

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

REED has a zero tolerance any form of child abuse. REED is committed to providing a child safe environment where children's safety and wellbeing is prioritised, supported and children feel respected, valued and encouraged to reach their full potential.

PURPOSE

REED will implement effective strategies to ensure employees understand their responsibilities and obligations in the timely and effective identification of, and response to, children who may be at risk of, or are experiencing abuse or neglect. Educators have an important role to support children to identify concerns that may jeopardise their safety, welfare, or wellbeing.

For concerns or disclosures of child sexual abuse please refer to the Mandatory Reporting Policy.

SCOPE

This policy applies to the approved provider, nominated supervisors, educators, staff, students, volunteers, families and children. This policy should be read in conjunction with the Interactions with Children, Child Safe Environment, Child Safeguarding, Delivery of Children to and Collection from Education and Care Service, Supervision, Privacy and Confidentiality, Incident Injury Trauma and Illness Policies.

EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL LAW AND REGULATIONS (WA)

84	Awareness of child protection law	S162A	Persons in day-to-day charge and nominated supervisors to have child protection training
86	Notification to parents of incident, injury, trauma and illness	S165	Offence to inadequately supervise children
87	Incident, injury, trauma and illness record	S165A	Offence relating to children leaving the Education and Care premises unauthorised
145	Staff records	S166	Offence to use inappropriate discipline
149	Volunteers and Students	S167	Offence relating to protection of children from harm and hazard
155	Interactions with children	S174	Offence to fail to notify certain information to Regulatory Authority
168	Education and care service must have policies and procedures	S175	Offence relating to the requirement to keep enrolment and other documents
170	Policies and procedures to be followed	S162A	Persons in day-to-day charge and nominated supervisors to have child protection training
175	Prescribed information to be notified to Regulatory Authority	S165	Offence to inadequately supervise children

176	Time to notify certain information to Regulatory Authority		
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LEGISLATION

<i>Children and Community Services Act 2004</i>	<i>Parliamentary Commissioner Amendment (Reportable Conduct) Act 2022</i>
<i>Working with Children (Criminal Record Checking) Amendment Act 2022</i>	

DEFINITIONS

Reportable Conduct Scheme: compels heads of organisations that exercise care, supervision, or authority over children to notify allegations of, or convictions for, child abuse by their employees (including contractors and volunteers) to the Ombudsman and then investigate these allegations.

Reportable Conduct: Any paid employee who has been alleged to, or has been convicted of Sexual offences, sexual misconduct, physical assault, significant neglect of a child; and any behaviour that causes significant emotional or psychological harm to a child.

Child Abuse: is any act or omission which directly or indirectly causes intentional harm or mistreatment of a child under the age of 18. It includes physical, sexual, psychological abuse as well as neglect.

Working With Children Check (WWC): A Working with Children Check is an assessment of whether a person poses an unacceptable risk to children. As part of the process, the WWC Screening Unit will look at criminal history, child protection information and other information.

THE APPROVED PROVIDER WILL ENSURE:

- There is a process in place for validating all educators', staff, volunteers' and students' Working with Children Checks, unless the person meets the criteria for exemption from a WWCC
- The service has policies and procedures in place for providing a child safe environment
- To develop and implement a reporting procedure for child abuse and neglect
- The Ombudsman is notified of reportable conduct or conviction following an allegation against an employee within 7 days of being aware
- All reporting requirements in relation to child abuse are fulfilled
- Notification to the TRBWA is provided within 7 days where the approved provider has reasonable grounds to suspect a registered teacher may have engaged in serious misconduct or has taught

with serious incompetence in circumstances where the teacher is dismissed, suspended or has resigned for a service.

- To develop and implement sound management of records
- There is a process in place so all nominated supervisors, educators, other staff are:
 - Aware of indicators showing a child may be at risk of harm or significant risk of harm
 - Provide resources to support educator's knowledge about child abuse and reporting
 - Provided with training and development in child protection on an annual basis
 - Provided with a reporting procedure and professional standards to safeguard children
 - Provided with support to adhere to a zero-tolerance stance against child abuse
 - Supported to create a maintain a child safe culture within the service by complying with the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations
- Complaint handling processes are child focused providing support and guidance for children to know who to talk to if they are feeling unsafe
- The child protection policy is available to families

NOMINATED SUPERVISOR WILL ENSURE:

