# Operations Practices Manual




Our Patch Operational Practises are designed to support each child, family, the school community, and our Educators in all that we do through connecting our core values with the My Time Our Place framework and the National Quality Framework

Our core values are embedded in all of our practises so together we provide a patch that reflects the voice of the child and enables every child to grow.

**Acknowledgement**

Our Patch acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the traditional custodians and owners of this land and waters. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present and to the children who are their leaders of tomorrow. We acknowledge their history and living culture and the many thousands of years in which they have raised their children to be safe and strong.

## Our Patch Group

**Our Patch Education Pty Ltd | School Plus Foundation Ltd | Amaze Active Outside School Hours Care Ltd**

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# Revisions

| Policy Name | Revision date | Revision Made |
|---|---|---|
| Educator Policies – Participation of Volunteers, Students and Short-Term Third-Party Providers | 03/03/2021 | Policy, strategies and Recruitment Screening, Risk Management Matrix and Definitions used were updated |
| Safeguarding Children's Policy | 07/04/2021 | Policy updated to reflect Victorian Child Safe Standards |
| Late Fee Payment and Account Exclusion | 23/04/2021 | Policy added to Operational Practices Manual |
| Supervision Policies – Delivery and Collect of Children | 09/08/2021 | Updated Late/Non-Arrival of Children – when children are non-attendance at school or went home early. |
| Priority of Access/Waitlist | 09/08/2021 | This section was removed due to no longer being an Australian Government guideline by Services Australia. |
| Reference to Family Assistance Office | 09/08/2021 | Reference to the Family Assistance Office was updated to their new name of Services Australia. |
| Full review of the document completed | February to April 2024 | The whole document was reviewed by the Leadership team during this period. |
| Safeguarding Children Policy — Guiding Values | March 2026 | Paramount consideration statutory duty added (National Law s.5A, 27 Feb 2026). Victorian Child Safe Standards updated to 2022 version (11 standards). NQS Element 2.2.3 renamed. |
| Risk Management Policy | March 2026 | Paramount consideration duty and tripled penalty regime (from 1 Jan 2026) added. |
| Governance Structure | March 2026 | Paramount consideration duty, related providers monitoring powers (27 Feb 2026), and NQS QA7 child safe reference added. |
| Governance and Management Policy | March 2026 | Paramount consideration duty, NQS QA7 update, tripled penalties, and National Worker Register reference added. |

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|---|---|---|
| Code of Conduct | March 2026 | Inappropriate Conduct criminal offence (s.165A) defined. Regulatory suspension and training direction powers added. From 27 Feb 2026. |
| Responding to Child Harm Reports and Allegations | March 2026 | Notification timeframe for physical/sexual abuse updated from 7 days to 24 hours (Reg 176, effective 1 Sep 2025). Paramount consideration added to Guiding Values. |
| Safeguarding Children Incident Policy | March 2026 | 24-hour notification timeframe for physical/sexual abuse explicitly stated (Reg 176, effective 1 Sep 2025). |
| Criminal Acts and Misconduct | March 2026 | Inappropriate conduct offence (s.165A) and expanded regulatory authority powers added. Reportable Conduct Scheme cross-reference updated. |
| Recruitment and Screening Policy | March 2026 | Prohibition notice pre-screening obligation added (National Law amendment, effective 10 Dec 2025). |
| Safeguarding Children Induction and Training Program | March 2026 | Mandatory Geccko national child safety training added. Foundation modules required by 27 Aug 2026 for existing staff; immediately on commencement for new staff from 27 Feb 2026. |
| Career Training and Development | March 2026 | Mandatory Geccko training added as a required training component from 27 Feb 2026. |
| Working with Children's Check / Blue Cards | March 2026 | Hard pre-commencement requirement added. Mandatory status change reporting to regulatory authority added. From 27 Feb 2026. |
| Staff Records | March 2026 | National Early Childhood Worker Register obligation added (National Law Part 6B, from 27 Feb 2026). |
| Tobacco, Vape, Alcohol and Drug Free | March 2026 | Regulation 82 citation updated to confirm 1 Sep 2025 amendment explicitly covers vaping substances and vaping devices. |
| Educator's Personal Electronic Devices and Social Media | March 2026 | Part 6A criminal prohibition on personal device use when working directly with children explicitly stated. From 27 Feb 2026. |
| Usage of Personal Devices Policy | March 2026 | Part 6A criminal offence status explicitly stated. Statutory Risk Minimisation Plan standard for exemptions updated. From 27 Feb 2026. |

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|---|---|---|
| NEW: Digital Safety, Images and Photography Policy | March 2026 | NEW POLICY added. Mandatory under Regulation 168 (effective 1 Sep 2025). Covers all required elements of Reg 168 and ACECQA National Model Code (July 2024). Insert after p.182. |
| NEW: National Early Childhood Worker Register Policy | March 2026 | NEW POLICY added. National Law Part 6B — effective 27 Feb 2026. Insert into Employment Policies section. |
| NEW: Reportable Conduct Scheme Policy | March 2026 | NEW POLICY added. QLD from 1 Jul 2026; VIC applicable since 2017. Insert into Safeguarding section. |
| Supervision of Children | March 2026 | Regulation 115 ongoing waiver removal noted. Supervision risk assessment for each Patch required. From 27 Feb 2026. |
| Excursions | March 2026 | Regulation 102D (risk assessment) and 102E (written authorisation) requirements explicitly cited. Regular outing authorisation framework added. |
| Emergency Policies — Emergency and Evacuation Process | March 2026 | Lockdown/shelter-in-place procedure added. Regulation 97 cited. Rehearsal record-keeping requirements added (minimum 2 rehearsals per year). |
| Infectious Disease and Pandemic Response Policy (formerly COVID-19) | March 2026 | Policy renamed and broadened. Stale COVID-specific references and links removed. Staying Healthy 6th Edition (2021) referenced. State health authority website links updated. |
| All policies referencing NQS QA2 and QA7 | March 2026 | NQS Element 2.2.3 renamed 'Child Safety and Protection' (1 Jan 2026). NQS QA7 updated to reference child safe services (1 Jan 2026). Appendix 12 to be updated. Nutrition policy updated to 2024 Dietary Guidelines and 2021 Caring for Children framework. |
| Safeguarding Children Policy — Guiding Values | April 2026 | Further review: QLD Child Safe Organisations Act 2024 and SA Child Safe Environments Act 2019 added to related legislation. UNCRC added. Child voice and participation principle (NQS Element 2.2.1) expanded. Plain-language educator note added. |
| Risk Management Policy | April 2026 | Further review: Risk Register review cycle formalised (each term + within 5 days of incident). Excursion and transport risk coverage clarified. Wellbeing risk category added. Plain-language educator note added. |

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| Governance Structure | April 2026 | Further review: Three-level governance structure summary added. Family complaints and grievance pathway added as a governance element. Plain-language educator note added. |
| Code of Conduct | April 2026 | Further review: Digital conduct (personal social media, messaging apps) clarified. Professional boundaries section expanded. Plain-language educator note added. |
| Responding to Child Harm Reports and Allegations | April 2026 | Further review: Step-by-step notification guide added. State-specific mandatory reporting obligations (QLD/VIC/SA) set out in full. Plain-language educator note added. |
| Safeguarding Children Incident Policy | April 2026 | Further review: Confidentiality obligations during investigation clarified. Support for children and families following an incident added. |
| Criminal Acts and Misconduct | April 2026 | Further review: SA Reportable Conduct Scheme gap noted. Duty to report colleague misconduct clarified. Whistleblower protections added. |
| Recruitment and Screening Policy | April 2026 | Further review: Pre-engagement screening checklist consolidated (WWCC, prohibition notice, NQAITS, qualifications, identity, references, Code of Conduct, Commitment to Children). Ongoing monitoring obligations (term re-check of NQAITS) added. |
| Safeguarding Children Induction and Training Program | April 2026 | Further review: Step-by-step Geccko registration guide added. Technical difficulty protocol added. Record-keeping for regulatory inspection confirmed. |
| WWCC / Blue Cards Policy | April 2026 | Further review: State WWCC portal quick-reference links added (QLD: bluecard.qld.gov.au; VIC: service.vic.gov.au/wwc; SA: screening.sa.gov.au). Interstate worker WWCC obligations clarified. |
| Staff Records | April 2026 | Further review: Step-by-step NQAITS registration guide added. Record retention period confirmed (7 years or until person turns 25, whichever is later). Privacy Act obligations noted. Prohibition notice check and Code of Conduct sign-off added to checklist. |
| Tobacco, Vape, Alcohol and Drug Free | April 2026 | Further review: Vaping device definition expanded to cover all current device types. State legislation quick-reference table added. Visitor management obligation added. |

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| Educator's Personal Electronic Devices Policy | April 2026 | Further review: "Working directly with children" defined. Smartwatch clarification added. Emergency personal device use protocol added. Leader session-start device check requirement added. |
| Usage of Personal Devices Policy | April 2026 | Further review: BYOD arrangements explicitly prohibited. Exemption Register requirement added. Leader monitoring responsibilities formalised. |
| Digital Safety, Images and Photography Policy | April 2026 | Further review: AI/deepfake prohibition added. Social media and educator digital footprint guidance expanded. Data breach response procedure added (aligned to Notifiable Data Breaches scheme). Consent form content requirements specified by use category. eSafety Commissioner reference added. |
| National Early Childhood Worker Register Policy | April 2026 | Further review: Step-by-step NQAITS registration guide for Leaders added. Register error correction process added. Privacy notice to workers obligation added. Term-based audit process formalised. Regulatory authority query response protocol added. |
| Reportable Conduct Scheme Policy | April 2026 | Further review: QLD 30-day clock trigger clarified (runs from CEO awareness). VIC 3-business-day timeframe confirmed. SA gap and mandatory reporting fallback noted. Risk assessment for stood-down staff added. Natural justice obligations expanded. Staff support (EAP) during investigation added. 45-year record retention confirmed. |
| Supervision of Children | April 2026 | Further review: Active supervision defined. Ratios quick-reference table added. Supervision of children with additional needs addressed. Transition and handover supervision protocol formalised. |
| Excursions Policy | April 2026 | Further review: Transport safety obligations specified (seatbelts, child restraints, driver licence, no child left in vehicle, headcount after transit). Water safety protocol expanded (enhanced ratios, swimming ability identification). Sun safety obligations added. Lost child on excursion procedure added. Excursion cancellation protocol added. |
| Emergency and Evacuation Policy | April 2026 | Further review: EMP minimum content requirements specified. Roles and responsibilities table added. Extreme heat procedure added. VIC bushfire procedure added (Code Red closure policy). Family reunification procedure added. Post-emergency debrief obligations expanded. EMP review cycle formalised. |

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| Infectious Disease and Pandemic Response Policy | April 2026 | Further review: Illness symptom response procedure added for educators. Common exclusion periods quick-reference table added (9 illnesses). Return-to-service requirements specified. Family notification requirements clarified. Immunisation records best practice added. Hygiene response triggers added. Outbreak management escalation process added. |
| NQS Quality Area References — All Policies | April 2026 | Further review: Full NQS QA1–QA7 summary table for OSHC added. MTOP V2.0 (2022) confirmed as applicable framework. QA6 family engagement obligations updated. Appendix 12 update checklist expanded with all new legislative references. QIP alignment obligations added. |
| Reportable Conduct Scheme Policy — Victoria | May 2026 | Victorian regulator updated from Commission for Children and Young People (CCYPV) to the Social Services Regulator (SSR). Responsibility for the Victorian Reportable Conduct Scheme and Child Safe Standards transferred to the SSR on 23 February 2026 under the Social Services Regulation Amendment (Child Safety, Complaints and Worker Regulation) Act 2025 (Vic). Notification now via SSR webform within 3 business days. |
| Reportable Conduct Scheme Policy — Queensland | May 2026 | Queensland regulator corrected from the (non-existent) "Commission for Children and Young People Queensland" to the Queensland Family and Child Commission (QFCC) — the body designated under the Child Safe Organisations Act 2024 to administer the Reportable Conduct Scheme (ECEC from 1 July 2026). Penalty for failure to notify (100 penalty units = $16,690) added. |
| Responding to Child Harm Policy — Harm definition | May 2026 | Definition of "harm" updated to reflect the QLD Child Safe Organisations Act 2024 — harm does not need to be "significant" to trigger action by Our Patch Group as a child-safe entity. Distinction added between the (lower) threshold for organisational action and the (higher) threshold for mandatory notification to statutory child protection. Plain-language educator note added. |
| Safeguarding Children Policy — Queensland | May 2026 | Queensland paragraph rewritten to reflect that the Child Safe Organisations Act 2024 commenced for ECEC services on 1 January 2026. 10 QLD Child Safe Standards and Universal Principle confirmed as mandatory. QFCC named as oversight body. Third-Party Provider Policy related-legislation list updated accordingly. |
| Related Legislation lists — Victorian | May 2026 | References to "Victorian Child Safe Standards 2015" and standalone "Victorian Standards" updated to the current 11 |

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|---|---|---|
| Child Safe Standards | | Standards (Ministerial Order 1359, updated 2022). Standard 1 (cultural safety for Aboriginal children) noted as a stand-alone Standard. SSR named as the body administering compliance from 23 February 2026. |
| Responding to Child Harm Policy — QLD mandatory reporting | May 2026 | Reference to "Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs (CYJMA)" removed; replaced with the Child Safety Service Centre contact pathway (1800 177 135 after-hours). VIC and SA pathways confirmed. 24-hour notification list corrected to direct notifications to the regulatory authority via the ACECQA portal (not state Departments of Education). |
| Safeguarding Children Policy — Universal Principle | May 2026 | New paragraph added at the head of Section 5 (Child Safe Standards) setting out the Universal Principle (QLD), the stand-alone Standard 1 (VIC), and the SA framework. Establishes cultural safety as a child safety requirement, not an optional extra. Foreshadows a future structural move of cultural safety from a sub-point under diversity to a stand-alone section. |
| Code of Conduct section — structural replacement | May 2026 | The Manual's Code of Conduct and Safeguarding Children section (p.58–66) replaced with a short cover page that points to the binding Code of Conduct v2.0 and explains the operational implementation that the Manual still owns. Structural change — required Approved Provider / Board sign-off. Archived prior text retained for audit history. |
| Code of Conduct — Photographs of children | May 2026 | Subsection at p.64 replaced with a single cross-reference to Code of Conduct v2.0 Part B §13 and the Digital Safety, Images and Photography Policy. Annual family consent refresh confirmed. Explicit prohibitions on photos in change rooms, toilets and sleep areas. Personal smartwatches and cameras explicitly named alongside personal phones. |
| Code of Conduct — Professional boundaries (relatives) | May 2026 | Direct-relative carve-out at p.62 replaced. Now turns on disclosure-and-acknowledgement (Conflict of Interest register) rather than on a relationship category. Recruitment / Onboarding checklist updated to require disclosure on commencement. |
| Code of Conduct — Bathroom/Change room arrangements | May 2026 | Same-gender supervision rule at p.66 removed. Replaced with line-of-sight supervision, two-adult rule wherever practicable, room-specific Supervision Plan, and explicit respect for the child's gender identity. Aligned to Code of Conduct v2.0 Part B §14. |

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|---|---|---|
| Code of Conduct — Acknowledgement frequency | May 2026 | New paragraph added clarifying that acknowledgement is required on commencement, annually, and within 30 days of any material revision (per Code of Conduct v2.0 §2 and §20). Recruitment / Onboarding checklist updated. Annual and revision-triggered acknowledgement campaigns now owned by the Safeguarding & Compliance Team. |

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# Entity Clarification

Our Patch will be reflected on all correspondence and relevant staffing documentation and will reference the associated company that are staff are employed by.

The associated group of entities includes:

- School Plus Foundation
- Our Patch Education
- Our Patch OSHC

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## Our Patch - GROW Value:

Safeguarding Childrens Policies are embedded in all parts of our organisation. Everything we do at Our Patch is about safeguarding our children in our programs. Our GROW value is the cornerstone of safeguarding children.

Our policies for this Value are as follows:

- Safeguarding Children Policy
- Safeguarding Children Commitment
- Risk Management Policy
- Risk Management Process
- Our Patch Governance Structure
- Risk Register – Child Abuse Incidents Allegations
- Code of Conduct
- Recruitment Policy
- Safeguarding Children Induction Training Program
- Volunteer, student, provider induction Checklist
- Safeguarding Information for Parents
- Guidelines for Parents and Guardians
- Safeguarding Statement for children
- Childrens Rights and Behaviours
- Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Engagement Procedure
- Responding to Child Abuse Incidents
- Safeguarding Children Incident Policy
- Child Abuse – ACF Report Form
- Child Abuse Incident and Allegations Register
- Policy Review
- Monitoring and Supervising Personnel Policy
- Monitoring Third Party Providers Procedure

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## Core Value - Grounded

- This is about yourself as an individual, how we conduct ourselves, our behaviours, words we choose to speak, how we listen to others and how we reflect upon all that we do
- We thrive on our personal growth by understanding why we think the way that we do. We consider and look upon our life experience and personal beliefs
- With all this in mind, we approach day by day using our experiences, our thoughts and living in the present moment
- We take responsibility for ourselves to be the best we can be

| Link | Further Information |
|---|---|
| Quality Area | Quality Area 3: Physical Environment<br>Quality Area 4: Staffing Arrangements |
| Learning Outcome | Outcome 1: Children have a strong sense of identity<br>• Children feel safe, secure, and supported<br>• Children develop their autonomy, inter-dependence, resilience and sense of agency<br>• Children develop knowledgeable and confident self-identities<br>• Children learn to interact in relation to others with care, empathy and respect<br><br>Outcome 2: Children are connected with and contribute to their world<br>• Children develop a sense of belonging to groups and communities and an<br>understanding of the reciprocal rights and responsibilities necessary for active community participation<br>• Children respond to diversity with respect<br>• Children become aware of fairness<br>• Children become socially responsible and show respect for the environment |

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**Educator Qualifications and Ratios:**

- Determination of the Responsible Person present
- Nominated Supervisor
- Role of Educational Leader
- Participation of Volunteers and Students
- Duty of Care

**Employment Policies:**

- Career Training and Development
- Working with Children's Check
- Equal opportunity

**Environmental Policies:**

- Tobacco, alcohol, and drug free
- Telephone Amenities
- Our Patch Space Requirements
- Cleaning and maintenance of space
- Dangerous Products and Equipment
- Storage and Maintenance of resources
- Water Safety
- Onsite Pools
- Water Activities
- Environment Statement and Sustainability

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## Core Value - Relationships

- Grounded and aware, we start to build an inner relationship with ourselves; only then can we start the process of building relationship with others
- Working with other individuals in an open transparent manner allows us to work towards strong, purposeful and engaging relationships
- We speak openly about situations as they surface and trust that together we work as one to solve and conquer

| Link | Further Information |
|---|---|
| Quality Area | Quality Area 5: Relationships with Children<br>Quality Area 6: Collaborative Partnerships with families and communities |
| Learning Outcome | Learning Outcome 5: Children are effective communicators<br>• Children interact verbally and non-verbally with others for a range of purposes<br>• Children engage with a range of texts and gain meaning from these texts<br>• Children collaborate with others, express ideas, and make meaning using a range of media and communication technologies |

**Relationships with Children:**

- Interactions and contact with children
- Guiding and supporting children
- Suspension/Exclusion
- Children's feedback and grievances
- Supporting children with additional needs
- Diversity and Inclusion

**Relationships with families and community:**

- Family participation and communication
- School and Local Community Involvement
- Fundraising
- Family Grievance and complaints
- Family Confidentiality
- Partnership responsibilities and communication

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## Core Value – Ownership

- We empower each other to take ownership of the important role we all play at Our Patch – our children, our families, our teams, and our schools.
- We provide an environment where we can feel a sense of "ours"- so that we can create the opportunity to allow for expression and creativity
- Belonging and contributing to the passion of Our Patch will continue to add value to every individual that is our offering
- We breathe ownership, pride and satisfaction in all that we do

| Link | Further Information |
|---|---|
| Quality Area | Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety<br>Quality Area 7: Leadership and Management of Service |
| Learning Outcome | Learning Outcome 3: Children have a strong sense of wellbeing<br>• Children become strong in their social and emotional wellbeing<br>• Children take increasing responsibility for their own health and physical wellbeing |

**Medical Policies:**

- Dealing with Medical Conditions
    - Administration of First Aid
    - Incident, Injury, Illness and Trauma
    - Serious or Fatal Incident
    - First Aid Kit Management

- Dealing with an Infectious disease
    - Hygiene and Infection Control
    - Personal Hygiene
    - Blood and Body Fluids Precautions

- Health Care Policies:
    - Dental Care
    - Nutrition, food and beverages, dietary requirements
        - Preparing and Serving food
    - Sun Protection - Extreme Heat Policy
    - Sleep/Rest, comfort, and clothing

**Supervision Policies:**

- Supervision of children
    - Bathroom Supervision
    - Children Leaving area of supervision
- Delivery and Collection of children
    - Late/Non-Arrival of a child
    - Late/Non-Collection of a child

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    - Authorisation to collect children
    - On the Day Attendances
- Parental Responsibility Arrangements
- Acceptance and Refusal of Authorisation
- Movement of children to the service
- Movement between school and service
- Travelling on Excursions

**Emergency Policies:**

- Emergency and Evacuation process
    - Fire on site
    - Natural Disasters
    - Improper relations
    - External Dangers

**Administrative Policies:**

- Governance and Management of service
    - Confidentiality of records
    - Archiving of records
- Child Enrolment
- Child Attendance Records
    - Definition of a Booking
    - Cancellation of a booking
- Hours of operations
- Orientation Process
- Child Care Subsidy
    - Late Payment
    - Fee for late collection
    - Child Absences
- Policy Management

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## Core Value – Wonder

- The freedom to create magic in all that we do
- Be creative – imagine the endless opportunities and seek to deliver
- Challenge the everyday by thinking what more we could do together
- Think outside the square – research, be passionate and dream

| Link | Further Information |
|---|---|
| Quality Area | Quality Area 1: Educational Program and Practise |
| Learning Outcome | Learning Outcome 4: Children are confident and involved learners<br>• Children develop dispositions such as curiosity, cooperation, confidence, creativity, commitment, enthusiasm, persistence, imagination and reflexivity<br>• Children use a range of skills and processes such as problem solving, inquiry, experimentation, hypothesising, researching, and investigating<br>• Children transfer and adapt what they have learned from one context to another<br>• Children resource their own learning through connecting with people, place, technologies, and natural and processed materials |

**Programming Policies:**

- Program Planning
- Critical Reflection Evaluation
- Animals in the Space
- Programming with music
- Extra-Curricular Activities
- Excursions
- Incursions
- Classification rating
- Children's personal electronic devices

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# Policy Outline and Descriptions Explained:

## Policy Name:

- The name of this Policy

## Purpose of the Policy:

- Talk about WHY Our Patch has this policy in place
- Expand on the Risk/awareness/assurance we do at Our Patch

## Prerequisite Policy:

- Other policies that are essential to this policy

## Policy:

Explains WHAT this policy is all about

- Understanding this policy

## Impact for Our Patch:

Impact this policy will have on the children/families/ educators/schools/ that attend Our Patch

## Strategies:

Documents HOW this policy is embedded into our practises

## Related Policies:

References to other policies

## Related legislation:

Describes the particular legislation that supports this policy

- Describes which legislation requires Our Patch to have this policy in place

## Resources:

Documents what resources are used to help form this policy

- Provides a list of resources for further reading
- Links to more information to research in support of the policy

## How Our Patch Policies Read:

Each one of Our Patch Values aligns with one of the five outcomes of children from our My Time Our Place Framework and one of the Quality Areas specified in the National Quality Framework. This will be described in each section of our Operational Practises Manual.

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# Definitions:

1. **ACECQA:**
   The Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority - an independent national body who helps governments deliver the National Quality Framework for children's education and care.

2. **Additional Needs:**
   Refers to children's diverse circumstances and additional vulnerabilities and includes the following groups:
   - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders
   - Children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
   - Children with a disability, medical condition (diagnosed and undiagnosed)
   - Children with challenging behaviour/s
   - LGBTQI+ (Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex)
   - Children who are unable to live at home

3. **Authorised person refer to:**

i. A person with a current working with children check or working with children card. This could be an Our Educator.

ii. A parent/guardian for a child who is being educated and cared for by the education and care service.

iii. A person nominated by a parent/guardian of a child who is being care for at Our Patch. This could be a family friend the parent/guardian gives permission to collect their child from Our Patch.

iv. Where an emergency has occurred, medical personnel, or emergency service personnel. This may be a paramedic attending the program for an incident, where 000 was contacted by Our Educator.

v. A person who is allowed to stay at Our Patch under our laws and regulations without holding a working with children check or a working with children card.

3. **Childcare Subsidy (CCS):** funding offered by the government to families/carers to provide support for the cost of childcare.

4. **Critical Reflection:** the ongoing process of reviewing thoughts and experiences within the program. When we critically reflect, we look at what worked well, where we can improve and where to next? All Educators will contribute to Critical Reflections.

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5. **Educational Leader:** a person nominated by Our Patch to lead the implementation of a quality educational program using the cycle of planning, and collaboration and Area Managering of their team, and ensure their practises are guided by the learning frameworks and the learning outcomes.

6. **Extra-curricular Activity:** an out of school hours activity managed by an external provider. Examples are: Kelly Sports, Coding, Robotics etc. If a child at Our Patch wishes to attend an Extra-curricular activity, parents/guardian must provide permission for their child to attend.

7. **Services Australia** enables families to access multiple government services from one place and offer a range of payments to support families with their responsibilities where eligible.

8. **Grow Educator:** Our Patch Grow Educators use Our Patch Values – Grounded, Relationships, Ownership and Wonder, to empower and support all children who attend Our Patch with a focus on the additional needs of each Our Patch Programs. Grow Educator also supports and provides guidance to Leader and Educators.

9. **XAP:** Our Patch Group's primary operating system. Used for enrolments and bookings, attendance, family communication, the Incident, Injury, Illness and Trauma (IIIT) record, medical condition flags, and as the audit-trail repository for parent acknowledgements of incident records.

10. **Learning Outcomes:** There are 5 Learning Outcomes under My Time Our Place framework. They are:
    - Children have a strong sense of identity.
    - Children are connected with and contribute to their world.
    - Children have a strong sense of wellbeing.
    - Children are confident and involved learners.
    - Children are effective communicators.

11. **My Time Our Place:** approved learning framework for school aged children used by Our Patch.

12. **Nominated Supervisor:** person nominated by Our Patch who is legally responsible for day-to-day management of a program.

13. **Leader:** person nominated by Our Patch to be responsible for the day-to-day operations of the Before and After School Care and Holiday Care programs.

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14. **Educator:** supports the Leader in the delivery of the Before and After School Care and Holiday Care programs.

15. **Reflection Journal:** a diary of the offerings provided to children with further information about what the children experienced, and what they learned. The Reflection Journal can be found in the Family Patch.

16. **Regulatory Authority:** governing body for the delivery of the National Quality Framework for each state or territory.

17. **Responsible Person:** a nominated person who is present at the service at all times and is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the program.

18. **Stakeholder:** person or group who have interest in and can affect or be affected by the activity of a business.

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# Our Patch – GROW Value: Safeguarding Policies

Safeguarding Childrens Policies are embedded in all parts of our organisation. Everything we do at Our Patch is about safeguarding our children in our programs. Our GROW value is the cornerstone of safeguarding children.

- Safeguarding Children Policy
- Safeguarding Children Commitment
- Risk Management Policy
- Risk Management Process
- Governance Structure
- Code of Conduct in Safeguarding Children
- Providing a Child Safe Environment
- Serious Incident Reporting Policy
- Reportable Conduct Scheme Policy
- Reporting Obligations by State
- Recruitment & Screening Policy
- Safeguarding Children Induction & Training Program
- Participation of Volunteers, Students and Short-Term Third Party Providers
- Safeguarding Information for Parents / Guardians
- Guidelines for Parents and Guardians
- Children's Rights and Behaviours
- Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Engagement Procedure
- Family Grievance and Complaints Policy
- Safeguarding Children Incident Policy
- Criminal Acts and Misconduct
- Safeguarding review Policy
- Monitoring and Supervising Personnel Policy
- Monitoring Third Party Providers Policy and Procedure

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# Safeguarding Children Policy

## Guiding Values

In keeping children safe, the following values are a mechanism for guiding our actions and assisting in decision-making:

- Safeguarding children is a shared responsibility; it is reliant on all individuals within Our Patch Group to keep children safe in our care.
- Any form of harm and risk of harm towards children will not be tolerated and immediate action will be taken upon report of any suspected harmful or abusive behaviours.
- The safety, rights and best interests of children are the PARAMOUNT CONSIDERATION in every action, decision and interaction made by all staff, volunteers, students and approved providers involved with Our Patch Group. This is a statutory duty under section 5A of the Education and Care Services National Law (effective 27 February 2026) and takes precedence over all other considerations.
- We are accountable to the children we work with by fostering high ethical standards in a culture of openness and transparency.
- We empower children by informing them of their rights and responsibilities and support them to speak up about any matters of importance to them.
- Children have the right to be heard. Consistent with NQS Element 2.2.1 (Children's Rights), educators actively seek and respect children's views on matters that affect them, and respond to children's concerns promptly and without dismissal.
- All personnel will treat every child with dignity, respect and fairness, regardless of ability, cultural background, gender, age or family circumstance.

## Purpose

Our Patch has zero-tolerance towards any form of harm or risk of harm of children. We are committed to the rights of all children to feel and be safe when participating in our organisation's programs, activities, and events.

The purpose of this policy is to outline the responsibilities, procedures, and practices required by all personnel involved with Our Patch in relation to keeping children free from harm and risk of harm.

This Safeguarding Children Policy has been developed in consultation with the Australian Childhood Foundation.

Our Safeguarding Children Policy also supports our international obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Child Safe Standards recommended by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse and is aligned with the Australian Human Rights Commission, National Principles for Child Safe Organisation, South Australia Legislation - Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017 and Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Act 2016, Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 and the Victorian Child Safe

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Standards. As such, our policies and procedures reflect child safe legislation and promote best practice and care for the children within our organisation.

We take seriously our responsibility to deliver a learning environment that is caring, nurturing and safe. We are committed to ensuring the safety of all children to whom we provide programs, activities or events and ensuring compliance with all requirements set out in this policy.

## The National Principles for Child Safe Organisations and the State-Based Child Safe Standards (QLD, VIC, SA)

On 19 February 2019 the Council of Australian Governments (COAG), which included the South Australian and Victorian Governments, endorsed the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations (National Principles). The National Principles embed the child safe standards recommended by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse(the Royal Commission).

The Victorian Child Safe Standards (11 Standards, Ministerial Order 1359, updated 2022) remain mandatory for organisations in accordance with the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005. Standard 1 — cultural safety for Aboriginal children — is a stand-alone Standard. From 23 February 2026, compliance with the Standards is administered by the Social Services Regulator (SSR), having transferred from the Commission for Children and Young People.

We also support and comply with the legislation in South Australia. - Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017 and Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Act 2016, we work towards ensuring our policies and process reflect the requirements as part of this legislation.

Section 5 of Safeguarding Children Policy outlines, the National Principles and Victorian Standards and how Our Patch embeds these standards into our policies and practices.

**Queensland**

Queensland has legislated 10 Child Safe Standards and a Universal Principle under the Child Safe Organisations Act 2024. These commenced for ECEC services on 1 January 2026 and are now mandatory for all Our Patch Group services delivered in Queensland.
The 10 QLD Child Safe Standards are aligned to the 10 National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, but the QLD framework adds key obligations specific to Queensland services:

- the Universal Principle — every Child Safe Standard must be implemented in a way that promotes and upholds the right to cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children;
- a broader definition of harm — harm does not need to be "significant" for the organisation to act (see Responding to Child Harm Policy);
- explicit recognition of peer-to-peer harm;

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- oversight by the Queensland Family and Child Commission (QFCC), with public information available at www.qfcc.qld.gov.au;
- the Reportable Conduct Scheme applies to the ECEC sector from 1 July 2026 (see Reportable Conduct Scheme Policy);
- Blue Card (Working with Children Check) requirements continue to apply.

Where this Manual sets out how Our Patch Group implements each of the National Principles, the corresponding QLD Child Safe Standard is implemented at the same time, with the Universal Principle running through each Standard.

## Scope

Our Safeguarding Children Policy applies to all personnel, including employees, casual staff, third-party providers and volunteers involved with Our Patch.

This policy applies in all Our Patch operational environments and without fail wherever children are participating in Our Patch programs, activities, and events. Adherence to this policy is a mandatory requirement for anyone involved with Our Patch programs, activities and events.

## Responsibilities

Safeguarding children is a shared responsibility within Our Patch. It is the responsibility of all personnel, including employees, casual staff, third-party providers and volunteers involved with Our Patch to:

- protect children from all forms of harm and risk of harm by our people
- be alert to incidents of child harm and risk of harm occurring outside the scope of our operations and services that may have an impact on the children to whom we provide a service; and
- create and maintain a child safe culture that is understood, endorsed, and put into action by all the individuals who work for, support, volunteer or access our programs, activities and events.

We expect anyone involved with Our Patch, regardless of their role or level of responsibility, to act to safeguard children from such harm by:

- adopting appropriate safeguarding practice and behaviours as set within our policy and procedural guidelines, when carrying out their roles, and reporting any harm and risk of harm of which they become aware to external authorities responsible for child protection or to police, (If any suspicions of harm or risk of harm to a child or young person is suspected, they must report directly to CARL 13 14 78 or Police on 000 if CYP is at immediate risk) regardless of whether that harm and risk of harm is being perpetrated by personnel within our organisation, or by those outside our organisation including those from the child's family, extended family, their family's extended network or strangers. Refer to the Responding to Child Harm and Risk of harm Reports and Allegations Policy.

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**Promoting Equity and Respecting Diversity**

We expect all personnel involved with Our Patch to promote equity and respect diversity by:

- actively anticipating children's diverse circumstances and responding effectively to those with additional vulnerabilities
- informing children of their rights and giving all children access to information, support and complaints processes
- respecting the rights of children to participate in decision making, paying appropriate attention to the needs of the following groups:
    - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders
    - Children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
    - Children with a disability or medical condition (diagnosed and undiagnosed)
    - Children with challenging behaviour/s
    - LGBTQI+ (Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex)
    - Children who are unable to live at home

The responsibility of each role in relation to the development and compliance of the Our Patch Safeguarding Children Policy is detailed in Section 11 of this policy.

## Our Commitment

Our Patch is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all children who access our programs, activities and events. Our governance structure, policies and procedures seek to address risks to child safety and to establish a safeguarding culture and practices.

Our safeguarding policies and procedures are:

- publicly accessible, online and in forms that are easy to understand
- informed by stakeholder consultation; and
- communicated to children and their families, our personnel, our partners, third- party providers, volunteers and the general public.

To inform and review our safeguarding policies, we seek feedback from all our services users and providers. We gain endorsement and advise stakeholders of any updates/changes.

## Child Safe Standards

The Universal Principle (Queensland)

In Queensland, every Child Safe Standard must be implemented in a way that promotes and upholds the right to cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. This is the Universal Principle under the Child Safe Organisations Act 2024 and it runs through each Standard — it is not a separate Standard to be addressed once. For each of the Principles discussed in this Section, Our Patch Group's implementation must therefore actively support the cultural identity, language, kinship and community connections of Aboriginal and Torres

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Strait Islander children, in partnership with their families and (where established) local Aboriginal community-controlled organisations.

In Victoria, cultural safety is recognised as a stand-alone Standard 1 (Ministerial Order 1359, 2022). In South Australia, cultural safety is required under the National Principles framework adopted into the Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017 environment. The practical commitments are the same — cultural safety is a child safety requirement, not an optional extra. See also Section 8 (Cultural Safety) of the Providing a Child Safe Environment Policy v2.0.

Below are the details of how Our Patch embeds child safe standards into our policies and practices throughout the organisation.

Our Patch has a safeguarding children governance structure with robust systems in place which support personnel and service users to report safeguarding concerns and facilitate effective risk-based and informed decisions that ensure accountability to children.

Our governance structure, including Area Manager defines the roles and responsibilities associated with providing oversight, management, and implementation of our commitment to safeguarding children.

Area Manager is responsible for developing, maintaining, and reviewing all Safeguarding Children policy advice based on best practice principles of Safeguarding Children to all personnel with Our Patch.

Our Patch Team will consistently act in the best interests of the child.

Through this Safeguarding Children Policy, we document our clear commitment to safeguarding children from harm and risk of harm . We communicate our commitment to all personnel involved with Our Patch and ensure that our Safeguarding Children Policy is also available in child-friendly versions that reflects the ages, developmental stage, diversity and abilities of the children to whom we deliver services.

We have a zero-tolerance approach towards child harm and risk of harm and take seriously any raised concerns / incidents. This policy outlines how Our Patch will meet its duty of care and responsibilities.

We ensure that anyone involved with Our Patch understand their role and the behaviour we expect in relation to safeguarding children from harm and risk of harm.

Our Code of Conduct clearly outlines our expectations for behaviour towards children. Anyone involved with Our Patch is required to acknowledge their commitment and adherence to our Code of Conduct prior to commencing their role.

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We also utilise Job Scorecards which clearly state relevant responsibilities and safeguarding requirements for our personnel.

We monitor and supervise all personnel, including partner organisations, third-party providers and volunteers for appropriate practice and behaviour in the delivery of our programs, activities and events to children.

Management considers a failure to observe our guidelines to be misconduct and will result in appropriate disciplinary action. Depending on the seriousness of the misconduct, disciplinary action may include suspension while matters are investigated and/or dismissal. In addition to any internal disciplinary proceedings, any breaches of law will be reported to police all instances in which a breach of the law has or may have occurred.

We minimise the likelihood of recruiting a person who is unsuitable by having appropriate measures in place. We require all applicants to undergo extensive screening processes prior to appointment to minimise the likelihood that we, or an external recruitment agency or third-party providers will recruit a person who is unsuitable to work / volunteer with children. Our Patch recruitment procedures ensure:

- our safeguarding commitment is communicated to potential applicants for all positions
- face-to-face interviews are held which include safeguarding-related questions
- two professional reference checks are undertaken which include safeguarding-related questions
- screening checks are undertaken, including identity, and qualification checks, working with children checks, national police checks (if applicable), and where applicable, international criminal history checks.

We require our personnel to disclose criminal convictions or charges affecting their suitability to work with children both prior and subsequent to their employment, and we review police records and working with children checks (WWCC/blue cards).

Specific information re SA requirements of WWCC's include:

- all employees must have a current, not prohibited WWCC prior to working with children or young people
- WWCC will be verified by us before employing them to work with children and for existing employees, we will verify they have renewed their WWCC every 5 years and the status remains as not prohibited. Verification will be done online through the Organisation Portal accessed via the Department of Human Services Screening Unit
- we will immediately contact the Department of Human Services Screening Unit when we become aware of certain information regarding any person involved with your organisation, including any serious criminal offence, child protection information, or disciplinary or misconduct information.

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We ensure that there will be no discrimination as part of the recruitment process, with respect to inclusion and equal opportunity and where possible, hire appropriate personnel that represent the diverse range of children and their families involved in our organisation.

We have an induction process ensuring all new personnel are informed and supported to understand our organisation's safeguarding children policies, procedures, and practices. Our personnel are provided with copies of our organisation's Safeguarding Children Policy, Code of Conduct and Reporting Policy and where applicable Recruitment Policy.

Our induction process provides guidance relating to an individual's safeguarding responsibilities and offers opportunities to seek clarity in relation to the commitments and behavioural expectations set out in Our Patch's safeguarding policies.

Our organisation's training plan includes information about children's rights, voices, and participation, cultural safety, and humility. Some examples that we consider during employees employment are as follows:

- **Supervision**
  - regular on-the-job supervision sessions that include a focus on child safety and wellbeing guided by the Area Manager and Leaders
- **Support**
  - an induction process that includes new employees/volunteers receiving a copy of this policy and that is clear on their responsibilities to children and young people, including record keeping, information sharing and reporting obligations
  - regular performance appraisals through your job scorecard review
  - Supported by our child safety manager.
- **Training**
  - ensure all staff and volunteers in SA read and understand the Mandatory Notification Information Booklet (see: https://dhs.sa.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0003/103179/CSE-Mandatory-notification-information-booklet.PDF
  - all our require mandated notifiers in SA attend a 'Safe Environments: Through Their Eyes' training course every 3 years or Responding to Risk of Harm – Education and Care (RRHAN-EC) training every 3 years
  - require all staff and volunteers to view the resources Keeping our kids safe at developed by SNAICC at
  - include child safety as a standing item on meeting agendas as per our ACF requirements
  - access to web-based resources about issues concerning child safety and wellbeing
  - professional development opportunities to build knowledge and skills regarding the wellbeing and development of children and young people.
  - Wonder Workshops run each month by our Educational Growth Manager and

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- Grounded Sessions offered termly by our Area Manageres.

. Our policy for reporting and applies to all our personnel. Refer to the policy for further detail.

**Criminal Grooming**

The Education and Care Services National Law (s.165A, effective 27 February 2026) creates a criminal offence of inappropriate conduct. This expressly includes grooming — any conduct directed at a child or their family that a reasonable person would recognise as designed to facilitate sexual abuse, exploitation or the erosion of appropriate professional boundaries.

**Grooming behaviour includes but is not limited to:**

- Forming a secretive or exclusive relationship with a child that excludes other educators, the child's family or supervisors
- Giving a child gifts, special privileges or excessive personal attention outside the program's planned activities
- Communicating with a child or their family via personal social media, messaging apps or personal email outside authorised channels
- Sharing personal information of a sexual or intimate nature with a child, or encouraging a child to share such information
- Photographing or recording a child in unauthorised circumstances (also a criminal offence under National Law Part 6A)
- Any conduct designed to isolate a child from trusted adults or to undermine a child's trust in their family, carers or other educators

Any person who suspects grooming behaviour by a colleague must report immediately to the CEO. If the CEO is the person of concern, report to the Chair of the Board. Grooming is a mandatory reporting trigger in all three states (QLD, VIC, SA) and must be assessed for notification under the Reportable Conduct Scheme (Change 19).

**Online Exploitation and Digital Child Safety**

Online child exploitation is a safeguarding risk that can be facilitated through, or disclosed at, an OSHC service. Indicators that a child may be experiencing online harm include:

- Unexpected behavioural changes, emotional distress or withdrawal after device use
- A child receiving gifts or money from unknown persons
- A child referencing online relationships with adults they have not met in person
- A child displaying age-inappropriate sexual knowledge or behaviour linked to online activity
- A child asking educators to keep online communications secret

Any disclosure or indicator of online exploitation must be managed under the Safeguarding Children Policy immediately (24-hour notification under Regulation 176). Educators must not investigate themselves, must not promise confidentiality, and must not contact the alleged

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perpetrator. Reports of online child sexual abuse material (CSAM) must be made to the AFP CyberTipline (report.cybertip.org).

**Child Safe Culture — Mandatory Obligations (NQS QA7.1.2)**

From 1 January 2026, NQS Standard 7.1, Element 7.1.2 explicitly requires governance and management practices to support the operation of a child safe service. Our Patch Group's child safe culture obligations include:

- The Board and CEO must actively model and promote child safety as the organisation's highest priority in all decisions, resource allocation and strategic planning
- All services must visibly display the Child Safe commitment statement, complaints process and children's rights information in areas accessible to children and families
- Children must be given age-appropriate information about their right to be safe and the name and role of their Nominated Supervisor
- Leaders must conduct at minimum an annual child safe culture review at their service and report findings to the CEO
- All policies in this Manual that reference child safety must use the updated NQS Element 2.2.3 name: 'Child Safety and Protection' (effective 1 January 2026)

**Risk Management and Mitigation**

Our approach to risk management recognises the potential risks to children associated with our organisation's program delivery and considers online and physical or psychological environments, and any vulnerable or diverse circumstances of children utilising our services.

To keep all children in our care safe, Our Patch personnel are to:

- Identify child safety risks using Our Patch Risk Assessment Matrix
- All new activities, changes in licenced spaces, equipment provided by Our Patch including excursions, online activities are to use our Risk Assessment Matrix and be approved by our Area Manageres prior to commencement.
- All risk assessment processes are to be updated on a regular basis (at a minimum annually) after consultation with stakeholders. Some circumstances may trigger an early review, this includes but is not limited to legislative changes, organisational changes, incident outcomes, and other matters deemed appropriate by our Area Manageres.
- Identify the likelihood of risk and the consequence of those risks.
- Consider what is the acceptable level of risk for the activity? If the risk is more than the acceptable level, identify further risk management strategies to be put into place to control, protect, and detect risk then re-assess the risk.
- Document decisions made and actions taken into relation to the safety of children in our care
- Educators document decisions and actions by completing the Risk Management Plan template provided.

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- Monitor risks by reviewing the effectiveness of the strategies developed and implemented.
- Seek and provide feedback for improvement and consider any follow up actions required from incidences.

Our Patch is committed to the regular review (at least annually) of our Risk Management policy and procedures. We will also record, monitor, and report to stakeholders as appropriate regarding any breaches to this policy. In addition, Our Patch is committed to other regulations, compliance and monitoring arrangements made under relevant policies and procedures.

**Empowering children**

We encourage the involvement of children and their families. We have processes for seeking and incorporating input and feedback with children and their families regarding our organisation's programs, activities, and events.

Children are encouraged to participate in clubs/activities/events held at the programs, have input into the daily programs, holiday programs and menus. Staff encourage children to use the Children's Voice App to provide their feedback on the program and activities.

We respect diversity and seek to facilitate effective communication and engagement.

We promote participation and empowerment of children and provide opportunity for their voice and ideas to be heard, and space to express their needs and concerns. We actively encourage children to take part in the decision-making process, particularly on matters affecting them. We create opportunities for involvement and seek input and feedback to inform our policies, procedures, and practices.

We involve children and their families in developing a safe, inclusive, and supportive environment. We provide information to children and their families (such as brochures, posters, handbooks, guidelines) about:

- our commitment and approach to upholding and safeguarding the rights of children
- the behaviour we expect of our personnel and anyone involved with Our Patch
- the behaviour we expect from the children and their families who access our services
- our policy and mechanism for reporting harm or concerns.

**Processes for complaints and concerns are child focussed**

All complaints will be dealt with care and compassion, with the wellbeing of the children at the forefront. Our Patch upholds a family's rights to have their concern resolved.

Our personnel have working knowledge of our complaints handling processes to provide support and access to information should any child or family in our service require it.

Children will be given the opportunity to let Educators know via the Our Patch Children's Voice App how they're feeling. The Children's Voice App provides the feedback being given instantaneously and will allow greater oversight of the child's experience.

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- If a child lets Our Patch know that they are unhappy with their experience, Leaders will be notified and can follow up with the child the next time the child is booked in to ensure the child is listened to and supported, if the Educator is not already aware as to why the child was unhappy
- Our Patch team will immediately action any item that a child has suggested that is safe and easy to accommodate.
- Children are encouraged to let Educators know when they would like to see changes in programming and Educators and Leaders will do their best to support these changes.
- If a child wants to make a complaint about another child at Our Patch, they will be encouraged to discuss it with staff. Staff will encourage the children to work through their concerns in line with Our Patch and the school's values.
- Should a child want to make a complaint about a Educator, they will be encouraged to discuss it with the Leader. The Leader will work through their concerns with them in a respectful and timely manner and include a child's family when appropriate.
- When required, the Area Manager will support the child and family to ensure that all parties feel listened to and supported to get to an agreed resolution.
- If a child wants to make a complaint about a parent/guardian or another adult, Leader will support them to discuss their complaint with respect and care. Leader will make no promises to the child but listen openly and advise direct manager
- All child complaints will be taken seriously and dealt with in a timely manner.

If the complaint is unable to be resolved immediately by the Leader, the Area Manager will support the conversation with parents/guardians so that a solution can be achieved.

Where an external or internal complaint includes an allegation or incident of child abuse or harm, then personnel must report this in accordance with the Responding to Child Harm and Risk of harm Reports and Allegations Policy. Personnel and management are required to prioritise the child's safety in any response and to report all potentially criminal conduct to Police.

All complaints will be documented and all steps to reaching the resolution will be documented as well.

**We maintain and improve our policies and practices**

Our organisation seeks to continuously review and improve our policies, procedures, and practices to safeguard children from abuse and neglect. The responsibility for implementing and reviewing our safeguarding children approach is led by Our Patch's Team.

To identify any key improvements needed, Our Patch incorporates findings from; internal audits / reviews that assess our ongoing compliance with our responsibilities to keep children safe as well as input and feedback from children and their families, our personnel and feedback gained from 'complaints and compliments' received.

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## Monitoring and review

This document will be reviewed by the Our Patch Team at least annually after consultation with stakeholders. Some circumstances may trigger an earlier review, this includes but is not limited to legislative changes, organisational changes, incident outcomes, and other matters deemed appropriate by our Team,

When there are any updates or changes to this policy, they will be communicated to all personnel and stakeholders.

A new compliance statement lodgement is required with Department of Human Services each time the policy is reviewed/updated for South Australia each time there is a change to this policy.

## Records and Documentation

Our Patch will retain records that document each review undertaken. Records may include minutes of meetings and documentation of changes to policies and procedures that result from a review.

## Supporting Resources

- Safeguarding Children Information for Parents and Care Givers
- Safeguarding Children Commitment
- Safeguarding and Children Governance Structure
- Appendix 1 Definitions

## Related Policies and Documents

The following Our Patch policies must be considered in relation to this document:

- Code of Conduct
- Reporting Policy
- Recruitment Policy
- Responding to Child Harm and Risk of harm Reports and Allegations Policy.
- Complaint Handling Policy/Reporting Policy

## Related Legislation

- Education and Care Services National Law (as amended by the Early Childhood Legislation (Child Safety) Amendment Act 2025)
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 (as amended, including changes effective 1 September 2025)
- NQS Quality Area 2, Element 2.2.3 — renamed 'Child Safety and Protection' (effective 1 January 2026)
- NQS Quality Area 7, Standard 7.1 and Element 7.1.2 — now explicitly reference child safe services (effective 1 January 2026)
- Victorian Child Safe Standards (Minister's Order 1359, updated 2022 — 11 standards)

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- Queensland Child Safe Organisations Act 2024 — QLD services must comply with Queensland Child Safe Standards. OSHC services are included. The Queensland Child Safe Standards (Child Safe Organisations Act 2024 (Qld)) have been mandatory for our QLD education and care services since 1 January 2026, and the Queensland Reportable Conduct Scheme applies to our QLD services from 1 July 2026.
- South Australia — Child Safety (Child Safe Environments) Act 2019 and associated Child Safe Environments Principles. OSHC services operating in SA are required to comply.
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) — Our Patch Group recognises children's rights as defined in the UNCRC and reflects these rights in all safeguarding practice.

## Roles and Responsibilities

The responsibilities of each role in relation to the development and compliance of the Our Patch Safeguarding Children Policy is detailed below:

| Role | Responsibility |
|---|---|
| Chief Executive Officer/ Leadership Team | • Advocate and promote child rights, empowering and engaging children in support of this Policy.<br>• Ensure all Personnel understand their obligations in accordance with this Policy and any relevant policy and procedural documentation.<br>• Ensure this Policy is implemented and adhered to amongst personnel.<br>• Ensure the development and implementation of required internal policy/ procedures and guidelines are in place to support safeguarding children practices in accordance with the expectations of this Policy.<br>• Ensure adequate resources are allocated to allow effective implementation of this Policy.<br>• Ensure to fully support Personnel with any decision to initiate action to protect a child from harm and risk of harm.<br>• Ensure appropriate supports, such as counselling and formal debriefing, are provided for any Personnel involved in a matter relating to responding to a concern for the safety and wellbeing of a child.<br>• Proactively share resources and experience in the development of child safe initiatives as they are identified.<br>• Develop opportunities for regular discussion and review at all levels to support a culture of continuous improvement and accountability of keeping children safe from harm and risk of harm.<br>• Ensure that all personnel are aware of the appropriate recruitment, screening and employment practice in relation to<br>• safeguarding children. |
| Area Manager | • Responsible for developing, maintaining, and reviewing all Safeguarding Children policy advice based on best practice principles of Safeguarding Children to all personnel involved with Our Patch.<br>• Chairing Safeguarding Committee to develop/implement policy, procedure and systems change based on best practice principles of Safeguarding Children to all personnel involved with Our Patch.<br>• Obtain and maintain Australian Childhood Foundation accreditation of Safeguarding Children Program at Our Patch. |

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| Role | Responsibility |
|---|---|
| Whole Team | • Advocate and promote child rights, empowering and engaging children in support of this Policy and its expectations.<br>• Promote the commitment to this Policy and its expectations both internally and publicly.<br>• Support policy review on an annual cycle as a minimum or at a time governed by legislation, regulations, or organisational learnings that promote a change to the Policy and all relevant policy or procedural guidelines.<br>• Ensure compliance to the Policy via an inbuilt mechanism for ongoing monitoring and review.<br>• Ensure adequate resources are allocated to allow for the development, effective implementation, communication and continuous improvement of this policy.<br>• Develop opportunities for regular discussion and review at all levels to support a culture of openness and continued improvement and accountability to keeping children safe from abuse and neglect. |
| Area Manager Team | • Review and update this Policy and supporting resources in consultation with relevant stakeholders<br>• Support the coordination of the Safeguarding Children Framework and its implementation<br>• Evaluate and analyse complaints, concerns and safety incidents relating to this Policy<br>• Provide training and advice in the application of this Policy |
| Third- party providers/ Volunteers | • Advocate and promote child rights, empowering, and engaging children in support of this Policy.<br>• Maintain a full understanding of the commitments and expectations of this Policy, as well as all other policy relevant to safeguarding children.<br>• Ensure compliance with this Policy, fully implementing and adhering to the commitments and expectations<br>• To undertake any induction and training anticipated in this Policy, in relation to policy and procedures relevant to safeguarding children.<br>• To support a culture of openness, continued improvement and accountability to children by engaging in regular review and discussion of organisational policies and practices and providing feedback to support improvement<br>• To seek guidance from a supervisor or manager if there is ever any lack of understanding in relation to the commitments and expectations as set out in this Policy.<br>• To adopt appropriate safeguarding practice and behaviour<br>• To take action to protect children from all forms of harm and risk of harm.<br>• To report any harm committed by personnel within our organisation or by others.<br>• To assist in creating and maintaining a child safe culture and a culture of inclusion and safety by:<br>  ○ Always asking for additional information and/or seeking clarity if unsure of any aspect of our Child Safety Program<br>  ○ Always let someone know if something doesn't seem right |

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## Supporting Resources

- Appendix 1 – Definitions

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## Safeguarding Children Commitment

Our Patch has zero-tolerance towards any form of harm and risk of harm of children. We are committed to the rights of all children to feel and be safe when participating in our organisation's programs, activities, events and / or facilities.

As part of this commitment, we have developed a framework of policies, procedures, and practices to support our personnel in meeting their responsibilities to protect children and young people from all forms of harm and risk of harm whilst in our care.

All personnel involved with Our Patch, including executives, employees, casual staff, third party providers, contractors, and volunteers are required to observe our policies, procedures, and practices.

Management considers a failure to observe our policies, procedures and practices to be misconduct and will result in appropriate disciplinary action. Depending on the seriousness of the misconduct, disciplinary action may include suspension while matters are investigated and/or dismissal. In addition to any internal disciplinary proceedings, any breaches of law will be reported to police all instances in which a breach of the law has or may have occurred.

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# Risk Management Policy

## Our Commitment

Our Patch has zero-tolerance towards any form of harm and risk of harm of children. We are committed to the rights of all children to feel and be safe when participating in our organisation's activities, programs and services.

In accordance with section 5A of the Education and Care Services National Law (effective 27 February 2026), all personnel of Our Patch Group must ensure that the safety, rights and best interests of children are the paramount consideration in every decision, action and interaction. From 1 January 2026, maximum penalties under the National Quality Framework have tripled nationally (nine-times for large providers in Victoria). Leaders, Nominated Supervisors and approved providers are personally liable for offences under the National Law. The Risk Register must reflect this heightened penalty exposure.

## Scope

Our Risk Management Policy applies to all personnel, including the leadership team, employees, casual staff, third-party providers, and volunteers involved with Our Patch Group. Adherence to this policy is a mandatory requirement. From 1 January 2026, maximum penalties under the National Quality Framework have tripled nationally. Leaders, Nominated Supervisors and approved providers are personally liable for offences under the National Law. The Risk Register must reflect this heightened penalty exposure.

## Risk Register

The Risk Register must be reviewed and updated:

- At minimum, once per term (four times per year) at each site
- Within 5 business days of any incident, near-miss or regulatory change
- Prior to any excursion, incursion, holiday program or change of premises

The Risk Register must include categories for: physical environment, child safety and protection, staffing and supervision, excursions and transport, digital safety, child and staff wellbeing, and emergency management. The CEO reviews the Risk Register annually.

## Excursions and Transport

All excursion and transport risk assessments must be completed BEFORE the activity and signed off by the Nominated Supervisor or Leader. Risk assessments for excursions must specifically address: route hazards, child-to-educator ratios during transit, emergency communication plans, sun safety, and child collection verification. Refer to the Excursions and Transport Policy for detailed requirements.

## Paramount Consideration and Penalty Regime

In accordance with section 5A of the Education and Care Services National Law (effective 27 February 2026), all personnel of Our Patch Group must ensure that the safety, rights and best

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interests of children are the paramount consideration in every decision, action and interaction. From 1 January 2026, maximum penalties under the National Quality Framework have tripled nationally (nine-times for large providers in Victoria). Leaders, Nominated Supervisors and approved providers are personally liable for offences under the National Law. The Risk Register must reflect this heightened penalty exposure.

## Responsibilities

Safeguarding children is a shared responsibility within Our Patch. It is the responsibility of all personnel, including Executives, employees, casual staff, third-party providers, and volunteers.

## Related Documents

The following Our Patch policies and documents must be considered in relation to this document:

- Safeguarding Children Policy
- Code of Conduct
- Digital Safety, Images and Photography Policy
- National Early Childhood Worker Register Policy
- Excursions and Transport Policy
- Emergency Management and Evacuation Policy

## Risk Assessment Process

This is a systematic process of evaluating possible risks linked to an activity. To keep all children in our care safe, Our Patch personnel are to:

- Identify child safety risks or potential harm and the consequence of those risks using Our Patch Risk Assessment Matrix provided.
    - All new activities, changes in licenced spaces, equipment provided by Our Patch, excursions or online activities are to use our Risk Assessment Matrix. Completed Risk Assessment Matrix is to be approved by A member of the Leadership Team prior to commencement.
    - All risk assessment processes are to be updated on a regular basis (at a minimum annually) after consultation with stakeholders. Some circumstances may trigger an early review, this includes but is not limited to legislative changes, organisational changes, incident outcomes, and other matters deemed appropriate by our Chief Executive Officer.
- Assess what is the acceptable level of risk for the activity.
- Manage the risk for the activity by identifying further risk management strategies to be put into place to control, protect, and detect risk then re-assess the risk.
- Evaluate the current risk or potential harm. Document decisions made and actions taken in relation to the safety of children in our care.
    - Educators document decisions and actions by completing the Risk Management Plan template provided in the Leaders SharePoint site.

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- Review the effectiveness of the strategies developed and implemented by monitoring risks or potential harm.
    - Seek and provide feedback for improvement and consider any follow up actions required from incidences.

Our Patch is committed to the regular review (at least annually) of this Risk Management Policy and will also record, monitor, and report to stakeholders as appropriate regarding any breaches to this policy. In addition, Our Patch is committed to other regulations, compliance and monitoring arrangements made under relevant policies and procedure Monitoring and Review

On the advice of the Chief Executive Officer, the Leadership Team will regularly monitor and review the progress being made in developing an appropriate culture of risk management and the effective implementation of risk management strategies throughout the organisation.

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## Risk Management Process Example

| Service, program, or activity details | Example |
|---|---|
| **Name of service, program, or activity:** | *Name of Program* |
| **Description:** | *Holiday Care Excursion* |
| **Location:** | *Hoyts Cinema, 1 Bourke St Melbourne, 3000* |
| **Date(s):** | *01.10.2021* |

| Risk Area | Hazard(s) | Control Measures | Procedures | Rating | Responsibility |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Staff** | | | | | |
| **Skills, knowledge, attitude & ability** | • Inadequacy of skills, knowledge, attitude & ability to perform required duties causes harm | • Recruitment process including mandatory child safe training prior to first shift<br>• Induction, supervision and training provided | • Code of Conduct<br>• Safeguarding Children Commitment<br>• Recruitment Policy<br>• Qualifications and Ratio Policy Supervision Policy | Low | • A member of the Leadership Team<br>• Manager of Recruitment and Education Growth<br>• Area Manager<br>• Leader |
| **Students/Volunteers under 18** | • Vulnerability not recognised when working alone with adults | • Clear guidelines in place including mandatory child safe training prior to first shift<br>• Induction, supervision and training provided | • Participation of Students and Volunteers Policy<br>• Code of Conduct<br>• Safeguarding Children Commitment<br>• Qualifications and Ratio Policy | Low | • A member of the Leadership Team<br>• Manager of Recruitment and Education Growth<br>• Area Manager<br>• Leader |

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| Risk Area | Hazard(s) | Control Measures | Procedures | Rating | Responsibility |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Supervision** | • Individuals alone with children<br>• Inappropriate Educator behaviour causes harm<br>• Prep/Foundation student's orientation | • Mandatory child safe training completed prior to first shift<br>• Induction, supervision and training provided<br>• Clear policies and procedures supporting Prep/Foundation student's orientation | • Code of Conduct<br>• Safeguarding Children Commitment<br>• Qualifications and Ratio Policy<br>• Supervision Policy<br>• Delivery and Collection of Children Policy | Low | • A member of the Leadership Team<br>• Manager of Recruitment and Education Growth<br>• Area Manager<br>• Leader |
| **Support** | • Workplace stresses negatively impacting on performance | • Educators provided with opportunities for de-briefing with corrective actions identified | • Employment Policies | Medium | • A member of the Leadership Team<br>• Manager of Recruitment and Education Growth |
| **Third Party Provider/Casual Educators** | • Third party unfamiliar with expectations | • Risk assessment conducted prior to commencing<br>• Supplier Agreement in place prior to commencing | • Programming Policy – Excursions<br>• Code of Conduct<br>• Safeguarding Children Commitment<br>• Extra Curricula Policy | Medium | • A member of the Leadership Team<br>• Holiday Program Manager<br>• Leaders<br>• Educators |
| **Facility** | | | | | |
| **Unsuitable external venue** | • Poor visibility to area<br>• Inability to restrict public access to area | • Risk assessment conducted prior to commencing | • Programming Policy – Excursions<br>• Supervision Policy | Low | • A member of the Leadership Team |

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| Risk Area | Hazard(s) | Control Measures | Procedures | Rating | Responsibility |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | • Supplier Agreement in place prior to address risk issues | • Supplier Agreement | | • Holiday Program Manager<br>• Area Manager |
| **Change-rooms and toilets** | • Lack of privacy including separation of gender, accessibility to the general public<br>• Lack of appropriate supervision including number and gender of Educators | • Planned toilet breaks, separation of gender and children in groups | • Bathroom Supervision Policy<br>• Ratio Policy (adequate ratio and genders) | Medium | • A member of the Leadership Team<br>• Holiday Program Manager<br>• Area Manager<br>• Leaders |
| **Unauthorised persons entering facility** | • Inability to restrict activities to area Inability to restrict public access to area | • CCTV Monitoring · Facility users abide by conditions of use of facility · Security patrols · Swipe card access | • Supervision Policy<br>• Supplier Agreement | Medium | • A member of the Leadership Team<br>• Area Manager<br>• Leaders |
| **Personal care / first aid** | • Unsuitable personal care arrangements e.g., lack of appropriate bathrooms re: age / gender / disability | • Management plans for children/families with additional needs<br>• Qualified Educators with first aid training<br>• Fully stocked first aid kits | • Supporting Children with Additional Needs Policy<br>• Medical Conditions Policy (Aug 2026 Version) | Medium | • A member of the Leadership Team<br>• Educational Growth Manager<br>• Area Manager<br>• Leaders |

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| Risk Area | Hazard(s) | Control Measures | Procedures | Rating | Responsibility |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | • Lack of privacy | | • Administration of First Aid Policy | | |
| **Client trauma** | • Disclosing abuse<br>• Disclosing or exhibiting self-harming or suicidal thoughts<br>• Suffering trauma | • Safeguarding Children Policy displayed and communicated to all<br>• Incident and mandatory reporting process clearly documented | • Safeguarding Children Policy<br>• Code of Conduct and Commitment to Code<br>• Incident Report Form | Medium | • All Our Patch personnel |
| **Activities** | | | | | |
| **Babysitting/Overnight stays** | • Inadequate approval<br>• Inadequate screening of other persons who may be present e.g., family members<br>• Inappropriate sleeping arrangements | • Our Patch prohibits any form of support to a child or their family, unrelated to our program (includes babysitting and overnight stays) | • Code of Conduct<br>• Safeguarding Children Commitment<br>• Guidelines for Providing Services Outside of Professional Role with Organisation<br>• Employee Manual | Low | • All Our Patch personnel |
| **Social Media, photography** | | | | | |

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| Risk Area | Hazard(s) | Control Measures | Procedures | Rating | Responsibility |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Social media + photography/video** | • Unacceptable use of devices<br>• Physical location of computers does not facilitate supervision<br>• Children accessing social media while in care<br>• Inadequate assessment & authorisation prior to photographs/videos being taken<br>• Inadequate supervision of external photographers | • Code of Conduct provided prior to employment regarding use of devices and social media<br>• All new uses of social media are approved and moderated by organisation<br>• Consent of parents and children must be sourced, and alternative channels of communication provided if consent is withheld<br>• Correct recruitment, screening and supervision of external providers followed | • Employee Manual<br>• Code of Conduct<br>• Safeguarding Children Commitment | Low | • All Our Patch personnel |
| **General public, spectators, parents** | | | | | |

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| Risk Area | Hazard(s) | Control Measures | Procedures | Rating | Responsibility |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Parent/visitor behaviour** | • Parents/visitors do not behave appropriately<br>• Children are not collected<br>• Personal injury from unforeseen violence and aggression from persons | • Educators trained to minimise risk and responses<br>• Program mobile phone with Educators at all times | • Parental Responsibility Policy<br>• Delivery and Collection of Children Policy<br>• Emergency and Evacuation Process | Medium | • A member of the Leadership Team<br>• Educational Growth Manager<br>• Area Manager<br>• Leaders<br>• Educators |

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## Governance Structure

Our Patch Group has a safeguarding children governance structure with robust systems in place which support personnel and service users to report safeguarding concerns.
Paramount Consideration Duty: Consistent with section 5A of the Education and Care Services National Law (effective 27 February 2026), every individual involved with Our Patch Group — from executives to volunteers — must ensure the safety, rights and best interests of children are the paramount consideration in every governance decision, resource allocation and operational choice. This duty is non-delegable and overrides all competing interests.

### Governance Structure Summary

Our Patch Group's governance structure operates at three levels:

- **Approved Provider level:** CEO and Board (Our Patch Group Education Pty Ltd / School Plus Foundation) — responsible for overall compliance, financial sustainability, and strategic direction in line with the National Law.
- **Nominated Supervisor / Leader level:** Each service's Nominated Supervisor or Leader is responsible for day-to-day compliance, staff supervision, incident response, and maintaining a child safe environment.
- **Educator level:** All educators and support staff are responsible for following policies, maintaining supervision, reporting concerns, and modelling appropriate conduct at all times.

### NQS Quality Area 7 — Child Safe Services

Consistent with the updated National Quality Standard Quality Area 7 (effective 1 January 2026), Our Patch Group operates as a child safe organisation. Standard 7.1 and Element 7.1.2 now explicitly require that governance and management practices actively support the operation of child safe services.

### Related Providers

From 27 February 2026, regulatory authorities have new powers to identify, monitor and regulate 'related providers'. Our Patch Group operates through the following related entities, each separately registered as an approved provider:

- School Plus Foundation — Queensland
- Our Patch Education — Victoria and South Australia
- Our Patch OSHC — Queensland

The CEO must ensure all related entities maintain individual compliance with the National Law and Regulations, and that the regulatory authority is notified of any changes to the group structure.

### Family Complaints and Grievance Pathway

Families and children have the right to raise concerns about the safety or operation of any Our Patch service. The governance structure supports this right through:

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- Each service displaying the complaints and grievance process prominently at the front entrance and in the family handbook
- Families being informed they may escalate complaints directly to the relevant state regulatory authority if concerns are not resolved by the service
- The CEO receiving a written summary of all unresolved complaints within 5 business days. "Unresolved" means any complaint where the family has not been contacted with a resolution outcome, or where the family has been contacted but has indicated they are not satisfied. The summary is generated from Xap and is the responsibility of the Coach

## Nominated Supervisor Responsibilities

The Nominated Supervisor at each service is responsible for:

- Ensuring this manual and all current policies are accessible to all staff at the service
- Confirming all staff have read and understood applicable policies on commencement and following any update
- Reporting any identified compliance gap to the CEO within 24 hours of becoming aware
- Supporting the continuous improvement process by identifying and documenting opportunities for improvement in the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP)
-

Our Patch has a safeguarding children governance structure with robust systems in place which support personnel and service users to report safeguarding concerns and facilitate effective risk-based and informed decisions that ensure accountability to children.

Our governance structure, including Area Manager a defines the roles and responsibilities associated with providing oversight, management, and implementation of our commitment to safeguarding children.

## Our Commitment

Our Patch is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all children who access our programs, activities, events and / or facilities. Our governance structure, policies and procedures seek to address risks to child safety and to establish a safeguarding culture and practices.

Our safeguarding policies and procedures are:

- publicly accessible, online and in forms that are easy to understand
- informed by stakeholder consultation; and
- communicated to children and their families, our personnel, our partners, third-party providers, volunteers, and the general public.

To inform and review our safeguarding policies, we seek feedback from all our services users and providers. We gain endorsement and advise stakeholders of any updates/changes.
We are committed to safeguarding children.

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Through this Safeguarding Children Policy, we document our clear commitment to safeguarding children from harm and risk of harm. We communicate our commitment to all personnel involved with Our Patch and ensure that our Safeguarding Children Policy is available in child-friendly versions that reflects the ages, developmental stage, diversity and abilities of the children to whom we deliver services.

We have a zero-tolerance approach towards child harm and risk of harm and take seriously any raised concerns / incidents.

Our approach to risk management recognises the potential risks to children associated with our organisation's service delivery and considers online and physical or psychological environments, and any vulnerable or diverse circumstances of children utilising our services.

Our personnel know the behaviour we expect.

We ensure that all personnel involved in the delivery of our services understand their role and the behaviour we expect in relation to safeguarding children from harm and risk of harm. We utilise Job Scorecards which clearly state relevant responsibilities and safeguarding requirements.

Our Patch requires all personnel to acknowledge, in writing, their commitment and adherence to our Safeguarding Children Policy.

Our Code of Conduct outlines our expectations for behaviour towards children. These guidelines are approved and endorsed by our Chief Executive Officer and Leadership Team.

We monitor and supervise all personnel, including partner organisations, third-party providers and volunteers for appropriate practice and behaviour in the delivery of our programs, activities, and events to children.

Management considers a failure to observe our guidelines to be misconduct and will result in appropriate disciplinary action. Depending on the seriousness of the misconduct, disciplinary action may include suspension while matters are investigated and/or dismissal. In addition to any internal disciplinary proceedings, any breaches of law will be reported to police all instances in which a breach of the law has or may have occurred.

We minimise the likelihood of recruiting a person who is unsuitable.

We have appropriate measures in place and require all applicants to undergo extensive screening processes prior to appointment to minimise the likelihood that we, or an external recruitment agency or third-party providers will recruit a person who is unsuitable to work / volunteer with children. Our Patch recruitment procedures ensure:

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- our safeguarding commitment is communicated to potential applicants for all positions
- face-to-face interviews or online interviews are held which include safeguarding-related questions
- two professional reference checks are undertaken which include safeguarding-related questions
- screening checks are undertaken, including identity, and qualification checks, working with children checks, national police checks, and where applicable, international criminal history checks.
- We require our personnel to disclose criminal convictions or charges affecting their suitability to work with children both prior and subsequent to their employment, and we review police records and working with children checks or equivalent periodically.

We ensure that there will be no discrimination as part of the recruitment process, with respect to inclusion and equal opportunity and where possible, hire appropriate personnel that represent the diverse range of children and their families involved in our organisation.

**Induction and training are part of our commitment**
We have an induction process ensuring all new personnel are informed and supported to understand our organisation's safeguarding children policies, procedures, and practices. Our personnel are provided with copies of our organisation's Safeguarding Children Policy, Code of Conduct and Reporting Policy and where applicable Recruitment Policy.

