

# PROVIDING A CHILD SAFE ENVIRONMENT PROCEDURE



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## **POLICY AND PHILOSOPHY**

The CEEC CH POL Providing a Child Safe Environment Policy outlines our commitment to minimising the risk of harm and hazard to children attending our services. This procedure provides processes in place to support staff and educators in the creation of safe and supportive environments for children.

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# SECURITY

## 1.1 TO ENSURE THE SECURITY OF SERVICE PREMISES, SERVICE LEADERS WILL:

- Only provide approved CEEC educators, approved Parish/School staff, and representatives of the Approved Provider keys to access the building and equipment areas.
- Ensure a key register is maintained by the facility owner indicating:
  - The person's receipt of the key;
  - Date received, and;
  - Date returned on completion of employment or completion of term (if required);
  - Location of extra keys.
- Ensure extra keys are cut only after agreement by the Approved Provider and the key's location is recorded on the key register.
- Adhere to the school's key registry requirements if the service is situated on a school site.
- Keep all monies and important documents in a lockable place and only permit access to delegated educators and representatives of the Approved Provider.

## 1.2 IN THE ABSENCE OF THE NOMINATED SUPERVISOR, RESPONSIBLE PERSONS IN CHARGE WILL:

- Ensure buildings are left in a secure manner on exiting:
  - All windows, cupboards, safe, other relevant areas are locked;
  - All heating/colding and lighting is off;
  - All doors are properly secured.
- Inform the police and the Manager, Service Operations as soon as possible if a break in has occurred:
  - Remain at the service until the police arrive (or police inform the Responsible Person of what to do) being mindful of personal safety at all times.

# MAINTENANCE

## 2.1 IN THE EVENT THAT NON-URGENT REPAIRS AND REGULAR MAINTENANCE ARE IDENTIFIED AT A SERVICE, SERVICE LEADERS WILL:

- Lodge as a hazard report on Guardian, including:
  - The type of problem;
  - Date observed;
  - Who notified the Nominated Supervisor;
  - Date the Nominated Supervisor was notified;
  - What was done to rectify the problem;
  - Date repaired;
  - Name of tradesperson employed to repair the problem.
- Bring hazards to the attention of the Manager, Service Operations.

## 2.2 THE MANAGER, SERVICE OPERATIONS WILL:

- Notify the property owner for action.
- Ensure faulty equipment is repaired by a suitable competent person, and if this is not possible ensure it is suitably disposed of.

## 2.3 WHERE URGENT REPAIRS ARE REQUIRED, SERVICE LEADERS WILL:

- Inform the Manager, Service Operations.

## 2.4 THE MANAGER, SERVICE OPERATIONS WILL:

- Contact Property and Building via **pbs@bne.catholic.net.au** to organise an approved contractor, **where CEEC is the managing entity.**
- Liase with the delegated representative (i.e. School Principal or Parish Priest) **where CEEC is not the property owner** (i.e. School or Parish building).
  - The delegated representative can arrange a contractor of their choice, or;
  - The Manager, Service Operations can contact Property and Building to organise an approved contractor to attend to the problem at the cost of the owner.

## **2.5 ONCE A PROBLEM HAS BEEN IDENTIFIED THE APPROVED PROVIDER (OR DELEGATE) WILL ENSURE THAT:**

- The issue is addressed in a timely manner and that the service is safe.
- Should the service be considered unsafe or as being a health risk, notice will be given to all relevant parties and the service will be closed, until the problem has been rectified.



# STORAGE

## 3.1 WHEN CONSIDERING THE LAYOUT OF THE SERVICE, EDUCATORS WILL:

- Provide easy access and un-cluttered storage of all equipment.
- Allow easy access to equipment and toys to all children during service operating hours.
- Where possible, ensure separate storage area will be available for sporting and large outdoor equipment.
- Store all hazardous items in designated secure areas inaccessible to the children, including:
  - Cleaning materials;
  - Disinfectants, flammable, poisonous and other dangerous substances;
  - Tools;
  - Toiletries;
  - First aid equipments;
  - Medications.
- Ensure areas containing hazardous items remain secure and educators do not inadvertently provide access to these items.

# PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENTS

## 4.1 SERVICE LEADERS WILL:

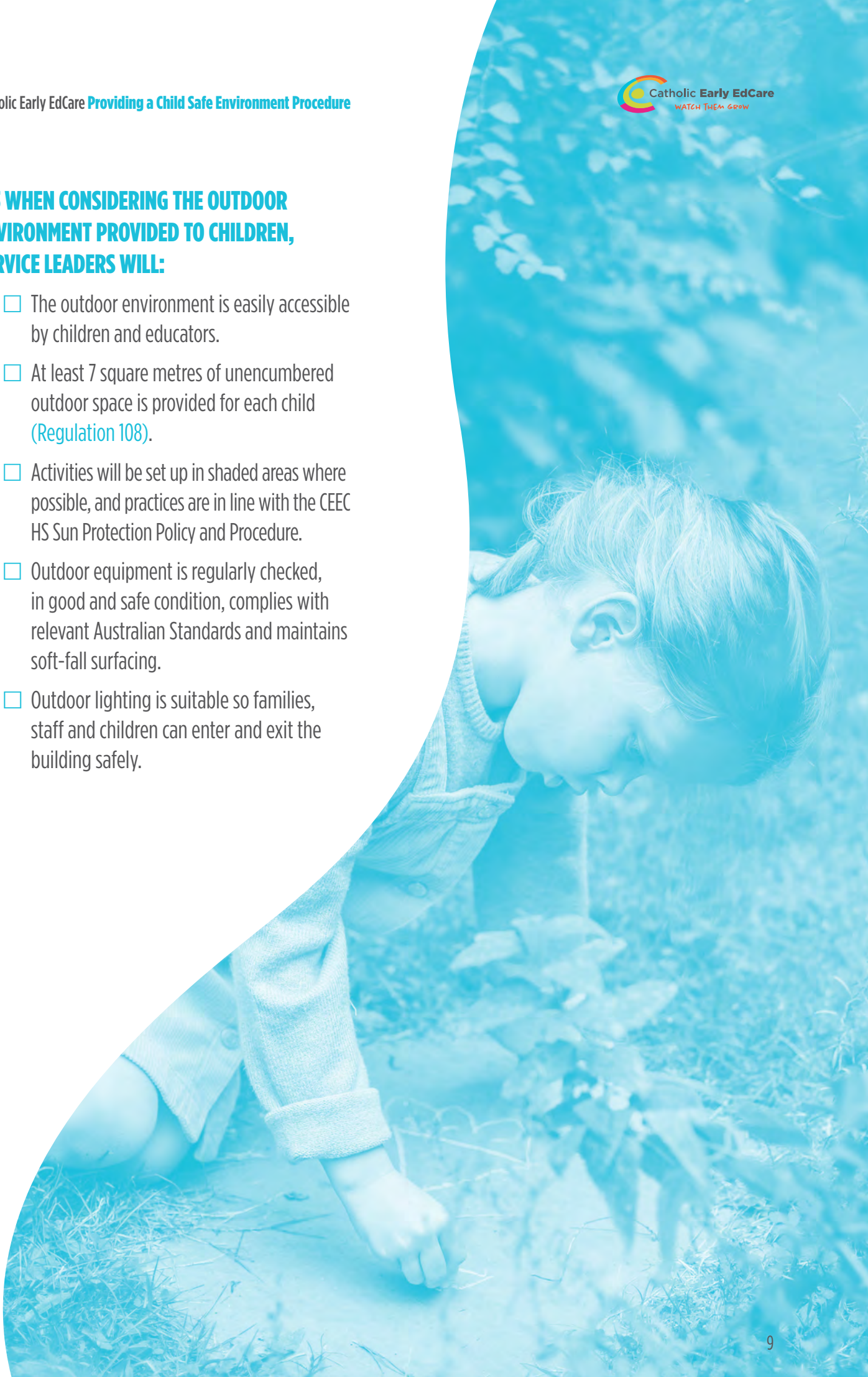
- Ensure environments are smoke free and 'No Smoking' notices are prominently displayed.
- Only enrol the number of children in the service as per the Service Approval Certificate.
- Ensure environments accessed are inspected daily and recorded on CEEC HS FORM Daily Safety Checklists.
- Hazardous items are removed and if possible, disposed of in a safe and careful manner prior to the children playing in the area.
- Ensure the environment is set up to allow children to participate in a variety of activities with easy access to equipment, and proper supervision can be maintained at all times.
- The space is set up in a variety of ways to encourage participation.
- Areas are made available where children can engage in solitary, large or small group play.
- Educators provide adequate supervision and maintain appropriate ratios.
- Educators and children identify boundaries for play.
- Manufacturers advice is followed regarding adequate ventilation where activities involve hazardous materials (such as paints and glues) before undertaking the activity, and risk assessments have been undertaken.
- Ensure educators assist children to store their bags, and items are not in walkways or play areas.
- Encourage educators and children to remove items obstructing areas and place in the correct storage areas.
- Ensure clear passageways and walkways through the building are maintained.

