



PROVIDING A CHILD SAFE ENVIRONMENT POLICY

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DIVISION: Sport, Community and Activation

BRANCH: Community Outcomes - Family Day Care

CATEGORY: 3

PART 1 – INTRODUCTION

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 To ensure all educators, staff and families are informed of the procedures required by Camden Council Family Day Care (FDC) in relation to providing children with a safe environment.
- 1.2 There are many considerations in ensuring that the health safety and wellbeing of children is protected at the service at all times these include:
 - Child Protection: protecting the rights of children to feel safe and be safe at all times.
 - Safety of physical environment and surrounds
 - Layout and organisation of spaces, equipment, and resources
 - Supervision
 - Exposure to potentially dangerous spaces, situations, animals, substances
 - Safe sleep and rest
 - Managing medical conditions
 - Excursions and transportation to places outside the FDC service
- 1.3 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 our FDC education and care services.

2. OBJECTIVE

- 2.1 Camden FDC provides environments that ensure the safety, health, and wellbeing of children at all times. The welfare, rights and protection of all children is of paramount importance.
- 2.2 Educators and staff will maintain the premises and equipment, adhere to procedures regarding safe practices and operate in line with all legislative requirements including child well-being and protection law.
- 2.3 Educators and staff will ensure that children are adequately supervised at all times and that every reasonable precaution is taken to protect children from harm and any hazard likely to cause injury or trauma.
- 2.4 Educators, staff, and management are aware of their legal responsibility as

Mandatory Reporters to take action to protect and support children they suspect may be at significant risk of harm.

3. SCOPE

3.1 This policy applies to:

- Camden Council FDC Service.
- Camden Council FDC staff employed by Camden Council.
- FDC educators (including educator assistants and relief educators) registered with the service as agents of the Approved Provider- Camden Council.
- Children enrolled in the service and their families.
- Volunteers and students engaged within Camden FDC services.

4. DEFINITIONS

- 4.1 **Approved Provider** means a person who holds a provider approval (*Education and Care Services National Law*). A provider approval authorises a person to apply for one or more education and care service approvals and is valid in all jurisdictions.
- 4.2 **Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA)** means the independent national authority that assists governments in administering the National Quality Framework including the provision of guidance, resources, and services to support the sector to improve outcomes for children.
- 4.3 **Authorised Person** means (a) a person who holds a current working with children check (WWCC), or equivalent; or (b) a family member of a child who is being educated and cared for by the service or the family day care (FDC) educator; or (c) an authorised nominee of a family member of a child who is being educated and cared for by the service or the FDC educator; or (d) in the case of an emergency, medical personnel or emergency service personnel; or (e) a person who is permitted under the jurisdictional working with children law to remain at the service without holding a working with children check (WWCC), or equivalent.
- 4.4 **Co-ordination Unit** means the Camden Family Day Care principal office and main faculty for running the Service from which Camden Family Day Care employees work.
- 4.5 **Educational program** means a program that is based on an approved learning framework and is delivered in accordance with the framework. Is based on the developmental needs, interests and experiences of each child and is designed to take into account the individual differences of each child.
- 4.6 **Educator** means an individual suitably qualified and registered by Camden Family Day Care to provide education and care and can refer to a Family Day Care educator as the business owner, an educator assistant or relief educator.
- 4.7 **Family Day Care (FDC)** means a type of education and care service that is run from the educator's own residence or an approved venue for the purpose of

educating and caring for small groups of children aged 0-12 years.

