

Children's Health & Safety

Child Safe Environment Policy.

Our Vision.

To give every child **the best start in life.**

Our Mission.

To deliver high quality childcare and exciting learning opportunities for every child, giving them a head start as they prepare for school.

Our Values.

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| Care | We take care of the children entrusted to us and our dedicated staff. All are appreciated and diversity is valued. |
| Quality | We maintain the highest standards in care and safety and provide exceptional early years education. |
| Service | We provide exceptional service and are integral to supporting parents bringing up children. |
| Value | We provide outstanding value for our families. |



Busy Bees Early Learning Australia advocates for children and have a strong commitment to child safety and establishing and maintaining a child safe environment. We embed the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations and promote a culture of safety and wellbeing to minimise the risk of child abuse or harm to children whilst promoting children's sense of security and belonging.

NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARDS (NQS)	
QUALITY AREA 2 – Children's Health and Safety	
2.1 - Health	2.1.1 – Wellbeing and Comfort
	2.1.2 – Health Practices and Procedures
	2.1.3 – Healthy Lifestyle
2.2 - Safety	2.2.1 - Supervision
	2.2.2 - Incident and Emergency Management
	2.2.3 - Child Protection
QUALITY AREA 3 – Physical Environment	
3.1 - Design	The design of the facilities is appropriate for the operation of a service.
3.2 - Use	The service environment is inclusive, promotes competence and supports exploration and play-based learning.
QUALITY AREA 5 – Relationships with Children	
5.1 - Relationships between educators and children	5.1.1 Positive educator to child interactions

EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL LAW AND REGULATIONS	
Part 6	Operating an Education and Care Service (Law – 162A, 166, 167)
Part 4.2	Children's Health and Safety (Reg – 82, 83, 84, 99)
Part 4.3	Physical Environment (Reg – 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115)
Part 4.4	Staffing Arrangements (Reg – 122, 123, 136)
Part 4.5	Relationships with Children (Reg – 155)
Part 4.7	Governance and Leadership (Reg – 162, 165, 166, 167, 168, 170) (Law – S162A, S165, S166 , S167)

RELATED POLICIES	
Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy	Recruitment and Selection Policy
Code of Conduct Policy	Respectful Relationships with Children Policy
Confidentiality and Privacy Policy	Responsible Person Policy
Delivery and Collection of Children Policy	Supervision Policy
Excursion and Incursion Policy	Student and Volunteer Policy
Educational Program Policy	Technology and IT Resources Policy
Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy	Transportation Of Children Policy
Medical Conditions Policy	Work Health and Safety Policy

PURPOSE

Busy Bees has a legal and ethical responsibility to provide a safe environment where all children are respected, valued and encouraged to reach their full potential. Children's safety and wellbeing is paramount, and we aim to take all practical steps to protect children and young people from harm or risk of harm. We ensure an environment free from the use of tobacco, alcohol and illicit drugs is provided where children's can participate, engage, develop, learn and belong inclusively.

SCOPE

Children, Busy Bees Employees, Management, Visitors, Families and Contractors

POLICY

Busy Bees abide by the Education and Care Services National Regulations to ensure that policies and procedures are in place for providing a child safe environment and take reasonable steps to ensure those policies and procedures are followed. The National Law requires management to ensure all children being educated and cared for are adequately supervised and every reasonable precaution is taken to protect children from harm and any hazard likely to cause injury.

Our focus is to build a child safe environment which is reflected in our Service policies and procedures and understood and practiced by all employees, volunteers and students.

To maintain our strong commitment, all Busy Bees employees undertake Child Protection training, participate in the development and implementation of risk management strategies, abide by all Busy Bees policies and procedures, and provide an environment that ensures children are appropriately always supervised.

Employees will ensure that the environment continuously reflects our ideology of providing an environment that is safe, stimulating and engaging for all who interact with it by participating in on-going professional development to ensure they continue to act in the best interest of the children, and are advocating the rights and inclusion of all children in our care.

Frequent risk assessments will be conducted to identify potential risks and hazards within the online and physical environment and minimise any risks to a child's right to privacy, access information, social connections and learning opportunities.

