

# CHILD SAFE ENVIRONMENT GUIDELINE



## Kindergarten Programs

### 1. Purpose and Intent

The City of Casey is committed to ensuring all children attending a City of Casey managed kindergarten programs are provided with a safe and secure environment that supports their health and wellbeing and adheres to National Regulations. This guideline outlines the responsibilities of the service in providing a fit for purpose early years environment that fosters physical, social and emotional wellbeing.

### 2. Scope

This guideline will apply to the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, Responsible Person in Day-to-Day Charge, educators, staff, students on placement, volunteers, parents, children and others attending the programs, activities and services managed by the City of Casey.

### 3. Definitions

| Key Term                           | Definition                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
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| Approved Provider                  | An individual or organisation, such as City of Casey, that has completed an application form and been approved by the Regulatory Authority as fit and proper (in accordance with Sections 12, 13 and 14 of the National Law) to operate one or more education and care services.                                                                                                                                                |
| Criminal History Record Checks     | A full-disclosure, Australia-wide criminal history record check issued by Victoria Police, or by a police force or other authority of a state or territory, or the Commonwealth. It may also be referred to as a National Police Certificate or Police Records Check.                                                                                                                                                           |
| Nominated Supervisor               | A person who is the Responsible Person in Day-to-Day Charge and has been nominated by the Approved Provider (City of Casey) of the service under Part 3 of the Act to be the Nominated Supervisor of that service, and who has consented to that nomination. The Nominated Supervisor has day-to-day responsibility for the service in accordance with the National Regulations. All services must have a Nominated Supervisor. |
| Person with Management and Control | Individuals responsible for managing the delivery of a service or those who have significant influence over its activities. PMCs have specific legal obligations for ensuring compliance within early childhood education and care providers.                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Working With Children Checks       | A check issued by the Department of Justice and Regulation in accordance with the Working with Children Act (2005).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |

#### 4. Background

The Education and Care Services National Regulations require approved providers to ensure their services have policies and procedures in place for providing a child safe environment to minimise risk of harm and hazard to children attending education and care services.

The City of Casey is committed to upholding the rights of all children to feel safe and be safe, including:

- Promoting a culture of child safety and wellbeing with the service.
- Promoting the cultural safety and wellbeing of Aboriginal children.
- Promoting the cultural safety and wellbeing of children from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds.
- Providing an inclusive learning environment for all children.
- Fostering opportunities for all children to participate, learn and develop.
- Acting in the best interests of each child and having zero tolerance of child abuse and mistreatment.
- Taking all reasonable steps to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of children.

#### 5. Responsibilities for this guideline

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| <b>Child Youth and Family Management, Person with Management or Control or the Approved Provider</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide strong leadership that supports a culture of child safety in the everyday practice of City of Casey employees.</li> <li>• Provide educators with clear guidelines, policies and procedures in relation to all matters specified in Regulation 168(2).</li> <li>• Ensure the service meets legislative requirements for indoor and outdoor space calculations, including the use of a verandah (Regulation 107).</li> <li>• Uphold the Victorian Child Safe Standards legislation.</li> <li>• Ensure screening, recruitment and induction processes for educators, staff, students, volunteers and contractors are in line with legislation and Council Policy. This includes but is not limited to:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Criminal History Checks and Working With Children Checks (WWCC).</li> <li>• Child Protection legislation training, including for Mandatory Reporting requirements and obligations.</li> <li>• National Gecko Child Safety training.</li> <li>• National Workforce Register.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Provide an environment that is free from the use of tobacco, vaping, drugs, and alcohol.</li> <li>• Take all reasonable steps to ensure that nominated supervisors, educators, staff, and volunteers follow guidelines and procedures.</li> <li>• Provide inclusive, safe learning environments and play spaces for children, which allow for adequate supervision, safe fall zones, good traffic flow, and well-maintained buildings and equipment.</li> <li>• Ensure culturally safe environments through staff training, and early identification and timely action toward incidents of racism or discrimination.</li> <li>• Demonstrate leadership in promoting cultural respect by supporting all staff, volunteers and students to understand and value Aboriginal culture, and to recognise its essential role in creating a culturally safe and child safe environment for Aboriginal children.</li> </ul> |
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|                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure appropriate notifications are made according to organisational policy and legislation, and secure records retained in relation to all incidents that occur within the service.</li> <li>• Notify the Regulatory Authority about serious incidents, injuries, illness and trauma within 24 hours.</li> <li>• Notify the Regulatory Authority about allegations or incidents of physical or sexual abuse within 24 hours.</li> <li>• Notify the Regulatory Authority within 24 hours of becoming aware of reportable sexual conduct by a person employed or engaged by the service, whether the conduct occurred at the service or outside the service.</li> <li>• Ensure all directions issued by VECRA or the Minister relating to the safety, health, welfare or wellbeing of children are implemented and monitored within required timeframes.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>Educators and staff</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comply with all City of Casey policies, guidelines and processes.</li> <li>• Ensure children are adequately supervised and that educator-to-child ratios are maintained in accordance with regulatory requirements.</li> <li>• Complete all required risk assessments and apply risk minimisation strategies where required.</li> <li>• Ensure all staff, including relief and casual educators, additional assistants, volunteers and students, are aware of the service supervision plan, and that this is included as part of the relief educator induction process.</li> <li>• Always act in the child's best interests.</li> <li>• Practice duty of care obligations under the law by protecting children and young people from any reasonable, foreseeable risk of injury or harm.</li> <li>• Notify the Person with Management or Control immediately upon becoming aware of a concern, complaint or allegation regarding the health, safety and welfare of a child at the service, and complete any associated records or reporting processes.</li> <li>• Use appropriate behaviour management techniques and never subject a child to any form of corporal punishment or any discipline that is unreasonable or excessive in the circumstances (National Law Section 166).</li> <li>• Never subject a child to any form of conduct that a reasonable person would consider to be inappropriate at an education and care service, understanding that this is an offence (National Law Section 166A).</li> <li>• Implement Emergency Management Plans.</li> <li>• Encourage active participation of parents and families at each service, working together to support the child's health, wellbeing, safety, and development.</li> <li>• Encourage children to express their culture.</li> <li>• Encourage children to wear protective footwear in accordance with the needs of the environment and the child's preferences.</li> <li>• Empower children to respond to behaviours from others that could cause harm.</li> <li>• Submit maintenance requests as required to ensure a safe service environment.</li> </ul> |

