

Providing a Child-Safe Environment policy

Policy Statement

Fun 4 U Helensburgh aims to provide a stimulating, comfortable and safe indoor and outdoor environment that allows flexibility and access to a variety of quiet, active, group and individual activities. This policy guides educators and visitors on how to behave with the children at Fun 4 U Helensburgh and the importance of promoting children's participation in our organisation to make a safer environment for all.

Links Education and Care Centres National Regulations 2018, National Quality Standard 2018

Regs:

- 84 Awareness of child protection law
- 88 Infectious diseases
- 99 Children leaving the education and care service premises
- 113 Outdoor space- natural environment
- 114 Outdoor space- Shade
- 115 Premises designed to facilitate supervision
- 117 Glass
- 123 Educator to child ratios
- 158 Childrens attendance record to be kept by approved provider
- 168 Education and care service must have policies and procedures

NQS

- 2.1 Each child's health and physical activity is supported and promoted.
- 2.2 Each child is protected
- 3.1 The design of the facilities is appropriate for the operation of a service.
- 3.2 The service environment is inclusive, promotes competence and supports exploration and play- based learning.

Procedure

CHILD-SAFE CHILD-FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENT

Definitions;

Child-safe means taking active measures to keep children safe from physical, sexual or emotional abuse.

Child-friendly means creating a trusting environment that values, respects and welcomes children.

Please note: In response to the Australian Government's Coronavirus Emergency Response Plan Fun 4 U will ensure it maintains up to date information on infection control and cleaning measures to ensure the environment remains safe at all times.

- 1. Sanitiser will be made available at the front door for anyone entering the service.**
- 2. Children will be directed as per normal infection control measures to ensure they wash their hands on arrival, before eating, after toileting themselves, after wiping their nose, after sneezing.**

Fun 4 U Helensburgh implements practices to ensure that we are preventative rather than reactive in our child safe environment as harm to children comes in many forms. We identify and understand the risks in our organisation and use several complementary strategies to manage risk. Risk of harm is a function of both an employee's characteristics and workplace factors including;

- The physical layout of the workplace
- The visibility of employees when working
- The role that other employees play in protecting children
- The nature and quality of supervision
- The vulnerability and dependency of the children

- Children's participation – we support the active participation of our children in service operations. The educators are responsible for listening to the children's view's, respecting what the children have to say and ensuring any actions are carried out as a result of children's input. Children will be involved in decision making especially about matters that will directly affect them.
- Fun 4 U Helensburgh promotes respect, fairness and consideration for all staff to ensure a harmonious working environment. All educators have senior staff who supervise them whilst at work providing support, assistance and encouragement as needed. All new staff receive a handbook that outlines policies and the service's code of conduct to orientate staff in their first few weeks.
- Recruitment of staff – Fun 4 U Helensburgh maintains an open and comprehensive recruitment, selection and screening process for the employment of staff. Staff are interviewed by the Co-ordinator and then spend a period of time interacting with the children. All staff are required to provide their working with children's check number so the appropriate screening can be conducted.
- Complaints – all families must put their complaints in writing and these will be addressed following the "Complaints / Grievances Policy". Children may make their complaints to educators either verbally or in writing. These complaints will be discussed and an outcome will be decided upon by staff in conjunction with the children.
- Communication – Regular staff meetings are conducted for all educators. Families receive information from the service through emails, newsletters and informal chats.
- Review – Our practices are reviewed annually and involve comments and suggestions from children, families and the community and follow current best practice guidelines on child protection, child safety and Work Health and Safety.

Child Safe indoor environment

- The Co-ordinator will ensure that the service premises and all equipment and furniture used by the children are safe, clean and in good repair. Any broken or unsafe items will be disposed of accordingly. Children will have access to sufficient furniture, materials and developmentally appropriate equipment suitable for the education and care of all children (Reg, 103 and 105).
- The indoor spaces used by the children will be well ventilated with the use of properly maintained air conditioners and have as much natural light as can be provided by the windows and doorways. The air conditioners will be maintained at a comfortable temperature dependent on the season.
- The indoor area is to be set up to allow children to participate in a variety of activities with easy access to equipment. These indoor spaces must be set up to ensure that proper supervision can be maintained at all times.
- Easy access to areas should be maintained by making clear easily definable passageways and walkways through the building. Staff will ensure that children properly store their bags and those bags and other items are not thrown into walkways or play areas. All items obstructing areas are to be removed and placed in the correct storage areas.
- Access to the outdoor environment should be clear and easily accessible by the children and staff.
- The service will provide adequate, developmentally and age appropriate toilet and hand washing facilities for children. The service has laundry facilities located in a locked area that is inaccessible to children. All linen and dress up clothes are regularly washed.