Busy Bees Services will meet legislative requirements by ensuring:

- Accurate unencumbered indoor and outdoor spaces for each child are provided
- There is an allocated space for managerial purposes and private consultations with families to occur
- Adequate, developmentally and age-appropriate nappy change, toilet and hygiene facilities, including hand washing and drying areas are provided
- Appropriate areas for food preparation are designated
- Indoor spaces are well ventilated, provide adequate light and are maintained at a temperature that ensures the safety and wellbeing of children
- Any outdoor space used by children is enclosed by a fence or barrier that is of a height and designed so children preschool age or under cannot go through, over or under it

Our indoor and outdoor environments will provide opportunities for intentional teaching and spontaneous play in environments that permit children to participate in activities independently or in small groups, and access resources autonomously where all experiences will cater for children's interests and abilities.

Employees and children will discuss safety characteristics of using toys and equipment in all care environments. Where children are required to be grouped together, the environment will align with children's ages and developmental stages to ensure it remains safe for all children present.

Busy Bees will actively seek the engagement of Families regarding environments at the Service and ensure any relevant safety information is communicated. Families and visitors have the right to report any concerns seen within the environments with regards to safety of children, equipment and furnishings.

Commitment to Safety of Children and Young People

Busy Bees is committed to being a child safe organisation and endorses the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, placing the protection of children as a priority of our responsibilities and obligations. The Child Safe Standards recommended by the Royal Commission provide guidance for our Services to ensure our policies and procedures, strategies, and attitudes, ensure children's safety is paramount.

Busy Bees has a zero tolerance to child abuse, and we are committed to the safety, participation, and empowerment of all children. We promote diversity and tolerance and aim to form equitable and positive relationships with children. We ensure children participate in decisions affecting them and listen and respect their suggestions and ideas. We respond to any concerns, disclosures, allegations, or suspicions of harm by reporting to the relevant authorities.

We are dedicated in promoting cultural safety for Aboriginal children, cultural safety for children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and to providing a safe environment for children with a disability. Busy Bees will not tolerate bullying, harassment, or racism. Our priority is to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children and encourage positive relationships. All children will have the ability to express their culture and enjoy their cultural rights. Any instances of racism will be addressed with appropriate consequences.

Code of Conduct

Busy Bees management, employees, volunteers, and students will adhere to our Code of Conduct Policy, and will:

- adhere to our Child Safe Environment Policy and Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- provide adequate supervision of children at all times
- take reasonable action to protect children and young people for risk of harm
- ensure the Service premise is free from the use of tobacco, illicit drugs and alcohol
- be responsible for their own, and others health and safety
- be a positive role model to children and young people
- respect children's privacy and dignity at all times
- listen and respond appropriately to the views and concerns of children and young people
- report any allegations of child abuse
- notify the approved provider and/or the regulatory authority within 24 hours of any serious incident or complaint as per the National Regulations
- encourage children and young people to 'have a say' on issues that are important to them, ensuring that children are not at risk of neglect or harm and allowing children to express concerns or grievances to employees in a way that they feel comfortable i.e. verbal, visual, emotional ques.
- not discriminate against any child, because of age, gender, cultural background, race, ethnicity or disability
- not put children at risk of abuse- refusing food/play, making threats, exposing children to inappropriate language or material (movies, internet, photos)
- not develop any 'special' relationships with children or young people that could be seen as favouritism such as the offering of gifts or special treatment.

Communication

We aim to build and maintain positive and respectful relationships with children, families and employees and prioritise a child safe environment. We communicate regularly and clearly with all stakeholders and ensure our policies and procedures are available to employees, volunteers, families and children and young people. Feedback and evaluation of our policies and procedures is welcomed through our evaluation cycle, surveys, feedback, or discussions with management.

Participation of Families, Children and Young People

Busy Bees ensures families are always welcome and feel comfortable asking questions on how we prioritise child safety. We provide a range of opportunities for consultation and collaboration about decisions about their child's safety whilst at our Service including:

- policy and procedure review
- child protection
- allegations/grievance procedures
- sun safety
- written authorisations- parenting orders
- code of conduct
- inclusivity and supporting children with diverse needs.

We promote a respectful, child safe culture where children concerns are always responded to, and children feel empowered to participate in decisions and provide feedback to employees. Busy Bees employees empower children by always upholding and respecting their rights, taking a proactive role in educating them about their rights, and supporting them to exercise their rights.

Recruitment Process

Busy Bees maintains a rigorous and consistent recruitment, screening, and selection process to ensure the best employees possible based on skills, qualifications, experience, and suitability for the position available. All employees participate in robust interviews and have reference checks completed to ensure the applicant's suitability to the role, previous experiences and their commitment to child safe values and practices. All employees are provided with a comprehensive induction process which outlines our Code of Conduct, identifying and responding to child abuse, grievance processes, and work health and safety.

