



# Lake Boga Primary School OSHC

*'Be the best that we can be'*

## Child Safe Environment Policy

**Rationale:** Lake Boga Primary School OSHC has a moral and legal responsibility to ensure that all children are safe in their care, and will provide training, resources, information and guidance to support this. Lake Boga Primary School OSHC is committed to:

- Ensuring that the health, safety and wellbeing of children at the service is protected at all times while also promoting their learning and development
- Fulfilling its duty of care obligations under the law by protecting children from any reasonable, foreseeable risk of injury or harm
- Ensuring that people caring for children at the service act in the best interests of the child, and take all reasonable steps to ensure the child's safety and wellbeing at all times
- Supporting the rights of all children to feel safe, and be safe, at all times
- Developing and maintaining a culture in which children feel valued, respected and cared for
- Encouraging active participation from parents/guardians and families at the service, and ensuring that best practice is based on a partnership approach and shared responsibility for children's health, safety, wellbeing and development
- Promoting children's development and wellbeing.

**Purpose:** This policy will provide a clear set of guidelines and procedures to ensure:

- All children attending Lake Boga Primary School OSHC are provided with a safe environment
- All reasonable steps are taken by the Approved Provider, educators and staff to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of children attending the service
- Timely and effective intervention for children and young people who may be at risk of abuse or neglect.

## Background

"Every child has the right to live a full and productive life. It is up to all of us to ensure our children grow up in environments that build confidence, friendship, security and happiness, irrespective of a person's family circumstances and background" (*Protecting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people – refer to Sources*). The protection of children, one of the most vulnerable groups in society, is a shared community responsibility and involves ensuring that all children are safe, their needs are met and the possibility of child abuse is minimised.

The *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* (CYFA) provides the legislative basis for the provision of services to vulnerable children, young people and their families, and places children's best interests at the heart of decision-making and service delivery. Under the *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2020*, the Approved Provider must

ensure that all educators and staff are familiar with current policies and procedures with regard to child protection, including state and territory legislative responsibilities and their obligations under these laws (Regulation 84).

The *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010* and the *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011* require that approved services protect children from any harm and hazards, and to adequately supervise children at all times. Services have a duty of care to act immediately to protect and preserve the safety and wellbeing of the children in their care. Any person who believes, on reasonable grounds, that a child is in need of protection may report their concerns to Child Protection.

Adult supervision is a key factor in creating and maintaining child safe environments. Active supervision together with risk minimisation strategies can prevent or reduce the risk of injury to children. Risk minimisation strategies, supported by clear policies and procedures for specific areas of child safety, will help ensure the environment and practices at the service are child safe. Policies and procedures must be developed in relation to all matters specified in Regulation 168(2), including emergency and evacuation, water safety, sun protection, delivery and collection of children, and incident, injury, trauma and illness. Risks in the child's physical environment can be minimised by ensuring the safety of buildings, grounds, equipment, materials and furniture used at the service, and the safe storage and use of dangerous substances such as cleaning products and chemicals.

Relevant legislation and standards this policy relates to include but are not limited to:

- *Ministerial Order 1359, Child Safe Standards 2022*
- *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)*, as amended 2011
- *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)*, as amended 2012
- *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic)*, as amended 2011
- *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 (Vic)*: Sections 165, 166, 167
- *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2020 (Vic)*: Regulations 84, 85, 86, 99, 100, 101, 102, 168(2)(h)
- *Family Law Act 1975 (Cth)*, as amended 2008 and 2011
- *National Quality Standard, Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety*
  - Standard 2.3: Each child is protected
    - Element 2.3.1: Children are adequately supervised at all times\
    - Element 2.3.2: Every reasonable precaution is taken to protect children from harm and any hazard likely to cause injury
    - Element 2.3.4: Educators, co-ordinators and staff members are aware of their roles and responsibilities to respond to every child at risk of abuse and neglect
- *National Quality Standard, Quality Area 3: Physical Environment*
  - Standard 3.1: The design and location of the premises is appropriate for the operation of a service
    - Element 3.1.1: Outdoor and indoor spaces, buildings, furniture, equipment, facilities and resources are suitable for their purpose