## 4.2 WHEN CONSIDERING THE INDOOR ENVIRONMENT PROVIDED TO CHILDREN, SERVICE LEADERS WILL:

- Provide at least 3.25 square metres of unencumbered indoor space is provided for each child (Regulation 107).
  - Seek other areas to disperse the group where children are indoors for long periods due to weather conditions.
  - Natural light is provided and enhanced as much as possible, and good overhead lighting provided in areas for children's homework or other fine detail work.
  - Heating/cooling systems are of good quality, checked regularly and inaccessible to children.
  - Individual needs and specific activities are considered when ensuring that temperature and ventilation levels are comfortable.
  - Complaints regarding the service temperature not being at a comfortable level will be brought to the attention of the Manager, Service Operations as per the Complaints and Feedback Management Policy and Procedure.
  - Windows are properly maintained to ensure easy opening to provide adequate ventilation and, where possible, have screens for protection from bugs and insects.
- Designate areas in the indoor environment for:
    - Signing children in/out of the Service;
    - Visitor and Staff sign in/out;
    - 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;
    - Cleaning of equipment;
    - Male and female toilet facilities, hand basins and hand drying facilities;
    - Creative activities, large and small group activities;
    - Display of children's activities and work;
    - Quiet space for children to retreat to, do homework, or lie down if unwell.

### **4.3 WHEN CONSIDERING THE OUTDOOR ENVIRONMENT PROVIDED TO CHILDREN, SERVICE LEADERS WILL:**

- The outdoor environment is easily accessible by children and educators.
- At least 7 square metres of unencumbered outdoor space is provided for each child (Regulation 108).
- Activities will be set up in shaded areas where possible, and practices are in line with the CEEC HS Sun Protection Policy and Procedure.
- Outdoor equipment is regularly checked, in good and safe condition, complies with relevant Australian Standards and maintains soft-fall surfacing.
- Outdoor lighting is suitable so families, staff and children can enter and exit the building safely.



# WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECKS

In our commitment to maintaining a secure environment for children, CEEC diligently follows a comprehensive procedure for working with children checks.

- Employees are required to renew their Working with Children Check (Blue Card) every 3 years.
- Employees will submit the Blue Card Renewal application form 6 months prior to expiry.
- In the circumstances in which a positive assessment is not received 28 days after the expiry of the Blue Card. The following actions will be required, it is imperative that the employee promptly provide evidence of their follow-up efforts. This may include correspondence with relevant authorities or any additional documentation demonstrating proactive engagement in the renewal process. Such evidence ensures transparency and upholds our collective responsibility to safeguard the wellbeing of the children under our care.

- The employee will also be required to sign an Ongoing Employee Evaluation for Child Safety Statutory Declaration answering the following questions:
  - Have you been involved in any legal proceedings or faced any charges since your initial employment that may impact your suitability for working with children?
  - Can you confirm that there are no legal incidents or convictions related to child endangerment, abuse or any other offences that could affect your role?
  - Are there any pending legal matters or investigations that could potentially raise concerns about your ability to work safely with children?
  - Have you had any interactions with law enforcement or regulatory authorities that we should be aware of in relation to your role involving children?
  - Can you assure us that your legal record remains in compliance with our organisation's standards for employees working with children?
- Employees are obligated to provide any change in circumstances in relation to their working with children checks and suitability to working with children. Employees are required to contact the People and Culture team with updates to their assessment outcome and working with children renewal.

# ROLES AND **RESPONSIBILITIES**

## APPROVED PROVIDERS

(Including Leadership and Management Teams)

