

09EEH – PROVIDING A CHILD SAFE ENVIRONMENT POLICY

WHY WE HAVE THIS POLICY [PURPOSE]

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that Just Kids Early Education House provides a safe indoor and outdoor environment for all children in our care.

SCOPE OF THE POLICY

This policy applies to all directors, teachers, educators, students and volunteers.

The Providing a Child Safe Environment Policy should be read in the context of the following Just Kids Early Education House policies and procedures.

1. Providing a Child Safe Environment Procedure
2. Incident, injury, illness and Trauma Policy and Procedure

POLICY

We aim to facilitate awareness of positive environmental practices. All children have the right to experience quality care in an environment, which provides for their health and safety. We believe that the opportunity to play outdoors in the fresh air is a fundamental facility at Just Kids Early Education House (Just Kids).

Just Kids Early Education House 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 in order to:

- Ensure that the health, safety and wellbeing of children at the service is protected at all times;
- Ensure that people educating and caring for children at the service act in the best interests of the child;
- Protect and advocate the rights of all children to feel safe, and be safe, at all times;
- Maintaining a culture in which children's rights are respected;
- Encouraging active participation from families at the service, supporting a partnership approach and shared responsibility for children's health, safety, wellbeing and development.

At Just Kids we believe 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 including the right to:

- Be asked to express their views and wishes about matters affecting their lives and to have those views appropriately considered by adults;
- feel and be safe in their interactions with adults and other children and young people; and
- understand, as early as possible, what is meant by 'feeling and being safe'.

Just Kids physical Environment

In order to promote a safe physical environment we will:

- Ensure all equipment and materials used at the service meet relevant safety standards.
- Remove, repair or replace worn and damaged 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.
- Conduct a risk assessment of the service environment on a regular basis to determine any risks to children's health and safety.
- 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 10 meters of any entrance of an enclosed public space.

Staffing and Supervision

- 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 screening and suitability of staff, 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

- All educators and volunteers of Just Kids Early Education House are Mandatory Reporters and are required to report to the Child Protection Helpline, if they have reasonable grounds to suspect a child or young person is at risk of significant harm and have current concern 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 new 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; »
 - 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 organisations

Trauma Guidance for educators

Early Childhood trauma generally refers to the traumatic experiences that occur to children aged 0-6. Because infants' and young children's reactions may be different from older children's, and because they may not be able to verbalize their reactions to threatening or dangerous events, many people assume that young age protects children from the impact of traumatic experiences. A growing body of research has established that young children may be affected by events that threaten their safety or the safety of their parents/caregivers, and their symptoms have been well documented. These traumas can be the result of intentional violence—such as child physical or sexual abuse, or domestic violence—or the result of natural disaster, accidents, or war. Young

children also may experience traumatic stress in response to painful medical procedures or the sudden loss of a parent/caregiver.

<https://www.nctsn.org/what-is-child-trauma/trauma-types/early-childhood-trauma-suspected>

For further guidance on suspected child abuse and other child related trauma, refer to the Incident, Injury, Illness and Trauma Policy and Procedure

Our child-friendly play area and regular outdoor excursions allow us to include outdoor play as integral part of our childcare curriculum. We will endeavour, at all times, to ensure that our garden is an extremely safe place for children to play.

Just Kids will protect the health and safety of children and every person who enters the service's premises or uses the service's equipment by staying abreast and complying with the applicable Workplace Health and Safety Legislation in accordance with the Education and Care Service National Regulations. Standards and recommendations from recognised authorities (e.g. Staying Healthy in Child Care) are followed at Just Kids to protect persons from harm, injury, illness or abuse.

To effectively supervise groups of children, educators at Just Kids conduct risk assessments and make professional judgements to determine our approach to supervision. Consideration is given to the ever-changing environment, the children, and the context of the activities children participate in. Risk assessments allow educators to determine the level of supervision that is required for particular situations.

At Just Kids we prefer to say we are "observing" children not supervising.

Through engaging in a number of Abecedarian strategies such as 3N, 3C and 3S, the educators are focused on observing children at a very high level.

Practices In relation to the smoking of tobacco.

Smoking will not be permitted in any areas utilised by Just Kids Early Education House including car parks and adjoining garden areas. Any staff wishing to smoke must be out of uniform and at least 10 metres away from the boundary and garden areas. All new staff will be provided with information on the effects of smoking and how to quit programs in their orientation packs and information will be displayed in the staff room. Parents, family members or relatives of children enrolled at the service will not be permitted to smoke in the centre or in the environment.

In relation to Drugs and Alcohol

Alcohol is not to be consumed on the premises at any time when children are being educated and cared for. Illicit Drugs are not allowed on the premises at any time and possessing or consuming these is an unlawful act.

3. The Nominated Supervisor will report anyone found in possession of illicit drugs to the police. Visitors to the Centre (including parents and relatives of children attending the Centre) are not to be affected by alcohol or drugs when engaging at the Centre at any time when children are being educated and cared for. No member of staff (including students, volunteers and visitors) will work while affected by alcohol or drugs (including prescription medication) that impairs the staff member's capacity to supervise or provide education and care to the children. All new staff will be provided with information on the effects of drug and alcohol abuse and how to quit programs in their orientation packs and information will be displayed in the staff room. Where an educator or members of staff have concerns relating to the fitness of a staff member to be supervising children due to the effects of drugs and/or alcohol these concerns should be reported to the nominated supervisor.

GOVERNANCE - LINKS, REFERENCES OR ASSOCIATED POLICY

- ACECQA: <https://www.acecqa.gov.au/>
- National Quality Framework
- <https://3a.education.unimelb.edu.au/about-the-abecedarian-approach>
- Workplace Health and Safety Regulations – Education and Care Service National Regulations.
- Staying Healthy in Childcare – NHMRC
http://www.imagineeducation.com.au/files/GapTraining/Staying_Healthy_5th_Edition.pdf
- Mandatory Reporter Guide & training including e-learning presentation –
www.keepthemsafe.qld.gov.au
- 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

DOCUMENT CONTROL

Just Kids Early Education House			
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