Working with Children Check and Police Checks

Working in conjunction with the Child Protection Act and National Regulations, the safety, welfare, and wellbeing of children is paramount within our Services and community. A Working with Children Check (WWCC) is a requirement for people who work 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 valid 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.

Management is responsible for the periodic review and maintenance of up-to-date records of employees, volunteer and student's Working with Children Check, including the Working with Children Check number and the date on which each clearance expires. Once an employee, volunteer or student provides their WWCC clearance, management will verify the clearance to ensure that it is valid and current. The WWCC will be stored in the individual's file and continue to be updated as required, and all employee, student and volunteer records will be kept.

Child Protection - Reportable Conduct and Child Protection Training

Children and young people always have a right to be safe and protected. To comply with legislation and ensure a child safe environment, employees are provided with training and ongoing supervision to ensure they understand that child safety is everyone's responsibility. All employees, volunteers, and students are advised of the existence and application of current child protection laws in their relevant state/territory, and understand any obligations held under law, during their induction.

All employees are mandatory reporters and must make reports if they suspect on reasonable grounds, a child is at risk of significant harm. All employees are provided with up to date training about child protection law and their obligations under this law and to ensure they are confident in following the reporting guidelines within their State/Territory and adhere to our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Through continual education and training, employees are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children safe. Training gives employees confidence to identify, respond and report child abuse. All employees complete a course in child protection on an annual basis.

Child protection - Allegations Against Employees

To protect children and ensure their safety, welfare and wellbeing, management is responsive to report allegations or convictions of child abuse and child related misconduct by any employee or volunteer or contractor to the relevant state/territory reporting authority as part of the Reportable Conduct Scheme.

Busy Bees will ensure an appropriate level of confidentiality of information relating to the reportable allegations as per the Children's Guardian Act 2019. We take our legislative responsibilities as part of the Reportable Conduct Scheme seriously and will respond to any reportable allegation or conviction against employees or volunteers that may arise.

Reporting and Responding to General Complaints

Feedback from children, families, employees, and the wider community is fundamental in creating an evolving Service working towards the highest standard of education and care. Busy Bees implement child-focused complaint handling policies and procedures and aim to investigate all complaints and grievances with a high standard of equity and fairness, including complaints alleging that a child is exhibiting harmful sexual behaviours. **Refer to the Complaints Policy and Manage Complaints and Grievances procedure for managing a child related complaint or grievance.**

Busy Bees believes in **the right of the child's voice being heard**, procedural fairness and natural justice that govern the strategies and practices, which include the following:

- The right to be heard fairly
- The right to an unbiased decision made by an objective decision maker
- The right to have the decision based on relevant evidence

Online Safety

Busy Bees is committed to create and maintain a safe online environment with support and collaboration with employees, families and community. Management ensures anti-virus and internet security systems are installed to block access to unsuitable web sites, newsgroups and chat rooms.

Busy Bees ensures backups of important and confidential data is made regularly and either stored securely offline, or online. Software and devices are updated regularly to avoid any breach of confidential information.

Only educational software programs and apps that have appropriate content and have been examined prior to allowing their use are used in the Service. Children are always supervised using any technology.

Families are provided with information about our software program which is password protected and used to share observations, photos, videos, daily reports and portfolios. Passwords are not to be shared with others.

Written authorisation is requested as part of the enrolment process for children to use computers/tablets; have their photo taken and published as part of promotional marketing or on the app program used by the Service. The identity of a child is not published on any platform.

Personal mobile phones or devices are not used to take photos or video of children at the Service.

Intimate Care

Definition of Intimate Care:

Intimate care is defined as any care tasks that are associated with bodily functions, bodily fluids or personal hygiene and require direct or indirect contact with, or expose of, sexual parts of the body.

This includes (but is not limited to) nappy changing, toileting, cream application, medication administration and changing clothing.