- 4.8 **Family Day Care Service** means the Family Day Care education and care business of each individual educator.
- 4.9 **Mandatory Reporting** means the legislative requirement for selected classes of people to report suspected child abuse and neglect to government authorities.
- 4.10 **Responsible Person** means a person appointed by the Approved Provider as responsible for overseeing an education and care service, as referred to in section 162(1)(a) to (c) of the *Education and Care Services National Law*.
- 4.11 **Reportable Conduct** means certain organisations or entities are required to notify and investigate certain allegations (reportable allegations) of abuse involving a child, when the allegation is against someone they employ, engage or contract in circumstances outlined by the legislation.
- 4.12 **Rights of the Child** means Human rights belonging to all children, as specified in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- 4.13 **Staff** means employees of Camden Council Family Day Care.
- 4.14 **Wellbeing** means a positive emotion that results from the satisfaction of basic needs – the need for tenderness and affection; security and clarity; social recognition; to feel competent; physical needs and for meaning in life. It includes happiness and satisfaction, effective social functioning and the dispositions of optimism, openness, curiosity, and resilience.
- 4.15 **Working Directly with Children** means A person is working directly with children at a given time if at that time the person is physically present with the children and is directly engaged in providing education and care to the children.
- 4.16 **Working with Children Check** means a notice, certificate or other document granted to, or with respect to, a person under a working with children law to the effect that the person has been assessed as suitable to work with children; or, there has been no information that if the person worked with children that the person would pose a risk to the children; or, the person is not prohibited from attempting to obtain, undertake or remain in child-related employment.

PART 2 - POLICY STATEMENT

5. PRINCIPLES

- 5.1 The safety, health and wellbeing of children is paramount for our service and we will ensure they are provided with a safe environment at all times with consideration to factors such as physical environment, supervision and child wellbeing and protection.
- 5.2 Educators work alone; at all times reasonable precautions and adequate and effective supervision protect children from harm and hazard.
- 5.3 Procedures to effectively manage incidents and emergencies are in place and practiced regularly.
- 5.4 Children's rights and wellbeing are at the forefront of decision making and children are actively encouraged to be involved in making decisions to allow

them to reach their potential.

- 5.5 Management, educators, and staff who work with children are advised of the existence and application of the current child wellbeing and protection laws and any obligations that they may have under that law.
- 5.6 Management, educators, and staff are aware and their roles and responsibilities to identify and respond to every child at risk of abuse or neglect.

6. CONSIDERATIONS

6.1 In order to promote a safe physical environment, educators will:

- 6.1.1 Ensure all accessible equipment and materials are clean and in good repair and where relevant meet the Australian safety standards.
- 6.1.2 Conduct daily checks of the environment and equipment.
- 6.1.3 Remove, repair, replace or make inaccessible any worn and damaged buildings, structures, equipment, and resources which may provide a safety risk for children.
- 6.1.4 Maintain buildings and equipment, develop a schedule for maintenance where applicable such as pest control, electrical checks, fire equipment checks, cleaning surfaces.
- 6.1.5 Ensure learning environments are organised in a way that allows for appropriate child groupings, sufficient space, and include carefully chosen and well-maintained resources and equipment.
- 6.1.6 Organise indoor and outdoor spaces to ensure risks to health and safety are minimised during play and transition between environments.
- 6.1.7 Prior to being registered with Camden FDC and annually upon re-registration conduct/review a risk assessment of their service environments and risky equipment to identify any hazards and risks and determine appropriate ways to eliminate or manage these.
- 6.1.8 Review risk assessments annually or as required and following any serious incident report made to the Regulatory Authority.
- 6.1.9 Ensure a smoke free environment for children including in vehicles, and within the NSW legislated distance of any entrance/exit as defined in the law (refer to public space requirements for approved venues and multiple use building requirements for spaces used for residential and commercial purposes).
- 6.1.10 Ensure secure storage of hazardous products and substances including chemicals, medications, and alcohol.

6.2 In order to ensure children are effectively and adequately supervised:

- 6.2.1 Educators and staff are provided with sufficient training in the area of adequate supervision practices.
- 6.2.2 Educators and staff understand they have a duty of care to ensure adequate supervision at all times.

- 6.2.3 Processes are in place for the Nominated Supervisor, or their delegate to be contactable at all times children are being educated and cared for by the service.
- 6.2.4 Camden Council implement routine monitoring visits by co-ordinators of FDC educators.
- 6.2.5 Camden Council implements screening to assess suitability of educators, all adult household members of a FDC residence, service staff and volunteers as per the legislation and policy as a part of the recruitment, registration and induction process, as required and as part of ongoing monitoring process'.
- 6.2.6 Camden Council responds proactively to emerging Educator performance concerns.
- 6.2.7 Consideration is given to:
- educators working alone; careful planning is required for the use of multiple spaces and managing routines to ensure adequate supervision is maintained.
 - the ages of the children; generally, the younger the child, the greater the need for an adult to be close by to support them.
 - Adequate supervision for sleeping children.
- 6.2.8 In order to ensure child wellbeing and protection:
- 6.2.9 All FDC service staff, educators, adult household members who reside at the Education and Care premise, students and volunteers have a current working with children check.
- 6.2.10 Management, service staff, educators and adult household members are given information/training about child protection law and any obligations they have under that law.
- 6.2.11 All staff, educators and volunteers of our service are required to familiarise themselves with the child protection legislation and take appropriate measures according to NSW specific protocols 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.
- 6.2.12 FDC service staff and educators will undertake training in order to effectively:
- make appropriate responses to all disclosures of abuse and any allegation of abuse against staff of the service and educators.
 - 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 are 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