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|                                           | <b>Cultural safety and inclusive behaviour</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a culturally safe environment for children and families.</li> <li>• Actively support and facilitate participation and inclusion within the organisation by Aboriginal children and their families.</li> <li>• Provide an environment where diversity is valued and is reflected in the daily program.</li> <li>• Act on and address incidences of racism.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Parents/Families and service users</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide complete and accurate information as part of the Child's Enrolment Record.</li> <li>• Share responsibility for their child's health, safety, wellbeing and development, and uphold the safety of other children in the service.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                         |

## 6. Inclusion of a verandah in the calculated indoor space

The City of Casey has approval from the Department of Education to include the verandah in calculating the indoor space at some kindergarten services.

City of Casey will ensure:

- The verandah is not included in the indoor and outdoor space measurement at the same time (Regulation 107 (5)).
- The verandah is directly accessible from the children's indoor room and provides comfortable and safe conditions for children and educators.
- The verandah enables supervision of all children at all times (Regulation 165).
- Modifications to the verandah space will not impede emergency evacuation procedures or emergency exits.

In the case of extreme weather conditions, educators will:

- Perform a risk assessment to determine if the verandah can be used.
- Modify the space as required using temporary protection to enable continued use of the space, if possible.

If the Nominated Supervisor assesses the verandah space as being unsuitable for use, they will notify a Team Leader immediately.

## 7. Associated documents and attachments

This guideline should be read in conjunction with:

- Child Protection guidelines
- Supervision guidelines
- Privacy and Confidentiality guidelines
- Delivery and Collection guidelines
- Serious Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness guidelines
- Complaints Handling guidelines
- Water Safety guidelines
- Weather Protection guidelines
- Hygiene guidelines

## 8. Relevant legislation and resources

Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010: Section 165,166,167
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011

- National Quality Standard, Quality Area 6
- Public Health and Wellbeing Amendment (No Jab No Play) Bill 2015
- Child Safe Standards and Reportable Conduct Scheme
- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)
- Child, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)
- National Quality Standard, Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety
- Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004
- Early Childhood Legislation Amendment (Child Safety) Bill 2025
- [A guide to creating a Child Safe Organisation](#)
- [Cultural safety for Aboriginal children](#)

## 9. Statement of Commitment to Child Safety

All children or young people who attend services, programs, and events delivered by, and spaces owned or managed by the City of Casey, have the right to feel and be safe. The wellbeing and safety of children and young people in our care will always be our priority.

Council has zero-tolerance of child abuse and is committed to creating and maintaining a child safe and child-friendly organisation where all children and young people are valued and protected from abuse, harm and neglect.

The City of Casey is committed to creating and maintaining a child safe organisation where protecting children and young people from abuse, harm and neglect is embedded in the everyday thinking and practice of Council, its employees, contractors and volunteers.

## 10. Monitoring, evaluation and review

The City of Casey will ensure:

- Regular monitoring of the implementation of this guideline and its associated documents including training and compliance.
- This guideline and its associated documents are kept up to date with current legislation, policy and best practice.
- Review and evaluation of this guideline and its associated documents as part of the service's review cycle, or as required.

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| <b>Reviewed by:</b>                     | CYF Policy Officer in consultation with Kindergarten Programs and Early Years & Partnerships team. |                    |            |
| <b>Approved by:</b>                     | Director – Community Life                                                                          |                    |            |
| <b>Date Approved:</b>                   | 09/06/2026                                                                                         |                    |            |
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| <b>Responsible Department and Team:</b> | CYF Policy Officer<br>Kindergarten Programs                                                        |                    |            |

## 11. Document History

| Date changed | Change Type |
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