Busy Bees believe that:

- All children have the right to be treated with kindness and respect, and have their modesty protected, and this should be considered during any intimate care tasks
- All children have the right to share their views and opinions and have these taken into account and acted upon where this is safe and appropriate
- All our employees have the right to be treated fairly and protected from discrimination due to their gender, sexuality, race, religion or beliefs
- Key people are best placed to carry out intimate care procedures with children due to their relationship and knowledge of the individual child
- Clear communication must always be given to the child in an age-appropriate manner to ensure they have adequate warning and appropriate understanding of the intimate care task taking place
- Employees will identify relevant risks while maintaining a delicate balance between children's privacy considerations including their dignity, rights, safety and wellbeing
- Employees are too mindful of all situations and interactions that they're involved in with children and intimate care with safety for all the forefront of all interactions
- Employees must ensure clear communication of their whereabouts to ensure they are positioned appropriately at all times to maintain appropriate supervision
- Employees should use age-appropriate anatomical language with children to minimise confusion and support understanding. This should be discussed with Families on an individual basis
- All intimate care tasks must be recorded promptly and accurately

We recognise that:

- At times Families may request that a particular employee does not provide intimate care to their child. Busy Bees is obliged to follow the Fairwork Act re workplace discrimination. It is unlawful for an employer to discriminate against an employee. This includes the persons race, colour, sex, sexual orientation, breastfeeding, gender identity, intersex status, age, physical or mental disability, marital status, family or carer's responsibilities, pregnancy, religion, political opinion, national extraction, or social origin.
- At times children may not want intimate care tasks to be carried out. Whilst children's views should always be respected, the main priority must always be to ensure the child is kept safe and healthy. Clear communication must be provided to the child, along with comfort where necessary whilst undertaking this task, to ensure minimal distress is caused

- Some children and families will use different terminology for anatomy. Whilst this should be respected, this should be listened to by all employees to ensure they are familiar with children as individuals in the event of any disclosures being made by a child
- Intimate care tasks may look different for every children, in particular those require additional support. Individual risk assessments, where appropriate, should be adhered to

We will seek to keep children and young people safe by:

- Following the Nappy Change and Toileting Children procedures at all times
- Reporting any concerns about the welfare or safety of a child to the Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Reporting any concerns about the actions of any employees to the Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Contacting Speak Up in the event your concerns are not acted upon

Every task of intimate care provided must be recorded on the appropriate form i.e. Nappy Change and Toileting Record, along with the initials of the person completing this. These records must be stored in line with confidentiality as per the Education and Care Services National Regulations.

Grouping Children and Supervision

Busy Bees Service's will group the children according to their age and/or developmental stage, ensuring that within that space there are a variety of age-appropriate resources to engage in, different learning areas and opportunities for play experiences. Each age group has different legally required adult to child ratios which will be adhered to in both the indoor and outdoor environment. Both indoor and outdoor environments will provide opportunities for developmentally appropriate planned experiences, intentional teaching, and spontaneous play throughout the day.

Employees will monitor and assess numbers and separate children into other rooms/spaces if required to ensure adequate supervision of children is maintained.

As guided by our Supervision Policy, children will always be supervised while being educated and cared for by the Service. Refer to the Supervision Policy for all supervision details and requirements.

If children are engaged in progressive meals, employees will communicate between themselves which children are moving between meal and another environment.

Continuity of Employees

Employee roster schedules will be managed to not only ensure that adequate numbers of educators are on duty to meet ratio and qualification requirements, but that duty of care implications are considered to always ensure adequate supervision. A minimum of two employees will be scheduled during the operational hours of the Service. The two employees responsible for closing the Service will check the entire premises to ensure that all children and families have departed prior to locking the Service.

Appropriate Equipment and Resources

Busy Bees will provide adequate furniture, equipment and resources that are age and developmentally appropriate. We will follow assembly instructions, and age and safety recommendations, ensuring all furniture, equipment and resources including car seats, booster seats, highchairs prams etc. meet relevant Australian Standards. Routine checks will ensure that all furniture and equipment remain safe, clean and in good repair. This includes ensuring highchairs and prams have the required safety straps installed, are always secure and in full working order.

Items introduced into the environments will be chosen to reflect the cultural diversity of the Service's community and the cultural diversity of contemporary Australia, including the incorporation of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

All learning environments will be organised to ensure supervision requirements are maintained, minimal disruption for children, integrate precise requirements of children with additional needs ensuring inclusion, and provide areas that allow children of several dispositions to occur in the same space (e.g., quiet play areas and loud play areas).

Employees will document the links between the environment arrangements, choice of resources, equipment, and children's learning in the program through critical reflection with Families, other employees, and valid research. A critical reflective record of any changes that are made to the physical environments of the Service, such as rearranging of rooms etc. to show continuous improvement, will be kept.