- 6.2.13 Educators will implement procedures that ensure children are only released into the care of authorised persons.
- 6.2.14 Refer to the Child Protection Policy and Procedure
- 6.3 To ensure the prevention of harm and hazards the service will:
 - 6.3.1 Upon registration Educators carefully plan the areas they will use for Family Day Care and the set-up of their environments and consider the implications and potential risks to children.
 - 6.3.2 Educators conduct risk assessments for equipment, resources, spaces, or play identified as a potential risk and review these as required and annually in line with re-registration. These should include managing the inaccessibility of dangerous spaces, materials, substances, and possessions, for example, firearms and ammunition.
 - 6.3.3 Educators conduct and review risk assessments for excursions, regular outings and transportation provided or arranged by the educator or service in conjunction with the services *Excursions* and *Safe Transportation of Children* policies.
 - 6.3.4 Educators have risk minimisation practices in place for the management of medical conditions in conjunction with the service's *Dealing with Medical Conditions* policy.
 - 6.3.5 Emergency evacuation plans specific to the FDC residence and approved venues are developed and implemented in conjunction with the service's *Emergency and Evacuation* policy.
 - 6.3.6 Educators and relevant staff are trained in First Aid, CPR, Asthma and Anaphylaxis response, these qualifications must be maintained as per the regulation requirements.
 - 6.3.7 Educators have plans in place for the effective management of risks related to the preparation, serving and consumption of hot meals and drinks whilst children are in care.
 - 6.3.8 As educators work alone, careful consideration is given to the health, wellbeing, and ability of that individual to meet regulatory and child protection requirements.
- 6.4 To ensure the security of the FDC residence/approved venue:
 - 6.4.1 The main entrance/security door of all residence/approved venues is to be kept locked and keys accessible to educator/staff but inaccessible to children.
 - 6.4.2 The security of all entry and exit points must be assessed and procedures put in place to manage these.
 - 6.4.3 If applicable, security is reinforced with design of premises, signage, workplace instructions and engagement of security providers.

- 6.4.4 Head counts will be conducted prior to any child leaving the FDC residence or approved venue to ensure that only the child who has been collected by a parent/guardian or authorised nominee leaves the exit point.
- 6.4.5 The educator is to undertake a risk assessment of their residence prior to registration and at least annually as part of the re-registration process that includes assessment of security measures.
- 6.4.6 A visitors' record, including signatures and arrival and departure times will be maintained.

7. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

7.1 Approved Provider:

- Ensure that obligations under the *Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations* are met.
- Take reasonable steps to ensure that nominated supervisors, educators, staff, and volunteers follow the policy and procedures.
- Ensure the nominated supervisor and co-ordination unit staff have access to appropriate resources for the development, implementation, training and ongoing management of this policy and its related procedures.
- Ensure that the *Providing a Child Safe Environment* policy and procedures are implemented, the appropriate risk assessments and action plans are completed, and all identified actions are taken to minimise the risks to children's health and safety (also known as a risk minimisation plan).
- Ensure that initial safety and risk assessments of the educator's residence are conducted and completed prior to registration and commencement of the FDC service and that these are reviewed annually. Safety assessments are to be conducted by two staff to ensure compliance, with supporting photos taken and stored on the server under the educator's file. This assessment tool guides the maintenance of a safe and suitable environment and will be used to assist educators and co-ordinator's in the review of the education and care setting.
- Ensure assessments of educator's residence are carried out with consideration to matters relating to premises, furniture and equipment, fencing, lockable gates, resources and materials, laundry, toilet and hygiene facilities, nappy change arrangements, ventilation and natural light and water hazards/features/swimming pools, animals and overall suitability of the residence.
- Ensure all educators and staff have undertaken current child protection legislation training, including on mandatory reporting requirements and obligations in their state/territory. If not, develop a plan to ensure training is undertaken in a suitable timeframe.
- Ensure all staff, educators, students, volunteers, and persons over the age of 18 residing at the FDC residence hold a current working with children check (WWCC).
- Provide an environment that is free from the use of tobacco, illicit drugs and