- Element 3.1.2: Premises, furniture and equipment are safe, clean and well maintained
- *National Quality Standard, Quality Area 7: Leadership and Service Management*
  - Standard 7.1: Effective leadership promotes a positive organisational culture and builds a professional learning community
    - Element 7.1.5: Adults working with children and those engaged in management of the service or residing on the premises are fit and proper

### **Implementation:**

the **Approved Provider** is responsible for:

#### *In relation to child safety and protection matters*

- Ensuring 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)
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- Identifying the potential for and signs of child abuse at Lake Boga Primary School OSHC, and developing and implementing effective prevention strategies in consultation with the Nominated Supervisor and educators/staff
- Ensuring recruitment and induction processes for educators, staff and contractors are in line with this policy
- Screening all educators, staff, contractors, volunteers and students, including undertaking criminal history checks (if required), Working with Children Checks (except for individuals under the age of 18, registered teachers or police officers), reference checks and interviews
- Ensuring that volunteers/students, parents/guardians and other visitors to the service are not left with sole supervision of individual children or groups of children
- Ensuring that where the service has been notified of a court order prohibiting an adult from contacting an enrolled child, such contact does not occur while the child is on the service premises
- Ensuring clear procedures are in place for reporting suspected child abuse and management of complaints (refer to Complaints Policy)
- Ensuring educators, staff, contractors, volunteers and students undertake appropriate training and education on child protection, including recognising the signs and symptoms of child abuse, knowing how to respond, and understanding processes for reporting and managing concerns/incidents
- Offering support to the child and their family, and to educators and staff in response to concerns or reports relating to the health, safety and wellbeing of a child at Lake Boga Primary School OSHC
- Developing co-operative relationships with appropriate services and/or professionals (including Child FIRST) in the best interests of children and their families
- Identifying and implementing appropriate programs and practices to support the principles of a child safe organisation, in consultation with the Nominated Supervisor and educators/staff at the service
- Notifying DET, in writing, within 24 hours of becoming aware of a notifiable complaint or allegation regarding the health, safety and/or welfare of a child at Lake Boga Primary School OSHC
- Maintaining confidentiality at all times

### In relation to providing a child safe environment at the service:

- Ensuring children are adequately supervised and that educator-to-child ratios are maintained at all times
- Ensuring parents/guardians have completed the enrolment form including details of authorised nominees, and permission forms for excursions and administration of medication
- Ensuring the physical environment at the service is safe, secure and free from hazards for children
- Ensuring the environment is free from the use of tobacco, illicit drugs and alcohol
- Ensuring that any staff member, volunteer or student is not affected by alcohol or drugs (including prescription medication) so as to impair the person's capacity to supervise or provide education and care to the children
- The organisation's leadership understands the responsibility to help everyone involved with the organisation to acknowledge and appreciate the strengths of Aboriginal culture and understand its importance to the wellbeing and safety of Aboriginal children
- Conducting risk assessments for excursions and considering children's safety when leaving the service premises
- Ensuring all equipment and materials used at the service meet relevant safety standards
- Ensuring the service is up to date with current legislation on child restraints in vehicles if transporting children
- Implementing and practising emergency and evacuation procedures (refer to *Emergency and Evacuation Policy*)
- Ensuring there are appropriate procedures in place for the safe delivery and collection of children (refer to *Delivery and Collection of Children Policy*)
- Ensuring that the Nominated Supervisor, educators and all staff at the service who work with children are aware that it is an offence to subject a child to any form of corporal punishment, or any discipline that is unreasonable or excessive in the circumstances
- Implementing and reviewing this policy in consultation with the Nominated Supervisor, educators, staff, contractors and parents/guardians
- Identifying and providing appropriate resources and training to assist educators, staff, contractors, visitors, volunteers and students to implement this policy
- Protecting the rights of children and families, and encouraging their participation in decision-making
- Ensuring the Nominated Supervisor, educators, staff, contractors, volunteers and students are kept informed of any relevant changes in legislation and practices in relation to this policy.\

