

## **Establishing a Protective Environment**

### **Policy Statement and Rationale**

Fleurieu Occasional Community Children's Centre understands it has a duty of care to ensure that all persons are provided with a high level of safety and protection during the service's hours of operation. All educators/staff will be fully informed about their responsibilities to implement and adhere to the services Child Protection Policies and procedures.

Everyone at Fleurieu Occasional Community Children's Centre is committed to the protection and physical, social, emotional and wellbeing of children and young people accessing our services.

There are several types of Child Abuse, this includes physical, emotional and sexual abuse. Our service will adhere to State requirements for Mandatory Reporting and report any suspected incidences of abuse or neglect.

Our service believes the best way to ensure Children's Protection is to minimise risk and set our clear guidelines for educators and staff to follow. Fleurieu is committed to a documented approach to ensuring child protection and acting in the best interests of children.

### **Legislation and Government Requirements**

State laws relating to Child Protection

Education and Child Care Services National Law Act 2010

Education and Child Care Services National Regulations

### **Children's and Families Needs**

Children have the right to feel safe, the right to care, safety and personal privacy. Children have the right to counselling and support in the event of abuse. Families need to be informed of protective procedures and why they are necessary; reassurance of their child's safety and confidentiality is maintained.

### **Educator Needs**

Training is provided in establishing a protective environment including what to do in the event of identified abuse, current trends and issues, and where to go for support.

### **Management**

Appropriate policies are implemented and a clear understanding of management responsibilities are understood, confidentiality is maintained.

### **Centre Practice:**

We will;

1. Ensure that all staff employed at the Centre have undertaken and hold current Child Safe Environment training within 1 month of employment at the Centre.
2. Ensure that all staff, volunteers and students working directly with children have completed a statutory declaration stating that the contact worker has no criminal convictions arising out of the abuse, neglect or assault (including sexual assault) of a person and is otherwise a fit and proper person to be employed as a contact staff member at the centre and ensure that they shall not be allowed unsupervised access to any child or group of children until such documentation is in place.
3. Require and maintain records of current police clearance checks for all contact staff employed at the Centre and that such information is held securely and in line with the recommendations for dealing with information obtained about the criminal history of employees and volunteers who work with children as published by the Government of South Australia Department for Families and the Community
4. Ensure that all educators are orientated to the services child protection policies, procedures and staff code of conduct.
5. Ensure that information to assist in the reporting of child abuse is readily accessible and the steps involved clear for all reporters
6. Ensure that all notified and/or suspected incidences of abuse are reported promptly to the Director and written records held securely at the Centre. Records of any concerns will also be kept in case further action is required at a later date.
7. Ensure that staff remain observant and attentive to each child's physical, mental and emotional well-being
8. Build strong and trusting relationships with children and their families to ease concerns and ensure any disclosure of child abuse is treated sensitively and professionally
9. Unauthorised people collecting children will be asked to provide identification (See Child Collection Policy)

10. Staff will make all reasonable and legal attempts to avoid releasing a child into a potentially dangerous situation, and if this is not possible will notify the Police of the situation immediately.
11. Staff will ensure that the Director and/or Licensee is informed of any such occurrences and will maintain written records of any such incident, holding written records securely
12. All children will be supervised at an appropriate level to the ages and needs of the child. Supervision away from the main areas including toilets is carefully monitored.
13. Child protection issues are discussed regularly at staff meetings and the policy will be regularly reviewed and discussed.
14. The service will develop a process for reporting and responding to abuse and neglect. (see Government of SA – Child Safe/Protection Policy following)
15. Involve and encourage our children, where appropriate, in making decisions regarding their own safety and sense of well-being

#### **Links to other policies:**

- Educator Code of Conduct
- Educator/staff member orientation checklist
- Dealing with Complaints and grievances
- Procedure for responding or reporting abuse and neglect
- Collection of Children Policy
- Confidentiality Policy
- Guiding children's Behaviour

#### **Sources of Information**

Early Childhood Australia – Code of Ethics  
Education and Child care service National Regulations  
PSC Alliance  
Office for Volunteers  
Child Abuse Hotline

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