



2.3 Providing a Child Safe Environment

QUALITY AREA 2: Children's Health and Safety

Policy Statement

Bellinghen Community Preschool views every child's safety and wellbeing as crucial. All children attending our school will be provided with a safe environment that supports children to reach their full potential. A child-safe environment will be fostered through responsive and reciprocal relationships between educators and children, an engaging, adventurous curriculum, and the provision of a safe and healthy environment.

Bellinghen Community Preschool has a moral and legal responsibility to ensure that the rights and best interests of the child, including supporting children's agency and decision-making about matters that affect them. Educators will gain professional training, resources, information, and guidance to:

- always ensure the adequate supervision of children as per our Supervision Policy & Plan.
- 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, always.
- 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.
- support children to take ownership of their own safety
- offering opportunities where children can safely explore calculated risks.

All children have the right to experience quality education and care in an environment that promotes opportunities to thrive and reach their full potential with adults who safeguard and advocate for their health, safety, security, and wellbeing. We believe children have 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'.

Practices

The Physical Environment

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 buildings, structures 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.
- Organise indoor and outdoor spaces to ensure risks to the health and safety are minimised.
- Conduct a risk assessment of the service environment on a quarterly 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 four 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.
- Ensure that all staff follow the Supervision Plan and Policy.

Child Protection

- All educators and volunteers of our service are Mandatory Reporters and are required to report to the Child Protection Helpline (Phone: 132 111 or eReport at: <https://reporter.childstory.nsw.gov.au/s/>) if they have reasonable grounds to suspect 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 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.

Program Design and Curriculum

We view children as active participants in their learning with a voice that should be heard in matters that affect them. At Bellingden Community Preschool we ensure that:

Issues of safety are discussed and explored with children within our daily interactions and curriculum design. For example. Following the installation of our new climbing fort, children were invited to share what safety considerations should be taken through drawing and discussion in our Morning Gatherings. These were added to our Risk Assessment for the area.

Adventurous Play

‘Being adventurous is about creating opportunities for children (and adults) to explore and test their own capacities, to manage risk and to grow as capable, resourceful and resilient children and adults.’

We acknowledge the important developmental benefits of adventurous and risky play such as psychological, perceptual, physical/motor skills and social development. (Sandseter, 2010). We encourage educators to support children’s curiosity by providing them with opportunities to access risks and manage situations appropriately. We aim to support and respond to children’s physical development by offering an environment that provides open-ended, dynamic, engaging and challenging learning opportunities for all children within a safe environment.

We acknowledge that it is sometimes difficult to find the right balance between allowing children to engage in adventurous play in our physical environment whilst preventing serious injuries. Bellingden Community Preschool is committed to supporting families to understand the importance and benefits of risk taking through adventurous play for their children. We believe that for children to learn effectively and prepare for life-long skills, it’s important for them to experience challenging situations in our physical environment that is managed effectively to minimise negative outcomes, not eliminate risk.

Relevant Regulations

Section 167	Offence relating to protection of children from harm and hazards
Section 165	Offence to inadequately supervise children
Section 166	Offence to use inappropriate discipline
82	Tobacco, drug and alcohol-free environment
83	Staff members and family day care educators not to be affected by alcohol or drugs
84	Awareness of child protection law Outdoor space – natural environment (centre-based services)
103	Premises, furniture and equipment to be safe, clean and in good repair
115	Premises designed to facilitate supervision
122	Educators must be working directly with children to be included in ratios
123	Educator to child ratios – centre-based services
165	Record of visitors
166	Children not to be alone with visitors
167	Record of service’s compliance

168	Education and care services must have policies and procedures
169	Additional policies and procedures – family day care service
171	Policies and procedures to be kept available
172	Notification of change to policies or procedures
175	Prescribed information to be notified to Regulatory Authority

Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Authority/Responsibility For
Approved Provider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the service operates in line with the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations 2020 with regard to the delivery and collection of children at all times. • Ensure all staff have access to relevant professional development. • Ensure that the Nominated Supervisor and staff members at the service who work with children are advised of current child protection legislation, its application, and any obligations that they may have under that law (Regulation 84).
Nominated Supervisor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide all staff and educators working directly with children with access to the Mandatory Reporter Guide to assist them in their reporting. • Provide all staff and educators working directly with children with access to the Child Wellbeing and Child Protection NSW Interagency Guidelines. • Ensuring screening and suitability processes are maintained to meet policy and legislated requirements. • Identifying and providing appropriate resources and training to assist staff, contractors, visitors, volunteers and students to implement this policy (refer to Sources). • Keeping up to date and complying with any relevant changes in legislation and practices in relation to this policy. • Cooperate with other services and/or professionals in the best interests of children and their families. • Ensure that families are made aware of support services available to them and of the assistance these services can provide. • Ensure that all staff who work with children are supported to implement this policy in the service. • Protect the rights of children and families and encourage their participation in decision-making at the service.
Early Childhood Educators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Act in accordance with the obligations outlined in this policy. • Raise concerns when barriers or threats to the protection of children and young people’s safety and wellbeing are identified, including through the conduct of other adults at the site/service. • Keeping up to date and complying with any relevant changes in legislation and practices in relation to this policy. • Follow all record keeping requirements. • Undertaking appropriate training and education on child protection.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying any potential for risk and harm to a child at the service and developing and implementing effective prevention strategies in consultation with the approved provider and the nominated supervisor. Co-operating with other services and/or professionals in the best interests of children and their families. Informing families of support services available to them (such as Families NSW), and of the assistance these services can provide. Ensuring that no child is left alone (or is out of sight) with a contractor, visitor, volunteer, student or parent/guardian at the service. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementing the procedures for reporting suspected child abuse. Notifying the nominated supervisor or the approved provider immediately on becoming aware of any concerns, complaints or allegations regarding the health, safety and welfare of a child at the service. Offering support to the child and their family, and to the other and staff in response to concerns or reports relating to the health, safety and wellbeing of a child at the service. Maintaining confidentiality at all times Adhering to all service policies.
Families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reading and complying with this policy Reporting any concerns, including in relation to potential for child abuse, to the Nominated Supervisor.

National Quality Standards (NQS)

Quality Area 2: Childrens Health and Safety		
2.2	Safety	Each child is protected

Quality Area 3: Physical Environment		
3.1	Design	The design of the facilities is appropriate for the operations of a service
3.2	Use	The service environment is inclusive, promotes competence and supports exploration and play-based learning.

Quality Area 7: Governance and Leadership		
7.1		Governance supports the operations of a quality service.
7.1.1		Systems are in place to manage risk and enable the effective management and operation of a quality service.

Review

POLICY REVIEWED	AUGUST 2021	NEXT REVIEW DATE	AUGUST 2024
MODIFICATIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Additions regarding philosophical stance on Adventurous Play.		