CHILD SAFE OUTDOOR ENVIRONMENT

- The outdoor space will be inspected daily for any obstacles or dangerous items. These items will be disposed of in a safe and careful manner prior to the children playing in the area. The educator responsible for the inspection will sign their time sheet under the appropriate column to say that they have completed the check.
- The outdoor space will be set up in a variety of different ways with a variety of equipment to encourage participation. The outdoor spaces allow children to explore and experience the natural environment by the use of natural features eg, natural vegetation and plants (Reg 113).
- Areas will be made available where children can play in large or small groups or by themselves. The service will ensure that the regulation requirement for outdoor space is adhered to with 7 square meters of unencumbered outdoor space being provided (Reg 108).
- Supervision will be properly maintained. Children are only to play in the areas that are clearly visible to the staff, and where proper child/staff ratios are maintained. This is to ensure the children's safety with regard to the need to maintain the rights and dignity of the children.
- Clear behaviour boundaries are set and enforced. When it is necessary to go outside the boundaries or line of supervision, a staff member must accompany the child eg oval, primary school.

Tobacco, drug and alcohol free environment

- Educators will ensure that children are provided with an environment that is free from the use of tobacco, illicit drugs and alcohol. Educators will not be affected by alcohol when working with children when the service is operating. The coordinator must ensure that no educators are affected by drugs that adversely affect that person's ability to care for children when the service is operating.

RISK MANAGEMENT PROCESS

Definition – Risk management can be defined as “the process of identification of foreseeable hazards, the assessment of associated risks, the elimination or control of those risks”

Risk Management Plan

The certified supervisor who is the WHS Representative will be responsible for documenting the risk management plans for Fun 4 U Helensburgh. These plans will identify hazards and risks of the organisation and ways to reduce them.

Employers must eliminate all reasonably foreseeable risks or if not practicable the risk must be controlled.

1. Identify the hazard/s (find the problem) – triggers or causes

Look at the tasks and activities in the workplace, consider the steps involved in the task and what hazards there are at each of these steps. Document the steps and any hazards as part of the risk assessment

This can be assisted by:

- Looking at the incident reports
- Consult with educators / families / community and children
- Meeting and discussing the issue with educators
- Conduct an information search (health and safety topics, websites)
- Inspect / audit of the workplace

Hazards can include:

- Physical – noise, light, vibration
- Chemical – poisons, dusts
- Biological – viruses, plants, parasites

- Mechanical and electrical – slips, trips and falls, tools, electrical equipment
- Psychological – fatigue, violence, bullying

2. Risk Assessment (assess the risks)

Not all hazards can be removed so they need to be minimized, work out what could happen and how likely it is to happen. When assessing a risk look at all reasonably available health and safety information on the hazard.

To assess the likelihood, consider if it is:

- Very likely – could happen any time
- Likely – could happen sometime
- Unlikely – could happen but very rarely
- Very unlikely – could happen but probably never will

To assess the severity, consider if it could cause:

- Death or permanent disability
- Long term illness or serious injury
- Require medical attention with someone off work for several days
- Someone to require first aid

3. Eliminate or Control the risk (fix the problems)

Start with the hazards that have the greatest risk. Try to eliminate the risk first, if this is not reasonably practicable then try to control it.

There are five main ways to control risks. In order of effectiveness these are:

1. Substituting / removing the hazardous substance, process or task with a safer alternative
2. Isolating the hazard from people
3. Minimising the risk by engineering means
4. Minimising the risk by administrative means. Adopt safe working practices, providing training, instruction or information.
5. Using personal protective equipment (PPE), should only be used when no other controls are practical or when used in combination with another control.

4. Monitor and Review

Monitor and review the control measures to ensure on-going safety. Communicate with educators and children to ensure risk controls are working and see if there are any new hazards they are aware of. Implement new measures if required.

Relevant documents for consideration

Toxic Playground: a guide to reducing the chemical load in schools and childcare centers by Jo Immig, Total Environment Centre.

Education and Care Services National Regulations 82-84, 103-106 and 109-115 (under sections 301 and 324 of the Education and Care Services National Law)

Child Safe, Child Friendly Workshop. Participant's Workbook. NSW Commission for Children and Young People.

My Time, Our Place. Outcome 1.1 Children feel safe, secure and supported. Outcome 3.2 Children take increasing responsibility for their own health and physical wellbeing.

Comments:

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