Our induction process provides guidance relating to an individual's safeguarding responsibilities and offers opportunities to seek clarity in relation to the commitments and behavioural expectations set out in Our Patch's safeguarding policies.

Our organisation's training plan includes information about children's rights, voices, and participation, cultural safety, and humility.

**We encourage the involvement of children and their families**
We have processes for seeking and incorporating input and feedback with children and their families regarding our organisation's programs, activities, and events. We respect diversity and seek to facilitate effective communication and engagement.

We promote participation and empowerment of children and provide opportunity for their voice and ideas to be heard, and space to express their needs and concerns. We actively encourage children to take part in the decision-making process, particularly on matters affecting them. We create opportunities for involvement and seek input and feedback to inform our policies, procedures and practices.

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We involve children and their families in developing a safe, inclusive, and supportive environment. We provide information to children and their families (such as brochures, posters, handbooks, guidelines) about:

- our commitment and approach to upholding and safeguarding the rights of children
- the behaviour we expect of our personnel and anyone involved with Our Patch
- the behaviour we expect from the children and their families who access our services
- our policy and mechanism for reporting abuse or concerns.

**Our personnel understand their responsibility for reporting child abuse**

Our Reporting and Responding to Child Harm or Risk of Harm Policy is approved and endorsed by our Chief Executive Officer and Leadership Team. Our policy for reporting and applies to all our personnel. The policy states that:

- personnel must immediately report harm and risk of harm and any concerns with policies, practices, or the behaviour of personnel
- personnel must meet any legislated mandatory reporting requirements
- personnel must follow a specified process when reporting harm and risk of harm including who will receive reports
- failure to report is serious misconduct

Our personnel are provided with access our Reporting and Responding to Child Harm and Risk of Harm Policy and understand the implications of the policy for their role. We document any allegation, disclosure or concern regarding child abuse and monitor responses to all allegations, disclosures or concerns.

**We maintain and improve our policies and practices**

Our organisation seeks to continuously review and improve our policies, procedures, and practices to safeguard children from harm or risk of harm. The responsibility for implementing and reviewing our safeguarding children approach is led by Our Patch's Leadership Team annually.

To identify any key improvements needed, Our Patch incorporates findings from; internal audits / reviews that assess our ongoing compliance with our responsibilities to keep children safe as well as input and feedback from children and their families, our personnel and feedback gained from 'complaints and compliments' received.

## Monitoring and review

This document will be reviewed by the Leadership Team at least annually after consultation with stakeholders. Some circumstances may trigger an early review, this includes but is not limited to legislative changes, organisational changes, incident outcomes, and other matters deemed appropriate by our Board and/or Chief Executive Officer.

When there are any updates or changes to this policy, they will be communicated to all personnel and stakeholders.

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## Records and Documentation

Our Patch will retain records that document each review undertaken. Records may include minutes of meetings and documentation of changes to policies and procedures that result from a review.

## Supporting Resources

- Safeguarding Children Information for Parents and Care Givers
- Safeguarding Children Commitment
- Safeguarding and Children Governance Structure
- Appendix 1 Definitions

## Related Policies and Documents

The following Our Patch policies must be considered in relation to this document:

- Code of Conduct
- Reporting Policy
- Recruitment Policy

## Related frameworks and legislation

Our guidelines comply with relevant legislation.

In upholding this policy, the following legislation and frameworks must be considered by all Our Patch personnel:

- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Child Safe Standards and National Child Safe Principles
- National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009-2020
- Australian Human Rights Commission National Principles for Child Safe Organisations
- The National Quality Framework (NQF) which operates under the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations
- Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017 and Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Act 2016

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## Roles and Responsibilities

The responsibilities of each role in relation to the development and compliance of the Our Patch Safeguarding Children Policy is detailed below:

| Role | Responsibility |
|---|---|
| Chief Executive Officer/ Leadership Team | • Advocate and promote child rights, empowering and engaging children in support of this Policy.<br>• Ensure all Personnel understand their obligations in accordance with this Policy and any relevant policy and procedural documentation.<br>• Ensure this Policy is implemented and adhered to amongst personnel.<br>• Ensure the development and implementation of required internal policy/ procedures and guidelines are in place to support safeguarding children practices in accordance with the expectations of this Policy.<br>• Ensure adequate resources are allocated to allow effective implementation of this Policy.<br>• Ensure to fully support Personnel with any decision to initiate action to protect a child from harm and risk of harm.<br>• Ensure appropriate supports, such as counselling and formal debriefing, are provided for any Personnel involved in a matter relating to responding to a concern for the safety and wellbeing of a child.<br>• Proactively share resources and experience in the development of child safe initiatives as they are identified.<br>• Develop opportunities for regular discussion and review at all levels to support a culture of continuous improvement and accountability of keeping children safe from harm and risk of harm.<br>• Ensure that all personnel are aware of the appropriate recruitment, screening and employment practice in relation to<br>• safeguarding children. |
| Area Manager | • Responsible for developing, maintaining, and reviewing all Safeguarding Children policy advice based on best practice principles of Safeguarding Children to all personnel involved with Our Patch.<br>• Chairing Safeguarding Committee to develop/implement policy, procedure and systems change based on best practice principles of Safeguarding Children to all personnel involved with Our Patch.<br>• Obtain and maintain Australian Childhood Foundation accreditation of Safeguarding Children Program at Our Patch. |
| Operations Team | • Review and update this Policy and supporting resources in consultation with relevant stakeholders<br>• Support the coordination of the Safeguarding Children Framework and its implementation<br>• Evaluate and analyse complaints, concerns and safety incidents relating to this Policy<br>• Provide training and advice in the application of this Policy |

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| Role | Responsibility |
|---|---|
| Third- party providers/ Volunteers | • Advocate and promote child rights, empowering, and engaging children in support of this Policy.<br>• Maintain a full understanding of the commitments and expectations of this Policy, as well as all other policy relevant to safeguarding children.<br>• Ensure compliance with this Policy, fully implementing and adhering to the commitments and expectations<br>• To undertake any induction and training anticipated in this Policy, in relation to policy and procedures relevant to safeguarding children.<br>• To support a culture of openness, continued improvement and accountability to children by engaging in regular review and discussion of organisational policies and practices and providing feedback to support improvement<br>• To seek guidance from a supervisor or manager if there is ever any lack of understanding in relation to the commitments and expectations as set out in this Policy.<br>• To adopt appropriate safeguarding practice and behaviour<br>• To take action to protect children from all forms of harm and risk of harm.<br>• To report any harm committed by personnel within our organisation or by others.<br>• To assist in creating and maintaining a child safe culture and a culture of inclusion and safety by:<br>  ○ Always asking for additional information and/or seeking clarity if unsure of any aspect of our Child Safety Program<br>  ○ Always let someone know if something doesn't seem right |

***Definition Reference and Sources***

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW), 2018
World Health Organization, (2006)
Child Family Community Australia (CFCA), (2016).
Australian eSafety Commissioner, (2020).

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# Code of Conduct in Safeguarding Children

## Paramount Consideration

Every person bound by this Code of Conduct must ensure the safety, rights and best interests of children are the paramount consideration in every action, decision and interaction with or concerning children (National Law s.5A, from 27 February 2026). This is a statutory legal duty, not merely an organisational expectation.

## Purpose

Our Patch has zero tolerance towards any form of harm and risk of harm of children. We are committed to the rights of all children to feel and be safe when participating in our organisation's programs, activities, and events.

As part of our commitment to safeguarding children, we aim to ensure that our personnel strive for the highest possible standards with respect to safeguarding children from harm and risk of harm.

Our Code of Conduct clearly outlines the expectations for practice and behaviour towards and in the presence of children, and so prevent, practice and behaviour that may be harmful to the children engaged in our activities, programs, and services.

You should read this Code of Conduct in conjunction with:

- the specific requirements of your role as defined in your Job Scorecard statement
- our relevant policy and procedure documents, including our:
    - Safeguarding Children Statement
    - Responding to Child Harm and Risk of Harm Reports and Allegations' Policy
- all applicable laws, including in relation to privacy, confidentiality, information sharing and record keeping
- general community expectations in relation to appropriate behaviour between adults and children.

As part of your commitment to observing our Code of Conduct you will be required to sign a Safeguarding Commitment.

Acknowledgement is required at three points: (a) on commencement, before any contact with children; (b) on each annual update of the Code; and (c) whenever the Code is materially revised (within 30 days of release of the revised Code). The Safeguarding & Compliance Team will run the annual and revision-triggered acknowledgement campaigns. The Educational Growth Manager will track acknowledgement completion in staff records and on the National Early Childhood Worker Register where applicable. Failure to acknowledge the current Code by the deadline is itself a breach of the Code.

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Any member of our team can report a breach of the Code of Conduct to their direct manager. If the individuals feels they have not been heard they can continue to escalate this through the escalation pathway.

Our Team can contact the below via email, phone, on TEAMS or in person.

Head of People & Culture (HR)
Candice Davenhill
Candice.Davenhill@ourpatchgroup.com

Children, young people, their families etc can report a breach of the Code of Conduct to any Our Patch team member or to any of the three people listed above.

Management considers a failure to observe our Code of Conduct to be misconduct and will result in appropriate disciplinary action. Depending on the seriousness of the misconduct, disciplinary action may include suspension while matters are investigated and/or dismissal. In addition to any internal disciplinary proceedings, any breaches of law will be reported to police all instances in which a breach of the law has or may have occurred.

There may be exceptional situations where some aspects of our Code of Conduct do not apply, for example, in an emergency situation. However, it is crucial that, where possible, you seek management authorisation prior to taking action that contravenes our Code of Conduct or that you advise management as soon possible after any incident in which our Code of Conduct is breached.

## Related Policies

- Safeguarding Children Commitment
- Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Child Abuse Policy
- Reportable Conduct Policy

## Related Legislation

- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2014
- Child, Youth and Families Act
- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)
- Section 17 of the Safety Act defines 'harm' to mean physical or psychological harm (whether caused by an act or omission), including harm caused by sexual, physical, mental or emotional harm and risk of harm or neglect.
- Ministerial Order 870 — Child Safe Standards — Managing the risk of child abuse in schools

## Scope

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All personnel involved with Our Patch, including, employees, third-party providers and volunteers involved with Our Patch are required to commit to and abide by our Code of Conduct.

## Definitions

| Term | Definition |
|---|---|
| Executives | Board members and Chief Executive Officer |
| Leadership Team | Head of each Department |
| Support Office | Team that works within the office to support our Educators |
| Educators | Individuals that work on the ground |
| Third-Party Providers | Incursion and excursion providers that come to Our Patch to offer a specialised program |
| Volunteers | Parents/guardians or students that come to Our Patch to share skills with our children |

## Responsibilities

| Position | Responsibility |
|---|---|
| Chief Executive Officer / Leadership Team | • Implement policy and procedures across the organisation<br>• Ensure personnel have access to and understand this policy and related procedures<br>• Ensure all staff have access to support and advice to understand and implement procedures. |
| Leadership Team / Area Manager / Educational Growth Manager | • Review and update this document and supporting resources in consultation with relevant stakeholders<br>• Support the coordination of the Safeguarding Children framework and implementation<br>• Provide training and advice in the application of procedures. |
| Area Manageres | • Ensure procedure is followed and implemented |
| Leaders / Educators | • Compliance with procedure. |

## Key Requirements

Our Code of Conduct address the major areas where you interact with the children who take part in our programs, activities and events. We have developed our Code of Conduct to help you to safeguard those children from harm or risk of harm.

**Sexual misconduct**

Under no circumstances is any form of 'sexual behaviour' to occur between, with, or in the presence of, children participating in any of our programs, activities and events.

'Sexual behaviour' needs to be interpreted widely, to encompass the entire range of actions that would reasonably be considered to be sexual in nature, including but not limited to:

- 'contact behaviour', such as sexual intercourse, kissing, fondling, sexual penetration or exploiting a child through prostitution

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- 'non-contact behaviour', such as flirting, sexual innuendo, inappropriate text messaging, inappropriate photography, or exposure to pornography or nudity.

**Inappropriate Conduct — Criminal Offence**

From 27 February 2026, 'inappropriate conduct' is a CRIMINAL OFFENCE under section 165A of the Education and Care Services National Law. Inappropriate conduct includes:

- Any verbal, physical, online or written behaviour directed at or about a child that a reasonable person would consider inappropriate in a professional ECEC context
- Any behaviour that exploits the power imbalance between an adult and a child in care
- Use of personal devices to take, store or transmit images/video/audio of children without authorisation (also prohibited under Part 6A)
- Any communication with or about children that is sexual, degrading, threatening, humiliating or designed to groom or isolate a child
- Any contact with a child or family member via personal social media accounts, personal messaging applications (e.g. WhatsApp, Instagram DMs, Snapchat), or personal mobile phone numbers — all communication must occur through Our Patch's approved platforms only

A person does not need to intend harm for conduct to be 'inappropriate conduct' — the test is whether a reasonable person would consider it inappropriate in context.

**Professional Boundaries**

All educators and staff must maintain clear professional boundaries with children and families at all times. This includes:

- Not sharing personal contact details (phone number, personal email, social media accounts) with children or their families
- Not accepting gifts of significant value from children or families without disclosing to the Leader
- Avoiding one-on-one situations with children in unobservable spaces — always ensure another adult or open sight lines are present
- Disclosing immediately to the Leader any personal relationship with a child's family member that could create a conflict of interest

**Positive Guidance**

We strive to ensure that children participating in our programs, activities and events are aware of the acceptable limits of their behaviour so that we can provide a positive experience for all participants. Children are encouraged to feel and be safe and have positive relationships and friendships with their peers.

Wherever possible, children are encouraged to 'have a say' and participate in all relevant organisational activities, especially on issues that are important to them. Children are given information about their safe participation in organisational activities including access to information about child abuse prevention programs.

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However, there are times when personnel may be required to use appropriate techniques and behaviour management strategies to ensure:

- an effective and positive environment
- the safety and/or wellbeing of children or personnel participating in our programs, activities, and events

We require our personnel to use strategies that are fair, respectful and appropriate to the developmental stage of the children involved. Our personnel are provided with a range of appropriate strategies to use. Policies containing appropriate strategies can be accessed from the Our Patch Operational Procedures document.

Our policies include:

- Code of Conduct
- Relationships with Children Policies – Interactions and Contact with Children
- Guiding and Supporting Children's Behaviour

The child needs to be provided with clear directions and given an opportunity to redirect their misbehaviour in a positive manner.

Under no circumstances is anyone involved with Our Patch to take disciplinary action involving physical punishment or any form of treatment that could reasonably be considered as degrading, cruel, frightening or humiliating.

**Adhering to professional boundaries**

Our personnel should not, of their own volition or at the request of a service user, act outside the confines of their duties (as specified in their position description) when helping to deliver our program.

Our Patch personnel:

- must not provide unauthorised transportation, for example, drive a child home after the aftercare or holiday care program closes
- must not engage in activities with children who are clients/members of our organisation outside authorised programs, such as attending a child's birthday party
- must not provide any form of support to a child or their family, unrelated to our program for example, babysitting
- must not seek contact with children (or former participants) outside our program
- must not accept an invitation to attend any private social function at the request of a child who has participated, or is participating, in our programs– or at the request of their family
- must not develop any 'special' relationships with children that could be seen as favouritism, for example, the offering of gifts or special treatment for specific children
- must not engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children, for example, personal social activities

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Pre-existing personal relationships (for example, where an educator is a relative of a child who later enrols at the same Patch) must be disclosed to the Company on commencement, on each annual review of the Code of Conduct, and immediately whenever a new relationship emerges. The disclosure is recorded on the Conflict of Interest register held by the Safeguarding & Compliance Team. Where a pre-existing relationship is disclosed and acknowledged in writing by the Company, contact with that child outside service business is permitted to continue in that family/personal capacity. Contact outside service business with a child where no pre-existing relationship has been disclosed and acknowledged in writing is not permitted, in line with Code of Conduct v2.0 Part B §14.

If any of our personnel become aware of a situation in which a child requires assistance that is beyond the confines of their role responsibilities, or beyond the scope of our organisation's usual service, they should at the earliest opportunity: refer the matter to an appropriate support agency or refer the child to an appropriate support agency or contact the child's parent or guardian or seek advice from management.

For additional information, see the Guidelines for Providing Services Outside of Professional Role with Organisation.

**Use of language and tone of voice**

Language and tone of voice used in the presence of children should:

- provide clear direction, boost their confidence, encourage, or affirm them
- not be harmful to children – in this respect, avoid language that is:
    - discriminatory, racist, or sexist
    - derogatory, belittling, or negative, for example, by calling a child a 'loser' or telling them they are 'too fat'
    - intended to threaten or frighten- profane or sexual.

**Promoting diversity and inclusion**

All personnel must ensure that their approach and interactions with children are sensitive, respectful, and inclusive of all backgrounds and abilities.

Where our organisation is involved with children who are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, who have a disability, LGBTQI+ children and children who are unable to live at home, our personnel will promote their safety (including cultural safety), participation and empowerment.

**Discrimination**

We expect personnel to treat all children and young people fairly, equally and with dignity. Our organisation abides by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Child. All actions and behaviours from our personnel must be non-discriminatory and always in the best interests of the child.

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Everyone has the right to feel safe and be free from discrimination. No one within our organisation will be discriminated based on age, gender, race, colour, language, disability, religion, political or other opinion, sexual orientation, national or social origin or their ability to live at home.

Our organisation does not tolerate discriminatory behaviours, and prejudiced attitudes will be challenged. Our personnel must have working knowledge of our complaints handling processes to provide support and access to information should any child or family in our service require it.

**Supervision**

Personnel are responsible for supervising the children to which our organisation provides programs, activities and events to ensure children:

- engage positively with our programs, for example, outside school hours care
- behave appropriately toward one another, for example, our Values – Relationship is all about the opportunities we have to engage with each other
- are in a safe environment and are protected from external threats, for example issues that may be happening at home

Our personnel are required to avoid one-to-one unsupervised situations with children to whom we provide programs, activities and events, and (where possible) to conduct all activities and/or discussions with service recipients in view of other personnel.

Each Leader will ensure that the service remains within the NQF Educator to Child ratio at all times, as per service specific age requirements.

**Use of electronic and online communications**

We prohibit all electronic communication between our program delivery personnel and the children to whom we provide programs without the express written permission from a member of our Leadership Team.

All our personnel are required to always follow our Personal Electronic Devices and Social Media Policies.

All our personnel, and the children to whom we deliver our programs, activities, and events a are required to follow our Acceptable Use Policy in relation to browsing websites on our organisation's computers.

Our personnel are required to ensure appropriate monitoring of children when they use our organisation's electronic communication equipment to ensure that children do not inadvertently place themselves at risk of abuse or exploitation via social networking sites, gaming sites or through web searches, or inappropriate email communication.

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**Giving gifts**

Giving of gifts by our program delivery personnel to children to whom we provide activities, programs and services is subject to:

- appropriate gifts will only be acceptable at Christmas/end of year
- obtaining prior authorisation from Area Manager or a member of the Leadership Team
- parents or other responsible adults being made aware of any gift given to children

**Photographs of children**

Photography and recordings of children are governed by Part B §13 of the Code of Conduct v2.0 and by the Digital Safety, Images and Photography Policy. The binding rules are:

- Service-issued devices only. Personal phones, smartwatches and cameras are prohibited under National Law Part 6A (criminal offence) when working directly with children.
- Images are stored only on Company systems. They must never be copied to personal storage, personal social media accounts, personal cloud drives or messaging apps.
- External sharing requires current written consent from the family, refreshed at least annually. The enrolment / re-enrolment workflow includes this refresh.
- No photographs or recordings in change rooms, toilets, sleep areas, or any other private setting — under any circumstances.
- Service social media accounts must never identify a child by full name, school, address or any other identifying detail.
- Operational procedures for retrieving, retaining, sharing and deleting images are set out in the Digital Safety, Images and Photography Policy.

**Physical contact with children**

Any physical contact with children must be appropriate to the delivery of our program such as showing a child a particular skill and based on the needs of the child (such as to assist or comfort a distressed child) rather than on the needs of our personnel.

Under no circumstances should any of our personnel have contact with children participating in our program that:

- involves touching:
    - of genitals
    - of buttocks
    - of the breast area that is other than part of delivering medical or allied health services
- would appear to a reasonable observer to have a sexual connotation
- is intended to cause pain or distress to the child – for example corporal punishment
- is overly physical – as is, for example, hugging, wrestling, horseplay, tickling or other roughhousing
- is unnecessary – for example, assisting with toileting when a child does not require assistance
- is initiated against the wishes of the child, except if such contact may be necessary to prevent injury to the child or to others, in which case:

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- physical restraint should be a last resort
- the level of force used must be appropriate to the specific circumstances
- restraining the child to prevent harm to themselves or others
- the incident must be reported to the Area Manager or a member of the Leadership Team as soon as possible.

Our Patch personnel are required to report to management any physical contact initiated by a child that is sexual and/or inappropriate, for example, acts of physical aggression, as soon as possible, to enable the situation to be managed in the interests of the safety of the child, our personnel and any other participants.

**Overnight stays and sleeping arrangements**
We prohibit overnight stays as part of the service we provide to children.

**Bathroom/Change room arrangements**
Personnel are required to supervise children in bathrooms/change rooms while balancing that requirement with a child's right to privacy and dignity. In addition:

- personnel should avoid one-to-one situations with a child in a bathroom/change room area
- personnel are not permitted to use the bathroom/change room area to, for example, undress, while children are present
- personnel need to ensure adequate supervision in 'public' bathroom/change rooms when they are used
- personnel need to provide the level of supervision required for preventing harm by members of the public, adult service users, peer service users, or general misbehaviour, while also respecting a child's privacy
- supervision in bathroom/change room areas operates under the two-adult rule wherever practicable — at least one other adult is aware of the activity and in line-of-sight, in line with Code of Conduct Part B §14
- where the two-adult rule cannot practicably be met (e.g. a child requires assistance from a single educator), the educator informs another adult before commencing and documents the situation in the room's communication log
- each room's documented Supervision Plan specifies how bathroom/change room supervision is achieved in that physical space, including hot-spots, positioning and the rota for breaks
- a child's gender identity is respected; educators do not assign bathroom support on the basis of binary gender matching, and never act in a way that singles out a child for their gender, gender expression or perceived gender

**Transport**
Children are to be transported only with prior authorisation from a parent/guardian and Our Patch management, for example to/from an excursion using an approved provider. Our

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personnel must not provide unauthorised transportation, for example, drive a child home after the aftercare or holiday care program closes.

**Uniform and name badge**

Personnel must wear their uniform only while involved in delivering service or as required by our organisation, such as when representing Our Patch at designated functions, to and from work, or school assemblies, and other school functions.

Personnel must use their Our Patch identification only in delivery of our program.

**Reporting obligations**

All personnel are expected to make a report immediately (i.e., as soon as possible or before the end of the day) if:

- they become aware of any allegations of child harm or risk of harm
- they have a concern for the safety of a child in our services
- they notice any personnel member whose practice or behaviour is contrary to the expectations of behaviour set out in this Code of Conduct.

Please refer to the Responding to Child Harm and Risk of Harm Policy for detailed guidance for all personnel to follow when making a report.

**Use, possession or supply of alcohol or drugs**

While on duty, personnel must not:

- use, possess or be under the influence of an alcohol or an illegal drug
- be incapacitated by any other legal drug such as prescription or over-the-counter drugs, supply alcohol or drugs (including tobacco and vaping substances) to children participating in our program
- Use of legal drugs other than alcohol is permitted, provided such use does not interfere with your ability to care for children involved in our program.
- Personnel must share with HR any use of prescription medications and all medication use whilst at work must adhere to our medication process and stored as per our medication policy.

## Regulatory Authority Powers

From 27 February 2026, the regulatory authority may:

- Issue suspension orders preventing an individual from working in any ECEC service — with or without prior notice in urgent cases
- Issue mandatory training directions as a condition of continuing to work in the sector

Our Patch Group will cooperate fully with all regulatory authority investigations, suspension orders and training directions. The CEO must be notified immediately if any staff member, volunteer or student receives a regulatory authority notice.

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# Providing a Child Safe Environment Policy

*Keeping every child safe, heard, and respected — every day, in every interaction.*

**At a glance**
This policy explains how Our Patch Group provides a child safe environment and how we meet our legal and ethical responsibilities under:

- the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations (the National Law)
- the National Quality Standard (NQS) – particularly Quality Area 2 and Quality Area 7
- the 10 National Principles for Child Safe Organisations
- Queensland's Child Safe Organisations Act 2024 (10 Child Safe Standards + Universal Principle)
- Victoria's 11 Child Safe Standards (Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005)
- South Australia's Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017 and the SA Child Safe Environments framework

**This policy applies to every educator, staff member, contractor, volunteer, student, family member and visitor in any Our Patch Group service.**

## 1. Policy statement

Our Patch Group puts children first. Every child who comes to one of our services has the right to feel safe, be safe, and be treated with respect — regardless of their age, background, ability, culture, gender, or family situation.

We are committed to creating environments where:

- children are protected from physical, sexual, emotional, psychological, cultural, and online harm
- children know they are listened to and taken seriously
- families are partners in keeping their children safe
- educators and staff are trained, supported, and held accountable
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children with disability, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and children who identify as LGBTQIA+ feel they belong and are safe to be themselves
- any concern about a child's safety is acted on quickly and properly.

We have zero tolerance for child abuse, neglect, or harm of any kind. We take all concerns, disclosures, and allegations seriously, no matter who they are about.

## 2. Why this policy exists

Children depend on adults to keep them safe. The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse showed what happens when organisations don't take child safety seriously enough. The reforms that followed — the National Principles, state-based Child Safe Standards, and the National Quality Framework — exist to make sure organisations like ours build child safety into everything we do.

This policy explains, in plain language:

- what *a child safe environment* means at Our Patch Group

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- how *we provide one* in everyday practice
- who *is responsible* for what
- how *we know it's working* — and how we improve it.

## 3. Who and what this policy covers

**This policy applies to:**

- all approved providers, nominated supervisors, persons in day-to-day charge, educators, educational leaders, and support staff
- volunteers, student placements, casual and agency staff
- contractors and visitors (e.g. incursion providers, maintenance workers, allied health professionals)
- families and any other adults entering our services
- all children enrolled in our services.

**It applies in all environments we operate in, including:**

- indoor and outdoor spaces at our services
- excursions, incursions, and transport
- online and digital environments (including photos, communication apps, learning platforms)
- any place where we are responsible for children, even temporarily.

## 4. Key terms (plain English)

So everyone reads this policy the same way, here is what we mean by the most important terms.

| Term | What it means at Our Patch Group |
|---|---|
| **Child** | Any person under 18 years of age. |
| **Child safe environment** | A place — physical and online — where children's safety, wellbeing, voices, and rights are actively prioritised. It's not just the absence of harm; it's a culture where harm is prevented, identified early, and responded to properly. |
| **Harm** | Damage to a child's health, safety, or wellbeing. This includes physical, sexual, emotional, and psychological abuse; neglect; family violence exposure; bullying; cultural harm; and harm caused by other children (peer-to-peer harm). Under the Queensland CSO Act 2024, harm does not need to be 'significant' to require action. |
| **Duty of care** | Our legal obligation to take reasonable steps to protect children from harm that we could reasonably have predicted. |
| **Active supervision** | Constant, alert, and responsive monitoring of children — not standing in one spot, not chatting with another educator, not on a phone. It involves scanning, listening, positioning, anticipating risk, and engaging. |
| **Risk assessment** | A documented process of identifying what could harm a child, how likely it is, and what we do to prevent or reduce it. |
| **Mandatory reporter** | A person required by law to report suspected child abuse or neglect. In ECEC settings, this includes all educators and staff in QLD, VIC, and SA. |
| **Reportable conduct** | Alleged or proven conduct by a worker that involves sexual offences, sexual misconduct, physical violence, significant emotional/psychological harm, or significant neglect of a child. Schemes exist in VIC and (from 1 July 2026 for ECEC) QLD. |
| **Cultural safety** | An environment where a child's cultural identity — particularly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander identity — is respected, visible, and valued, and where racism is identified and not tolerated. |

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| Term | What it means at Our Patch Group |
|---|---|
| **Working with Children Check (WWCC)** | A background check required before working with children. Known as the Blue Card in QLD, Working with Children Check in VIC, and Working with Children Check in SA (from DHS). |

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## 5. The legal and standards framework we work to

Our Patch Group operates under one nationally consistent quality framework (the NQF) and additional state-based child safe schemes in the states where we deliver services. The diagram below shows how they fit together.

### 5.1 National Law and National Regulations

The Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations are the foundation of how we operate.

| Reference | What it requires us to do |
|---|---|
| **s165** | Adequately supervise children at all times. |
| **s166** | Not subject children to inappropriate discipline. |
| **s167** | Protect children from harm and hazards. |
| **r82, r83, r84** | Tobacco, drug, alcohol-free environment; child protection training; awareness of obligations. |
| **r84A–84D** | Awareness, response and prevention of child sexual abuse (where applicable to setting). |
| **r85–87** | Incident, injury, trauma and illness procedures and recording. |
| **r97** | Emergency and evacuation procedures and rehearsals. |
| **r99–100** | Children leaving the premises and excursions — written authorisations and risk assessments. |
| **r103** | Premises, furniture and equipment are safe, clean and well maintained. |
| **r115** | Premises designed to facilitate supervision. |
| **r122, r123** | Educator-to-child ratios and educator qualifications. |
| **r168, r170** | Required policies and procedures, including child safe environment, incident management, and complaints. |
| **r175** | Notifications to the regulatory authority (e.g. serious incidents, complaints alleging breaches). |

### 5.2 National Quality Standard (NQS) — Quality Areas most relevant to this policy

**Quality Area 2 — Children's Health and Safety**

- 2.1.2 – Health practices and procedures are effective.
- 2.2.1 – Supervision: at all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision protect children from harm and hazard.
- 2.2.2 – Incident and emergency management: plans are developed, practised and implemented.
- 2.2.3 – Child protection: educators and staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities to identify and respond to every child at risk of abuse or neglect.

**Quality Area 7 — Governance and Leadership**

- 7.1.2 – Management systems are in place to support effective service operation, including risk management.
- 7.1.3 – Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and understood.
- 7.2.1 – Continuous improvement: effective self-assessment and quality improvement processes.
- 7.2.3 – Development of professionals: educators, coordinators and staff members' performance is regularly evaluated and individual plans are in place to support learning and development.

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### 5.3 National Principles for Child Safe Organisations

The 10 National Principles give effect to the Child Safe Standards recommended by the Royal Commission and are endorsed by all Australian governments. They are the foundation that the state-based standards are built on. Each principle is addressed in Section 7 of this policy.

### 5.4 State-based Child Safe Standards

Although the National Principles provide consistency, each state we operate in has its own legislated Child Safe Standards. We comply with all of them in the states where we deliver services.

**Queensland — Child Safe Organisations Act 2024**

- 10 Child Safe Standards (aligned to the National Principles) became mandatory for ECEC services from 1 January 2026.
- A Universal Principle: every Child Safe Standard must be implemented in a way that **promotes and upholds the right to cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children**.
- Oversight by the Queensland Family and Child Commission (QFCC).
- Broader definition of harm — includes peer-to-peer harm, and harm does *not* need to be 'significant' to require action.
- Reportable Conduct Scheme applies to the ECEC sector from 1 July 2026.
- Blue Card (Working with Children Check) requirements continue to apply.

**Victoria — 11 Child Safe Standards (Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005)**

- Victoria has 11 Child Safe Standards (since 1 July 2022). Standard 1 — cultural safety for Aboriginal children — is a stand-alone standard.
- Reportable Conduct Scheme applies through the Social Services Regulator (responsibilities transferred from the Commission for Children and Young People in February 2026).
- Working with Children Check (Victorian WWCC) required for all educators and staff.
- Mandatory reporting and 'failure to disclose' / 'failure to protect' offences under the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic) apply.

**South Australia — Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017**

- All SA ECEC services must have a Child Safe Environments policy aligned with the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.
- Lodgement of a Child Safe Environments Compliance (CSEC) statement with the SA Department of Human Services is required, with re-lodgement on policy review (at least every 5 years).
- Working with Children Check (DHS) required for all staff and volunteers in child-related work.
- Mandatory reporting — all educators must complete 'Responding to Risks of Harm, Abuse and Neglect — Education and Care' (RRHAN-EC) training and refresh it every 3 years.
- We monitor the transition to the Children and Young People (Safety and Support) Act 2025 and will update this policy as new requirements commence.

## 6. Who does what — roles and responsibilities

Keeping children safe is everyone's job. Below is who is accountable for which parts.

| Role | Key responsibilities under this policy |
|---|---|
| **Approved Provider / Board / Senior Leadership** | • Sets the child safe culture from the top.<br>• Ensures policies, training, resources and oversight are in place and funded.<br>• Reviews child safety as a standing agenda item at governance meetings.<br>• Submits regulator notifications and CSEC statements where required. |

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| Role | Key responsibilities under this policy |
|---|---|
| **Safeguarding and Compliance Team** | • Primary contact for child safety concerns, disclosures, and complaints.<br>• Tracks training currency, WWCC/Blue Card status, and risk assessments.<br>• Reports to leadership on trends, incidents, and improvements. |
| **Nominated Supervisor / Service Director** | • Day-to-day responsibility for safe operations, supervision plans and ratios.<br>• Ensures the physical environment is safe and supports line-of-sight supervision.<br>• Responds to incidents immediately and notifies the regulator within required timeframes. |
| **Educational Leader** | • Embeds child safety, voice and rights in curriculum and reflective practice.<br>• Area Manageres educators on protective behaviours and trauma-aware practice. |
| **Educators and staff** | • Actively supervise children at all times.<br>• Follow the Code of Conduct.<br>• Listen to children, respect their rights, respond to disclosures.<br>• Report any concern — internal or external — through the steps in Section 10. |
| **Volunteers, students, contractors** | • Hold a current WWCC/Blue Card and complete child safe induction before contact with children.<br>• Are supervised at all times; never alone with a child.<br>• Follow the Code of Conduct. |
| **Families** | • Partners in their child's safety — we share information, listen, and act on concerns.<br>• Are encouraged to raise concerns through our complaints process at any time. |
| **Children** | • Have the right to feel safe, be heard, and have a say.<br>• Are taught (age-appropriately) about their rights, body safety, and how to tell a trusted adult. |

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## 7. How we provide a child safe environment

Our Patch Group works to the 10 National Principles for Child Safe Organisations. These principles are also reflected in the Queensland Child Safe Standards (with the Universal Principle running through each one), the Victorian 11 Child Safe Standards, and the South Australian Child Safe Environments framework.

The 10 National Principles that guide our practice are:

- Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture.
- Children and young people are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them, and are taken seriously.
- Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.
- Equity is upheld and diverse needs are respected in policy and practice.
- People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.
- Processes to respond to complaints and concerns are child-focused.
- Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training.
- Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.
- Implementation of the Child Safe Principles is regularly reviewed and improved.
- Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people.

### How we measure and improve our practice against these principles

We commit to an ongoing cycle of self-assessment and improvement that allows us to honestly measure where we are, identify what needs to change, and take action.

**At the organisation level**

- Our Patch Group conducts an annual organisational self-assessment against the 10 National Principles and the relevant state-based Child Safe Standards
- The self-assessment identifies our maturity against each principle, our strengths, and the areas needing improvement.
- Findings are reported to the Approved Provider and used to set organisation-wide priorities for the year ahead.
- Progress is reviewed by leadership on an ongoing basis as part of our governance cycle.

**At the service level**

- Each service completes an annual self-assessment against the Child Safe Standards as part of its Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) cycle.
- Key actions for improvement are documented in the QIP, with clear responsibilities and timeframes.
- Progress against QIP actions is reviewed regularly and updated as the service matures its practice.
- Service-level findings inform the organisation-wide self-assessment, ensuring improvement happens at both levels and is connected.

**How this approach protects children and the organisation**

This self-assessment cycle is consistent with the continuous-improvement intent of the National Quality Framework (NQS 7.2.1) and the expectations of state-based Child Safe Standards regulators. It allows us to be

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honest about where we are, transparent about where we are going, and accountable for getting there — rather than overstating what is already in place.

## 8. Cultural safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children

Cultural safety is not the same as cultural awareness. A culturally safe environment is one where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, families and communities are not just welcomed, but actively respected, included, and protected from racism.

Because the Queensland Child Safe Organisations Act 2024 makes this a Universal Principle that runs through every Child Safe Standard, and because it is a stand-alone Standard 1 in Victoria, we treat cultural safety as a core child safety practice — not an extra.

As with the other principles, our approach to cultural safety is reviewed through our annual self-assessment cycle (Section 7), with specific actions identified at the organisation and service level. We are committed to ongoing improvement, guided by local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders and community-controlled organisations as those relationships are built.

## 9. Active supervision — what it looks like every day

Supervision is the single most important thing educators do to keep children safe. It is not passive watching — it is active, planned, and continuous.

**Our supervision rules:**

- Children are supervised at all times — including during sleep/rest, toileting, transitions, mealtimes, and outdoor play.
- Educator-to-child ratios are met or exceeded at all times (regulations 122, 123).
- Each room/space has a documented Supervision Plan that names supervision 'hot spots', educator positioning, and the rota for breaks.
- Educators use scanning techniques — sweeping eyes across the whole environment every 10–15 seconds.
- 'Two adult rule' applies to nappy changes, toileting assistance, and any one-on-one situation wherever practicable; where not practicable, the activity is in line-of-sight of another educator.
- Educator phones are off or stored away during contact time with children — except for service-issued devices being used for documented work tasks.
- Volunteers, students and visitors are never left alone with a child.

**Supervision in higher-risk moments:**

- Arrivals and departures — designated educator at the gate or sign-in point.
- Excursions — increased ratios where assessed, written risk assessment, named lead educator.
- Bathrooms and change areas — line-of-sight while preserving dignity.
- Water play — constant visual contact, no distractions.

## 10. Recognising, responding to, and reporting concerns

### 10.1 Signs that might indicate a child is being harmed

Harm includes physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional/psychological abuse, neglect, family violence exposure, bullying, online harm, and harm caused by other children. Signs can be physical, behavioural, emotional, or developmental — and one sign on its own does not confirm abuse, but a pattern, a sudden change, or a disclosure must always be acted on.

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**If a child discloses harm to you**

1. Stay calm. Let them talk. Don't interrupt or fill silences.
2. Believe them. Tell them they did the right thing by telling you.
3. Don't ask leading or 'why' questions. Don't promise confidentiality.
4. As soon as the child has finished, record their exact words.
5. Report immediately to the Nominated Supervisor / Safeguarding and Compliance Team.
6. Make a mandatory report yourself if your professional judgement requires it — your obligation does not transfer to anyone else.

### 10.2 Mandatory reporting — by state

### 10.3 Allegations against a worker

- Any allegation against an educator, staff member, contractor, or volunteer is treated extremely seriously.
- The person is immediately stood down from any contact with children pending investigation — this is a protective step, not a finding of guilt.
- The allegation is reported to police (where a criminal offence is alleged), child protection (where a child is at risk), the regulator (under r175), and the Reportable Conduct Scheme where applicable.
- The child and their family are supported by the Safeguarding and Compliance Team.
- Procedural fairness applies to the worker; confidentiality is maintained on a need-to-know basis.

### 10.4 Complaints from children, families, or community

- Complaints can be raised verbally, in writing, in person, by email, anonymously, or through a family member or advocate.
- They are acknowledged within 2 business days and resolved within 30 days where possible — families are kept informed of progress.
- Complaints involving alleged child safety breaches are escalated immediately under Section 10.3.
- Families have the right to escalate to the regulator (ACECQA / state regulator) at any time, and we tell them how.

## 11. Monitoring, review, and continuous improvement

**Ongoing monitoring:**

- Daily safety checks of environments, attendance records, WWCC/Blue Card register.
- Weekly review of incident, injury, illness, and 'near-miss' records.
- Monthly supervision plan review and educator practice observations.
- Quarterly Child Safety Report to the Approved Provider, including trends and actions.

**Annual review of this policy includes:**

- Self-assessment against the National Principles and the relevant state Child Safe Standards.
- Feedback from children (age-appropriate methods), families, staff, and community partners.
- Analysis of incidents, complaints, and regulator interactions.
- Updates from ACECQA, QFCC, the Social Services Regulator (VIC), and SA DHS.
- Review of training currency and outstanding actions.

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**Triggers for an early review:**

- A serious incident or allegation.
- A regulatory change (e.g. commencement of the QLD Reportable Conduct Scheme for ECEC on 1 July 2026).
- A pattern of complaints or incidents.
- Significant change in service operations.

## 12. Related Our Patch Group policies and procedures

- Child Protection Policy
- Code of Conduct
- Supervision Policy and room-level Supervision Plans
- Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy
- Risk Management Policy
- Excursion Policy
- Sleep, Rest and Relaxation Policy
- Toileting and Hygiene Procedure
- Recruitment, Induction and Performance Management Policy
- Complaints and Grievances Policy
- Acceptable Use of Technology and Social Media Policy
- Reportable Conduct Procedure (VIC; QLD from 1 July 2026)
- Privacy and Information Sharing Policy
- Inclusion, Cultural Safety and Anti-Discrimination Policy

## 13. Sources and authority

- Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations
- National Quality Standard (ACECQA), particularly QA2 and QA7
- National Principles for Child Safe Organisations (National Office for Child Safety / AHRC)
- Child Safe Organisations Act 2024 (Qld) and QFCC guidelines
- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic) — 11 Child Safe Standards
- Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017 (SA) and SA DHS Child Safe Environments framework
- Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000 (Qld); Worker Screening Act 2020 (Vic); Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Act 2016 (SA)
- Crimes Act 1958 (Vic) — 'failure to disclose' and 'failure to protect' offences
- Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse — Final Report (2017)

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# Serious Incident Reporting Policy

## Guiding Values

In keeping children safe, the following values are a mechanism for guiding our actions and assisting in decision-making, they are a reference to which personnel can refer, to ensure their responsibilities to children are upheld.

- Safeguarding children is a shared responsibility, it is reliant on all individuals within our organisation to keep children safe in our care.
- Any form of risk and risk of harm towards children will not be tolerated and immediate action will be taken upon report of any suspected harmful or abusive behaviours
- The best interest of the child will be the primary consideration in all actions and decisions concerning the safety or wellbeing of a child.
- We are accountable to the children we work with by fostering high ethical standards in a culture of openness and transparency.
- We empower children by informing them of their rights and responsibilities and support them to speak up about any matters of importance to them, including if something goes wrong. We work to include the participation of children in decision making regarding any programs or other matters affecting them.

## Purpose

Our Patch has zero tolerance to any form of child risk and risk of harm. We are committed to protecting the children to whom it delivers a program, activity or event.

Accordingly, we have developed this policy on how to respond to child harm and risk of harm reports and allegations as a guide for all personnel in meeting their legal and moral responsibilities in this area.

All of our personnel are mandated notifiers and are legally required to report if they have a reasonable belief that a child has been or is at risk of harm perpetrated by anyone including personnel within our organisation or those outside our organisation, including those from the child's family, extended family, their family's school and community network or strangers.

All children and families accessing our programs, activities and events will be informed of Reporting to Child Harm and risk of harm Reports and Allegations policy and the process for reporting harm and risk of harm.

We believe that it is the right of all children to be heard, protected, and supported, and that as part of that, Our Patch will promote equity and respect diversity of the children and their parents/guardians who access our programs, activities and events.

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We firmly commit to the cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, children with a disability/medical condition, LGBTQI+ children, and children who cannot live at home.

We take seriously our responsibility to deliver a learning environment that is caring, nurturing and safe and we listen to children's voices. We are committed to ensuring the safety of all children to whom we provide programs, activities, and events and ensuring compliance with all requirements set out in this policy.

As part of our commitment to safeguarding children, our Board, Chief Executive Officer and Leadership Team approves and endorses this Responding to Child Harm and risk of harm and Allegations Policy.

## Scope

Our Responding to Child Harm and risk of harm Reports and Allegations Policy applies to all personnel, including employees, casual staff, third-party providers, and volunteers involved with Our Patch.

This policy applies in all Our Patch operational environments and without fail wherever children are participating in Our Patch programs, activities and events. Adherence to this policy is a mandatory requirement for anyone involved with Our Patch.

## Definitions

| | |
|---|---|
| **Bullying** | Bullying involves the inappropriate use of power by one or more persons over another less powerful person or group and is generally an act that is repeated over time. Bullying has been described by researchers as taking many forms which are often interrelated and include:<br>• Verbal (name calling, put downs, threats);<br>• Physical (hitting, punching, kicking, scratching, tripping, spitting);<br>• Social (ignoring, excluding, ostracising, alienating); and/or<br>• Psychological (spreading rumors, stalking, dirty looks, hiding or damaging possessions). |
| **Child** | A person under the age of eighteen years. |
| **Emotional or psychological harm and risk of harm** | Emotional or psychological harm and risk of harm occurs when a child does not receive the love, affection or attention they need for healthy emotional, psychological and social development. Such harm and risk of harm may involve repeated rejection or threats to a child. Constant criticism, teasing, ignoring, threatening, yelling, scapegoating, ridicule and rejection or continual coldness are all examples of emotional harm and risk of harm. These behaviors continue to an extent that results in significant damage to the child's physical, intellectual or emotional wellbeing and development. |
| **Family Violence** | Family violence occurs when children are forced to live with violence between adults in their home. It is harmful to children. It can include witnessing violence or the consequences of violence. Family violence is defined as violence between members of a family or extended family or those fulfilling the role of family in a child's life. Exposure to family violence places children at increased risk of physical injury and harm and has a significant impact on their wellbeing and development. |
| **Grooming** | Grooming is a term used to describe what happens when a perpetrator of harm and risk of harm builds a relationship with a child with a view to abusing them at some stage. There is no set pattern in relation to the grooming of children. For some perpetrators, there will be a lengthy period of time before the harm and risk of harm begins. The child may be given special attention and, what starts as an apparently normal display of affection, such as cuddling, can develop into |

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| | |
|---|---|
| | sexual touching or masturbation and then into more serious sexual behaviour. Other perpetrators may draw a child in and harm and risk of harm them relatively quickly. Some harm and risk of harm do not groom children but harm and risk of harm them without forming a relationship at all. Grooming can take place in any setting where a relationship is formed, such as leisure, music, sports and religious activities, or in internet chatrooms, in social media or by other technological channels. |
| **Harm** | Harm to a child means any detrimental effect on the child's physical, safety, psychological wellbeing, or emotional wellbeing. Harm includes physical, sexual, emotional and psychological abuse; neglect; family violence exposure; bullying; cultural harm; online harm; and harm caused by other children (peer-to-peer harm). It is immaterial how the harm is caused. Harm can be caused by:<br>• physical, psychological or emotional harm or risk of harm;<br>• sexual harm or risk of harm or exploitation;<br>• a single act, omission or circumstance; and<br>• a series or combination of acts, omissions or circumstances.<br>Under the Queensland Child Safe Organisations Act 2024, harm does not need to be 'significant' to require action by Our Patch Group as a child-safe entity. This threshold for organisational response is lower than the threshold for a mandatory notification to a statutory child protection authority. Educators in Queensland services must therefore act on emerging concerns even where the harm would not (yet) meet the statutory child-protection threshold.<br>For South Australian services, section 17 of the Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017 (SA) provides the statutory definition of harm. When the Children and Young People (Safety and Support) Act 2025 (SA) is proclaimed, this reference will be updated. The lower-threshold organisational duty above applies in addition to (and is not limited by) the statutory definition. |
| **Neglect** | Neglect is the persistent failure or deliberate denial to provide the child with the basic necessities of life. Such neglect includes the failure to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, adequate supervision, clean water, medical attention or supervision to the extent that the child's health and development is, or is likely to be, significantly harmed. Categories of neglect include physical neglect, medical neglect, abandonment or desertion, emotional neglect and educational neglect. The issue of neglect must be considered within the context of resources reasonably available. |
| **Personnel** | All staff, contractors and volunteers who work for the organisation whether in a paid or unpaid capacity. |
| **Physical harm and risk of harm** | Physical harm and risk of harm occurs when a person subjects a child to non-accidental physically aggressive acts. The harm and risk of harm may inflict an injury intentionally or inadvertently as a result of physical punishment or the aggressive treatment of a child. Physically abusive behaviour includes (but is not limited to) shoving, hitting, slapping, shaking, throwing, punching, biting, burning, excessive and physically harmful over training, and kicking. It also includes giving children harmful substances such as drugs, alcohol or poison. Certain types of punishment, whilst not causing injury can also be considered physical harm and risk of harm if they place a child are risk of being hurt. |
| **Sexual harm and risk of harm** | Sexual harm and risk of harm occurs when an adult or a person of authority (e.g. older) involves a child in any sexual activity. Perpetrators of sexual harm and risk of harm take advantage of their power, authority or position over the child for their own benefit. It can include making sexual comments to a child, engaging children to participate in sexual conversations over the internet or on social media, kissing, touching a child's genitals or breasts, oral sex or intercourse with a child. Encouraging a child to view pornographic magazines, websites and videos is also sexual harm and risk of harm. Engaging children to participate in sexual conversations over the internet is also considered sexual harm and risk of harm. |
| **Sexual exploitation** | Sexual exploitation occurs when children are forced into sexual activities that are then recorded in some way and/or used to produce pornography. Such pornography can be in the form of actual photos or videos or published on the internet. Exploitation can also involve children who are forced into prostitution. |

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## Responsibilities

| Positions | Responsibility |
|---|---|
| Chief Executive Officer | • Implement policies and procedures across the organisation |
| Leadership Team | • Ensure personnel have access to and understand this policy and related procedures<br>• Ensure all managers/supervisors have access to support and advice to understand and implement policies and procedures |
| Leadership Team | • Review and update this document and supporting resources in consultation with relevant stakeholders<br>• Support the coordination of the SCYP framework and implementation<br>• Provide training and advice in the application of policies and procedures |
| Leadership Team and CEO | • Ensure policies and procedures are followed and implemented |
| All Personnel | • Compliance with policy and procedures. |

**Prevention and Preparedness**

It is all personnel's role to identify and assess potential risks in ongoing programs and one-off activities. Personnel should consider the online, physical, or psychological risks associated with activities, and develop and implement risk mitigation strategies to address those risks, in line with our organisation's risk management policy framework.

Our organisation creates a safe environment for children. Our personnel use strategies to support and encourage children to practice safe behaviours amongst personnel and their peers and speak up if they feel unsafe or uncomfortable.

## Key Steps

There are four critical steps that everyone in our organisation must follow regarding all incidents, allegations, disclosures or reasonable concerns of risk and risk of harm, where appropriate:

1. Responding
2. Reporting
3. Sharing of Information
4. Supporting

**Responding to an incident**

To ensure that all children are fully supported, personnel are to ensure their own safety and wellbeing prior to responding to an incident and must only take action if it is safe to do so.

Immediate responses include the care, support and communication actions that take place immediately following an incident to mitigate further harm and ensure the safety of children/ program users, families and personnel. Personnel are required to:

- reduce the harm and risk of harm to those impacted by the incident including by:
    - making the surroundings safe to prevent immediate recurrence of the incident, for example

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        - removing potentially harmful person(s)
        - increase supervision of children
        - move uninvolved children away from incident
    - moving to a safe place
    - alerting others to risks that extend beyond the local environment, for example, other areas within the program or organisation
    - calling Emergency Services if required 000

**Responding to a disclosure/allegation**

When responding to a disclosure or allegation by a child, personnel should respond by;

- listening to the allegation or disclosure supportively, without dispute
- clarifying the basic details, without seeking detailed information or asking suggestive or leading questions, guided by our organisation's Incident Injury Trauma and Illness Record
- providing reassurance that the child has done the right thing in telling you, are believed and our organisation will take immediate action in response to the allegation.
- explaining to the child (if present) that other people may need to be told, in order to stop what is happening. Do not promise to keep any information a secret.
- follow the reporting procedure below
- record notes as early as possible to ensure all information is captured on our organisation's Incident Injury Trauma and Illness Record
- In your responses you will need to consider the specific needs of the child. Consider the unique qualities of a child including, for example, whether the child is Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, has a disability/medical condition, identifies as LGBTQI+ has a culturally and linguistically diverse background and/or is unable to live at home.

## Notification Timeframes

From 1 September 2025, the following updated notification timeframes apply under Regulation 176:

**Physical or sexual abuse — allegation or incident: notify the regulatory authority WITHIN 24 HOURS. This replaces the previous 7-day timeframe. This is mandatory.**

- Death of a child while in care: notify immediately (verbally and in writing)
- Serious injury, illness or trauma requiring emergency medical attention: notify as soon as practicable and within 24 hours
- All other reportable incidents: notify within the timeframes specified in the National Regulations

## Mandatory Reporting — State Obligations

Mandatory reporting obligations differ by state. All Our Patch staff in the following states must be aware of their personal reporting obligations:

- **QLD:** All adults (including educators) are mandatory reporters under the Child Protection Act 1999. You must report to the Child Safety Service Centre (or after-hours

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Child Safety After Hours Service Centre — 1800 177 135) if you believe on reasonable grounds a child has been, is being, or is at risk of being abused or neglected. Contact the Queensland Police Service on 000 if a child is in immediate danger, or 131 444 otherwise.

- **VIC:** Educators are mandatory reporters under the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005. Report to Child Protection (Department of Families, Fairness and Housing) via the child protection intake line.
- **SA:** Educators are mandatory notifiers under the Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017. Notify the Child Abuse Report Line (CARL): 13 14 78 (24 hours).

A mandatory reporting obligation is your personal legal duty. Making an internal report to your Leader does not remove your personal obligation to also notify the statutory authority if you believe a child is at risk.

Who must be notified within 24 hours of a physical or sexual abuse allegation:

- QLD: The regulatory authority (Department of Education, Early Childhood Regulation and Quality) via the ACECQA portal — **within 24 hours**
- VIC: The Victorian Early Childhood Regulation Authority (VECRA) via the ACECQA portal — **within 24 hours**
- SA: The Education Standards Board (SA regulatory authority for ECEC) via the ACECQA portal — **within 24 hours**
- CEO of Our Patch Group — immediately upon Leader becoming aware
- Police — if criminal conduct is suspected

Written confirmation of all notifications must be documented (time, method, recipient) and retained.

## Related Policies

- Safeguarding Children Policy
- Code of Conduct
- Family Grievance and Complaints Policy

*An outline of the mandatory reporting requirements across Australian jurisdictions can be found: https://aifs.gov.au/cfca/publications/mandatory-reporting-child-abuse-and-neglect*

## Related Legislation

Our guidelines comply with the following relevant legislation:

- National Principles for Child Safe Organisations
- Child Safe Standards – VIC
- Child Safe Standards – QLD to be determined by governing council
- Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017 SA and Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Act 2016 SA
- Reportable Conduct Scheme – VIC
- Reportable Conduct Scheme – QLD
- Reportable Conduct Scheme – SA

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- Duty of Care
- Failure to Protect | Failure to Disclose | Grooming
- Information Sharing
- The National Quality Framework (NQF) which operates under the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations

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# Serious Incident Reporting Procedure

## Purpose

Our Patch Group is committed to ensuring the safety, health, and wellbeing of all children. This policy establishes the requirements for identifying, managing, and reporting serious incidents in accordance with:

- Education and Care Services National Law
- Education and Care Services National Regulations (including Regulations 12 and 174–176)
- Relevant State and Territory child protection legislation
- Work Health and Safety legislation
- National Quality Framework (NQF)

## Scope

This policy applies to all Our Patch Group OSHC services and to all staff, agency staff, volunteers, contractors, and visitors.

## Policy Statement

Our Patch Group requires that:

- The safety and wellbeing of children is prioritised at all times
- All serious incidents are identified, managed, and reported without delay once the situation has been stabilised
- All notifiable incidents are reported to the Regulatory Authority within 24 hours
- Incidents are documented accurately, factually, and securely
- Appropriate notifications are made to families and relevant authorities
- All incidents are reviewed to inform continuous improvement and risk mitigation
- All allegations or concerns relating to inappropriate conduct towards a child are treated seriously, escalated immediately, and managed in accordance with child protection and regulatory reporting obligations

## Definition – Serious Incident

A serious incident is defined in accordance with Regulation 12 and includes, but is not limited to:

- Death of a child
- Serious injury, trauma, or illness requiring hospital treatment or urgent medical attention
- A child being:
    - Missing or unaccounted for
    - Removed without authorisation
    - Locked in or out of the service
    - Emergency services attendance
    - Any circumstance posing a serious risk to the health, safety or wellbeing of a

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- child
- Allegations of abuse, neglect, or inappropriate conduct
- Any allegation or incident of inappropriate conduct by a staff member, agency staff, volunteer, or contractor towards a child, including behaviour that is inconsistent with the organisation's Code of Conduct or Child Safe Environment expectations, regardless of whether the conduct meets the threshold for abuse or a criminal offence

## Roles and Responsibilities

**Approved Provider (Our Patch Group)**

- Ensures compliant systems for incident management and reporting
- Ensures regulatory notifications occur within required timeframes
- Maintains oversight of incident trends and risk
- Nominated Supervisor / Responsible Person
- Ensures incidents are managed and reported appropriately
- Ensures internal escalation occurs in line with organisational requirements
- Ensures documentation is completed accurately

**Staff**

- Take immediate action to ensure safety
- Report incidents to the Responsible Person as soon as practicable
- Provide accurate and factual information

**Reporting Requirements (Aligned with Process)**

Our Patch Group requires that:

- All serious incidents are reported internally immediately once the incident has
- been managed and all children are safe
- The Nominated Supervisor / Responsible Person must notify the Area Manager/Area
- Manager immediately following stabilisation of the incident
- A formal incident report must be completed within 2 hours of the incident, unless exceptional circumstances prevent this, in which case it must be completed as soon as practicable
- All notifiable serious incidents are submitted to the Regulatory Authority within 24 hours in accordance with Regulation 176
- External notifications (e.g. child protection, police, WHS regulators) are made as required by law
- Families are informed as soon as practicable, unless otherwise directed by a relevant authority

**Documentation**

All serious incidents must be:

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- Recorded using the approved Our Patch Group reporting system, Serious Incident Reporting Form
- Completed with accurate, objective, and comprehensive information
- Inclusive of actions taken, notifications made, and supporting evidence
- Stored securely in accordance with privacy and record-keeping obligations

**Risk Management and Review**

Following a serious incident:

- A review must be undertaken to identify contributing factors
- Corrective actions must be implemented to minimise recurrence
- Learnings must be communicated to staff
- Relevant risk assessments, procedures, and controls must be updated

**Training and Awareness**

The Approved Provider ensures that:

- Staff are trained in incident identification and reporting obligations
- Staff understand escalation and reporting expectations
- Ongoing refresher training is provided

**Related Documents**

This policy must be read in conjunction with:

- Serious Incident Reporting Process
- Child Safe Environment Policy
- Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy
- Emergency Management Procedures
- Work Health and Safety Policy
- Complaints Handling Policy

**Legislative References**

- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
- Relevant Child Protection legislation
- Work Health and Safety legislation

**Procedure Review**

This procedure will be reviewed annually o earlier as required.

**Other Reporting Obligations**

As an approved provider, Our Patch must also notify the Police and Regulatory Authority and The Commission for Children and Young People of any serious incident (as defined in regulation 12) at the approved education and care program.

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Incidents and complaints (education.vic.gov.au / education.qld.gov.au / education.sa.gov.au)

The Incident Injury Trauma and Illness Record will be used for this purpose.

**Confidentiality and Privacy**
Our organisation maintains the confidentiality and privacy of all concerned (including the alleged perpetrator), except if doing so would compromise the safety or wellbeing of the child and/or investigation of the allegation.

After a harm and risk of harm incident has been reported and where appropriate, the disclosure process with program users, their families and involved personnel will begin as soon as reasonably possible. The process will be adapted to fit program users, family and personnel needs and the requirements of any investigation processes.

Where police and/or child protection are involved, they will be provided with information about the harm and risk of harm incident to assist them in their investigations.

If the harm and risk of harm incident has reached the threshold to report to external agencies, our organisation will consult with the relevant child protection authority to determine what information can be shared with parents/ guardians. This can include;

- not contacting the parents/guardians in circumstances where they have alleged to have been engaged in the harm and risk of harm, or
- to contact the parents/guardians and provide agreed information as soon as possible.

Police and/or child protection will be consulted about the disclosing of information to program users, their/ families and personnel.

The decision to disclose information will consider:

- whether the ongoing safety of those involved in or impacted by the incident is compromised by the disclosure or non-disclosure of information
- the advice of police and child protection (care will be taken not to compromise their investigations)
- the rights of those impacted by the incident to privacy, confidentiality, procedural fairness and a presumption of innocence in accordance with organisational policies and law, and
- the need (of those potentially impacted by the incident) to know of the incident

If it is suspected that the allegation may involve criminal acts, our organisation will also consult with the local police so it can be addressed using the appropriate legal processes.

**Supporting**
The final step is about addressing to contact the parents/guardians and provide agreed information as soon as possible, including:

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- the support needs of those impacted by the harm and risk of harm incident including considerations of cultural safety for the child and their family (this include any specific support needs for those from an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander; Culturally and Linguistically Diverse; or person with a disability/medical condition; LGBTQI+, or a child who is unable to live at home);
- other children as witnesses to incident
- personnel who witness and/or reported the incident
- any personnel against whom a complaint is made, for example, offering professional counselling through our EAP service
- other personnel impacted by the incident
- make clear to all other personnel who are aware of the incident that:
- any allegation does not mean the person is guilty, and that the allegation will be properly investigated and will include the right to 'procedural fairness'
- they are not to discuss the matter with any person, except as directed by police, child protection authorities and/or Area Manager and only in direct relation to investigation of the allegation.

We will support a child or young person following a report to authorities by continuing to provide them a service and/or referring them to other appropriate services.

Our team will be supported by our organisation at this time. Through discussions with appropriate personnel within Our Patch. Working closely with our Head of People & Culture (HR) and also being able to utilise our Employee Assistance Program that is available.

**Records and Documentation**
All incidents relating to safeguarding children will be recorded on the Regulatory Register and are regularly (every six months) reviewed by senior management to ensure the effectiveness of actions taken and to identify areas for improvement.

Operations Compliance team will oversee the administration of all completed Serious Incident Reporting Forms relating to safeguarding children and any other documentation relating to the allegation and subsequent action.

To prevent access by unauthorised persons, our organisation stores any documentation associated with an allegation of risk and risk of harm of a child and breaches of code of conduct by having:

- hard-copy documentation stored in a locked filing cabinet (or similar)
- electronic documentation stored in a password-protected folder (or similar).

We maintain and regularly monitor records of Serious Incident Reporting Forms relating to safeguarding children and Child Harm and risk of harm Incident and Allegations Forms as part of our Safeguarding Children Incident Management Policy to ensure that they are responded to effectively in accordance with this policy and that requirements for reporting to external

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authorities are complied with. These records will inform reviews of the Responding to Child Harm and risk of harm Reports and Allegations Policy as detailed in [section 10]. of this policy.

The Serious Incident Reporting Form is the approved system of record for serious incidents under Regulation 12; the IIIT record in Xap is not a substitute. Where an incident is initially recorded in Xap and is subsequently identified as meeting the Reg 12 threshold, the Serious Incident pathway is invoked immediately and a Serious Incident Reporting Form is opened in addition to the Xap record. Cross-reference between the two records is captured to ensure a complete audit trail."

**Confidentiality and privacy**
Our Patch maintains the confidentiality and privacy of all concerned (including the alleged perpetrator), except if doing so would compromise the welfare of the child or and/or investigation of the allegation.

## Supporting Resources

- Safeguarding Children Policy
- Incident Injury Trauma and Illness Record
- Child Harm and risk of harm Incident and Allegations Form
- Child Harm and risk of harm Incident - ACF Report Form
- Child Harm and risk of harm Incident Register

- Appendix 2 - Victorian Legislation and Resources
- Appendix 3 - South Australia Legislation and Resources
- Appendix 4 - Queensland Legislation and Resources

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# Reportable Conduct Scheme Policy

## Purpose

Our Patch Group operates in Queensland, Victoria and South Australia. The Reportable Conduct Scheme (RCS) applies in Queensland to the ECEC sector from 1 July 2026, and in Victoria has applied since 2017. This policy establishes Our Patch Group's obligations and procedures under both schemes.

## What is Reportable Conduct?

- Sexual offences committed against, with or in the presence of a child
- Sexual misconduct committed against, with or in the presence of a child
- Obscene or indecent acts committed against, with or in the presence of a child
- Physical violence against a child
- Behaviour causing significant emotional or psychological harm to a child
- Significant neglect of a child in the context of an employee's role
- From 27 February 2026, conduct constituting the new criminal offence of 'inappropriate conduct' (National Law s.165A) will also engage the RCS process where it falls within the above categories. All 'inappropriate conduct' notifications should be assessed against both the RCS and the criminal offence threshold

## Intersection with Mandatory Reporting

The Reportable Conduct Scheme and mandatory reporting to child protection are separate obligations. Notifying the relevant oversight body (the Social Services Regulator in Victoria or the Queensland Family and Child Commission in Queensland) under the RCS does not replace the obligation to notify child protection or police if a child is at risk of harm. Both notifications may be required simultaneously. The CEO must always assess whether a mandatory reporting obligation is also triggered and act accordingly.

## Reporting Obligations by State

**Queensland — effective 1 July 2026**

- The approved provider (CEO) must notify the Queensland Family and Child Commission (QFCC) of any reportable allegation within 30 days of becoming aware of it
- The 30-day clock runs from when the CEO (approved provider) becomes aware of the allegation — not from when it is first reported to a Leader. Leaders must therefore notify the CEO immediately upon becoming aware of any allegation, so the 30-day clock is managed correctly
- The approved provider must conduct, oversee or commission an investigation and report findings to the QFCC
- All notifications are made via the QFCC's Child Safe Organisations / Reportable Conduct Scheme reporting channels at www.qfcc.qld.gov.au/childsafe/reportable-conduct-scheme

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- The QFCC has published the "Guide to Queensland's Reportable Conduct Scheme" (March 2026) and a fact sheet for child safe entities — both available at qfcc.qld.gov.au. The Safeguarding & Compliance Team will incorporate these into Leader training before 1 July 2026.
- Failure to notify the QFCC of a reportable allegation may result in a financial penalty of 100 penalty units (currently $16,690 in Queensland) for the head of the organisation, and details may be recorded on a public register.

**Victoria — applicable now**

- The approved provider (Head of OSHC Programs) must notify the Social Services Regulator (SSR) as soon as practicable — within 3 business days
- The 3 business day notification timeframe is confirmed by SSR guidance. "As soon as practicable" means immediately upon forming a reasonable belief that reportable conduct has occurred — do not wait for internal investigation outcomes before notifying
- The approved provider must conduct or oversee an investigation and report findings to the SSR
- All notifications are made via the SSR's secure webform, accessible via https://www.vic.gov.au/reportable-conduct-scheme. Reports previously made to the CCYP before 23 February 2026 have been transferred to the SSR; do not re-submit.
- All Victorian Leaders must be trained in their Reportable Conduct Scheme obligations: see SSR guidance at https://www.vic.gov.au/reportable-conduct-scheme
- The Educational Growth Manager must ensure all VIC Leaders have completed Reportable Conduct Scheme training acceptable to the SSR by 30 June 2026. Where training was previously completed under CCYP, the Safeguarding & Compliance Team will confirm whether top-up training is required under the new SSR arrangements.

**South Australia**

- South Australia does not currently have a Reportable Conduct Scheme. If introduced, this policy will be updated.
- SA services must still comply with mandatory reporting obligations under the Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017 and Our Patch Group's internal reportable conduct process (see Internal Obligations below), even in the absence of a state RCS

## Internal Obligations — All States

- Any employee who becomes aware of a reportable allegation must immediately notify the CEO — do not investigate independently
- The subject of the allegation must be stood down from direct contact with children as soon as practicable
- Records of all reportable allegations, investigations and outcomes must be kept securely for a minimum of 45 years
- Information about a reportable allegation investigation must not be disclosed to any person other than those legally required to receive it

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- The subject of the allegation has a right to procedural fairness — this must be balanced with the paramount obligation to protect children
- The 45-year minimum record retention period is confirmed by VIC Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005. Records must be stored in a secure, confidential system separate from general staff records and accessible only to the CEO and authorised persons

## Risk Assessment for Stood-Down Staff

When a person is stood down pending a reportable conduct investigation, the CEO must conduct a brief written risk assessment to determine:

- Whether the person has had any recent unsupervised contact with any child not yet accounted for in the investigation scope
- Whether there are other children at the service who may need to be included in the safeguarding response
- Whether interim staffing changes are required to maintain ratios and supervision at the service
- Whether the service's insurance provider and legal counsel should be notified

## Natural Justice and Procedural Fairness

The subject of a reportable allegation has the right to be informed of the allegations against them (at an appropriate point in the investigation process, and as directed by the Commission) and to have an opportunity to respond. However:

- Natural justice does not require notifying the subject before the regulatory authority has been notified
- Natural justice does not require sharing the identity of the person who raised the allegation, where doing so could compromise the safety of a child or the integrity of the investigation
- The CEO must seek guidance from the relevant Commission before conducting any internal interview with the subject of a reportable allegation

## Staff Support During an Investigation

Our Patch Group recognises that a reportable conduct investigation is a stressful experience for all involved. The following support is available:

- The subject of an allegation is entitled to have a support person present at any interview conducted by Our Patch Group (not during regulatory authority interviews unless the Commission permits)
- The CEO must provide the stood-down person with access to the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) contact details within 24 hours of stand-down
- The person who raised the allegation (or the child involved) must also be offered EAP referral and appropriate support
- All parties are entitled to confidentiality to the maximum extent the investigation permits

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## Related Legislation

- Queensland: Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000 — Reportable Conduct Scheme for ECEC (from 1 July 2026)
- Victoria: Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 — Reportable Conduct Scheme
- South Australia: Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017 — mandatory notification obligations
- Education and Care Services National Law, s.165A — Inappropriate Conduct offence (from 27 February 2026)

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# Recruitment & Screening Policy

## Ongoing Monitoring

Screening is not a one-time event. Our Patch Group must:

- Re-verify each person's WWCC every six months and at each renewal
- Re-check the prohibition notice register at the start of each term
- Document any change of status and respond as required (stand down, regulatory notification)

## 1. Purpose

Our Patch is committed to an extensive recruitment and screening process to ensure we attract and offer to a high calibre of applicants who align with our GROW values and can deliver our brand promises, to ensure we find the right people for all positions.

Our Recruitment and Screening Policy has been developed to provide a fair, consistent, and comprehensive recruitment process across Our Patch.

The requirements outlined in this policy ensure information from all stages of the recruitment process are incorporated and will be considered in applicant's suitability assessment, precluding any applicant who appears to pose an unacceptable risk to children.

All candidates are informed about our safeguarding children commitment as part of the recruitment process with mandated safeguarding children questions used as part of our screening process.

Our Patch recruitment process will be documented, tracked, and reviewed regularly by internal key stakeholders to ensure the process is operating effectively and continuously improving.

## 2. Related Policies

- Safeguarding Children Policy
- Duty of Care Policy
- All Employment Policies
- Participation of Volunteers, Students and Short-Term Third-Party Providers Policy

## 3. Related Legislation

Our recruitment policies and procedures comply with equal opportunity, antidiscrimination, employment, privacy, and other relevant legislation. Including:

- Working with Children Clearance Act (2015)
- Education and Care Law and Regulations
- Worker Screening Act 2020

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We ensure that there will be no discrimination as part of the recruitment process, with respect to inclusion and equal opportunity and where possible, hire appropriate personnel that represents the diverse range of children and young people and their families involved in our organisation.

## 4. Scope

The requirements outlined in this document apply to all existing, new, and prospective personnel, including employees, casual staff, volunteers, students, and third-party providers involved with Our Patch.

## 5. Definitions

'Working with Children Check' (or state equivalent) is a legislative requirement for people who work or volunteer in child-related work. It involves a national criminal history check and a review of findings of workplace misconduct.

The result of a Working with Children Check is either a clearance to work with children or a bar against working with children. Cleared applicants are subject to ongoing monitoring and relevant new records may lead to the clearance being revoked.

