous building sites.
- A maintenance book will be kept that records any maintenance that needs to be addressed.
- The maintenance book will record:
  - Type of problem
  - Date that it was observed
  - Who notified the Manager and when?
  - What was done to rectify the problem?
  - Date repaired
  - Tradesperson employed to repair the problem
- For urgent repairs the Manager will organise a contractor to attend to the problem.
- Non-urgent repairs will be recorded in the maintenance book. The Manager will act on these to rectify the problem as soon as possible.
- For major repairs a minimum of three quotes will be sought and reviewed by the Board who will make a decision on a further course of action. The Manager or someone with management control may obtain the quotes.
- Maintenance reviews should be done as part of the regular staff meetings.
- It is the responsibility of management, once a problem has been raised, to ensure that it is rectified in the most efficient manner and that the service is safe for educators and clientele.
- Should the service be considered unsafe or as being a health risk, then the service will be closed, after notice has been given to all relevant parties, until the problem has been rectified.
- The service will have an appropriate number of first aid kits that are suitable to the ages and needs of the children attending. The first aid kit will be well stocked and be easily recognised and accessible at all times.

## **Storage**

- A storage system should be devised that ensures easy access and un-cluttered storage of all equipment.
- Storage areas will be cleaned and tidied at least twice a year or when seen as necessary.

- Play equipment and toys should be easily accessible to all children during the operating hours of the service.
- Children will be encouraged to pack equipment away that they have used to avoid trip hazards.
- All equipment is to be neatly packed away at the end of each session.
- Craft equipment will be stored in a separate area.
- All craft equipment is to be properly washed and cleaned before storage.
- Where room permits, a separate storage area will be available for sporting and large outdoor equipment to prevent clutter.
- All items such as cleaning materials, disinfectants, flammable, poisonous and other dangerous substances, tools, toiletries, first aid equipment, and medications should be stored in the designated secured area which is inaccessible to the children. Educators are responsible to ensure that these areas remain secure and that they do not inadvertently provide access to these items.
- Kitchen and other refuse areas will be provided with lidded facilities that are cleaned and emptied daily.
- Educators and management will ensure that all family records are kept in a nominated secure place, ensuring that records are kept confidential and not left accessible to others during the course of the daily operations.

### **Ventilation, temperature and natural light**

- All heating and cooling systems will be of good quality and checked regularly to ensure safety and reliability.
- All heating and cooling systems and power cords will be kept in a safe area and away from children.
- Educators will take individual needs and specific activities into account when ensuring that heating, ventilation levels are comfortable.
- If educators, children or families complain about the temperature in the service not being at a comfortable level, this matter will be drawn to the attention of management and steps will be made to address the problem.
- Adequate ventilation will be provided at all times. Windows will be properly maintained to ensure easy opening and protection from bugs and insects.
- Where activities involve strong smells from materials such as paints and glues, staff are to ensure there is adequate ventilation before undertaking the activity.
- Natural light is considered to be most desirable. Provision of natural light areas will be enhanced as much as possible.
- In areas made available for children's fine detail work, natural light will be made available where possible and good overhead lighting provided.
- Outdoor lighting will be suitable so that families, staff and children can enter and exit the building without any unsafe dark areas.

### **Pest control:**

- Equipment and especially food items will be properly stored so as not to attract pests and vermin.
- Refuse bins and disposal areas will be emptied and cleaned daily.
- Kitchen, food preparation areas and storage will be cleaned and maintained daily.
- All areas will be checked daily for any signs of pests or vermin.
- Should any pests or vermin be identified then action should be taken to rid the service of the problem by:
  - Initially using non-chemical methods such as physical removal, maintaining a clean environment, and use of any non-chemical products.
  - Low irritant, environmentally friendly sprays to be used minimally and only with adequate ventilation and preferably not in the presence of the children.
  - Other methods such as the employment of a pest control company if deemed necessary by management where the above methods have failed.
- If urgent, the Nominated Supervisor may obtain a contractor from management list to address the problem.
- If non urgent, the Nominated Supervisor will bring the problem to the attention of management in their report and management will decide on the appropriate course of action.
- All families will be notified of any use of chemicals.
- Any use of chemical products should only be conducted outside the hours of the children and educators' presence in the building.
- All action will be taken to remove the children, educators, families and visitors from the environment for as long as is safe and viable.

## **Managing the Indoor and Outdoor Environment**

### **Indoor environment**

- All areas of Patersonia property, indoors and out, are no smoking areas
- The Service will only enrol the number of children in the service, which can comfortably fit into the building space and in accordance with the National Regulations.
- Where children are indoors for long periods due to weather conditions, special activities will be planned and other areas sought to disperse the group such as school halls and verandas.
- Separate areas in the indoor environment will be provided for:
  - Collection of fees, answering phones, and maintaining daily records.

