



PENNANT HILLS WAR MEMORIAL CHILDREN'S CENTRE

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PENNANT HILLS WAR MEMORIAL CHILDREN'S CENTRE (PHWMCC) PROVIDING A CHILD SAFE ENVIRONMENT POLICY

Introduction

PHWMCC has a moral and legal responsibility to ensure that the rights and best interests of the child are paramount and that we will provide training, resources, information and guidance to support this.

All children have the right to experience quality education and care in an environment that promotes opportunities to thrive with adults who safeguard and advocate for their health, safety, security and wellbeing.

Educators must consider all of the elements of wellbeing, and ensure that programs also acknowledge the importance of risk management to provide a safe environment and reasonably protect children from potential harm.

Aim

At PHWMCC we will:

- Ensure that the health, safety and wellbeing of children is protected at all times.
- Ensure all educators and staff act in the best interests of each child.
- Protect and advocate for the rights of all children to feel safe, and be safe, at all times.
- Maintain a culture in which children's rights are respected.
- Monitor and minimise hazards and safety risks in the environment.
- Listen to and respect the views of children, and appropriately consider these.

Procedure

The Physical Environment

In order to promote a safe physical environment PHWMCC will:

- Ensure all equipment and materials used at the service meet relevant safety standards.
- Remove, repair or replace worn and damaged buildings, structures, equipment and resources which may provide a safety risk for children in a timely manner.
- Ensure learning environments are established that provide appropriate child groupings, sufficient space, and include carefully chosen and well-maintained resources and equipment.
- Organise indoor and outdoor spaces to ensure risks to health and safety are minimised.
- Conduct annual safety inspections and maintenance in order to minimise risk to children – electrical tagging, pest inspection, playground inspection, hot water testing, tree inspections (as required).
- Conduct an inspection of the preschool on a quarterly basis to determine any risks to children's health and safety.
- Conduct an inspection of each room weekly, and of the outdoor area each day.
- Report any risks or hazards within the preschool to the Nominated Supervisor as soon as possible, so that repairs and maintenance can be carried out.
- Analyse and evaluate the risks associated with identified hazards.

- Determine appropriate ways to eliminate or control identified hazards.
- Review risk assessments after any serious incident report is made to the Regulatory Authority.
- Ensure smoking is banned within the grounds of, and within 4 metres of any entrance of the preschool.
- Make sufficient allowance within budgets to allow for the replacement of worn and damaged equipment and resources which may pose safety risks for children.
- Make sufficient allowance within budgets to allow the adequate maintenance of all indoor and outdoor environments.

Staffing and Supervision

PHWMCC will:

- Ensure that sufficient numbers of educators are employed to ensure adequate supervision of children at all times.
- Manage rosters to not only ensure that adequate numbers of educators are on duty to meet ratio and qualification requirements but that duty of care implications are considered to ensure adequate supervision at all times.
- Ensure that staff will be made aware of the need for adequate supervision of children at all times. This may include the development of supervision charts for outdoor or indoor areas.
- Ensure screening and suitability of staff and volunteers as per the legislation and policy at the time of employment, and as part of an ongoing process.
- Respond proactively to emerging staff performance concerns.

Child Protection

- Refer to the *PHWMCC Child Protection Policy*.
- All educators, staff and volunteers of our preschool are Mandatory Reporters and are required to report to the Child Protection Helpline (Phone : 132 111) or eReport at <https://reporter.childstory.nsw.gov.au/s/> if they have reasonable grounds to suspect a child or young person is at risk of significant harm and have current concerns about the safety, welfare or wellbeing of a child or young person.
- The *Mandatory Reporter Guide* will be used to guide decision making and determine whether or not to report to the Child Protection Helpline under the risk of significant harm reporting threshold.
- Staff will undertake training in order to effectively:
 - make appropriate responses to all disclosures of abuse and any allegation of abuse against staff members of the service;
 - understand the responsibilities and processes as a mandatory reporter;
 - be able to recognise the factors that increase a child's vulnerability to maltreatment; and
 - be aware of the vulnerabilities which may indicate a need to assess, monitor or curtail the behaviour of individuals in relation to children and young people within the preschool.

Roles and Responsibilities

Approved Provider

- Ensure all staff have access to relevant professional development.
- Ensure that the Nominated Supervisor and staff members at the preschool who work with children are advised of current child protection legislation, its application, and any obligations that they may have under that law.
- Ensure all members of the Management Committee and all staff of the preschool have current Working With Children Checks and that these are verified annually.
- Ensure that families are aware of and have access to the *PHWMCC Complaints Handling Policy*.

- Ensure that there is a rigorous and consistent recruitment, screening and selection process when employing new staff.
- Ensure that the premises are maintained at a high standard, in order to minimise risk.
- Ensure that the premises provide clear visibility between classrooms, bathrooms and outdoors so that staff can always be seen, thereby minimising any risk to children. Staff are never to be out of sight with a child / children.