## 6. Responsibilities

The Leader is responsible for undertaking recruitment and screening with assistance from their Area Manager and members of the Recruitment Team to ensure that our organisation's recruitment and screening procedures are followed.

| Position | Responsibility |
|---|---|
| Leadership Team<br>Leadership Team/Area Manager<br>Leadership Team/Area Manager | • Implement policy and procedures across Our Patch<br>• Ensure personnel have access to and understand this policy and related procedures<br>• Ensure all Leaders have access to support and advice, to understand and implement policy and procedures |
| Area Manager/ Educational Growth Manager | • Review and update this document and supporting resources in consultation with relevant stakeholders<br>• Support the coordination of the Safeguarding Children Framework and implementation<br>• Provide training and advice in the application of policy and procedures |
| Leadership Team | • Ensure policies and procedures are followed and implemented |
| Employees / Third-Party Providers/Volunteers | • Compliance with policy and procedure. |

## 7.Key Requirements

**Consultation with Key Stakeholders**

- Schools – can provide insight about the traits they would like their Leader to have
- Leadership Team – utilising the knowledge of our Leadership Team to ensure we are meeting the needs of the school community from all departments.

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**Recruitment, Screening, and Induction Requirements**

Our Recruitment, Screening, and Induction requirements for anyone involved with Our Patch, including employees, emergency/casual staff, volunteers including parent-volunteers, students and third-party providers are dependent on their level of interaction with children both in terms of the level of unsupervised and supervised contact they may have, the duration and regularity of contact.

Regardless of whether recruitment occurs through internal processes, external candidates, or the transfer of team members as part of program acquisitions, all individuals will be subject to the same rigorous recruitment procedures, Prohibition status checks and child protection screening requirements

The following matrix outlines our Recruitment, Screening and Induction requirements and provides some examples as a guide. Our Recruitment, Screening and Induction processes detailed in this policy are designed to meet the requirements of this matrix.

**Our Patch Recruitment, Screening, and Induction Requirements Matrix**

| Duration | Minimal | Low (up to a day a week on a non-regular basis) | Medium (1-5 days per week on a non-regular basis) | High (1-5 days per week and ongoing) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| High (direct contact with children, supervised with primary responsibility) | | | Holiday Club Educators Leadership Team | Leader/Educator Teacher, Carers |
| Medium (direct contact with children and supervised) | | | Emergency/Casual Educators Specialist Educators (nonregular) | Sports Area Manageres Specialist Educators (ongoing) |
| Low (irregular contact with children and supervised) | | Emergency/Casual Educators (Agency Staff) Parent Volunteers, Community Visitors Students | Incursion/Excursion Providers Transport Providers | |
| Minimal | After Hours School Cleaners and Maintenance Staff | Regulatory Authorities | | |

**Risk Management Matrix**

| Risk Management Requirements | WWCC* | Interview with SCYP questions | Reference with SYCP questions | Briefing on SCYP | Signed Code of Conduct | SCYP Course |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Minimal** | N | N | N | Y | N | N |
| **Low** | Y | N | N | Y | Y | N |
| **Medium** | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | N |
| **High** | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y |

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**Always refer to appropriate legislation regarding WWCC (or state equivalent) requirements*

**Definitions used in Our Patch Recruitment, Screening, and Induction Matrix**

| | |
|---|---|
| Direct contact with children | Providing programs, activities, and events to children as a core part of the role. |
| Supervised with primary responsibility | Where the adults contact with children is directly supervised by another adult. This includes roles having responsibility for management of direct program contact personnel and management of personal records of children. |
| Supervised | Where the adults/students contact with children is directly supervised by an adult and hence do not have primary responsibility for children |
| Irregular contact with children and supervised | Where the adults/students contact with children is directly supervised by an adult. Our Patch personnel always have primary responsibility for children.<br>Volunteer/Student/Third Party Providers will not be left unattended with children at any time. |
| Minimal | Work is conducted in areas where children are not usually present. Contact with children is incidental to the role and those children with whom they have incidental contact are supervised by other adults.<br>Note: as individual Patches are located within schools, the cleaning/maintenance of the Patch is normally performed after hours by the school's own cleaners/maintenance teams. |
| Low | One-off or up to a day per week on a non-regular basis |
| Medium | 1-5 days per week on a non-regular basis |
| Ongoing | Long term, full-time or part-time |
| Briefing on Safeguarding Children policies and procedures | Provided with information of our organisation's commitment to safeguarding children, its expectations in relation to behaviour with children and its child abuse reporting policy. |

Note: In low risk and minimal risk categories as outlined in the Risk Management Matrix above, volunteers (including parent-volunteers), students and short-term third-party providers are not required to participate in an interview with safeguarding children questions, provide referees or police check details, complete ACF Safeguarding Children training or receive a Job Scorecard Responsibilities document.

## Prohibition Notice Screening

From 10 December 2025, the following additional obligations apply:

- **Pre-engagement check:** Before engaging any person (employee, contractor, volunteer, student or agency worker), Our Patch Group must confirm that person is NOT subject to a prohibition notice issued under the National Law. A person subject to a prohibition notice must not be engaged in any capacity involving children.
- **Agency workers:** If a recruitment agency supplies a worker who is later found to be subject to a prohibition notice, Our Patch Group must immediately stand that person down and notify the agency.
- **Information sharing:** From 10 December 2025, regulatory authorities can share prohibition notice information directly with recruitment agencies. All agencies used by Our Patch Group should be aware of this framework.
- **False information offence:** It is a criminal offence for a person subject to a prohibition notice to give false or misleading information to a recruitment agency.

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## 8. Advertising

All available positions will be advertised, and all advertisements placed by Our Patch will contain the following safeguarding children statement:

- Our Patch is committed to protecting children from harm. We require all applicants to undergo an extensive screening process prior to appointment.
- The successful applicant is required to possess a current and valid 'working with children' check (or state equivalent) and is subject to a satisfactory criminal history record check.
- It is an offence in this state for a person convicted of a serious sex offence to apply for this position. Relevant screening will be conducted.

The information detailed in the job advertisement will be based on the specific needs of the individual Patch.

**Job Advertisement Template**

The Recruitment Team will create the job advertisement template which includes the mandated safeguarding children statement and details about the specific needs for an individual Patch. This template has been reviewed by our Leadership Team to ensure it meets our safeguarding and other requirements.

**Job Advertisement Released**

Our Members of our HR Team will organise for the role to be advertised. This may include but not limited to:

- Indeed/SEEK
- Social media (e.g., Facebook, Community Groups)
- School Newsletters
- University Job Boards

**Use of External Recruitment Agencies**

Where Our Patch sources applicants through an external recruitment agency, this will be done using the services of ANZUK Education, Randstad or Expect A Star. This is determined by the needs at the individual Patch, for example an emergency/casual Educator may only be required as a once off at an individual Patch until the usual Educator returns to that Patch.

For any roles with direct contact with children sourced through ANZUK, Randstad or Expect A Star (including ongoing and emergency relief/casual roles) the Agency will manage the recruitment and current Compliancy document checks.

ANZUK, Randstad or Expect A Star will be required to provide to Our Patch the following documents prior to Agency staff commencing at Our Patch:

1. Working with Children's Check (or state equivalent)
2. Police Check Details
3. First Aid Certificate

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4. Qualifications

ANZUK, Randstad or Expect A Star will also store and validate an applicant's Working with Children's Check and Police Check details using their own platform to ensure compliance with these requirements at all times.

For any roles with direct contact with children not sourced through the external recruitment agency, ANZUK, Randstad or Expect A Star, Our Patch will manage the recruitment and screening of applicants as detailed in Section 9 of this document.

When Our Patch receives an applicant's documents for an ongoing role, Our Patch Recruitment Team will:

1. Conduct an interview including questions relevant to the role (which includes their knowledge and understanding of Child
2. Request Compliancy documents (which include WWCC (or state equivalent), Police Check, Qualifications including current first aid.
3. Conduct a Round 2 face to face interview if the ongoing role is for a Leader with the Area Manager and HR Manager or Head of Organisational Support.

**Use of Existing Educators at a School**

Where a school requests that an existing Educator already employed by the school or a previous outside school hours care provider remains working as an Educator in their program, Our Patch Recruitment Team will:

1. Contact the Educator to ask the mandated Safeguarding Children interview questions.
2. Contact two professional referees which may include the school where Educator already works to ask the Australian Childhood Foundation mandated Safeguarding Children Referee Check questions
3. Validate and store the applicant's Working with Children's Check and Police Check on the business tracking system.

## 9. Screening of applicants

The Recruitment Team will assist with screening of all applications for roles with direct contact with children. As applicants submit their applications, each application will be reviewed and assessed to determine whether the applicant is to proceed to the next stage as outlined below.

Where Our Patch is recruiting for roles with no direct contact with children e.g., Administration role in Head Office, depending on the role and position, the Manager of that function area will be responsible for recruiting and screening applicants for that role.

**Stage 1: Resume Screening**

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All applications for roles with direct contact with children will be assessed using the relevant Resume Screening Matrix – Leader (Appendix 5) or Resume Screening Matrix – Educator (Appendix 6).

Not all applicants will be suitable for the role advertised. Where it is determined that the applicant will not proceed to the next stage, they will be notified of this by Recruitment Team, via the platform they applied through.

Where it is determined that the applicant has the required qualifications, training, experience and has submitted a complete and professional resume, they will proceed to the next stage (phone screening or direct to interview) and will be notified of this by Recruitment Team or Leader.

**Stage 2: Phone Screening/Teams Interview**

The Recruitment Team, or Leader will use the relevant Phone Screen Interview Matrix Leader (Appendix 7) or Phone Screen Interview Matrix – Educator (Appendix 8) and speak with suitable applicants to obtain further information about their resume as required.

The Recruitment Team or Leader will use the relevant Phone Screen Interview Template to record applicant's answers during this interview stage.

Applicants that meet requirements detailed in the relevant Phone Screen Interview Matrix will proceed to the next stage (Round 1 face to face/ Teams interview) and will be notified of this by Recruitment Coordinator, or Leader.

**Stage 3: Face to Face / Teams Interviews**

Once a candidate has progressed from the resume and phone screening stage, suitable applicants with ongoing and direct contact with children roles are required to attend at least one face to face/Teams interview with Area Manager and/or a member of the Leadership Team.

As part of each face to face/Teams interview, Our Patch will highlight our organisation's commitment to protecting children from abuse and neglect. We also explain Our Patch's screening requirements and their purpose.

During face-to-face/Teams interviews, Our Patch will examine the following topics relating to the applicant's suitability to work with children or in the role for which they have applied:

- the applicant's beliefs and values in relation to the treatment of children
- the applicant's professional experience, qualifications, and competence
- the applicant's reasons for leaving previous positions involving work with children

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- any potential concerns Our Patch may have with the applicant's resume or work history, such as gaps in their work history, frequent job changes, inability to nominate precise start or end dates for previous roles
- the applicant's general awareness and understanding of child protection issues.

**Leaders Interviews**
Leaders with ongoing roles are required to attend one face to face/Teams interview (QLD) and two face to face/Teams interviews (VIC/SA) with members of our Leadership Team (where possible this will include the Area Manager).

## 10. Interview Process

**All Roles with Direct Contact with Children**
Applicant will meet face to face or via Teams with Recruitment Team member, Leader and a member of the HR Team (if required) to participate in a combination of questions and practical activities. Recruitment Team will document applicant responses using the Round 1 - Interview Template.

## 11. Employee Checks

**Pre-Engagement Screening Checklist**
Before a new employee, contractor, volunteer or student commences, the following must be confirmed and documented:

- Valid Working with Children Check (WWCC) or state equivalent — verified before first shift via state government portal
- No active prohibition notice under the National Law — checked via ACECQA/NQAITS
- National Early Childhood Worker Register — registered in NQAITS before or on first day
- Qualifications confirmed as genuine (for educators required to hold qualifications)
- Identity verified (photo ID sighted)
- Two references checked (for paid employees)
- Code of Conduct read and signed
- Commitment to Children form completed
- On commencement, the worker discloses any pre-existing personal relationship with a child or family enrolled at any Our Patch Group service. The disclosure is recorded on the Conflict of Interest register. Failure to disclose is itself a breach of the Code of Conduct.
- Annual re-acknowledgement of the current Code of Conduct — completed by every worker in their anniversary month, tracked by the Safeguarding & Compliance Team.
- Material-revision re-acknowledgement — within 30 days of release of any materially revised Code, completed by every worker, tracked by the Safeguarding & Compliance Team.

## 12. Successful Applicants

Human Resources will provide following documents to the successful applicant:

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- Relevant Staff Record Template
- Taxation Declaration
- Superannuation Forms: Standard Choice Form
- Letter of Offer and Contract
- Job Scorecard
- Fair Work Information Statement
- Deed of Confidentiality

When the applicant returns signed copies of the documents listed directly above, Human Resources will provide the following to the applicant:

- Access to our online Learning Management System with links to mandatory training:

  Queensland staff are required to complete
    - Safeguarding Children Training
    - Food Safety training
    - Our Patch Code of Conduct and Safeguarding Children Commitment
    - Our Patch Mandatory Educational Growth Journey Training
- Leaders will be required to complete Food Safety Supervisor Training within 4 weeks of commencement

Victoria and South Australia are required to complete
    - Safeguarding Children Training
    - WH&S Training
    - Employee Guidebook
    - Our Patch Code of Conduct and Safeguarding Children Commitment
    - Our Patch Mandatory Educational Growth Journey Training
- Leaders will be required to complete Food Safety Supervisor Training within 4 weeks of commencement

Recruitment Team will use our Recruitment File Checklist to ensure that all mandatory documents are returned, and all mandatory training is completed prior to the successful applicant's first shift at Our Patch.

**Volunteers, students, and Short-Term Third-Party Providers**

Our Patch will support participation of volunteers (Including parent-volunteers), students and short-term third-party providers as we know the value this brings to everyone.

Our due diligence practices are embedded throughout our organisation to ensure the safety of children in our care, personnel and anyone involved with Our Patch are aware of the requirements.

Our Recruitment Screening and Induction Requirements Matrix as detailed in this document outlines the requirements for Volunteers, Students and Short-Term Third-Party Providers. Our

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Participation of Volunteers, Students and Short-Term Third-Party Providers Policy (Appendix 9) outlines how these parties can participate in our programs, activities and events whilst still meeting our safeguarding children requirements.

Where our organisation uses the services of personnel for short periods of time or through external providers, we comply with the requirements under the legislation that applies in our jurisdiction(s) with respect to 'working with children' checks.

**Minors**

Where our organisation engages personnel, who are under the age of 18 (a minor), in a paid or unpaid capacity, we comply with the requirements under the legislation that applies in our jurisdiction(s) with respect to child employment rights, to ensure their engagement is free from exploitation and abuse and to prevent inappropriate or unreasonable demands being made of them.

Minors may engage with Our Patch through their school or educational institution and are required to follow the processes detailed in our Participation of Volunteers, Students and Short-Term Third-Party Providers Policy.

When engaging with minors, we take seriously our responsibility for their interactions with adults and program users whilst engaged in activities, to ensure they are provided with a safe environment in which to work.

**Screening requirements for minors**

We have adopted a policy applying to minors who work/volunteer with children in our care, which: requires our organisation to comply with any Working with Children Check (or state equivalent) and national criminal history record check guidelines that specifically exempts minors from undergoing such checks and so we require those minors to be subject to more comprehensive:

- screening prior to participating in a program
- on-the-job supervision. This includes Leaders ensuring that the minor will not be left unattended with children at any time

**Recruitment requirements for Minors**

Where recruitment involves minors, our organisation will:

- ensure the activity is deemed low risk, in accordance with an exhaustive Risk Assessment for the minor involved
- gain written permission from parents/guardians prior
- ensure minors understand the responsibility and duties within the role description
- ensure all organisational policies and procedures, particularly behavioural expectations as outlined in our Code of Conduct and mechanisms for reporting concerns or abuse are explained in a way that is appropriate to their age and developmental ability

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- ensure all required training is accessible to parents/care givers
- ensure minors can contact parents/care givers should they wish to do so.

**Consent from parents / guardians of Minors**

Prior to a minor commencing work/volunteering activity, Leader will provide parents/ guardians of any minor with details of the activity including:

- contact information for the Patch where the minor will perform their role
- contact details of the Leader
- details of the proposed role including training and duties that the minor will be asked to perform
- the hours the minor will participate in the program
- a full copy of Our Patch Code of Conduct

Parents/guardians of any minor engaged at a Patch are required to provide written consent to hr@ourpatchgroup.com prior to the minor's commencement.

**Training**

We ask minors who are engaged with our organisation to undergo their relevant training with their parents/ care givers consent. This training involves the review of our Code of Conduct. As part of a minor's commitment to observing our Code of Conduct they will be required to sign a Safeguarding Commitment and provide this as part of the onsite Induction/Orientation process at the relevant Patch.

**Supervision of minors**

Where we engage minors, we ensure direct and adequate supervision is provided at all times. All appointed supervisors (Leaders) will undergo appropriate training including our Safeguarding Children Policy and our Reporting Policy as well as our behaviour expectations outlined in our organisation's Code of Conduct, health and safety hazards including teasing, bullying and harassment.

We keep records in relation to the dates, hours and locations worked by a minor and the Onsite Induction/Orientation process at a Patch.

Where our organisation engages personnel, who are under the age of 18 (a minor), in a paid or unpaid capacity, we comply with the requirements under the legislation that applies in our jurisdiction(s) with respect to child employment rights, to ensure their engagement is free from exploitation and abuse and to prevent inappropriate or unreasonable demands being made of them.

## 13. Ongoing Monitoring

Screening is not a one-time event. Our Patch Group must:

- Re-verify each person's WWCC every six months and at each renewal
- Re-check the prohibition notice register at the start of each term

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- Document any change of status and respond as required (stand down, regulatory notification)

## 14. Communication

We communicate our Recruitment and Screening requirements to personnel responsible for recruitment and screening. We involve our personnel in reviews of our Recruitment and Screening requirements. We communicate any significant alterations to our Recruitment and Screening requirements and resources to all personnel who assist in recruiting 'involved' personnel.

## 15. Monitoring and Review

This document will be reviewed every 3 years, in consultation with stakeholders. Some circumstances may trigger an early review, this includes but not limited to legislative changes, organisational changes, incident outcomes and other matters deemed appropriate by the Chief Executive Officer. We retain 'evidence' to document each review undertaken. Such evidence may include minutes of meetings and documentation of changes to policies and procedures that result from a review.

## 16. Supporting Resources

- Appendix 5 - Resume Screening Matrix – Leader
- Appendix 6 - Resume Screening Matrix – Educator
- Appendix 7 – Phone Screen Interview Matrix - Leader
- Appendix 8 - Phone Screen Interview Matrix – Educator
- Appendix 9 - Participation of Volunteers and Students and Third-Party Providers Policy

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# Safeguarding Children Induction and Training Program

## Purpose

Our Patch has zero-tolerance towards any form of abuse and neglect of children. We are committed to the rights of all children to feel and be safe when participating in our organisation's programs, activities, and events.

Our induction and training requirements have been developed to ensure that all personnel, including, employees, casual staff, volunteers, students, and third-party providers involved with Our Patch are informed and supported to understand our organisation's safeguarding children policies, procedures and practices and they:

- are aware of and remain alert to the risk of child abuse
- understand our commitment to preventing and responding to child abuse
- understand how they are expected to behaviour towards children
- know how to identify and respond to child abuse, and
- understand their responsibility in relation to identifying and responding to child abuse
- understand about children's rights, voices, participation and cultural safety

## Mandatory National Child Safety Training — Geccko Platform

From 27 February 2026, ALL staff, volunteers, students and third-party providers must complete mandatory national child safety training via the Geccko platform.
Geccko is the Australian Government Department of Education's free online learning platform: www.education.gov.au/national-child-safety-training

## Foundation Training

- Required for: ALL staff, volunteers, students and third-party providers
- Existing staff deadline: 27 August 2026 (6 months from obligation commencement)
- New staff/volunteers: must be completed before or immediately upon commencement

## How to Register on Geccko

1. Go to www.education.gov.au/national-child-safety-training
2. Select "Create an account" — use your work email address
3. Complete the Foundation training modules (estimated 2–3 hours total)
4. Download and save your completion certificate
5. Provide a copy of your certificate to your Leader for your staff record

If you experience technical difficulties accessing Geccko, notify your Leader immediately. Do not wait — document the attempt and seek IT support via the Educational Growth Manager.

## Advanced Modules

- Available from July 2026 — required roles to be confirmed by ACECQA

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## Responsibilities

- Educational Growth Manager: tracks completion, maintains records, reports non-compliance to CEO
- Area Manager: ensures all Educators and Leaders have completed Foundation training in time
- Each individual: responsible for creating their Geccko account and completing training by the required deadline

Geccko completion certificate must be added to each individual's Staff Record and be available for regulatory inspection.

## Related Policies

- Safeguarding Children
- Code of Conduct
- Responding to Child Abuse Reports and Allegations
- Recruitment
- Staff Records
- Career Training and Development
- Volunteers, Students and Short-Term Third-Party Providers Policy Volunteer Policy

## Related Legislation

Our induction and training policies and procedures comply with relevant legislation.

- Child Safe standards
- Education and Care Law and Regulations
- Working With Children Act

## Definitions

| Term | Definition |
|---|---|
| Executives | Board members and Chief Executive Officer |
| Leadership Team | Head of each department |
| Head Office | Team that works within the office to support our educators and programs |
| Educators | Individuals that work on the ground |
| Third-Party Providers | Incursion and excursion providers that come to Our Patch to offer a specialised program |
| Volunteers | Parents/guardians or students that come to Our Patch to share skills with our children |

## Responsibilities

| Position | Responsibility |
|---|---|
| Educational Growth Manager | • Implement policies and procedures across the organisation<br>• Ensure personnel have access to and understand this policy and related procedures<br>• Ensure all Leaders have access to support and advice to understand and implement policies and procedures<br>• Provide training and advice in the application of policies and procedures |
| Area Manager | • Review and update this document and supporting resources in consultation with relevant stakeholders |

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| | |
|---|---|
| | • Support the coordination of the Safeguarding Children framework and implementation<br>• Provide training and advice in the application of policies and procedures |
| Leadership Team | • Ensure policies and procedures are followed and implemented |
| Educators, Volunteers, Students and Third- party providers | • Compliance with policy and procedure |

## Key Requirements

### *Induction*

All personnel including our Chief Executive Officer, leadership team, employees, casual staff, volunteers, students, and third-party providers involved with Our Patch will complete an induction process. This Is done by using the relevant Induction Checklist Form.

Templates for Staff Records and Induction Checklists can be accessed from "Leaders" SharePoint site. A sample Leader Staff Record Template available here.

Our Patch personnel are required to:

- Review our organisation's commitment to safeguarding children and related policies and procedures including our organisation's: policy on responding to reports and allegations of child abuse incidents and allegations, code of conduct, supervision requirements, guidelines for parents and children's rights and responsibilities' statement
- Provide their mandatory Certificate of Completion for Code of Conduct as evidence of their review of our Code of Conduct and Commitment to our Code of Conduct prior to their first shift at any Patch
- Provide copies and details of their qualifications prior to their first shift
- Provide a copy of their Working with Children's Check prior to their first shift
- Provide details of their Police Check prior to their first shift

As per the Risk Management Matrix detailed in our Recruitment Policy, personnel with ongoing roles at Our Patch are considered high risk therefore these personnel are also required to:

- Provide their mandatory Certificate of Completion for ACF training prior to their first shift

### *Ongoing Training and Education*

All personnel will receive ongoing training and education including through the following mechanisms:

Safeguarding Children as an agenda item for each weekly staff meeting and training and/or discussions of Safeguarding issues and scenarios in staff meetings once per term

- periodic training and updates of relevant policies
- Leaders complete 'Managing Responses to child abuse' and 'Responding after a Child Abuse Incident' training or state equivalent

### *Volunteers, Students and Third-Party Providers*

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As per the Risk Management Matrix detailed in our Recruitment Policy, personnel with short term or ongoing intermittent roles at Our Patch, including volunteers, students, third party providers are considered low/medium risk therefore these personnel are required to:

- Review our Code of Conduct with Safeguarding Commitment to Code signed
- Provide a copy of their Working with Children's Check
- Complete a Volunteer. Student, Third Party Provider Staff Records form
- Participate in our Induction and Orientation Checklist

However, these personnel, including volunteers, students, third party providers are not required to provide police checks or complete ACF training prior to working/volunteering at Our Patch.

Our Volunteers, Students and Short-Term Third-Party Providers Policy Volunteer Policy requires that any volunteers, students, and third-party providers are supervised by Educators and will not be left unattended with children at any time. This is reiterated as part of the Induction Checklist.

## Records and documentation

Our Patch maintains records of our induction and training processes including records of:

- Certificate of Completion for Code of Conduct as evidence of agreement to Our Patch Code of Conduct (for personnel with ongoing roles with direct contact with children)
- Signed Safeguarding Commitment to our Code of Conduct (volunteers, students, third party providers)
- Certificate of Completion as evidence of completion of ACF mandatory Safeguarding Children Training (for personnel with ongoing roles with direct contact with children)
- Working with Children's Checks (or state equivalent)
- Police Checks (if applicable
- Qualifications Details

## Communication

We communicate our induction and training requirements to personnel responsible for induction and training. We communicate any significant alterations to these requirements and resources to all personnel.

## Monitoring and Review

This document will be reviewed every 3 years, in consultation with stakeholders. Some circumstances may trigger an early review, this includes but not limited to legislative changes, organisational changes, incident outcomes and other matters deemed appropriate by the Chief Executive Officer.

We retain records of each review undertaken. Such records may include minutes of meetings and documentation of changes to policies and procedures that result from a review.

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# Participation of Volunteers, Students and Short-Term Third-Party Providers

## Purpose of this Policy:

Our Patch will support participation of volunteers (Including parent-volunteers), students and short-term third-party providers as we know the value this brings to everyone.

Our due diligence practices are embedded throughout our organisation to ensure the safety of children in our care, personnel and anyone involved with Our Patch so that they are aware of the requirements.

## Prerequisite Policy:

- Working with Children Check Policy
- Code of Conduct and Safeguarding Children Commitment

## Policy:

We inform prospective volunteers, students, and third-party providers that our organisation's approach is to take every precaution to protect all children in our care.

Where required, additional support is to be provided to parents/guardians with particular attention paid to the cultural or linguistic background of these parents/guardians to enable them to participate in our programs whilst still meeting our safeguarding children requirements.

All volunteers, students and third-party providers will need to follow the strategies set out below and will be required to perform to their best of their ability so the best outcome for their learning and development.

## Impact for Our Patch:

- Safety and Well-being of all children
- Support Volunteers and Students to learn and achieve

## Strategies:

- Any consideration of Volunteers (including parent-volunteers), students and short-term third-party providers must be submitted in full prior to info@ourpatch.education prior to commencement and provide information about:
    - Purpose of the visit/placement
    - Duration
    - Visit and assessment schedules
    - Student's supervisor (school or educational institution)
        - A copy of current and valid Working with Children Check (Employee or Volunteer).

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- WWCC for Volunteers are free of charge and can be obtained from Applicants | Working with Children
- If a student is under the age of 18, they are considered a child and do not require a Working with Children Check.

- The Area Manager and a member in the Leadership Team in consultation with the relevant Leader will review the request submitted and advise the applicant of the decision.

In low risk and minimal risk categories as outlined in the Risk Management Risk Matrix below, volunteers (including parent-volunteers), students and short-term third-party providers are not required to participate in an interview with safeguarding children questions, provide referees or receive job scorecard Responsibilities document.

## Recruitment, Screening and Induction Matrix for Volunteers, students, and short-term third-party providers

| | | Frequency and duration of contact | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Nature of contact** | **Short-term** | **Ongoing intermittent** | **Ongoing** |
| **Degree of unsupervised direct program contact** | **Unsupervised, direct program contact** | Example: Emergency relief teacher, Area Manager, educator, carer, mentor, counsellor, weekend camp leader, chaperone | Example: Specialist teacher, Area Manager, educator in skills program run every term | Example: Teacher, Area Manager, educator, carer, mentor, counsellor, manager of children's programs, Board members |
| | **Supervised, direct program or secondary contact** | Example: Work experience, administration & reception, event support | Example: Maintenance contractor, administration & reception, parent volunteer | Example: Work experience, kitchen staff, administration & reception in children's programs |
| | **Supervised, no direct program or secondary contact** | Example: fundraisers, marketing, auditor, building contractor in non-child related areas | Example: Maintenance contractor, finance, bookkeeper, administration in non-child related areas | Example: Personnel in non-child related areas, after hours cleaners |

## Risk Management Matrix.

| Risk Management Requirements | WWCC* | Interview with SCYP questions | Reference with SYCP questions | Briefing on SCYP | Signed Code of Conduct | SCYP Course |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Minimal** | N | N | N | Y | N | N |
| **Low** | Y | N | N | Y | Y | N |
| **Medium** | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | N |
| **High** | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y |

*Always refer to appropriate legislation regarding WWCC requirements

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### Definitions used In Recruitment, Screening, and Induction Matrix

| | |
|---|---|
| **Unsupervised**<br>Note: A Volunteer/Student/Third party provider will not be left unattended with children at any time | Where the adult's contact with children is not directly supervised by another adult and hence, they have responsibility for care of children. This includes roles having responsibility for management of direct program contact personnel and management of personal records of children. |
| **Supervised** | Where the adult's contact with children is directly supervised by another adult and hence do not have primary responsibility for children. |
| **Direct program contact** | Providing programs, activities, and events to children as a core part of the role. |
| **Secondary contact** | Performing ancillary or administrative functions in organisations that provide programs, activities, and events for children and where children are present. |
| **No direct program or secondary contact** | Work is conducted in areas where children are not usually present; contact with children is incidental to the role and those children with whom they have incidental contact are supervised by other adults. |
| **Short term** | One-off, temporary, less than 2 weeks |
| **Ongoing** | Long term, full-time or part-time |
| **Briefing on Safeguarding Children policies and procedures** | An explanation (as it relates to the particular role) of the organisation's commitment to safeguarding children, its expectations in relation to behaviour with children and its child abuse reporting policy. |

## Induction and orientation

- Our Patch will offer an induction and orientation on their first day which will outline expectations including:
- that the Volunteer/Student/Third party provider will not be left unattended with children at any time
- Our Patch team will work with Volunteers/Students/Third party providers to teach, guide, and develop skills whilst working with us
- A staff record will be completed for the volunteer/student/third party provider. Leaders can access the staff record form from "Leaders" SharePoint site
- Attendance list for each day the Volunteer/Student/Third Party provider is at Our Patch – the service, the date, and hours of participation
- Should an issue arise during this time – it will be escalated through to Area Manager and appropriate steps with the individual, organisation, school, or training institution will take place.
- Unacceptable behaviour will not be tolerated as the safety of children and educators are paramount.
- Our Patch team will work with Volunteer/Student to teach, guide, and develop skills whilst working with us

***An orientation will also include the Volunteer/Student/Third party provider being shown:***

- The licenced area (indoors and outdoors), bathrooms, kitchen
- Location of first aid kit, emergency management plan, medical management plans

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## Related Policies:

- Educator Policies
- Employment Policies
- Interactions with Children Policies
- Safeguarding of Children Policies

## Related legislation:

- Regulations 120, 149
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011, Regulation 168 — policies and procedures (including complaints from families)
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011, Regulation 176(2)(b) — notification of complaints alleging that the safety, health or wellbeing of a child was compromised
- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010, s.174(2)(b) — duty to notify the Regulatory Authority of complaints
- National Quality Standard — Quality Area 6 (Collaborative Partnerships with Families and Communities), Standard 6.2.3
- National Quality Standard — Quality Area 7 (Governance and Leadership), Standard 7.1.2

## Resources:

- Education and Care Regulations

## Supporting Resources

- Appendix 14 - First Aid Kit Items

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## Safeguarding Information for Parents / Guardians

Our Patch has zero-tolerance towards any form of harm and risk of harm of children. We are committed to the rights of all children to feel and be safe when participating in our organisation's programs, activities, events.

As part of this commitment, Our Patch is undertaking Safeguarding Children Accreditation in partnership with the Australian Childhood Foundation to develop and implement effective child protection policies and procedures throughout our organisation to safeguard and respond to children.

In recognition of the important role Parents/guardians have in safeguarding children, parents/guardians are to be provided with this Safeguarding Information for Parents/Guardians and our Guidelines for Parents/Guardians outlining how they can support a safe environment for all children involved with Our Patch. Safeguarding information will also be used as discussion points at enrolment.

To ensure parents/guardians have access to our Safeguarding Children policies these are available in our Operations Process Manual which is accessible at each Patch.

We will also discuss safeguarding children in our programs in ways that are appropriate for each child's age and developmental stage.

We are committed to delivering an environment that is caring, nurturing and safe and this is reflected in our policies and practices. Below are some of the processes we have in place to support our commitment to safeguarding children.

### 1. Enrolment Process

As part of our enrolment process, parents/guardians are required to provide all necessary details about their child, including any medical conditions, health needs, parental orders as well as details about any person authorised to collect their child to ensure all requirements are met.

Parents/guardians are required to keep their child's enrolment details up to date at all times using Our Patch XAP (enrolment app).

### 2. Welcome to Our Patch

At Our Patch, we know that children who are safe, are free to grow up happy and healthy; and we take our role in providing a safe environment for each and every child we care for very seriously.

It is the responsibility of all at personnel including employees, casual staff, third-party providers and volunteers involved with Our Patch to:

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- protect children from all forms of abuse, bullying and exploitation by our people;
- be alert to incidents of child abuse and neglect occurring outside the scope of our operations that may have an impact on the children to whom we provide programs, activities and events and;
- create and maintain a child safe culture that is understood, endorsed and put into action by all the individuals who work for, volunteer or access our programs, activities and events.

Our policies and procedures seek to address risks to child safety and to establish a safeguarding culture and practices. Our safeguarding policies and procedures are accessible in forms that are easy to understand, have been informed by stakeholder consultation, and are communicated to children and their families, along with our personnel and the general public.

We regularly review our policies, gain endorsement of changes and advise our personnel of changes. Our policies and procedures in relation to the protection of children guide:

- the screening and recruitment of our personnel
- the behaviour of our personnel towards children
- the induction and training of our personnel about safeguarding children
- our open and effective communication with children and their parents and guardians
- our responses to the abuse and neglect of children if it occurs and
- our maintenance of a safeguarding culture in the organisation.

## 3. Our Commitment

At Our Patch we consider the health, safety and wellbeing of all children to be our highest priority. We strive to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children through our Safeguarding Children Policy.

Our Safeguarding Children Policy has been adopted, approved and endorsed by our Board, Chief Executive Officer and Leadership Team. It underpins a set of policies and procedures in relation to the protection of children which guide:

- the screening and recruitment of our personnel
- the behaviour of our personnel towards children
- the induction and training of our personnel about safeguarding children
- our open and effective communication with children and their parents/guardians
- our responses to the harm and risk of harm of children if it occurs and
- our maintenance of a safeguarding culture in the organisation.

All personnel, including employees, casual staff, third-party providers and volunteers involved with Our Patch must ensure that their approach and interactions with children are sensitive, respectful and inclusive of all backgrounds and abilities. We promote equity and respect diversity by:

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- actively anticipating children diverse circumstances and responding effectively to those with additional vulnerabilities
- by giving all children access to information, support and complaints processes, and
- paying particular attention to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, children with a disability, LGBTI, and those unable to live at home.

Our personnel are required to:

- undergo an extensive screening process including a Working with Children Check and/or a National Criminal Records Check
- behave professionally and with care towards children including not acting outside the boundaries of their duties or using their position with the organisation to solicit work with or initiate contact with children to whom we provide care
- understand the important responsibility they have to protect children from all forms of abuse, bullying and exploitation either by our personnel or that occurs outside the scope of our operations and programs; and
- create and maintain a child safe culture.

We expect all within our organisation, regardless of their role or level of responsibility, to act to safeguard children from such harm by:

- adopting the practices and behaviour we have set as our standard when carrying out their roles, and.
- reporting any abuse or neglect of which they become aware to our management and/or to external authorities responsible for child protection or to police, regardless of whether that abuse is being perpetrated by personnel within our organisation, or by those outside our organisation including those from the child's family, extended family, their family's extended network or strangers.

### *Responding to Child Abuse Reports and Allegations*

We consider any form of child abuse including emotional, physical and sexual abuse, family violence, grooming or neglect as intolerable under any circumstances.

We have a legal, moral and mission driven responsibility to protect children from harm and to ensure that any incident of suspected child abuse is promptly and appropriately dealt with. Our personnel are required to report suspected child abuse to their direct supervisor/manager and the child protection authorities or the police.

Our Patch will co-operate with the child protection authorities and police and other agencies as required by law.

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**Safeguarding Code of Conduct**
Please refer to our Code of Conduct and Safeguarding of Children policy.

**Further Information**
If you have concerns regarding the safety of a child or would like to discuss any of the information further, please contact Leader.

For more information about child safety and Our Patch, our safeguarding children policies are available in our Operations Process Manual which is accessible at each Patch.

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## Guidelines for Parents and Guardians

Our Patch is committed to creating an environment where all its community can enjoy participation in our programs, activities, and events without experiencing abusive, insulting, threatening or other anti-social behaviour.

Parents/guardians have an important role in safeguarding children and in partnership we will work together to provide a safe environment for each child. We call on all parents/guardians and other spectators involved with Our Patch to:

- observe our organisation's guidelines for parents/guardians
- when necessary, politely, and respectfully remind others of their obligations under these guidelines; and
- in the event of serious or ongoing breaches of these Guidelines by another person, to report the matter to Our Patch personnel so appropriate action can be taken.

Our primary consideration is the participation, enjoyment, and safety of your children as well as other children in Our Patch programs, activities or events. As parents/guardians your role is to support these outcomes by:

- encouraging your child's participation in a positive manner
- providing all necessary details on their child at enrolment, including any medical conditions, health needs, parental orders and details about any person authorised to collect your child, consent for photography and their child's use of personal electronic devices and Our Patch VOICE app to ensure all requirements are met.
- keeping their child's enrolment details up to date at all times using Our Patch using Our Patch XAP (enrolment app).
- advising the Leader of any additional support that your child may have or develops over the course of the program, to assist in the safe participation of the program e.g. asthma, allergies, etc.
- advising the Leader of any changes in contact information in the event of an emergency, parental orders, person authorised to collect your child etc.
- not engaging in behaviour that discriminates against any other person on the basis of age, gender, race, ability, colour, religion, language, politics, sexual orientation, national or ethnic origin or ability to live at home
- not engaging in, or threatening to engage in, violent, physical or verbal confrontations with any other person
- engaging with Our Patch personnel in a positive manner and do not criticise the personnel in the presence of your child. Report any concerns to the Leader.
- ensuring your child has adequate supervision at all times when you visit Our Patch programs activities or events
- ensuring that your child is picked up on time at the conclusion of program, activity, or event
- notify the Leader prior to the session if your child is to be picked up by a person unknown to the program and update the authorised person on your child

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- not taking photos of other children unless you have prior consent of their parents/guardians
- not being affected by alcohol, drugs and other behaviour altering substances
- not requesting contact with personnel outside of Our Patch programs, activities, and events
- not requesting personnel to provide any other support outside the boundaries of Our Patch programs, activities and events e.g., do not ask for babysitting, to borrow money, lifts home for your child
- report any concerns regarding the safety, wellbeing and welfare of a child to Our Patch personnel immediately
- provide feedback and input on Our Patch, programs, activities, events and decisions that affect the safety, wellbeing, and welfare of children.

Serious or ongoing breaches of these guidelines will not be tolerated. Those who breach our guidelines risk being asked to leave the program, activity or event and/or being prohibited from attending future engagements.

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## Safeguarding Statement for children

We at Our Patch believe children who come to our programs, activities and events should:

- feel safe and be safe
- feel welcome; and
- be cared for; and
- have a voice

Everyone who works at Our Patch does their best to make sure children in our care are protected from any harm.

- It is not okay for anyone to hurt your feelings or your body.
- It is okay for you to say NO to an adult if they ask you to do something that makes you feel unsafe or uncomfortable.
- If you ever feel unsafe, or uncomfortable or upset we will listen to you and help you.
- We will listen to your voice, what you say through words, pictures etc.
- We will help you to learn about Children's Rights and Behaviours
- We will discuss and offer safeguarding children's activities in ways that are appropriate for your age and developmental stage.
- We will help you to keep safe when you are using electronic devices whilst in our care
- It is always okay to let someone know if you are not feeling comfortable or safe or if you have been hurt. You can do this by telling us or a parent or by writing a letter.
- If you are unhappy with the way you are being treated, please let someone from Our Patch or a parent/guardian know.

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## Childrens Rights and Behaviours

Many years ago, world leaders made a commitment to the world's children by adopting the United Nations Rights of the Child. United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Children (www.unicef.org.au). At Our Patch we use these commitments to guide everything we do.

### The Rights of the Child means:

- All children have all these rights, no matter who they are, where they live, what language they speak, what their religion is, what they think, what they look like, if they are a boy or girl, if they have a disability, if they are rich or poor, and no matter who their parents or families are or what their parents or families believe or do. No child should be treated unfairly for any reason.
- When adults make decisions, they should think about how their decisions will affect children. All adults should do what is best for children. Governments should make sure children are protected and looked after by their parents, or by other people when this is needed. Governments should make sure that people and places responsible for looking after children are doing a good job.

### The responsibility of Our Patch Team:

Our Patch Team will:

- Do our best to make sure that you are safe from any harm
- We will listen to your voice, what you say through words, pictures etc. and if you ever feel unsafe, or uncomfortable or upset we will help you.
- Discuss safeguarding children in our programs in ways that are appropriate for your age and developmental stage.
- Wear a uniform and/or a name badge so you know who they are
- Supervise you while you are at Our Patch
- Not be alone with you where we cannot be seen by other Our Educators
- Give you guidance that is fair, respectful, and appropriate to your age and background; and
- Not take any disciplinary action involving physical punishment or any form of treatment that could reasonably be considered as degrading, cruel, frightening or humiliating.
- Limit physical contact with you, this means no hugging, wrestling, horseplay, tickling or other roughhousing
- Get your parents/guardians permission in writing before we take you on an excursion.
- Not transport you privately for example, drive you home when aftercare closes
- Ask you and your parents/guardians if its ok to take pictures of you.
    - Any pictures of you will be limited to specific events for example a performing arts performance at our program
    - Any pictures of you will only be taken using devices provided by Our Patch. Pictures of you will not to be taken using personal devices at any time.
- Not babysit you, visit you at your home, give you gifts or special treatment
- Not call, text or email you or make contact with you on social media

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- Help you and other children if you feel unsafe, uncomfortable, or upset.

## Responsibilities of Children at Our Patch:

At Our Patch, the voice of children guides us in all we do. We want you to use your voice by telling us your ideas. Please let your Leader what you think about the 'Responsibilities of Children at Our Patch' so we can capture your thoughts and ideas.

When you take part in an Our Patch activity, event or program you also have to behave positively by:

- Telling an Educator or parent if you feel unsafe, uncomfortable, upset or if you have been hurt. You can do this by telling or writing to us or a parent/guardian
- Treating other children and adults with respect.
- Following the guidelines of the Patch program, activity or event; for example:
    - Kindness! Kindness is our primary guideline – everything in the Patch should be done with kindness at the forefront. Kindness to each other, kindness to ourselves, kindness to our space, kindness to our resources.
    - Always staying where it is safe and not leaving the area of supervision or activity without talking to an Educator first
    - Always going to the bathroom/change rooms in pairs or small groups
    - Always behaving appropriately when using bathrooms/change rooms
    - Always keeping safe when using any electronic devices by following the Acceptable Use of Personal Device Agreement – Child.
- Having fun!

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## Acceptable Use of Personal Device Agreement - Child

At Our Patch we believe all children who come to our programs should feel safe and be safe.

This is why, if your parent/guardian has given permission for you to use your personal devices such as laptops, iPads, tablets, and mobile phones when you are in our care, you will be asked to sign and follow this agreement.

I _____ agree that when I am at Our Patch:

- I will use my personal device for no more than 30mins and will put my personal device away after this time.
- I will only use my personal device for the following reasons:
    - Homework
    - Games
    - Mindfulness Apps
    - Research for activities
- I will only use the school's Wi-Fi to connect my personal device to the internet
- I understand that an Educator will check in to see how I'm using my device
- If I use my personal device the wrong way, an Educator will ask me to put my personal device away.
- I will not use my personal device to take or share any images/recordings
- I understand that any personal device bought to Our Patch is my responsibility, and Our Patch is not responsible if my device is stolen, lost or damaged while I am in care.

Name

_____ Date _____

Signature

_____

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# Diversity and Inclusion Policy

## Guiding Values

Our Patch is dedicated to continual improvement when developing our programs to ensure that all children are included, supported, and recognised for the wealth of knowledge and talent their diversity brings.

We will build a culture of inclusiveness in all areas of our business from recruitment, training and our Child Safe policies.

Our Patch recognises and respects the importance of having a program that is free of bias or prejudice. It is paramount that all children, families, and cultures are included and considered in all aspects of Our Patch—from programming, to resources, to the pedagogy that guides the practices of Our Patch.

Our Patch respects the rights of all children to participate, paying appropriate attention to the needs of the following groups:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders
- Children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- Children with a disability or medical condition
- LGBTQI+ (Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex)
- Children who are unable to live at home

## Prerequisite Policy:

- GROW Values
- Duty of Care
- Code of Conduct
- Child Safeguarding Policies

## Policy:

Being grounded is one of the fundamental aspects of Our Patch, and this entails empowering children to know who they are and what they stand for. To do this, we have an unbiased approach that embraces every aspect of the child, allowing their voice to be heard and recognising any barriers that may occur. Through consultation with specialised teams and all our children, regardless of their area of diversity, will have opportunity to participate in all programmed activities.

Leaders and Educators will support all children in their participation in the program. All children will have the opportunity to interact, learn and enjoy the play each day in their Patch.

We have an inclusive ethos that welcomes and supports all cultures, languages, genders and how children choose to identify, communities, and abilities. It is especially important to

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acknowledge and support the cultural identity of children and their linguistically diverse backgrounds, including Aboriginal and Torres Straight Island children.

Our Patch will build cultural competency amongst Our Patch community—giving children the ability to understand, communicate with and effectively interact with people across cultures.

## Strategies:

- Leaders and Educators will embrace the philosophy of inclusion and celebrating diversity and welcome all gender identities, religions, cultural backgrounds, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds, those with linguistically diverse backgrounds, and children with additional needs.
- Leaders will ensure that the program reflects the goals and needs for children's individual development, additional needs, health or medical conditions, and cultural backgrounds.
- A range of activities will be planned throughout Our Patch to incorporate the strengths, interests, and needs of the children
- A Grounded Plan will be written for a child to ensure the strategies they need to thrive at Our Patch are captured
    - When needed, a Grow Educator can be placed at Our Patch to support the integration of children into Our Patch
- Our Patch will ensure that it is not performative in its actions to include other cultures, backgrounds, and needs, but rather embed them respectfully into the everyday happenings at the program so children of diverse experiences always feel included and seen
- Children will be encouraged to build skills in empathy and listening to each other's feelings to better understand them
- Leader and Educators will work closely with the school community to incorporate the values of the school into Our Patch
- Leaders and Educators will role model behaviour to ensure Our Patch is an inclusive space for all children that allows them to
    - Build trusting relationships
    - Embrace their self-identity and self-expression
    - Develop their learning and wellbeing
    - Celebrate diversity
    - Promote positive learning experiences
- Educators will give opportunities for children to enhance their knowledge of Indigenous culture, relevant to Aboriginal History in the community

## Related Policies:

- Guiding and Supporting Children
- Supporting Children with Additional Needs

## Related legislation:

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- Quality Area 1 – Educational Program and Practice.
- Quality Area 2 – Children's health and safety.
- Quality Area 5 – Relationships with children.
- Quality Area 6 – Collaborative partnerships with families and communities.
- Education and Care Services National Regulations (2011), R 73, 74.
- Education and Care Services National Law Act (2010), S168.

## Resources:

- ACECQA Guide to the NQF
- Supporting Culturally and Linguistically Diverse People
- Care for Kids - Encouraging Cultural and Linguistic Diversity in Your Service
- Exploring Diversity and Equity in Education and Care Services
- ACECQA - We Hear You (2014)

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## Engagement Procedure

As our engagement procedures happen throughout the program, this procedures document provides an extract of several relevant policies including: Orientation Process, Children's Feedback and Grievances, Family Grievance and Complaints.

All of the Our Patch policies listed above are available in full in our Operational Practises Manual which is available at each Patch.

### Orientation for children and families

All children will be welcomed into Our Patch and have an orientation program. The Orientation program will provide children and families with the detail about how the program operates and what children can do whilst at Our Patch. It is an opportunity to get a feel about our program and learn about the ways we can support children to GROW.

### Orientation Strategies:

- Our Patch supports each child individually. Educators take Ownership of the orientation process with a dash of Wonder to develop a process uniquely for their children. Pending the children and the program, some initiatives may include:
    - Children and families to visit the service prior to the child's first session to see the program and meet the Educators.
    - 'What to bring' list for a child's first day.
    - Children receive a welcome gift on their first day.
    - 'My First Day at Our Patch' welcome activity.
    - Welcome flyer for the children made by the children.
    - Use of a Buddy system.
    - Child is taken on a tour of the service by their buddy or another child.
- All parents are encouraged to register their child with Our Patch so that they can attend Our Patch whenever required.
- Each day and each session of care, Leader will review the attendance list to identify any new children to Our Patch and:
    - Determine whether they have any medical conditions and ensure all the paperwork is in order to support them
    - Determine whether the child has any specific dietary needs
    - Determine whether there are any court orders for the child
    - Determine whether there is any support the child needs for their behaviour and positive interactions/engagement in Our Patch

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- When Leader or Educator hasn't met the parent/guardian or authorised person who has come to collect the child, Leader/Educator will ask the parent/guardian or authorised person to see their photo ID to verify they are approved to collect the child from Our Patch
- When the parent/guardian or person who is authorised to collect their child arrives, Leader or Educator will greet them let them know what the child participated in during their time at Our Patch.
- All prep/foundation children will be collected directly from their classroom by an Educator for the first term, or as the needs of the children determine. The full process will be communicated with the parents/guardians and the school and kept in Our Patch's information folder.

## Children's Feedback and Grievances

It is imperative that the child's voice guides every aspect of Our Patch, so children are encouraged to provide feedback about all aspects of Our Patch. Children are encouraged to provide feedback continually to make sure that their voices are being heard.

We want the children to feel grounded and supported in Our Patch and to have ownership of their Patch. Children are the core of Our Patch and ensuring that they can participate in a program that reflects them and their wants is fundamental.
Our Patch passion and vision is all about capturing children's voice. This is the reason why Our Patch exists. To help improve all children's experiences at Our Patch, children will be given the opportunity to provide regular feedback.

All children will be empowered to provide feedback in ways that are appropriate for each child's age and developmental stage e.g., children can provide feedback by talking to us,

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writing to use, drawing their ideas and where parental consent has been provided by using our secure Our Patch VOICE app. All feedback received is gathered and appropriate follow up will be taken with programs and activities to be developed in response to children's feedback.

## Children's Feedback and Grievances Strategies:

- Throughout Our Patch space are different Patches where children can engage in activities. One primary area is Assembly Patch.
    - This patch has been designed for children to come together and talk about Our Patch – what they are enjoying, what they would like to see more and less of, experiences they wish to do, what resources they might need to enjoy their time at Our Patch.
    - This patch is safe and empowers children to have choice and control.
    - An Educator is available here for children to talk to or the children may nominate a child to represent each time they come together.
- Upon entry into Our Patch, children will be given the opportunity to let Educators know via our secure Our Patch VOICE App how they're feeling. Children will also be given the opportunity to provide feedback at the end of their session via the secure Our Patch VOICE app so that feedback is being given instantaneously and will allow greater oversight of the child's experience.
- Parents are asked to provide consent for their children to use Our Patch VOICE app as part of their enrolment form.
- All information contained in the Our Patch VOICE app will be kept safe in a password protected file.
- Any feedback received via the Our Patch VOICE app will be reviewed by the Leadership Team on a regular basis with appropriate messages sent to parents/guardians.
    - If a child lets Our Patch know that they are unhappy with their experience, Leaders will be notified and can follow up with the child the next time the child is booked in to ensure the child is listened to and supported.
    - Our Patch team will immediately action any item that a child has suggested that is safe and easy to accommodate.
- Children are encouraged to let Educators know when they would like to see changes in programming and Educators and Leaders will do their best to support these changes.
- If a child wants to make a complaint about another child at Our Patch, they will be encouraged to discuss it with a Educator or Leader. Children can also let us know through letters, drawings and via Our Patch VOICE app. Educators will encourage the children to work through their concerns in line with Our Patch and the school's values.
- Should a child want to make a complaint about a Educator, they will be encouraged to discuss it with a different Educator or Leader. The Our Patch staff will work with them through their concerns in a respectful and timely manner and include a child's family when appropriate.
    - When required, Area Manager will support the child and family to ensure that all parties feel listened to and supported to get to an agreed resolution.

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- If a child wants to make a complaint about a parent/guardian or another adult, Leader will support them to discuss their complaint with respect and care. Leader will make no promises to the child but listen openly and advise direct manager
- All child complaints will be taken seriously and dealt with in a timely manner.
    - Should a child disclose an allegation of abuse and/or neglect, our personnel are mandatory reporters, and educator is required to report this immediately, or if that is not possible, no later than before ending that person's session of work with Our Patch.
    - Reporting it to be done as per Our Patch Responding to Child Abuse Reports and Allegations Policy provided in this document.
    - Personnel responding to child abuse reports and allegations will be supported by the Area Manager

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## Family Grievance and Complaints Policy

Our Patch provides families with a number of tools so that all families have a voice in Our Patch and will encourage families to provide feedback to improve on the service delivery. This is our promise to our families.

Parents/Guardians will always have their grievances heard, and together we work to support each other so that the resolution is fair and reasonable to all concerned.

All complaints will be dealt with care and compassion, with the wellbeing of the children at the forefront.

### Family Grievance and Complaints Strategies:

Families are encouraged to speak with Educators to provide their feedback. They can also provide feedback through letters and surveys.

A future process to be developed will provide parents/guardians with the opportunity after the completion of a session, to provide their feedback about their child/ren's session at Our Patch via the Our Patch VOICE App.

- Parents/guardians are able to rate their session and if they advise that they were unhappy, Leader will contact them within 24 hours to seek their feedback directly.
- Parents/guardians can also call Our Patch or email through to Our Patch if they would prefer to lodge their complaint that way.
    - Should a parent choose to notify Our Patch of their grievances outside the Our Patch App, Our Leader or Area Manager will contact the parent/guardian within 24 hours.
- If any complaint is unable to be resolved immediately by Leader, Area Manager will support the conversation with parents/guardians so that a solution can be achieved.
- If it is determined that the nature of a complaint is serious—in that it alleges the health, safety, or wellbeing of a child is compromised while being at Our Patch—it will be escalated by Area Manager to the Regulatory Authority.
    - All reportable complaints will be reported to the DET within 24 hours

- If the parent/guardian is unsatisfied with the investigation or the outcome that was conduct by Leader, they can escalate to the Area Manager
    - The Area Manager will review the investigation and contact persons involved if necessary.
    - The Area Manager will escalate to the Leadership Team the nature of the complaint/grievance for additional support for the parent/guardian.
    - Where the safety and wellbeing of children is being addressed, the Area Manager will support parents/guardians directly. The Safeguarding Framework will be reviewed in conjunction with the incident to maintain the safety and wellbeing of all children involved.

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    - The Area Manager will come back to the parent/guardian within 48 hours of the complaint being escalated to them with the resolution/outcome of the complaint.
- All complaints will be documented and all steps to reaching the resolution will be documented as well.
- All complaints will be investigated fully, fairly, and unbiasedly.
- Schools will be advised of any matter that is serious and should Our Patch receive a number of complaints about a concern, Area Manager will advise the school so that they are aware and included in the discussions.

## Documentation requirements

- All complaints — verbal or written — are logged in Xap on the day they are received.
- For verbal complaints (including comments made in passing at pick-up): the Leader creates a file note in Xap including who raised the complaint, the date and time, the substance of what was said (quoted where possible), and the proposed next step. A written confirmation email is sent to the family the same day.
- For written complaints: the original email/VOICE feedback is attached or referenced in the Xap record; an acknowledgement reply is sent within 24 hours confirming who is handling the complaint and the next contact date.
- All written replies to complaints copy the Coach where the complaint is anything more than a routine clarification.

Each Xap complaint record carries an audit trail of correspondence, agreed actions, owners, due dates and the eventual resolution.

## Five-step complaint approach

The following five-step approach is to be added at the start of the Family Grievance and Complaints Strategies section. Every family complaint — regardless of how it arrives — is to be managed through these five steps. Skipping any step is not acceptable.

- **Step 1 — Acknowledge.** Within 24 hours of the complaint being raised, the Leader or Coach contacts the family directly. Acknowledgement is required even where the issue cannot be resolved immediately.
- **Step 2 — Document.** Verbal complaints (in person, by phone, in passing at pick-up) are captured as a file note in Xap on the same day, and a written confirmation email is sent to the family summarising what was raised and what happens next. Written complaints (email, VOICE app, letter) are acknowledged in writing within 24 hours and logged in Xap the same day.
- **Step 3 — Empathise and clarify.** The Leader reflects back what they have heard, asks clarifying questions to confirm the facts (what happened, when, who was involved), and asks the family what outcome they are seeking.

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- **Step 4 — Act and resolve.** Agreed actions are recorded in Xap with named owners and timeframes. The Leader is accountable for the work being done. Where the complaint cannot be resolved by the Leader, the Coach takes over and returns to the family within 48 hours with the resolution/outcome (existing manual requirement).
- **Step 5 — Close the loop.** A final contact with the family confirms what was done. The family is explicitly asked whether they are satisfied with the resolution. If they are not, the complaint is escalated to the Coach and reopened in Xap. The Xap record is only closed once the family has confirmed satisfaction or the matter has been formally escalated.

## Related Policies:

- Acceptance and Refusal of Authorisations
- Authorisation to Collect
- Children's feedback and grievances
- Child protection
- Code of Conduct
- Duty of Care
- Family grievance and complaints
- Guiding and Support Children
- Interactions with children
- Medical conditions policy (Aug 2026 Version)
- Program Planning
- Responding to child abuse reports and allegations policy
- Suspension/Exclusion

## Related legislation:

- Quality Area 1 – Educational Program and Practice.
- Quality Area 2 – Children's health and safety
- Quality Area 6 – Collaborative partnerships with families and communities
- Quality Area 7 – Leadership and service management
- Education and Care Services National Law Act (2010), S 168,74,175
- Education and Care Services National Regulations (2011), R 160,161,62,173,176

## Resources:

- ACECQA Guide to the NQF
- Education and Care Services National Law Act (2010)
- Education and Care Services National Regulations (2011)

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## Safeguarding Children Incident Policy

Consistent with section 5A of the National Law, the safety, rights and best interests of children are the paramount consideration in all incident management decisions.

### Purpose

The purpose of the Safeguarding Children Incident Management Policy is to outline the actions required to ensure the effective management of incidents. Effectively managing incidents includes taking the appropriate actions in relation to incidents while also identifying any changes required to help prevent or reduce harm to our program users, including children, our personnel, and other stakeholders.

Compliance with this policy ensures all incidents are reported and managed in a way that is responsive to the immediate circumstances of the incident, the rights of those involved, and wherever possible, any risks of recurrence are minimised.

This policy assists our organisation to:

- identify incident management and implementation roles and responsibilities
- review incident information over time to identify lessons and practice implications, and making recommendations for improvement
- generate and implement improvement strategies and action plans, and
- monitor and review the effectiveness of actions taken.

In adhering to this policy, all personnel involved with Our Patch will promote equity and respect diversity of the children and their parents/guardians who access our programs activities and events.

This includes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and children with a disability/medical condition, LGBTQI+ children and children who cannot live at home. Our organisation upholds a family's right to have their concern resolved.

Our policies and procedures reflect child safe legislation and promote best practice and care for the children within our organisation. Our Board, Chief Executive Officer and Leadership Team approves and endorses this Safeguarding Children Incident Policy.

### Scope

Our Safeguarding Children Incident Policy applies to all personnel, including employees, casual staff, third-party providers and volunteers involved with Our Patch.

This policy applies in all Our Patch operational environments and without fail wherever children are participating in Our Patch programs, activities, and events. Adherence to this

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policy is a mandatory requirement for anyone involved with Our Patch programs, activities, and events.

## Incident Notification Timeframes

**Physical or sexual abuse — allegation or incident: notify the regulatory authority WITHIN 24 HOURS (Regulation 176 as amended from 1 September 2025). The previous 7-day timeframe no longer applies to this category.**

- Serious incident (death, serious injury, trauma, illness): notify as soon as practicable and within 24 hours
- All other reportable incidents: notify within the timeframes specified in the National Regulations

The Leader or Nominated Supervisor must immediately notify the CEO upon becoming aware of any allegation or incident of physical or sexual abuse. The CEO is responsible for ensuring regulatory authority notification within 24 hours. Written records of all notifications must be retained.

## Confidentiality During an Investigation

Staff involved in, or aware of, an incident or investigation must:

- Not discuss the matter with other staff, families or community members except as required by the investigation process
- Direct all media or external enquiries immediately to the CEO — no staff member may speak to media about an incident or allegation
- Maintain records securely and in accordance with the Privacy Act 1988 and state privacy legislation

## Support for Children and Families

Following any incident involving a child, the Leader must ensure:

- The child's immediate welfare and emotional needs are attended to, with access to a trusted educator
- The child's family is notified as soon as practicable (unless notification would put the child at further risk — seek CEO guidance in that case)
- Referrals to appropriate support services (counselling, Child Protection) are offered where needed

## Criminal Acts and Inappropriate Conduct

All suspected criminal activity must be reported to the CEO and Police. From 27 February 2026, 'inappropriate conduct' is a specific criminal offence under section 165A of the National Law. Where conduct may constitute inappropriate conduct (see Code of Conduct), the CEO must consider whether notification to the regulatory authority is also required.

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## Responsibilities

All personnel within our organisation have a duty of care, and a legal obligation to ensure that:

- incidents are responded to and managed appropriately
- 'Reasonable steps' are taken to prevent harm to children

An incident can occur at any time and may be triggered from a conversation, email, phone call or an indicator.

Our personnel are obliged to report any information relating to:

- Incidents, allegations, disclosures, or reasonable concerns in relation to abuse or neglect of a child, either by personnel within our organisation or by others
- Breaches or actions of other personnel within our organisation that contravene our policies and procedures, such as outlined in Our Patch Code of Conduct.

Management considers a failure to observe our guidelines to be misconduct and will result in appropriate disciplinary action. Depending on the seriousness of the misconduct, disciplinary action may include suspension while matters are investigated and/or dismissal. In addition to any internal disciplinary proceedings, any breaches of law will be reported to police all instances in which a breach of the law has or may have occurred.
The responsibility of each role in relation to the development and compliance of the Our Patch Child Safety Incident Management Policy is detailed in [section 8] of this policy.

**Reporting summary**

In the immediate event of an incident, all personnel must follow the steps outlined in the Responding to Child Abuse Reports and Allegations Policy:

1. Responding- immediate response to incident or disclosure
2. Reporting- internal and external reporting, including mandatory reporting and regulatory authority reporting
3. Sharing of Information- confidentiality and sharing between authorities and other stakeholders
4. Supporting- provision of support for children and others involved

## Categorisation of Child Abuse/Neglect Incidents

Categorisation is an essential activity in incident management. The main objective is to understand what type of incident has occurred, and therefore how to manage most effectively. Over time, if incidents are categorised similarly, the data can be used to identify trends and focus efforts on improving proactively.

Given the broad definition of what constitutes an incident, three categories have been developed to allow for specialised responses based on the actual or potential severity of impact. These categories are as follows:

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| Category | Details | Responsibility |
|---|---|---|
| Minor Incident | Events which cause or may cause minor physical stress and or emotional stress to program users/ or personnel.<br><br>Near misses and minor breaches of professional standards or agency policy (for example the Code of Conduct) that do **not** compromise the health and safety of program users and/or personnel. | Educators/Leaders/ Area Manager |
| Moderate Incident | Events which cause or are likely to cause physical stress or emotional distress to program users or personnel.<br><br>Near misses and criminal behaviour or breaches of professional standards or agency policy (for example the Code of Conduct) by personnel that may compromise the health and safety of program users or and/or personnel. | Area Manager |
| Serious Incident | Criminal behaviour, breaches of professional standards or organisational policy (for example Code of Conduct) by personnel that cause harm to or significantly compromise the health and safety of including program users and/or personnel. | Leadership Team and Area Manager |
| Refer to Appendix 1 for more information regarding Terms used | | |

Following a Child Abuse/Neglect incident being reported, the Area Manager is responsible for assessing and categorising the incident as Minor, Moderate or Serious as defined above.

The Area Manager must report any moderate and serious incidents to Head of OSHC Programs. immediately.

As an approved provider, must also notify the Regulatory Authority of any serious incident at the approved education and care service. The Area Manager is responsible for this.

## Investigation

**Internal Investigation**

After any Child Abuse/Neglect incident, an internal investigation is conducted by Area Manager using Our Patch Child Abuse/Neglect Incident Internal Investigation Form. This investigation will aim to establish;

- Events that led up to the incident
- What the nature of the incident was
- Category of the incident
- Impact to children
- Action taken by personnel to report
- Causes and influencing factors in the lead up to the incident
- Procedure followed and actions made by personnel

- Support provided to individuals impacted by the incident

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- Follow up actions to be completed
- Corrective actions to be taken by the organisation which informs continuous improvement
- Report to the Chief Executive Officer and Board

When the organisation lacks the specific skills or impartiality to complete a fair investigation, an incident may be contracted out to an external investigator. Our Patch Chief Executive Officer may also initiate an external review.

**Key Considerations for all Investigations**

Careful planning is key to conducting an accurate and procedurally fair investigation. All investigations should consider:

- Fairness- ensuring the most appropriate investigator is engaged to complete a fair and unbiased analysis. Investigations should be clear in their purpose, scope and plan. Each reportable allegation should be investigated separately. Investigations may still need to be completed regardless of if there has already been a police investigation
- Sensitivity- The rights of all parties involved should be upheld. Consideration for when, how and with whom interviews are conducted, avoiding any potential conflicts of interest. Interviews must be carried out sensitively and culturally appropriately with victims and witnesses. There should be procedural fairness towards the personnel involved and a reasonable opportunity to respond
- Confidentiality- Gathering relevant and appropriate evidence which is clearly documented and stored appropriately. Managing risks during investigations such as impact on programs and welfare of children
- Outcomes and Recommendations- Recommending findings and opportunities for continuous improvement should be clear. Any action which goes against the recommendations should be thoroughly explained and justified.

**External Investigation**

In some cases, this may be instigated by an external regulatory body as part of a licencing or compliance requirement. An external investigation may be carried out by the appropriate authorities, for example Police, child protection, NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission and the Regulatory Authority.

Where an external investigation occurs, Our Patch will support this investigation and provide all information and documentation as requested.

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# Criminal Acts and Misconduct

## Criminal acts

If while categorising, investigating, or reviewing an incident, it is suspected that the incident may involve criminal acts, Our Patch Group must refer the matter to the appropriate external body (police / child protection / Regulatory Authority).

All suspected criminal activity must be reported to the CEO and Police. From 27 February 2026, 'inappropriate conduct' is a specific criminal offence under section 165A of the National Law. Where conduct may constitute inappropriate conduct (see Code of Conduct), the CEO must consider whether notification to the regulatory authority is also required.

## Regulatory Authority Suspension and Training Direction Powers

- From 27 February 2026, the regulatory authority may issue suspension orders and mandatory training directions independently of any internal investigation
- No person subject to a suspension order may be engaged in any capacity involving children until it is lifted
- All regulatory authority notices must be reported to the CEO immediately and documented

## Misconduct and Reportable Conduct

Where an allegation involves personnel within our organisation, the CEO will consider if such conduct contravenes the Code of Conduct and if required by law, act in accordance with the Reportable Conduct Scheme. In Queensland, the Reportable Conduct Scheme applies to ECEC from 1 July 2026. In Victoria, it has applied since 2017. See the new Reportable Conduct Scheme Policy in Part 2.

**South Australia**: SA does not yet have a standalone Reportable Conduct Scheme for ECEC at the time of this review. SA services must still comply with mandatory notification obligations and are advised to follow Our Patch Group's internal reportable conduct process pending any legislative update.

## Duty to Report Colleague Misconduct

All staff have a duty to report concerns about a colleague's conduct involving children. Failure to report known or suspected misconduct may itself constitute a breach of this policy and the Code of Conduct, and may expose the individual to personal liability.
Reports may be made to the Leader, Nominated Supervisor, or directly to the CEO. If the concern involves the CEO, reports may be directed to the Board Chair of Our Patch Group Education Pty Ltd.

Our Patch Group provides whistleblower protections consistent with the Public Interest Disclosure Act (Cth) and applicable state legislation. No person making a genuine report in good faith will face adverse action as a result of that report.

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## Incident Review

The management of moderate and serious incidents that impact significantly on the persons directly concerned and more broadly on the safe delivery of programs, activities and events will be independently reviewed. An independent internal or external review of the management of the incident may be initiated by the Chief Executive Officer.

Incident Reviews and investigations are required for incidents where:

- children and/or personnel are seriously injured, or their health and well-being is compromised
- external authorities / emergency services are involved
- insurance claims arise
- the reputation of the organisation may be brought into disrepute
- Work Health and Safety systems and procedures fail.

Area Manager will develop a root cause analysis of the incident forms part of this review to identify incident factors to be eliminated through process improvement.

Due to the small leadership team at Our Patch, Area Manager will be assigned as the Incident Review Coordinator. Incident Reviews must be completed by the Incident Review Coordinator in conjunction with relevant personnel who may include the Chief Executive Officer, Board, Area Manager, and external experts. To support the objectivity of incident review processes at least one member of the Incident Review Team should not have been involved in the management of the incident, this role will be filled by Our Manager of Business Support. The personnel listed above will form our Incident Review Team.

A Review should be completed within 21 days of the initiating date with a further 21 days for completion of any follow-up actions.

Follow-up actions may be identified throughout the process of an Incident Review. These actions will be assigned to a responsible person and a timeframe for completion be established. Follow-up actions arising will be added to the Risk Register to ensure that effective mitigation activities are implemented. The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for ensuring that actions on the Risk Register are completed within required timeframes.

If there is a risk, then immediate controls will be put in place to control the hazard. This control may be temporary in nature whilst longer term solutions are determined.

The Incident Review Report must be provided to the Chief Executive Officer. Where follow-up action is required of service / program areas the Incident Review Coordinator will advise the appropriate Manager of the actions to be taken and the timeframes for completion of the actions.

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All Incident Review Reports are to be stored on a central and secure system. Regular thematic analysis review of all incidents will be undertaken by the Area Manager as a minimum twice per year.

## 7. Monitoring

Any Child Abuse/Neglect Incident Reports are to be recorded on the Incident Register and be regularly reviewed, every six months by the Area Manager to ensure the effectiveness of actions taken and to identify areas for improvement.

All follow-up actions arising from a Child Abuse/Neglect incident review, will be monitored by the Chief Executive Officer via the Incident Register.

Data trend reports from both the Incident and Risk Registers are to be provided to Our Patch Chief Executive Officer every six months to assist with organisation incident and risk management strategies.
Incidents are not to be closed until actions have been completed and reviewed by the Area Manager and persons reporting the incident have been informed of the final outcome.