The **Nominated Supervisor** is responsible for:

### In relation to child protection matters:

- Ensuring that they are aware of current child protection legislation, its application and any obligations that they may have under that law
- Keeping up to date and complying with any relevant changes in legislation and practices in relation to this policy
- Arranging appropriate training and education for educators and staff on child protection, including recognising the signs and symptoms of child abuse, knowing how to respond, and understanding processes for reporting and managing concerns/incidents
- Identifying the potential for child abuse at Lake Boga Primary School OSHC, and developing and implementing effective prevention strategies in consultation with the Approved Provider and educators/staff
- Ensuring that where the service has been notified of a court order prohibiting an adult from contacting an enrolled child, such contact does not occur while the child is on the service premises

- Identifying and implementing appropriate programs and practices to support the principles of a child safe organisation in consultation with the Approved Provider and educators at the service
- Co-operating with other services and/or professionals in the best interests of children and their families
- Ensuring that families are made aware of support services available to them (such as Child FIRST), 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
- Implementing the procedures for reporting suspected child abuse and management of complaints
- Notifying the Approved Provider immediately on becoming aware of a concern, complaint or allegation regarding the health, safety and welfare of a child at Lake Boga Primary School OSHC
- Offering support to the child and their family, and to educators and staff in response to concerns or reports relating to the health, safety and wellbeing of a child at Lake Boga Primary School OSHC
- Implementing and reviewing this policy in consultation with the Approved Provider, educators, staff, contractors and parents/guardians
- Maintaining confidentiality at all times

*In relation to providing a child safe environment at the service:*

- Ensuring that all educators and staff who work with children are aware of this policy, and are supported to implement it in the service
- Ensuring that Staff are aware of the School's "Action Plan for the safety and wellbeing of Aboriginal children" and follows the strategies mention in the plan to make sure the Aboriginal children feel safe and secure in the OSHC environment.
- Ensuring that the Action Plan for the wellbeing and safety of Aboriginal Children have Public access at all times.
- Protecting the rights of children and families, and encouraging their participation in decision-making at the service
- Ensuring that all children are adequately supervised at all times
- Ensuring that they are not affected by alcohol or drugs (including prescription medication) or consume alcohol whilst at the service
- Ensuring no staff member, volunteer or student is affected by alcohol or drugs (including prescription medication) or consume alcohol whilst at the service
- Ensuring learning environments are established that provide sufficient space, and include carefully chosen and well-maintained resources and equipment that will help enhance the quality of children's learning and experiences
- Organising/facilitating regular safety audits of the following:
  - Emergency equipment
  - Playgrounds and fixed equipment in outdoor environments
  - Cleaning services
  - Horticultural maintenance
  - Pest control
- Ensuring that all cupboards/rooms are labelled accordingly, including those that contain chemicals and first aid kits, and that child-proof locks are installed on doors and cupboards where contents may be harmful

- Ensuring that all contractors/visitors sign in to the visitor's log book
- Ensuring the physical environment at the service is safe, secure and free from hazards for children
- Conducting risk assessments for excursions and considering children's safety when leaving the service premises
- Ensuring all equipment and materials used at the service meet relevant safety standards
- Ensuring the service is up to date with current legislation on child restraints in vehicles if transporting children
- Implementing and practising emergency and evacuation procedures
- Ensuring there are appropriate procedures in place for the safe delivery and collection of children
- Ensuring that all educators and staff at the service who work with children are aware that it is an offence to subject a child to any form of corporal punishment, or any discipline that is unreasonable or excessive in the circumstances
- Implementing and reviewing this policy in consultation with the Nominated Supervisor, educators, staff, contractors and parents/guardians
- Identifying and providing appropriate resources and training to assist educators, staff, contractors, visitors, volunteers and students to implement this policy
- Keeping up to date and complying with any relevant changes in legislation and practices in relation to this policy.

