

Child Safe Environment (Standard 2)

Purpose

All children have a right to live and play in an environment that is free from all forms of abuse including racial, cultural and religious ridicule, hatred or negativity. This includes Aboriginal children, children from a culturally and or linguistically diverse background and children with disabilities. (Standard 3)

EY@PP promotes diversity and tolerance from all walks of life and cultural background. We recognise that children are vulnerable members in our community, not having the power to stop abuse and relying on others to assist them.

Therefore Early Years at Phoenix Park is committed to the safety and well-being of all children accessing our service. We support the rights of all children and will act without hesitation to ensure a child safe environment is maintained at all times. (Standard 3)

We believe the prevention of child abuse is the responsibility of all members of the community. Therefore EY@PP plays an important role in preventing child abuse, reporting child abuse, identifying families at risk and supporting families and children. (Standard 3)

We support and incorporate the Child Safe Standards into our environment:

Standard 1: Strategies to embed an organisational culture of child safety, including through effective leadership arrangements

Standard 2: A child safe policy or statement of commitment to child safety

Standard 3: A code of conduct that establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children

Standard 4: Screening, supervision, training and other human resources practices that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing personnel

Standard 5: Processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse

Standard 6: Strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse

Standard 7: Strategies to promote the participation and empowerment of children

Definitions

Physical abuse occurs when a person purposefully injures or threatens to injure a child or young person. This may take the form of slapping, punching, shaking, kicking, burning, shoving, or grabbing

Sexual abuse is when a child or young person is used by an older or bigger child, adolescent, or adult for his or her own stimulation or gratification. There are two categories: contact or non-contact.

Emotional and Psychological abuse is a chronic attack on a child or young person's self-esteem. It can take the form of name-calling, threatening, ridiculing, intimidating or isolating the child or young person.

Neglect is the failure to provide the child with the basic necessities of life, such as food, clothing, shelter, and supervision, to the extent that the child's health and development are placed at risk

Racial, Cultural and Religious abuse is conduct that demonstrates contempt, ridicule, hatred or negativity towards a child because of their race, culture or religion.

Reasonable Belief is formed if a reasonable person in the same position would have formed the belief on the same grounds.

Procedures

Staff Responsibilities (Standard 1)

EY@PP staff, students and volunteers who has a reasonable belief that a child is being Physical, Emotional, Neglect, Racial, Cultural and Religiously abused, are morally, and in some cases legally, obligated to report these concerns to the Manager/person-in-charge at EY@PP, who will in turn make a report to the Child Protection or Child First (as per attachment).

Reporting child sexual abuse is now a community wide responsibility. It is a legal duty upon all adults to report information about a child's sexual abuse.

It is the staff's role to form a belief about the significant harm to the child. It is not the staff's role to substantiate whether harm has occurred or not. Staff are required to report their beliefs using the procedure outlined in this policy. See the Manager for reference books with lists of the indicators of abuse, information regarding support strategies for victims of abuse and professional contacts.

Reporting Procedure (Standard 5)

1. Responding to concerns

- In the circumstance that a child discloses abuse to staff, listen carefully but do not ask questions of child to gain more information. If staff suspect an abuse has occurred do not question child or family.
- In the circumstances that an Adult discloses abuse about a child again listen carefully and only ask question that is relevant.
- In the circumstance you have observed indicators of abuse or neglect document all observations
- Ensure all relevant information and observations are documented in a professional non-judgmental manner.
- Only take photos if asked by Child first or Child Protection worker. Instead sketch it.

2. Forming a belief on reasonable grounds

- Once you believe a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering significant harm report your concerns to one of the managers
- If you are unsure discuss your concern with one of the managers

3. Making a report of referral or report

- Establish if a report or referral should be made.
- If unsure make referral to child first and they will advise you on what to do.
- A report or referral can be made by either, a staff member, the manager or both.

Privacy

EY@PP can lawfully disclose information to Child Protection without breaching the *Victorian Information Privacy Act 2000* and the *Victorian Health Records Act 2001*. The personal information of the child can be disclosed to Child Protection if the agency believes there is a serious and imminent threat to an individual's life, health, safety or welfare, or an unlawful activity has been, is being or may be engaged in and use or disclosure of personal information is a necessary part of the investigation of the matter or reporting these concerns.

Staff recruitment (Standard 4)

Management will provide best practice in recruiting, supervision and staff support. Staff will be provided with a handbook detailing the code of ethics, duty of care, code of conduct etc. When employing staff the interview panel will check referees and working with children checks. (Refer to relevant procedures.)

In the circumstance that a staff member organizes to babysit children who use the centre. This is a private agreement between the parents and staff member and remains totally separate to the centre. In this instance staff will need to ensure confidentiality with regards to the centre, staff or children is maintained at all times.

Visibility/Supervision (Standard 6)

The building is set up with high visibility of all spaces. There are windows between rooms and the office maintains an open door policy. Office staff conducts safety rounds at regular intervals throughout the day and there are limited opportunities for staff to be alone with children. During rest periods adequate lighting is to be maintained for supervision, such as a blind left open or light kept on.

Excursion (Standard 6)

In the circumstance of excursions, staff will remain in view of all children throughout, extra staff will be organized to ensure adequate supervision, parent/s assisting is/are not to take children to the toilet.

Parents with working with children checks will be encouraged to attend and help out. A risk assessment will be completed before the excursion takes place.

Children's privacy, body awareness and touching guidelines (Standard 7)

The age and developmental stage of children governs their level of body awareness. Staff will assist children in developing respect for their own bodies and respect for the personal space of others. Staff will help children set boundaries with regard to their own safety, respect children's privacy - providing appropriate areas (bathrooms) for older children to get changed, and model appropriate clothing coverage.

Video/photography (Standard 6)

The use of photographs is regulated to ensure privacy is maintained. Permission is sought via the enrolment form prior to photos being taken in the centre. The purpose of the photos is clearly set out in the enrolment forms. Children will not be photographed if unclothed. Photos will be distributed to the appropriate families on their departure from the centre or otherwise shredded and destroyed. If a parent attends the centre for a special function, i.e. child's birthday, and would like to take photos or video, they must provide staff with prior warning. Their child must be the purpose and feature of the photography. Mobile phones are not permitted in the children's play areas, to prevent the use of phones to take photos.

Sources

1. Choose with Care, 2001; Child Protection and Care, Dept. Human Services;
2. Responding to Child Abuse, 2003, Dept. Human Services
3. Protecting the safety and well being of children and young people, Department of Humans Services, DEECD,
4. A Guide for creating a child safe organisation .Version2.0 2015 Commission for children and young people 2015.
5. Child Wellbeing and Safety Act
6. Child Wellbeing and Safety Amendment (Child Safe Standards) ACT 2015.
7. The Child Safe Standards, Dept. Education and Training

Links to other Policies

- ❖ Supervision
- ❖ Interaction with children
- ❖ Staff recruitment
- ❖ Professional conduct
- ❖ Determining a responsible person
- ❖ Incident, injury, trauma & Illness
- ❖ Interaction with children

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