## 8. Roles and Responsibilities

The responsibilities of each role in relation to the development, implementation and compliance of the Safeguarding Children Incident Policy is detailed below;

| Position | Responsibility |
|---|---|
| **Board** | • Approval and endorsement of this policy<br>• Receiving incident reports for specified categories of incidents, provide support and advice as appropriate, and utilise data to inform organisation incident and risk management strategies<br>• Receiving incident report trends from CEO / Executive<br>• Media and/or regulatory reporting oversight<br>• Provide advice and support to CEO during specified incidents Manage media interviews and coverage |
| **Chief Executive Officer** | • Implement policies and procedures across the organisation<br>• Ensure personnel have access to and understand this policy and related procedures<br>• Ensure all managers/supervisors have access to support and advice to understand and implement this policy and related procedures<br>• Establish a Serious Incident Response Team (CIRT) and appoint a Coordinator of the CIRT where the incident is categorised as Serious<br>• Receive a Serious Incident Debriefing Report from the CIRT<br>• Establish an Incident Review Team and Coordinator where required. |

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| | |
|---|---|
| **Area Manager** | • Ensure this policy and related procedures are followed and implemented<br>• Provide support and advice to personnel to help understand and implement this policy and related procedures<br>• Review and update this document and supporting resources in consultation with relevant stakeholders<br>• Assess each Child Abuse/Neglect incident reported and notify appropriate personnel as indicated on this policy<br>• Lead internal and external incident reviews investigations and recovery coordination of a Child Abuse/Neglect incident<br>• Immediately control the situation including liaising with key stakeholders, obtaining and documenting details of the incident<br>• Report to all moderate and serious incidents to the CEO and/or the Serious Incident Response Team where required |
| **Area Manager / Educational Growth Manager** | • Coordination of personnel performance management and disciplinary procedures<br>• If required contact relevant state department for working with children checks<br>• Provide training and advice in the application of this policy and procedures |
| **Serious Incident Response Team** | • Coordinate the response and recovery of an incident, including coordination of Emergency Evacuation Procedures (if required)<br>• Notifying relevant emergency contacts program users and/or personnel involved in the incident and provide appropriate support<br>• Coordinate appropriate counselling and support services<br>• Manage internal and external communications include liaising with external authorities<br>• Implementing an ongoing plan of support to ensure follow up concerning the well-being of individuals involved in the incident<br>• Ensuring that the organisation complies with any additional external / legislative reporting requirements that may arise from the incident<br>• (The CIRT would usually include persons with management responsibilities for the effected program and appropriate skills in incident management.) |
| **Incident Review Coordinator – Area Manager Supported by Head of OSHC Programs** | • Coordinate an Incident Review. Area Manager can ordinate the review however, to support the objectivity of incident review processes at least one member of the Incident Review Team should not have been involved in the management of the incident.<br>• Providing a confidential Incident Review Report to the CEO<br>• Making recommendations for the management of such incidents in the future. (This would usually be a person with no management responsibility for the effected program and who has appropriate skills and knowledge of Incident Management Policy requirements). |
| **Incident Review Team** | • Assisting the Incident Review Coordinator to acquit their responsibilities as outlined above<br>• (This would usually be persons who have with no line management responsibility for the effected program and who have appropriate skills and knowledge of Incident Management Policy requirements) |
| **Personnel** | • Awareness of and compliance with this policy and related procedure. |
| | • Where necessary and if safe to do so, provide an immediate management of incident as stated in Reporting Policy<br>• Notify and report to Area Manager immediately, or if that is not possible, no later than before ending that person's shift or session of work with our organisation |

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## 9. Communication

The Child Safety Incident Management Policy will be communicated to all personnel. Personnel will be involved in reviews of the Child Safety Incident Management requirements. Any significant alterations to the Incident Management requirements and resources will be communicated to all personnel.

## 10. Policy Review

This document will be reviewed every three years, in consultation with stakeholders. Some circumstances may trigger an early review, this includes but not limited to legislative changes, organisational changes, incident outcomes and other matters deemed appropriate by the Chief Executive Officer and Board. Records are retained to document each review undertaken. Such records may include minutes of meetings and documentation of changes to policies and procedures that result from a review.

## 11. Supporting Resources

- Safeguarding Children Policy
- Incident Injury Illness and Trauma Record
- Child Abuse Incident/Allegation Form
- Child Abuse Incident - ACF Report Form
- Child Abuse Incident Register
- Incident Review Report
- Incident Register
- Risk Register
- Risk Assessment

## 12. Related Policies

- Safeguarding Children Policy
- Responding to Child Abuse and Allegations Policy
- Engagement Procedure
- Policy, Procedure and Practice Review Procedure
- Risk Management Policy
- Serious Incident Procedure
- Investigation Procedure

## 13. Related Frameworks and Legislation

Our guidelines comply with relevant legislation.

In upholding this policy, the following legislation and frameworks must be considered by all Our Patch personnel:

- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Child Safe Standards recommended by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse

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- National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009-2020
- Australian Human Rights Commission National Principles for Child Safe Organisations
- The National Quality Framework (NQF) which operates under the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations

## 14. Definitions

| Term | Details |
|---|---|
| Program users | Persons accessing programs, activities or events from the organisation including children and their families. |
| Incident Register | A register of incidents identified through incident report system. |
| Incident Review | A review of the management of an incident that:<br>• assesses whether the incident has been effectively managed<br>• assesses whether the Incident Management Policy and processes are effective<br>• makes recommendation(s) to ameliorate and deficiencies in policies and processes. |
| Personnel | All who work for the organisation whether in a paid or unpaid capacity, including; employees, casual staff, third party providers and volunteers involved with Our Patch |
| Risk Register | A register of risks identified through risk assessments and incident reviews. Risk mitigation activities and time frames for their completion are recorded. Risks remain on the risk register until risk mitigation activities are completed. |
| Root Cause Analysis | Part of an Incident Review. Root Cause Analysis probes the source of a problem and then suggests productive solutions in the form of preventive system changes. Root cause analysis:<br>• focuses primarily on systems and processes, not individual performance<br>• progresses from special causes to common causes in organisational processes<br>• identifies changes that could be made in systems and processes to improve the level of performance and reduce the risk of a particular and serious incident occurring in the future. |

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# Safeguarding Review Policy

## 1. Purpose

This policy details the requirements for the approval and review of all policy documents including those related to our Safeguarding Children Policy and procedures.

## 2. Relating Policies

The following Our Patch policies must be considered in relation to this document:

- Safeguarding Children Policy
- Duty of Care
- Children's Feedback and Grievances Policy
- Family Grievance and Complaints Policy
- Safeguarding Children Incident Policy
- Responding to Child Abuse Incidents and Allegations Policy
- Safeguarding Educational Growth Journey (Training)

## 3. Legislation

This policy complies with relevant legislation. Including:

- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Child Safe Standards recommended by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse
- National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009-2020
- Australian Human Rights Commission National Principles for Child Safe Organisations
- The National Quality Framework (NQF) which operates under the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations
- National Principles for Child Safe Organisations
- Victorian Child Safe Standards (11 Standards, Ministerial Order 1359, updated 2022) — Standard 1 (cultural safety for Aboriginal children) is a stand-alone Standard

## 4. Scope

Our Safeguarding Review Policy applies to all personnel, including employees, casual staff, third-party providers, and volunteers involved with Our Patch. All parties listed are required to observe the requirements of this policy.

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## 5. Definitions

| Term | Definition |
|---|---|
| Policies | Polices are guiding principles of an organisation. A policy is a written statement of intent and lays out the business rules under which an organisation will operate. Policies are mandatory and personnel are responsible to ensure they understand all relevant policies and are up to date with changes that are made to these policies. |
| Procedures | Procedures provide details of how the policy will be implemented. Procedures are the specific instructions necessary to perform required actions of a policy. They detail who performs the procedure, what is performed, when the function is performed and how the procedure is performed. Procedures are mandatory and Staff are responsible to ensure they understand all relevant procedures and are up to date with changes that are made to these procedures. |
| Guidelines | Guidelines provide additional detail of how a policy or procedure is to be implemented. It is not mandatory to have a guideline as part of a policy document. However, if one exists, then the guideline should be considered when making decisions and when following that policy or procedure. |

## 6. Roles and Responsibilities

The responsibilities of each role in relation to the development and compliance of Our Patch Safeguarding Review Policy is detailed below:

| Role | Responsibility |
|---|---|
| Chief Executive Officer/Area Manager | • Implement policy and procedures across the organisation<br>• Ensure personnel have access to and understand this policy and related procedures<br>• Ensure all managers/supervisors have access to support and advice to understand and implement procedures<br>• Develop opportunities for regular discussion and review at all levels to support a culture of continuous improvement and accountability of keeping children safe from abuse and neglect. |
| Area Manager | • Support policy/practices review in consultation with relevant stakeholders on an annual cycle as a minimum or at a time governed by legislation, regulations, or organisational learnings that promote a change to the Policy and all relevant policy, procedure, guidelines.<br>• Evaluate and analyse complaints, concerns and safety incidents relating to this Policy |
| Leadership Team | • Support the coordination of the Safeguarding Children Framework and its implementation<br>• Ensure that all personnel are aware of the appropriate recruitment, screening and employment practice in relation to safeguarding children.<br>• Provide training and advice in the application of this Policy |
| Personnel, Third-party providers/ Volunteers | • Compliance with policy and procedures |

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## 7. Key Requirements

All Our Patch policies and procedures will be reviewed based on feedback received from key stakeholders and organisational requirements.

We encourage children, families and other key stakeholders to provide feedback to us about any matters of importance to them at any time by providing a range of tools so they have a voice in Our Patch. We also ensure that Our Patch policies are easy to understand and accessible via our Operational Process Manual which is available at each Patch.

Our Patch welcomes feedback and will take appropriate actions to guide our excellence aims.

Specifically, our Safeguarding Children Policies and procedures will be reviewed at least every 3 years after consultation with key stakeholders. Some circumstances may trigger an early review, this includes but is not limited to legislative changes, organisational changes, incident outcomes, feedback from key stakeholders and other matters deemed appropriate by our Board and/or Chief Executive Officer.

The review of the policies and procedures will consider the following factors:

- Relevant government legislation
- Gaps in current policies and procedures
- Operational improvements
- Changes to related policies and procedures
- Whether the policy / procedure is still consistent with best practice
- Whether it meets stakeholders needs
- The level of compliance with the existing policy / procedure
- All policies and procedures will be reviewed by the appropriate management representative in conjunction with key stakeholders.

## 8. Key Stakeholders

Our key stakeholders are informed and provided with information about our commitment to child safety and our organisation's policies and processes are developed to regularly involve key stakeholders. Our key stakeholders include children, their families, schools, our personnel (including volunteers and third-party providers), regulatory authorities and The Australia Childhood Foundation.

Our Patch provides a variety of processes for seeking and incorporating input and feedback to continuously review and improve our policies, practices and guidelines, including our safeguarding policies, practices, and guidelines. Details about these processes and outlined in Standard 5. All feedback and findings will be gathered with appropriate follow up taken in response to feedback.

**Children**

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Children's voice is central to our safeguarding practices. All children will be empowered to provide feedback in ways that are appropriate for each child's age and developmental stage e.g., children can provide feedback by talking to us, writing to us, drawing their ideas and where parental consent has been provided by using our secure Our Patch VOICE app to record a message and provide their feedback at any time.

Children are encouraged to speak up and participate in decision making about any matters of importance to them.

**Families**

Our Patch also supports families to feel comfortable and confident in providing their feedback on their experience with Our Patch. This is our promise to our families.

Families are encouraged and provided with regular opportunities to provide their feedback. This includes during the enrolment and orientation process as well as throughout the duration of their involvement with Our Patch. Our families will also be surveyed regularly to give them the opportunity to provide feedback and will also have the opportunity via the Our Patch Voice App (Release two) provide their feedback at any time.

Families can also provide feedback on our policies and excursions as:

- All Policies including Our Child Safeguarding Policies are in easy-to-understand language and accessible via our Operational Practices Manual available online at each Patch.
- The risk assessment will also be available at Our Patch prior to any excursion so that parent/guardians and the school community can have access to it and provide feedback.

**Schools**

Our Patch highlights our Safeguarding Children Policies and Practices to potential partnership schools and our partnership schools. Schools are provided with a variety of opportunities to provide feedback. Including:

- Providing our Safeguarding Policies (Safeguarding Children Policy, Code of Conduct and Recruitment and Screening Policy) where required as part of the Expression of Interest Policy to potential partnership schools.
- As part of our 'Getting to Know You Process' with new partnership schools our Safeguarding Children Policies and Practices are discussed, with schools informed they are welcome to provide feedback on these at any time.
- Relationship meeting discussions with Principals at Partnership Schools are held a minimum of once per term. Feedback is sought at these meetings.
- As a feature on the third release of Our Patch VOICE app, School Principals will also be able to use their secure login to record a message and provide their feedback to Our Patch at any time.

**Personnel (including Volunteers, Students and Third Party Providers)**

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Anyone involved with Our Patch will be able to provide feedback as part of their onsite induction process.

Our personnel also have additional regular opportunities to provide feedback about our Safeguarding Children Practices and Policies. This includes:

- As part of their training prior to commencing at Our Patch
- As part of their face to face and onsite training process prior to commencing at Our Patch
- During their induction process onsite at each Patch
- During weekly staff meetings held at each Patch where Safeguarding Children is a required agenda item.
- During professional development training and discussions where Safeguarding issues and scenarios which will be offered once per term
- As part of an annual Safeguarding questionnaire requiring personnel to review and answer questions regarding our organisation's Safeguarding Children Policy and Responding to Abuse Policy
- Following responding and reporting any allegation/incident

**Regulatory Authorities**

All of our Policies including Our Child Safeguarding Policies are in easy-to-understand language and accessible via our Operational Practices Manual which is available online at each Patch. Regulatory Authorities are aware they can view our policies at any time.

Our personnel are also briefed and can respond to questions during any Regulatory Authority visits about how Our Patch supports and embeds our child safety policies and processes into each Patch.

All feedback received and findings from internal audits/reviews is gathered and appropriate follow up will be taken in response to this feedback.

## 9. Approval

Our Safeguarding Review Policy is approved and endorsed by our Board, Chief Executive Officer and Leadership Team.

## 10. Safeguarding Policies and Procedures

The following documents will be reviewed by the Head of OSHC Programs at least every 3 years. These documents will be reviewed in conjunction with the Board, CEO, Leadership Team, Employees and Volunteers.

- Safeguarding Children Policy
- Child Abuse Reporting Requirements
- Code of Conduct
- Recruitment and Screening Requirements

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## 11. Annual Review

The Annual Review Self-Assessment will be completed annually by the Area Manager Coordinator in conjunction with the Leadership Team and Chief Executive Officer. Any changes that have occurred as a result of the Self-Assessment will be communicated to all personnel.

To identify any key improvements needed, Our Patch incorporates findings from; internal audits / reviews that assess our ongoing compliance with our responsibilities to keep children safe as well as input and feedback from children and their families, our personnel and feedback gained from 'complaints and compliments' received.

## 12. Communication

We communicate our Safeguarding Review Policy requirements to all personnel in our organisation. We involve our personnel in reviews of our Safeguarding Review Policy requirements and communicate any significant alterations to these requirements and resources to all personnel.

## 13. Monitoring and Review

This document will be reviewed by the Our Patch Safeguarding Committee at least annually after consultation with stakeholders. Some circumstances may trigger an early review, this includes but is not limited to legislative changes, organisational changes, incident outcomes, and other matters deemed appropriate by our Board and/or Chief Executive Officer.

External audit and verification based on a sample, conducted by the Australian Childhood Foundation shall occur at 3 yearly intervals.

When there are any updates or changes to this policy, they will be communicated to all personnel and stakeholders.

## 14. Records and Documentation

Our Patch will retain records that document each review undertaken. Records may include minutes of meetings and documentation of changes to policies and procedures that result from a review.

## 15. Related Documents

The following Our Patch documents must be considered in relation to this document:

- Code of Conduct
- Safeguarding Children Information for Parents/Guardians
- Guidelines for Parents/Guardians
- Safeguarding Statement for Children
- Children's Rights and Behaviours including Personal Device Agreement
- Engagement Procedure

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# Monitoring and Supervising Personnel Policy

## 1. Purpose

Our Patch is committed to ensuring that all activities and infrastructure at or on any of our programs are fully compliant with any relevant laws, statutes and standards.

Our Patch has zero-tolerance towards abuse and neglect of children. Therefore, the purpose of this policy is to outline the responsibilities and processes required by all Our Patch personnel in relation to keeping children free from abuse and neglect.

Our Monitoring Personnel Policy is approved and endorsed by our Board, Chief Executive Officer and Leadership Team.

## 2. Scope

This document outlines how our personnel will be supported, supervised, and monitored throughout their employment at Our Patch.

At Our Patch, we are committed to our GROW Values, ongoing development, and engagement of our Educators. Our employees will be supported with their role at Our Patch with individual employees required to take responsibility for their personal and professional growth guided by Our Patch commitment to each individual.

All employees are provided with regular opportunities to provide feedback and/or raise any concerns they may have during their employment. Our Patch welcomes feedback and will take appropriate actions to guide our excellence aims.

## 3. Relating Policies

The following Our Patch policies must be considered in relation to this document:

- Duty of Care
- Children's Feedback and Grievances Policy
- Family Grievance and Complaints Policy
- Safeguarding Children Policy
- Responding to Child Abuse Incidents and Allegations Policy
- Safeguarding Children Incident Policy

## 4. Scope

Our Monitoring and Supervising Personnel Policy and process applies to all personnel employees with ongoing roles. All Our Patch personnel required to observe the requirements of this policy.

## 5. Roles and Responsibilities

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The responsibilities of each role in relation to the development and compliance of Our Patch Monitoring and Supervising Personnel Procedure is detailed below:

| Role | Responsibility |
|---|---|
| Leadership Team/whole organisation | • Implement policy and procedures across the organisation<br>• Ensure personnel have access to and understand this policy and related procedures<br>• Ensure all managers/supervisors have access to support and advice to understand and implement procedures<br>• Develop opportunities for regular discussion and review at all levels to support a culture of continuous improvement and accountability of keeping children safe from abuse and neglect. |
| Area Manager / Educational Growth Manager | • Support the coordination of the Safeguarding Children Framework and its implementation<br>• Ensure that all personnel are aware of the appropriate recruitment, screening, and employment practice in relation to safeguarding children.<br>• Provide training and advice in the application of this procedure |
| Personnel | • Compliance with policy and procedures |

## 6. Supporting and Supervising Personnel

Personnel who meet our safeguarding children recruitment and screening requirements and regulatory requirements as outlined in Standard 3 and Standard 4 will then be employed.

All Our Patch personnel are provided with support and training prior to commencing their role and throughout their role. This is outlined in the Supporting and Supervising Personnel Details as outlined on page 4 of this document.

Personnel with ongoing roles that have direct contact with children will also be tracked using our Educator Engagement Cycle Tracker to ensure they are receiving the support and supervision required whilst also progressing through the Educator Engagement cycle as required.

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| Activity | Timeframe | Support and Supervision Details |
|---|---|---|
| **1. Safeguarding Children Training** | Prior to 1st shift | All personnel with ongoing roles must complete mandatory Safeguarding Children training and provide their Certificate of Completion with the Staff Record as evidence of this. |
| **2. Code of Conduct and Safeguarding Children Commitment** | Prior to 1st shift | All personnel with ongoing roles must complete mandatory Our Patch Code of Conduct training and provide their Certificate of Completion as evidence of their commitment to our Code of Conduct |
| **3. Educational Growth Journey Face to Face Training** | Prior to 1st shift | All personnel with ongoing roles must complete mandatory Our Patch Educational Growth Training with Area Manager presenting on Safeguarding Children and Child's VOICE. Participants receive their Certificate of Completion when face-to-face training completed |
| **4. Employee Guidebook Training** | Prior to 1st shift | All personnel with ongoing roles must complete mandatory Employee Guidebook Training Participants receive their Certificate of Completion training is completed |
| **5. Supervised onsite Training** | Prior to 1st shift | Educators supervised by Leader or Area Manager at a Patch. |
| **6. Onsite induction** | 1st shift | Educators required to participate in an onsite Induction process at assigned Patch. Induction process includes briefing on Safeguarding Children and Reporting Policies and practices. Job Score Card – explanation of their role and the role of Educator Leader, supervision and support provided and provides an orientation and tour of the patch. |
| **7. First day of work** | 1st Shift | Area Manager provides support by Educator's first day of work in ratio at assigned Patch |
| **8. Leader Support** | Each session | Educator supervised and supported by their Leader to ensure our values and safeguarding practices are embedded at each Patch. Qualified and screened Educators will be rostered within ratio requirements to supervise children at each Patch.<br>For regional areas or at Patches with low attendance rates where it is difficult to source/financially unviable to have multiple Educators more than the required ratios, Our Patch will focus on risk management strategies and will specific these in their site-specific risk assessment of the relevant Patch. This will include detailing the times school staff (Teachers and administration staff) are also on site, provision of regular supervision training for the relevant Educator. |
| **9. First 3 days** | First 3 days | Area Manager checks in with Educator's to find out how they are feeling and find out about any support/training they require. |
| **10. Team Meetings** | Weekly | Leaders at each Patch will meet with their team to review service operations, critical issues, including safeguarding children and provide any support/training required. |
| **11. Operations E-email** | Weekly | Area Manager to develop and distribute weekly email outlining operational updates/requirements |

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| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **12. Professional Development** | Each Term | Educators provided with opportunity to attend Professional Development sessions run by our Educational Growth Manager. Agenda will include safeguarding policies and practices and relevant focus topics. This is also an opportunity for Educators to build their relationships with Our Patch Team and develop new skills. |
| **13. Review of Job Scorecard** | Each Term | Educator meets with their direct line manager to review their Job Scorecards and assess how they are performing their role and find out about any support/training required. |
| **14. Conference** | Bi-Annual | Educators provided with opportunity to attend Conference run by Run by Area Manager, Agenda will include safeguarding children policies and practices, focus topics e.g., Legislative requirements. This is also an opportunity for Educators to build their relationships with Our Patch Team and develop new skills. |
| **15. Check in** | 3 months | Members of our Senior Leadership Team will check in to see how an Educator is going and find out about any support/training required. Educator and Area Manager will review Educator's progress and future aspirations with Our Patch during their probationary period. |
| **16. Probationary Review** | 6 months | Members of our Senior Leadership Team will check in to see how an Educator is going and find out about any support/training required. Educator and Area Manager review Educator's progress and future aspirations with Our Patch during their probationary period. Confirmation that Educator's employment continuing past the probationary period will be provided. |
| **17. Training Electives** | As required | To support ongoing development, Educators are provided with supplementary LMS training on focus topics e.g., Supporting Children with Additional Needs |

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## 7. Monitoring Personnel

Our Employee Handbook outlines our Performance Management Policy and step by step processes. All employees with ongoing roles will be provided with a copy of our Employee Handbook and are required to provide their Certificate of Completion of this course as part of the Onsite Induction/Orientation Process prior to their first shift at Our Patch.

**Performance review**

The purpose of Our Patch performance management is to improve performance. It is an ongoing process that includes informal and formal review. We encourage a two-way process, that is, employees can also give management feedback on performance.

Each Term, Educators with ongoing roles will meet with their direct line manager to review their Job Scorecards and assess how they are performing their role and find out about any support/training required.

All employees with ongoing roles will undergo a formal performance review with their immediate direct line managers once a year when together the Job Scorecard is reviewed and updated.

Outside of this formal process, employees are encouraged to provide feedback and raise any issues they have when they arise.

At Our Patch, each team member must speak up when they feel they need support, we work towards open and transparent interactions and issues shouldn't be put on hold until a performance review.

**Performance improvement**

Where warranted, Our Patch will use improvement processes to improve performance. Should such improvement processes be unsuccessful in improving an employee's performance and depending on the circumstances, performance improvement action may include:

- performance improvement plan
- verbal or written warnings
- counselling e.g., Employee Assistance Program (PeopleSense by Altius)
- retraining
- additional training
- suspension or termination of employment.

Any required Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) will be developed by the relevant Leader, or Area Manager (in conjunction with HR) and the personnel involved to identify specific issues and document the agreed strategies and timeframe for completion and review (2-4 weeks).

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Any verbal or written warnings will be developed and delivered by the relevant Leader, or Area Manager (in conjunction with HR) and the personnel involved. Written warnings will be confidential and signed by the relevant personnel. Once signed, the Leader will email the completed written warning to HR to be stored on the applicant's HR/Personnel file. These files have limited access and will be stored on Our Patch's online and secure SharePoint site.

Our expected standard of conduct and practice will be made clear to employees in management appraisals. If an employee does not meet this standard, Our Patch will take appropriate action. Formal performance improvement procedures will generally only start when other corrective action fails.

Each employee must be given details of the specific issues that need to be resolved, understand their responsibilities, be counselled and given the opportunity to fix any performance issues and reach the standards expected of them. Our Patch will give an employee the opportunity to do this before management takes further action.

If after following the procedures detailed in our Employee Handbook the employee's performance or conduct doesn't improve, the direct line manager will give the employee a written warning.
This document will provide the employee with clear actions on the improvements required to be made and what the implications might be should this not occur.

**Note:** some circumstances justify going straight to a second or written warning.

**Gross or serious misconduct**.
If after following the procedure detailed in our Employee Handbook regarding gross or serious misconduct for example theft or refusing to carry out work duties or where an employee deliberately breaches business policy or procedure, HR will issue the employee a final written warning and take any action necessary including options such as:

- suspending that staff member from duty until the validity of any allegation is determined
- terminating that staff member from duty

**Breaches of our Safeguarding Children/Code of Conduct**
In cases where an employee breaches our Safeguarding Children Policy or Conduct of Conduct, the best interest of the child will be the primary consideration and Our Patch will take any action necessary to safeguard the child (or other children in our care) from additional harm through options such as:

- suspending that staff member from duty until the validity of any allegation is determined
- terminating that staff member from duty

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In instances of breaches our Safeguarding Children Policy or Conduct of Conduct employees are required to report this immediately, or if that is not possible, no later than before ending that person's shift or session of work with our organisation.

Our Child Abuse Incidents and Allegations Policy provides information about the four critical steps that all personnel must follow regarding all incidents, allegations, disclosures or reasonable concerns of abuse or neglect, where appropriate:

1. Responding
2. Reporting
3. Sharing of Information
4. Supporting

## 8. Communication

We communicate our Monitoring and Supervising Personnel Policy to all personnel with ongoing roles in our organisation. We involve our personnel in reviews of our Monitoring and Supervising Personnel Policy and process and communicate any significant alterations to these requirements and resources to all personnel within our organisation.

## 9. Monitoring and Review

This document will be reviewed by our Leadership Team at least annually after consultation with stakeholders. Some circumstances may trigger an early review, this includes but is not limited to legislative changes, organisational changes, incident outcomes, and other matters deemed appropriate by our Chief Executive Officer.

## 10. Records and Documentation

Our Patch will retain records that document the Monitoring and Supervising of Personnel. Records may include minutes of meetings and documentation of changes to policies and procedures that result from a review.

## 11. Supporting Resources

The following Our Patch documents must be considered in relation to this document:

- Employee Guidebook
- Code of Conduct
- Engagement Cycle
- Educational Growth Journey (Training)

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# Monitoring Third Party Providers Policy and Procedure

## 1. Purpose

Our Patch is committed to ensuring that all activities and infrastructure at or on any programs are fully compliant with any relevant laws, statutes and standards.

Our Patch has zero-tolerance towards abuse and neglect of children. Therefore, the purpose of this policy is to outline the responsibilities, procedures and practices required by all personnel within and involved with Our Patch in relation to keeping children free from abuse and neglect.

Our Monitoring Third-Party Policy and Procedures details the responsibilities and expectations for all Third-Party Providers. This document is approved and endorsed by our Board, Chief Executive Officer and Leadership Team.

## 2. Scope

Third Party Providers includes incursion providers that come to Our Patch to offer a specialised program, contractors, partners, consultants and/or individuals when they engage with or work for Our Patch to provide services. These parties are referred to as "Third-Party Providers" throughout this Policy.

This policy and process applies in all our operational environments and without fail wherever children are participating in our organisation's activities, programs, activities, and events.

## 3. Roles and Responsibilities

Our Patch has systems in place to ensure that all programs, activities and events – including those delivered by external organisations – are effectively monitored and evaluated and that any individual engaged in our programs comply with the relevant organisational and legislative requirements. Specific responsibilities for each party are outlined as follows:

**Our Patch Responsibility**

- Holiday Program Manager will provide to the Third-Party Provider our:
- Contract outlining products and/or services required and the terms of agreement including duration of agreement, each parties' responsibilities and our Safeguarding Children's Requirements.
- Safeguarding Children Policy (1.1)
- Responding to Child Abuse Incidents and Allegations Policy (6.1)
- Code of Conduct (2.1) and
- Safeguarding Commitment (1.2)
- Public liability cover details and will;

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- Request a copy of the Third-Party Provider's Working with Children's Check (WWCC/Blue card)

**Contracts**

All Our Patch contracts will specify that: "Any Third-Party Provider or their sub-contractors or employees who fails to comply at any time with our terms of agreement, including our Safeguarding Children Requirements, may face termination of the contract. Any contract must be approved by Our Patch Chief Executive Officer.

**Third-Party Provider Checklist**

Our Third-Party Provider Checklist will be used when engaging a third party to ensure that all mandatory documents are returned and validated prior to the Third-Party Provider commencing their role. A copy of our Third-Party Provider Checklist is provided as Appendix 10.

Upon receipt of all completed and signed mandatory documents listed below they are to be forwarded to our Holiday Program Manager who will store the Third-Party Provider Checklist and associated documents to the Third-Party Provider's file. These files have limited access and will be stored on Our Patch's secure SharePoint site.

**Third Party Provider Responsibility**

All Third-Party Providers are required to complete and provide the following mandatory documents to Our Patch prior to commencing their role:

- Signed Our Patch Contract
- Public liability cover details
- Signed Safeguarding Commitment to Our Patch Code of Conduct
- Copy of their Working with Children's Check (WWCC) or state equivalent.

All Third-Party Providers are also required to:

- Inform their sub-contractors and employees about current legislative and Our Patch safeguarding children requirements. This includes providing Our Patch with their:
    - Signed Safeguarding Commitment to Our Patch Code of Conduct
    - Copy of their Working with Children's Check (WWCC) or state equivalent.
- Ensure their sub-contractors and employees always comply with Our Patch terms of agreement as detailed in our Contract and Our Patch Code of Conduct.

When a Third-Party Provider including their sub-contractors and employees attend any Patch they will be required to:

- Sign in and out using the Visitors Log provided.
- Participate in our Induction and Orientation Checklist
- Be supervised by Our Educators. Third Party Providers will not be left unattended with children at any time.

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In low risk and minimal risk categories as outlined in the Risk Management Risk Matrix in our Recruitment and Screening Policy (Standard 3), volunteers (including parent-volunteers), students and short-term third-party providers are not required to participate in an interview with safeguarding children questions, provide referees or police check details, complete ACF Safeguarding Children training or receive a Job Scorecard Responsibilities document.

However, if any third-party provider (this includes incursion providers, contractors, partners, consultants and/or individuals when they engage with or work for Our Patch to deliver services) escalate into medium or high risk categories due to an increased level of contact they will have with children and/or the duration and regularity of that contact, the additional checks as outlined in Our Patch Recruitment Screening and Induction Requirements Matrix will be required.

**Safeguarding Children Requirements**

Safeguarding children is a shared responsibility within our organisation, including those engaging on behalf of external organisations such as Third-Party Providers. It is the responsibility of anyone involved with Our Patch including Third-Party Providers their sub-contractors and employees to:

- protect children from all forms of abuse and neglect by our people;
- be alert to incidents of child abuse and neglect occurring outside the scope of our operations and services that may have an impact on the children to whom we provide a service; and
- create and maintain a child safe culture that is understood, endorsed and put into action by all the individuals who work for, volunteer, support or access our programs activities and events.

We expect all within our organisation, including contractors, to act to safeguard children and from such harm by:

- adopting appropriate safeguarding practice and behaviour set within our policy and procedural guidelines, when carrying out their roles, and
- reporting any abuse and neglect of which they become aware to our management and/or to external authorities responsible for child protection or to police, regardless of whether that abuse is being perpetrated by personnel within our organisation, or by those outside our organisation including those from the child's family, extended family, their family's extended network or strangers.

We expect all within our organisation, including contractors, to promote equity and respect diversity by:

- actively anticipating children's diverse circumstances and responding effectively to those with additional vulnerabilities
- informing children of their rights and giving all children and families access to information, support, and complaints processes

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- respecting the rights of children to participate in decision making, paying appropriate attention to the needs of the following groups:
    - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders
    - Children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
    - Children with a disability or medical condition (diagnosed and undiagnosed)
    - Children with challenging behaviour/s
    - LGBTQI+ (Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex)
    - Children who are unable to live at home

## 4. Monitoring and review

This document will be reviewed by our Leadership Team at least every 3 years, after consultation with relevant stakeholders. Some circumstances may trigger an early review, this includes but is not limited to legislative changes, organisational changes, incident outcomes and other matters deemed appropriate by the Chief Executive Officer.

## 5. Communication

We communicate our Safeguarding Children Requirements as detailed in this Policy to all third-party providers as part of our Contract.

When there are any updates or changes to this Policy, they will be communicated to all personnel in our organisation and relevant stakeholders.

## 6. Records and Documentation

We retain records that document each review undertaken. Records may include minutes of meetings and documentation of changes to policies and procedures that result from a review.

## 7. Supporting Resources

- Appendix 1 Third Party Provider Checklist
- Code of Conduct
- Supervision Policy
- Safeguarding Children Policy
- Safeguarding Children Information for Parents/Guardians
- Safeguarding Statement for Children
- Our Patch Governance Structure
- Excursion Policy
- Incursion Policy

## 8. Related frameworks and legislation

Our Third-Party Policy and Process comply with relevant legislation.

In upholding this policy, the following legislation and frameworks must be considered by all Our Patch personnel:

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- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Child Safe Standards recommended by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse
- National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009-2020
- Australian Human Rights Commission National Principles for Child Safe Organisations
- The National Quality Framework (NQF) which operates under the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations
- National Principles for Child Safe Organisations
- Victorian Child Safe Standards (11 Standards, Ministerial Order 1359, updated 2022) — Standard 1 (cultural safety for Aboriginal children) is a stand-alone Standard
- South Australia Child Safe Standards
- Queensland Child Safe Organisations Act 2024 — 10 Queensland Child Safe Standards and Universal Principle, in force for ECEC from 1 January 2026; Reportable Conduct Scheme for ECEC from 1 July 2026; oversight by the Queensland Family and Child Commission (QFCC).

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# Our Patch - Grounded Value: Educator Policies

- Educator Qualifications and Ratios
- Determination of the Responsible Person present
- Nominated Supervisor
- Role of Educational Leader
- Duty of Care

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# Educator Qualifications and Ratios

## Purpose of this Policy:

To ensure that all personnel involved with Our Patch are aware of the legal requirements when recruiting, training, and allocating shifts for educators to work.

This policy provides clarity on why, how, and what needs to occur to have the right educators working with children.

## Prerequisite Policy:

- Recruitment Policy
- Code of Conduct Policy
- Participation of Student and Volunteers Policy

## Policy:

As an Approved Provider, Our Patch qualified educators share our values when working with children. We work together to ensure that we always have required educator to child ratios. Our strategies will guide us to support one another in keeping children safe.

Our Patch will meet all legislative requirements regarding qualified educators and ratios of 1 educator to every 15 children.

Each patch will have educators that will hold:

- Diploma – Education and Care (Leaders)
- Certificate III - Studying towards Education and Care (Educators)

## Impact for Our Patch:

- Safety of children
- Qualified Educators who share our values working at each Patch
- Assurance to families and Schools that Our Patch have recruited educators with the appropriate qualifications

## Strategies: Educator Qualifications

- All Educators recruited for Our Patch will need to hold or be studying towards one of the above outlined qualifications
- Any other qualification will need to be on the Approved Qualification list as specified by ACECQA. Should there be any discrepancies, the educator will need to have their qualification assessed by ACECQA. Until this is approved, the educator will be unable to be offered a position or work in the capacity of the qualification
- A qualification will need to be validated with original copies only. A photocopy will be taken at employment and signed by the recruiter confirming sighting of original copy
- Should an educator be undertaking the qualification the flowing steps will be taken:

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- A recent transcript of the qualification
- A documented timeframe for completion of the qualification
- A regular written three-month update is required by the educator which will be included in the Educator's Staff record and filed
- The Educator will need to ensure the qualification is completed at the timeframe outlined in order for the educator to continue to work at Our Patch

## Strategies:

### Educator Ratios

- Each Leader will ensure that the service remains within a 1:15 Educator to Child ratio at all times
- All Educators will ensue they are within their ratio when with a group of children
- Rosters will be designed to have a ratio of 1:15 unless stated otherwise in tender agreement.
- Should an educator fall ill before their shift, they must contact their Leader to ensure that their shift is covered and remains compliant.

### Booking Agency Staff

| | Process Step Description |
|---|---|
| Step 1: | All requests are to be made through our Roster Administrator (Sherrie) unless there is an urgent request Out of Business Hours. |
| | Leaders submit an Agency request Via Microsoft Teams (preference) or email (back up option).<br>Please use the Agency Request Form provided by Sherrie to assist with the booking process. |
| | Leaders add a Vacant Shift to the Tanda Roster, so that when filled, Sherrie can add the name of the Agency Worker. |
| Step 2: | Sherrie submits the request to Randstad via Portal (and receives a 'Notification Receipt' from Randstad which is filed) |
| | Sherrie enters the requested shift to our Invoice Tracking Spreadsheet |
| Step 3 (a) | Randstad fill the shift and send a 'Shift Filled'/ 'Blue Card Email' which confirms the Agency Worker who will attend - this email has Blue Card and Compliance Training. |

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| | |
|---|---|
| Step 3 (b) | Sherrie forwards this email to the Leader as confirmation, with a 'Clock on Code' for the Agency Worker (relating to Tanda) |
| | Sherrie adds the Agency Worker into the Tanda Roster directly (within 24 hours). |
| | Sherrie updates the Invoice Tracking Spreadsheet with the Shift Filled Information. |
| | IF Randstad advise they cannot fill a Shift, or an Agency Worker withdraws - Randstad send an email to both Sherrie and the Leader. |
| | Sherrie updates the Tracking Spreadsheet with 'Unable to Fill'.<br>Randstad advise if they have found a replacement or the Leader may request that Sherrie contact ANZUK to fill the shift. |
| Step 4 | Following the Shift, the Leader approves a Timesheet in Tanda for the Agency Worker |
| | Leaders should please advise Sherrie if an Agency Worker does not attend (via Teams), and Sherrie will update the Invoice Tracking Spreadsheet accordingly. |
| | Randstad send an Auto- Timesheet Email for each Agency Worker/ Shift, this is Filed for record only Randstad send an Invoice to Sherrie, and we are requesting an 'Exceptions Report' of Agency Workers who did not attend shift to cross check. |
| | Sherrie checks the Invoice against Tanda Approved Timesheet (hours confirmed by Leader as worked) |
| | Sherrie checks the Invoice against the Tracking Spreadsheet to verify correct shift hours (from Tanda) and confirming the shift was completed - Entering the Invoice Number. |
| | Sherrie sends the approved Invoice to Accounts, who upload to DEXT for approval. |

## Related Policies:

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- All Educator Policies
- All Employment Polices
- All Supervision Policies

## Related legislation:

- Regulation 120, 126, 137

## Resources:

- Education and Care Regulations
- ACECQA – Guide to the NQF
- Appendix 16 – Randstad Education

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# Determination of the Responsible Person Present

## Purpose of this Policy:

Each Patch will have one person who will be determined as the Responsible Person for that session of care. This policy will guide Educators to be familiar with the expectation and accountability the Responsible Person has when operating a service for Our Patch.

## Prerequisite Policy:

- Qualifications and Ratio Policy
- Duty of Care Policy
- Nominated Supervisor Policy

## Policy:

To ensure the safety of each child at Our Patch and in support of our legislative responsibilities, our Responsible Person will manage the day-to-day operations of Our Patch program in the absence of our Nominated Supervisor.

Our Responsible Person will be determined by the Nominated Supervisor. This is an important role for us at Our Patch and we are committed to providing our Responsible Person with appropriate ongoing training and have robust conversations on the requirements of this important role.

## Impact for Our Patch:

- Safety of all children in our care
- Awareness and full training with the requirements of this role for the educator
- Work in line with legislative requirements

## Strategies:

- The Nominated Supervisor will ensure each Patch will have a Responsible Person in their absence to oversee the session operations. At Our Patch this will be Leader.
- The Responsible person will have:
    - Have the appropriate qualifications
    - Agreed and signed to be the Responsible Person
    - Completed the training required for this role
    - Update and include this information with their Staff Record
- The name of the Responsible Person will be on display in the Family Patch alongside the prescribed information
- The Responsible Person will work with the Nominated Supervisor to support the delivery of the offering to the children and the management of Our Patch
- The Nominated Supervisor and the Responsible Person will work with Authorised Officers should there be a query about the offering being provided

## Related Policies:

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- All Educator Policies
- All Employment Polices
- All Supervision Policies

## Related legislation:

- Regulation 34, 35, 117A, 117B, 117C

## Resources:

- Education and Care Regulations
- ACECQA – Guide to the NQF

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# Nominated Supervisor

## Purpose of this Policy:

This policy will ensure that the Nominated Supervisor has the right qualification and skills to be in a position to hold this critical role and manage Our Patch in accordance with our legislative requirements.

## Prerequisite Policy:

- Code of Conduct
- Qualifications and Ratio Policy
- Determination of the Responsible Person Present Policy

## Policy:

A Nominated Supervisor at Our Patch will be 18 years or over, will have adequate knowledge in education and care and have the ability to manage services at Our Patch. The expectation of the Nominated Supervisor will be that of support, guidance and lead all educators at each patch to ensure the education and care setting is compliant at all times.

## Impact for Our Patch:

- Safety of all children in our care
- Employed and trained all Nominated Supervisors before allocating the role
- Work in line with legislative requirements
- Supports Persons with Management and Control

## Strategies:

- Area Manageres will be the Nominated Supervisor for the education and care Patches – in which they will be meet all legislative requirements.
- The Nominated Supervisor will confirm in writing their acceptance to this role. This will be filed as part of their staff record.
- Leader will be the Responsible Person for the day-to-day operations in the absence of Area Manager – Nominated Supervisor
- The Nominated Supervisor will frequently meet with Responsible Person and Educators at each Patch to offer guidance, training, and support
- Access to the Education and Care Regulations and Law will be available at all Patches. This will be noted with the Prescribed Information in the Family Patch
- Should a change in Nominated Supervisor for a Patch need to occur, Our Patch will ensure that the Regulatory Authority will be notified as specified in our legislative timeframes

## Related Policies:

All Educator Policies
All Employment Polices

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## Related legislation:

Regulation 117C

## Resources:

Education and Care Regulations
ACECQA – Guide to the NQF

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# Role of Educational Leader

## Purpose of this Policy:

Our Patch is committed to offering children a Patch for them to grow and this can only be successful if the Educational Leader owns this policy of providing an offering that is in line with the voice of each child.

## Mandatory Designation:

Regulation 118 requires every approved provider to designate in writing a suitably qualified and experienced educator as the Educational Leader at each service. This designation must be:

- Made in writing and signed by the approved provider (CEO)
- Held in the service's regulatory compliance file and available for inspection by an authorised officer
- Reviewed when the designated person leaves the service or changes roles
- Reflected in the service's Quality Improvement Plan (QIP)

The Educational Leader is responsible for leading the development and implementation of the educational program (MTOP V2.0); mentoring educators in planning and documentation; and ensuring the program reflects children's interests, strengths and goals. The Educational Leader does not need to be the Nominated Supervisor but must hold appropriate qualifications and experience.

## Qualification Requirements for OSHC — Summary

Under Regulations 120–126:

- A Nominated Supervisor or person in day-to-day charge must be at least 18 years old, have adequate knowledge and understanding of the National Law and Regulations, and have the management capability for the role (National Law ss.161A/162A). There is no mandated qualification for these roles; where Our Patch requires a Certificate III, this is an internal company standard, not a legislative requirement.
- Qualification requirements for school age care are set to each state and differ from the preschool-age ratios. In both SA and QLD, at least one educator holding an approved diploma-level (or higher) qualification must be in attendance at all times the service is educating or caring for children, plus at least one qualified educator (Certificate III or higher) for every 30 children.
  In SA (from 10 May 2024), the first qualified educator must be diploma-qualified; a second or subsequent qualified educator may hold a Certificate III. Educators actively working towards an approved qualification may be counted in line with ACECQA'S "active work towards" rules.
- Unqualified educators must be supervised by a qualified educator at all times when working with children
- Volunteers and students on placement are not included in educator-to-child ratios and must be under direct supervision at all times

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Leaders must maintain a qualifications register for all educators and report any change in qualification status to the CEO within 5 business days. A full qualifications audit must be completed by 30 June 2026.

## SA-Specific: DHS Working with Children Screening

In South Australia, the required pre-employment screening is the DHS Working with Children Check (not a WWCC), administered by the SA Department of Human Services Screening Unit (screening.sa.gov.au). A QLD Blue Card or VIC WWCC does NOT authorise work with children in SA — a separate SA DHS check is required for all SA-based staff, volunteers and students, and for interstate workers covering SA services.

## Policy:

The Educational Leader is an important role at Our Patch. This role will lead our educators and children in a discovery of wonder. They are instrumental in establishing and maintaining quality learning at each one of Our Patchs.

*The role at Our Patch will focus on:*

1. Upholding the rights and wellbeing of children
2. Outcomes for the children alongside our GROW values to achieve the best outcomes for children.
3. Empower our educators to strive towards theory knowledge through to practise
4. Support a culture of continuous improvement
5. Will champion quality and embed Our Patch brand promise of EXCELLENCE in all that we do

## Impact for Our Patch:

- Learning of children
- Growth of Educators
- Ongoing improvement

## Strategies:

- Educational Leader will be Leader, Co-Leader or Area Manager who is primarily responsible for the operations of Our Patch programs. This will be noted in the Staff Record.
- Educational Leader will collaborate with all leaders and educators at the service and provide guidance with the delivery of the offering for the children. This will enable the Educational Leader to lead and implement an effective program for children
- Ensure that our My Time Our place framework is used when developing the program for children. Using the 5 outcomes to help with the program cycle
- Educational Leader will also reference Quality Area 7 of the National Framework, where this role works closely with the Nominated Supervisor to ensure strong

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governance for each patch is referenced with good decision-making process in place
- There is an abundance of information and reference tools to support the Educational Leader and utilising these resources will continue to help grow and guide
- Interactions with other Educational Leaders within Our Patch is encouraged always and frequent opportunities to meet with other Educational Leaders will be offered and arranged by A member of the Leadership Team
- As the role is demanding and rewarding, Our Patch will implement the actions described by ACECQA* to assist Educational Leaders:
    - Observations
    - Collaboration
    - Reporting
    - Mentoring/Support
    - Planning
    - Researching
- The Educational Leader will with Leaders and educators write and adjust the Quality Improvement Plan and will have regular discussions with Area Manageres about the continuous improvement of this plan
- Critical reflection is the only way we can continue to improve; therefore, opportunities will be made by the Educational Leader to have this time of reflection with educators, children, families, and Nominated Supervisor

## Related Policies:

- Relationships with Children Policies
- Programming Policies

## Related legislation:

- Regulations 118–126 — Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
- NQS QA4 — Staffing Arrangements
- Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017 (SA) — DHS Working with Children screening

## Resources:

- Education and Care Regulations
- ACECQA – Guide to the NQF
- ACECQA Education Leader Resource* and Videos - https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2019-04/ACECQA_Educational_Leader_Manual_WEB.pdf

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# Duty of Care

## Purpose of this Policy:

This policy will outline the important responsibility all educators have when educating and caring for all children. Educators must be vigilant, aware, and diligent at all times in keeping children safe.

## Prerequisite Policy:

- Supervision of Children
- Delivery and Collection of children
- Child Safe Environment

## Policy:

At Our Patch, there are a number of ways we all work together to provide a duty of care to children. This may be in our Support Office, in our communications with schools as well as all the work we do at each Patch with children and their families

We will work together to always to be vigilant, aware, and diligent with our communications, our actions, and our preparations. Our duty of care to the children is the most important aspect of our role. Our Patch will take all reasonable steps to provide a safe environment that will protect children from harm during play and interactions.

## Impact for Our Patch:

- Safety and Well-being for children
- Safe environments
- Educating Our Educators

## Strategies:

- Educators must ensure firstly:
    - They are within ratio at all times
    - The environment is hazard free
    - All licensed areas are accessible and available to children
- They are Positioned throughout Our Patch where they can supervise children adequately
- Educators will ensure that children are accounted for at all times and follow all supervision policies. Extra diligence is required at the commencement of care, during transition through licensed areas, and when children are using bathrooms
- Educators will communicate regularly with one another, especially with keeping one another updated with children's whereabouts and name counts
- Parents alongside Leaders will ensure that all medical conditions and requirements as well as children's enrolment forms are updated regularly

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- All licensed areas will need to be monitored to ensure they remain compliant and safe. Each Patch will need to complete site hazard checklists termly or when deemed necessary
- All equipment and resources will be maintained to ensure they are safe for the children to use
- Any damaged items must be removed and can be reordered through Our Patch
- Educators will communicate with parents, children, and school to continue to support the care and safety of the children

## Related Policies:

- Safeguarding of Children Policies
- Medical Policies
- Emergency Policies
- Environmental Policies
- Interactions with Children

## Related legislation:

- Part 4.2 Children's Health and Safety
- Part 4.3 Physical Environment

## Resources:

- Education and Care Regulations
- ACECQA – Guide to the NQF

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# Our Patch - Grounded Value: Employment Policies

- Recruitment
- Digital Safety, Images and Photography Policy
- Working with Children's Check/Blue Cards
- Equal opportunities
- Career Training and Development
- Staff Records
- National Early Childhood Register Policy
- Absentees

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# Recruitment

## Purpose of this Policy:

At Our Patch we ensure that all employees are driven by our purpose, goals, and our promises to our children, families, schools, and one another. With this forefront, of all that we do, recruitment and screening the right people to be part of Our Patch is a critical step in embedding our values.

## Prerequisite Policy:

- Safeguarding Children Policies
- Code of Conduct

## Policy:

Our Patch will provide future employees with an outline of the role, our organisation and the qualifications required when advertising for positions within our organisation. Our Patch is a Child Safe Organisation, and we will uphold all legislative requirements in Safeguarding Children.

The screening of individuals will be stringent, and we will ensure that only the right people whose values align with Our Patch will work with our organisation which includes all agencies and contract workers.

All applicants will need to provide evidence of qualifications, professional referees and have the experience and knowledge to work with Our Patch. Applicants will also be required to undertake induction and training programs at the commencement of their employment with us and have full ownership to maintain this throughout their duration at Our Patch.

## Impact for Our Patch:

- Safeguarding of children
- Values upheld always
- Families and schools
- Best quality Educators trained always

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## Strategies:

- A Job Scorecard will be developed for each role within Our Patch which will provide the role details, skills and qualifications and key performance tasks will be determined.
    - Our Patch Job Scorecard are regularly updated to support the employee to grow and progress their development
- Each advertisement will provide detail about our organisation, our commitment to Child Safety, details about the role and qualifications/skills required
- Screening of applicants will be a very thorough process where each applicant will need to provide a range of information
    - All original certification and qualifications
    - Valid Working with Children Check
    - Valid National Police Check
    - Resume with 2 professional referees only
    - Visa rights to work in Australia
- Before commencement of the role, the successful applicant:
    - Will need to complete Our Patch Induction training
    - ACF online Child Protection Training
    - Specific Training for the role
    - Prohibition Check
- All unsuccessful applicants are contacted and provided with feedback
- Successful applicants are provided with:
    - Our Patch Employment Contract
    - Job Scorecard for the role
    - Induction training
    - Role training
    - Link to Operational Practises Manual and
    - Other general conditions of employment

## Related Policies:

- Safeguarding Children
- Interactions and Contact with Children Policy
- Educator Policies

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## Related legislation:

- Regulation 126, 136, 137, 143

## Resources:

- Fair Work Ombudsman
- Education and Care Regulations

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# Digital Safety, Images and Photography Policy

## Purpose

Regulation 168 of the Education and Care Services National Regulations (effective 1 September 2025) requires all approved providers to have a policy and procedure for the safe use of digital technologies and online environments. This policy fulfils that requirement and is aligned with the ACECQA National Model Code for Taking Images in ECEC (July 2024).

## Scope

This policy applies to all educators, staff, volunteers, students, contractors, visitors and children attending any Our Patch Group service, and to all parents and guardians in their interactions with the service.

## Taking, Use, Storage and Destruction of Images and Videos of Children

- Images and videos of children may only be taken using service-supplied or formally service-authorised devices. Personal devices must never be used (criminal offence under Part 6A from 27 Feb 2026)
- Images may only be taken for a legitimate educational or operational purpose: documenting a child's learning journey, service newsletters, or regulatory documentation
- Images must never be shared on personal social media accounts, messaging apps, or any public platform by any educator, staff member, volunteer or student
- All images and videos are stored securely on Our Patch Group's authorised service systems (XAP, OWNA, service iPad). Access is restricted to authorised personnel
- Images are retained for the period required by the National Regulations, then securely destroyed. Destruction must be documented
- If a family withdraws image consent, all images of that child must be removed from service devices and systems within 14 days
- AI-generated images, digitally altered images, composite images and deepfakes involving children are strictly prohibited — regardless of purpose or whether the child's face is recognisable. This prohibition extends to the use of any AI tool trained on, or that generates, images resembling children at the service
- Screenshots of children taken from OWNA, XAP or any service platform are subject to the same handling, storage and deletion requirements as original photographs

## Parental Authorisation for Images and Videos

- Written authorisation from the child's parent or guardian must be obtained before any image or video is taken. This is captured in the child's enrolment record (XAP)
- Authorisation must specify: purposes for which images may be taken; how images will be stored; who may view them; and whether images may be used in service communications such as newsletters or the OWNA app

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- Authorisation may be withdrawn at any time in writing. Upon withdrawal, no further images may be taken and existing images must be deleted within 14 days
- If a child is photographed incidentally as part of a group and a family has not given consent, the image must not be used or shared in any context
- Consent forms must clearly specify each use category separately (e.g. OWNA/learning documentation; service newsletter; external grant/award applications; social media operated by Our Patch Group; regulatory documentation). A family may consent to some purposes but not others. Consent for one category does not imply consent for others.
- Our Patch Group does not operate public-facing social media accounts featuring identifiable images of individual children. If this changes, this policy must be updated before any images are posted, and fresh consent obtained for social media use specifically.

## Social Media and Online Sharing

No educator, staff member, volunteer or student may:

- Post, share or tag any image or video of a child on any personal social media platform (including but not limited to Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat, BeReal, LinkedIn, X/Twitter)
- Tag the location of a service or name a child in any public online post
- Share any image or video of a child in any group messaging chat (WhatsApp, Messenger, iMessage etc.) that includes persons not employed by Our Patch Group
- Use an image or video of a child from the service in any personal online profile picture, header image, or portfolio

Educators should be mindful of their overall digital footprint in relation to the service. Publicly accessible personal social media posts that identify the service, make comments about families or children, or reflect poorly on Our Patch Group may constitute a breach of the Code of Conduct, regardless of whether the post includes images.

## CCTV and Optical Surveillance Devices

- Our Patch Group does not independently operate CCTV. Where school-operated CCTV covers a Patch service area, the Leader must annually confirm with the school that appropriate consent and storage procedures are in place, and document this confirmation
- If CCTV is ever introduced by Our Patch Group, families and staff must be informed, and applicable state privacy legislation must be complied with
- Staff must not use personal door cameras (e.g. Ring, Arlo), audio recorders or any covert surveillance device at or near the service. Any concern that a family member, contractor or visitor may be recording a service without consent must be reported to the Leader and CEO immediately

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## Service-Issued Digital Devices

- Each Patch is provided with a service mobile phone and iPad for service use only — not for personal purposes
- Images taken on service devices must be transferred to authorised service systems (OWNA, XAP) and must not be stored on the device itself beyond the session unless required for documentation
- Service devices must be stored securely overnight and must not leave the service premises without Area Manager approval
- Service devices must be password-protected and locked when not in active use. Passwords must not be shared with children
- Service devices must not be used to access personal social media accounts, personal email, personal banking, or any non-service application
- If a service device is lost or stolen, the Leader must notify the Area Manager and CEO within 2 hours. The device must be remotely wiped if that capability is available. A data breach assessment must be completed within 72 hours — refer to the Data Breach procedure below

## Data Breach Procedure

If a data breach occurs (including loss of a device containing images of children, or unauthorised access to OWNA or XAP), the following steps must be taken:

1. Notify the CEO within 2 hours of becoming aware
2. CEO to conduct an initial assessment within 24 hours to determine the nature and scope of the breach
3. If the breach is likely to cause serious harm to any individual, notify the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC) and affected individuals as required under the Notifiable Data Breaches scheme (Privacy Act 1988, Part IIIC)
4. Document the breach, assessment, notifications and remediation actions and retain records for 7 years
5. Review the policy and device management procedure following any breach to prevent recurrence

## Digital Devices Used by Children

- Children may only use personal devices with written parental/guardian permission, in accordance with the Children's Personal Electronic Devices Policy
- Children must not use any device to take or share images of other children or staff without explicit consent
- Children using service iPads or devices must be actively supervised by an educator at all times
- Online safety is a component of our educational program. Educators are encouraged to use age-appropriate digital citizenship resources (e.g. eSafety Commissioner — esafety.gov.au) to support children in developing safe and responsible online behaviours

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- If an educator becomes aware that a child has been exposed to inappropriate online content, or that a child may be experiencing online bullying or exploitation, this must be treated as a child safety matter and managed under the Safeguarding Children Policy immediately

## Related Legislation and Guidance

- Regulation 168 — Education and Care Services National Regulations (as amended 1 September 2025)
- National Law, Part 6A — personal device prohibition (27 February 2026)
- ACECQA National Model Code for Taking Images in ECEC (July 2024)
- Privacy Act 1988 (Cth) and Australian Privacy Principles
- State surveillance and privacy legislation — Victoria, Queensland, South Australia
- Online Safety Act 2021 (Cth) — basic online safety expectations for services
- eSafety Commissioner guidance for early childhood services — esafety.gov.au
- Notifiable Data Breaches scheme — Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC)

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# Working with Children's Check/Blue Cards

## Purpose of this Policy:

Our Patch remains committed to the safeguarding of children therefore ALL employees will need to hold a valid and current Working with Children's Check (or state equivalent).

## Prerequisite Policy:

- Recruitment Policy
- Safeguarding Children Policies

## Policy:

As an employee of Our Patch and the commitment we take to Safeguarding children, all employees will hold a valid and current Working with Children Check (WWCC) or state equivalent. Each employee will be responsible in maintaining the currency of the WWCC (or state equivalent) throughout their employment and provide Our Patch with updated copies for their staff record. Should a concern be escalated, appropriate steps and actions will take place to keep both child and employee safe.

## Pre-Commencement Requirement (effective 27 February 2026)

**PRE-COMMENCEMENT REQUIREMENT (effective 27 February 2026):** No person may commence work with Our Patch Group in any capacity involving children until their WWCC (or state equivalent) has been CONFIRMED AS VALID. A person must not start a shift, orientation, volunteer placement or student placement until their WWCC has been verified. There are NO exceptions.

## State WWCC Verification Portals — Quick Reference

- **QLD:** Blue Card Services — bluecard.qld.gov.au — verify using the person's Blue Card number
- **VIC:** Working with Children Check — service.vic.gov.au/wwc — verify using the person's WWC number and date of birth
- **SA:** Screening Unit — screening.sa.gov.au — verify using the person's screening number

Verification must be conducted through the relevant state portal, not by sighting the card alone. A printed or screen-saved copy of the verification result must be retained in the staff record.

## Interstate Workers

A WWCC issued in one state does not automatically authorise work in another state. If a staff member works across state borders (e.g., a QLD-based casual covering a VIC service), they must hold a valid WWCC in each state where they work. The Leader must confirm the appropriate state WWCC is valid before the person begins work at an interstate service.

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## Strategies

- Verification before first shift: The Leader or Area Manager must verify the validity of the WWCC via the relevant state government portal BEFORE the person's first shift or first contact with children. (Previously: verification on first shift — now pre-commencement.)
- An employee will have their WWCC with them during every shift
- WWCC will be revalidated every 6 months; evidence kept in the staff record
- Should an employee's WWCC lapse, they will be immediately stood down from all contact with children

## Mandatory Status Change Reporting

If Our Patch Group becomes aware — through any means — that a person's WWCC status has changed (suspended, revoked, cancelled or conditions imposed), the CEO must:

- Immediately stand the person down from all contact with children
- Notify the relevant state regulatory authority of the change in status within 24 hours
- Document the notification (time, method, recipient) and retain the record

From 27 February 2026, WWCC issuing authorities may also consider unsubstantiated intelligence when making clearance decisions.

## Impact for Our Patch:

- Safety of Children
- Protection of all employees

## Related Policies:

- Safeguarding Children Policy
- Interactions and Contact with Children Policy
- Educator Policies

## Related legislation:

- Regulation 147
- Victoria – Child Safe Standards
- South Australia – Child Safe Standards
- Queensland – Child Safe Standards – National Child Safe Principals

## Resources:

- Education and Care Regulations
- Child Safe Standards
- National Principals of Child Safe Organisation
- Working with Children's Check VIC
- Working with Children's Check SA
- QLD Government – Blue Card Services

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# Equal opportunities

## Purpose of this Policy:

This policy exists to ensure that our community will feel respected, listened, and appreciated and this is acknowledged through our GROW Values and Brand Promises. We are a diverse and inclusive organisation, and we value one another's differences.

## Prerequisite Policy:

- Recruitment Policy

## Policy:

At Our Patch we work together as one, we listen to each other with respect and offer opportunities to those who seek it. We work together embedding leading practises on human rights, equal opportunity, and racial and religious tolerances.

## Impact for Our Patch:

- Equality for children
- Equality for employees, families, and communities

## Strategies:

- Employees will be offered equal opportunities to engage with and participate in as each one of us feel comfortable in
- All employees will have access to EAP should they require it any point
- Employees will all be offered further training and professional development in line with Our Patch Vision and Values
- Educators will provide children with endless opportunities that are equal and fair to all children involved – keeping children safe at all times
- Our community, families and schools will be also actively involved in supporting equal opportunities for all children
- As professionals, we are also responsible to role model these behaviours so that we can continue to teach and guide each other and children we work along side

## Related Policies:

- Educator Policies
- Interactions and Contact with Children Policy
- Relationships with Families and Communities Policies

## Related legislation:

- Equal Opportunity Act 2010

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## Resources:

- Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission
- Equal Opportunity Commission of South Australia
- Queensland Human Rights Commission
- ACECQA Information Sheet – Quality Area 1-- Be a Part of Reconciliation

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# Career Training and Development

## Purpose of this Policy:

Our Patch is committed to offering our employees an opportunity to grow both their personal and professional development. This policy will provide our team with confidence to know that we together are committed to career training and development.

## Prerequisite Policy:

- Code of Conduct
- Qualifications and Ratios Policy

## Policy:

As individuals, we are all responsible for our personal and professional growth. We all need to take ownership of this in order to move in the direction we are aiming for. At Our Patch we will work alongside you to inspire, empower, and provide tools/resources to support your journey. The training and development of each one of our employees will help your grow. Our Grow Values align to each one of our journeys at Our Patch.

## Impact for Our Patch:

- Quality Educators/Employees
- Deliver our brand promises
- Stand by our values

## Mandatory Training Requirements:

Each employee must complete mandated training specific to their role, including:

- Child Protection training — on commencement and refreshed as required
- Induction Training — incorporating the mandatory national child safety training via Geccko (Foundation modules required by 27 August 2026 for existing staff; immediately on commencement for new staff from 27 February 2026)
- Mandatory National Child Safety Training (Geccko) — a legal requirement under the Education and Care Services National Law from 27 February 2026
- Role-specific training as specified in each Job Scorecard

## Non-Compliance Consequences:

A person who has not completed Geccko Foundation Training by the required deadline may not continue to work in a role involving children until the training is completed. This applies to all personnel regardless of seniority or employment type. The Educational Growth Manager will report non-compliance to the CEO no later than 28 August 2026, following which the CEO will determine the appropriate response for each non-compliant individual.

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## Recognition of Prior Completion:

If a staff member has already completed Geccko Foundation Training at a previous employer or in a personal capacity, this completion is valid provided the certificate is current and can be produced for inspection. The staff member must provide a copy of their certificate to their Leader for the staff record.

## Strategies:

- Each employee will have a Job Scorecard at time of employment. The Job Scorecard will help each one of us understand what the organisation requires the role to do in order to embed our values.
- The Job Scorecard will be updated annually to reflect the goals of business – at this time we would also review employees training and development path
- Employees would need to consider what they would like to further develop in and work with Our Patch to support that process
- At the commencement of work, all employees would need to complete Child Protection training followed by Induction Training
- Each employee will need to complete mandated training specific to the role that they will hold
- Training on various aspects will be offered regularly at Our Patch to keep all employees up to date about any facet of our organisation

## Related Policies:

- Educator Policies

## Related legislation:

- Quality Area 7

## Resources:

- Quality Area 7

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## Staff Records

From 27 February 2026, the Staff Records obligation is extended by the requirement to maintain accurate records in the National Early Childhood Worker Register hosted by ACECQA (NQAITS). See the National Early Childhood Worker Register Policy below for full details.
Staff records documents will be made available for any educator/student/volunteer to complete prior to working at Our Patch. This is a legislative requirement, and all educators will need to have this completed before working at any one of Our Patch schools.

### National Worker Register

Registering workers on the National Early Childhood Worker Register is the approved provider's responsibility – individual workers do not self-register. The Leaders/Area Manager, on behalf of the approved provider, enters and maintain each workers, volunteer's and student's details via the NQA IT System provider portal (portal.nqaits.gov.au).

Records must be updated with the required timeframe (within 14 days of engaging a worker; Our Patch's interna standard is 5 business days).

### Updated Staff Record Checklist

- Copies of qualifications
- Copies of any first aid certificates
- Copy of valid and current Working with Children Check (verified BEFORE first shift — pre-commencement requirement from 27 February 2026)
- Copy of completed Commitment to Children
- Copy of completed ACF training AND Geccko Foundation training completion certificate
- National Early Childhood Worker Register: confirmation of registration in NQAITS before or on first day of work — include registration date and NQAITS reference
- Prohibition notice check: confirmation that no prohibition notice exists — recorded at commencement and re-checked each term
- Signed copy of Code of Conduct
- Emergency contact details

### Record Retention and Privacy

Staff records must be retained for a minimum of 7 years after the person's employment or engagement ends (or until the person turns 25, if they were under 18 during their engagement, whichever is later). Records must be stored securely with access restricted to the Leader, Nominated Supervisor and CEO. Staff have the right to request access to their own record under the Privacy Act 1988.

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## Related Policies:

- Educator Policies

## Related legislation:

- Regulation 145

## Resources:

- Education and Care Regulations
- ACECQA – Guide to the NQF

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# National Early Childhood Worker Register Policy

## Purpose

From 27 February 2026, all approved ECEC providers must register all workers, volunteers and students in the National Early Childhood Worker Register, hosted by ACECQA within the National Quality Agenda IT System (NQAITS). This policy establishes Our Patch Group's obligations and procedures for maintaining the Register.

## Who Must Be Registered

- All paid staff (full-time, part-time, casual and agency/auxiliary staff)
- All volunteers (including parent volunteers and community volunteers)
- All students on placement at the service
- Third-party providers working directly with children

## Registration Obligations

- **At commencement:** Leader or Area Manager must register each new worker/volunteer/student in NQAITS before or on their first day of contact with children
- **Information required:** full name, date of birth, WWCC number and expiry, qualifications held, role at the service, and the approved provider's service approval number
- **Accuracy:** Register must be kept current. Leader must update within 5 business days of any change to a person's role, qualifications or WWCC status
- **Departures:** When a person ceases work at the service, Leader must record their departure date within 5 business days
- **Regulatory access:** The Register is accessible to regulatory authorities and must accurately reflect all persons currently and recently engaged at each service

## Step-by-Step Registration Guide for Leaders

1. Log in to NQAITS at nqaits.acecqa.gov.au using your approved provider login credentials
2. Navigate to the Worker Register section for your service
3. Select 'Add new worker' and complete all mandatory fields: full legal name, date of birth, role, start date, WWCC number and expiry, and qualifications
4. Save the entry and note the NQAITS reference number — record this in the person's staff record
5. When a worker departs, return to their record and record the departure date within 5 business days
6. When any detail changes (WWCC renewal, qualification upgrade, role change), update the record within 5 business days

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## Register Error Correction

If an error is identified in a worker's Register entry (e.g. incorrect qualification recorded, wrong WWCC expiry), the Leader must correct the entry in NQAITS within 2 business days of identifying the error. If the error relates to a security-critical field (WWCC status, prohibition notice), the CEO must be notified immediately. Corrections must be documented in the service compliance log.

## Privacy Notice to Workers

Our Patch Group must inform each worker, volunteer and student at or before registration that their information is being recorded in the National Early Childhood Worker Register, that this information is accessible to regulatory authorities, and that it is collected and used in accordance with the Privacy Act 1988. This notice must be included in the staff induction checklist and in offer letters from commencement.

## Register Auditing

The Educational Growth Manager must conduct a full audit of the Register at the start of each term to confirm that all active workers are registered, all records are current, and all departed workers have departure dates recorded. Audit findings must be reported to the CEO within 5 business days. Any systemic non-compliance must be remediated within 10 business days of the audit report.

## Regulatory Authority Queries

If the regulatory authority queries a worker's Register entry or requests additional information about any registered person, the CEO must be notified immediately. The CEO is responsible for coordinating the response to the regulatory authority. No individual staff member or Leader should respond to a regulatory authority query about the Register without CEO direction.

## Responsibilities

- Educational Growth Manager: establishes and maintains the organisation-level Worker Register compliance process
- Area Manager: oversees Register compliance across their Patches and conducts term audits
- Leader: day-to-day Register maintenance, including timely registration and updates
- CEO: receives audit reports, manages regulatory authority queries, and is responsible for systemic compliance with the Register obligation

## Related Legislation

- Education and Care Services National Law, Part 6B (from 27 February 2026)
- ACECQA information sheet: Early Childhood Worker Register — acecqa.gov.au
- Privacy Act 1988 (Cth) — collection and handling of worker personal information

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# Absentees

## Purpose of this Policy:

To ensure that all educators are familiar and aware of how they can manage any absence from work and be provided with the right support in order for educators to take time away from their day-to-day duties.

## Prerequisite Policy:

- Code of Conduct

## Policy:

Our employment contract with Our Patch defines our leave requirements and expectations. All Educators are able to request planned leave up to 4 weeks in advance so that a suitable educator is sourced, and children are least affected by the change of educator.

## Impact for Our Patch:

- Child safety
- Educator committed

## Strategies:

- Each Educator will be advised of the rostered hours required for work
- Pending the circumstance, Educators may be in an ongoing shift or be contacted to fill a shift if there is an absence
- Should Educators wish to take planned leave, they must put in a leave application directly through to their direct manager for approval with four-weeks' notice. It is recommended that educators not pay for any flights or accommodation until d the leave is approved
- Should Educators require leave for appointments, there is expectation where possible that appointments are made not during OSHC or Holiday Care operating hours
- Should Educators fall ill unexpectedly, contact to their direct manager must be made immediately so that appropriate educators are sourced ensuring Our Patch is not understaffed and children placed at risk

## Related Policies:

- Educator Policies
- Safeguarding Children Policies

## Related Legislation:

- Regulation 13, 117A, 117B, 122, 123

## Resources:

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- Education and Care Regulations
- ACECQA – Guide to the NQF

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# Our Patch - Grounded Value: Environmental Policies

- Tobacco, alcohol, and drug free
- Usage of Personal Electronic Devices
- Our Patch Space Requirements
- Storage and Maintenance
- Water Safety
- Environment Statement and Sustainability

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## Tobacco, Vape, Alcohol, and Drug Free

Keeping an environment safe for all children educators and other parties is important. Understanding the legislative requirements and implementing these requirements need to be adhered to all times.

The environment at Our Patch Group is free from tobacco, vape substances, alcohol, and drugs. All staff will be diligent with their approach in upkeeping this policy.

### Related Legislation

Regulation 82 — Education and Care Services National Regulations (as amended from 1 September 2025). Regulation 82 now explicitly requires services to ensure the environment is free from: (a) tobacco products and tobacco smoke; (b) vaping substances and vaping devices; (c) illicit drugs and alcohol. This policy reflects and gives effect to all four categories. The previous version of Regulation 82 did not explicitly name vaping — the September 2025 amendment adds this requirement.

### Definition of Vaping Devices

For the purposes of this policy, 'vaping devices' includes all e-cigarettes, electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS), heat-not-burn devices, pod-based devices (e.g. JUUL, VUSE), disposable vapes, and any device designed to aerosolise a substance for inhalation. The prohibition applies regardless of whether the device contains nicotine, flavouring only, or any other substance.

### State Legislation — Quick Reference

| State | Key Act | Key Requirement for OSHC |
|---|---|---|
| Queensland | Tobacco and Other Smoking Products Act 1998 (Qld); Public Health (Tobacco) Act 2023 (Cth) | Smoking and vaping prohibited in all outdoor areas of licensed childcare and OSHC premises. On-the-spot fines apply to individuals. |
| Victoria | Tobacco Act 1987 (Vic); Tobacco Amendment (Smoking in Outdoor Areas) Act 2023 | Smoking and vaping prohibited within 10 metres of children's outdoor play areas at education and care services. Penalties apply to individuals and operators. |
| South Australia | Tobacco and E-Cigarette Products Act 1997 (SA) | Smoking and vaping prohibited at or near children's services and school grounds. Applies to |

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| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | | all hours, not only during operating hours. |

## Visitor Management

Leaders must ensure that all visitors to the service (including parent/guardian visitors, contractors and maintenance workers) are informed of the tobacco, vape, alcohol and drug free policy on arrival. A copy of this policy or a brief summary notice must be displayed at the service entrance. Any visitor who breaches this policy must be asked to leave the service area and the incident documented.