alcohol and ensure no educators or staff are affected by alcohol or drugs (including prescription medication) so as to impair their capacity to supervise or provide education and care to children in the service.

- Ensure educators understand the requirement to report any allegations of child abuse to the Approved Provider or Nominated Supervisor and this is then reported to the police or child protection helpline.
- Ensure educators are aware of emergency and evacuation procedures in accordance with *Emergency and Evacuation* policy.
- Ensure that copies of the policy and procedures are readily accessible to nominated supervisors, co-ordinator's, educators and staff, and available for inspection.
- Notify families at least 14 days before changing the policy or procedures if the changes will affect the fees and charges and/or significantly impact the service's education and care of children or the family's ability to utilise the service.

7.2 Nominated Supervisor/Team Leader:

- Ensure they conduct themselves and the service practices in accordance with all legislative requirements and Camden Family Day Care policy and procedures and as directed by the Approved Provider.
- Implement the *Providing a Child Safe Environment* policy and procedures.
- Take reasonable steps to ensure that educators, staff, volunteers, and students follow legislative the policy and procedures.
- Guide and mentor educators and staff to be able to follow the policy and procedures.
- Ensure that communication between educators, the co-ordination unit and parents/guardians is adequate to ensure that all parties are aware of their roles and responsibilities in relation to legislative requirements and Camden FDC policy and procedures and they have the opportunity to provide their input into the service.
- Ensure all educators and staff are aware of current child protection legislation, including the mandatory reporting requirement and obligations in their state/territory.
- Ensure each educator is meeting staff to child ratios to ensure adequate supervision.
- Ensure all educators and staff know where to access the *Providing a child safe environment* policy and procedures.
- Provide ongoing communication with educators and staff about their responsibilities and any changes to policies, procedures, and legislation.
- Regularly monitor child protection training schedules and ensure all educators and staff are up to date with their training.

- When required, work collaboratively with appropriate services and/or professionals to support children's access, inclusion, and participation in the program.
- Undertake a safety and performance review of the educator within 24 hours of a serious incident.
- Require that where the service has been notified of a Court Order prohibiting an adult from contacting any enrolled child the educator ensures such contact does not occur while the child is in the educator's residence.
- Ensure the safety and wellbeing of children attending the service by keeping a visitors' record, including signatures and arrival/departure times (a mandatory requirement for FDC services).

7.3 Co-ordination unit staff:

- Ensure they conduct themselves and the service practices in accordance with all legislative requirements and Camden Family Day Care policy and procedures and as directed by the nominated supervisor.
- Implement the *Providing a Child Safe Environment* policy and procedures.
- Monitor, guide, support, and mentor educators to ensure their FDC service environments and practices are at all times compliant with legislative requirements and Camden FDC policy and procedures.
- Ensure all educators are aware of current child protection legislation, including the mandatory reporting requirement and obligations in NSW.
- Ensure each educator is meeting staff to child ratios to ensure adequate supervision.
- Ensure all educators know where to access the *Providing a Child Safe Environment* policy and procedures.
- Provide ongoing communication with educators about their responsibilities and any changes to policies, procedures, and legislation.
- Implement a system of routine monitoring visits of FDC educators focusing on supervision, children at risk of significant harm, medical action plans and safe environments and practices.

7.4 Educators:

- Ensure they conduct themselves and their FDC service practices in accordance with all legislative requirements and Camden Family Day Care policy and procedures and as directed by the nominated supervisor.
- Must be aware of and implement the *Providing a Child Safe Environment* policy and procedures.
- Be aware of current child protection legislation, including the mandatory reporting requirements and obligations.
- Implement the *Providing a child safe environment* policy and procedures and ensure that any action plans for individual children are carried out.