- Educators and families to talk in confidence.
- Children to store their bags and belongings.
- Storage of equipment, food, dangerous materials, and family records.
- Preparation of food and drinks.
- Kitchen and other refuse.
- Male and female toilet, hand basins and hand drying facilities.
- Creative and other activities.
- Large and small group activities.
- Display of children's activities and work.
- Quiet space for children to retreat to, or lie down if unwell.
- The indoor area is to be set up to allow children to participate in a variety of activities with easy access to equipment. Drawing paper and other materials will be made available to the children at all times.
- Easy access to areas should be maintained by making clear easily definable passageways and walkways through the building.
- Staff will ensure that children properly store their bags and that bags and other items are not thrown into walkways or play areas.
- All items obstructing areas are to be removed and placed in the correct storage areas.
- Areas must be set up to ensure that proper supervision can be maintained at all times.
- Access to the outdoor environment should be clear and easily accessible by the children and staff.

### **Outdoor environment**

- The outdoor environment provides each child with at least 7 square metres of unencumbered outdoor space in compliance with National Regulation 108.
- The outdoor space will be inspected daily for any obstacles or dangerous items and the hazard check will be recorded.
- Any hazardous items will be disposed of in a safe and careful manner prior to the children playing in the area.
- The outdoor space will be set up in a variety of ways to encourage participation.
- Areas will be made available where children can play in large or small groups or by themselves.
- Supervision should be properly maintained. Children are only to play in areas that are clearly visible to educators, and where child/educator ratios are maintained.

- Clear boundaries shall be set and enforced.
- When it is necessary to go outside the boundaries or line of supervision, an educator must accompany children.
- Adequate shade via trees and coverings will be maintained.
- As far as possible, activities will be set up in shaded areas.
- Use of other outdoor venues will be considered where access to the area is safe, adequate supervision can be maintained, the area is considered of value to the children's physical development and personal comfort, and where adequate staff/educator ratios can be maintained.

## **Child Protective Practices**

### **Mandatory reporting**

- A Mandatory Reporter is anybody who delivers services to children as part of their paid or professional work. This includes:
- Educators that deliver services to children
- Management, either paid or voluntary, whose duties include direct responsibility or direct supervision for the provision of these services
- Volunteers in schools and childcare related settings
- Educators are mandated to report to Community Services if they have current concerns about the safety or welfare of a child.
- Educators will undergo training in relation to child protection and reporting as part of the training budget.
- Reports should be treated with strict confidentiality in adherence to the service's Confidentiality Policy.
- Any educator who forms a belief based on reasonable grounds that a child is at risk of harm should discuss their concerns with the Nominated Supervisor and/or the Responsible Person in charge of daily operation as they may have information the educator is not aware of. The incident/s that lead the educator to form the belief should be recorded concisely, include as much detail as possible and be kept in a secure place to ensure confidentiality.
- The Manager will then assist staff in following the Mandatory Reporting Process as set out in Patersonia's Child Protection Policy and Mandatory Reporting Fact Sheet.
- If the Nominated Supervisor has been advised to, but has not reported you are legally responsible to do so.
- Once a report is made to Gateway Services or DHHS no further report needs to be made unless new information comes to hand.

On 6 June 2017, the *Strong Families, Safe Kids* Project Team released the final model for the Children's Advice and Referral Alliance (CARA), which will provide a single point of

entry for people seeking information, advice and service referral in regard to significant concerns for the safety and wellbeing of children.

#### **Where a complaint is made about an educator or someone in the service**

- Please refer to the Patersonia Grievance Policy

#### **Recruitment and orientation of staff**

- All educators working within the service including management, full time/ part time and casual educators, volunteers and students will be subject to a Working with Vulnerable People Check.
- All staff will be informed of their responsibilities as a Mandatory Reporter as part of their orientation and induction process. This will involve discussion regarding their current understanding, use of this policy and resources and access to Child Protection training. Information related to sexual grooming will also be provided upon orientation and induction to ensure that staff are fully aware of the signs and limits related to appropriately interacting with children.
- Staff First aid requirements are set out in 3.3.1 Administration of First Aid Policy.

### **RESPONSIBILITIES**

#### **1. The Board will:**

- Regularly review this policy in line with the Policy Review Schedule and any relevant change in legislation or standard practice.

#### **2. The Business Manager will:**

- Ensure that the induction process includes training in this policy.
- Oversee the performance of subordinate officers in these matters.
- Review and report to the Board, as appropriate, on the effectiveness of the management systems.
- Analyse material breaches and identified compliance system weaknesses for systematic trends and ensure that any adverse trends are addressed.
- Promote a culture of effective policy compliance across the organisation.

#### **3. All staff and volunteers at all levels will:**

- Ensure that they are aware of the organisation's policy and undertake actions consistent with it.
- Where appropriate, suggest ways in which practices, systems and procedures could be improved so as to improve the policy.

## **PROCESSES**

The Business Manager will review and change the organisation's procedures to ensure that these are in accordance with the principles expressed in this policy.

Staff and volunteers will follow these procedures.

## **RELATED DOCUMENTS**

Education and Care Services National Law 2010

Education and Care Services National Regulations 2010 and 2014 Update (82, 84, 85, 86, 87, 89, 103, 105, 107, 108, 109, 110, 114, 115, 155, 170, 176, 168)

National Quality Standards (2, 3, 4, 5 & 7)

Parent handbook

Staff handbook

All Health and Safety policies and procedures

All Staffing policies and procedures

Code of Conduct

Child Protection Policy

Grievance Policy

Philosophy

Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012

and the Child Protection (Working with Children) Regulation 2013