## Related legislation:

- Regulation 82

## Resources:

- Education and Care Regulations
- ACECQA – Guide to the NQF

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# Usage of Personal Devices Policy

## Purpose

Educators have an important role in supervising children at all times, and all Our Patch Group sites have access to Our Patch Group operational telephones. Personal electronic devices include, but are not limited to computers, laptops, iPads, tablets, smart watches and mobile phones. From 27 February 2026, the use of personal devices capable of taking, storing or transmitting images, video or audio is PROHIBITED when working directly with children. This prohibition is a CRIMINAL OFFENCE under Part 6A of the Education and Care Services National Law — not merely a workplace policy expectation. Exemptions may only be granted through the formal written exemption process set out in the Usage of Personal Devices Policy (Change 16) and Appendix 15.

## Prerequisite Policy

- Code of Conduct

## Legal Prohibition — Part 6A

- No person working directly with children at an ECEC service may use a personal device capable of taking, storing or transmitting images, video or audio
- Only service-supplied or formally service-authorised devices may capture, store or transmit images or video of children, and only with proper parental authorisation under the Digital Safety, Images and Photography Policy (Change 17)
- A breach of Part 6A is a criminal offence. Personal liability attaches to the individual, not just the approved provider
- BYOD (bring-your-own-device) arrangements are not permitted under this policy. No personal device may be designated as a "service device" through informal arrangement — all service devices must be procured, registered and managed by Our Patch Group

### What "Working Directly with Children" Means

You are "working directly with children" from the moment children arrive at the service until the last child has departed and you are no longer responsible for any child. This includes:

- Before-school care, after-school care, and vacation care program hours
- Transition time (e.g. collecting children from classrooms, supervising arrival queues)
- Excursions and incursions
- Any time you are counted in the educator-to-child ratio

You are NOT "working directly with children" only when you are on an uninterrupted break away from the program area AND another qualified adult has taken over supervision

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responsibility. A break is not uninterrupted if you remain in the room or yard where children are present.

## Smartwatches

Smartwatches (e.g. Apple Watch, Fitbit, Samsung Galaxy Watch, Garmin) are personal devices capable of receiving images, messages and audio. They fall within the Part 6A prohibition. Smartwatches must be stored with other personal devices when working directly with children, unless the watch has no connectivity to a phone or internet and cannot receive or transmit any data (e.g. a basic fitness tracker without messaging capability). If you are unsure whether your device qualifies, speak to your Leader before your next shift.

## Emergency Personal Device Use

If you have a genuine personal emergency requiring you to use your phone while working directly with children, you must:

- Inform your Leader immediately and hand over your supervision responsibilities
- Step away from the program area before using your device
- Return your device to storage before re-entering the program area
- Document the incident (time, nature of emergency) in the service communication log

An "emergency" means an urgent situation involving your own health or safety, or that of an immediate family member. Checking messages, social media, or taking personal calls does not constitute an emergency for the purposes of this protocol.

## What This Means in Practice

- Phones, tablets, smartwatches, laptops and any other device capable of recording must be stored out of the working area when an educator is working directly with children
- No photographs or videos of children may be taken on personal devices under any circumstances — even with parental consent (service devices must be used)
- Under the tripled penalty regime (from 1 January 2026), financial penalties for a breach are significant and attach to the individual personally, not only the approved provider
- Exemptions only through the formal written process in the Usage of Personal Devices Policy and Appendix 15 — no verbal or informal exemptions permitted
- Leaders must conduct a device storage check at the start of each session — a brief confirmation that all educators have stored personal devices before children arrive
- If a breach is observed, the Leader must direct the educator to store the device immediately, document the incident in the service communication log, and notify the Area Manager by the end of the business day

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## Exemption Process — Statutory Risk Minimisation Plan Standard

An exemption may only be granted through the following statutory process:

- Written application to the Leader and Area Manager setting out the specific reason for the exemption
- Written approval by the Nominated Supervisor before the exemption takes effect — verbal approval is insufficient
- A written Risk Minimisation Plan approved by the Nominated Supervisor addressing: how children's safety will be maintained; how the device will be stored and secured; restrictions on use; and how compliance will be monitored
- Completion of the Personal Device Exemption Agreement (Appendix 15)
- The exemption must specify the period (maximum 12 weeks, subject to renewal review) and the specific permitted use only
- The exemption and Risk Minimisation Plan must be filed in the service's compliance folder and a copy provided to the Educational Growth Manager

## Exemption Register

Each service must maintain an Exemption Register recording all active personal device exemptions. The Register must include: the individual's name and role; the device type; the specific permitted use; the approval date; the expiry date; and the name of the approving Nominated Supervisor. The Exemption Register must be available for regulatory inspection.

The Area Manager must review all active exemptions at the start of each term. Any exemption not renewed before its expiry date ceases to have effect — the individual must immediately revert to full device storage requirements until a new written exemption is approved.

## Leader Monitoring Responsibilities

Leaders are responsible for:

- Conducting a device check at the start of each session (before children arrive)
- Ensuring the Exemption Register is current and that no expired exemptions remain active
- Documenting and reporting any observed breach to the Area Manager by end of business day
- Notifying the CEO of any suspected criminal breach under Part 6A within 24 hours

# Related Policies

- Safeguarding Children Policy
- Code of Conduct

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- Educator Policies
- Educator's Personal Electronic Devices and Social Media Policy

## Related Legislation

Section / Regulation Why it's relevant to safe digital technology use

| Section/Regulation | Why it's relevant to safe digital technology use |
|---|---|
| Section 162A | **Child protection training**<br>Staff need awareness of risks associated with online environments as part of child protection. |
| Section 165 | **Offence to inadequately supervise children**<br>Use of devices must not compromise active supervision of children. |
| Section 167 | **Offence relating to protection of children from harm and hazards**<br>Digital risks (e.g., inappropriate content, cyber risks, misuse of devices) are hazards that services must protect children from. |
| Regulation 84 | **Awareness of child protection law**<br>Links to understanding child safety obligations. Including digital spaces. |
| Regulation 115 | **Premises designed to facilitate supervision**<br>Relevant where digital technology use might occur. Supervision must still be effective. |
| Regulation 122 | **Educators must be working directly with children to be included in ratios** |
| Regulation 123 | **Educator to child ratios – centre-based services**<br>Ratios must not be compromised by device use or poor attention to children. |
| Regulation 165 | **Record of visitor**<br>Visitors bringing devices into services require monitoring and recording. |
| Regulation 166 | **Children not to be alone with visitors** |
| Regulation 168 | **Education and care services must have policies and procedures**<br>Includes circumstances where children might be unsupervised with adults using devices. |
| Regulation 170 | **Policies and procedures to be followed**<br>Ensures that once the digital technology policy is in place, staff must comply. |
| Regulation 171 | **Policies and procedures to be kept available** |

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| | |
|---|---|
| | The digital technology policy must be accessible to staff and families. |
| Regulation 172 | **Notification of change to policies or procedures**<br>Services must notify families/regulators when they update policies (e.g., to include digital technology use). |
| Regulation (New) - effective 1 September 2025 | **Safe use of digital technologies and online environments** |

## Policy Review

- This policy has been developed in accordance with ACECQA guidelines and the National Quality Framework.
- This policy will be reviewed annually or as required by changes in legislation or operational needs to ensure ongoing relevance and compliance.
- Families and staff will be notified at least 14 days prior to any significant police change via formal communication channels (e.g., email, newsletter, or noticeboard).
- All policy updates and review dates will be documented in the policy register.

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# Our Patch Space Requirements

## Purpose of this Policy:

Our Patch is all about having the right space for children to participate in. Ensuring the environment is safe, welcoming and in line with legislative requirements is critical for the delivery of each Our Patch offering.

## Prerequisite Policy:

- Supervision Policies

## Policy:

Our Patch values are true to the core of how and what we are. We strive to develop an offering that is centred around the child's voice. We are committed to our promise and in order for us to fulfil this, we will only work in a space that is centred around this promise. Each space where Our Patch is involved with needs to be an enriching environment. A space where children feel comfortable, confident, and calm in. Together with our involvement with schools will we offer such a space that stimulates ownership and wonder.

## Impact for Our Patch:

- Aligns to our values of GROW – Grounded, Relationships, Ownership and Wonder
- Delivery of our Brand Promises – We Grow - VOICE, VALUE and EXCELLENCE

## Strategies:

- Initially Our Patch in early communications stages will be in a position to partner with schools that are able to offer a space aligned to our values
- Each space will need to meet all legislative requirements including items such as:
    - Bathroom
    - Outdoor and Indoor areas
    - Kitchen
    - Heating/Cooling
    - Ventilation
- Storage of resources and equipment will be accessible to educators and will be kept neat and tidy at all times
- Where possible, Our Patch will have a space that is available to the Educators 30 to 60 minutes before and after each session so that appropriate packing up and down occurs. Preference will be to have a space in the school that is just for Our Patch
- Supervision in spaces is critical in safeguarding children. Each space will be analysed for risk mitigation. Each space needs to have a supervision plan where risk might be slightly increased due to the nature of the space
- Schools will work closely to ensure Our Patch has the legislative size measurements requirements for the number of children in attendance
- The Educators are responsible to maintain the cleanliness and neatness of the space including bathrooms, storerooms, kitchen, and office areas.

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- Each school will do the full daily clean of the space and more heavy-duty cleaning at agreed times with Leaders
- Should there be any hazards or damages to the space, the school must be advised through their appropriate process as soon as possible and the situation rectified as soon as possible
- All fire extinguishers will be monitored and checked as required by school process

## Related Policies:

- Safeguarding Children Policies
- Environmental Policies

## Related legislation:

- Regulations 77, 103, 107, 108, 109, 110, 115
- Child Safe Standard 6

## Resources:

- Education and Care Regulations
- ACECQA – Guide to the NQF
- Child Safe Standards

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# Storage and Maintenance

## Purpose of this Policy:

Providing children with the safest equipment, resources and products is a critical part of our role at Our Patch. This policy will aid guidance and support on how to store equipment, resources and products including the process to maintain these.

## Prerequisite Policy:

- Our Patch Space Requirements Policy

## Policy:

The storage of all equipment, resources and products at Our Patch will be organised in a safe and organised manner. All items that are onsite will stored in appropriate areas and in order.

Any hazards items will be kept away from children and stored away in appropriate areas. Our Patch will ensure that any hazards products are kept to a minimum, where possible, products will be organic and eco-friendly.

## Impact for Our Patch:

- Safe environment for children and educators
- Use of safe products to protect our environment

## Strategies:

- Each Patch will have signs to advise where all resources, equipment, and products are kept
- All cleaning products used at Our Patch will be preapproved with a heightened awareness to purchase eco-friendly and organic products where possible
- Educators will speak openly with children about safety measures when using kitchen tools such as knives and ovens, entering storerooms and any other hazardous products.
    - Our role with children is provide them awareness and protect them to ensure they are always safe
- Storerooms will be kept safe and organised. Children will not be able to enter storerooms
- As per r105 all furniture and material resources used at Program are developmentally and age appropriate for the education and care of the chid/ren.
- To ensure compliance with r103 Educators will monitor equipment and resources to maintain good condition and that there is ample resources for children to use.
    - Should equipment/resources break they will be removed and where possible, repaired safely. If this is not possible, they are to be replaced

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- Educators will engage with all children to ensure the equipment and resources purchased are aligned to Our Patch values and reflect all children's input and support QIP Planning.
- During Program Visits Area Manageres will provide feedback to the Program's Leadership Team on resourcing purchase requirements throughout the term,
- Any cleaning products used at Our Patch will be locked away from the children and in a labelled area.
    - Children will not be able to use any of the cleaning products

## Process:

- Resource budgets available at the start of each Term.
- Orders can be emailed to resources@ourpatchgroup.com
- Resource Team will action all orders and reply via email

## Related Policies:

- Environmental Policies
- Relationships with Children Policies

## Related legislation:

- Regulation 103, 105

## Resources:

- Education and Care Regulations
- ACECQA – Guide to the NQF

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# Water Safety

## Purpose of this Policy:

Water is a big part of our lives, and we always enjoy our time with water.
Providing water-based experiences for children at Our Patch requires a high level of diligence so children are supervised and monitored safely whilst engaging in water offerings.

## Prerequisite Policy:

Supervision Policies

## Policy:

High risk activities require additional measures in place so that children at Our Patch have opportunities to experience and learn. Water is one of those activities, where the benefits of water play will enrich children's learning, exploring, and help them grow to understand the importance of safety and risk.

## Impact for Our Patch:

Safe water activities for children to participate in
Safe environment for children and educators

## Strategies:

***Onsite Pools***

- Where pools are present onsite, Leaders will work with Area Manageres and A member of the Leadership Team to determine the suitability of the pool for use by Our Patch through development of risk assessments.
- A risk minimisation plan will be created for each Patch and excursions that have onsite pools to mitigate the risk, regardless of whether Our Patch is using the pool. This will cover how educators will get children to and from the pool and/or how they will safely keep children away from the pool if it's not to be used.
- Where the use of the onsite pool is more frequent (a couple of time in the term), Area Manager will be on site to support Our Patch during this period
    - If Area Manager is unavailable to support, then an alternative member(s) of the Support Office Team will be onsite to support Our Patch
- Permission slips will be required to be signed off by a child's parent/guardian allowing them to participate in the activity at the pool.
- Parent/guardian to advise (via the permission slip) Leader of child's swimming level so that Educators are aware of the child's swimming abilities.
    - No pool is to be used if a lifeguard is not present.
    - No pool is to be use if qualified support staff are not on site, i.e. lifeguards.
- Educators will be expected to participate in the activity where possible, i.e. If swimming is offered, then educators will be in the water with the children.

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### *Water Activities*

- **Off Site**
    - This includes, but is not limited to, excursions with water-based activities (aquatic parks, off site pools, water parks, splash pads, open water activities- boating, fishing, surfing, and other similar activities)
    - When water activities are to be participated in, Leaders will work with Area Manageres to determine the suitability of the activity through use of risk assessments.
    - All water-based excursions will maintain a ratio of 1:8
    - On days where Our Patch is at an offsite water-based excursion, Area Manager will be on site to support Our Patch during their excursion.
        - If either is unavailable to support, then an alternative member(s) of the Leadership Team will be onsite to support Our Patch
    - Permission slips will be required to be signed off by a child's parent/guardian allowing them to participate in the water activity.
    - Parent/guardian to advise Leader (via permission slip) of child's swimming level so that Educators are aware of the child's swimming abilities.
    - No activity is to be participated in if qualified support staff are not on site, i.e. lifeguards.
    - Educators will be expected to participate in the activity where possible, i.e. If swimming is offered, then educators will be in the water with the children.

- **On Site**
    - This includes but is not limited to water play activities (water tables, sensory play, and other similar activities).
    - Any water container that is not to be used for the programmed water play, i.e. basins, sinks, buckets, are to be covered up or stored away to ensure safety
    - With other water-based activities, i.e. sensory play and water tables, staff are to maintain close and provide constant supervision
    - Families will be given notice, where possible, that a water activity is going to be programmed so that children can wear/bring suitable clothing

### *Change rooms*

- A risk assessment will be completed prior to using of the onsite pool facilities and will include the change room area
    - Should a change room be deemed unfit, Our Patch will not be able to use the onsite pool or the pool's facilities.
- Our Patch will have the facility block off a minimum of two cubicles in the change rooms that will only be used by Our Patch during their time at the pool.
- Children will need to be accompanied by a Educator/Leader to ensure that the selected cubicles are empty for the children to use
- If a child would like, they are able to change in a cubicle in the change family room

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- Children are required to dry and changes themselves
- Where possible, male Educators will support the male children and female Educators will support the female children
    - Should there be no males available, female Educators can support the male children
        - Where female Educators need to support the male children, two Educators will support the children where possible.
    - Please note: male refers to those who identify as male, and female refers to those who identify as female. If a child does not identify with either gender or is non-binary, we respect that and will encourage the child to use the family change rooms and would require an Educator to wait outside that change room.
- A Educator/Leader will avoid being one–on–one with a child in the change room
    - If a child needs support, two Educators will support where possible
    - Children will need to be a group of more than two and accompanied by a Educator
- Where a Leader/Educator needs to get changed, they are to take turns ensuring supervision of the children (maintaining ratio), they are to change in a cubical, and they are to change once all the children have left the change room area.

## Related Policies:

- Excursion Policy
- Safeguarding Children Policies ** (ACF Accreditation)

## Related legislation:

- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010: Section 167
- Regulations 101(2), 168(2)(a)(iii)
- Quality Area 2

## Resources:

- Education and Care Regulations
- ACECQA – Guide to the NQF
- Water Safety Victoria

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# Environment Statement and Sustainability

## Purpose of this Policy:

Our Patch has made a commitment to ethical and sustainable decision making as an organisation. Through awareness of the environment and sustainable practices, we want to ensure that we are educating children to become conscious and considerate of the world we live in, to create a better world for tomorrow. We want to support children by cultivating a respect for the environment through sustainability programs and activities.

## Prerequisite Policy:

- Program Planning Policy

## Policy:

Through incorporating Our Patch values with the values of the school community, Our Patch will nurture children to become aware of their environment and the steps they can take to be environmentally responsible and aware. Educators will take ownership of sustainability depending on their environment and school. Our Patch will aim to educate children about the environment through daily practice, resources, and interactions.

## Impact for Our Patch:

- Clean environment
- Strategies for children and families to use at home
- Helping to create responsible global citizens

## Strategies:

- Our Patch promotes and respects sustainability. Our Patch Team will role model and educate children about sustainable practises.




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- The children who attend Our Patch will guide the direction of sustainability for their program and Leaders will document their ideas, and plan for experiences which represents the children's input.
- With intention and purpose, Our Patch Team will create awareness for children when exploring areas of sustainability. Children are encouraged to critically think, make decisions, and problem solve.
- Our Patch Team will actively seek inspiration for ideas on sustainability to present to the children and further extend on their interests.
- All programs will offer a Sustainability Patch in their programs. In this space, sustainability experiences can be set up and displays on sustainability.
- Our Patch is connected with recycled art suppliers to provide materials for Our Patchs.
- There is endless opportunity for Our Patch Team to incorporate sustainability into their program. Below are some initiatives which can be used:
    - Shredding paper and donating to local animal shelters.
    - Energy and water conservation practises used where possible.
    - Our Patch Team will engage with a diverse range of environmental awareness events which promote sustainability such as Global Recycling Day and Clean up Australia Day.
    - Leaders will ensure their service philosophy reflects the programs commitment to sustainability.
    - Leaders will conduct Internal audits on sustainability of their program.
    - Our Patch Team will regularly review their Quality Improvement Plan to continuously improve sustainability within their program.
    - Our Patch Team will provide communications electronically via the Our Patch Voice App where possible.
    - Recipients of Our Patch communications will be discouraged from printing anything that isn't necessary.
    - Policies and procedures as well as the National Laws and Regulations will be stored electronically at the service, unless there is limited, or no internet access and it is required that they are printed.
    - Information will be available at the Family Patch for ways families can incorporate sustainable practices at home.
- Our Patch Team can recognise children's contribution to sustainability through the nomination of a Sustainability Officer, writing in the school newsletter, presenting at school assemblies etc.

## Related Policies:

- Sun Protection – Extreme Heat Policy
- Water Safety Policy

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## Related legislation:

- National Quality Standard 3.2.3

## Resources:

- Environmental Education in Early Childhood
- CERES

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## Our Patch – Relationships Value: Relationships with Children Policies

- Interactions and contact with children
- Guiding and supporting children
- Behaviour Guidance Policy
- Suspension/Exclusion
- Our Patchs Suspension and Exclusion Matrix
- Children's feedback and grievances
- Supporting children with additional needs
- Diversity and Inclusion

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# Interactions and contact with children

## Purpose of this Policy:

Our Patch's GROW Values underpin everything we do, and especially our interactions with children. It is imperative that we help children to become grounded individuals so that they can have healthy and meaningful relationships that encourage ownership of their actions and wonder of the world around them.

Our Patch will ensure that all interactions at Our Patch are safe, positive, and compassionate. This is important not only for child-to-child interactions, but especially important for Educator or Leader interactions with children. Interactions between Educators and/or Leaders will be encouraging and thoughtful. Leaders and/or Educators and family's interactions will be supportive, and respectful at all times.

## Prerequisite Policy:

- Duty of Care
- Safeguarding Children Policies

## Policy:

Interactions between Our Patch and the school community are warm and caring, with the wellbeing of all a priority. Children will be guided to grow and learn from their interactions with each other, and Leaders/Educators will guide children to be grounded. Interactions will always be line with the Child Safe Standards and the five learning outcomes outlined in My Time Our Place.

## Impact for Our Patch:

- Warm and caring environment for children to grow and thrive
- Respectful relationships between children, Educators/Leaders, families, and the school community

## Strategies:

- All Educators and Leaders will complete training in our Educational Growth Journey during their induction to Our Patch. This will align with the Child Safe Standards and guide Practices and Behaviours per Standard 7—Children have a right to be heard and have their concerns and ideas taken seriously
- Educators and Leaders will be role models for all children in care and will model the behaviours and interactions required at Our Patch, such as empathy, care, warmth, respect, ownership, and wonder.
- Educators and Leaders will guide the behaviour of the children in Our Patch and support challenging conversations through:

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    - Ensuring that all children's voices are heard in the programming and that Leader is planning for what the children want to experience
    - Reflecting on the values of Our Patch and the school community
    - Focusing on the behaviour, not the person
    - Engagement in the different Patches on offer and redirecting when needed
    - Having appropriate and adequate resources available
    - Adequate space and supervision throughout Our Patch
- Our program will guide children to grow in self-esteem and self-reliance supported by Leaders and Educators
- Educators and Leaders will have a consistent approach that is calm and considerate
- Educators and Leaders will be present, remain fair-minded, demonstrate active listening, and respectful in all interactions
- Leaders and Educators will encourage children to collaborate, learn, and help each other
- Educators and Leaders are committed to building strong relationships with each other, the children, the families, and the school community to ensure that there is consistent and adequate communication.
- Leaders and Educators are committed to being respectful of the cultures, values, physical and intellectual abilities of all families using Our Patch (R155)
- Educators and Leaders will always ensure the dignity and rights of the child are maintained

## Related Policies:

- Programming Planning Policy
- Children's Feedback and Grievances Policy
- Family Grievance and Complaints Policy
- Guiding and Supporting Children's Behaviour Policy
- Supporting Children with Additional Needs Policy
- Suspension/Exclusion Policy

## Related legislation:

- Quality Area 1 – Educational program and practice.
- Quality Area 2 – Children's health and safety
- Quality Area 5 – Relationships with children
- Regulations 155 & 156

## Resources:

- ACECQA Guide to the NQF
- Child Safe Standards, Standard 7

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# Guiding and supporting children

## Purpose of this Policy:

There are times where children need support with their interactions with each other and it is the responsibility of Leader and Educators to encourage positive interactions between all children. This policy is designed to help guide interactions with children and support the team should a child need extra support.

## Prerequisite Policy:

- Interactions and Contact with Children Policy
- Duty of Care Policy

## Policy:

Leaders and Educators will always support and guide children's interactions to foster a positive and warm environment in Our Patch. Leaders and Educators will role model appropriate communication skills, while providing compassion, empathy, and care to support a child's growth and development. All children will be guided and supported to grow as individuals, to become grounded in themselves, build meaningful relationships, have ownership of their space, and grow their sense of wonder.

## Impact for Our Patch:

- Open, caring environment for children to flourish
- A space where children feel comfortable and supported
- Diligence for Our Patch

## Strategies:

- Leaders and Educators will role model respectful relationships with others. This includes all children, other Educators, parents/guardians, the school community, and visitors.
- Educators and Leaders will support children's interactions by being engaged in the children's activities Our Patch Values are embedded in all interactions so that children are being guided to being grounded and assured of themselves, build relationships with each other, own their interactions, and create wonder with each other.
    - The values of the school will always be incorporated into Our Patch we will do this by learning and asking questions then role modelling those values
- Our Patch will have one primary guideline—kindness. Kindness will be what Leaders and Educators use to guide and encourage appropriate behaviour with children
- Educators will discuss with children the Code of Conduct for Children Policy. This policy outlines the rules of the program, activity or event and provides guidelines for children's behaviour for example:
    - Telling a staff person or parent if you feel unsafe, upset or uncomfortable

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    - Always staying where it is safe and not leaving the area of supervision without talking to an Educator first
    - Always going to the toilet in pairs or small groups
    - Letting an Educator know if you are going to the toilet and who you are going with
- Through our communications with children, we will learn and ask more about the resources required to support each patch
- Throughout the session, children will be encouraged to work through their differences with the help and support of Leader and Educators
- Educators and Leaders will ensure they have reasonable expectations of the children, based on the children's age, abilities, and backgrounds, to make sure they aren't asking things of the children that can set them up for disappointment or failure
- Leaders and Educators will have a holistic view of Our Patch and will consider all areas of Our Patch when supporting the child by considering:
    - Have we actively listened to what the child is saying?
    - Is the child hungry?
    - Is the child tired?
    - Is the child bored or disengaged?
    - Is the child too warm or too cold?
    - Does the child understand what's expected of them?
    - Has the child been given enough notice of an upcoming transition of activities?
- Should a child have difficulties having positive interactions in Our Patch, Leader will consult the parents/guardians to see if there are strategies that are used at home
    - Leader, with the permission of the parents/guardians, will consult the school to see if there are strategies that can be implemented in Our Patch
    - A Grounded Plan will be created with the child, the family, and the school should it be necessary, to best support a child and their interactions in Our Patch. A Grounded Plan is an individualised plan that takes into consideration the strengths and challenges of a child to ensure they have enough support to appropriately engage in a program.
    - A Grow Educator can be rostered to support the integration of a child into Our Patch who is having difficulty with engaging appropriately.
- Our Patch will ensure that the environment of each Patch is supportive and inclusive. Should a child display behaviour that contradicts this through bullying or violence, Our Patch will take all necessary steps that best supports all children.

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## Damage to Equipment or Facilities

As part of everyday experiences involving children, we recognise that fair wear and tear will occur to equipment and facilities.

However purposeful and wilful damage to property or equipment will be required to be repaired or replaced at the expense of the child's parent/guardian.

The Leader, Area Manager and Head of OSHC Programs in consultation with the school as required, will distinguish between accidental and deliberate damage.

## Related Policies:

- Supporting Children with Additional Needs Policy
- Suspension/Exclusion Policy
- Children's Feedback and Grievances Policy

## Related legislation:

- Quality Area 1 – Educational program and practice.
- Quality Area 2 – Children's health and safety
- Quality Area 5 – Relationships with children
- Education and Care Services National Regulations (2011), R 155 & 156

## Resources:

- ACECQA Guide to the NQF (2012)

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# Behaviour Guidance Policy

## Regulatory Basis:

Regulation 155B requires all services to have a documented behaviour guidance policy covering: strategies for managing behaviour, prohibited practices, and the role of educators in supporting children's social and emotional development. This policy must be consistent with the NQS and updated when the NQS or National Law changes.

## Guiding Principles:

All behaviour guidance at Our Patch services is grounded in the following principles:

- Behaviour is understood in the context of each child's age, stage of development, cultural background and individual circumstances
- Educators respond with curiosity and empathy, seeking to understand the unmet need or emotion driving the behaviour
- The goal is to support children to develop self-regulation, social skills and emotional literacy — not merely to manage or suppress behaviour
- Consistent with Child Safety and Protection, educators must always consider whether a child's behaviour — including aggression, withdrawal, or sexually inappropriate behaviour — may indicate abuse, trauma or exploitation. If so, the Safeguarding Children Policy is activated immediately.
- The paramount consideration duty (National Law s.5A) applies to all behaviour guidance decisions

## Prohibited Practices — Absolute Prohibitions:

The following practices are PROHIBITED at all Our Patch services. Any educator who engages in a prohibited practice is subject to immediate disciplinary action and may be reported under the Reportable Conduct Scheme (Change 19) and may constitute inappropriate conduct under National Law s.165A:

- Any form of corporal punishment — including smacking, hitting, pushing or shaking
- Any discipline that causes or is likely to cause physical or psychological harm
- Confining a child in an enclosed space as a behaviour consequence
- Withholding food, water, toileting or rest as a behaviour consequence
- Using demeaning, humiliating, sarcastic, threatening or frightening language
- Excluding a child from the program as a consequence without written approval from the approved provider and notification to the family

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## Related Legislation

- Regulation 155B — Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011; National Law s.165A (inappropriate conduct, from 27 February 2026); NQS QA5 — Relationships with Children; NQS QA2.2.3 — Child Safety and Protection

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# Suspension/Exclusion

## Purpose of this Policy:

Our Patch will have an environment where children can thrive by becoming grounded in who they are and building positive relationships with those around them. Unfortunately, there can be times where children behave in a way that endangers other children, educators, and themselves. When this happens, Our Patch wants to ensure that Leaders and Educators have the tools they need to support the child and family.

## Prerequisite Policy:

- Duty of Care Policy
- Interactions and Contact with Children Policy
- Guiding and Supporting Children Policy
- Supporting Children with Additional Needs Policy

## Policy:

Our Patch will be a space for children to grow through positive interactions with another. In all instances Our Patch will use resources, tools, and guidance in providing all children with the opportunity to grow.

In instances where our resources and tools haven't been about to support a child or should a child display aggressive, threatening, or violent behaviours or behave otherwise inappropriately, further conversations with parents, guardians and school will need to take place. At this time, we may need to address suspended or exclusion from Our Patch.

## Impact for Our Patch:

- Safety and wellbeing of all children and educators in Our Patch
- Anti-violence and anti-bullying ethos of Our Patch

## Strategies:

- Leader and Educators will support an inclusive environment where children have the space to grow, learn, and become resilient
- Should a child be unable to behave appropriately at Our Patch, Leader will speak with the parents/guardians as soon as practical to discuss the incident.
    - Examples of inappropriate behaviour:
        - Swearing/Aggressive language
        - Attempting to abscond/absconding
        - Threatening violence to other children or educators
        - Damaging property
        - Bullying—emotional and physical
        - Violence towards other children or educators
- When a child displays inappropriate behaviour, Leader will create a Grounded Plan with the help of the parents/guardians and the school contacts

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    - The severity of an incident will always be taken into consideration when managing the inappropriate behaviour and creating the Grounded Plan
- The nature of the incident will always be reviewed with the parents/guardians.
- The school contacts where appropriate may be notified when a Grounded Plan has been developed as their input important.
- The Grounded Plan outlines the triggers and strategies for the child, as referenced in the Supporting Children with Additional Needs Policy
    - The Grounded Plan will need to be signed by Leader, the parent/guardian, and the child to give everyone ownership of the Grounded Plan and understand the expectations of everyone involved
- Should the inappropriate behaviour continue to occur at the program the suspension/exclusion matrix will be used (see below)
    - The matrix ranks the severity of the behaviour against the number of instances of the inappropriate behaviour.
- Our Patch will make every reasonable effort to ensure all children are able to use Our Patch; however, should a child be endangering the safety of themselves, other children, or Leader/Educators, that child may need to be suspended or excluded from Our Patch.
    - If a child is suspended or excluded, the Leader will notify the family via phone as soon as possible of the decision, explaining why the decision was made, and the steps taken to support the child in Our Patch.
    - Leader will also notify the school as soon as possible
    - If a child is suspended, a plan will be put in place to support the child coming back into Our Patch
    - If a child is excluded, the parent/guardian will not be charged for any bookings that were cancelled due to the exclusion.
        - The customer service team will ensure that all bookings held during the suspension period are cancelled without fee to the parent/guardian

## Related Policies:

- Governance Policies
- Program Planning Policy

## Related legislation:

- Quality Area 1 – Educational program and practice.
- Quality Area 2 – Children's health and safety
- Quality Area 5 – Relationships with children
- Regulations 155 & 156

## Resources:

- ACECQA Guide to the NQF

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## Our Patch's Suspension and Exclusion Matrix

SEVERITY OF BEHAVIOUR →

| LIKELIHOOD OF SUSPENSION/EXCLUSION FROM OUR PATCH ↓ | **Swearing/Aggressive Language towards other Children or Educators** | **Attempted absconding/Absconding from Our Patch** | **Threat of Physical Violence towards other Children or Educators** | **Property Damage, Sexually Explicit Language or Behaviour, or Racist Behaviour** | **Physical Violence or Bullying towards other Children or Educators** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1st Instance** | **LOW**<br>Grounded Plan to be created | **LOW**<br>Grounded Plan to be created | **LOW**<br>Grounded Plan to be created | **MEDIUM**<br>Grounded Plan to be created, discussion with family and school, Area Manager to support Patch | **MEDIUM**<br>Grounded Plan to be created, discussion with Family and School, Area Manager to support Patch |
| **2nd Instance** | **LOW**<br>Review of Grounded Plan, Discussion with Family and School t | **MEDIUM**<br>Grounded Plan to be reviewed, \discussion with family and school Area Manager to support Patch | **MEDIUM**<br>Grounded Plan to be reviewed, discussion with family and school, Area Manager to support Patch | **HIGH**<br>Review of Grounded Plan, consult with family, school, external Inclusion Support, and Medical Practitioner, Area Manager to support Patch<br>Child will be Suspended from Our Patch for agreed upon amount of time | **HIGH**<br>Review of Grounded Plan, Consult with Family, School, External Inclusion Support, and Medical Practitioner, Area Manager to support Patch<br>Child will be Suspended from Our Patch for agreed upon amount of time |
| | **LOW** | **MEDIUM** | **HIGH** | **HIGH** | **EXTREME** |

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| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **3rd Instance** | Review of Grounded Plan, Discussion with Family and School, Area Manager to support Patch | Review of Grounded Plan, Consult with Family, School, and External Inclusion Support, Area Manager to support Patch | Review of Grounded Plan, Consult with Family, School, External Inclusion Support, and Medical Practitioner, Area Manager to support Patch<br>Child will be Suspended from Our Patch for agreed upon amount of time | Review of Grounded Plan, Consult with Family, School, External Inclusion Support, and Medical Practitioner, Area Manager to support Patch<br>Child will be Suspended from Our Patch for agreed upon amount of time | Child will be Excluded from Our Patch, Discussion with Family and School, Area Manager to Support Patch |
| **4th Instance** | **MEDIUM**<br>Review of Grounded Plan, Discussion with Family, School, and External Inclusion Support, Area Manager to support Patch | **HIGH**<br>Review of Grounded Plan, Consult with Family, School, External Inclusion Support, and Medical Practitioner, Area Manager to support Patch<br>Child will be Suspended from Our Patch for agreed upon amount of time | **HIGH**<br>Review of Grounded Plan, Consult with Family, School, External Inclusion Support, and Medical Practitioner, Area Manager to support Patch<br>Child will be Suspended from Our Patch for agreed upon amount of time | **HIGH**<br>Review of Grounded Plan, Consult with Family, School, External Inclusion Support, and Medical Practitioner, Area Manager to support Patch<br>Child will be Suspended from Our Patch for agreed upon amount of time | **EXTREME**<br>Child will be Excluded from Our Patch, Discussion with Family and School, Area Manager to Support Patch |
| **5th Instance** | **MEDIUM**<br>Review of Grounded Plan, Discussion with Family, School, and External Inclusion Support, Area Manager to support Patch | **HIGH**<br>Review of Grounded Plan, Consult with Family, School, External Inclusion Support, and Medical Practitioner, Area Manager to support Patch<br>Child will be Suspended from Our Patch for agreed upon amount of time | **EXTREME**<br>Child will be Excluded from Our Patch, Discussion with Family and School, Area Manager to Support Patch | **EXTREME**<br>Child will be Excluded from Our Patch, Discussion with Family and School, Area Manager to Support Patch | **EXTREME**<br>Child will be Excluded from Our Patch, Discussion with Family and School, Area Manager to Support Patch |

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# Children's feedback and grievances

## Purpose of this Policy:

It is imperative that the child's voice guides every aspect of Our Patch, so children are encouraged to provide feedback about all aspects of Our Patch. Children are encouraged to provide feedback continually to make sure that their voices are being heard. We want the children to feel grounded and supported in Our Patch and to have ownership of their Patch. Children are the core of Our Patch and ensuring that they can participate in a program that reflects them and their wants is fundamental.

## Prerequisite Policy:

- Interactions and Contact with Children Policy
- Duty of Care Policy
- Safeguarding Children Policies

## Policy:

Our Patch passion and vision is all about capturing children's voice. This is the reason why Our Patch exists. To help improve all children's experiences at Our Patch, children will be given the opportunity to provide regular feedback. All children will be empowered to provide feedback using one of our many tools. All feedback is recorded and appropriate follow up will be taken.

## Impact for Our Patch:

- Children and family satisfaction and support
- School satisfaction
- Empowered and engaged children
- Program that reflects the needs and wants of the children

## Strategies:

- Throughout Our Patch space are different Patches where children can engage in activities. One primary area is Assembly Patch.
    - This patch has been designed for children to come together and talk about Our Patch – what they are enjoying, what they would like to see more and less of, experiences they wish to do, what resources they might need to enjoy their time at Our Patch.
    - This patch is safe and empowers children to have choice and control.
    - An Educator is available here for children to talk to or the children may nominate a child to represent each time they come together.
- Upon entry into Our Patch, children will be given the opportunity to let Educators know via the Our Patch Voice App how they're feeling. Children will also be given the opportunity to

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provide feedback at the end of their session via the Our Patch Voice App so that feedback is being given instantaneously and will allow greater oversight of the child's experience.
    - If a child lets Our Patch know that they are unhappy with their experience, Leaders will be notified and can follow up with the child the next time the child is booked in to ensure the child is listened to and supported.
    - Our Patch team will immediately action any item that a child has suggested that is safe and easy to accommodate.
- Children are encouraged to let Educators know when they would like to see changes in programming and Educators and Leaders will do their best to support these changes.
- If a child wants to make a complaint about another child at Our Patch, they will be encouraged to discuss it with a Educator or Leader. Educators will encourage the children to work through their concerns in line with Our Patch and the school's values.
- Should a child want to make a complaint about a Educator, they will be encouraged to discuss it with a different Educator or Leader. The Our Patch staff will work with them through their concerns in a respectful and timely manner and include a child's family when appropriate.
    - When required, Area Manager will support the child and family to ensure that all parties feel listened to and supported to get to an agreed resolution.
- If a child wants to make a complaint about a parent/guardian or another adult, Leader will support them to discuss their complaint with respect and care. Leader will make no promises to the child but listen openly and advise direct manager
- All child complaints will be taken seriously and dealt with in a timely manner.
    - Should a child disclose an allegation of abuse and/or neglect, our personnel are mandatory reporters, and educator is required to report this immediately, or if that is not possible, no later than before ending that person's session of work with Our Patch.
    - Reporting it to be done as per Our Patch Responding to Child Abuse Reports and Allegations Policy provided in this document.
    - Personnel responding to child abuse reports and allegations will be supported by the Area Manager, and a member of the Leadership Team.

## Related Policies:

- Family Grievance and Complaints Policy
- Safeguarding Children Policy
- Responding to child abuse reports and allegations policy
- Program planning Policy

## Related legislation:

- Quality Area 1 – Educational Program and Practice.
- Quality Area 2 – Children's Health and Safety

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- Quality Area 7 – Leadership and Service Management
- Laws S 168, S 174
- Regulations 173, R 176

## Resources:

- ACECQA Guide to the NQF
- Education and Care Services National Law Act (2010)
- Education and Care Services National Regulations (2011)

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# Supporting children with additional needs

## Purpose of this Policy:

Children with all needs and abilities have the opportunity to grow and thrive at Our Patch because Our Patch's program recognises the importance of ensuring the child's voice in everything we do and embracing inclusive practices. All children have the right to have a program where they are able to grow and excel, where they can build relationships with other children and Our Educators and have a space where they feel they are able to engage in activities of their choosing that allow them to embrace their curiosity of the world.

## Prerequisite Policy:

- Duty of Care Policy
- Code of Conduct
- GROW Values
- Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Safeguarding Children Policies ** (ACF Accreditation)
- Guiding and Supporting Children Policy

## Policy:

Children will come to Our Patch with an array of needs that we need to support—including, but not limited to, having a disability, challenging living situations, or from different culturally and linguistically different backgrounds. Our Patch will work collaboratively with parents/guardians, the school community, and any medical professionals to ensure all children with additional needs are supported within Our Patch.

## Impact for Our Patch:

- Children feeling included and supported to grow and thrive
- Families feeling included and supported
- Our Patch Diligence

## Strategies:

- Leaders and Educators will ensure they use inclusive practices and language—making sure that children with additional needs, physical disabilities, language or learning difficulties, health concerns, or of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background always feel supported and included
- Our Patch will work with Community Childcare and the Early Learning Association Australia to best support children at Our Patch
- Our Patch will create and maintain relationships with external providers, such as Noah's Arc and the Victorian Inclusion Agency, to ensure that children with additional needs have
    - Access to equipment and resources

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    - Wide selection of sensory toys and sensory experiences
- Our Patch will work collaboratively with the school to ensure Our Patch has access to change areas and equipment that a child with additional needs may use during the school day
    - Our Patch requests that where possible, a child with additional needs who uses nappies comes to Our Patch in a recently changed pull-up to best support the child and Our Patch team member who will be supporting this child throughout the session
- Where applicable, Our Patch will apply for funding for inclusion support
- For a child with additional needs, we require 7 days' notice is given when booking into Our Patch so that staffing requirements can be met, and a Grow Educator rostered to support the child's engagement at Our Patch
    - Should a Grow Educator be required to support a child's needs at a Patch, Our Patch will make every effort to ensure that it is a consistent Grow Educator rostered
    - A Grow Educator is rostered to support the whole of the program with the engagement of the child with additional needs; however, they are not necessarily only to work with the child with additional needs
        - This will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis to make sure that the child's needs are being met
- Children with additional needs and behaviour support needs will have a Grounded Plan to be completed. The Grounded Plan will include information that Leaders and Educators will use to support the child's engagement at Our Patch. All Grounded Plans to be created on the Our Patch Grounded Plan template.
    - Exert from a Grounded Plan:

> Strategies - *ways the child can be supported into the program:*
>
> - Henry to be given time reminders leading up transitions of routines. The reminders will be given at 5 minutes, 3 minutes and 1 minute prior to the transition.
> - If Henry is starting to feel anxious and needing a quiet space, ask Henry if he wishes to use headphones which can be provided to him.
> - When Henry arrives for the day, take him to the My Peace Patch and read to him a book to transition him into program.

- All Grounded Plans will be stored with the child's enrolment form in a locked cabinet
- The Grounded Plan is a living document and will be reviewed at a minimum termly to ensure that it is still relevant, and the strategies are still supporting the child
    - The reviews will be documented with the Grounded Plan and any amendments noted so that all are aware of what needs to be done to support the child

## Related Policies:

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- Medical conditions policy (Aug 2026 Version)
- Diversity and Inclusion Policy

## Related legislation:

- Quality Area 1 – Educational Program and Practice.
- Quality Area 2 – Children's health and safety.
- Quality Area 5 – Relationships with children.
- Quality Area 6 – Collaborative partnerships with families and communities.
- Education and Care Services National Law Act (2010), S168.
- Regulations 73, 74.

## Resources:

- ACECQA Guide to the NQF
- Individual Learning Plans for Children in Out of Home Care
- NDIS Website

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# Diversity and Inclusion

## Purpose of this Policy:

Our Patch is dedicated to continual improvement when developing our programs to ensure that all children are included, supported, and recognised for the wealth of knowledge and talent their diversity brings. We will build a culture of inclusiveness in all areas of our business from recruitment, training and our Child Safe policies. Our Patch recognises and respects the importance of having a Patch that offers a program that is free of bias or prejudice. It is paramount that all children, families, and cultures are included and considered in all aspects of Our Patch—from programming, to resources, to the pedagogy that guides the practices of Our Patch.

Our Patch respects the rights of all children to participate, paying appropriate attention to the needs of the following groups:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders
- Children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- Children with a disability
- LGBTQI+ (Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex)
- Children who are unable to live at home

## Prerequisite Policy:

- GROW Values
- Duty of Care Policy
- Code of Conduct
- Safeguarding Children Policies

## Policy:

Being grounded is one of the fundamental aspects of Our Patch, and this entails empowering children to know who they are and what they stand for. To do this, we have an unbiased approach that embraces every aspect of the child, allowing their voice to be heard and recognising any barriers that may occur. Through consultation with specialised teams and all our children, regardless of their area of diversity, will have opportunity to participate in all programmed activities.

Leaders and Educators will support all children in their participation in the program. All children will have the opportunity to interact, learn and enjoy the play each day in their Patch. We have an inclusive ethos that welcomes and supports all cultures, languages, genders and how children choose to identify, communities, and abilities. It is especially important to acknowledge and support the cultural identity of children and their linguistically diverse backgrounds, including Aboriginal and Torres Straight Island children. Our Patch will build cultural competency amongst

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Our Patch community—giving children the ability to understand, communicate with and effectively interact with people across cultures.

## Impact for Our Patch:

- Child's satisfaction and support in the program
- School and community support
- Our Patch Diligence

## Strategies:

- Leaders and Educators will embrace the philosophy of inclusion and celebrating diversity and welcome all gender identities, religions, cultural backgrounds, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds, those with linguistically diverse backgrounds, and children with additional needs.
- Leaders will ensure that the program reflects the goals and needs for children's individual development, additional needs, health or medical conditions, and cultural backgrounds.
- A range of activities will be planned throughout Our Patch to incorporate the strengths, interests, and needs of the children
- A Grounded Plan will be written for a child to ensure the strategies they need to thrive at Our Patch are captured
- When needed, a Grow Educator can be placed at Our Patch to support the integration of children into Our Patch
- Our Patch will ensure that it is not performative in its actions to include other cultures, backgrounds, and needs, but rather embed them respectfully into the everyday happenings at the program so children of diverse experiences always feel included and seen
- Children will be encouraged to build skills in empathy and listening to each other's feelings to better understand them
- Leader and Educators will work closely with the school community to incorporate the values of the school into Our Patch
- Leaders and Educators will role model behaviour to ensure Our Patch is an inclusive space for all children that allows them to
    - Build trusting relationships
    - Embrace their self-identify and self-expression
    - Develop their learning experiences
- Educators will give opportunities for children to enhance their knowledge of Indigenous culture, relevant to Aboriginal History in the community

## Related Policies:

- Guiding and Supporting Children
- Supporting Children with Additional Needs

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## Related legislation:

- Quality Area 1 – Educational Program and Practice.
- Quality Area 2 – Children's health and safety.
- Quality Area 5 – Relationships with children.
- Quality Area 6 – Collaborative partnerships with families and communities.
- Education and Care Services National Regulations (2011), R 73, 74.
- Education and Care Services National Law Act (2010), S168.

## Resources:

- ACECQA Guide to the NQF
- Supporting Culturally and Linguistically Diverse People
- Care for Kids - Encouraging Cultural and Linguistic Diversity in Your Service
- Exploring Diversity and Equity in Education and Care Services
- ACECQA - We Hear You (2014)

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# Our Patch – Relationships Value: Relationships with families and community Policies

- Family participation and communication
- School and Local Community Involvement
- Fundraising
- Grievance and complaints

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# Family participation and communication

## Purpose of this Policy:

Family and community participation are encouraged and welcomed at Our Patch. Our Patch is to be reflective of those that use it, and family participation is an important way that this can happen. This policy also covers family confidentiality.

## Prerequisite Policy:

- Student and Volunteer Policy

## Policy:

Our Patch captures voice – be it the children, families, and school community. This is one our most important promises. Families and the school community will be encouraged to talk to us, provide us feedback and we will listen and respond.

Our Patch will interact genuinely with families so that families feel part of Our Patch. Our Patch will also maintain family confidentiality in accordance with the Privacy Act of 1988.

## Impact for Our Patch:

- Strengthened bond between Our Patch and Families/School community

## Strategies:

- Every parent/guardian is encouraged to visit Our Patch whenever it is operating.
    - Parents/guardians wishing to spend additional time, e.g., at pick up or drop off times to participate with children other than their own, will need to hold either a valid Working with Children's Check or Volunteer Check
- Should a parent/guardian have skills or talents they want to use to support Our Patch in a Specialist or Enrichment Patch, they are welcome to speak to Leader to organise this.
- Parents/guardians/school community are encouraged to provide feedback early and often about what they would like to see happening at Our Patch
    - This can be done via the Our Patch Voice App, speaking with Leader, or contacting the Our Patch Head Office via email or phone

## Family Confidentiality

Our Patch will comply with the Privacy Act of 1988 and maintain confidentiality and privacy for families that use Our Patch. Our Patch will take every reasonable measure to protect and secure sensitive and personal information to ensure that it doesn't become public, misused, or that any unauthorised access to information occurs or is transferred to other organisations.

- Personal information regarding families and their children will not be passed to any other person unless written permission is obtained beforehand by the parent/guardian

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    - If a parent/guardian requires access to their personal information, they can access this via the Our Patch Voice App and update the information there
        - The Our Patch Voice App is password protected for parent/guardians and will only give them access to their personal information
    - Should a parent/guardian have concerns about the misuse of information, they can be addressed per the Grievances and Complaints policy.
- The enrolment forms will be stored securely in a locked cabinet in the office to make sure that no personal information is accessible to anyone other than Our Educators and the Regulatory Authority. The following will also be stored with the enrolment forms to ensure the confidentiality of the information in them:
    - Incident/illness/ injury/ trauma forms
    - Court order or custody arrangements
    - Grounded Plans or other behaviour support documentations
    - Medical management plans and authorisations
- When no longer required at the service, children's personal and family information will be stored per the Archiving Policy
- All archived records will be reviewed annually and shredded if no longer legally required.

## Related Policies:

- Children's Feedback and Grievances Policy
- Families Grievances and Complaints Policy
- Responding to child abuse reports and allegations policy

## Related legislation:

- Quality Area 1 – Educational Program and Practice.
- Quality Area 2 – Children's Health and Safety
- Quality Area 6 – Collaborative Partnerships with Families and Communities
- Quality Area 7 – Leadership and Service Management
- Education and Care Services National Law Act (2010), S 168
- Education and Care Services National Regulations (2011), R 181, 182, 183 & 184
- Victorian Government – Information Privacy Act 2000
- Victorian Government – Public Records Office Standard PROS 09/05

## Resources:

- ACECQA Guide to the NQF
- Education and Care Services National Law Act (2010)
- Education and Care Services National Regulations (2011)

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# School and Local Community Involvement

## Purpose of this Policy:

Our Patch will have a seamless partnership with the school communities it operates in and wants to operate in line with the school, not as a separate identity. To do this effectively, Our Patch will have an open relationship with the school and its community, where involvement from the school community is wholeheartedly welcomed.

## Prerequisite Policy:

- Family Participation and Communication Policy

## Policy:

Our Patch encourages participation from our school communities because we want each community to be involved and together, we work to provide a patch for every child to grow.

Leaders will work closely with schools and local community to ensure they are part of our daily program.

## Impact for Our Patch:

- Strong relationship between Our Patch and the school community
- Strong relationships with the families who use Our Patch

## Strategies:

- Leaders will ask about the school's and community's events
    - When appropriate, Our Patch will offer to support school and community events
    - When notified of an event, Leader will speak with Area Manager to make sure it aligns with the values and mission of Our Patch
    - Where the event aligns with Our Patch, Area Manager will discuss with the school contact Our Patch's participation and support of the school event
- At the Family Patch, Leader will ensure that there is updated information about what is happening within the school community and the local surrounding community
- Each Patch newsletter will be on XAP and sent to families
    - When requested by the school, this piece can be approved to go into the school newsletter
        - Parents/guardians will need to give permission for their child to be in the newsletter

## Related Policies:

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- Student and Volunteer Policy
- Partnership Responsibilities and Communication Policy
- Fundraising Policy

## Related legislation:

- Quality Area 1 – Educational Program and Practice.
- Quality Area 6 – Collaborative Partnerships with Families and Communities

## Resources:

- ACECQA Guide to the NQF
- Education and Care Services National Law Act (2010)
- Education and Care Services National Regulations (2011)

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# Fundraising

## Purpose of this Policy:

There are a multitude of wonderful organisations that do work to benefit those in need and Our Patch wants to ensure that it supports organisations that are aligned in its values.

## Prerequisite Policy:

- GROW Values
- Code of Conduct

## Policy:

Our Patch will support fundraising for registered not for profit organisations that share similar values or viewpoints. These fundraising efforts can be initiated by the school community or Our Patch. Our one goal is to always have a positive impact on children at Our Patch, our communities, our country, and our world.

## Impact for Our Patch:

- Children becoming global citizens
- Our Patch supporting those in need
- Strengthened bond with the school community

## Strategies:

- Our Patch supports the following charities and has donation links for them on the Our Patch Website:




- If a Leader or Educator would like to support a charity that is not already being supported by Our Patch, they will contact Area Manager to ensure the organisation is aligned with Our Patch before any fundraising efforts commence

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- Fundraising activities can only support not for profit organisations registered on https://www.acnc.gov.au/
- Educators are required to provide details of any proposed funding activities including the types of activities to be undertaken to the Area Manager prior to commencement
    - Our personnel, children and families attending Our Patch will be unable to solicit public donations (such as doorknock appeals or street collections)
    - Our personnel, children and families attending Our Patch will be unable to
    - raise funds through the sale of confectionary, cakes, sausage sizzles etc. as these activities breach food licencing regulations Our Patch must comply with
    - Cash will not be kept at Our Patch programs at any time. All monetary donations are to be returned directly to the registered not for profit organisation.
- All fundraising activities must be approved in writing by Area Manager prior to commencement.

**Related Policies:**

- School and Local Community Involvement Policy
- Family Participation and Communication Policy

**Related legislation:**

- Quality Area 1 – Educational Program and Practice.
- Quality Area 6 – Collaborative Partnerships with Families and Communities

**Resources:**

- ACECQA Guide to the NQF

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# Grievance and complaints

## Purpose of this Policy:

Our Patch has the responsibility to prevent, identify and promptly resolve problems whenever possible in the service.

Where a grievance does arise, it must be resolved in an objective, fair and timely manner. It is important to ensure grievances are resolved by discussion and negotiation between the parties concerned.

Our Patch provides families with a number of tools so all families have a voice in Our Patch, and will encourage families to provide feedback to improve on the service delivery.

## Prerequisite Policy:

- Interactions with children
- Code of Conduct
- Duty of Care
- Children's Feedback and Grievances Policy

## Policy:

Our Patch supports families to feel comfortable and confident in providing their feedback on their experience with Our Patch. This is our promise to our families.

Parents/Guardians will always have their grievances heard, and together we work to support each other so that the resolution is fair and reasonable to all concerned.

All complaints will be dealt with care and compassion, with the wellbeing of the children at the forefront.

## Impact for Our Patch:

- Families feeling supported
- Children feeling empowered
- Diligence of Our Patch

## Strategies:

### Complaints by parents/families

- After the completion of a session, parents/guardians will have the opportunity via the Our Patch App to provide their feedback about their child/ren's session at Our Patch.
    - Parents/guardians are able to rate their session and if they advise that they were unhappy, Leader will contact them within 24 hours to seek their feedback directly.

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This contact must be recorded as a file note in Xap and followed up with a written summary email to the family.
    - Parents/guardians can also call Our Patch or email through to Our Patch if they would prefer to lodge their complaint that way.
        - Should a parent choose to notify Our Patch of their grievances outside the Our Patch App, Leader or Area Manager will contact the parent/guardian within 24 hours. All such contacts are logged in Xap on the same day they occur. Written complaints are acknowledged by reply within 24 hours.
- If the complaint is unable to be resolved immediately by Leader, Area Manager will support the conversation with parents/guardians so that a solution can be achieved.
- If it is determined that the nature of a complaint is serious—in that it alleges the health, safety, or wellbeing of a child is compromised while being at Our Patch—it will be escalated by Area Manager to the Regulatory Authority.
    - All reportable complaints will be reported to the Regulatory Authority within 24 hours.
- If the parent/guardian is unsatisfied with the investigation or the outcome that was conduct by Leader, they can escalate to the Area Manager.
    - The Area Manager will review the investigation and contact persons involved if necessary.
    - The Area Manager will escalate to the Leadership Team the nature of the complaint/grievance for additional support for the parent/guardian.
    - Where the safety and wellbeing of children is being addressed, the Area Manager will support parents/guardians directly. The Safeguarding Framework will be reviewed in conjunction with the incident to maintain the safety and wellbeing of all children involved.
    - The Area Manager will come back to the parent/guardian within 48hours of the complaint being escalated to them with the resolution/outcome of the complaint.
- All complaints will be documented and all steps to reaching the resolution will be documented as well.
- All complaints will be investigated fully, fairly and unbiasedly.
- Schools will be advised of any matter that is serious and should Our Patch receive a number of complains about a concern, Area Manager will advise the school, so they are aware and included in the discussions.

### Reportable complaint check

- On receipt of any complaint, the Leader is to check the complaint against the Regulation 176 reporting criteria before any other action.
- A complaint is reportable if it alleges that the health, safety or wellbeing of a child has been compromised at Our Patch, OR that the National Law or National Regulations have been contravened.

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- If the complaint meets the reportable threshold, the Coach/Area Manager must be notified immediately. The Serious Incident pathway is invoked: a Serious Incident Reporting Form is opened (within 2 hours), the Approved Provider notifies the Regulatory Authority within 24 hours under Regulation 176, and the Operations Compliance team administers the completed form and oversees follow-up. The complaint is also a Serious Incident under Reg 12 and is managed under the Serious Incident Reporting Procedure (pp.74–76).
- Regulatory notification runs in parallel with the five-step service-level response — the complaint is still acknowledged, documented, investigated, resolved and closed with the family. The reportable status does not displace the service-level process; it adds to it.

### Complaints by or involving children

- A child-focused approach ensures children are:
    - listened to
    - taken seriously
    - involved in decisions affecting them, age appropriately.
- Staff must:
    - provide safe and supportive environments for children to speak up
    - respond sensitively to children's concerns; and
    - document complaints appropriately and involve families where needed.

### Complaints to the Regulatory Authority

- Serious complaints may be referred directly to the Regulatory Authority.
- Our Patch is required to notify the Regulatory Authority of any incident or complaint that suggests:
    - a breach of the Education and Care Services National Law; or
    - any risk to a child's health, safety, or wellbeing.

## Related Policies:

- Guiding and supporting Children
- Suspension/Exclusion
- Child protection

## Related legislation:

- Quality Area 2 – Children's Health and Safety
- Quality Area 6 – Collaborative partnerships with families and communities
- Quality Area 7 – Governance and leadership
- Laws S 168, S 174

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- Regulations 173, R 176
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011, Regulation 12 — definition of "serious incident"
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011, Regulation 87 — incident, injury, trauma and illness record
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011, Regulation 176 — notification of serious incidents to the Regulatory Authority within 24 hours
- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010, s.174 — duty to notify
- National Quality Standard — Quality Area 2 (Children's Health and Safety), Standard 2.2.2

## Resources:

- ACECQA Guide to the NQF
- Education and Care Services National Law Act (2010)
- Education and Care Services National Regulations (2011)

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# Our Patch - Ownership Value: Dealing with an Infectious disease Policies

- Hygiene and Infection Control
- Personal Hygiene
- Blood and Body Fluids Precautions
- Infectious Disease and Pandemic Response Policy

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# Hygiene and Infection Control

## Reference Source

Our Patch Group's exclusion periods and infection control practices follow the National Health and Medical Research Council's Staying Healthy in Child Care, 6th Edition (2021). Refer to nhmrc.gov.au/staying-healthy. A printed copy must be available at each service.

## Common Exclusion Periods

- **Gastroenteritis (vomiting/diarrhoea):** Exclude the child until there has been no vomiting or diarrhoea for at least 24 hours, Staff who handle food must not return until there has been no vomiting or diarrhoea for at least 48 hours,
- **Influenza:** Excluded until well (free of fever for 24 hours without medication). Applies to children and staff.
- **Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease:** Excluded until all blisters have dried. Notify families of any case at the service.
- **Conjunctivitis:** Excluded until discharge from eye has ceased. Medical clearance not required but recommended.
- **Impetigo (school sores):** Excluded until lesions are crusted and dried, or 24 hours after treatment has commenced. Lesions must be covered during exclusion period.
- **Head lice:** Not excluded — treat and return. Children may return after first treatment. Notify families of any confirmed case.
- **Chickenpox (varicella):** Excluded until all blisters have dried (usually 5 days after rash appears). Notify immunocompromised families immediately.
- **Streptococcal infection (strep throat):** Excluded until 24 hours after antibiotic treatment has commenced and child is well. Requires medical clearance.

For the full exclusion period list, refer to the Staying Healthy in Child Care guidelines (6th Edition, 2021): nhmrc.gov.au/staying-healthy.

## Return-to-Service Requirements

Before a child or staff member returns after an illness-related exclusion, the Leader must confirm:

- The exclusion period specified in the Staying Healthy guidelines (or state health directive) has been completed
- Where a medical clearance is required (e.g. strep throat, confirmed serious illness), a clearance letter or certificate from a medical practitioner has been provided
- The returning person is well enough to participate in the program — a child who is still visibly unwell must not be accepted back, even if the minimum exclusion period has elapsed

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## Family Notification of Illness at the Service

When a notifiable illness or a disease requiring exclusion is identified at the service, families of all children at the service must be notified promptly via the service communication app. The notification must:

- State the illness (without identifying the specific child affected — privacy must be protected)
- State the exclusion period that applies
- Advise families to monitor their child for symptoms
- Direct families to the relevant health authority or GP if they have concerns

## Hygiene and Cleaning Response Triggers

The following events must trigger an enhanced cleaning response in addition to routine hygiene procedures:

- A child or staff member vomits at the service — the area must be cleaned and disinfected immediately using the service's infection control cleaning kit
- Two or more children present with the same illness symptoms within a 48-hour period — notify the Area Manager and commence an outbreak response
- A confirmed case of a notifiable disease at the service — contact the state health authority for cleaning and management advice specific to the disease

## Outbreak Management Escalation

If three or more children or staff at a service become ill with the same illness within a 72-hour period, the Leader must:

- Notify the Area Manager and CEO immediately
- Contact the relevant state health authority for outbreak guidance
- Document all ill persons, onset times, symptoms and actions taken
- Implement enhanced cleaning and hygiene measures across the entire service immediately
- Notify all families of the situation via the service communication app within 24 hours
- If directed by the health authority, close the service or implement isolation procedures as instructed

## Related Resources — Updated

- Staying Healthy in Child Care — 6th Edition (2021), NHMRC: www.nhmrc.gov.au/staying-healthy [Replaces 5th Edition]
- Queensland Health: www.health.qld.gov.au
- Victorian Department of Health: www.health.vic.gov.au
- SA Health: www.sahealth.sa.gov.au
- National Immunisation Program Schedule: www.immunise.health.gov.au

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- eSafety Commissioner: esafety.gov.au
- Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC): health.gov.au/committees-and-groups/ahppc

## Purpose of this Policy:

Children will interact and engage with each other, which can lead to the spread of communicable diseases. Our Patch ensures that proper hygiene practices are embedded at Our Patch and follows necessary protocols to stop the spread of infectious disease.

## Prerequisite Policy:

- Duty of Care Policy
- Storage and Maintenance Policy

## Policy:

By ensuring effective hygiene and implementing recommended exclusion periods as outlined in "Staying Healthy in Childcare", Our Patch will support the health and wellbeing children, parents/guardians, educators, and the greater school community.

## Impact for Our Patch:

- Children's health and wellbeing

## Strategies:

***Hygiene Practices***

- Our Patch will follow all prescribed current legislation from the relevant state government with regards to the use of masks and hand sanitiser as well as any prescribed social distancing measures to help prevent the spread of communicable diseases such as COVID-19
- Upon the start of a shift, Educators and Leaders will wash their hands using soap and water and thoroughly dry using paper towel or use the hand sanitiser provided
- Children must wash their hands upon entry into Our Patch and during other transitions, including before and after eating, if they cough or sneeze or go to the bathroom. Children must wash their hands with soap and water and thoroughly dry using paper towel under the supervision of a Educator to ensure that it's done correctly. Children can use hand sanitiser can use the hand sanitiser provided
- Hand Sanitiser will be provided by Our Patch and is to be available throughout the session
- Signs will be placed throughout Our Patch to remind children that they should be coughing or sneezing into their elbow and then either washing their hands or using hand sanitiser afterwards to help prevent the spread of communicable disease.
- Leaders and Educators will wipe down surfaces using an appropriate cleaning spray:

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- At the beginning and end of each session
- If a child sneezes or coughs onto a surface
- If an activity is being packed up

***Infectious Disease***

- Leader and Educators will ensure they are following all current legislative policies to prevent the spread of infectious disease.
- On the enrolment form, parents/guardians are to provide information regarding the immunisation status of the child/ren.
    - Families are encouraged to provide their child's immunisation status at enrolment, and it is recorded where provided. As an OSHC (school age care) service, Our Patch is not required to collect immunisation history statements or to apply "No Jab, No Play" enrolment rules, which apply to long day care, kindergarten, occasional care and family day care.
- A copy of the Infectious Disease table will be on display in the office area of each Patch, so that all Educators and Leader are aware of the recommended minimum exclusion periods
- Staying Healthy in Childcare PDF is the resource Our Patch uses to guide the recommended minimum exclusion periods.
- Should there be a notification that there has been a confirmed case of any infectious disease at Our Patch, the individual (i.e. child, educator, parent/guardian) with the confirmed case will be unable to attend Our Patch until a clearance certificate is received from a medical practitioner to verify they no longer have the infectious disease.
    - If a child develops symptoms that lead a Educator to suspect that the child has an infectious or communicable disease, the parent/guardian will be contacted to come and collect their child as soon as possible
    - If there has been a confirmed cases of an infectious disease at Our Patch and there are children in attendance who are immunocompromised or unvaccinated, the parent/guardian of the child will be contacted to come and collect their child as soon as possible from Our Patch
- Parents/guardians are asked to advise Our Patch as soon as practical if their child/ren contract a communicable or infectious disease
- Our Patch will alert all stakeholders when there's been a confirmed case of an infectious disease at Our Patch via XAP and signage will be on display upon entry to Our Patch
- If there is a case of head lice at Our Patch, parents/guardians will be asked to collect their child/ren if head lice are found on their child's head.
- Our Educators and Leaders will ensure that confidentiality is maintained at all time.

## Related Policies:

- Personal Hygiene Policy
- Medical Conditions Policy (Aug 2026 Version)

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## Related legislation:

- Education and Care Services National Law Act (2010), S 165, S 167
- Education and Care Services National Regulations (2011), R 87, R 173
- Quality Area 2 – Children's health and safety
- Quality Area 7 – Leadership and Service Management

## Resources:

- Staying Healthy in Childcare – 5th Edition (2013) https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/reports/clinical%20guidelines/ch55-staying-healthy.pdf
- National Immunisation Program Schedule https://beta.health.gov.au/file/7831/download?token=u7ac8cG
- Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2008 (Victoria), R 85
- Public Health Amendment (Review) Act 2017 (New South Wales), R 85
- Public Health Act 2005 (Queensland), R 85
- South Australia Public Health Act 2011
- Department of Health and Human Services www.dhhs.vic.gov.au
- ACECQA Guide to the NQF

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# Personal Hygiene

## Purpose of this Policy:

Personal hygiene of Educators and Leaders is maintained at all times to ensure a safe and healthy environment.

## Prerequisite Policy:

- Duty of Care Policy
- Code of Conduct

## Policy:

Each person has a responsibility to themselves and people they work with to practise personal hygiene and model positive hygiene practices to children whilst working at Our Patch.

## Impact for Our Patch:

- Educator's health and wellbeing
- Warm and safe space for children to use

## Strategies:

- Leaders and Educators will be required to make sure they are always professionally presented, ensuring acceptable standards of grooming and hygiene.
- Leaders and Educators are to always ensure their Our Patch uniform is clean
- Upon the start of a shift, Educators and Leaders will wash their hands using soap and water and thoroughly dry using paper towel.
- Should a Educator or Leader be diagnosed with an infectious disease, they will be unable to attend a shift at Our Patch until a clearance certificate is received from a medical practitioner to verify, they no longer have the infectious disease.

**Related Policies:**

- Hygiene and Infectious disease Policy
- Medical Conditions Policy (Aug 2026 Version)

**Related legislation:**

- Education and Care Services National Law Act (2010), S 165, S 167
- Education and Care Services National Regulations (2011), R 87, R 173
- Quality Area 2 – Children's health and safety
- Quality Area 7 – Leadership and Service Management

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**Resources:**

- Staying Healthy in Childcare – 5th Edition (2013) https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/reports/clinical%20guidelines/ch55-staying-healthy.pdf
- Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2008 (Victoria), R 85
- Public Health Amendment (Review) Act 2017 (New South Wales), R 85
- Public Health Act 2005 (Queensland), R 85
- South Australia Public Health Act 2011
- Department of Health and Human Services www.dhhs.vic.gov.au
- ACECQA Guide to the NQF (2012)
- When to Wash Hands Graphic--Minnesota Department of Health

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# Blood and Body Fluids Precautions

## Purpose of this Policy:

Our Patch takes every reasonable precaution to avoid incident and injuries at Our Patch; however, where an incident does occur, Leaders and Educators will take every practical step to ensure that there is no spread of any infectious disease.

## Prerequisite Policy:

- Duty of Care Policy
- Code of Conduct
- Hygiene and Infectious Disease Policy

## Policy:

Leaders and Educators will ensure that they are abiding by the standard infection control measures when handling items contaminated by blood or bodily fluids.

## Impact for Our Patch:

- Children's health and wellbeing
- Educator's health and wellbeing
- Our Patch Diligence

## Strategies:

- The Blood and Body Fluids policy will be followed to reduce the spread of blood borne pathogens
    - Where a Educator or Leader is attending to an injured child or adult who is bleeding or has other bodily fluid discharge (urine, faeces, vomit, etc), Our Educator or Leader must wear nonporous gloves to administer first aid and avoid direct contact with the discharge
        - Gloves used to administer first aid and all used materials will be disposed of hygienically by placing them in a plastic bag, sealing the bag, then putting the sealed bag in the bin
    - Where blood or bodily fluids have come in contact with another person, the area of contact must be washed with soap and warm water immediately.
        - If the area of contact is a person's eyes or mouth, the person must seek medical attention immediately
        - If contact is made with an open wound, broken skin, or penetrating injury, the area must be washed with soapy warm water and medical attention sought immediately
    - Where blood or bodily fluids come in contact with other surfaces (floor, furniture, etc), children are to be kept away from the area until it is cleaned properly

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        - Educators or Leader will put on new gloves and wash the area with detergent and warm water.
        - Educators or Leader will then wash their hands and any other body part that may have been contaminated thoroughly with warm soapy water and dry thoroughly with paper towel.
- All incidents and actions taken will be documented on the incident/illness/injury/trauma form and kept as per our archiving policy

Please note: Our Patch will ensure that all children are cared for and are provided the best care; and while it's not mandatory, we ask that parents/guardians advise Our Patch of their child's HIV or AIDS diagnosis to best support them at Our Patch. It's not mandatory that a Educator or Leader disclose that they have an HIV or AIDS diagnosis; however, if a team member or child disclose, we will work together to minimise risk for those involved

## Related Policies:

- Medical Conditions Policy (Aug 2026 Version)
- Governance and Management of Our Patch Policy

## Related legislation:

- Education and Care Services National Law Act (2010), S 165, S 167
- Education and Care Services National Regulations (2011), R 87, R 173
- Quality Area 2 – Children's health and safety
- Quality Area 7 – Leadership and Service Management

## Resources:

- Staying Healthy in Childcare – 5th Edition (2013) https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/reports/clinical%20guidelines/ch55-staying-healthy.pdf
- Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2008 (Victoria), R 85
- Public Health Amendment (Review) Act 2017 (New South Wales), R 85
- Public Health Act 2005 (Queensland), R 85
- South Australia Public Health Act 2011
- Department of Health and Human Services www.dhhs.vic.gov.au
- ACECQA Guide to the NQF (2012)

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# Infectious Disease and Pandemic Response Policy

## Purpose of this Policy:

Our Patch Group recognises that infectious disease outbreaks — endemic, epidemic or pandemic in nature — pose a risk to the health and safety of children, families and staff. This policy establishes Our Patch Group's approach to preventing and responding to infectious diseases of all types, including (but not limited to) COVID-19, influenza, gastroenteritis, hand-foot-and-mouth disease, and any future declared public health emergency.