- Child protection is a standing agenda item for staff meetings
- All educators and other staff are provided with a copy of the current *Mandatory Reporting Policy* and *Child Protection Policy and related procedures* as part of the induction process
- Any educators and other staff of the service complete a course in child protection annually
- Access is provided to all staff regarding relevant legislations, regulations, standards and other resources to help educators, staff, and volunteers meet their obligations
- Records of abuse or suspected abuse are kept in line with our *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy*
- The regulatory authority is notified through the NQA-ITS (within 7 days) of any allegation or incident where it is reasonably believed that physical and/or sexual abuse of a child has occurred or is occurring while the child is being educated and cared for by the Service
- The regulatory authority is notified through the NQA-ITS (within 24hrs) of any complaints alleging that a serious incident has occurred or is occurring at the service
- The regulatory authority is notified through the NQA-ITS (within 24hrs) of a serious incident, which may include physical or sexual abuse where emergency services attended the service
- Families are referred to appropriate agencies where there are concerns about the parents' ability to care for the child safely, including the protecting them from harm. Family consent will be sought before making referrals.

- The Approved Provider is advised of any circumstances that may affect an educator's WWC or fit and proper status
- The Approved Provider is advised of any child abuse concerns
- The Approved Provider is advised of any instances of reportable conduct (*see definition*)

EDUCATORS AND OTHER STAFF WILL:

- Contact emergency services 000 if there is an **immediate danger** to a child and intervene if it is safe to do so
- Be able to recognise indicators of abuse
- Participate in annual child protection training
- Respect what a child discloses and take it seriously
- Follow the Child Protection Reporting Procedure
- Promote the welfare, safety, and wellbeing of children at the Service
- Prepare accurate records recording exactly what happened, conversations that took place and what was observed
- Be familiar with and understand the Child Protection Procedure and related resources
- Provide valid Working with Children Check details during their employment at the service
- Advise the Nominated Supervisor of any circumstances that may affect their WWC or fit and proper status
- Allow children to be part of the decision-making process where appropriate
- Foster a culture of openness and respect where children feel safe to disclose risk of harm
- Educate children about protective behaviours
- Identify and notify any concerns around staff, educator or volunteer behaviour or conduct to the Nominated Supervisor
- Report any allegations of reportable conduct (*see definition*) to the Nominated Supervisor

FAMILIES WILL:

- Be informed of REEDs Child Protection Policy
- Maintain open communication and share relevant information about their children on arrival
- Understand that REED have a zero tolerance to child abuse and neglect and agree that REED will disseminate any relevant information to prescribed authorities
- Recognise REEDs commitment and obligations as an Early Childhood Education and Care Provider to report any instance and/or disclosure of child abuse

CONFIDENTIALITY

It is important that any notification remains confidential, as it is vitally important to remember that no confirmation of any allegation can be made until the matter is investigated. The individual who makes the notification should not inform the suspected perpetrator (if known). This ensures the matter can be investigated without contamination of evidence or pre-rehearsed statements. It also minimises the risk of retaliation on the child for disclosing.

RELATED DOCUMENTS

RESOURCES	PROCEDURES
Recognise Child Abuse Information Booklet	Child Protection Reporting Procedure

SOURCE

Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2014).
 ACECQA. (2023.) Embedding the National Child Safe Principles.
 Australian Government Department of Education. [Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia](#). V2.0, 2022
Children and Community Services Act 2004
 Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics. (2016).
 Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010. (Amended 2023).
[Education and Care Services National Regulations](#). (Amended 2023).
Freedom of Information Act 1992
 Government of Western Australia. Department of Communities, Child Protection and Family Support. (2024).
[About mandatory reporting legislation](#)
 Guide to the National Quality Framework. (Amended 2023).
 Ombudsman Western Australia. Early Childhood Education and Care Sector Reporting Obligations 2023.
[Western Australian Education and Care Services National Regulations](#)

REVIEW

POLICY REVIEWED	MODIFICATIONS	NEXT REVIEW DATE
NOVEMBER 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Modification of template Revision of content (succinct and explicit) 	November 2025
AUGUST 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> policy maintenance - no major changes to policy link to Western Australian Education and Care Services National Regulations added in 'Sources' hyperlinks checked and repaired as required 	AUGUST 2024
AUGUST 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New policy drafted for ECEC services located in Western Australia 	AUGUST 2023