Nominated Supervisor

- Ensure all staff complete regular approved Child Protection Training.
- Ensure all staff are aware of how to access the *Mandatory Reporter Guide*.
- Ensure all staff have access to *the Child Wellbeing and Child Protection NSW Interagency Guidelines*.
- Ensure screening and suitability processes are maintained to meet policy and legislated requirements.
- Identify and provide appropriate resources and training to assist staff, contractors, visitors, volunteers and students to implement this policy (refer to Useful Resources at the end of this document).
- Keep up to date and comply with any relevant changes in legislation and practices in relation to this policy.
- Co-operate with other services and/or professionals in the best interests of children and their families.
- Ensure that families are made aware of support services available to them.
- Ensure that staff are supported to implement this policy.
- Protect the rights of children and their families.

Early Childhood Educators

- Act in accordance with the obligations outlined in this policy.
- Raise concerns when barriers or threats to the protection of children and young people's safety and wellbeing are identified, including through the conduct of other adults at the preschool.
- Keep up to date and comply with any relevant changes in legislation and practices in relation to this policy.
- Follow all record keeping requirements.
- Undertake appropriate training and education on child protection.
- Identify any potential for risk and harm to a child at the preschool and develop and implement effective prevention strategies in consultation with the Approved Provider and the Nominated Supervisor.
- Co-operate with other services and/or professionals in the best interests of children and their families.
- Inform families of support services available to them and of the assistance these services can provide.
- Ensure that no child is left alone (or is out of sight) with a contractor, visitor, volunteer, student or parent/guardian at the preschool.
- Implement the procedures for reporting suspected child abuse.
- Notify the Nominated Supervisor or the Approved Provider immediately on becoming aware of any concerns, complaints or allegations regarding the health, safety and welfare of a child at the preschool.
- Offer support to the child and their family, and other staff in response to concerns or reports relating to the health, safety and wellbeing of children.
- Maintain confidentiality at all times.

Families

- Comply with this policy.
- Report any concerns, including in relation to potential for child abuse, to the Nominated Supervisor

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

This policy will be monitored to ensure compliance with legislative requirements and unless deemed necessary through the identification of practice gaps, the preschool will review this policy every three years.

Families and staff are essential stakeholders in the policy review process and will be given opportunity and encouragement to be actively involved.

In accordance with R. 172 of the *Education and Care Services National Regulations*, the preschool will ensure that families of children at the preschool are notified at least 14 days before making any change to a policy or procedure that may have significant impact on the provision of education and care to any child enrolled at the preschool; a family's ability to utilise the preschool; the fees charged or the way in which fees are collected.

Definitions

Regulatory Authority:	Early Childhood Education and Care Directorate
Approved Provider:	Pennant Hills War Memorial Children's Centre Management Committee
Nominated Supervisor:	Director of Pennant Hills War Memorial Children's Centre
Responsible Person:	Nominated Supervisor or an Educator who has been placed in day-to-day charge of the Preschool
Early Childhood Educators:	Teachers and Child Care Workers

Related Legislation	Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010: Sections 165,167 Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011: Regulations 84, 99, 158-159, 168, 172, 176 Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012 Child Protection (Working with Children) Regulation 2013 Ombudsman Act 1974 – Part 3A Privacy Act 1988 Smoke Free Environment Act 2000
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Related Guidelines, Standards, Frameworks	National Quality Standards Quality Area 2 Children's Health and Safety – Standard 2.2 Quality Area 3 Physical Environment – Standard 3.1, 3.2 Quality Area 7 Governance and Leadership – Standard 7.1, 7.2
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Sources	Community Early Learning Australia – Providing a Child Safe Environment Sample Policy Office of the Children's Guardian Child Safe Sample Policy
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Relevant Documents	PHWMCC Child Protection Policy PHWMCC Staff Code of Conduct Policy PHWMCC Staff Interactions with Children Policy PHWMCC Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy PHWMCC Alcohol, Drugs and Smoking Policy PHWMCC Volunteers, Students and Visitors Policy PHWMCC Privacy and Confidentiality Policy PHWMCC Complaints Handling Policy PHWMCC Risk Management Policy PHWMCC Working Together Policy and Agreement PHWMCC Maintenance / WHS Policies (to be updated) PHWMCC Recruitment Policy (to be updated)
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Useful Resources:

Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) – www.acecqa.gov.au
Mandatory Reporter Guide & training including e-learning presentation www.keepthemsafe.nsw.gov.au
eReporting is available at <https://reporter.childstory.nsw.gov.au/s/>
Working With Children Check - www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au/working-withchildren/working-with-children-check
Become a Childsafe Organisation – www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au/child-safeorganisations/become-a-child-safe-organisation
Childsafety Australia – www.childsafetyaustralia.com.au
United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child – www.unicef.org.au
The Supporting young children's rights: Statement of intent (2015-2018) – www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au
Australian Human Rights Commission – www.humanrights.gov.au
Australian Childhood Foundation – www.childhood.org.au
Families NSW - Supporting Families to Raise Children - www.families.nsw.gov.au

Policy Reviewed:

May 2019

Next Review Date:

May 2022

Risk Management Process	
1. Establish settings	Establish the different settings your organisation works in
2. Identify risks	Identify the risks which could occur within the different settings
3. Analyse and evaluate risks	Determine the risk level: high, medium, or low using a risk matrix
4. Develop interventions	Develop and implement interventions that aim to reduce risk