## Policy:

Our Patch will follow all current regulatory guidelines to ensure that health and safety of all families.

## Strategies:

- Our Patch Group will follow all current public health directives issued by the relevant state health authority for Queensland, Victoria and South Australia respectively
- All hygiene and infectious disease preventatives in the Hygiene and Infection Control Policy will be followed at all times
- Any child or staff member displaying symptoms of an infectious illness must not attend the service and must remain away for the period specified in the Staying Healthy in Child Care guidelines (6th Edition, 2021) or the relevant current state health directive — whichever requires the longer exclusion period
- State-specific infectious disease response information is maintained at each Patch and updated as required by state health authority directives. COVID-Safe Plans are no longer required.

## Illness Symptom Response — Educator Procedure

If a child presents with or develops symptoms of illness during the session, the educator must:

1. Inform the Leader immediately
2. Separate the child from the group as gently and non-distressingly as possible — ideally to a supervised quiet area, not left alone
3. The Leader contacts the child's parent or guardian to arrange immediate collection — collection must occur within 1 hour of notification where possible
4. While awaiting collection, ensure the child is comfortable, supervised, and away from other children where the illness may be infectious
5. If the child's condition deteriorates or appears to be a medical emergency, call 000 immediately and notify the parent
6. Record the symptoms, time of onset, action taken and time of parent notification in the service incident log

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Educators must not administer medication to a child who becomes unwell at the service unless a Medication Authorisation form is in place and the medication has been provided by the parent. Refer to the Medication Policy for all medication administration requirements.

## Common Exclusion Periods — Quick Reference Table

The following exclusion periods apply under the Staying Healthy in Child Care guidelines (6th Edition, 2021). Always check the current state health authority directive, as requirements may be updated. If in doubt, contact your state health authority.

| Illness | Exclusion Period | Notes |
|---|---|---|
| Gastroenteritis (vomiting/diarrhoea) | Exclude the child until there has been no vomiting or diarrhoea for at least 24 hours, Staff who handle food must not return until there has been no vomiting or diarrhoea for at least 48 hours, | Different ruling for children and staff. |
| COVID-19 | Follow current state health authority advice — requirements vary by state and have changed since 2022 | Check health.qld.gov.au / health.vic.gov.au / sahealth.sa.gov.au for current guidance |
| Influenza | Until well (free of fever for 24 hours without medication) | Applies to children and staff |
| Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease | Until all blisters have dried | Very common in OSHC. Notify families of any case at the service. |
| Conjunctivitis | Until discharge from eye has ceased | Check whether bacterial or viral — medical clearance not required but recommended |
| Impetigo (school sores) | Until lesions are crusted and dried, or 24 hours after treatment has commenced | Lesions must be covered during exclusion period |
| Head lice | Not excluded — treat and return | Children may return after first treatment. Notify families of any confirmed case. |
| Chickenpox (varicella) | Until all blisters have dried (usually 5 days after rash appears) | Notify immunocompromised families immediately |

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| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Streptococcal infection (strep throat) | Until 24 hours after antibiotic treatment has commenced and child is well | Requires medical clearance |

For the full exclusion period list, refer to the Staying Healthy in Child Care guidelines (6th Edition, 2021): nhmrc.gov.au/staying-healthy. A printed copy must be available at each service.

## Return-to-Service Requirements

Before a child or staff member returns after an illness-related exclusion, the Leader must confirm:

- The exclusion period specified in the Staying Healthy guidelines (or state health directive) has been completed
- Where a medical clearance is required (e.g. strep throat, confirmed serious illness), a clearance letter or certificate from a medical practitioner has been provided
- The returning person is well enough to participate in the program — a child who is still visibly unwell must not be accepted back, even if the minimum exclusion period has elapsed

## Family Notification of Illness at the Service

When a notifiable illness or a disease requiring exclusion is identified at the service, families of all children at the service must be notified promptly via the service communication app. The notification must:

- State the illness (without identifying the specific child affected — privacy must be protected)
- State the exclusion period that applies
- Advise families to monitor their child for symptoms
- Direct families to the relevant health authority or GP if they have concerns

Certain diseases are notifiable to the state health authority by medical practitioners. Our Patch Group should promptly share any diagnosis information provided by a family with the Leader and Area Manager to support outbreak management — refer to the state health authority for notifiable disease reporting obligations.

## Immunisation Records

Our Patch Group is not required to collect immunisation history statements from families under the National Regulations for OSHC. However, for the protection of all children and staff, the following best practice applies:

- Families are encouraged to ensure their child's immunisations are up to date in accordance with the National Immunisation Program Schedule
- During a disease outbreak (e.g. measles, chickenpox), the Leader may request immunisation information from families to determine which children may be at elevated risk — seek CEO guidance before making such a request

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- Staff are encouraged to ensure their own immunisations are current, including annual influenza vaccination

## Hygiene and Cleaning Response Triggers

The following events must trigger an enhanced cleaning response in addition to routine hygiene procedures:

- A child or staff member vomits at the service — the area must be cleaned and disinfected immediately using the service's infection control cleaning kit
- Two or more children present with the same illness symptoms within a 48-hour period — notify the Area Manager and commence an outbreak response
- A confirmed case of a notifiable disease at the service — contact the state health authority for cleaning and management advice specific to the disease

## Outbreak Management Escalation

If three or more children or staff at a service become ill with the same illness within a 72-hour period, the Leader must:

1. Notify the Area Manager and CEO immediately
2. Contact the relevant state health authority for outbreak guidance
3. Document all ill persons, onset times, symptoms and actions taken
4. Implement enhanced cleaning and hygiene measures across the entire service immediately
5. Notify all families of the situation via the service communication app within 24 hours
6. If directed by the health authority, close the service or implement isolation procedures as instructed

## Related Policies:

- Personal Hygiene Policy
- Medical Conditions Policy (Aug 2026 Version)

## Related Legislation & Resources:

- Education and Care Services National Law Act (2010), S 165, S 167
- Education and Care Services National Regulations (2011), R 87, R 173
- NQS Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety — including Element 2.2.3 'Child Safety and Protection' (renamed 1 January 2026)
- Staying Healthy in Child Care — 6th Edition (2021), National Health and Medical Research Council: www.nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/publications/staying-healthy-preventing-infectious-diseases-early-childhood-education-and-care-services
- Queensland Health: www.health.qld.gov.au
- Victorian Department of Health: www.health.vic.gov.au

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- SA Health: www.sahealth.sa.gov.au
- National Immunisation Program Schedule: www.immunise.health.gov.au
- eSafety Commissioner (online safety in emergencies): esafety.gov.au
- Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC) — national guidance on public health emergencies: health.gov.au/committees-and-groups/ahppc

## Our Patch - Ownership Value: Health Care Policies

- Dental Care
- Nutrition, food and beverages, dietary requirements
- Preparing and Serving food
- Sun Protection - Extreme Heat Policy
- Sleep/Rest, comfort, and clothing

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# Dental Care

## Purpose of this Policy:

Dental health is an important part of a child's overall health, and Our Patch will ensure that dental care is supported and encouraged in Our Patch.

## Prerequisite Policy:

- Duty of Care Policy

## Policy:

Our Patch will include dental health in regular conversations with children. Leaders and Educators will promote good dental hygiene practices for the children and families at Our Patch.

## Impact for Our Patch:

- Children's health and wellbeing

## Strategies:

- Our Patch is partnered with Positively Nutrition, which is an accredited practising dietetic program, and will ensure that the menu includes healthy and nutritious foods and drinks that limit sugar intake to help with dental health.
- Through the Enrichment Patch, Leaders will have the opportunity to organise for parents/guardians that may work in dental care or a dental hygienist, or someone similar, to come and discuss with the children the importance of good dental health
- Families will be offered information at the Family Patch regarding local dentists and good dental hygiene
- Should families wish for their child/ren to brush their teeth at Our Patch, Leader will create an individual program to support the child/ren's dental health needs.

## Related Policies:

- Personal Hygiene Policy

## Related legislation:

- Education and Care Services National Law Act (2010), S 165, S 167
- Education and Care Services National Regulations (2011), R 87, R 173
- Quality Area 2 – Children's health and safety

## Resources:

- ACECQA Guide to the NQF (2012)
- Australian Dental Association - Kids Dental Health

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# Nutrition, food and beverages, dietary requirements

## Purpose of this Policy:

Our Patch will provide children with information to guide healthy life choices, which includes recognising the value of having a program that includes nutritious food that meets the dietary needs of the children attending Our Patch.

## Prerequisite Policy:

- Duty of Care Policy
- Medical Conditions Policy (Aug 2026 Version)

## Policy:

Health and wellbeing are foundational at Our Patch hence our commitment to offering a nutritious menu throughout each session. Our Patch will focus on having meal/snack times that are nutritious, delicious, and create a positive space for children to learn and explore their food and beverage choices. This will all be done in line with the dietary requirements of the children of Our Patch and care for the cultural needs of the children.

## Impact for Our Patch:

- Children's health and wellbeing
- Building ties to the local community

## Strategies:

- Our Patch is partnered with Positively Nutrition, which is an accredited practising dietetic program, to provide guidance and support to Leaders in creating a menu for their programs that is healthy and nutritious.
- Parents/guardians will provide information about their child/ren's dietary needs on the enrolment form so that Our Patch can best support their families' needs.
    - Parents/guardians will be asked to provide a list suitable food for those children who are on specific diets
- Leaders will engage with the children and other Educators to create a menu each week and are given the autonomy to purchase the food that is required for Our Patch
    - Leaders will engage with the Area Manager to source local community businesses
    - Leaders are also encouraged to purchase fruit and vegetables that are in season
- Our Patch will provide the opportunity for children to try new foods as well as cooking a variety of food. All children will be involved in conversations about the menu and what they would like to eat while at Our Patch. Children can also make suggestions about the menu via the Our Patch Voice App.
- Food will be available throughout the session so that children can eat when they're hungry.

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    - Leaders will use their Patch community to guide their shopping and will be considerate of cultural, dietary, and health needs of the children in their Patch.
    - Leaders will ensure that the menu on offer for the children is balanced and nutritious.
    - Leaders will ensure that they buy and provide the children with adequate quantities of food.
- The menu will be on display at all times and will reflect the foods that are on offer in the program.
- Educators will model appropriate behaviour and ensure that they are encouraging all children to sit while they're eating and drinking and only taking what they will eat to reduce waste,
- Prior to eating, all children will wash their hands with soap and water or use hand sanitiser and ensure that their hands are dried properly.
- Educators will ensure that the area where the children eat is wiped down with disinfectant prior to the children using the area to eat and after the children have finished eating.
- Children will be reminded to not eat food that's fallen on the floor; or use utensils that have fallen on the floor
- Water will be accessible at all times for the children to drink
    - Children will be encouraged to drink water throughout the session, especially on warm weather days or when participating in sport
    - Our Patch will offer jugs of water and clean drinking cups throughout the session
- On excursions, accessibility to drinking water will be considered, but all children who participate on excursions will be encouraged to bring their own water bottle

### *Hot Drinks*

- Due to the dangerous nature of hot drinks, these will be offered at Our Patch but done so with extreme caution to prevent injury
- Our Patch will be able to service hot drinks, including soup, throughout the session but will ensure that the liquid is served below 60 degrees Celsius by taking the temperature of the liquid before serving it.
- Children will be adequately supervised whilst around hot drinks to ensure their safety
    - Children will always be seated when consuming a hot drink
    - Children are not allowed to have tea or coffee

### *Preparing Food*

- Our Patch will ensure that the area where the food is prepared is wiped down with disinfectant before and after use to ensure that is hygienic.
- Children involved in cooking activities and will be educated on safe food preparation and precautions prior to beginning.
- Children will be supervised by Educators throughout the activity

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- Children and Educators/Leaders must wash their hands with soap and water and dry them thoroughly or hand sanitiser can be used to ensure proper hygiene.
- Children will be reminded to not use utensils that have fallen on the floor when preparing food.
- Recipes will be provided to parents/guardians upon request.
- Our Patch will make sure that Leaders are maintaining the cleanliness and hygiene of the kitchen in line with the local council requirements.

## Related Policies:

- Hygiene and Infectious Disease Policy
- Personal Hygiene Policy

## Related legislation:

- ACECQA National Quality Framework Resource Kit (2012)
- Quality Area 1 – Educational Program and Practice.
- Quality Area 2 – Children's health and safety.
- Education and Care Services National Regulations (2011). R 77, 78, 79 & 80

## Resources:

- Positively Nutrition positivelynutrition@gmail.com
- Australian Dietary Guidelines

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# Nutrition and Food Safety

## Purpose of this Policy:

As per Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations, our service has a nutritional and food safety policy and procedures in place to ensure quality practices relating to nutrition, food and beverages and dietary requirements are followed at all times.

Our Patch recognises the importance of safe food handling and healthy eating to the growth and development of young children and is committed to implementing the healthy eating key messages outlined in the Australian Dietary Guidelines for primary school aged children.

Our Patch recognises the important role educators have in teaching healthy lifestyles through everyday experiences and routines and physical activity. Our educators support families by providing information about healthy food and drink for their children when visiting our service.

NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD (NQS)

**QUALITY AREA 2: CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND SAFETY**
2.1 Health Each child's health and physical activity is supported and promoted
2.1.2 Health practices and procedures
Effective illness and injury management and hygiene practices are promoted and implemented
2.1.3 Healthy lifestyles
Healthy eating and physical activity are promoted and appropriate for each child

## Purpose:

Out of School Hours Care Services are required by legislation within the National Quality Standard to ensure the provision of healthy foods and drinks that meet the requirements for children according to the Australian Dietary Guidelines.

It is essential that Our Patch partners with families to provide education about nutrition and promote healthy eating habits for children to positively influence their health and wellbeing.

Dietary and healthy eating habits formed in the early years are shown to continue into adulthood and can reduce the risk factors associated with chronic adult conditions such as obesity, type 2 diabetes, and cardiovascular disease.

Our Patch recognises the importance of healthy eating for the growth, development, and wellbeing of children and is committed to promoting and supporting healthy food and drink choices for children in our care.

This policy affirms our position on the provision of healthy food and drink while children are in our care and the promotion and education of healthy choices for optimum nutrition.

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We believe in providing a positive eating environment that reflects dietary requirements, cultural and family values, and promotes lifelong learning for children, as we commit to implementing and embedding the healthy eating key messages outlined the Australian Guide to Healthy Eating.

Our Patch is also committed to ensuring consistently high standards of food preparation and food storage and transportation are adhered to.

## Scope:

This policy applies to children, families, staff, visitors, approved provider, nominated supervisor and management of Our Patch

Nutrition and Food Safety Policy

**IMPLEMENTATION**

Our Patch has a responsibility to help children to develop good food practices and approaches, by working with families and educators.

Mealtimes reflect a relaxed and pleasant environment where educators engage in meaningful conversations with children. This assists in creating a positive and enjoyable eating environment.

Food will be prepared in accordance with the Food Safety Program. All kitchens and food preparation areas will comply with Food Standards Australia and New Zealand (FSANZ) and any relevant local jurisdictional requirements (i.e., local council registrations and inspections).

All staff involved in the stages of food handling have the skills and knowledge to ensure food safety is a priority.

From Friday 8 December 2023, Early Education and Care Services who prepare food, including ready to eat food or meals that have brought into the service by families, must adhere to requirements relating to food safety outlined within the Food Standards Code and Food Act 2003 (Standard 3.2.2A).

The revised requirements involve the appointment of a Food Safety Supervisor who must be available to supervise food handlers at the service. It is a requirement that both the Food Safety Supervisor and all food handlers attend food safety training. Additionally, records must be maintained relating to receiving, storage, processing, displaying and transportation of food. These records must be retained for a period of 3 months.

**NUTRITION**

Promote healthy food and drinks based on the Australian Guide to Healthy Eating and the Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents.

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**WHERE FOOD IS PROVIDED BY**

Our Patch we commit to:

- Provide children with a wide variety of healthy and nutritious foods for meals and snacks including fruit and vegetables, wholegrain cereal products, dairy products, lean meats, and high protein alternatives.
- Plan and display a menu that is based on sound menu planning principles and meets 50% of the daily nutritional needs of children
- Plan healthy snacks on the menu to complement what is served at mealtimes and ensure the snacks are substantial enough to meet the energy and nutrient needs of children.
- Vary the meals and snacks on the menu to keep children interested and to introduce children to a range of healthy food ideas
- Regularly review the menu to ensure it meets best practice guidelines
- Develop the menu in consultation with children, educators and families
- Consult with health professionals to support the menu development including Dietitians for children with special dietary requirements such as vegetarian and vegans
- Celebrate diversity by valuing and including foods of different cultures
- Respect and accommodate children's cultural or religious dietary practices as requested by families

**THE APPROVED PROVIDER/ MANAGEMENT/ NOMINATED SUPERVISOR WILL:**

- Ensure educators and staff are aware of their responsibilities and obligations under the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations in relation to this policy and relevant procedures to ensure awareness of safe food handling practices while promoting healthy eating
- Ensure new staff and educators are aware of food practices and procedures as outlined in this policy during induction and orientation
- Ensure water is readily available for children to drink
- Ensure enrolment forms include information relating to child's food preferences, allergies, intolerances, cultural or religious considerations or medical conditions which involve food or food practices
- Consult with families on enrolment to develop individual management plans, including completing Risk Minimisation Plans for children with medical conditions involving food allergies, food intolerances and special dietary requirements as per Medical Conditions Policy (Aug 2026 Version)
- Ensure children's individual dietary requirements as per enrolment information or medical condition plans are communicated to all staff and food handlers
- Ensure any changes to children's individual dietary requirements are recorded and communicated to all staff and food handlers

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- Appoint a Food Safety Supervisor to oversee food handlers (mandatory for all services who prepare food, including food brought from home)
- Ensure the Food Safety Supervisor and all staff and food handlers attend basic safe food handling training, including an appropriate Food Safety and Food Hygiene Certificate
- Keep an up-to-date Food Safety Certificate Register to provide evidence of safe food handling training for all food handlers
- Keep records relating to receiving, storage, processing, displaying and transportation of food. These records must be kept for a period of 3 months
- Ensure the weekly menu is displayed in an accessible and prominent area for parents to view
- Ensure the weekly menu is accurate and describes the food and beverages provided each day of the week
- Ensure the service menu is reviewed on a regular basis, every 6 months. Amendments made to the service menu will be recorded.
- Encourage and provide opportunities for staff and educators to undertake regular professional development to maintain and enhance their knowledge about childhood nutrition and food safety practices

**EDUCATORS/ FOOD HANDLERS WILL:**

- Ensure children remain seated while eating and drinking
- Be aware of children with food allergies, food intolerances, and special dietary requirements and consult with families and management to ensure individual management plans are developed and implemented, including completing Risk Minimisation Plans for children with medical conditions involving food as per Medical Conditions Policy (Aug 2026 Version)
- Supervise children whilst eating and drinking
- Participate in regular professional development to maintain and enhance knowledge about childhood nutrition and food safety practices
- Participate in safe food handling training on a regular basis, every 12 months, including the completion of an appropriate Food Safety and Food Hygiene Certificate
- Keep records relating to the safe handling of food, where required
- Consult with children, families, educators and dietitians regarding the review of the service menu
- Follow the guidelines for serving different types of food and the serving sizes in the guidelines
- Display nutritional information for families and keep them regularly updated
- Ensure the weekly menu is displayed in an accessible and prominent area for parents to view

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- Ensure the weekly menu is accurate and describes the food and beverages provided each day of the week
- Ensure food is presently attractively
- Not allow food to be used as a form of punishment or to be used as a reward or bribe
- Establish healthy eating habits in the children by incorporating nutritional information into our program
- Encourage parents to the best of our ability to continue our healthy eating message in their homes
- Encourage children to brush their teeth after breakfast at the OSHC Service, if possible, to promote good dental health
- Ensure pets or animals are not present within the kitchen or food preparation areas

**FOOD HYGIENE**

Food poisoning is caused by bacteria, viruses, or other toxins being present in food and can cause extremely unpleasant symptoms such as diarrhoea, vomiting, stomach cramps, and fevers.

(Foodsafety.gov, 2019).

Our Patch will strictly adhere to food hygiene standards to prevent the risk of food poisoning.

**BUYING AND TRANSPORTING FOOD**

Our Patch WILL:

- Ensure food supplies have been ordered in a timely manner
- Always check labels for the 'use by' and 'best before' dates, understanding that 'use by' dates apply to perishable foods that could potentially cause food poisoning if out of date, whilst 'best before' dates refer to food items with long shelf life, but quality could be compromised
- Avoid buying food items in damaged, swollen, leaking or dented packaging
- Always check eggs within cartons: Never buy dirty or cracked eggs
- Never buy any food item if unsure about its quality
- Record temperatures of foods upon delivery (See Food Delivery Register)
- Ensure fresh meat, chicken, or fish products cannot leak on to other food items
- Ensure chilled, frozen, and hot food items are kept out of the 'danger zone' (5c to 60c)
- Immediately unpacking and storing these items upon the return to the Service.

**STORING FOOD**

Our Patch WILL:

- Ensure the refrigerator and freezer has a thermometer and that the refrigerator is maintained at 5c or below and the freezer is maintained at -17 oC or below

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- Ensure fridge and freezer temperatures are checked and recorded daily
- Store raw foods below cooked foods in the refrigerator to avoid cross contamination by foods dripping onto other foods
- Ensure fresh meat is not stored in the fridge for more than 3 days
- Ensure that all foods stored in the refrigerator are stored in strong food-safe containers with either a tight-fitting lid, or tightly applied plastic wrap or foil
- Ensure that all foods not stored in their original packaging are labelled with:
    - the name of the food
    - the 'use by' date
    - the date the food was opened
    - details of any allergens present in the food
- Transfer the contents of opened cans into appropriate containers
- Ensure all bottles and jars are refrigerated after opening
- Place 'left-over' hot food in an appropriate sealed container in the refrigerator as soon as the steam has stopped rising. Food can be cooled quickly to this point by placing in smaller quantities in shallow containers, reducing the amount of time sitting in the 'danger zone'
- Not reuse disposable containers (e.g., Chinese food containers)
- Store dry foods in labelled and sealed, air-tight containers if not in original packaging.
- Store dry foods in cupboards or if in a walk-in pantry, on shelving no lower than 30cm from the floor
- Not place anything on the floor of a walk-in pantry (as containers of any type create easy access to shelves for mice and rats)
- Store bulk dry foods only in food-safe and airtight containers
- Use the FIFO (first in, first out) rule for all foods (dry, chilled, and frozen) to ensure rotation of stock so that older stock is used first
- Store cleaning supplies and chemicals separate to food items

**PREPARING AND SERVING FOOD**

Our Patch WILL:

- Ensure that all cooked food is cooked through and reaches 75 oC
- Document periodic recordings of food (See Cooking, Cooling & Reheating Register)
- Ensure that cooked food is served promptly, or
- Use a thermometer to ensure that hot food is maintained at above 60 oC until ready to serve.
- Ensure that prepared cold food is stored in the refrigerator maintained at below 5 oC until ready to serve

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- Discard any cooked food that has been left in the 'danger zone' for two or more hours. Do not reheat.
- Reheat cooked food (if required, for example for a child who was sleeping at lunch time) to a temperature of 70 oC (but only ever reheat once. Discard if the food is not eaten after being reheated).
- Keep cooked and ready-to-eat foods separate from raw foods
- Ensure foods are defrosted in the fridge or microwave
- Wash fruit and vegetables thoroughly under clean running water before preparation
- Ensure unused washed fruit or vegetables are thoroughly dry before returning to storage
- Ensure food that has been dropped on the floor is immediately discarded
- Thoroughly clean kitchen utensils and equipment between using with different foods and/or between different tasks
- Avoid cross-contamination by ensuring that separate knives and utensils are used for different foods
- Avoid cross-contamination by ensuring that colour-coded cutting boards are used (note that it doesn't matter which colour you use for which food providing signs are displayed to alert all staff).

**Common colours are:**

- Blue: raw fish/seafood
- Green: fruit and vegetables
- Red: raw meat
- Brown: cooked meat
- Yellow: raw poultry
- White: bakery and dairy

- Ensure that gloves are changed between handling different foods or changing tasks
- Ensure that staff preparing food for children with food allergies or intolerances are proficient at reading ingredient labels
- Ensure that food allergies and intolerances are catered for by using separate cutting boards, utensils, and kitchen equipment (e.g., using a colour code, or food-safe permanent marker)
- Ensure that children with food allergies and/or intolerances are served their meals and snacks individually on an easily identifiable plate (e.g. different colour), and that food is securely covered with plastic wrap until received by the child to prevent possible cross-contamination
- Ensure all educators and staff are aware of children who have severe allergic reactions to certain foods as per ASCIA Action Plans

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- Ensure that unwell staff do not handle food
- Ensure left-over food is stored immediately in the fridge or thrown away

**CLEANING**

Our Patch WILL:

- Ensure that food preparation areas and surfaces are cleaned both before, after, and during any food preparation
- Record cleaning and sanitising of food contact surfaces
- Ensure that all cooking and serving utensils are cleaned and sanitised before use
- Ensure that all dishwashing sponges, brushes, and scourers are cleaned after each use and allowed to air dry or placed in the dishwasher
- Ensure the food storage area is clean, ventilated, dry, pest free, and not in direct sunlight
- Ensure refrigerators and freezers are cleaned regularly and door seals checked and replaced if not in good repair
- Prevent pest infestations by cleaning spills as quickly as possible and ensuring rubbish and food scraps are disposed of frequently
- Ensure that floor mops are thoroughly cleaned and air dried after each use
- Replace any cleaning equipment that shows signs of wear or permanent soiling.

**PERSONAL HYGIENE FOR FOOD HANDLERS**

Our Patch WILL:

- Clean clothing is worn by food handlers
- long hair is tied back or covered with a net
- hand and wrist jewellery are not worn while preparing food
- nails are kept short and clean
- strict hand-washing hygiene is adhered to, including washing hands each time they return to the kitchen before continuing with food preparation duties
- wounds or cuts are covered with a brightly coloured, waterproof dressing (that will easily be seen if it falls off), and gloves will be worn over any dressings
- staff who are not well will not prepare or handle food.

**ALL STAFF HANDLING FOOD WILL:**

- ensure children and staff wash and dry their hands (using soap, running water, and single use disposable towels or individual hand towels) before handling food or eating meals and snacks
- ensure gloves (and food tongs) are used by all staff handling 'ready to eat' foods.
- ensure food is stored and served at safe temperatures (below 5 oC or above 60 oC), with consideration to the safe eating temperature requirements of children
- ensure separate cutting boards are used for raw meat and chicken, fruit and vegetables, and utensils
- and hands are washed before touching other foods

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- discourage children from handling other children's food and utensils
- ensure food-handling staff members attend relevant training courses and pass relevant information on to the rest of the staff.

**CREATING A POSITIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT**

Our Patch WILL:

- ensure that educators sit with the children at meal and snack times to role-model healthy food and drink choices and actively engage children in conversations about the food and drink provided
- choose water as a preferred drink
- endeavour to recognise, nurture and celebrate the dietary differences of children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- choose foods from the five food groups
- create a relaxed atmosphere at mealtimes where children have enough time to eat and enjoy their food as well as enjoying the social interactions with educators and other children
- encourage children to try different foods but do not force them to eat
- not use food as a reward or withhold food from children for disciplinary purposes
- role-model and discuss safe food handling with children

**Our Patch PROGRAM**

Our Patch WILL:

- foster awareness and understanding of healthy food and drink choices through including in the
- children's program a range of learning experiences encouraging children's healthy eating
- encourage children to participate in a variety of 'hands-on' food preparation experiences
- provide opportunities for children to engage in discovery learning and discussion about healthy food and drink choices
- embed the importance of healthy eating and physical activity in everyday activities and experiences

**COOKING WITH CHILDREN**

Cooking can help develop children's knowledge and skills regarding healthy eating habits. Cooking is a great, fun activity and provides opportunities for children to be exposed to new foods, sharing of recipes and cooking skills. During any cooking experience, educators will be vigilant to ensure that the experience remains safe, and relevant food hygiene practices are adhered to.

**COMMUNICATING WITH FAMILIES**

Our Patch will:

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- provide a copy of the Nutrition and Food Safety Policy to all families upon orientation at the Service
- provide opportunities for families to contribute to the review and development of the policy
- request that details of any food allergies or intolerances or specific dietary requirements be provided to the OSHC Service and work in partnership with families to develop an appropriate response so that children's individual dietary needs are met
- display menus for families to view easily
- communicate regularly with families about food and nutrition related experiences within the Service and provide up to date information to assist families to provide healthy food choices at home.
- communicate regularly with families and provide information and advice on appropriate food and drink to be included in children's lunchboxes- especially during Vacation Care. This information may be provided to families in a variety of ways including factsheets, newsletters, during orientation, information sessions and informal discussion.
- discuss discretionary choices- (food and beverages which are not necessary as part of a balanced diet) with families and if necessary, remove items from children's lunch boxes. Alternative healthy food will be offered to children.

**CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT/REFLECTION**

Our Nutrition and Food Safety Policy will be reviewed on an annual basis in consultation with children, families, staff, educators, and management.

## Related legislation:

- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011: 77, 78, 79, 80,90,91,160,162,168,170,171,172

## Related Policies:

- Administration of First Aid Policy
- Child Safe Environment Policy
- Dealing with Infectious Diseases Policy
- Enrolment Policy
- Excursions / Incursions Policy
- Family Communication Policy
- Governance Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Incident, Injury, Trauma, and Illness Policy
- Medical Conditions Policy (Aug 2026 Version)

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- Multicultural Policy

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# Sun Protection - Extreme Heat Policy

## Purpose of this Policy:

As per the SunSmart website, too much of the sun's UV can cause sunburn, skin and eye damage and skin cancer. UV damage accumulated during childhood and adolescence is strongly associated with an increased risk of skin cancer in later life. Australia has one of the highest rates of skin cancer in the world, with two in three Australians developing some form of skin cancer before age 70.

Regulation 168 (as amended 1 September 2025) requires all services to have a policy for the safe use of the physical environment, including sun protection. When the UV Index is 3 or above — which applies year-round in QLD and for much of the year in VIC and SA — the following apply to all outdoor activities:

- Broad-spectrum SPF50+ water-resistant sunscreen applied to all exposed skin at least 20 minutes before going outdoors; reapplied every 2 hours
- Children must wear a sun-protective hat: broad-brimmed (min. 7.5cm brim), bucket or legionnaire style. Caps alone do not meet this requirement.
- Shade must be actively used; high-activity outdoor play should not be scheduled between 11am–3pm in summer unless adequate shade is available for the entire group
- Educators are role models — educators must also apply sunscreen and wear sun-protective hats when outdoors
- Sunscreen must be available free of charge at the service with stock and expiry dates checked monthly
-

UV Index forecasts are available at bom.gov.au or via the SunSmart app. Leaders must check the UV forecast each morning during summer months.

## Prerequisite Policy:

- Duty of Care Policy

## Policy:

Our Patch will work with all children and Educators/Leaders to adhere to current Sun Smart guidelines to keep the children and staff of Our Patch safe and healthy.
Our Patch will work with each school so that the outdoor environment keeps children safe during times when the UV is high.

Our Patch will also guide and educate children about being safe in the sun, we will talk to children about safe times to be in the sun and how to ensure we cover up whilst playing during high UV times.

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## Impact for Our Patch:

- Children with becoming SunSmart individuals

## Strategies:

- Educators/Leaders and children are encouraged to access the daily local sun protection times via the SunSmart widget on the SunSmart website, the free SunSmart app, or at sunsmart.com.au or myuv.com.au.
- The sun protection measures listed below are used for all outdoor activities during the daily local sun protection times.
    - The sun protection times are a forecast from the Bureau of Meteorology for the time-of-day UV levels are forecast to reach 3 or higher. At these levels, sun protection is recommended for all skin types.
    - In Victoria, UV levels regularly reach 3 or higher from mid-August to the end of April.
    - As per school requirements, children and Educators/Leaders will be required to wear a hat and sunscreen at minimum Terms 1 and 4.
- Seek shade
    - Leaders make sure there is a sufficient number of shelters and trees providing shade in the outdoor area.
    - The availability of shade is considered when planning all outdoor activities and excursions. Children are encouraged to choose and use available areas of shade when outside.
    - Children who do not have appropriate hats or sunscreen will be unable to participate in outdoor activities during Terms 1 and 4., or where the UV index is above 3.
- Slip on sun protective clothing
    - Children will be encouraged to wear loose-fitting clothing that covers as much skin as possible.
    - If a child is wearing a singlet top or shoestring dress, they will be encouraged to choose a t-shirt/shirt to wear over this before going outdoors.
    - Rash vests or t-shirts are encouraged for outdoor swimming and water activities.
    - Slap on a sun protective hat
        - All children and educators wear hats during Terms 1 and 4, or where the UV index is above 3
            - Bucket hats, legionnaire hats, and broad brimmed hats are encouraged
- Slop on sunscreen
    - Children and staff will be provided with broad spectrum, water-resistant SPF50 or SPF50+ sunscreen, applied 20-minutes before going outdoors and reapplied every two hours (and after water play or heavy perspiration).

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    - If a child has an allergy to the sunscreen provided, they are to bring their own to use at the service; however, it needs to be SPF 50 or higher
    - Leaders and Educators will regularly remind children to apply sunscreen before going outdoors
    - Sunscreen is stored in a cool place, out of the sun and the expiry date is monitored.
- Learning and skills
    - Sun protection is incorporated into the learning and development program.
    - The sun protection policy is reinforced by Educators and through children's activities and displays.
- When enrolling their child, families are:
    - Informed of Our Patch SunSmart policy and asked to provide a suitable sun protective hat and encouraged to provide covering clothing for their child
    - encouraged to use sun protection measures themselves when at the service.
    - Parents/guardians will supply appropriate sunscreen if their child has an allergy or sensitive to sunscreen
- Educators
    - Will role model and wear a suitable sun-protective hat, covering clothing and, if practical, sunglasses
    - Regularly apply sunscreen
    - Seek shade whenever possible.

On days of extreme heat, Leaders will take extra precaution to ensure the health and wellbeing of the children at Our Patch. Heat stress can come when doing high intensity activities in a hot environment due to fluid loss and elevation of body temperature. Leaders and Educators hold up to date relevant first aid qualifications to recognise the signs and symptoms of dehydration, heat exhaustion, and heat stroke and how to prevent these from happening.

| | |
|---|---|
| Temperatures of 30 degrees Celsius or Less | • Staff and children should drink water often to remain hydrated.<br>• All staff should be aware of the UV Rating and plan outdoor activities during the morning and late afternoon.<br>• Shelter will be provided for everyone during service operation.<br>• Staff and children will be encouraged to wear a hat and Sunscreen, and remain in the shade if going outside |
| Temperatures between 31 – 37 degrees Celsius | All the above in addition to the two dot points below<br>• If the service wishes to go outside, Staff must limit the time children spend outdoors and encourage children to choose low energy activities in shaded areas.<br>• Children are encouraged not to overexert themselves during periods of extreme heat |
| Temperatures of 38 degrees Celsius or above | All of the above in addition to the dot points below.<br>• Staff and children should exercise extreme caution.<br>• Staff and children should remain indoors and where possible in air conditioning or cooler areas. |

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| | |
|---|---|
| | • If an excursion is scheduled, the Our Patch will consider the health, wellbeing, and safety of those attending the excursion to determine whether or not it is suitable for the excursion to go ahead as planned. |

## Related Policies:

- Program Planning Policy

## Related legislation:

- Occupational Health and Safety Act (2004)
- Children's Services Act 1996
- Children's Services Regulations 2009
- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic) (Part 2: Principles for children)
- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010: Section 167
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011: R100, 113, 114, 168 (2)(a)(ii), 170, 171
- Regulation 168 — Sun protection and safe physical environment (as amended 1 September 2025)
- NQS QA2.1 (health)
- QA3 (physical environment)
- Cancer Council SunSmart ECEC guidelines

## Resources:

- Sun Smart Sample Policies https://www.sunsmart.com.au/communities/early-childhood-schools/sample-policies

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# Sleep/Rest, comfort, and clothing

## Purpose of this Policy:

It is important to recognise that sleep and rest are crucial for development. Children lead busy lives, in and outside of school, and Our Patch wants to make sure that all children have a place that they feel comfortable in to rest, relax, and even sleep if needed.

## Prerequisite Policy:

- Duty of Care Policy
- Program Planning Policy

## Policy:

Our Patch will engage with the children about their rest area, what this might look like and what the children may need to make this area comfortable and relaxing.

Parents will discuss with educators about clothing for their child. Our Patch encourages families to dress their child appropriately particularly during Holiday Care.

## Impact for Our Patch:

- Children's health and wellbeing
- A calm and comfortable environment

## Strategies:

- Throughout Our Patch, different areas will be set up daily to ensure the children have a variety of activities available to them. On offer daily will be the Relaxing Patch and the Peace Patch.
    - The Relaxing Patch is a home like feel where children can relax on the couch/ bean bags. The pleasant aesthetic resources in this patch with some classical music playing softly will support the ambience of this patch.
    - The Peace Patch is accessible to a child who needs to have quiet, alone, and reflective time. There will be a pillow and beanbag in this patch area. A child may like to bring a book to read, to draw, to write or whatever other item they may need to unwind and centre themselves.
- If a child is feeling unwell and waiting to be picked up by their parent/guardian, Leader will ensure they are comfortable and able to rest while they wait. Leader or Educator will monitor the child and support the child when needed
- Educators will make sure that outside play is suitable by considering the weather
- It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to make sure their child is suitably dressed in appropriate clothing and footwear. For days where water play is programmed,

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parents/guardians are encouraged to pack spare clothing for their children to change into
- Wet or soiled clothing will be discreetly placed in a plastic bag and given to the parents/guardians when they collect their child
- Art smocks will be encouraged when children participate in messy activities (i.e. painting)
- All pillowcases, dress ups and art smocks will be washed regularly by Leaders in a routine developed by Leader.

## Related Policies:

- Hygiene Policies
- Safeguarding Children Policies

## Related legislation:

- Quality Area 2 – Children's Health & Safety
- Education and Care Services National Regulations (2011), R 81
- Education and Care Services National Law Act (2010), S 165

## Resources:

- ACECQA Guide to the NQF (2012)

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# Our Patch - Ownership Value: Supervision Policies

- Supervision of children
- Delivery and Collection of children
- Safe Arrival of Children
- Parental Responsibility Arrangements
- Acceptance and Refusal of Authorisation
- Movement of children to the service
- Transitional Movement
- Travelling on Excursions

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# Supervision of children

## Purpose of this Policy:

Our Patch has a duty of care to all children that attend Our Patch and part of this means ensuring that children are always actively supervised. Children will be able to explore and engage in a variety of activities while being safely monitored by Our Educators.

## Prerequisite Policy:

- Duty of Care Policy
- Safeguarding Children Policies

## Policy:

Our Patch has clear expectations and guidelines for all Leaders and Educators to understand what they need to do to take every reasonable step to have the highest level of supervision of children attending Our Patch.

Leaders and Educators will always know where each child is, who they are with, and what children are doing.  We follow our guidelines for Supervising at Our Patch - Protect, Aware, Talk, Count, Harmony.

Our Patch Group has clear expectations for all Leaders and Educators to take every reasonable step to maintain the highest level of supervision of children at all times.

## Regulation 115 — Premises Compliance

From 27 February 2026, the ability to apply for ongoing waivers for premises design requirements related to supervision under Regulation 115 of the Education and Care Services National Regulations has been REMOVED. Any Our Patch Group service currently operating under an ongoing Reg 115 supervision waiver must either bring the premises into compliance or apply for a one-off temporary waiver through the regulatory authority.

## Required Action for All Area Managers and Leaders

Each Area Manager must confirm, for every Patch in their area, whether the service is currently relying on a Regulation 115 supervision waiver. If so, escalate immediately to the CEO and Head of OSHC Programs. A supervision risk assessment must be completed for each Patch confirming compliance with Regulation 115 — adequate line-of-sight supervision in all areas used by children.

Where compliance cannot be achieved without physical changes to the premises, this must be escalated to the Leadership Team and School Principal as a priority action. The supervision risk assessment must be documented, reviewed annually, and available for regulatory inspection.

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## What Active Supervision Means

Active supervision is more than being present. It requires educators to:

- Position themselves where they can see and hear all children in their area — move around the space, do not remain stationary at the perimeter
- Count children regularly at minimum every 30 minutes, after every transition, after every change of environment, and any time an educator feels a count is needed. Headcounts are also required at every transition point (arrival, activity change, meal times, departure)
- Anticipate risks — scan the environment continuously for hazards, conflicts or behaviours that may escalate
- Communicate with co-educators — clearly hand over supervision responsibility when moving between areas, taking a break, or being called away
- Avoid distractions — administrative tasks, phone calls, conversations with visitors or parents that divert attention from children must be managed so supervision is not compromised

A "supervision gap" occurs any time a child could be in a location or situation where no educator has line-of-sight responsibility. Supervision gaps must be treated as a safety incident and documented.

## Headcount Procedure

Headcounts are one of our primary tools to ensure that every child in our care is accounted for. All Leaders and Educators must follow the four-step headcount process every time a headcount is conducted:

1. Step 1 — STOP. Pause movement. Gain children's attention. Reduce noise.
2. Step 2 — COUNT. Count each child individually against the roll in XAP. Do not change roles, swap educators, or accept interruptions during the count.
3. Step 3 — CONFIRM. Confirm all children are accounted for against the roll in XAP.
4. Step 4 — COMMUNICATE. Announce the number out loud. Ensure every educator present knows the number. Update the number any time a child joins or leaves the group.

Headcounts must be conducted at minimum every 30 minutes, after every transition, after every change of environment, and any time an educator feels a count is needed.
Common causes of an unreliable headcount include: rushing the count; completing it while distracted; counting while children are moving; not cross-checking with the roll; assuming another educator has done it; and inconsistent methods between educators. The four-step process above must be followed consistently by every educator to avoid these failures.

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## Educator-to-Child Ratios for OSHC — Quick Reference

The following minimum ratios apply to OSHC services under the National Regulations. More favourable ratios may be required by state regulation or by the service's own risk assessment:

| State | OSHC Ratio (School-Age Children) | Note |
|---|---|---|
| Queensland | 1:15 | National Regulation 123. At least one educator must hold an approved first aid qualification. |
| Victoria | 1:15 | National Regulation 123. VIC regulations do not impose a more favourable ratio for OSHC above the national minimum. |
| South Australia | 1:15 | National Regulation 123. SA regulations align with the national minimum for OSHC. |

Ratios must be maintained at all times during operating hours, including during meals, transitions, excursions and outdoor play. Any breach of ratio must be documented and reported to the Area Manager by end of business day.

## Supervision of Children with Additional Needs

Children who have a medical condition, disability, behaviour support plan, or any other circumstance that affects supervision must have their individual supervision requirements documented in their enrolment record and discussed with educators at induction and at any review. The Leader must ensure that:

- Educators assigned to supervise a child with additional needs are familiar with the child's individual plan before the session begins
- Supervision arrangements for children with additional needs are reviewed if the child's circumstances change, or at minimum at each term
- Counting and roll-call procedures account for any child who may not respond to standard headcount methods

## Transition and Handover Supervision

Supervision must be explicitly handed over — it does not transfer automatically. The following transition points require a deliberate verbal handover between educators:

- At the start and end of each shift
- When an educator leaves the program area for a break, meeting, or to attend to a visitor

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- When children move from an indoor to an outdoor area, or between separate areas of the service
- At school collection — transitioning from school supervision to OSHC supervision
- At departure — confirming the child has been collected by an authorised person before removing them from the roll

A verbal handover must include: the number of children present, any children with specific needs or concerns, and any active incidents or risks. A handover that does not include all three elements is incomplete.

## Strategies:

All Educators will follow our supervising Our Patch guidelines:




- Routines are in place at Our Patch to help ensure children know what is expected of them and ensure they are supervised and safe.
- Leader and Educators are to always know who is signed into care and where they are.
- Ratios are always maintained.
- Children will be made aware of the guidelines of Our Patch in their orientation so they know where it is safe to be and under what circumstances, i.e. a child cannot leave the area of supervision without talking to Educator first
- If children are on an excursion, Leaders will make sure that children are aware of the boundaries of the excursion.

## Bathroom Supervision

- There will be different requirements for ensuring the safety of the children in Our Patch moving to and from the bathroom
- Educators check toilets prior to shift to ensure they are empty, be clean and have sufficient supplies of toilet paper, soap, paper towel etc.

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- Educators to monitor toilets regularly. For high any risk toilets (where members of public can also access), Educators to check toilet before children go in there
- Each Patch will have their own risk assessment to review the process and make sure the risks are mitigated for the safety of the children
    - Higher risk includes if a service doesn't have toilets attached to Our Patch and the steps, they will take to ensure the safety of the children
    - Children will go to the toilet in pairs or small groups always
    - During their orientation to Our Patch, children and Educators will review the bathroom supervision process to ensure everyone knows what the expectations are
    - The process will be available for Educators, children, and families in the Family Patch to refer to easily
    - Children will need to speak to Leader or Educators to advise that they are going to the toilet and with whom they are going to the toilet
    - Leaders and Educators need to monitor how long children are going to the toilet
    - If a pair of children has gone to the toilet for more than 5 minutes, Leader or Educator will walk over to the toilets and check that the children are alright
    - If the children cannot be accounted for, Leader will be notified, and the team will follow the Children Leaving the Area of Supervision Policy

## Children Leaving area of supervision

- Our Patch will take every reasonable step to ensure that children are always supervised; however, we recognise that there are times where children leave the area of supervision. They can be unaccounted for, attempting to abscond, or absconding from Our Patch.
- Should a child leave the area of supervision without permission, it is imperative that Leader and Educators make every effort to locate the child as quickly as possible, without jeopardising the safety of the other children in care or Educators.

| STEP | ACTION |
|---|---|
| **NOTIFY** | • Immediately notify Leader (if not already aware and all Our Educators)<br>• Note the time the child was first identified as unaccounted for. This time starts the 10-minute escalation timer (see CONTACT row below). |
| **HEADCOUNT** | • Leader will bring all children to Assembly Patch, conduct a headcount using the four-step process (Stop / Count / Confirm / Communicate) to ensure that all other children are accounted for. |
| **SEARCH** | • A Educator will search all bathrooms and school grounds to make sure child/ren are not in these areas.<br>• While searching the school grounds, Our Educator is to check in at the school office and see if the child is there.<br>• Where possible, the educator is to ask the school to place an announcement over the PA system asking the child to return to the office.<br>• If ratio allows, check the immediate area surrounding the school. |
| | • Leader will contact the parent/guardian and notify of the situation. |

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| | |
|---|---|
| **CONTACT** | • If the parent/guardian cannot be reached Leader must contact other authorised contacts on the enrolment form.<br>• The parent/guardian/authorised contact will be contacted every 10 minutes to advise the status of the situation and to check in to see if they've been able to locate the child.<br>• Leader to notify Area Manager of the situation as soon as practical.<br>• Area Manager will inform a member of the Leadership Team. |
| **CONTACT** | • If the child/children are unable to be accounted for within 10 minutes, the police are to be called on 000.<br>• During the search, all other children are to remain inside with Our Educators, who will ensure the children remain calm and supported during this situation.<br>• If there is no one at the school office, Area Manager will contact A member of the Leadership Team and will decide who will notify the school. |
| **DEBRIEF** | Once the child has been accounted for:<br>• Leader will complete and Incident/Injury/Illness/Trauma Form and have the parent/guardian to sign.<br>• Leader will conduct a meeting with all Educators to review the incident to determine what can be done to minimise the risk of recurrence. This meeting will be documented on the Debriefing Template and emailed to Area Manager on the day of the meeting.<br>• Area Manager will contact Parent/Guardian to review the incident and advise of the follow up that has occurred.<br>• Our Patch Team member who notified the school of the incident will ensure they advise the school of the follow up that has occurred.<br>• A member of the Leadership Team will contact the school to review the incident and advise of the follow up that has occurred. |

- Should it be noticed that a child is attempting to abscond or has absconded from Our Patch, Our Patch Team will:
    - Stay close to the child and continue to encourage the child to come back to Our Patch
    - Where possible, Our Educator or Leader will notify the other team members to make them aware of the situation using their mobile phone or Our Patch iPads
- If the child absconds from the school grounds, the parent/guardian will be notified via phone call immediately
    - If the parent/guardian cannot be reached, the other authorised contacts will be notified
    - Our Patch Team will be made aware of the situation and will contact Area Manager as soon as practical
    - Area Manager will make every effort to attend Our Patch to support Our Patch with finding the child
    - The team will follow the steps outlined above with an unaccounted-for child
- Once the child's whereabouts are known and the child is safe
    - Leader will complete an incident/illness/trauma/injury form as soon as practical outlining the steps taken
    - Area Manager will conduct a debrief with the team within 24 hours of the incident to review the debrief template, Appendix four.

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- Should it be determined that a Educator or Leader was negligent in their supervision, they will need to participate in Performance Management
- The parent/guardian will be contacted within 24 hours of the incident to review the incident and the steps being taken by Our Patch to ensure a similar situation doesn't occur
- The school contact will be notified of the incident by A member of the Leadership Team on the day
- Within 48 hours of the incident, A member of the Leadership Team will advise the school contact of the debrief and steps being taken to ensure a similar incident doesn't occur again
- The DET will be notified within 24 hours of all reportable incidents as per reporting pathways

## Related Policies:

- Incursions Policy
- Excursions Policy
- Extra-Curricular Activities Policy
- Medical Conditions Policy (Aug 2026 Version)
- Interactions and Contact with Children Policy
- Guiding and Supporting Children Policy

## Related legislation:

- Quality Area 2 – Children's health and safety
- Quality Area 7 – Leadership and Service Management
- Victorian Child Safe Standards (11 Standards, Ministerial Order 1359, updated 2022) — Standard 1 (cultural safety for Aboriginal children) is a stand-alone Standard
- South Australia Child Safe Environments framework — Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017 (transitioning to Children and Young People (Safety and Support) Act 2025 on proclamation)
- Queensland Child Safe Standards (10 Standards plus Universal Principle, Child Safe Organisations Act 2024, in force for ECEC from 1 January 2026)
- Education and Care Services National Law Act (2010), s.165

## Resources:

- ACECQA Guide to the NQF

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# Delivery and Collection of children

## Purpose of this Policy:

Our Patch is an integral part of the school and greater community. It is our dedication to collect children to and from Our Patch safely and with their wellbeing front of mind.

## Prerequisite Policy:

- Duty of Care Policy
- Qualifications and Ratios Policy
- Supervision Policies

## Policy:

Safeguarding children is a priority at Our Patch and collecting children to and from the service is paramount to ensuring their safety. This policy is designed to support families and educators with the steps needed to take to ensure the safe arrival of a child into Our Patch.

It will account for:

- the late/non-arrival of a child to Our Patch
- the late/non-collection of a child from the program
- the authorisation to collect children from the service, and
- on the day attendances.

## Impact for Our Patch:

- Child safety
- Familial support
- Educator Diligence

## Strategies:

To ensure the children's safe arrival, Our Patch has outlined the steps educators and families can take to support the children attending a program.

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## Collection of the children into the service

- This is in place to support children being signed in and out of the service safely
- Children will be signed in at Our Patch, either electronically or written signature, by an authorised person/s. The time of delivery and collection of the children will be recorded each day.
- Educators can sign a child in or out of the program if an authorised person is unable to so (i.e. the parent is collecting the child directly from an extracurricular activity) and the parent will be required to verify this and co-sign at the child's next booking.
- Parents/guardians are to make sure their child's enrolment form is up to date and authorised nominees are listed accordingly.
- Parents/guardians are to make sure that Our Patch is provided with any court orders or parenting orders that are in place regarding contact with the child. Our Patch cannot support the orders if they are not received prior to the child's attendance.
- To ensure that children are being collected by an authorised person/s, educators are to request a photo ID on arrival of any person the educators have not previously met before a child can be allowed to leave the service.
- Educators cannot release a child into the care of someone who isn't listed as an authorised person on the enrolment form.
- Should an unauthorised person arrive to collect the child, educators will immediately contact the parent/guardian. It isn't until permission is received in writing, i.e. email or text message to the Our Patch phone, from the parent/guardian that the child can be released to the person's care.
- Children will not be released into the care anyone who is visibly affected by drugs or alcohol. If someone arrives to the service to collect a child while impacted by drugs or alcohol, Leader should contact emergency services for assistance if the person becomes agitated or aggressive.
- The duty of care for children attending Our Patch begins when the child is signed in by an authorised person and ends when the child is signed out by an authorised person.
- Children will not be able to travel from a Patch to another activity, i.e., extracurricular activities, without written permission from the parent/guardian. This permission slip will be kept with the child's enrolment information.
- In this instance that a child will attend an extra-curricular activity after school, the child will be walked over to Our Patch by the extra-curricular team member.
- Children will not be accepted into the service prior to official opening hours.

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## Late/Non-Arrival of a child

The following steps are to be taken should a child not arrive to the Our Patch Pickup Patch and they're booked in to attend:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 5-10 minutes after the school bell | 1. A Educator is to contact the school office to confirm that the child attended school that day and/or went home from school early.<br>2. If the child was at school and didn't leave early, a school PA announcement is to be made asking the child to immediately go to Our Patch Pickup.<br>3. A Educator should go to the child's classroom to check in with the teacher and other children to see about the child's whereabouts. A check of the school grounds should be done at this time as well. | After confirming with the school Office that the Child was not at School or went home early, no further action is required from Leader. |
| 10-15 minutes after the school bell goes | 4. If the child cannot be found on the school grounds or information has been given that the child left the school, Leader is to contact the parent/guardian to confirm the child's whereabouts.<br>5. If the parent/guardian cannot be reached, Leader is to contact the other authorised contacts listed on the enrolment form to help determine the child's whereabouts. | |
| 15-20 minutes after the school bell | 6. If the child's whereabout cannot be confirmed, Leader is to contact the police on 000.<br>7. Leader should continue to try to contact the parent/guardian throughout the session to get confirmation of the child's whereabouts. | As soon as practical, Leader will notify Area Manager of the actions they've taken to locate the child, including the times at which they attempted to locate the child. Area Manager will advise a member of the Leadership Team. |

All reportable incidents to be reported to the DET within 24 hours by Area Manager

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## Late/non-collection of a child

- Where possible, a parent/guardian should let Our Patch know if they're going to be late to collect their child from Our Patch or if someone else is going to be collecting their child from Our Patch.
- When a child's parent/guardian is late to collect them from Our Patch, it can be very worrying for the child, and it is important the child's needs and wellbeing should be at the forefront. A Educator will remain with the child throughout to make sure that the child remains calm, supported, and engaged in activities until they are collected from Our Patch.
- The following steps are be taken should a child not be collected from Our Patch by closing time:

| | |
|---|---|
| 5 minutes after Our Patch has closed | • Leader will call the parent/guardian<br>• If the parent/guardian cannot be reached, Leader will leave a voicemail and send a text message. – "Please contact Our Patch urgently to confirm your child's attendance in after school care" |
| 10 minutes after Our Patch has closed | • Leader will contact the other authorised contacts on the enrolment form to try to arrange for the child to be collected from Our Patch. |
| 30 minutes after Our Patch has closed | • Leader is to let Area Manager know that the child hasn't yet been collected from Our Patch<br>• Area Manager or a member of the Leadership Team is to notify the relevant Child Protection Services—Department of Health and Human Services<br>• Leader may notify the police on 000 to help contact the parent/guardian<br>• The parent/guardian will be charged a late fee of $15 per 15 minutes, per family after closing time |

## Authorisation to collect children

- Educators need to make sure that a child is being collected by authorised persons in accordance with their enrolment form to ensure the child's safety and wellbeing.
- Parents/guardians will provide Our Patch with the names and contact details of all authorised people to collect the child from Our Patch. This will be listed on the enrolment form.
- No one under 18 years old is permitted to collect a child from Our Patch unless it is the sibling of the child. Siblings need to be at least 16 years old. Special circumstances may be considered on a case-by-case basis with Area Manager.
- Any changes to an authorised person/s details will be updated by the parent/guardian and Our Patch will be notified as soon as possible in writing.

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- Educators cannot release a child into the care of someone who isn't listed as an authorised person on the enrolment form unless in an emergency where authorisation can be provide in writing by the parent/guardian.
- Should an unauthorised person arrive to collect the child, educators will immediately contact the parent/guardian. It isn't until permission is received in writing, i.e. email or text message to the Our Patch phone, from the parent/guardian that the child can be released to the person's care. At this time, the unauthorised person will need to ensure they provide photo identification upon collection.
- Parents/guardians are to make sure that Our Patch is provided with any court orders or parenting orders that are in place regarding contact with the child. Our Patch cannot support the orders if they are not received prior to the child's attendance.
- To ensure that children are being collected by an authorised person/s, educators are to request a photo ID on arrival of those the educators have not previously met before a child can be allowed to leave the service.
- Children will not be allowed to sign themselves in or out of Our Patch; all children need to be collected by a parent/guardian or other authorised person.

## Collection of children after operating hours:

Family must ensure that their child is collected before the closing times of the program. The program is not legally able to operate after the program official closing time. Should a family be late in collecting their child over continuously, the following process will be followed:

- Leader verbally advises the parent that this cannot continue as the operating hours for is 6pm.
- If it occurs again - the Area Manager will call the parent to remind them of their obligations to pick up their child by closure time.
- If it occurs once more a formal letter written by the Area Manager is issued to the parent.
- If it occurs on the 4*th* time the parent will be excluded from using the program.

## On the Day Attendances

- If a child does not have an enrolment form with Our Patch, they will be unable to attend the program.
- The child will be taken to the school office by Our Educator or Leader.
- All parents/guardians will be encouraged to enrol their child with Our Patch

## Related Policies:

- Supervision Policies
- Family Participation and Communication Policy

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## Related legislation:

- Quality Area 2—Children's health and safety
- Quality Area 6—Collaborative partnerships with families and communities
- Quality Area 7—Governance and Leadership
- Education and Care Services National Law Act (2010), S 168, S 175
- Regulations (2011) 160, 161, 162

## Resources:

- ACECQA Guide to the NQF
- Education and Care Services National Law Act (2010)
- Education and Care Services National Regulations (2011)

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## Safe Arrival of Children

### Policy Statement:

We are committed to the safe arrival of children during travel between the school setting and outside school hours care. We have detailed processes, procedures and practices in this regard and ensure that all educators and staff implement them.

### Background:

The Education and Care Services National Regulations require approved providers to ensure their services have policies and procedures in place in relation to the safe arrival of children who travel between an education and service and any other education or early childhood service. Children's safety and wellbeing is of primary importance, and approved providers and their services must ensure that appropriate measures are in place to protect children from any harm or hazard, including during the time children are travelling to or from the service. The travel of children to, and away from, a service requires particular attention, particularly given how busy it can be at certain times and the number of people coming and going. Safeguarding children during travel between the service premises and other educational settings can be enabled by the creation of policies and procedures and an effective process for their implementation.

### Regulations that support the policy

| Section/regulation | Description |
|---|---|
| **Section 165** | Offence to inadequately supervise children |
| **Section 167** | Offence relating to protection of children from harm and hazards |
| **Section 175** | Offence relating to requirement to keep enrolment and other documents |
| **Section 167** | Offence relating to protection of children from harm and hazards |
| **Regulation 99** | Children leaving the education and care service premises |
| **WA only** | Delivery to and collection of children from the education and care service (Regulation 99 and 168(2)(f). Approved providers in WA must ensure the service has a policy about the delivery and collection of children that is consistent with the procedures for ensuring children's safety set out at section 165A of the National Law (WA). |
| **Regulation 100** | Risk assessment must be conducted before excursion |
| **Regulation 101** | Conduct of risk assessment for excursion |
| **Regulation 102** | Authorisation for excursions |
| **Regulation 102AAB** | Safe arrival of children policies and procedures |
| **Regulation 102AAC** | Risk assessment for the purposes of safe arrival of children policies and procedures |
| **Regulation 102C** | Conduct of risk assessment for transporting children by the education and care service |
| **Regulation 102D** | Authorisation for service to transport children |
| **Regulation 122** | Educators must be working directly with children to be included in ratios |

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| Section/regulation | Description |
|---|---|
| **Regulation 123** | Educator to child ratios |
| **Regulation 161** | Authorisations to be kept in enrolment record |
| **Regulation 168** | Education and care service must have policies and procedures |
| **Regulation 169** | Additional policies and procedures – family day care service |
| **Regulation 170** | Policies and procedures to be followed |
| **Regulation 171** | Policies and procedures to be kept available |
| **Regulation 172** | Notification of change to policies or procedures |

## Strategies to assist our policy:

The safety, health and wellbeing of the children at our program is paramount.
Our policies and procedures ensure that children are safeguarded during the time between the points of delivery to, and collection from, the service.

We acknowledge the important role played by our leaders, educators and staff. They are provided with the necessary training and support to implement the policies and procedures for the travel to, and collection from, the service premises. This is completed through our Educational Growth training, Wonder Workshops, Grounded Sessions and reviewing policies regularly.
Our leaders, educators and staff have a clear understanding of who holds the duty of care when children travel between schools and education and care settings.

We have clearly defined roles and use effective communication to ensure that management, educators and staff are aware of their responsibilities in relation to the travel of children to and from the service. This will be specific program to program.

Being prepared and knowing the risks involved when children travel to or from the service is vital. We develop risk assessments to assist us in identifying the risks involved during this time moving to or from the service. The risk assessments are completed annually and reviewed quarterly or when there is a change in circumstance.

## Related Policies:

- Acceptance and Refusal of Authorisation
- Delivery and Collection of Children
- Travelling on Excursions
- Safeguarding Children Policy
- Movement of Children to the service

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# Parental Responsibility Arrangements

## Purpose of this Policy:

Safeguarding children is part of Our Patch and ensuring that all orders that are in place to support the child are adhered to is critical. Our Patch will make every effort to support all parental orders to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the child, as well as the safety and wellbeing of the other children and Our Patch Team.

## Prerequisite Policy:

- Duty of Care Policy
- Code of Conduct
- Supervision Policies
- Acceptance and Refusal of Authorisation Policy

## Policy:

Our Patch requires all parental order documentation be provided when children enrol at Our Patch or as soon as a parental order is granted to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the child and all others at Our Patch. Without the parental order documentation, Our Patch cannot support or adhere to the orders.

## Impact for Our Patch:

- Child safety and wellbeing
- Our Patch Diligence

## Strategies:

- Where a parental order is required for the safety of the child, the parent/guardian must provide a copy of the parental order during the enrolment process or as soon as a parental order is granted
- The parental order will be kept with the child's enrolment form, in a locked cabinet that only Leader and Educators have access to
- Leader needs to be familiar with the order and its requirements
- Leader will use discretion and advise Our Educators of the information in the order that they need to know to keep the child safe
- If Leader is unsure of what the requirements of the order are, they will seek clarity from the parent/guardian who provided the order
- If that Leader is concerned about any aspect of the parental order, they will contact Area Manager to support a conversation with the parent/guardian
- Leader's will be aware of any expiration dates on the parental order

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- It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to always ensure that Our Patch has the most up to date parental order on file. Leader will review the parental order annually, when the child's enrolment information is reviewed, to ensure it is up to date and relevant

***Breech of Parental Order***

- If an unauthorised parent/guardian (per the parental order) arrives to collect the child from Our Patch, Leader will:
    - Speak calmly and advise that they are unable to collect the child as the authorised parent/guardian has not given permission for them to do so
    - Encourage the unauthorised parent/guardian to leave Our Patch
    - Contact the authorised parent/guardian and advise that the unauthorised parent/guardian attempted to collect the child from Our Patch
- If the unauthorised parent/guardian becomes aggressive/violent, refuses to leave, or insists on taking the child from Our Patch, Leader will attempt to diffuse the situation by asking the unauthorised parent/guardian to go to a different space to talk through the situation, away from the group—if ratio allows
    - If ratio doesn't allow for Leader to go to another space with the unauthorised parent/guardian, they will move the conversation to a space that is removed from the group, but still within Our Patch, where they can ensure they are able to quickly support the rest of the children and Educators if need be
- If Leader is at any stage concerned that the behaviour has escalated and the safety of anyone at Our Patch is in jeopardy, then Leader should
    - Contact the police on 000 immediately to advise of the situation and request assistance
        - Instigate a lockdown per the lockdown procedures that are outlined in our Emergency Management Plan and our Emergency Management Policy
            - If a lockdown is initiated, Leader will
                - Contact Area Manager to support Our Patch and help notify the other parents
                - Area Manager will advise a member of the Leadership Team
                - Notify the authorised parent/guardian of the incident
                - Complete an incident report outlining what happened as soon as possible
            - Area Manager will debrief per the debrief template found in Appendix Four
- All reportable incidents will be reported to the DET within 24 hours as per Our Patch reporting pathway
- Should there be any negative parent behaviour that continues over time, Leader is to seek support from Area Manager so that appropriate action can be taken

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## Related Policies:

- Family Communication and Participation Policy
- Emergency and Evacuation Process Policy
- Medical Conditions Policy (Aug 2026 Version)

## Related legislation:

- Quality Area 2—Children's health and safety
- Quality Area 6—Collaborative partnerships with families and communities
- Quality Area 7—Governance and Leadership
- Education and Care Services National Law Act (2010), S 168, S 175
- Regulations (2011) 160, 161, 162

## Resources:

- ACECQA Guide to the NQF
- Education and Care Services National Law Act (2010)
- Education and Care Services National Regulations (2011)

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# Acceptance and Refusal of Authorisation

## Purpose of this Policy:

Safeguarding children is foundational at Our Patch. This policy will help guide Leaders and Educators so that they are aware of the practises required should an authorisation need to be refused.

## Prerequisite Policy:

- Duty of Care Policy
- Delivery and Collection of Children into Care Policy

## Policy:

Our Patch is dedicated to the safety and wellbeing of children, and this is supported by ensuring that there is written authorisation at Our Patch from parents/guardians in the child's enrolment information. There may be times where Our Patch refuses to accept a parent/guardian's written authorisation to maintain the safety of a child, educator, or family.

## Impact for Our Patch:

- Children's safety
- Educator diligence
- Familial support

## Strategies:

- Parents/guardians will provide Our Patch with the names and contact details of all authorised people to collect the child/ren from Our Patch. This will be listed on the child's enrolment form.
- Where parents/guardians are unable to provide authorisation for their child/ren, authority is then delegated to emergency contacts in priority set by the parent/guardian. Authority from emergency contacts can be provided in relation to contacting emergency services for the child/ren and administration of medication.
- No one under 18 years old is permitted to collect a child from Our Patch unless it is the sibling of the child, who is older than 16 years old.
- Parents/guardians will ensure that all court orders and parental orders are provided to Our Patch on enrolment or as soon as any orders are granted
- Parents/guardians will ensure that they are providing up-to-date details for authorised persons to Our Patch
- Should an authorised person attend Our Patch and it appears that they are intoxicated or under the influence of drugs Leader will intervene. The person will be asked to wait for another authorised person to arrive to collect the child.

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- If the authorised person refuses and insists on taking the child, Leader will contact the police on 000 immediately and request assistance.
- Leader will notify Area Manager as soon as practical of the situation.
    - Area Manager will advise a member of the Leadership Team.
- All reportable incidents to be reported to the DET within 24 hours as per our reporting timelines
- Children will not be allowed to sign themselves in or out of Our Patch at any time; all children need to be collected by a parent/guardian or other authorised person.

## Related Policies

- Delivery and Collection Policy
- Medical Conditions Policy (Aug 2026 Version)
- Child Enrolment Record Policy
- Orientation Process Policy

## Related legislation:

- Quality Area 2 – Children's health and safety
- Quality Area 7 – Leadership and Service Management
- Regulations (2011) R 168, R 161, R 158, R 96, R 99-102
- Education and Care Services National Law Act (2010) S 167

## Resources:

- ACECQA Guide to the NQF
- Education and Care Services National Regulations (2011)
- Education and Care Services National Law Act (2010)

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# Movement of children to the service

## Purpose of this Policy:

School campus' can be far reaching and there may be times where children need to move from one campus to another to get to the Our Patch program. Our Patch will ensure the safe movement of children between spaces and places when coming to and from Our Patch.

## Prerequisite Policy:

- Duty of Care Policy
- Excursion Policy
- Supervision Policy

## Policy:

Our Patch has a duty of care and will ensure the safety of the children whilst at Our Patch and in transit. Our Patch will make sure that all reasonable precautions are always taken prior to the children moving between places and will be vigilant while children are moving between spaces.

This policy directly relates to children moving from feeder schools to Our Patch.

## Impact for Our Patch:

- Our Patch Diligence
- Child Safety

## Strategies:

- The movement of children will be approved by Area Manager.
- A risk assessment will be completed regarding the movement of the children to Our Patch to/from the feeder school. The risk assessment template can be found in Appendix Five
- Once a risk assessment is approved, it will be valid for the regular outing of the children between places for 12 months unless there are changes to the procedure or route prior
- Written permission will be obtained from the parents/guardians for all children movement. This will be done using the Our Patch permission slip
    - If this is a regular outing, the permission slip will need to be signed once and will be valid for 12 months unless there are changes to the procedure or route prior; whereby parents/guardians will need to resign the permission slip acknowledging the changes
- Prior to children coming to Our Patch from a nearby school campus or a feeder school where children will need to cross the road, a conversation will be had with the children regarding traffic and road safety. This includes:
    - What will they do when they cross the road?
    - What are they looking for when the cross the road?

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    - When is it safe to cross the road?
    - Why they need to keep checking the road until they're safely across to the other side
- Leader and/or Educators who are moving with the children between places will ensure they bring the following items:
    - Travel first aid kit
    - Roll of the children moving between places
    - Patch iPad with access to parental/guardian information
    - Patch mobile phone
- Should a child become unaccounted for during the movement between places, Leader/Educator will:
    - Scan the area and see if they are able to spot the child without leaving the other children unattended
    - If the child can be spotted, Leader/Educator will attempt to have the child to come back to the group by calling out to them and talking to them about the safety of the situation
    - If ratios allow, a Leader/Educator will attempt to follow the child to ask them to come back to the group
    - If the child cannot be spotted, Leader/Educator will go to Our Patch with all the other children and a full headcount will be completed
    - If the child cannot be accounted for in 10 minutes, the police will be notified by calling 000 and asking for assistance
    - The parent/guardian will be notified that their child is unaccounted for. If the parent/guardian is able to be reached, the authorised contacts will be notified of the situation
    - Area Manager will be notified as soon as practical of the incident and will make every attempt to get to Our Patch to support Our Patch find the child
- Once the child's whereabouts are known and the child is safe
    - Leader will complete an incident/illness/trauma/injury form as soon as practical, outlining the steps taken
    - Area Manager will conduct a debrief per the debrief template in Appendix Four with the team within 24 hours of the incident.
    - Should it be determined that a Educator or Leader was negligent in their supervision, they will need to participate in Performance Management
    - The parent/guardian will be contacted within 24 hours of the incident to review the incident and the steps being taken by Our Patch to ensure a similar situation doesn't occur
    - Within 48 hours of the incident, Area Manager will advise the school contact of the debrief and steps being taken to ensure a similar incident doesn't occur again
    - The DET will be notified within 24 hours of all reportable incidents by Area Manager

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## Managing Transitions — The Our Patch Standard

Transitions — the movement of children from one activity, space, or routine to another — are a high-risk operational activity. Movement, noise, blind spots, split educator attention and unclear roles all contribute to risk. The following standards apply to every transition:

**Plan and set up before the transition**

- Equipment and space are checked and ready before the transition begins.
- The roll is updated in XAP.
- iPads and Our Patch communication devices are ready and accessible.

**Clear educator roles**

- Every Educator has a dedicated role for the transition.
- The Leader is positioned at the front of the transition with a key support Educator at the back.
- Educators are positioned at key points along the transition route (for example, stoppage points and turning points).

**Create the routine**

- Use consistent visual cues and verbal countdowns to signal the transition.
- Use consistent grouping strategies and consistent language across educators.
- Apply consistent expectations for children's behaviour during transitions.

**Active supervision — always**

- Eyes up and watching children at all times. No administrative tasks during a transition.
- Educators are spread out across the transition area, not clustered.
- Educators anticipate children's behaviour and movement.

**Arrival check-in**

- On arrival at the destination, the four-step headcount process is completed (Stop /

**Count / Confirm / Communicate).**

- Numbers are confirmed against the roll in XAP, and all children are accounted for, before any activity commences.