- Take all reasonable steps to protect children from harm or hazards.
- Know the individual needs and action plans for the children in your care.
- Maintain current accredited child protection, first aid and approved CPR, asthma, and anaphylaxis training.
- Maintain staff to child ratios to ensure adequate supervision of children.
- Provide an environment that is free from the use of tobacco, illicit drugs, and alcohol.
- Ensure hazardous materials and substances are eliminated from the environment or stored safely inaccessible to children.
- Keep a visitors' record, including signatures and arrival and departure times.
- Consistently maintain the environment and equipment to protect the health, safety and wellbeing of children being educated and cared for.
- Ensure children are never left alone with visitors under Regulation 166.
- Complete a notification to obtain advice and approval from Camden Council FDC before beginning any renovations or additions to the residence.
- Complete a notification to obtain advice and approval from Camden Council FDC before making any changes to the physical environment of the residence or outdoor play areas that may affect the education, care or supervision provided to children. This includes but is not limited to changes such as new fixed play equipment, pets, fences, pools, patios etc.

7.5 Families

- Be aware of the *Providing a Child Safe Environment* policy and procedures and implement the required practices as directed by the FDC educator and the Service.
- Ensure they have the service's up-to-date contact details.
- Ensure they complete the attendance record on delivery and collection of their child.
- Provide emergency contact details on their child's enrolment form and ensure this is kept up to date.
- Ensure they are aware of the service policy and procedures and follow them if required.
- Stay informed and have input into the educational program for their child.
- When in attendance at the service, supervise their children and ensure that they follow the service procedures in relation to providing a safe environment for children.

8. INDUCTION AND ONGOING TRAINING

- 8.1 Induction and ongoing professional development will be implemented for all educators and staff, focusing on this policy and related procedures.

- 8.2 Educator induction will be implemented as a part of the registration process, their ongoing training requirements and review of their service environments and practices occurs annually at the time of re-registration and as a need is identified.
- 8.3 Information will be shared with educator assistants and relief educators on induction and as relevant to the environments that they are working in, their shift responsibilities and the children in their care.

9. MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW

- 9.1 This policy will be monitored to ensure compliance with legislative requirements and unless deemed necessary through the identification of practice gaps, the service will review this policy every three years.
- 9.2 Families, educators, and staff are essential stakeholders in the policy review process and will be given opportunity and encouragement to be actively involved.
- 9.3 In accordance with R. 172 of the *Education and Care Services National Regulations*, the service will ensure that families of children enrolled at the service 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 service; a family's ability to utilise the service; the fees charged or the way in which fees are collected.

10. SOURCES AND RESOURCES

- [ACECQA Guide to the National Quality Framework](#)
- [Australian Childhood Foundation](#)
- [Australian Human Rights Commission](#)
- [Kidsafe Australia | Keeping Children Safe](#)
- [Supporting Young Children's Rights Statement of Intent](#)
- [UN Convention Rights of the Child](#)

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RELEVANT LEGISLATIVE INSTRUMENTS: *Australian Child Protection Legislation*
Australian Privacy Principles
Child Wellbeing and Protection Laws in NSW
Children (Education and Care Services) National Law (NSW)
Education and Care Services National Regulations
National Quality Standard | Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA)
Work Health and Safety Act 2011

RELATED POLICIES, PLANS AND PROCEDURES: Assessment and reassessment of residences and venues for FDC policy
Dealing with medical conditions in children policy
Delivery of children to, and collection from the FDC service policy
Emergency and evacuation policy
Excursions policy
Incident, injury, trauma, and illness policy
Interactions with children policy
Nutrition, food and beverages, dietary requirements policy
Physical environment procedure
Safe storage of dangerous goods procedure
Safe transportation of children policy
Sleep and rest for children policy
Sun protection policy
Staffing and supervision procedure
Visitors to FDC residences and venues while education and care is being provided to children policy
Water safety policy

RESPONSIBLE DIRECTOR: Director Sport, Community and Activation

APPROVAL: General Manager through the Executive Leadership Group.

HISTORY:

Version	Approved by	Changes made	Date	EDMS Number
1			February 2014	
2			June 2019	14/29673
3	ELG	Major amendments.	March 2022	22/109603