- Ensure that obligations under the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations are met.
- Ensure that the Providing a child safe environment policy and procedures are implemented, the appropriate risk assessments and action plans are completed, and all identified action are taken to minimise the risks to children's health and safety (also known as a risk minimisation plan).
- Ensure all educators and staff, volunteers and students, have undertaken current child protection legislation training, including on mandatory reporting requirements and obligations. If not, develop a plan to ensure training is undertaken in a suitable time frame.
- Ensure educators and management are aware of their legal responsibilities to provide a child safe environment; including their legal responsibility as mandatory reporters to take action to protect and support children they suspect may be at significant risk of harm.
- Provide an environment that is free from the use of tobacco, illicit drugs and alcohol and ensure no educators or staff are affected by alcohol or drugs (including prescription medication) so as to impair their capacity to supervise or provide education and care to children in the service.
- Provide children with adequate, developmentally and age-appropriate toilet, washing and drying facilities.
- Ensure sufficient access to furniture, materials and developmentally appropriate equipment suitable for each child, and remove faulty equipment.
- Promote a culture of child safety and wellbeing that underpins all aspects of the service's operations, to reduce risk to children (including the risk of abuse).
- Ensure the safe use of online environments at the service.
- Ensure policies and procedures promote equity and respect diversity for the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.

- Take reasonable steps to ensure that nominated supervisors, educators and staff follow the Providing a Child Safe Environment policy and procedures.
- Ensure that copies of the policy and procedures are readily accessible to nominated supervisors, coordinators, educators and staff, and available for inspection.
- Notify families at least 14 days before changing the policy or procedures if the changes will:
  - Affect the fees charged or the way they are collected, or;
  - Significantly impact the service's education and care of children, or;
  - Significantly impact the family's ability to utilise the service.

## **NOMINATED SUPERVISORS AND RESPONSIBLE PERSONS**

- Implement the Providing a Child Safe Environment policy and procedures and ensure that any plans developed from risk assessments are in place for individual children and are carried out.
- Ensure all educators and staff, volunteers and students, are aware of current child protection legislation, including the mandatory reporting requirement and obligations.
- Meeting educator-to-child ratios to ensure adequate supervision.
- Ensure all educators and staff know where to access the Providing a Child Safe Environment policy and procedures.
- Ongoing communication with educators and staff about their responsibilities and any changes to policies, procedures and legislation.
- Support educators and staff to uphold the service's culture of child safety and wellbeing.
- Regularly monitor child protection training schedules and ensure all educators and staff are up to date with their training.
- When required, work collaboratively with appropriate services and/or professionals to support childrens' access, inclusion and participation in the program.
- Ensure the safety and wellbeing of children attending the service by keeping a visitors' record, including signatures and arrival/ departure times.
- Ensure protection is placed around any dangerous building sites.
- Ensure there are no damaged electrical plugs, sockets, power cords or extension cords.
- Fit plug sockets and electrical equipment with safety plugs.
- Install, maintain and test RCDs in accordance with Australian Standards.

## EDUCATORS

- Be aware of current child protection legislation, including the mandatory reporting requirements and obligations.
- Implement the Providing a Child Safe Environment policy and procedures and ensure that any action plans for individual children are carried out.
- Implement the service's culture of child safety and wellbeing.
- Know the individual needs and action plans for the children in your care.
- Maintain current accredited child protection, first aid and approved CPR, asthma and anaphylaxis training.
- Monitor and maintain educator-to-child ratios to ensure adequate supervision of children.
- Provide an environment that is free from the use of tobacco, illicit drugs and alcohol.
- Keep a visitors' record, including signatures and arrival and departure times.
- Recognise and respond effectively to children and young people, considering diverse needs.
- Ensure children and young people

participate in decision making in matters affecting them, including in relation to safety issues and risk identification.

- Report hazards and/or items that require maintenance to the Responsible Person in Charge as soon as possible.
- Assist with risk assessments for work health and safety hazards and the implementation of the appropriate risk controls.
- Check recycled craft materials for potential hazards.
- Ensure safe handling of all tools if used as part of any activity.

## FAMILIES

- Inform educators of any safety issues observed.
- Adhere to the Safe Conduct Agreement as a condition of enrolment.

## MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW

Centacare will place this policy on the Archdiocesan Intranet (AI). Service Leaders and Managers are responsible for ensuring that the appropriate communication of policies and supporting documents to staff has occurred.

- All staff are responsible for understanding and complying with this policy.
- Summary information about fees and related procedures will be included in the CEEC information handbooks.
- Educators and families will be invited to participate in the review of this procedure.
- Changes to this document will be shared with families and educators.
- Ongoing training opportunities for Service Leaders and Responsible Persons in Charge will be provided using a range of learning platforms. Videos of some Xplor processes are available on AI.
- Contact the Policy Sponsor for further interpretation of this policy.

Breaches of this policy will be dealt with under Centacare's misconduct provisions, as stated in the Employment Guidelines Code of Conduct.