## Related Policies:

- Travelling on Excursions
- Transport between School and OSCH
- Incident/illness/trauma/injury Policy
- Children Leaving the Area of Supervision Policy

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## Related legislation:

- Quality Area 2 – Children's Health and Safety
- Education and Care Services National Regulations (2011) R168, 100, 101, 102

## Resources:

- Safe Transport of Children Oct 1 2020

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# Transitional Movement

## Purpose of this Policy:

Not all classrooms are near where Our Patch is located on the school grounds and therefore it can be difficult for children to arrive to Our Patch after school.

## Prerequisite Policy:

- Duty of Care Policy
- Code of Conduct
- Safeguarding Children Policies

## Policy:

Pickup Patch is the designated place in the school grounds where children will be met with educators when coming to Our Patch. This area has been predetermined with our school so that that the Pickup Patch is safe and easy for children to meet at.

## Impact for Our Patch:

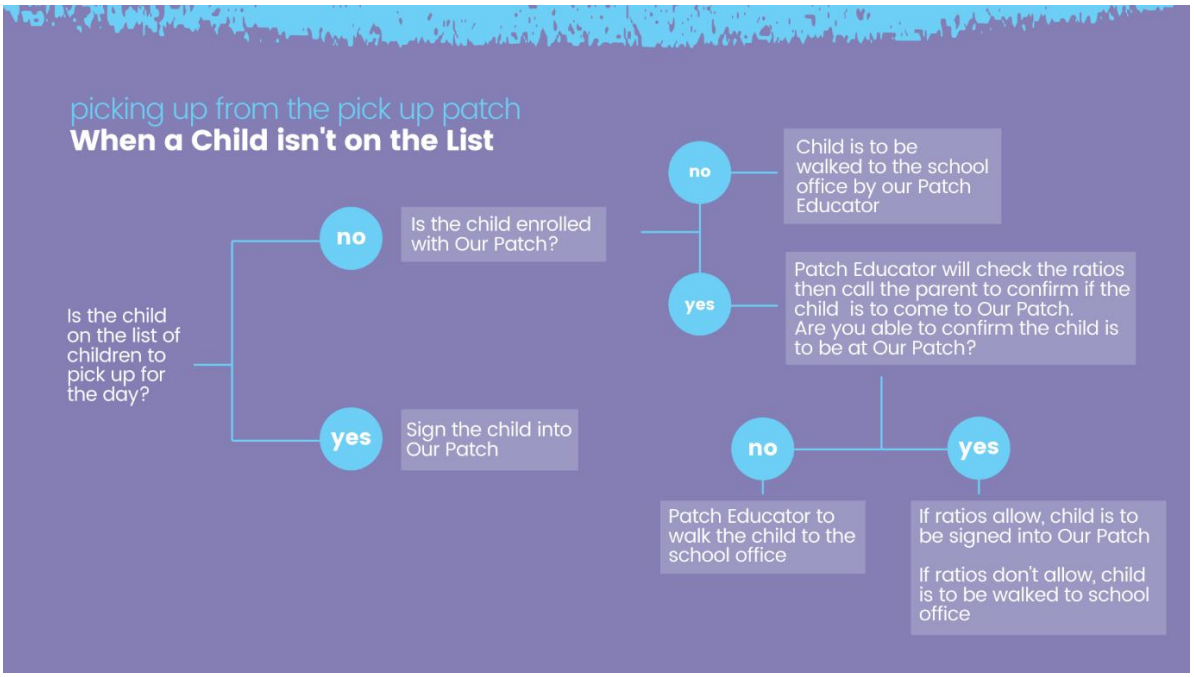
- Child Safety
- Our Patch Diligence

## Strategies:

- At the start of the school term, Leader will work with the school to determine the best place/s throughout the school yard that Our Patch staff can drop off and collect children from before and after school. These locations will be known as the Pickup Patch(es).
- These locations will be on display in the Family Patch so that all children, their parent/guardians and Educators know where the Pickup Patches are, and which classrooms will be collected from which area
- At the end of Before School Care session, children will be allowed to leave Our Patch to go to their classroom:
    - For children in Prep/Foundation, Educator will walk the children to their classroom during Term 1 whilst they transition to school. For the rest of the year, the Prep/Foundation children will walk themselves.
    - Once the children are in the care of the school, the Leader will sign them out of Our Patch
- Prior to the After School Care session, Leader will create a list of the children each Educator is to collect from the designated Pickup Patch(es) in the school yard
- When a Educator arrives for their shift, they will check in with Leader to review which children are in care for the session and the Pickup Patch they are to collect children from

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- Five (5) minutes before the afternoon school bell goes, Our Educator will go to the Pickup Patch with their list of children to collect and wait for the children to be released from their classrooms
- Leader and Educators will be wearing their complete Our Patch Uniform and Names Tags throughout their shifts to be easily identifiable at all times.
- When children are released from school, Educators will use XAP on the iPad to confirm the children they are required to collect from the Pickup Patch:
    - Leaders will ensure children are tagged on XAP by their Grade level.
    - Educators will filter bookings for the current session by Grades, to determine who they are required to collect from the Pickup Patch they are allocated to.
    - Educators will ensure they have collected all children required to be collected from the Pickup Patch before returning the program.
- Should a child approach Educator who isn't on their list saying that they're meant to be at Our Patch, Our Educator will:




- Should a child be on the list and not arrive to the Pickup Patch Our Educator will see if they can locate the child's teacher to confirm whether the child was at school that day. If they are unable to confirm with the child's teacher, they will return to Our Patch with the other children and check in with Leader immediately.
- If a child is late or hasn't arrived, the Late/Non-Arrival of a Child Policy will be followed
- To get from the Pickup Patch to the main Patch, Our Educator will have the children walk in a group together and maintain supervision the whole time and complete headcounts throughout the walk

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- Once the children arrive to Our Patch, Leader will sign them in on the attendance record.
- If any child hasn't arrived yet to Our Patch, Leader and Educators will follow the Late/Non-Arrival of a Child Policy

## Related Policies:

- Supervision Policies
- Delivery and Collection of Children Policy

## Related legislation:

- Education and Care Services National Regulations (2011)168, 99

## Resources:

- ACECQA Guide to the NQF 2012

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# Travelling on Excursions

## Purpose of this Policy:

There are times where the children will participate in experiences where they leave Our Patch for example, travelling on excursions. In these instances, Our Patch will ensure the children are kept safe from harm and hazard during transit to and from the experience.

## Prerequisite Policy:

- Duty of Care Policy
- Excursion Policy
- Supervision Policies

## Policy:

Because of children being at the forefront of everything at Our Patch, we will make sure the safety of all children in our care is maintained in transit to and from excursions. Our Patch will take every reasonable precaution prior to, during the excursion to prevent incident from occurring and be proactive and responsive should an incident arise.

## Impact for Our Patch:

- Our Patch Diligence
- Child Safety

## Strategies:

- Prior to children going on excursion, a risk assessment regarding the transport of the children will be completed on our risk assessment template
- All parents/guardians must sign a permission slip authorising their child to go on transport to/from the excursion. Permission slips will be on Our Patch Template.
- Transportation will be organised prior to the excursion through recognised transport companies
    - Drivers will be fully licensed
    - The driver will operate the vehicle in accordance with the road rules
    - The bus will be currently registered and insured
    - The vehicle is roadworthy and in good working condition and not damaged or unsafe
- Ratios will be maintained throughout the transport—if more than one bus is required, the ratio of the excursion will be maintained on each bus
- Headcount will be taken at the following times:
    - before the children leave Our Patch for the bus;
    - when the children sit down on the bus before it leaves;
    - during transit

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    - when the children disembark the bus
- When the children have taken their seats, they will be instructed to put their seatbelts on and remain in their seats at all times throughout the journey
- Before leaving Our Patch, Leader will review safety expectations with the children
    - Throughout the journey and as needed, the children will be reminded of the safety expectations
- A Educator will check the buses after the children disembark to ensure there are no children or belongings left behind
- Children must never be transported in the private vehicle of a Leader or Educator or any unauthorised person
- In the event of emergency, Leader will follow the instructions of emergency services
- If the bus breaks down, the Leader is required to notify Area Manager immediately, and they will help to organise alternative transport for the children and Patch staff
- A member of the Leadership Team will also organise families to be contacted when required

## Related Policies:

- Movement of Children Policy
- Medical Conditions Policy (Aug 2026 Version)
- Supervision Policies

## Related legislation:

- Quality Area 2 – Children's Health and Safety
- Education and Care Services National Regulations (2011) R168, 100, 101, 102

## Resources:

- Safe Transport of Children Oct 1 2020

## Supporting Resources

- Appendix 11 - Risk Assessment Template

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# Our Patch - Ownership Value: Emergency & Evacuation Policies:

- Emergency and Evacuation process

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Under the *Education and Care Services National Regulations*, policies and procedures are in place for emergency and evacuation (regulation 168) and take reasonable steps to ensure those policies and procedures are followed (regulation 170).

Your procedures will need to consider different types of emergencies. Emergencies situations can range from fire and smoke, to personal injuries and threats, bomb threats, suspicious mail, biohazards and chemical spills, gas leaks, floods and other natural disasters. Such emergencies may necessitate a need to evacuate or initiate a lock down.

Different emergency situations may present different levels of risk and require different responses, dependent on where a service is located. For example, a service might be located in a flood prone region, or be surrounded by bushland making it more susceptible to bush fires.

In addition, educators and staff must have ready access to a telephone or similar means of communication (regulation 98).

Principles could include, but are not limited to:

- The safety, health and wellbeing of children is a paramount consideration for our service. Therefore we conduct rehearsals and reviews of our emergency and evacuation procedures.
- Our educational program promotes opportunities for children to learn and develop in all aspects of the program.
- Key skills such as gross motor, coordination, language and cognitive skills can be practiced during evacuation rehearsals.
- We are committed to regular communication with families about all aspects of the educational program, their child's development, and the service. This includes information about emergency and evacuation procedures.
- Our educators and staff are key to our service's effective operation. Part of the training and development they receive focuses on our *Emergency and evacuation policy* and *procedures*. This includes conducting and documenting evacuation rehearsals in accordance with regulatory requirements.

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# Emergency and Evacuation Process

## Regulatory Basis

**This policy gives effect to Regulation 97** of the Education and Care Services National Regulations. Emergency Management Plans (EMPs) must address all prescribed emergency types including:

- Fire — evacuation procedures and fire extinguisher access
- Natural disaster — flood, earthquake, storm, extreme heat, and (in Victoria) bushfire
- Medical emergency — serious injury, anaphylaxis, cardiac event
- **Security threat / External danger / Lockdown** — see procedure below
- Missing child — procedure for a child who cannot be accounted for
- **Extreme heat** — see procedure below

## Emergency Management Plan — Content Requirements

Each service's EMP must include the following, documented and reviewed annually:

- The designated evacuation assembly point (with a backup if the primary is inaccessible)
- The designated lockdown/shelter-in-place area
- The name and contact details of the Nominated Supervisor, Leader, Area Manager and CEO
- Contact details for all relevant emergency services (000, local police, local SES)
- The location of all first aid kits, fire extinguishers, and emergency equipment
- A floor plan or site map showing exits, assembly point, lockdown area, and first aid locations
- A family reunification procedure — how children will be released to authorised persons following an emergency
- The communication plan — who contacts whom, in what order, during and after each emergency type
- A documented emergency risk assessment identifying the potential emergencies relevant to the service (based in its location, premises, surrounding hazards, and the ages and abilities of the children). The emergency and evacuation procedures must be based on this risk assessment, which must be reviewed at least every 12 months and as soon as practicable after any change that may affect the safe evacuation of children.

A copy of the emergency and evacuation floor plan and instructions must be displayed in a prominent position near each exit (including exits forming part of an evacuation route.

## Roles and Responsibilities During an Emergency

| Role | Responsibility During an Emergency |
|---|---|
| Leader / Most Senior Educator Present | Activates the EMP; directs all educators; calls 000 if required; takes the roll; notifies Area Manager as soon as safe to do so |

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| | |
|---|---|
| All Educators | Follow the Leader's directions; move children to the designated area; account for all children in their care; do not leave children unattended |
| Area Manager | Notifies CEO; provides support to the service; liaises with school principal if on school grounds; manages family communications if directed by CEO |
| CEO | Overall incident management; regulatory notifications; media management; family communications |

## Lockdown / Shelter-in-Place Procedure

A lockdown or shelter-in-place is required when there is an external threat to the safety of children and staff — such as an armed person on or near the premises, a dangerous animal, a chemical hazard, or a direction from police or emergency services. The procedure is:

- Leader immediately activates the lockdown upon becoming aware of a threat or receiving a direction from police or the school
- All children and educators move immediately to the designated lockdown area (identified in each Patch's EMP) and all doors are secured
- Leader takes the roll — ALL children and educators must be accounted for immediately
- Leader contacts 000 if not already in contact with emergency services. Do NOT open doors or move children until given the all-clear by police or emergency services
- Leader notifies Area Manager as soon as it is safe to do so
- **Do NOT contact parents to collect children during a lockdown** — emergency services directions take precedence over all other communications
- Following the all-clear, children must be offered an age-appropriate debrief
- If the lockdown is activated while the service is operating across multiple rooms or areas, each educator must shelter-in-place with the children in their current area — do not move children through unsecured areas to consolidate groups

## Extreme Heat — Emergency Procedure

Extreme heat is a prescribed emergency type. When the Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) forecasts a temperature at or above 38°C (or a lower threshold specified by the service's risk assessment for the local climate), the following must be applied:

- All outdoor activities are suspended for the duration of the extreme heat period — children remain indoors in a cooled or shaded environment
- Cool water must be made available and actively offered to children every 30 minutes

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- Educators must monitor children for signs of heat stress: flushed skin, rapid breathing, dizziness, vomiting, or confusion. Any child showing symptoms must be treated as a medical emergency
- If the indoor environment cannot be maintained at a safe temperature (below 30°C), the Leader must notify the Area Manager and CEO. Temporary relocation to a cooled school space may be arranged with the Principal's agreement

## Bushfire Procedure — Victoria

VIC services located in or near designated bushfire-prone areas must have a bushfire-specific section in their EMP. This must include:

- The service's Fire Danger Rating (FDR) threshold for early closure or relocation — Our Patch Group's policy is to close VIC services located in fire-prone areas on days forecast as Catastrophic (Code Red) before children arrive
- A designated safe relocation site if the service must evacuate due to bushfire (agreed with the school and local CFA/fire authority)
- The communication plan for notifying families of early closure on Code Red days — notification must be made no later than the evening before, using the service communication app and direct contact for families without app access
- The bushfire section must be reviewed annually before the fire danger season (by 1 September each year for VIC services)

## Emergency Rehearsal and Record-Keeping

Minimum rehearsal requirements: All services must rehearse and document their Emergency and evacuation procedures every three months.

If the service has more than one emergency and evacuation procedure, all procedures must be rehearsed every three months. For example, if you have identified both a lock down and evacuation response procedure in your risk assessments, and incorporated them in your emergency plan, you will need to rehearse both every three months.

- At least one evacuation rehearsal (fire or natural disaster)
- At least one lockdown or shelter-in-place rehearsal
- VIC services in bushfire-prone areas must also conduct an annual bushfire relocation rehearsal before 1 October each year

Record-keeping: A record of each emergency rehearsal must be kept at the Patch and submitted to Area Manager within 5 business days. Records must include:

- Date and type of rehearsal
- Number of children and educators present
- Time taken from activation to all-clear
- Any issues identified and how they will be addressed
- Confirmation that all children and educators were accounted for during the rehearsal

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- Any child who was absent during the rehearsal and therefore has not yet participated (a make-up rehearsal walkthrough must be conducted with that child before their next session)

Records must be available for regulatory inspection and retained for a minimum of 3 years.

## Family Reunification Following an Emergency

Following any emergency that results in an evacuation or lockdown, children may only be released to an authorised person (as recorded in the child's enrolment record). The following steps apply:

1. The Leader maintains the roll and does not release any child until the all-clear is given by emergency services or the CEO
2. Families are notified of the situation and the reunification process by the Area Manager or CEO — not by individual educators
3. A designated reunification point must be established away from the emergency area — this must be communicated to families clearly
4. Each child must be signed out by an authorised person. Photo ID may be requested if the person is not known to the educator
5. No child may be released to a person not listed as an authorised contact, regardless of the circumstances or the urgency of the family's request — refer to the CEO for any exception

## Post-Emergency Debrief

Following any actual emergency (not a rehearsal), the Leader must conduct a debrief with all educators within 2 business days. The debrief must address:

- What happened and how the EMP was activated
- What worked well
- What did not work, and what changes are needed to the EMP or training
- Whether any child or educator requires additional support following the event (and referral to EAP if appropriate)

The debrief summary must be provided to the Area Manager in writing. Any required EMP amendments must be made within 10 business days of the debrief. The EMP must be reviewed annually regardless of whether an emergency has occurred.

## EMP Review Cycle

Each service's EMP must be reviewed:

- Annually — by the Leader, with Area Manager oversight, no later than the start of Term 1 each year
- Within 10 business days of any actual emergency
- Within 10 business days of any significant change to the service premises (e.g. building works, new shared areas, change of lockdown area)

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- When a regulatory authority review or advice identifies a gap in the EMP

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## Related legislation:

Your policy must be consistent with, and refer to, legislative requirements for emergencies and evacuations.

Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Section 167 Offence relating to protection of children from harm and hazards
- Regulation 97 Emergency and evacuation procedures
- Regulation 98 Telephone or other communication equipment
- Regulation 168 Education and care services must have policies and procedures
- Regulation 169 Additional policies and procedures – family day care
- Regulation 170 Policies and procedures must be followed
- Regulation 171 Policies and procedures to be kept available
- Regulation 172 Notification of change to policies and procedures

## Resources:

- BARR Pre-emptive School Relocation or Closure on CODE RED Days
- Guide to Developing EMP - DET
- Bureau of Meteorology
- ACECQA Guide to the NQF
- Education and Care Services National Law Act (2010)
- Education and Care Services National Regulations (2011)

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# Our Patch - Ownership Value: Administrative Policies

- Governance and Management of Our Patch
- Child Enrolment
- Child Attendance Records
- Hours of operations
- Orientation Process
- Childcare Fees
- Late Fee Payment and Account Exclusion
- Child Care Subsidy
- Policy Management

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## Governance and Management of Our Patch

Our Patch Group Education Pty Ltd inclusive of School Plus Foundation is a registered business and has legal responsibilities with ASIC and other governing bodies.

Paramount Consideration (from 27 Feb 2026): Pursuant to section 5A of the National Law, the safety, rights and best interests of children are the paramount consideration in all governance decisions and operational management.

Penalty Awareness (from 1 Jan 2026): Maximum penalties under the National Quality Framework have tripled nationally (nine-times for large providers in Victoria). Leadership must factor this into governance oversight and compliance planning.
NQS QA7 (from 1 Jan 2026): Our governance and management practices actively support the operation of a child safe service as required by Standard 7.1 and Element 7.1.2 of the updated National Quality Standard.

### Prerequisite Policy:

- Code of Conduct Policy
- Responsible Person Policy
- Nominated Supervisor Policy
- Storage and Maintenance Policy

### Policy:

Our Patch Education Pty Ltd inclusive of School Plus Foundation is a registered business and has legal responsibilities with ASIC and other governing bodies. Our Patch also has a legal obligation to implement and embed our approved frameworks to guide the programming for children and to adhere to the Education and Care Services National Law Act and Education and Care Services National Regulations to maintain compliance.
Good strong governance is important therefore Our Patch will provide resources and tools to all programs to ensure that each program is diligent in governance and management.

This policy will explain in detail the management of confidentiality and archiving of records to secure privacy processes for Our Patch families.

### Strategies:

- Children are the core of Our Patch and our organisational structure highlights that they are the forefront of all decisions that are made
- The Education and Care Services National Law Act and Education and Care Services National Regulations will always be available on site at Our Patch —they will be downloaded to Our Patch's laptop as well as Our Patch's iPads.
- Our Patch works complies with Fair Work requirements and ensures that all Our Patch Team—Educators, Leaders, Area Manager, Leadership Team and Support

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Office —are committed to the values of our organisation and that our values are implemented to best support the children and families.
- Our Patch has strong practises, polices, processes throughout the business to ensure governance at a high level is maintained.
- Leaders are given the autonomy to own and GROW their Patch and are supported by Area Manager and Our Patch Team

## Confidentiality of records

- Our Patch will ensure that it complies with all current privacy legislation to maintain the confidentiality of personal information of families.
- All paper records, i.e., attendance records, enrolment forms, incident/injury/trauma/illness forms, staff records, that are required to be stored onsite will be stored in a safe and secure location that Leader has access to
- Every child will have an enrolment record. Family information kept for CCMS will be password protected and only accessible to relevant parties.
- All Our Educators will have password protected logins to Our Patch databases and only able to access information relevant to their role.
- Personal information regarding children and families will not be provided to any other person (apart from Authorised Persons) unless written permission is obtained beforehand from the child's parent/guardian.
- Leaders and Educators will only discuss details relating to children and families with Our Patch team members or other professionals involved in supporting the inclusion of a child at Our Patch once consent has been obtained from the parent/guardian.
- Should a parent/guardian have concerns about the misuse of information, they can be addressed per our Grievances and Complaints policy.
- All sensitive matters will be handled in private and with care always.

## Archiving of records

All confidential information will be archived safely and securely. Archived information will need to be stored as per legislative requirement.

| Confidential Records | Legislative Requirements |
|---|---|
| Daily sign in/out attendance records | Kept by Our Patch for 3 years from the last date the child attended Our Patch |
| IIIT records of individuals (children and educators) | Maintained by the service.<br>Should the child or educator suffer an IIIT while at Our Patch, the IIIT record will be kept with the child's enrolment information and stored for 25 years from the last date the child attended Our Patch. |
| A record of a family's fees paid and outstanding | Kept by Our Patch for 3 years from the date of last entry. |
| Employee timesheet records, including when staff signed in and out | Kept by Our Patch for 3 years. |
| All payroll and service records of Our Patch staff | Kept in a safe and secure location for 5 years as per the requirements of the Australian Taxation Department. |

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## Family Confidentiality & Privacy Laws

- Our Patch is subject to the Australian Privacy Principles (APPs) under the Commonwealth Privacy Act 1988 in the handling of personal information, as required by Regulation 195 of the Education and Care Services National Regulations. Complying with the APP's is a condition of continued approval to operate under Section 195 of the A New Tax System (Family Assistance) (Administration) Act.
- Please find attached in Appendix 7 the Our Patch Privacy Policy

## Nominated Supervisor Responsibilities

The Nominated Supervisor at each service is responsible for:

- Ensuring this manual and all current policies are accessible to all staff at the service
- Confirming all staff have read and understood applicable policies on commencement and following any update
- Reporting any identified compliance gap to the CEO within 24 hours of becoming aware
- Supporting the continuous improvement process by identifying and documenting opportunities for improvement in the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP)

## Policy Review Cycle

All policies in this Operational Practices Manual must be reviewed at minimum annually. Policies affected by a legislative or regulatory change must be reviewed within 30 days of that change taking effect. The CEO is responsible for ensuring the review schedule is maintained and that all staff are notified of policy updates within 5 business days of approval.

## Related Policies:

- Family Grievance and Complaints Policy
- Staff Records Policy
- Child Enrolment Records Policy
- Orientation Process Policy
- Privacy Policy

## Related legislation:

- Education and Care Services National Law Act (2010), S 168
- Education and Care Services National Regulations (2011), R 181, 182, 183 & 184
- Information Privacy Act 2000 Australia
- Victorian Government – Public Records Office Standard PROS 09/05
- Quality Area 4 – Staffing and arrangements.
- Quality Area 6 – Collaborative partnerships with families and communities.
- Quality Area 7 – Leadership and Service Management

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## Resources:

- ACECQA Guide to the NQF
- Education and Care Services National Law Act (2010)
- Education and Care Services National Regulations (2011)

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# Child Enrolment

## Purpose of this Policy:

In order for children to attend Our Patch, it is a legal requirement that the child's parent/guardian complete a child enrolment form. This policy is accessible for all to provide clarity on the enrolment processes at Our Patch.

## Prerequisite Policy:

- Governance and Management of Our Patch Policy
- Duty of Care Policy

## Policy:

All children that attend Our Patch will have a completed online enrolment form through XAP. Parents will provide all necessary details on each child for their personal care and safety and will ensure this information is frequently reviewed and updated. Children's enrolment forms will be kept in a secured place and be accessible to authorised persons. All confidential information will be kept safe as per our Governance and Management Policy.

Regulation 162 specifies the information that must be included in every child's enrolment record. Our Patch Group's enrolment record (held in XAP) must include: full name, date of birth, gender and home address; parent/guardian contact details; authorised nominees (persons authorised to collect the child); the child's registered GP; emergency contacts (minimum two); medical conditions and MMP details; authorisation for emergency medical treatment (renewed annually); authorisation for regular outings (renewed annually); authorisation for taking and use of images; and any relevant court orders or access restrictions.

Enrolment records must be updated within 7 days of any change notified by the family.

## Impact for Our Patch:

- Safety of children
- Wellbeing and care of children
- Family confidentiality with record keeping

## Strategies:

- All details in the enrolment form are necessary requirements of the regulations (Regulation 160)
- Parents will need to complete ALL details and include ALL attachments before their child can attend Our Patch
- A child without a completed enrolment form will be unable to attend Our Patch and will be assisted back to the school office by our educators

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- Once a parent has completed the enrolment record for their child, Leader will read the enrolment information and will contact parent with any questions
- Enrolment records will be reviewed by Our Patch Team with the parent/guardian when their child commences with Our Patch to ensure the information on the enrolment record is accurate and up to date.
- Educators will also access enrolment details through XAP
- Parents will be periodically asked to check child enrolment details and make any necessary changes
- Should a parent require or be required to make a change they are required to do this through their XAP App.
- In the case that there is a change in Approved Provider, parents will advise if they consent for their child's enrolment records/details to be provided to the incoming provider (Regulation 184)

## Related Policies:

- Attendance Records Policy
- Orientation Process Policy

## Related legislation:

- Regulation 160, 161, 162, 177, 181, 183, 184
- Quality Area 2 – Child Health and Safety
- Regulations 160, 161, 162 — Enrolment records

## Resources:

- ACECQA Guide to the NQF
- Education and Care Services National Law Act (2010)
- Education and Care Services National Regulations (2011)

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# Child Attendance Records

## Purpose of this Policy:

This Policy will advise parents/guardians/educators and other authorised persons, the legal requirements in maintaining children attendance records for Our Patch.

## Prerequisite Policy:

- Child Enrolment Record Policy
- Duty of Care Policy
- Supervision Policies

## Policy:

Children that attend Our Patch will be signed in and out by authorised people at all times. This is documented on the attendance record that is accessible via XAP. All children who are booked into Our Patch will be on the attendance record and will be expected to arrive at Our Patch.

The Attendance Record is a reference for educators to ensure they are aware of which children are booked into and are at Our Patch and to ensure all children in care are supervised at all times. They are also a legislative requirement for families to have access to Child Care subsidy. Attendance records are accessible and available to authorised personnel when necessary and are stored for the expected legislative timeframe.

## Impact for Our Patch:

- Safety of children
- Confidentiality of family records

## Strategies:

- Leader will review the attendance list to confirm children attending Our Patch for the upcoming session, will confirm enrolment forms have been completed, note any first-time children attending and ensure adequate educators have been rostered.
- Leader will delegate which Educators will be responsible in collecting the children from the designated Pickup Patch(es) once the school bell has rung.
- Each child will be signed in and out of Our Patch by a nominated and authorised person as listed on the child's enrolment form.
- Leader and Educators will conduct regular name counts against attendance records so that all children are accounted for at all times.
- Leader will ensure all children are signed out at the end of each session and follow up any discrepancies before they leave the session at Our Patch.

## Bookings and Cancellations:

- Parents will need to book their child into Our Patch and nominate the session they wish for them to attend

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- Parents may choose to make a permanent booking or book on a casual basis – different fees apply
- Where parents are cancelling their child's attendance, they are required to access XAP and mark the child absent. All booking with 48 hours' notice given will be cancelled weekly when updated
- Any child who is booked into Our Patch and has not arrived will instigate our process of following up child's whereabouts.
- Parents/Guardians must sign children in and out to record the appropriate CCS charges.
- Cancellation of a booking must be done via contacting the Customer Care Team or marking the child absent through the app and bookings will be removed if the required 48 hours' notice has been provided.
    - Cancellations with 48 hours' notice will be cancelled at no charge
    - Cancellations inside 48 hours' notice will be marked as absent and charged.

### *On the day bookings:*

- Parents are expected to book online via XAP, however if a child requires to attend care on the day the child's parent/guardian must contact the school and Leader to advise. Leader will confirm if the child can attend the program.
- As per our Transitional Movement Policy, if ratios allow, child is to be signed into Our Patch. However, if ratios don't allow, child is to be walked to school office for parent/guardian to collect.

### *On the day cancellations:*

- For any on the day cancellations the parent/guardian is to contact Leader via Our Patch phone

### *Booking Terms:*

| | |
|---|---|
| **Permanent Booking** | A child is booked in with regular sessions in Before School Care, After School Care and Holiday Care |
| **Casual Booking** | A child is booked in when parents/guardians are requiring their child to attend Our Patch.<br>Any bookings made on the day must be called through to the school (for after school care bookings) and called through to Leader. |
| **Early Finish Bookings** | At times the school may finish the class day early so parents are able to book their child into Our Patch earlier |
| **Curriculum Day Bookings** | Our Patch offers a Curriculum Free Day session where children can attend Our Patch as school will not be available on this day |

## Related Policies:

- Enrolment form Policy
- Duty of Care Policy
- Child Care Subsidy Policy
- Orientation Process Policy

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## Related legislation:

- Regulation 158, 181, 183
- Quality Area 2 – Child Health and Safety

## Resources:

- ACECQA Guide to the NQF
- Education and Care Services National Law Act (2010)
- Education and Care Services National Regulations (2011)

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# Hours of operations

## Purpose of this Policy:

Our Patch will support as much as possible the operating hours of the program in line to expectations from the school.

## Prerequisite Policy:

- Duty of Care Policy
- Safeguarding Children Policies
- Delivery and Collection of Children Policies

## Policy:

The operating hours will be in line with requirements discussed with each school/venue. The program will operate during the working week and hours will be subject to the access of the space.

## Impact for Our Patch:

- Providing a service to the school community that meets their needs

## Strategies:

- During the Get to Know You phase with the school, the hours of operation will be confirmed between the school and Head of Partnerships to determine the hours best suited to the school for Before School Care, After School Care, Holiday Program and Student Free Days
- All relevant government bodies will be notified of Our Patch's hours of operations
- The hours of operation will be on display at Our Patch program
- The school community can request a change in hours of operations, and this will be discussed with the school and the Leader of Business Relationships

## Related Policies:

- Partnership responsibilities Policy
- Family participation and communication Policy
- Family Complaints and Grievances Policy

## Related legislation:

- Quality Area 7—Governance and Leadership

## Resources:

- ACECQA Guide to the NQF

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# Orientation Process

## Purpose of this Policy:

It is vital that children feel that welcomed and included in Our Patch, from the minute they walk into Our Patch. In order for new children to feel comfortable at Our Patch, they will have an orientation to familiarise themselves with our program.

## Prerequisite Policy:

- Duty of Care
- Safeguarding Children

## Policy:

All children will be welcomed into Our Patch and have an orientation program. The Orientation program will provide children and families with the detail about how the program operates and what children can do whilst at Our Patch. It is an opportunity to get a feel about our program and learn about the ways we can support children to GROW.

## Impact for Our Patch:

- All children feeling welcome and invited into Our Patch
- All parents feeling comfortable and secure with Our Patch
- Our Patch Diligence

## Strategies:

- Our Patch supports each patch and each child individually. Educators take Ownership of the orientation process with a dash of Wonder to develop a process uniquely for their children. Pending the children and the program, some initiatives may include:
    - Children and families to visit the service prior to the child's first session to see the program and meet the Educators.
    - 'What to bring' list for a child's first day.
    - Children receive a welcome gift on their first day.
    - 'My First Day at Our Patch' welcome activity.
    - Welcome flyer for the children made by the children.
    - Use of a Buddy system.
    - Child is taken on a tour of the service by their buddy or another child.
- All parents are encouraged to register their child with Our Patch so that they can attend Our Patch whenever required.
- Each day and each session of care, Leader will review the attendance list to identify any new children to Our Patch and:
    - Determine whether they have any medical conditions and ensure all the paperwork is in order to support them
    - Determine whether the child has any specific dietary needs
    - Determine whether there are any court orders for the child

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- Determine whether there is any support the child needs for their behaviour and positive interactions/engagement in Our Patch




- When Leader or Educator hasn't met the parent/guardian or authorised person who has come to collect the child, Leader/Educator will ask the parent/guardian or authorised person to see their photo ID to verify they are approved to collect the child from Our Patch
- When the parent/guardian or person who is authorised to collect their child arrives, Leader or Educator will greet them let them know what the child participated in during their time at Our Patch.
- All prep/foundation children will be collected directly from their classroom by an Educator for the first term, or as the needs of the children determine. The full process will be communicated with the parents/guardians and the school and kept in Our Patch's information folder.

## Related Policies:

- Authorisation to Collect
- Acceptance and Refusal of Authorisations Policy
- Program Planning Policy
- Medical Conditions Policy (Aug 2026 Version)
- Guiding and Supporting Children Policy

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## Related legislation:

- Quality Area 2 – Children's health and safety
- Quality Area 6 – Collaborative partnerships with families and communities
- Quality Area 7 – Leadership and service management
- Education and Care Services National Law Act (2010), S 168, S 175
- Education and Care Services National Regulations (2011), R 160, 161, 162

## Resources:

- ACECQA Guide to the NQF

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# Childcare Fees

## Purpose of this Policy:

Our Patch governance is critical to the financial sustainability of all Our Patch programs. Our Patch have embedded strong sustainable practises to support the viability of each Our Patch program.

## Prerequisite Policy:

Child Enrolment Record Policy
Child Care Subsidy Policy

## Policy:

Our Patch will offer a program to children that is aligned to legislative requirements and support the values of Our Patch, each school community and that of the National Quality Framework. In order to do this, families will be charged a fee to use a program offered by Our Patch. Parents are expected to pay their fees on time and in full (with Child Care subsidy rebates)

## Impact for Our Patch:

Financial viability of each Our Patch program

## Strategies:

- Our Patch via XAP will automatically bill families for the days/times each child has been book into at a Our Patch. It is important parents/guardians ensure all billing information on their XAP App is accurate and kept up to date.
- Each statement will be emailed to parents/guardians and will show child's attendance, absence and payments made
- Statements will also contain any payments/subsidies for Services Australia
- Should parents have any issue with their statement they will need to contact Our Patch
- Parents will be billed for the previous week of care plus any outstanding fees
- Invoices to be released Wednesday weekly to be debited Friday weekly.
- Should a parent be facing financial hardship, they must contact Our Patch immediately to discuss payment plan options
- In instances where three statements have been issued with no payments received, Our Patch will be required to suspend the account until payment is made. Regrettably, children will be unable to attend Our Patch until payment has been made or a payment plan has been established.
    - In cases where parent continues not to pay an outstanding statement that matter could be referred to a collection agency nominated by Our Patch
- Leaders and Educators will not accept cash, nor will cash be kept at Our Patch programs at any time.

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- Any changes made to fees or how they are collected with be communicated to families 14 days earlier before the change is made
- Parents are expected to view and keep themselves updated with Terms and Conditions on XAP and through the enrolment process

## Related Policies:

- Child Enrolment Record Policy
- Attendance Records Policy

## Related legislation:

- Family Assistance Law

## Resources:

- Services Australia Handbook
- Polices of Our Patch Education
- Terms and Conditions Our Patch Education

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# Late Fee Payment and Account Exclusion

## Purpose of this Policy:

Our Patch works to provide care with fees that are reasonably priced for our communities. This policy is in place to provide information to parents/guardians on the steps in place at Our Patch, should they be unable to pay or miss an account payment.

## Prerequisite Policy:

- Attendance Records
- Child Care Subsidy
- Child Care Fees

## Policy:

All fees for care must be paid by the due date identified on the invoice. Invoices are sent to Parents every two weeks via email. Should a family require an invoice posted to them then they must advise us via email.

## Impact for Our Patch

By parents/guardians paying their accounts, Our Patch is able to be financially viable and continue to provide care within the communities in which we operate.

## Strategies:

- Where a family has failed to meet the fee payment requirements, they may be excluded from using an Our Patch Program until the account is resolved.
- A Parent/Guardian must have active method of direct debit, the Parent/Guardian must ensure that payment is received by Our Patch before the due date given on the statement.
- A follow up email will be sent to the Parent/Guardian on a Wednesday following a direct debit to advise of any unsuccessful payments.
- Parents will be contacted by telephone, email, or by sms by our customer service team if payment is not received by the due date.
- Parents may call the Customer Care Team on 1300 018 310 during business hours, except for National Holidays to discuss payment options or requirements for each individual account.
- Assistance to families in financial hardship or extreme difficulties can be provided, subject to approval, but only after discussion with our customer service team.
- If a Parent's/Guardian's account remains unpaid for more than 21 days after the first due date, exclusion will commence for the Children listed on that individual account and all bookings will be cancelled until full payment is received by Our Patch.

## Related Policies

- All Administrative Policies

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## Related Legislation

- Services National Regulations (2011). R168
- A New Tax System (Family Assistance) (Administration) Act 1999

## Resources

- ACECQA - Guide to the NQF
- Education and Care Regulations

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# Child Care Subsidy

## Purpose of this Policy:

Child Care subsidy is a major detail for families to be aware of. Parents/guardians should be familiar with this policy and are encouraged to contact Our Patch to talk through any aspects of this policy.

This policy will include information relating to:

- Child Care Subsidy
- Late Fee Payment
- Fee for late collection
- Child Absences

## Prerequisite Policy:

- Child Enrolment Record Policy
- Attendance Record Policy

## Policy:

Parents/guardians that use the service provided at Our Patch for their children will be required to make payments and keep their account details up to date. Parents/guardians may be entitled to Child Care Subsidy and Our Patch encourages parents/guardians to actively source this funding which will help reduce the cost of childcare.

There are a number of considerations for parents/guardians to be aware of when it comes to Child Care Subsidy and Our Patch will actively encourage parents to access this information through the Australian Government's Services Australia.

## Impact for Our Patch:

- Financial sustainability of Our Patch
- Parent awareness of rebates and financial support available

## Strategies:

- Child Care Subsidy will assist families to reduce the cost of childcare. Parents/guardians will be required to provide Our Patch with their Customer Reference Number (CRN) and date of birth for themselves and for each of their children to be eligible to receive this subsidy.
- Parents/guardians can obtain their CRN from Services Australia (SA) by calling 136150*
- Once the Parent/guardian has provided the appropriate information from Services Australia to Our Patch, the details will be formalised and submitted automatically as part of the fortnightly statement process. Fees will be adjusted when confirmation has been received from Services Australia.

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- From January 5 2026, the Child Care Subsidy activity test was replaced by the "3 Day Guarantee". All families eligible for CCS receive a base entitlement of at least 72 hours of subsidised care per fortnight (around three days a week), regardless of activity; First Nations children are entitled to at least 100 hours per fortnight.
- Families wanting more than 72 hours can access additional hours based on their recognised activity. CCS remains means-tested on family income. (The 42-day allowable absence provisions continue to apply.
- Claims for Child Care Subsidy (CCS) can be lodged with Services Australia up to 12 months after the date that care was provided.
- Families who are eligible for CCS can also be considered for Additional CCS – please contact 136150 for more information on the additional CCS types:
    - Child Wellbeing
    - Transition to work
    - Grandparent
    - Temporary Financial Hardship

## Late Fee Payment

- Parents are required to pay for their child's care by the due date as noted on the statement. Statements will be emailed to parents through XAP system
- An overdue fee will be charged to families should their account not be paid by the due date
- Our Patch will contact parents by phone, email or post if payment is not received by the due date
- Should parents require support through a hardship, they are to contact Our Patch immediately so that payment plan options can be discussed
- If an account remains unpaid our Child Care Fee policy will be enacted

## Fee for late collection

- Should a child remain in the care of Our Patch after the operating times, a fee will be charged specific for each Program as per the tender agreement.
- Parents/guardians must ensure that their child is collected by the closing time, if they are unsure of the closing time, they are to speak to Leader and read the operating times as detailed on the information board at Our Patch

## Child Absences

- Leader will ensure that the child attendance record is kept accurate at all times
- Parents/guardians will need to ensure that they are signing their child in and out each time they attend Our Patch
- Should a child be absent please follow Our Patch Attendance Record Policy
- Fees are charged based on booked sessions and where CCS applies to the account
- Where parents/guardians are eligible for CCS, they are entitled to 42 absences per financial year – known as allowable absence (AA)

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- Once the 42 days (AA) have been paid out in that financial year, parents will then be charged a full fee with no CCS applied to any additional absences

## Related Policies:

- Child Enrolment Record Policy
- Child Care Fees Policy
- Attendance Record Policy
- Late Fee Payment and Account Exclusion

## Related legislation:

- Family Assistance Law

## Resources:

- Services Australia Handbook

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# Policy Management

## Purpose of this Policy:

Our Patch works collaboratively with all stakeholders and ensures transparency with policy writing to ensure that it reflects the values of Our Patch and the communities that work with Our Patch.

## Prerequisite Policy:

- Governance and Management of Our Patch Policy

## Policy:

Our Patch will continually review and assess its policies to make sure that it continues to align with the children, families, and communities that Our Patch supports. Reviewing our policies regularly ensures that Our Patch is meeting legislative requirements.

## Impact for Our Patch:

- Diligence for Our Patch
- Opportunity to see feedback in action
- Child health and wellbeing

## Strategies:

- This Operational Practices will also be available on all Our Patch iPads and on Our Patch's laptops.
    - If required, Leader can provide paper copies of policies
- Children, families, the school community will be encouraged to provide feedback about Our Patch policies
    - Children can provide feedback when asked to rate a session
    - Feedback about policies can be given via the App when the parent/guardian is asked to rate a session
    - Alternatively, children and their families can provide feedback verbally to a Leader, emailed to Our Patch, or provided over the phone to Our Patch
- The policies will be reviewed regularly and guided by feedback from Our Patch, children, parents/guardians, the school community and other relevant stakeholders
- Should policy changes have a major impact on a family's ability to use Our Patch or impacts on the fees charged by Our Patch, 14 days' notice will be given to families.
- Any time changes are made, it will be noted on the amendments page, prior versions of the policy will be kept for point in time reference.
- All changes made to policies will be in line with the Laws and Regulations

## Related Policies:

- Family Grievances and Complaints Policy

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## Related legislation:

- Educations and Care Services National Regulations 2011 R168 - 172

## Resources:

- Educations and Care Services National Regulations

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# Our Patch - Wonder Value: Programming Policies

- Program Planning
- Critical Reflection Evaluation
- Animals in the Space
- Programming with music
- Extra-Curricular Activities
- Excursions
- Incursions
- Classification rating
- Children's Personal Electronic Devices
- Acceptable Use
- Privacy Policy

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# Program Planning

## Purpose of this Policy:

Our Patch strongly believes in the importance of planning a program that is uniquely focused for the children who attend. Through collaboration between the Educational Leader and Our Patch Team, we plan for a program that recognises and celebrates the voice of each and every child who attends Our Patch.

## Prerequisite Policy:

- Duty of Care Policy
- Supervision Policies
- Diversity and Inclusion Policy

## Policy:

Our Program is designed by children. We talk to children, we ask questions, and we learn about their areas of passion and interest. This is why Our Patch exists… we create a patch for every child to grow and our program offering the cornerstone to our vision.

Children need to be given opportunity to voice, to experience and to explore and our program helps children with this.

We work within the guidelines of our framework and use the MTOP as a foundation. We work with our talented and passionate Leaders and educators to embed our program planning and reflection in all that we do.

## Impact for Our Patch:

- Engaged Children
- Program reflective of the needs and wants of the children, parents, and school.

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## Strategies:



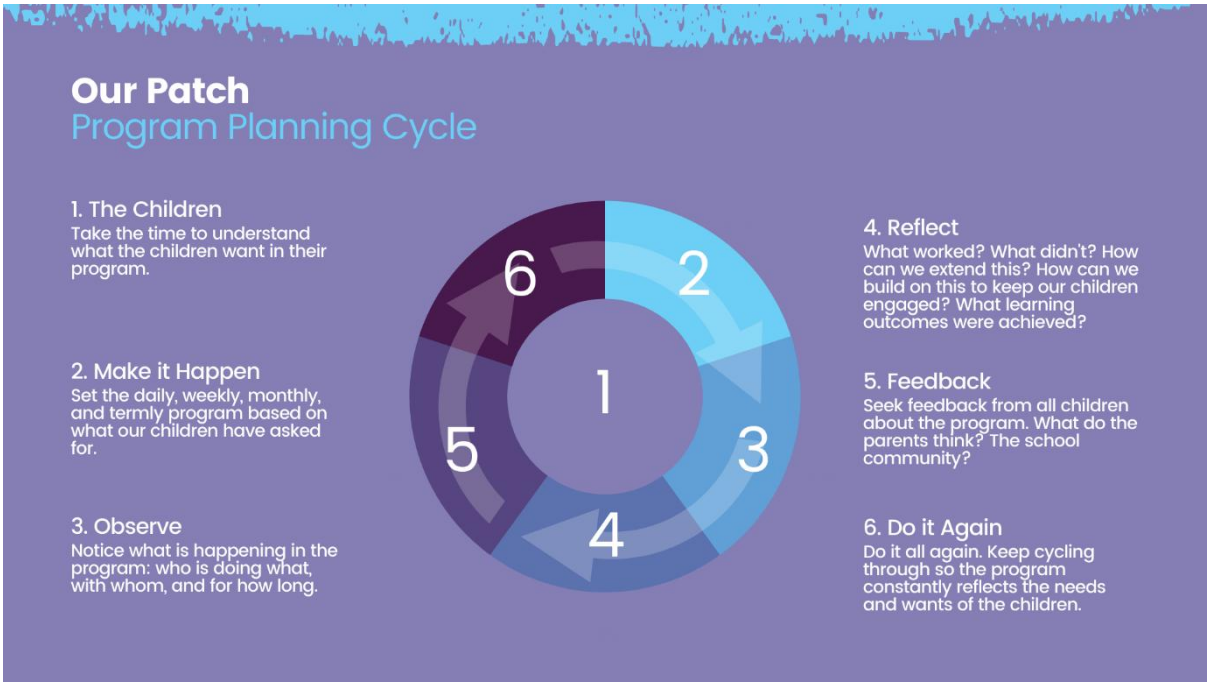

- Leader, who is supported by Educational Leader of the program (Area Manager) will guide the direction of planning for the program. In these roles, they will embrace the opportunity to connect Our Patch Team and their practises, to create a program where child's voice is heard.
- This program will be designed in line with My Time Our Place Framework (MTOP) and the National Quality Standards.
- Area Manager as the Educational Leader alongside the Leader will Area Manager their team and develop their skills to be confident to contribute to the cycle of planning.
- Our Patch's programs will encompass the service's philosophy and the values of Our Patch:




- Our Patch Team reflects on their educational program and practise ongoing guided by the MTOP Learning Outcomes:
    - Children have a strong sense of identity.
    - Children are connected with and contribute to their world.

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    - Children have a strong sense of wellbeing.
    - Children are confident and involved learners.
    - Children are effective communicators.
- Leaders will plan their program with children's voice at the forefront to ensure their patch is well resourced to support a program that encourages resiliency, skill development, cooperation, and positive relationships.
    - Children will be encouraged to participate in various offerings that develop their physical, social, and emotional skills.
    - Children's abilities will be considered when planning the offerings.
- Our Patch welcomes Child's voice, and the voice of Our Educators, Families and School to contribute to the planning of the program:
    - Our Children's Assembly Patch - a chance for children to come together to discuss Our Patch, what they like and what they would like to see at the program.
    - Children, Families, and School will be surveyed regularly to give them the opportunity to provide feedback and have direct input into the program offerings.
    - Conversations with children can be documented in Child's Voice meeting template and observations.
    - Point in time conversations with families and school are to be documented in the Community Voice Journal.
    - Observations of the children are documented by all Educators.
    - Critical reflections of the program occur as ongoing, embedded practise by all Educators.
    - Leader will meet with School to seek feedback and gain valuable insight to contribute to the continuous improvement of the program.




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- A current weekly program will be displayed in the Family Patch to showcase the wonderful experiences on offer. The program will consist of planned, spontaneous and continuous activities
- Our Patch will be working with specialist teachers to offer an enriching program that allows for outside people to come to Our Patch and teach skills to the children, such as Music, Performing Arts, Yoga, Martial Arts, etc.
- In collaboration with school or families as requested, Our Patch will be working with teachers to have onsite support for tutoring.
- The program will ensure that it meets the needs and goals of children with additional needs through discussions with parents/guardians, the school contacts, and community support networks. Children with additional needs includes refers to children's diverse circumstances and additional vulnerabilities and includes the following groups:
    - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.
    - Children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
    - Children with a disability, medication condition (diagnosed and undiagnosed).
    - Children with challenging behaviour/s.
    - LGBTQI+ (Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex).
    - Children who are unable to live at home.

## Related Policies:

- Children's Feedback and Grievances Policy
- Interactions and Contact with Children Policy

## Related legislation:

- Quality Area 1 – Educational Program and Practice
- Education and Care Services National Regulations (2011) R73 – 75, 177, 185

## Resources:

- Australian Childhood Foundation
- ACECQA Guide to the NQF

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# Critical Reflection Evaluation

## Purpose of this Policy:

When we reflect, we have an opportunity to celebrate what we do well and collaborate on where we can improve on. Our Patch uses critical reflection as embedded practise to ensure Child's Voice is heard and guide the quality of the program provided.

## Prerequisite Policy:

- Program Planning Policy
- Duty of Care Policy
- Diversity and Inclusion Policy

## Policy:

Our Patch brand promise is based on VOICE and because of this we can critically reflect and evaluate what we do in our program. Together, children, educators, families will look and unpack our offering decide what is successful and what's not. We celebrate the success and be thankful for the failures as this helps each patch to grow in its offering and be better on our how and what.

## Impact for Our Patch:

- Engaged children
- Program satisfaction from parents/guardians and school community
- Our Patch Diligence

## Strategies:

- Leaders and Educators will ensure that the program that is provided to the children is reflective of the needs and wants of the children, families, and school through:
    - Feedback provided via Our Patch Voice App or verbally
    - All Educators contributing to observations.
    - All Educators contributing to the Reflection Journal.
    - All Educators contributing to Critical Reflections.
    - Feedback documented in the Community Voice Journal
- Our Patch's Reflection Journal will always be accessible at the Family Patch for all children, families, members of the school community and Our Patch staff to access.
    - Children, families, and school are encouraged to add to the journal.
- Leaders and Educators will reflect on the program individually and in collaboration and write observations and reflections on the happenings in the program.
- All reflections and observations will be completed in line with the National Quality Standards
- When using the journal on display at the Family Patch, Leaders and Educators will link observations back to the My Time Our Place Learning Framework and using the child's first name to further link their interests to the program.

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- Reflections will maintain confidentiality when it is required—i.e., documenting sensitive conversations with children and keeping the documentation with the child's enrolment information, not on display.
- Educators are encouraged to provide feedback at any time to Leader about the program.
- The program will be reflected on during Our Patch Team meetings.
    - This meeting will be documented on Our Patch Team Meeting Template and kept in a secure location at Our Patch to maintain confidentiality.
- Parents/guardians can view observations on their child when requested and provide feedback as to what they would like to see at Our Patch each term via the Our Patch Voice App, or verbally to Leader and Implemented in the program.
    - Leader is to use this feedback to reflect on the program to ensure the program is meeting the needs of all children and families in Our Patch.
- Leader will then use the feedback to reflect on the program and use the feedback to ensure the program is meeting the needs of the school community.

## Quality Rating Display — National Law s.172

Section 172 of the Education and Care Services National Law requires approved providers to display their service's current quality rating prominently at the service and in public advertising and promotional material. Our Patch Group services must:

- Display the current quality rating certificate at the entrance or main common area of each service, accessible to families
- Include the current rating in any website, social media profile or promotional material that refers to the service's quality
- Update the display within 5 business days of receiving a new rating from the regulatory authority

Failure to display the quality rating is an offence under the National Law. Regulatory authorities have issued compliance notices for non-display.

## Related Policies:

- Animals in the Space Policy
- Programming with Music Policy
- Children's Feedback and Grievances Policy
- Families Grievances and Complaints Policy

## Related legislation:

- Quality Area 1 – Educational Program and Practice
- Education and Care Services National Regulations (2011) R73 – 75, 177, 185
- National Law s.172 — Quality rating display
-

## Resources:

- ACECQA Guide to the NQF

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# Animals in the Space

## Purpose of this Policy:

Animals and birds can provide fantastic learning experiences; however, they do pose unique challenges. Our Patch will take all reasonable steps to make sure that children and Patch staff are kept safe.

## Prerequisite Policy:

- Program Planning Policy
- Duty of Care Policy

## Policy:

One of the magical things we do at Our Patch is offer children the opportunity to learn more about caring for animals, hence why at Our Patch we provide children with the opportunity to think about the care of a special pet, the responsibilities, and the ownership we have in keeping them safe.

## Impact for Our Patch:

- Enriching program with opportunity for children to experience animals or birds they mightn't otherwise.

## Strategies:

- The opportunity to have a special pet at Our Patch will be guided by the children to extend their interests and satisfy their curiosity.
- Collaborative discussions will be held in the Our Children's Assembly Patch:
    - Children will consider and decide on their special pet.
    - Children are encouraged to assess the program to ensure the special pet will be appropriate to be cared for.
    - Children can research potential special pets and how to care for them, and then present information at Our Children's Assembly Patch.
- To cultivate the program to care for a special pet, initiatives as below may be included:
    - Our Children's Assembly Patch discussion can be held on the responsibility of having a special pet.
        - Any allergies and phobias of animals will need to be considered prior to bringing an animal/ bird into Our Patch.
    - Families are consulted before and after a special pet is introduced to the program to gain their feedback, and this information is to be documented in the Community Voice Journal and considered for the program.
    - A display created about the special pet including instructions on how to care for It. This can be made by the children.
    - Children are educated on hygiene practises including washing their hands before and after handling a special pet.

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    - Children are educated on cleaning and maintenance of the special pet and their bedding, tanks, cages, or enclosures.
    - Special Pet Leaders can be nominated where children take ownership of the special pet.
    - All new children to the program will be introduced to the special pet as part of their orientation process.
- Children are appropriately supervised when handling the special pet or if the pet is out of its tank/cage/enclosure.
- All requests for special pets must be approved in writing by the school and Area Manager prior to being brought in or kept at Our Patch
    - To be approved by Area Manager, Our Patch will need to create a risk assessment outlining:
        - How the animal/bird will be cared for
        - Where the animal/bird will live
        - What the animal/bird will eat
    - Clear instructions will need to be displayed near where the animal lives to ensure anyone coming into Our Patch knows what the expectations are for caring for the animal/bird and any particulars for the animal/bird.
- If Our Patch has approval to keep an animal/bird at the Patch, it will be at Our Patch's own cost and maintenance.
- Parents/guardians will need to provide a permission slip giving permission to care for the animal or bird
- All animals and birds must be kept in a healthy and clean condition always.
    - The children will support Leader and Educators with caring for and feeding the special pet.
- Arrangements will need to be made to take care of the animal or bird during school holidays and weekends in a system that can include educators and families.
- All incursion providers that offer an experience with animals or birds will need to have a permission slip to be signed by parents/guardians prior allowing the children to participate in the experience:
    - Incursion providers will provide clear instructions and expectations ahead of the experience so that Leader and Educators can discuss with the children and ensure the safety and wellbeing of the children, educators, and animals or birds.

## Related Policies:

- Children's Feedback and Grievances Policy

## Related legislation:

- Quality Area 1 – Educational Program and Practice
- Education and Care Services National Regulations (2011) R73 – 75, 177, 185

## Resources:

- ACECQA Guide to the NQF

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# Programming with Music

## Purpose of this Policy:

Music is an offering which allows children with a creative outlet to freely express themselves with joy and Wonder. Music provides children experience of other cultures, and an opportunity to connect with the world around them.

## Prerequisite Policy:

- Program Planning Policy
- Duty of Care Policy

## Policy:

We know at Our Patch that music is an essential part of children to GROW. We know that through experiences offering music in our programs, will help children be grounded and creative.
Our music program is so important at Our Patch that we have partnered with a music store to provide us with instruments that will guide and encourage children to explore with sound, learn about music and instruments, and more.

## Impact for Our Patch:

- Enriching program with opportunity for children to experience music through listening and engaging with musical instruments.

## Strategies:

- A Music Patch will be offered daily at each Our Patch location with a variety of musical instruments available to be played and experienced through guided experiences or through self-expression.
    - A Bluetooth speaker is available at each Patch so that Leaders and Educators can play appropriate music requests throughout a session.
- Leader will ask the children what music they like to listen to
    - Leader will ensure that all music that is played is age appropriate and doesn't contain any explicit content or lyrics.
- Listening to the radio, watching YouTube and other internet clips are not to be used during service operations due to the unpredictability and suitability of what is discussed and played, regardless of parental/guardian permission.
- Children, families, the school community, and educators will be regularly encouraged to provide feedback and input into the music that is being played at each Patch.
- Music will be sourced from other cultures to be played at Our Patch.
- Educators and Leaders will review music requests before playing to ensure the suitability for all children of Our Patch to listen

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- Should the children, families, or school community advise they would like to have a music incursion provider come and support the Patch, this will be organised by Leader through an Our Patch approved partner.
    - The Leader and Educators are to ensure the incursion provider adhere to all Our Patch Child Safe Policies
    - The incursion provider will ensure that all music that is learned and played is age appropriate and doesn't contain any explicit content or lyrics

## Related Policies:

- Children's Feedback and Grievances Policy
- Safeguarding Children Policies

## Related legislation:

- Quality Area 1 – Educational Program and Practice
- Education and Care Services National Regulations (2011) R73 – 75, 177, 185

## Resources:

- ACECQA Guide to the NQF

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# Extra-Curricular Activities

## Purpose of this Policy:

Our Patch embraces opportunities for children to engage in additional learning experiences. We collaborate with families and school to support the interests of the children to participate in Extra Curricular Activities.

## Prerequisite Policy:

- Duty of Care Policy
- Supervision Policies
- Authorisation to Collect Children Policy
- Acceptance and Refusal of Authorisations Policy

## Policy:

Children are provided with the wonderful opportunity to participate in ECA. At Our Patch we want to support this as we know it will help each child GROW. We also want keep children safe whilst out of Our Patch care to do what they want to so together with parents, school and ECA provider we have sound practises to follow.

## Impact for Our Patch:

- Child safety
- Community involvement
- Our Patch Diligence

## Strategies:

- Our Patch will support children attending extra-curricular activities on the days where they are also booked into attend Our Patch.
- Leader will liaise with the school at the start of each term to learn which extra-curricular activities are being offered at the school for the term.
- At the start of the school term, Leader will review with the parents/guardians whether their child/children will be attending any extra-curricular activities.
- Leader will have the parent/guardian sign the Extra-Curricular Activity Permission Form.
- A child will be unable to attend the extra-curricular activity without Leader having permission from the parent/guardian.
- Where ratio allows, a Educator will walk the child to the extra-curricular activity; however, if ratio does not allow, the extra-curricular leader is expected to collect the participating children from Our Patch.
- When the child is signed out of Our Patch into the care of an authorised person, Our Patch is no longer responsible for the child until they are signed back into the care of Our Patch.

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- Where ratio allows, a Educator will collect the children returning to Our Patch after their extra-curricular activity finishes; however, if ratio does not allow, the leader of the extra-curricular activity will be expected to return the children to Our Patch when the extra-curricular activity finishes.
- Should the child not return after the extra-curricular activity, Leader will follow the steps outlined in the Children Leaving the Area of Supervision Policy

## Related Policies:

- Supervision Policies
- Excursions Policy
- Medical Conditions Policy (Aug 2026 Version)

## Related legislation:

- Quality Area 2 – Children's Health and Safety

## Resources:

- ACECQA Guide to the NQF

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# Excursions

## Purpose of this Policy:

Excursions are an exciting time for the children who attend Our Patch to explore the world and experience life outside of their norm. Our Patch will provide such offerings to enhance the program and provide children with a sense of agency as they develop their resilience and independence. Our Patch delivers excursions which are a journey of discovery for a child and have practises in place to ensure their safety at all times.

## Prerequisite Policy:

- Duty of Care Policy
- Code of Conduct
- Program Planning Policy
- Supervision Policies

## Policy:

We ask children about excursions because we know Holiday time is important for children to unwind, have fun and do something they don't normally have time for, so we are here to support the opportunity of new experiences.

## Impact for Our Patch:

- Enriching program offering
- Variety of activities available
- Our Patch Diligence
- Child and family satisfaction

## Strategies:

- Children and families will be provided an opportunity to give input to the types of excursions they would like to see In the Holiday program:
    - Patch/Educational Leader will use this feedback and collaborate with Our Patch Team to decide on the excursions which best meet the voice of children and their families.
- Prior to any excursion, a risk assessment will be completed of the venue and its facilities to determine the suitability of the activity for the children to participate in
- Once a risk assessment is reviewed, the excursion is approved by Area Manager.
- All children, parents/guardians, and Leaders and Educators will have prior notice before the commencement of an excursion to ensure the correct paperwork and procedures are in place beforehand.
- The risk assessment will be available at Our Patch prior to the excursion so that parent/guardians and the school community can have access to it
- All specifics for the excursion will be available at the time of booking, including activities, departure/arrival times

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- Parents/guardians need to drop their child/ren off at Our Patch at least 15 minutes prior to the scheduled departure time to ensure all necessary paperwork is completed
- Parents/guardians need to ensure their child/ren are dressed appropriately for the activity. This includes weather and activity appropriate clothing and footwear, snacks/lunch/drinks, and sun protection
- Buses will depart on time and children who are late will be unable to attend Our Patch as it will be closed during excursion times
- Permission slips need to be obtained for every child going on the excursion prior to Our Patch leaving for the excursion
    - If the child doesn't have a signed permission slip, the child cannot go on the excursion
    - If a child doesn't have a signed permission slip, the parent/guardian will be contacted immediately to return to Our Patch to sign the permission slip
        - If a parent/guardian cannot be reached and hasn't signed a permission slip for their child/ren, Area Manager will be notified immediately to help support alternative arrangements for the child/ren as they cannot go on the excursion
- All Leaders and Educators to wear complete Our Patch uniforms throughout their shifts to be easily identifiable at all times
- Excursions may be cancelled due to unsuitable weather conditions if they are deemed inappropriate for the planned activity
- All excursion providers will need to confirm their commitment to adhere to all Our Patch Safeguarding Children Policies by signing our Commitment to Safeguarding Children Form prior to providing their service.
    - Our Safeguarding Children Policy and our Commitment to Safeguarding Children Form will be provided to each incursion provider by the Holiday Program Manager
    - The signed Commitment to Safeguarding Children Form is to be returned to the Holiday Program Manager and will be kept safe and stored electronically at Head Office

## Regulatory Basis

The following National Regulations govern all excursions and must be complied with for every excursion and regular outing:

### Regulation 102D — Written Risk Assessment

A written risk assessment must be completed before each excursion, addressing:

- The proposed route and destination; description of activities
- The means of transport to be used
- The number and ages of children attending
- The ratio of educators to children for the excursion
- The competencies and first aid qualifications of attending educators

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- Potential risks and hazards at the destination and during transit, and how they will be managed
- Any water-based activities and the supervision arrangements for them
- Sun safety considerations — availability of shade, sunscreen, hats, and the UV index for the day and location
- Communication plan — how educators will communicate with each other, with the service, and with emergency services during the excursion (e.g. service phone, designated communication check-in times)
- Emergency meeting point — a designated location all children and educators will go to in the event of an emergency at the destination

Use the Our Patch Group Risk Assessment Template (Appendix 11) for all excursions. The completed risk assessment must be reviewed and approved by the Area Manager before the excursion proceeds, and must be available at the service for parent/guardian inspection.

#### Regulation 102E — Written Authorisation

Written authorisation from a parent or guardian must be obtained before each excursion. The authorisation form must specify:

- The proposed excursion — date, destination, description of activities
- Transport details — type of transport, whether seatbelts are available
- The ratio of educators to children for the excursion
- Whether any water-based activity is involved and the nature of it
- Any other relevant details specified in the excursion risk assessment

**Written authorisation from each child's parent/guardian must be obtained BEFORE the excursion departs — verbal consent is not sufficient. No child may attend an excursion without a signed authorisation form.**

## Regular Outings

Where Our Patch Group regularly travels the same route (e.g. from school to service or to a regular local park), a regular outing authorisation may be obtained at enrolment, provided it covers: the specific route; type of transport; and all details required by Regulation 102E. Regular outing authorisations must be reviewed and re-signed annually.

## Transport Safety

When children are transported as part of an excursion, the following must be confirmed before departure:

- Seatbelts and child restraints: All children must be secured in an appropriate seatbelt or approved child restraint. No child may travel in a vehicle without a working seatbelt. If a vehicle does not have sufficient seatbelts for all children, the excursion must not proceed in that vehicle.
- Vehicle capacity: The number of children must not exceed the licensed passenger capacity of the vehicle.

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- Authorised driver: The driver must hold a current, appropriate licence for the vehicle being used. Leaders must confirm the driver's licence is valid before the excursion departs.
- Children left in vehicles: No child may ever be left in a vehicle unattended, even briefly. An educator must accompany children at all times when in or exiting a vehicle.
- Roll check after transport: A full headcount must be conducted immediately after children exit any vehicle to confirm all children are accounted for.

## Water Safety

Any excursion involving a water-based activity (swimming, beach visits, river or lake environments, water parks, watercraft) requires the following additional steps:

- The risk assessment must specifically identify: the water body type; depth; currents; hazards; distance from water; and any lifeguard supervision arrangements at the venue
- An enhanced educator-to-child ratio applies for water-based activities. The Leader must confirm the appropriate ratio with the Area Manager before the excursion is approved — the standard 1:15 OSHC ratio is not sufficient for water environments
- At least one educator on any water-based excursion must hold a current approved first aid qualification that includes CPR
- Children who cannot swim, or whose swimming ability is unknown, must be identified before the excursion and appropriate supervision arrangements confirmed (e.g. remaining in shallow water, wearing a flotation device)
- Parent authorisation for water-based activities must explicitly name the type of water activity and the supervision arrangements — a general excursion consent does not cover swimming or other water activities
- If the water activity is at a public pool, the service must confirm the pool's own supervision and lifeguard arrangements before departing. A pool lifeguard does not replace the educator's supervision responsibility.

## Sun Safety on Excursions

Sun safety is a mandatory consideration for all outdoor excursions in Australia. Before any outdoor excursion, the Leader must confirm:

- The UV index for the excursion day and location (check at arpansa.gov.au/uv-index). Sun protection is required when the UV index is 3 or above.
- Sufficient shade is available at the destination, or a shade shelter will be brought
- All children and educators have sunscreen (SPF 50+) applied before departure and at the 2-hour reapplication point during the excursion
- All children and educators wear a sun-protective hat (broad brim or bucket hat) during all outdoor periods

## Lost Child on Excursion

If a child cannot be located during an excursion:

1. Do not panic. Immediately conduct a headcount and confirm exactly which child(ren) is missing and their last known location.

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2. Assign one educator to remain with all other children — do not leave the group unsupervised.
3. The Leader (or most senior educator) begins an immediate search of the immediate area.
4. If the child is not located within 5 minutes, call 000 and notify police.
5. Notify the Area Manager and CEO immediately.
6. Do not move the group from the location without police or CEO direction — emergency services will need to know your position.
7. Notify the child's family as soon as practicable — after emergency services have been contacted.
8. Complete a full incident report. The regulatory authority must be notified as a serious incident under Regulation 176.

## Excursion Cancellation Protocol

An excursion must be cancelled or postponed if, at any time before departure:

- Educator-to-child ratios cannot be maintained due to staff absence
- The weather forecast presents an extreme heat, storm, or severe weather warning for the excursion location or time period
- The transport arrangement fails (e.g. vehicle breakdown, driver unavailable)
- A risk identified in the risk assessment cannot be adequately mitigated

The Leader must notify the Area Manager before cancelling an approved excursion and must notify families as promptly as possible. A cancelled excursion does not require a new risk assessment if rescheduled to the same destination within the same term — however, the risk assessment must be reviewed and re-dated for the new excursion date.

## Related Policies:

- Supervision Policies
- Travelling on Excursions Policies
- Water Safety Policies

## Related legislation:

- Quality Area 2 – Children's Health and Safety
- Education and Care Services National Regulations (2011) R168, 100, 101, 102

## Resources:

- ACECQA Guide to the NQF
- https://www.murrays.com.au/group-Area Manager-hire/travel-safe/seating-plans/

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# Incursions

## Purpose of this Policy:

Our Patch will offer incursions to enhance the programming for children attending a Patch. Incursions provide a way to expand the experiences of children of Our Patch by bringing in other people from the community to Our Patch to educate, perform, or introducing them to things they mightn't experience otherwise. Our guidelines are established to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all children attending an Our Patch incursion.

## Prerequisite Policy:

- Duty of Care Policy
- GROW Values
- Program Planning Policies
- Safeguarding Children Policies

## Policy:

As part of Our Patch's values, we want to encourage children to wonder and become grounded in themselves, and this is something that can be encouraged through incursions being programmed. Our Patch is committed to offering a diverse range of incursions that are guided by the needs and wants of children in Our Patch.

## Impact for Our Patch:

- Children's satisfaction and building of skills
- Engagement with the local community

## Strategies:

- Leaders will organise incursions with the help of their Area Manager and Holiday Club Manager Support for their Enrichment and Specialist Patches.
    - Depending on the size of the program, the frequency of the incursions will vary, but Our Patch strives to have one incursion per week per Patch.
- Incursions will be planned based on the input of the children, i.e. if there is a strong interest in guitar, the incursion for the term will be guitar lessons with a qualified guitar teacher.
- All incursion providers will be given a copy of the Our Patch Safeguarding Children Policies prior to commencement to ensure the health and wellbeing of the children
- All incursion providers will need to confirm their commitment to adhere to all Our Patch Safeguarding Children Policies by signing our Commitment to Safeguarding Children Form prior to providing their service.
    - Our Safeguarding Children Policy and our Commitment to Safeguarding Children Form will be provided to each incursion provider by the Holiday Program Manager

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    - The signed Commitment to Safeguarding Children Form is to be returned to the Holiday Program Manager and will be kept safe and stored electronically at Head Office
- Children are never to be left alone with the incursion provider—a Educator will need to be present throughout the whole incursion
- If it is an active incursion—i.e. sport—children will need to be dressed appropriately and will have access to water throughout the incursion
- Where possible, Educators will engage in the incursion to support the children and incursion provider.
- Educators will actively supervise throughout the incursion and position themselves to best see the incursion and ensure Patch guidelines are being adhered to at all times.
- Holiday Program will have incursions throughout the program. These will be advertised on the Our Patch website with information regarding the specifics of the incursion so parents/guardians are aware of what their child/ren will be participating in.

## Related Policies:

- All complaints and grievances policies

## Related legislation:

- Quality Area 1 – Educational Program and Practice
- Quality Area 5 – Relationships with Children
- Quality Area 6 – Collaborative Partnerships with Families and Communities

## Resources:

- ACECQA Guide to the NQF

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# Classification Rating

## Purpose of this Policy:

Children will be offered a range of experiences at Our Patch, and this may, on occasion, include the watching of TV/DVD/Games. To ensure the wellbeing and that we are best supporting the needs of all children, classification ratings will be used to guide all multimedia experiences offered at Our Patch.

## Prerequisite Policy:

- Program planning Policy
- Duty of Care Policy

## Policy:

Children will be given the opportunity to experience various forms of media at Our Patch and Leader will ensure that it is aligned with the program plan, be of interest to the children, and enhance their learning experiences.

## Impact for Our Patch:

- Enriching program with opportunity for children to experience different forms of media

## Strategies:

- All media shown at a Patch will be rated General Exhibition (G).
- Where the classification rating is Parental Guidance (PG), written permission from the parents/guardians will need to be obtained prior.
- Children will be given the opportunity to engage in other activities if they don't want to participate in the media experience being offered
- TV/DVD/Games rated M15+, MA15+, and/or R18+ cannot be viewed at any time at Our Patch, regardless of parental/guardian permission
- Listening to the radio, watching YouTube and other internet clips are not to be used during service operations due to the unpredictability and suitability of what is discussed and played, regardless of parental/guardian permission
- All media used in Our Patch needs to be original—not downloaded copies—to make sure it was legally obtained.