All **educators** are responsible for:

*In relation to child protection matters:*

- Keeping up to date and complying with any relevant changes in legislation and practices in relation to this policy
- Undertaking appropriate training and education on child protection, including recognising the signs and symptoms of child abuse, knowing how to respond, and understanding processes for reporting and managing concerns/incidents
- Identifying the potential for child abuse at Lake Boga Primary School OSHC, and developing and implementing effective prevention strategies in consultation with the Approved Provider and the Nominated Supervisor
- Ensuring that where the service has been notified of a court order prohibiting an adult from contacting an enrolled child, such contact does not occur while the child is on the service premises
- Identifying and implementing appropriate programs and practices to support the principles of a child safe organisation in consultation with the Approved Provider and Nominated Supervisor at the service
- Co-operating with other services and/or professionals (including Child FIRST) in the best interests of children and their families
- Informing families of support services available to them (such as Child FIRST), 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
- Implementing the procedures for reporting suspected child abuse and management of complaints
- 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 Lake Boga Primary School OSHC.

- Offering support to the child and their family, and to other educators and staff in response to concerns or reports relating to the health, safety and wellbeing of a child at Lake Boga Primary School OSHC
- Maintaining confidentiality at all times
- Reviewing this policy in consultation with the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, educators, staff, contractors and parents/guardians.

*In relation to providing a child safe environment at the service:*

- Maintaining learning environments that provide sufficient space, and include carefully chosen and well-maintained resources and equipment to ensure a safe environment
- Maintaining a regular cleaning schedule for all equipment to avoid cross-infection (refer to Infectious Diseases Policy)
- Maintaining a clean environment daily, and removing tripping/slipping hazards as soon as these become apparent
- Conducting a daily check of the building, ensuring all children are signed out of the service, doors and windows are closed and locked, and appliances are switched off etc. A written record of the daily check should be kept, signed by an educator and filed for future reference
- Ensuring they are not affected by alcohol or drugs (including prescription medication) or consume alcohol whilst at the service
- Educating and empowering children to talk about events and situations that make them feel uncomfortable
- staff and volunteers are advised to encourage and support children to express their culture and enjoy their cultural rights
- staff and volunteers are expected to actively support and facilitate participation and inclusion within the organisation by Aboriginal children and their families.
- racism will not be tolerated within the organisation and the organisation will respond, including potential consequences
- Ensuring children are adequately supervised at all times
- Ensuring the physical environment at the service is safe, secure and free from hazards for children
- Conducting risk assessments for excursions and considering children's safety when leaving the service premises
- Ensuring all equipment and materials used at the service meet relevant safety standards
- Ensuring the service is up to date with current legislation on child restraints in vehicles if transporting children
- Implementing and practising emergency and evacuation procedures (refer to *Emergency and Evacuation Policy*)
- Ensuring there are appropriate procedures in place for the safe delivery and collection of children (refer to *Delivery and Collection of Children Policy*)
- Ensuring that children at the service are not subjected to any form of corporal punishment, or any discipline that is unreasonable or excessive in the circumstances
- Implementing and reviewing this policy in consultation with the Nominated Supervisor, educators, staff, contractors and parents/guardians

- Identifying and providing appropriate resources and training to assist educators, staff, contractors, visitors, volunteers and students to implement this policy (refer to *Sources*)
- Protecting the rights of children and families, and encouraging their participation in decision-making
- Keeping up to date and complying with any changes in legislation and practices in relation to this policy

**Parents/Guardians** are responsible for:

- Reading and complying with this policy
- Reporting any concerns, including in relation to potential for child abuse, to the Nominated Supervisor
- Abiding by the service's *Code of Conduct*.

**Volunteers and students, whilst present at this service, will follow this policy and its procedures**

## Evaluation

In order to assess whether the values and purposes of the policy have been achieved, the **Approved Provider** will:

- Regularly seek feedback from everyone affected by the policy regarding its effectiveness, particularly in relation to identifying and responding to child safety concerns
- Monitor the implementation, compliance, complaints and incidents in relation to this policy
- Keep the policy up to date with current legislation, research, policy and best practice
- Revise the policy and procedures as part of the service's policy review cycle, or as required
- Notify parents/guardians at least 14 days before making any changes to this policy or its procedures (Regulation 172(2)).