## Related Policies:

- Children's Feedback and Grievances Policy

## Related legislation:

- Quality Area 1 – Educational Program and Practice
- Education and Care Services National Regulations (2011) R73 – 75, 177, 185

## Resources:

- ACECQA Guide to the NQF

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# Children's Personal Electronic Devices

## Purpose of this Policy:

Personal electronic devices are of increasing interest in the world we live in. To enable children to use of the personal electronic device, Our Patch wants to ensure they are able to be used by the children in Our Patch in a safe and responsible manner.

## Prerequisite Policy:

- Duty of Care Policy
- Code of Conduct

## Policy:

Our Patch will ensure the values of the school community are upheld with regards to the use of children using their own electronic devices at Our Patch.

Our Patch will make sure that the use of the children's personal electronic devices by children are in line with Safeguarding Children, in that the children will be supervised and conversations about appropriate use of technology will be had.

Children's personal electronic devices include, but aren't limited to computers, laptops, iPads, tablets, and mobile phones.

Educators are to adhere to our Personal Electronic Devices and Social Media Policies at all times.

## Impact for Our Patch:

- Child safety
- Educator awareness

## Strategies:

- Parents/guardians will sign a permission slip allowing children to use their personal electronic devices at Our Patch.
    - The permission slip will specify what activities the child can use their personal electronic devices for, including but not limited to
        - Homework
        - Games
        - Mindfulness Apps
        - Research for activities
- Children will sign off on an Agreement of Acceptable Use of Personal Electronic Devices - Child, to give them ownership of their use of devices in Our Patch.
- Children may use their personal electronic devices to access the internet with the supervision of a Educator or Leader

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    - Our Educator or Leader will ensure the children are sitting in a place within Our Patch where the devices can be easily monitored to ensure the children are only doing approved activities
- Children's personal electronic devices will need to be on the school's Wi-Fi as there are already censors in place to reduce the sites that children can access
- The amount of time a child uses their personal electronic device will be monitored and limited to 30-minute blocks, unless the child is doing homework, and they require more time to complete it
- If a child is found to be using their personal electronic device inappropriately or comes across material that is inappropriate for children, Our Educators will ask the child to return their device into their school bag and the child will agree to do this.
    - The Educator will then take note of the website/material that was inappropriate and will discuss with the parent/guardian at collection time.
    - Images/recording are not to be taken or shared using personal devices at any time.
    - If a child is deliberately looking at inappropriate material/websites, they will be unable to use their personal electronic devices for an amount of time agreed to by the Leader, the parent/guardian, and the child.
    - When practical, the Leader will notify the school of the inappropriate material/website so that they can put a block on the school's system for future use.
- Any personal electronic devices are the responsibility of the owner, and Our Patch is not responsible for any theft, loss, or damage to any personal electronic devices brought to Our Patch

## Related Policies:

- Educator Personal Electronic Devices and Social Media Policy

## Related legislation:

- Quality Area 1 – Educational Program and Practice.
- Quality Area 2 – Children's health and safety
- Quality Area 7 – Leadership and Service Management
- Victorian Child Safe Standards (11 Standards, Ministerial Order 1359, updated 2022) — Standard 1 (cultural safety for Aboriginal children) is a stand-alone Standard
- South Australia Child Safe Standards
- Queensland Child Safe Standards
- Education and Care Services National Law Act (2010), S 165

## Resources:

- ACECQA Guide to the NQF
- Australian Childhood Foundation

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# Acceptable Use

## Purpose of this Policy:

To ensure the safety of all children, Our Patch has an acceptable use policy. This policy is designed to outline the acceptable uses of the websites, computers, and other personal electronic devices to ensure that no child is privy to material they shouldn't be.

## Prerequisite Policy:

- Duty of Care Policy
- Code of Conduct
- Classification Rating Policy
- Educators Personal Electronic Devices Policy
- Children's Personal Electronic Devices Policy

## Policy:

All our personnel, and the children to whom we deliver our program to, are required to follow our 'Acceptable Use' Policy in relation to browsing websites on our organisation's or their personal electronic devices.

All Our Patch employees are required to ensure appropriate monitoring of children when using any electronic device. This includes our organisation's device as well as a child's personal electronic device (i.e. iPads, mobile phones, laptop computers) to ensure that they do not inadvertently place themselves at risk of abuse or exploitation via social networking sites, gaming sites or through web searches, or inappropriate email communication.

## Impact for Our Patch:

- Child safety
- Educator awareness

## Strategies:

- Parents/guardians will sign a permission slip allowing children to use Our Patch's devices while at Our Patch
    - The permission slip will specify what activities a child can the Our Patch devices for, including but not limited to
        - Homework
        - Games
        - Mindfulness Apps
        - Research for activities
- Educators must not contact children directly via any electronic device or via social media at any time.
- Children will sign off on an Agreement of Acceptable Use of Personal Electronic Devices, to give them ownership of their use of devices in Our Patch

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- Children may use Our Patch's devices to access the internet, but only under the supervision of a Educator or Leader
    - Our Educator or Leader will ensure all children using devices are sitting in a place within Our Patch where the devices can be easily monitored to ensure the children are only doing approved activities
- The Our Patch devices will need to be on the school's Wi-Fi as there are already censors in place to reduce the sites that children can access
- The amount of time a child uses Our Patch's device will be monitored and limited to 30-minute blocks, unless the child is doing homework, and they require more time to complete it
- If a child is found to be using an Our Patch device inappropriately or comes across material that is inappropriate for children, Our Educators will ask the child for the device and take note of the website/material that was inappropriate.
    - If a child is deliberately looking at or for inappropriate material/websites, they will be unable to use Our Patch's devices for an amount of time agreed to by the Leader, the parent/guardian, and the child.
    - When practical, the Leader will notify the school of the inappropriate material/website so that they can put a block in the system for future uses
- Personnel and children are unable to take images on any personal electronic device at any time.
- Images are not to be distributed to anyone outside our organisation at any time

## Related Policies:

- Children's Personal Electronic Devices Policy
- Educator's Personal Electronic Devices and Social Media Policy

## Related legislation:

- Quality Area 1 – Educational Program and Practice.
- Quality Area 2 – Children's health and safety
- Quality Area 7 – Leadership and Service Management
- Victorian Child Safe Standards (11 Standards, Ministerial Order 1359, updated 2022) — Standard 1 (cultural safety for Aboriginal children) is a stand-alone Standard
- Education and Care Services National Law Act (2010), S 165

## Resources:

- ACECQA Guide to the NQF
- Australian Childhood Foundation

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# Privacy Policy

## 1. Introduction

Our Patch Education Pty Ltd ABN: 27 650 020 394)) alongside School Plus Foundation (ABN45 160 942 943), Our Patch Education (ABN 50 640 869 209) and Amaze Active OSHC Ltd (ABN 59 604 428 953) recognises that every individual has the right to ensure their personal information is accurate and secure, and only used or disclosed to achieve the outcomes for which it was initially collected. Personal information will be managed openly and transparently in a way that protects an individual's privacy and respects their rights under Australian privacy laws.

We manage personal information in accordance with and in compliance with the obligations under the Privacy Act 1988 (cth), the Education and Care Services National Law, the Fair Work Act, the Superannuation Guarantee (Administration) Act, the Income Tax Assessment Act, Occupational Health and Safety acts, Workers Compensation acts, Family Assistance laws and related acts and regulations. In addition, Our Patch Education Pty Ltd complies with the Australian Privacy Principles published by the Office of the Australian Information Commission.

We only collect information that is reasonably necessary for the proper performance of our activities or functions. We do not collect personal information just because we think it could be useful at some future stage if we have no present need for it. We may decline to collect unsolicited personal information from or about you or your child and take steps to purge it from our systems. By following the links in this document, you will be able to find out how we manage you and your child's personal information as an APP Entity under the Australian Privacy Principles (APPs). You will also be able to find out about the information flows associated with that information. If you have any questions, please contact us.

### 1.1. APP Entity

Our Patch Education Pty Ltd and entities listed above manages personal information, as an APP Entity, under the Australian Privacy Principles (APPs). Because we are a contracted service provider to a range of Commonwealth, State and Territory government agencies, it sometimes becomes necessary for us to collect and manage personal information as an Agency under different privacy arrangements. If you wish to know whether this applies to you, please contact us.

### 1.2. Information Flow

We collect personal information if it is necessary for us to carry out program operations or to comply with our legal obligations. This includes information required to comply with the National Education and Care Law and Regulations and to promote learning under the Early Years Learning Framework, we will also exchange your information with Services Australia in regard to your Child Care Subsidy (CCS) payments.
When we collect your personal information:

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- we check that it is reasonably necessary for our purposes as an Education and Care provider.
- we check that it is current, complete, and accurate. This will sometimes mean that we have to cross check the information that we collect from you with third parties;
- we record and hold your information in our information record system.
- we retrieve your information when we need to use or disclose it for our purposes
- At that time, we check that it is current, complete, accurate and relevant. This will sometimes mean that we have to cross check the information that we collect from you with third parties once again – especially if some time has passed since we last checked.
- subject to some exceptions, we permit you to access your personal information in accordance with APP:12 of the (APPs).
- we correct or attach associated statements to your personal information in accordance with APP:13 of the (APPs).
- we destroy or de-identify your personal information when it is no longer needed for any purpose for which it may be used or disclosed provided that it is lawful for us to do so. We do not destroy or de-identify information that is contained in a Commonwealth Record.

## 2. Kinds of information that we collect and hold

Personal information that we collect, and hold is information that is reasonably necessary as an Education and Care provider and is likely to differ depending on whether you are:

- a Customer
- a Job Applicant/Employee
- a Business Partner/Supplier
- a Referee

### 2.1. For Customers

Our Patch Education Pty Ltd will collect your personal information from a range of sources including directly from you at the point of enrolment, your use of the Our Patch Education App or XAP, our standard forms, attendance at a program, promotions and events and from your subscription to receive Our Patch Education Pty Ltd updates and information. Information that we need to collect may include:

- Personal information includes name, address, date of birth, gender, family contact details, emergency contact details, authorised nominee details, parents, occupations, cultural background, home language, religious beliefs, payment details, child care subsidy information, immunisation records, medical information, medical management plans, photos of children and family members and information about children's strengths, interests, preferences and needs, including special needs. Personal information also includes government related identifiers like Medicare numbers and CCS references.

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We usually collect personal information directly from a parent or guardian either in writing or verbally, for example during enrolment, when completing waiting list applications, or as we establish a partnership with families in caring for and educating a child. We may also collect information through Family Law court orders or agreements, special needs agencies and training courses.

Once attending the program, we may collect and hold information pertaining to children and may include, but is not limited to, incident records, attendance records, health records and child profiles. This information is only collected as it is required by the Education and Care National Law.

## 2.2. For Job Applicants and Employees

We collect personal information when recruiting personnel, such as your name, contact details, qualifications, and work history.

The type of information that we typically collect when recruiting personnel is employment related information that is necessary to assess amenability to work offers and work availability and suitability for placements such as:

- Candidate's background, qualifications, and references.
- Past employment details
- Valid Working with Children's Check (for relevant state)
- National Police Check, checking your right to work status
- Identification of your training needs or any other products that may assist your development or employability
- Our management of performance reviews, complaints, investigations or inquiries that involve you
- Any insurance claim or workplace rehabilitation that requires disclosure of your personal and sensitive information.

Generally, we will collect this information directly from you. We may also collect personal information from third parties in ways which you would expect (for example, from recruitment agencies or referees you have nominated). Before offering you a position, we may collect additional details such as your tax file number and superannuation information and other information necessary to conduct background checks to determine your suitability for working with children.

## 2.3. For Business Partner/Suppliers

The type of information that we typically collect and hold about our Business Partners/Suppliers is information that is necessary to help us manage the presentation and delivery of our services and includes:

- The names, mobile phone numbers and email addresses of contacts
- Feedback given on selected candidates that have worked on a client site

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- Various site details

### 2.4. For Referees

The type of information that we typically collect and hold about Referees is information that is necessary to help to make determinations about the suitability of one of our Job Applicants for particular jobs or types of work and includes:

- Contact numbers and contact details and
- Declarations on the suitability of candidates

## 3. Purposes

The purposes for which we collect, hold, use and disclose your personal information are likely to differ depending on whether you are:

- a Customer
- a Job Applicant/Employee
- a Business Partner/Supplier
- a Referee

The following sections are also relevant to our use and disclosure of your personal information:

- Our Policy on Direct Marketing

### 3.1. For Customers

Our Patch Education Pty Ltd will not disclose your personal information to others unless you would have reasonably expected us to do this, or we have your consent. For example, personal information may be disclosed to:

- emergency service personnel so they can provide medical treatment in an emergency
- special needs educators or inclusion support agencies
- trainers or presenters if children participate in special learning activities/incursions
- another program to which a child is transferring where you have consented to the transfer.
- the new operator of the program if we sell our business and you have consented to the transfer of enrolment and other documents listed in Regulation 177 of the National Education and Care Regulations.

We may disclose personal information where we are permitted or obliged to do so by an Australian law. For example, personal information may be disclosed to:

- authorised officers when our program is assessed and rated under the National Education and Care Law and Regulations
- Government agencies (eg for CCS)
- software companies that provide child care management systems
- management companies we may engage to administer the program

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- software companies that provide tailored computer based educational tools for children
- lawyers in relation to a legal claim.
- officers carrying out an external dispute resolution process
- a debt collection company we use to recover outstanding fees
- to child protection agencies or family support agencies when it is reasonably believed that a child is at risk of significant harm, as is required by the National Law and Our Patch Education Pty Ltd's Child Protection Policy.

We do not disclose personal information to any person or organisation overseas or for any direct marketing purposes.

### 3.2. For Job Applicants/Employees

Our Patch Education Pty Ltd will not disclose your personal information to others unless you would have reasonably expected us to do this, or we have your consent. For example, personal information may be disclosed to:

- your referees
- our related companies
- regulatory authorities as required by the National Law and Regulations
- Our insurers and Workers Compensation agencies
- Australian Government Departments or Agencies including the Australian Taxation Office
- Staff management
- Training
- Risk management
- Client and business relationship management
- Any person with a lawful entitlement to obtain the information.
- Marketing services to you; but only where this is permitted and whilst you are employed with us

### 3.3. For Business Partners/Suppliers

Personal information that we collect, hold, use and disclose about Business Partners/Suppliers is typically used for:

- client and business relationship management
- recruitment functions
- marketing services to you
- statistical purposes and statutory compliance requirements

### 3.4. For Referees

Personal information that we collect, hold, use and disclose about Referees is typically used for:

- to confirm identity and authority to provide references

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- Job Applicant suitability assessment
- recruitment functions
- confirm identity and authority to provide references
- assess Job Applicant suitability

### 3.5. Our Policy on Direct Marketing

Our Patch Education Pty Ltd will only communicate directly with you to inform you about our products or services, upcoming promotions or events that may be of interest to you. Our Patch Education Pty Ltd may conduct and contact you for the purpose of market research for the purpose of optimising our services. Our Patch Education Pty Ltd will not sell personal information or data to any other entity for any purposes.

If you have received direct marketing materials from us and you no longer wish to receive direct marketing material from us, you are able to opt-out of direct marketing or market research from Our Patch Education Pty Ltd by clicking the unsubscribe button in the email, replying to the communication or contact us.

## 4. How your personal information is collected

The means by which we will generally collect your personal information are likely to differ depending on whether you are:

- a Customer
- a Job Applicant/Employee
- a Business Partner/Supplier
- a Referee

### 4.1. For Customers

Our Patch Education Pty Ltd may collect your personal information from a range of sources including directly from you at the point of enrolment, your use of the Our Patch Education Pty Ltd App or XAP, our standard forms, attendance at a program, promotions, and events and from your subscription to receive Our Patch Education Pty Ltd updates and information.

Our Patch Education Pty Ltd may also collect personal information from suppliers, employees, prospective employees, personal contacts, third parties such as your child's school, publicly available resources and through the ordinary course of business.

### 4.2. For Job Applicants/Employees

Personal information will be collected from you directly when you fill out and submit an application form or any other information in connection with your application to us for work. Personal information is also collected when:

- You alter your availability or location
- You change your numbers and contact details
- We check your references and

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- When we gain feedback on your work performance

We may also collect personal information about you from a range of publicly available sources including newspapers, journals, directories, the Internet, and social media sites. When we collect personal information about you from publicly available sources for inclusion in our records we will manage the information in accordance with the APPs and our Privacy Policy.

### 4.3. For Business Partners/Suppliers

Personal information about you may be collected:

- when you provide it to us for business- or business-related social purposes
- when you offer it at conferences
- when you are referred to us by another client

We may also collect personal information about you from a range of publicly available sources including newspapers, journals, directories, the Internet, and social media sites. When we collect personal information about you from publicly available sources for inclusion in our records we will manage the information in accordance with the APPs and our Privacy Policy.

### 4.4. For Referees

Personal information about you may be collected when you provide it to us:

- in the course of our checking Job seeker references with you and when we are checking information that we obtain from you about Job seekers

We may also collect personal information about you from a range of publicly available sources including newspapers, journals, directories, the Internet, and social media sites. When we collect personal information about you from publicly available sources for inclusion in our records we will manage the information in accordance with the APPs and our Privacy Policy.

### 4.5. Electronic Transactions

Sometimes, we collect personal information that individuals choose to give us via online forms or by email, for example when individuals:

- ask to be on a mailing list
- enrol as a program attendee
- apply for employment or submit a resume by email or through our website
- make a written online enquiry or email us through our website

It is important that you understand that there are risks associated with use of the Internet and you should take all appropriate steps to protect your personal information. It might help you to look at the OAIC's resource on Internet Communications and other Technologies.

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You can contact us by land line telephone or post if you have concerns about making contact via the Internet.

**4.5.1 Access**

You can contact us as set out below to request access to the personal information we hold about you and correction of that information. We may need to verify your identity.

Please provide as much detail as you can about the particular information you seek, to help us locate it. We will provide our reasons if we deny any request for access to or correction of personal information. Where we decide not to make a requested correction to your personal information and you disagree, you may ask us to make a note of your requested correction with the information.

We might impose a moderate charge in providing access. Our Privacy Co-ordinator would discuss these with you.

You should also anticipate that it may take a little time to process your application for access as there may be a need to retrieve information from storage and review information in order to determine what information may be provided. We will generally respond to your request for access within 20 working days.

**4.5.2 Electronic Transactions**

This section explains how we handle personal information collected from our website www.ourpatch.education and by other technology in the course of electronic transactions.

It is important that you understand that there are risks associated with use of the internet and you should take all appropriate steps to protect your personal information. It might help you to look at: Office of the Australian Information Commissioner

It is important that you:

- Know your rights: read our privacy policy, collection statement and consent to electronic transactions.
- Be careful what information you share on the Web.
- Use privacy tools on the site - control access to your search listing and profile.
- Make sure your anti-virus and data protection software is up to date.

Please contact our office by phone or mail if you have concerns about making contact via the internet. For further information see the how to contact us in this document.

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### 4.5.3 Browsing

When an individual looks at our website, our internet service provider (Telstra) makes a record of the visit and logs (in server logs) the following information for statistical purposes:

- The individual's server address
- The individual's top level domain name (for example .com, .gov, .org, .au, etc)
- The pages the individual accessed, and documents downloaded
- The previous site the individual visited and
- The type of browser being used.

We do not identify users or their browsing activities except, in the event of an investigation, where a law enforcement agency may exercise a warrant to inspect the internet service provider's server logs.

We do not accept responsibility for the privacy policy of any other site to which our site has a hyperlink, and it is advisable to look at the privacy policy of other sites before disclosing personal information.

### 4.5.4 Cookies

Cookies are uniquely numbered identification numbers like tags which are placed on your browser. By themselves cookies do not identify you personally, but they may link back to a database record about you. If you register on our site, we will then link your cookie back to your personal information details.

This site uses cookies to monitor usage of the website, to enable purchases, and to create a personal record of when you visit our website and what pages you view. Cookies are necessary to enable us to assess the effectiveness of our page content and SEO strategy on our web site, but if you do not wish us to retain any information about your visit to our site you could delete the cookies on your browser and change the settings on your web browser program.

### 4.5.5 Web Bugs

If we use web bugs we will display a clearly visible icon on the page. The icon will include the name of the company collecting information and will be labelled as a tracking device. The Web bug will be linked to a page disclosing what data is collected, how it is used, and which companies receive the data. Web visitors will be able to opt out of data collection by Web bugs. Web bugs will not be used to collect sensitive information.

### 4.5.6 Cloud Computing Services

We cannot guarantee that any recipient of your personal information will protect it to the standard to which it ought to be protected. The costs and difficulties of enforcement of privacy rights in foreign jurisdictions or against third parties and the impracticability of

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attempting to enforce such rights in some jurisdictions will mean that in some instances, we will need to seek your consent to disclosure.

In cases where we use cloud computing services, we will take reasonable steps to ensure that:

- Disclosure of your personal information to the cloud service provider is consistent with our disclosure obligations under the Privacy Principles. This may include ensuring that we have obtained your consent, or that the disclosure is for purposes within your reasonable expectations.
- Disclosure is consistent with any other legal obligations, such as the restrictions on the disclosure of tax file number information or the disclosure by private employment agencies of applicant details.
- Our Cloud computing services provider's terms of service recognise that we are bound by obligations to protect the privacy of your personal information and that they will not do anything that would cause us to breach those obligations.

**4.5.7 Emails**

Our technology systems log emails received and sent and may include voting and read and receipt notifications to enable tracking.

When your email address is received by us because you send us a message, the email address will only be used or disclosed for the purpose for which you have provided it, and it will not be added to a mailing list or used or disclosed for any other purpose without your consent other than as may be permitted or required by law.

**4.5.8 Call and message logs**

Our telephone technology (systems and mobile phones) logs telephone calls and messages received and sent and enables call number display.

When your call number is received by us because you phone us or send us a message, the number will only be used or disclosed for the purpose for which you have provided it, and it will not be added to a phone list or used or disclosed for any other purpose without your consent other than as may be permitted or required by law.

**4.5.9 Teleconferences and Video conferences**

Teleconferences and video conferences may be recorded with your consent. In cases where it is proposed that they be recorded, we will tell you first the purpose for which they are to be used and retained.

**4.5.10 Database**

We use recruiting software and databases to log and record recruitment operations.

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#### 4.5.11 Paperless Office

Recognising the environmental advantages and efficiencies it provides, we operate a wholly/partially paperless office as a result of which your paper-based communications with us may be digitised and retained in digital format, the paper-based communications may be culled.
It is therefore important that, except where specifically requested, you do not send us originals of any paper-based document and that you retain copies for your own records. Where we do request original paper-based documents, we will return them to you once they are no longer required by us for the purpose for which they may be used or disclosed.

## 5. How your personal information is held

Personal information is held in our information record system until it is no longer needed for any purpose for which it may be used or disclosed at which time it will be de-identified or destroyed provided that it is lawful for us to do so. We take a range of measures to protect your personal information from:

- misuse, interference, and loss; and
- unauthorised access, modification, or disclosure.

## 5.1. Our Information Record System

We store information internally on an in-house server which is managed by a dedicated in-house IT team.

## 5.2. Information Security

Our information security system is built around data protection and privacy policy. This includes:

- Staff training on confidentiality and privacy
- "Clean desk" procedures
- Need-to-know and authorisation policies
- Just-in-time collection policies
- Password protection
- Policies on laptop, mobile phone, and portable storage device security
- Policy on timely culling
- Culling procedures including shredding and secure disposal of confidential documents etc.

## 6. Disclosures

We may disclose your personal information for any of the purpose for which it is primarily held or for a related purpose. We may disclose your personal information where we are under a legal duty to do so. Disclosure will usually be:

- internally and to our related entities

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- to our Clients
- to Referees for suitability and screening purposes.

### 6.1. Related Purpose Disclosures

We outsource a number of services to contracted service suppliers (CSPs) from time to time. Our CSPs may see some of your personal information. Typically, our CSPs would include:

- Software solutions providers
- I.T. contractors and database designers and Internet service suppliers
- Legal and other professional advisors
- Insurance brokers, loss assessors and underwriters
- Superannuation fund managers
- Background checking and screening agents

We take reasonable steps to ensure that terms of service with our CSPs recognise that we are bound by obligations to protect the privacy of your personal information and that they will not do anything that would cause us to breach those obligations.

We may disclose your personal information for any of the purposes for which it is primarily held or for a related purpose where lawfully permitted.

We may disclose your personal information where we are under a legal duty to do so, including circumstances where we are under a contractual or lawful duty of care to disclose information.

We do not share personal information about you with government agencies, organisations, or anyone else unless one of the following applies:

- You have consented
- You would reasonably expect, or have been told, that information of that kind is usually passed to those individuals, bodies or agencies
- It is required or authorised by law
- It will prevent or lessen a serious and imminent threat to somebody's life or health
- The disclosure is reasonably necessary for the enforcement of the criminal law or of a law imposing a pecuniary penalty, or for the protection of public revenue

## 7. Access & Correction

Subject to some exceptions set out in privacy law, you can gain access to your personal information that we hold.

Important exceptions include:

- access that would impact on the privacy rights of other people. We do refuse access if it would breach confidentiality.

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For more information about access to your information see our Access Policy.

For more information about applying to correct your information see our Correction Policy.

### 7.1. Access Policy

If you wish to obtain access to your personal information you should contact our Privacy Co-ordinator. You will need to be in a position to verify your identity.

Subject to some exceptions that are set out in both the Australian Privacy Principles you can gain access to the personal information that we hold about you. To make a request to access your personal information, you will need to complete a written application form verifying your identity and specifying what information you require. We will respond to your request within a reasonable period after the request is made and provide access to the information in the manner requested if it is reasonable and practicable to do so. Please ensure you request a specific time and date on when your information is required so we can reasonably inform you of our ability to respond within this time frame.

If we refuse to provide you with access to your personal information, we will notify you in writing of the reasons for the refusal and the process for escalation regarding this refusal.

### 7.2. Correction Policy

If you find that personal information that we hold about you is inaccurate, out of date, incomplete, irrelevant or misleading, you can ask us to correct it by contacting us.

We will take such steps as are reasonable in the circumstances to correct that information to ensure that, having regard to the purpose for which it is held, the information is accurate, up to date, complete, relevant, and not misleading.

If we have disclosed personal information about you that is inaccurate, out of date, incomplete, irrelevant, or misleading, you can ask us to notify the third parties to whom we made the disclosure and we will take such steps (if any) as are reasonable in the circumstances to give that notification unless it is impracticable or unlawful to do so.

## 8. Complaints

You have a right to complain about our handling of your personal information if you believe that we have interfered with your privacy. For more information see our Complaints Procedure.

### 8.1. Complaints procedure

If you are making a complaint about our handling of your personal information, it should first be made to us in writing.

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You can make complaints about our handling of your personal information to our Privacy Co-ordinator, whose contact details are Rosa Piteri on 0499 161 612 or rosap@ourpatch.education

You can also make complaints to the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner

Complaints may also be made to the Education Regulatory Authority in your state.

When we receive your complaint:

- We will take steps to confirm the authenticity of the complaint and the contact details provided to us to ensure that we are responding to you or to a person whom you have authorised to receive information about your complaint
- Upon confirmation we will write to you to acknowledge receipt and to confirm that we are handling your complaint in accordance with our privacy policy.
- We may ask for clarification of certain aspects of the complaint and for further detail
- We will consider the complaint and may make inquiries of people who can assist us to establish what has happened and why
- We will require a reasonable time (usually 30 days) to respond
- If the complaint can be resolved by procedures for access and correction, we will suggest these to you as possible solutions
- If we believe that your complaint may be capable of some other solution, we will suggest that solution to you, on a confidential and without prejudice basis in our response

If the complaint cannot be resolved by means that we propose in our response, we will suggest that you take your complaint to any recognised external dispute resolution scheme to which we belong or to the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner.

**Future Changes**

This policy may change over time in light of changes to privacy laws, technology and business practice. If you use our website regularly it is important that you check this policy regularly to ensure that you are aware of the extent of any consent, authorisation, or permission you might give.

This Privacy Policy was last updated in March 2024.

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## Appendix 1 – Definitions

| Term | Definition |
|---|---|
| Bullying | Bullying involves the inappropriate use of power by one or more persons over another less powerful person or group and is generally an act that is repeated over time. Bullying has been described by researchers as taking many forms which are often interrelated and include:<br>• ***Verbal*** (name calling, put downs, threats);<br>• ***Physical*** (hitting, punching, kicking, scratching, tripping, spitting);<br>• ***Social*** (ignoring, excluding, ostracising, alienating); and/or<br>• ***Psychological*** (spreading rumours, stalking, dirty looks, hiding or damaging possessions). |
| Child | A person under the age of eighteen years. |
| Code of Conduct | The Code of Conduct aims to identify and prevent behaviour that may be harmful to children in our programs and communities. The Code of Conduct outlines what is, and what is not acceptable behaviour or practice when working with or engaging with children. |
| Emotional or psychological abuse | Emotional or psychological abuse occurs when a child does not receive the love, affection, or attention they need for healthy emotional, psychological, and social development. Such abuse may involve repeated rejection or threats to a child. Constant criticism, teasing, ignoring, threatening, yelling, scapegoating, ridicule and rejection or continual coldness are all examples of emotional abuse. These behaviours continue to an extent that results in significant damage to the child physical, intellectual, or emotional wellbeing and development. |
| Family Violence | Family violence occurs when children are forced to live with violence between adults in their home. It is harmful to children. It can include witnessing violence or the consequences of violence. Family violence is defined as violence between members of a family or extended family or those fulfilling the role of family in a child's life. Exposure to family violence places children at increased risk of physical injury and harm and has a significant impact on their wellbeing and development. |
| Grooming | Grooming is a term used to describe what happens when a perpetrator of abuse builds a relationship with a child with a view to abusing them at some stage. There is no set pattern in relation to the grooming of children. For some perpetrators, there will be a lengthy period of time before the abuse begins. The child may be given special attention and, what starts as an apparently normal display of affection, such as cuddling, can develop into sexual touching or masturbation and then into more serious sexual behaviour. Other perpetrators may draw a child in and abuse them relatively quickly. Some abusers do not groom children but abuse them without forming a relationship at all. Grooming can take place in any setting where a relationship is formed, such as |

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| Term | Definition |
|---|---|
| | leisure, music, sports, and religious activities, or in internet chatrooms, in social media or by other technological channels. |
| Harm | Harm to a child, is any detrimental effect of a significant nature on the child's physical, psychological, or emotional wellbeing. It is immaterial how the harm is caused. Harm can be caused by:<br>• physical, psychological, or emotional abuse or neglect;<br>• sexual abuse or exploitation;<br>• a single act, omission, or circumstance; and<br>• a series or combination of acts, omissions, or circumstances. |
| LGBTQI+ | (Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and intersex) as outlined in *Rainbow Tick National Accreditation* program for LGBTQI inclusive practice throughout Australia.<br>https://www.qip.com.au/standards/rainbow-tick-standards/ |
| National Principles for Child Safe Organisations (National Principles) | The National Principles are designed to build capacity and deliver child safety and wellbeing in organisations, families, and communities and prevent future harm. The principles have been endorsed by all Commonwealth, state, and territory governments.<br>https://childsafe.humanrights.gov.au/national-principles |
| Neglect | Neglect is the persistent failure or deliberate denial to provide the child with the basic necessities of life. Such neglect includes the failure to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, adequate supervision, clean water, medical attention, or supervision to the extent that the child's health and development is, or is likely to be, significantly harmed. Categories of neglect include physical neglect, medical neglect, abandonment, or desertion, emotional neglect, and educational neglect. The issue of neglect must be considered within the context of resources reasonably available. |
| Online environment | Anywhere online that allows digital communication, such as: social networks, text messages and messaging apps, email and private messaging, online chats, comments on live streaming sites and voice chat in games. |
| Personnel | All who work for the organisation whether in a paid or unpaid capacity, including employees, casual employees, third-party providers, volunteers, the Board, and committee members. |
| Physical abuse | Physical abuse occurs when a person subjects a child to non-accidental physically aggressive acts. The abuser may inflict an injury intentionally or inadvertently as a result of physical punishment or the aggressive treatment of a child. Physically abusive behaviour includes (but is not limited to) shoving, hitting, slapping, shaking, throwing, punching, biting, burning, suffocating, excessive and physically harmful over training, |

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| Term | Definition |
|---|---|
| | and kicking. It also includes giving children harmful substances such as drugs, alcohol, or poison. Certain types of punishment, whilst not causing injury can also be considered physical abuse if they place a child at risk of being hurt. |
| Risk management | In the context of creating safe environments for children, risk management consists of assessing and taking steps to minimise the risks of harm to children because of the action of an employee, third-party provider, volunteer, or another child. Risk management includes planning the work of the organisation to reduce or minimise situations where children may be abused. |
| The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (Royal Commission). | An independent inquiry established in 2013 by the Australian Government to examine and report upon responses by institutions to instances and allegations of child sexual abuse in educational institutions, religious groups, sporting organisations, state institutions and youth organisations. The findings provide recommendations to the Government on how to improve laws, policies, structures, and practices to prevent such harm from re-occurring.<br>https://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/ |
| Sexual abuse | Sexual abuse occurs when an adult or a person of authority (e.g., older) involves a child in any sexual activity. Perpetrators of sexual abuse take advantage of their power, authority, or position over the child for their own benefit. It can include making sexual comments to a child, engaging children to participate in sexual conversations over the internet or on social media, kissing, touching a child's genitals or breasts, oral sex, or intercourse with a child. Encouraging a child to view pornographic magazines, websites and videos is also sexual abuse. Engaging children to participate in sexual conversations over the internet is also considered sexual abuse. |
| Sexual exploitation | Sexual exploitation is a form of sexual abuse where offenders use their power, (physical, financial, or emotional) over a child, or a false identity, to sexually or emotionally abuse them. It often involves situations and relationships where children receive something (food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts, money etc.) in return for participating in sexual activities. Sexual exploitation can occur in person or online, and sometimes the child may not even realise they are a victim. |
| Victorian Child Safe Standards | All Victorian organisations that provide services or facilities to children are required by law to comply with the Child Safe Standards<br>CCYP \| The Child Safe Standards |
| United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child | Is an international agreement setting out the civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights of every child, regardless of their race, religion, or abilities.<br>https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx |

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***Definition Reference and Sources***

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW), 2018
World Health Organization, (2006)
Child Family Community Australia (CFCA), (2016).
Australian eSafety Commissioner, (2020).

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# Appendix 2: Victorian Legislation and Resources

| Victorian Legislation | |
|---|---|
| Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic.) | • Adoption Act 1984 (Vic.)<br>• Child Employment Act 2003 (Vic.)<br>• Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic.)<br>• Children and Justice Legislation Amendment (Youth Justice Reform) Act 2017 (Vic.)<br>• Commission for Children and Young People Act 2012 (Vic.)<br>• Family Violence Protection Act 2008 (Vic.)<br>• Sex Offenders Registration Act 2004 (Vic.)<br>• Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic.) |

| Victorian Mandator Reporting Guidance Resource | Reporters in Victoria are: |
|---|---|
| Mandatory reporting laws require specified people to report suspected abuse and neglect to government child protection services in Australia.<br><br>This legislation requires that all mandatory reporters must make a report to Victoria Police and/or DHHS Child Protection as soon as practicable if, during the course of carrying out their professional roles and responsibilities, they form a belief on reasonable grounds that:<br>• a child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, significant harm as a result of physical abuse and/ or sexual abuse, and<br>• the child's parents have not protected, or are unlikely to protect, the child from harm of that type. | There are certain classes of professionals who are classified as "mandatory reporters". Within Victoria mandatory reporters include all:<br>• registered medical practitioners<br>• nurses<br>• midwives<br>• registered teachers and early childhood teachers<br>• school principals<br>• school counsellors<br>• police officers<br>• out of home care workers (excluding voluntary foster and kinship carers)<br>• early childhood workers<br>• youth justice workers<br>• registered psychologists<br>• people in religious ministry |

**For Immediate Help**

- To report concerns that are life threatening, ring Victoria Police: 000
- To report concerns about the immediate safety of a child after hours, call the After-Hours Child Protection Emergency Service: 13 12 78.

To make a report, you should contact the child protection intake service covering the local government area (LGA) where the child normally resides.

Telephone numbers to make a report during business hours (8.45am -5.00pm), Monday to Friday, are listed below:

- North Division intake: 1300 664 977
- South Division intake: 1300 655 795
- East Division intake: 1300 360 391
- West Division intake - metropolitan: 1300 664 977
- West Division intake - rural and regional: 1800 075 599

If you are not sure which number to call, check the Child Protection Contacts Page for details on the LGAs covered by each intake service:

- By calling your local police station. Find my local police station
- If you have significant concern for the wellbeing of a child, but do not believe they are at risk of significant harm, and where the immediate safety of the child will not be compromised a referral to Child FIRST or The Orange Door may be appropriate. This is the new access point for families who need assistance with the care and wellbeing of children, including those experiencing family violence, to contact the services they need to be safe and supported Child FIRST and family services - DHHS Services

It is a criminal offence not to report in these circumstances.

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**Victorian Working with Children**

Legislation on working with children ensures that adults who work with, or care for, children are subject to screening processes to protect children from physical and sexual harms.

To ensure that all employees, and volunteers involved in activities and contact with children and young people are responsible and of sound character and comply with the requirement of the Working with Children Act of 2005.

Any personnel whose duties usually involve or are likely to involve work with children and young people (paid or unpaid) is considered to be engaged in 'child-related work' and must be compliant with the Working with Children Act.

Our organisation is required to:

- Verify online and record the status of each child-related worker's Working with Children Check clearance (or equivalent).
- Only employ or engage child-related workers or eligible volunteers who have a valid Working with Children Check clearance (or equivalent); and
- Where a Reportable Conduct Scheme (or equivalent) is applicable, advise our administering body of any findings after completing an investigation of reportable conduct. Any findings in relation to sexual misconduct, a sexual offence or serious physical assault must be referred to the Working with Children Check Clearance (or equivalent) Directorate

It is an offence for an employer to knowingly engage a child-related worker who does not hold a Working with Children Check Clearance (or equivalent) or who has a bar.

Personnel who are engaged with our organisation in a child-related work are required to:

- Hold and maintain a valid Working with Children Check clearance (or equivalent).;
- Not engage in child-related work at any time that they are subjected to an interim bar or a bar;
- Report to the Head of Relevant Entity if they are no longer eligible for Working with Children Check clearance (or equivalent), the status of their Working with Children Check clearance (or equivalent) changes or are notified by the administering body that they are subject of risk assessment; and
- Notify the administering body of any changes to their personal details within 3 months of the change occurring. Failure to do so may result in a fine.

It is an offence for an employee, volunteer, contractor and where identified sub-contractor to engage in child related work when they do not have clearance or if they are subject to a bar.

| | |
|---|---|
| Working With Children Act 2005 (Vic.) | Individuals are required to apply for a WWCC. The check allows individuals to engage in child-related occupations/volunteering and practical training. Valid for: 5 years. |

**Victorian Reportable Conduct Scheme**

Victorian Reportable Conduct Scheme seeks to improve organisations' responses to allegations of child abuse and neglect by their workers and volunteers. The scheme is established by the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (the Act).

Reportable conduct is defined as;

- a sexual offence with or in the presence of a child,
- sexual misconduct with, or in the presence of a child,
- ill-treatment of a child,
- neglect of a child,
- an assault against a child, or,
- behaviour that causes significant emotional or psychological harm to a child.

Our Patch, as part of the Victorian Reportable Conduct Scheme are required to:

- have in place systems to prevent child abuse and, if child abuse is alleged, to ensure allegations can be brought to the attention of appropriate persons for investigation and response

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- ensure that the Commission is notified and given updates on the organisation's response to an allegation.

The Reportable Conduct Scheme does not replace the need to report allegations of child abuse, including criminal conduct and family violence to Victoria Police.

| **Victorian Failure to Report** |
| --- |
| Personnel within organisations have a moral obligation to report child abuse. In certain States and Territories, failing to prevent child abuse or concealing child abuse behaviour that causes emotional or psychological harm and may fall under the reportable conduct scheme and result in legal implications. |

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# Appendix 3: South Australian Legislation and Resources

| South Australian Legislation |
|---|
| • Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Act 2016<br>• Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017<br>• Child Abuse Report Line 13 14 78<br>• Child Family Community Australia (CFCA) |

| South Australian Mandatory Reporting Guidance Resource | Mandatory reporters in South Australia are: |
|---|---|
| Mandatory reporting laws require specified people to report suspected abuse and neglect to government child protection services in Australia. South Australia mandatory reporting laws cover an extensive list of professions, and the details of the reporting requirements are provided in the table below. | See below |
| **Legal provisions** | **Sections 17, 18, 30 and 31 of the Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017 (SA)** |
| Who is mandated to report? | • Medical practitioners<br>• Pharmacists<br>• registered or enrolled nurses<br>• dentists<br>• psychologists<br>• police officers<br>• community corrections officers under the Correctional Services Act 1982<br>• social workers<br>• ministers of religion<br>• employees of, or volunteers in, an organisation formed for religious or spiritual purposes<br>• teachers employed as such in a school (within the meaning of the Education and Early Childhood Services (Registration and Standards) Act 2011) or a preschool or kindergarten<br>• employees of, or volunteers in, an organisation that provides health, welfare, education, sporting or recreational, child care or residential services wholly or partly for children and young people, being a person who<br>• provides such services directly to children and young people; or<br>• holds a management position in the organisation, the duties of which include direct responsibility for, or direct supervision of, the provision of those services to children and young people |
| What must be reported? | Reasonable grounds to suspect a child or young person is, or may be, at risk; and the suspicion was formed in the course of the person's employment |
| Abuse and neglect types that must be reported | • Physical harm and risk of harm<br>• Sexual harm and risk of harm<br>• Mental or emotional harm and risk of harm<br>• Neglect |

| For Immediate Help |
|---|
| • To report concerns that are life threatening, ring SA Police: 000<br>• To report concerns about the safety of a child contact the Child Harm and risk of harm Report Line; 13 14 78<br>• Less serious concerns mandated notifiers may use the online child protection reporting system www.reportchildabuse.families.sa.gov.au |

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| South Australian Working With Children | |
|---|---|
| **Principal act** | **Type of program:** |
| The Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Act 2016 (SA) | The South Australian system is an employer-driven system requiring employers and responsible authorities to obtain National Police Checks and conduct wider child-related employment screening for those engaging in child-related occupations/volunteering.<br><br>The Working with Children Check applies to people aged 14 and over.<br><br>Check applications can be started by an individual or by an organisation on behalf of their employees or volunteers. Sole-traders, contractors and self-employed people are considered organisations, too.<br><br>Prescribed positions are defined as: involving regular contact with children or work in close proximity with children on a regular basis, unless the contact or work is directly supervised at all times; roles supervising or managing persons in such positions; roles with access to records relating to children; or roles engaged in any other function prescribed by regulation.<br><br>Organisations need to register with the Screening Unit before completing any applications. Employers must ensure that Working with Children Checks are renewed every five years. Renewal applications must be sent when an applicant has six months or less on their current clearance.<br>Valid for: 5 Years |

| South Australian Failure to Report |
|---|
| Mandated notifiers within organisations have a legal obligation to report child harm and risk of harm. South Australia does not have a reportable conduct scheme.<br><br>Even if not a mandated notifier, anyone can make a report<br><br>There is a $10,000 fine if a mandated notifier doesn't meet their obligations<br><br>The new provisions of the Criminal Law Consolidation Act 1935 came in to effect on 1.6.2022 - that for any adult that fails to report child sexual abuse there is a maximum penalty of 3 years imprisonment and any adult that fails to protect a child from sexual abuse there is a maximum of 15 years imprisonment. Note, that this applies to any adult that fails to report whether mandated notifier or not. |

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# Appendix 4: Queensland Legislation and Resources

| Queensland Legislation |
|---|
| • Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Act 2016<br>• Child Protection regulation 2023<br>• Children's Court Act 1992<br>• Public Guardian Act 2014<br>• Family and Child Commission Act 2014<br>• Child Protection Act 1999<br>• Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017<br>• Child Abuse Report Line 13 14 78Child Family Community Australia (CFCA) **During normal business hours** - contact the Regional Intake Service.<br>• **After hours and on weekends** - contact the Child Safety After Hours Service Centre on **1800 177 135**. The service operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. |

| Queensland Mandatory Reporting Guidance Resource | Mandatory reporters in Queensland Lare: |
|---|---|
| Under s.16E of the Child Protection Act 1999 (Qld), early childhood education and care professionals (including Our Patch educators) must report a reasonable suspicion that a child has suffered, is suffering, or is at unacceptable risk of suffering significant harm from physical or sexual abuse and may not have a parent able and willing to protect them. Separately, under s.229BC of the Criminal Code (Qld), any adult must report to police a belief on reasonable grounds that a child sexual offence is being, or has been, committed. | See below |

| Legal provisions | Sections 17, 18, 30 and 31 of the Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017 (SA) |
|---|---|
| Who is mandated to report? | • Medical practitioners<br>• Pharmacists<br>• registered or enrolled nurses<br>• dentists<br>• psychologists<br>• police officers<br>• community corrections officers under the Correctional Services Act 1982<br>• social workers<br>• ministers of religion<br>• employees of, or volunteers in, an organisation formed for religious or spiritual purposes<br>• teachers employed as such in a school (within the meaning of the Education and Early Childhood Services (Registration and Standards) Act 2011) or a preschool or kindergarten<br>• employees of, or volunteers in, an organisation that provides health, welfare, education, sporting or recreational, child care or residential services wholly or partly for children and young people, being a person who<br>• provides such services directly to children and young people; or<br>• holds a management position in the organisation, the duties of which include direct responsibility for, or direct supervision of, the provision of those services to children and young people |
| What must be reported? | Reasonable grounds to suspect a child or young person is, or may be, at risk; and the suspicion was formed in the course of the person's employment |
| Abuse and neglect types that must be reported | • Physical harm and risk of harm<br>• Sexual harm and risk of harm<br>• Mental or emotional harm and risk of harm |

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| | |
|---|---|
| | • Neglect |

| For Immediate Help |
|---|
| • To report concerns that are life threatening, ring QLD Police: 000<br>• To report concerns about the safety of a child contact the Child Safety After Hours Service Centre : 1800 177 135<br>• Less serious concerns mandated notifiers may use the online child protection reporting system www.reportchildabuse.families.sa.gov.au<br>For QLD<br>• Child Abuse Report Line 13 14 78 |

| Queensland Working With Children | |
|---|---|
| **Principal act** | **Type of program:** |
| Working with children:<br><br>Child safe:<br><br>For immediate help: | Blue Card system under Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000 (Qld).<br><br>Child Safe Organisations Act 2004 (Qld) – 10 Child Safe Standards and a Universal Principle (mandatory for ECEC from 1 January 2026), and the Queensland Reportable Conduct Scheme (applies to ECEC from 1 July 2026), overseen by the Queensland Family and Child Commission (QFCC).<br><br>Queensland police (000) and the Child Safety After Hours Service Centre; QFCC for reportable conduct matters. |

| Queensland Failure to Report |
|---|
| Mandated notifiers within organisations have a legal obligation to report child harm and risk of harm. South Australia does not have a reportable conduct scheme.<br><br>Even if not a mandated notifier, anyone can make a report<br><br>There is a $10,000 fine if a mandated notifier doesn't meet their obligations<br><br>The new provisions of the Criminal Law Consolidation Act 1935 came in to effect on 1.6.2022 - that for any adult that fails to report child sexual abuse there is a maximum penalty of 3 years imprisonment and any adult that fails to protect a child from sexual abuse there is a maximum of 15 years imprisonment. Note, that this applies to any adult that fails to report whether mandated notifier or not. |

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## Appendix 5: Resume Screening Matrix – Leader

| Behaviour and Qualifications | Previous experience in OSHC | Experience managing team | Experience with key stakeholders | Unexplained gaps/brief employment patterns | Presentation of resume |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| All required Qualifications: Dip. Children's Service or equivalent, WWCC, First Aid, Police Check | Proceed to phone interview | Proceed to phone interview | Proceed to phone interview | Proceed to phone interview | If incomplete/unprofessional, then unsuccessful |
| ACECQA Approved Qualification | Call candidate to clarify if required + confirm with ACECQA | Call candidate to clarify if required + confirm with ACECQA | Call candidate to clarify if required + confirm with ACECQA | Call candidate to clarify if required + confirm with ACECQA | Call candidate to clarify if required + confirm with ACECQA |
| Working Towards Child-care Qualification | Verify WWCC. If valid, proceed to phone interview | Verify WWCC. If valid, proceed to phone interview | Verify WWCC. If valid, proceed to phone interview | Call candidate to clarify then verify WWCC. If valid, proceed to phone interview | If incomplete/unprofessional, then unsuccessful |
| No Qualification | Unsuccessful | Unsuccessful | Unsuccessful | Unsuccessful | Unsuccessful |
| WWCC (or state equivalent) /Police Check | Proceed to phone interview | Proceed to phone interview | Proceed to phone interview | Call to clarify | If incomplete/unprofessional, then unsuccessful |
| First Aid, Anaphylaxis, Asthma | Proceed to phone interview | Proceed to phone interview | Proceed to phone interview | Call to clarify | If incomplete/unprofessional, then unsuccessful |
| Understanding of Child Protection | Proceed to phone interview | Proceed to phone interview | Proceed to phone interview | Call to clarify | If incomplete/unprofessional, then unsuccessful |

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## Appendix 6: Resume Screening Matrix – Educator

| Behaviour and Qualifications | Previous experience in OSHC | Experience managing team | Experience with key stakeholders | Unexplained gaps/brief employment patterns | Presentation of resume |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| All required Qualifications | Proceed to face to face interview | Proceed to face to face interview | Proceed to face to face interview | Proceed to phone screen interview | If incomplete/ unprofessional, then unsuccessful |
| ACECQA Approved Qualification | Proceed to face to face interview | Proceed to face to face interview | Review what qualification is. If Industry related, proceed to phone interview | Call candidate to clarify if required then confirm with ACECQA | If incomplete/ unprofessional, then unsuccessful |
| No Qualification | Proceed to face to face interview | Proceed to face to face interview | Proceed to face to face interview | Proceed to phone screen interview | If incomplete/ unprofessional, then unsuccessful |
| WWCC (or state equivalent) /Police Check | Verify WWCC. If valid, proceed to phone interview | Verify WWCC. If valid, proceed to phone interview | Verify WWCC. If valid, proceed to phone interview | Call to clarify then verify WWCC/PC. If valid, proceed to phone interview | If incomplete/ unprofessional, then unsuccessful |
| First Aid, Anaphylaxis, Asthma | Proceed to phone interview | Proceed to phone interview | Proceed to phone interview | Call to clarify | If incomplete/ unprofessional, then unsuccessful |
| Understanding of Child Protection | Proceed to phone interview | Proceed to phone interview | Proceed to phone interview | Call to clarify | If incomplete/ unprofessional, then unsuccessful |

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## Appendix 7: Phone Screen Matrix – Leader

| Behaviour and Qualifications | Phone answered promptly | Speaks clearly and confidently | Availability of Our Patch hours | Aligned to Our Patch values | Worked in 60+ program |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| All required Qualifications | Proceed to face to face interview | Proceed to face to face interview | Proceed to face to face interview | Proceed to face to face interview | Proceed to face to face interview |
| Valid WWCC (or state equivalent) /Police Check | Has or willing to obtain, then proceed to face to face interviews. Applicant must submit both docs prior to confirming employment | Has or willing to obtain, then proceed to face to face interviews. Applicant must submit both docs prior to confirming employment | Has or willing to obtain, then proceed to face to face interviews. Applicant must submit both docs prior to confirming employment | Has or willing to obtain, then proceed to face to face interviews. Applicant must submit both docs prior to confirming employment | Has or willing to obtain, then proceed to face to face interviews. Applicant must submit both docs prior to confirming employment |
| First Aid | Has or willing to obtain, then proceed to face to face interviews | Has or willing to obtain, then proceed to face to face interviews | Has or willing to obtain, then proceed to face to face interviews | Has or willing to obtain, then proceed to face to face interviews | Has or willing to obtain, then proceed to face to face interviews |
| Understanding of Child Protection | Proceed to face to face interview if candidate demonstrates knowledge | Proceed to face to face interview if candidate demonstrates knowledge | Proceed to face to face interview if candidate demonstrates knowledge | Proceed to face to face interview if candidate demonstrates knowledge | Proceed to face to face interview if candidate demonstrates knowledge |

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## Appendix 8: Phone Screen Matrix – Educator

| Behaviour and Qualifications | Phone answered promptly | Speaks clearly and confidently | Availability of Our Patch hours | Aligned to Our Patch values | Demonstrated understanding of programming/observations |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| All required Qualifications | Proceed to face to face interview | Proceed to face to face interview | Proceed to face to face interview | Proceed to face to face interview | Proceed to face to face interview |
| ACECQA Approved Qualifications | Has or willing to obtain, then proceed to face to face interviews | Has or willing to obtain, then proceed to face to face interviews | Has or willing to obtain, then proceed to face to face interviews | Has or willing to obtain, then proceed to face to face interviews | Has or willing to obtain, then proceed to face to face interviews |
| Valid WWCC (or state equivalent) /Police Check | Has or willing to obtain, then proceed to face to face interviews. Applicant must submit both docs prior to confirming employment | Has or willing to obtain, then proceed to face to face interviews. Applicant must submit both docs prior to confirming employment | Has or willing to obtain, then proceed to face to face interviews. Applicant must submit both docs prior to confirming employment | Has or willing to obtain, then proceed to face to face interviews. Applicant must submit both docs prior to confirming employment | Has or willing to obtain, then proceed to face to face interviews. Applicant must submit both docs prior to confirming employment |
| First Aid | Has or willing to obtain, then proceed to face to face interviews | Has or willing to obtain, then proceed to face to face interviews | Has or willing to obtain, then proceed to face to face interviews | Has or willing to obtain, then proceed to face to face interviews | Has or willing to obtain, then proceed to face to face interviews |
| Understanding of Child Protection | Demonstrates an awareness of child protection, proceed to face to face interview | Demonstrates an awareness of child protection, proceed to face to face interview | Demonstrates an awareness of child protection, proceed to face to face interview | Demonstrates an awareness of child protection, proceed to face to face interview | Demonstrates an awareness of child protection, proceed to face to face interview |

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## Appendix 9: Participation of Volunteers, Students and Short-Term Third-Party Providers Policy

**Purpose of this Policy:**
Our Patch will support participation of volunteers (Including parent-volunteers), students and short-term third-party providers as we know the value this brings to everyone.

Our due diligence practices are embedded throughout our organisation to ensure the safety of children in our care, personnel and anyone involved with Our Patch so that they are aware of the requirements.

**Prerequisite Policy:**
- Working with Children Check
- Code of Conduct

**Policy:**
We inform any prospective volunteers, students, and third-party providers that our organisation's approach is to take every precaution to protect all children in our care.

Where required, additional support is to be provided to parents/guardians with particular attention paid to the cultural or linguistic background of these parents/guardians to enable them to participate in our programs whilst still meeting our safeguarding children requirements.

All volunteers, students and third-party providers will need to follow the strategies set out in this policy and will be required to perform to their best of their ability so the best outcome for their learning and development.

**Impact for Our Patch:**
- Safety and Well-being all children
- Support Volunteers and Students to learn and achieve

**Strategies:**
Any consideration of Volunteers (including parent-volunteers), students and short-term third-party providers must be submitted in full to hradmin@ourpatchgroup.com prior to commencement and provide information about:
- Purpose of the visit/placement
- Duration of the visit/placement
- Visit and assessment schedules (where relevant)
- Student's supervisor (school or educational institution) contact details

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- A copy of current and valid Working with Children Check (Employee or Volunteer).
    - WWCC (or state equivalent) for Volunteers are free of charge and can be obtained from relevant state authority.
    - If a student is under the age of 18, they are considered a child and do not require a Working with Children Check.

**Minors**

If the Volunteer/Student/short-term third-party provider is a minor (under 18 years of age) prior to them commencing the proposed work/volunteering activity, Leader will provide parents/ guardians with details of the activity including:

- contact information for the Patch where the minor will perform their role
- contact details of the Leader
- details of the proposed role including training and duties that the minor will be asked to perform
- the hours the minor will participate in the program
- a full copy of Our Patch Code of Conduct

Parents/guardians of any minor engaged at a Patch are required to provide written consent to hradmin@ourpatchgroup.com prior to the minor's commencement.

**Obtaining approval**

Recruitment Coordinator in consultation with the relevant Area Manager will review the request submitted and advise the Leader and applicant of the decision.

**Induction and orientation**

Our Patch will provide all Volunteer/Student/Third Party Providers an induction and orientation on their first day which will outline expectations including:

- That the Volunteer/Student/Third Party provider will not be left unattended with children at any time
- Our Patch team will work with Volunteer/Student to teach, guide, and develop skills whilst working with us
- Each Volunteer/Student/Third Party Provider will be required to sign in and out whenever they attend any Patch using the Visitors Log provided.
- Attendance list for each day the Volunteer/Student/Third Party provider is at Our Patch – the service, the date, and hours of participation
- Should an issue arise during this time – it will be escalated through to the Recruitment Coordinator and appropriate steps with the individual, organisation, school or training institution will take place.
- Unacceptable behaviour will not be tolerated as the safety of children and educators are paramount.
- Our Patch team will work with Volunteer/Student to teach, guide, and develop skills whilst working with us

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An orientation will also include the Volunteer/Student/Third party provider being shown:

- The licenced area (indoors and outdoors), bathrooms, kitchen
- Location of first aid kit, emergency management plan, medical management plans

**Related Policies:**

- Educator Policies
- Employment Policies
- Relationships with Children Policies
- Safeguarding of Children Policies

**Related legislation:**

- Regulations 120, 149

**Resources:**

- Education and Care Regulations
- Applicants | Working with Children – Victoria
- Blue Card Portal – Queensland
- Working with Children – South Australia

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## Appendix 10 - Third Party Provider Checklist

Third Party Providers includes incursion providers that come to Our Patch to offer a specialised program, contractors, partners, consultants and/or individuals when they engage with or work for Our Patch to provide services.

| **Details** | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Name of Third-Party Provider | | | |
| Provider Contact Details | Mobile:<br>Email: | | |
| Brief Description:<br>*(Products/Services to be provided)* | | | |
| Public Liability Insurance – Copy Attached | c Yes c No | | |
| Contract Commencement Date | / / 20 | Contract Finish Date | / / 20 |
| Provider meets low and minimal risk categories as outlined in the Our Patch Recruitment, Screening and Induction Matrix provided c Yes c No<br><br>If no, contact Leader Child Safety to discuss additional checks required prior to role commencing | | | |

**SECTION 1: Mandatory Requirements for Third Party Providers (Low-Medium Risk)**

| **Name of Employee 1** | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Type of Card | c WWCC<br>c VIT | Expiration Date<br>/ /20 | Copy Attached<br>c Yes c No | Card Validated c Yes<br>/ /20 |
| Signed Safeguarding Children Commitment Returned | | Date Completed / /20 | | Copy Attached c Yes |

| **Name of Employee 2** | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Type of Card | c WWCC<br>c VIT | Expiration Date<br>/ /20 | Copy Attached<br>c Yes c No | Card Validated c Yes<br>/ /20 |
| Signed Safeguarding Children Commitment Returned | | Date Completed / /20 | | Copy Attached c Yes |

| **Name of Employee 3** | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Type of Card | c WWCC<br>c VIT | Expiration Date<br>/ /20 | Copy Attached<br>c Yes c No | Card Validated c Yes<br>/ /20 |
| Signed Safeguarding Children Commitment Returned | | Date Completed / /20 | | Copy Attached c Yes |

| **Name of Employee 4** | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Type of Card | c WWCC | Expiration Date | Copy Attached | Card Validated c Yes |

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| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | c VIT | / /20 | c Yes c No | / /20 |
| Signed Safeguarding Children Commitment Returned | | Date Completed / /20 | | Copy Attached c Yes |

| **Name of Employee 5** | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Type of Card | c WWCC<br>c VIT | Expiration Date<br>/ /20 | Copy Attached<br>c Yes c No | Card Validated c Yes<br>/ /20 |
| Signed Safeguarding Children Commitment Returned | | Date Completed / /20 | | Copy Attached c Yes |

*Please complete separate checklist for Third Party Providers that have more than 5 employees providing a service.*

| **Third Party Provider Checklist Completed By:** | |
|---|---|
| Name of Our Patch Employee: | |
| Job Title: | |
| Date of Completion: | |
| Signature: | |
| *Third Party Provider Checklist to be stored on Providers file on Our Patch SharePoint site.* | |

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## Appendix 11 - Risk Assessment Template

# Risk assessment template - Excursions

Approved providers nominated supervisors and family day care educators must ensure a risk assessment is carried out before children are taken outside the service premises on an excursion. Prior authorisation must also be obtained from parents or other authorised nominees.

ACECQA has prepared this template to assist services in undertaking risk assessments before children leave the service premises as part of an excursion, which services may wish to incorporate within their own risk assessment material.
Regulation 101 of the Education and Care Services National Regulations includes the minimum risk assessment considerations for excursions, including specific considerations when an excursion involves transporting children.

*Note*: A risk assessment is only required to be completed at least once for a 12-month period if the excursion is a '*regular outing**'.
*Regular outing: means a walk, drive, or trip to and from a destination that the service visits regularly as part of its educational program, and where the circumstances relevant to the risk assessment are substantially the same on each outing.

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| Service Name | |
|---|---|
| Excursion details | |
| **Date (s) of excursion.**<br>If it is a regular outing include a description of when children are to be taken on regular outings. | |
| **Proposed activities.**<br>List all activities that will take place during the excursion. | |
| **Pick up location and destination (s).**<br>List each location travelled to and from as part of the excursion.<br>E.g. the museum, park for lunch and service. | |
| **Estimated departure and arrival times and duration of the excursion.**<br>E.g. from the service to each destination and returning to the service. | |
| **Proposed route**<br>You can include an image of the route sourced online. | |
| **Means of transport**<br>E.g. public bus, private bus, Area Manager, private car, taxi, tram | |

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| | |
|---|---|
| **Requirements for seatbelts or safety restraints in your state or territory have been met.** | Yes / No<br>Comment: |
| **Number and full names of each adult involved in the excursion.**<br>E.g. service staff, family members, volunteers | |
| **The number of educators / responsible adults, appropriate to provide supervision, and whether any adults with specialised skills are required.**<br>E.g. for children's individual needs. | |
| **The number of children involved in the excursion.** | |
| **Any water hazards during the excursion, including any risks associated with water-based activities?**<br>If yes, detail in the risk assessment table below. | Yes / No<br>Comment: |
| **Educator to child ratio, including whether this excursion warrants a higher ratio.**<br>Provide details in the risk assessment table below. | |
| Describe the process for entering and exiting the service premises and the pick-up location or destinations (as required); (include how each child is accounted for): | |

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| Describe the procedures for embarking and disembarking the vehicle (include how each child is accounted for in embarking and disembarking): | |
|---|---|
| **Excursion checklist – items to be readily available during the excursion (please tick)** | |
| oFirst aid kit | oList of adults involved in the excursion |
| oList of children involved in the excursion | oContact information for each adult |
| oContact information for each child | oMobile phone / other means of communicating with the service & emergency services |
| oMedication, health plans and risk assessments for individual children | oOther items, please list |

Use the table below to identify and assess risks to the safety, health or wellbeing of children attending the excursion, and specify how these risks will be managed and minimised [regulation 101(1)]. This must include any risks associated with water-based activities.

| Risk assessment | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Activity | Hazard identified | Risk assessment (use matrix) | Elimination/control measures | Who | When |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |

(Press tab to add more rows)

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| Risk Matrix | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | **Consequence** | | | | |
| **Likelihood** | | Insignificant | Minor | Moderate | Major | Catastrophic |
| | Almost certain | Moderate | High | High | Extreme | Extreme |
| | Likely | Moderate | Moderate | High | Extreme | Extreme |
| | Possible | Low | Moderate | High | High | Extreme |
| | Unlikely | Low | Low | Moderate | High | High |
| | Rare | Low | Low | Low | Moderate | High |

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| Plan and Review | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Plan prepared by: | Full name:<br>Signature:<br>Role/Position: | Date: | |
| Prepared in consultation with: | Full name:<br>Signature:<br>Role/Position: | | |
| Communicated to all relevant staff: | Yes / No<br>Comment if needed: | | |
| Vehicle safety information reviewed and attached: | Yes / No<br>Comment if needed: | | |
| Risk assessment to be evaluated and reviewed on:<br>A risk assessment must be undertaken prior to an excursion being undertaken (and before seeking authorisation for that excursion to be undertaken - see regulation 102). If the excursion is a '*regular outing*'*, a risk assessment must be undertaken *at least* annually. | Date: | | |

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# Appendix 12 - Education and Care Legislative POLICY Requirements

## Health and safety

| Reference | Content of policy and/or procedure |
|---|---|
| Regulation 99; 168(2)(f) | Delivery and collection of children |
| Regulations 100 to 102; 168(2)(g) | Excursions |
| Regulation 168(2)(m) | Refusal and acceptance of authorisations |
| Regulation 88; 168(2)(c)<br>National Quality Standard 2.1 | Dealing with infectious disease |
| Regulation 90; 168(2)(d)<br>National Quality Standard 2.1 | Dealing with medical conditions |
| Regulation 97; 168(2)(e)<br>National Quality Standard 2.3 | Emergency and evacuation |
| Regulation 168(2)(a)<br>National Quality Standard 2.2<br>National Quality Standard 2.3<br>National Quality Standard 2.3<br>National Quality Standard 2.1 | Health and safety, including matters relating to:<br>i. Nutrition, food and beverages, dietary requirements<br>ii. Sun protection<br>iii. Water safety<br>iv. Administration of first aid<br>v. sleep and rest for children and infants |
| Regulation 85; 168(2)(b)<br>National Quality Standard 2.1 | Incident, injury, trauma, and illness |
| Regulation 168(2)(h)<br>National Quality Standard 2.3, 7.1 | Child safe environment |

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## Staffing arrangements

| Reference | Content of policy and/or procedure |
|---|---|
| Regulation 168(2)(i)<br>National Quality Standard 4.2 | Staffing, including:<br>i. Code of conduct<br>ii. Determining the responsible person present<br>iii. Participation of volunteers and students |

## Relationships with children

| Reference | Content of policy and/or procedure |
|---|---|
| Regulations 155 & 156; 168(2)(j) | Interactions with children |

## Service management

| Reference | Content of policy and/or procedure |
|---|---|
| Regulation 168(2)(l)<br>National Quality Standard 7.3 | Governance and management of the service, including confidentiality of records |
| Regulation 168(2)(k)<br>National Quality Standard 6.1 | Enrolment and orientation |
| Regulation 168(2)(n)<br>National Quality Standard 7.3 | Payment of fees |
| Regulation 168(2)(o)<br>National Quality Standard 7.3 | Dealing with complaints |

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# Appendix 13 - Explanation of Anaphylaxis, Asthma, Diabetes, and Epilepsy

## Anaphylaxis

Anaphylaxis is the most severe form of allergic reaction which can be life threatening. (ASCIA Guidelines for Prevention). The following often cause anaphylactic reactions; however, this list is not all encompassing:

Peanuts, tree nuts, eggs, cow's milk, shellfish, fish, sesame, kiwi, strawberry, wheat, soy, bee stings, wasp stings, and some medications/antibiotics

An anaphylactic reaction can quickly develop, even if there has been no prior reaction. To mitigate this, all educators are required to complete and hold up to date anaphylactic qualifications, which also trains in how recognise a reaction quickly. EpiPens are at each Patch to help make sure that any anaphylactic reaction can quickly be supported. While Our Patch strives to eliminate as many allergens as possible from Our Patch; however, it is not possible to make Our Patch completely allergen free and therefore risk minimisation plans are created to highlight the strategies to be used to reduce the risk of exposure and risk of reaction at Our Patch.

## Asthma

Asthma is a condition which impacts a child's airways, which when exposed to triggers can make it so that breathing difficult in ways like coughing, shortness of breath, wheezing, or rapidly breathing. Asthma can happen at any time, even without prior history of an asthma attack. Asthma can be mild or severe; and Our Patch strives to minimise the risk to triggers through identification in the risk minimisation plan. Ventolin is in the first aid kit of each Patch to help make sure that any asthma attack is quickly supported.

## Diabetes

Diabetes is a serious condition where a child's body cannot maintain healthy levels of glucose in their bloodstream (Diabetes Australia). Insulin is required for glucose to be converted into energy and in people with diabetes, insulin is no longer produced or produced in sufficient amounts for the body. Things like sports and break times can impact diabetes and this will be accounted for so that Our Patch can best support the child. Each diabetic has very specific needs to support their health and wellbeing, and Our Patch with work in conjunction with the parent/guardian to ensure that we are able to support the child's needs. Should additional training be required to support a child with diabetes, Our Patch will ensure this is completed and maintained.

## Epilepsy

Epilepsy is a disorder of brain function that takes the form of recurring convulsive or non-convulsive seizures. It is a diverse family of conditions that comprises of many seizure types. Seizures can be subtle, momentary lapses of consciousness, or obvious, sudden loss of body control. They are episodic and unpredictable, and they can occur frequently or occasionally. Some children require medication to help support their health and wellbeing (Epilepsy

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Australia). Leaders and Educators will work with the parents/guardians of children with epilepsy to identify triggers and how to best reduce them. Should additional training be required to support a child with epilepsy, Our Patch will ensure this is completed and maintained.

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## Appendix 14 - First Aid Kit Items

Each Leader is to ensure that all the following items are in their kit and all items are within their expiration date:

- EpiPen (Adult & Junior)
- Asthma Reliver
- Bandages
- Disposable, non-porous gloves
- Disposable masks
- Adhesive Band-Aids of assorted sizes
- Sealed packages of alcohol wipes or antiseptic wipes
- Scissors
- Tweezers
- Thermometer
- Bandage tape
- Sterile gauze pads (2" and 3")
- Flexible roller gauze (1" and 2" widths)
- Triangular bandages
- Small splints
- Cold pack
- Safety pins
- Eye dressings
- Eye wash saline
- Insect sting preparation
- Water
- Soap
- Resealable plastic bags (for soiled materials)
- Pen/pencil and notepad
- Current First Aid Guide (Australian Red Cross)
- Emergency phone numbers (000 emergency notification, Poison Control Centre, etc.)
- Mobile phone
- Emergency medications or supplies prescribed for each child with special health needs - this will include spare Ventolin and spare EpiPen

**Portable First Aid Kit** is to be brought with the program if outside the main Patch, i.e. playing outside, excursions. Each Leader is to ensure that all of the following items are in their kit and all items are within their expiration date:

- Including but not limited to:
    - Bandages
    - Disposable, non-porous gloves
    - Disposable masks
    - Adhesive Band-Aids of assorted sizes
    - Sealed packages of alcohol wipes or antiseptic wipes

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- Triangular bandages
- Cold pack
- Resealable plastic bags (for soiled materials)
- Pen/pencil and notepad
- Current First Aid Guide (Australian Red Cross)
- Emergency phone numbers (000 emergency notification, Poison Control Centre, etc.)
- Mobile phone
- Children's medical management plans and medication

## Appendix 15 – Personal Device Exemption Agreement

# Personal Device Exemption Agreement

This agreement applies to the approved exemption granted to:

Employee Name: _____
Position: _____
Service: _____
Date of Exemption Approval: _____
Exemption Period: From _____ to _____

**Terms of the Exemption**

1. I acknowledge that personal mobile phones and digital devices are generally not permitted during working hours in OSHC settings to protect child safety and supervision.
2. I have been granted a written exemption by Our Patch to carry/use my personal device within the service for the following reason(s):
    a.
3. I understand this exemption is subject to a Risk Minimisation Plan approved by management that outlines how risks to children's safety, privacy, and supervision will be managed.
4. I agree to:

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a. Use my personal device only as permitted in the Risk Minimisation Plan.
b. Store and secure my device as directed to prevent unauthorised access or use near children.
c. Immediately report any incidents or concerns related to device use.
d. Comply with all other aspects of the service's Personal Mobile Phones and Digital Devices policy.

5. I understand the exemption may be reviewed at any time and must be renewed at least every six months. Failure to comply with conditions of this exemption may result in its immediate cancellation and possible disciplinary action.

Employee Signature: _____

Date: _____

Nominated Supervisor Name: _____

Nominated Supervisor Signature: _____

Date: _____

## Appendix 16 – Randstad Education Child Protection Resources

Responding to allegations of educator to child harm procedure
Certification of Registration – Quality Management System
Code of conduct and safeguarding children & young people declaration
Working with Children check process& policy
Child safety policy and procedure
Child safety recruitment procedure and process

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