Nursery environments will remain free from small objects or items that can break and become a potential hazard. To reduce the risk of harm, baby walkers, collapsible furniture and furniture that presents possible entrapment hazards, bassinets and prams will not be used.

There are several factors that can contribute to a hazard, such as a deprived program, insufficient supervision and dilapidated equipment. To ensure a child safe environment free from hazards, we have implemented practices and continue to monitor Service policies and procedures that uphold Australian Safety Standards.

The premises and all equipment and furniture used within the Service are audited to ensure all aspects are safe, clean and in good repair. We understand that hazards are specific to developmental stages; employees are aware that toys and equipment need to be checked to ensure they are safe and developmentally appropriate for children. Regular checks occur within the Service to ensure that all toys, furniture, and equipment are in good condition and working order.

Impact Areas

Any equipment, furniture and resources will be positioned at least 1.5 metres from the perimeter or fixed equipment. Non-fixed/moveable play equipment in the Service grounds over 60cm high have mats underneath or positioned on an even soft fall surface, and an impact area of 1.5m around the perimeter of equipment will be maintained.

Environment Inspections and Safety

Fences and barriers that enclose outdoor spaces used by children are to be of a height and design that children cannot go through, over or under. Fences and barriers will be routinely checked to ensure they are in good working condition and remain compliant with current regulations.

Similarly, trees in the grounds will be maintained and checked regularly for overhanging, dead or dangerous looking branches as well as check for any indicators of infestations or nests.

Safe environment inspections of the premises will be undertaken at least twice per day, initially by the Responsible Person opening the Service in the morning and again by the Responsible Person closing the Service in the afternoon. The same inspection will be conducted prior to any children entering an outdoor play environment throughout the day. These records will be kept by the Service.

This inspection will include checking the Service perimeters, fences/fence line, gates, paths, buildings, fixed equipment, sandpits, and all environments accessible by children to identify any hazards or dangerous objects in the grounds ranging from sharps to poisonous or dangerous plants and animals.

Employees will ensure surface temperatures always remain safe for children by assessing the environments and physically monitoring surface temperatures.

In the event of a sharp object being found (for example a syringe) employees will wear gloves and use tongs to pick up the object and place it in the 'sharp object box'. This box will be disposed of as per the recommendations of our local council and replaced.

Button Batteries

All Services will prohibit the use and/or possession of button batteries. This applies to all items brought onto the premise by employees, children, families, and visitors. This includes toys, electronic devices, clothing including shoes and any other items that may contain button batteries. These batteries can pose a serious risk to children if swallowed or inserted into a child's ear or nose. Due to their small size, they can easily become lodged in a child's throat or digestive system, causing serious injury or even death. Employees will inform families and visitors of the policy and the reasons behind it and will conduct regular checks to ensure that no button batteries are present on the premise. Any item containing button batteries will be confiscated and returned to the owner when they leave the premise.

Hazardous Materials

Busy Bees will endeavour to provide a safe environment where necessary chemical and hazardous equipment are safely stored away from children and handled appropriately. We will reduce the risk of harm to children and employees by using eco-friendly products. Employees will adhere to manufacturer's advice and instructions when using products.

A register of all hazardous chemicals, substances and equipment used will be kept. Information recorded will include where they are stored, their use, any risks, and first aid instructions and the current SDS. The register will be readily accessible.

To maintain a safe environment for children, safety checks, audits and checklists are regularly conducted, including medication audits.

Maintenance

Busy Bees is committed to providing high quality maintenance of our premises and will ensure any apparent hazards are dealt with quickly and professionally. The building, grounds and equipment will be maintained and monitored regularly in a scheduled and planned manner.

Pests

Regular pest inspections will be carried out by an accredited pest control company. Documentation of these inspections will be kept and any findings from the pest control check will be carried out in line with the recommendation of the pest control company. Employees will monitor any occurrences in the Service to determine the success of control measures and advise management of any evidence located.

Continuous Review

To ensure we maintain a culture of continuous improvement, we will ensure our child safe practices are regularly reviewed, evaluated and improved. We aim to ensure all employees and volunteers understand and effectively implement our policies and procedures to provide a child safe environment at our Service.

We will regularly review and monitor the effectiveness of our Child Safe policies and procedures and invite children, employees, families and communities to contribute to their development.

Any updates or revisions will be communicated to all stakeholders.

SOURCES[ACECQA](#)[United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child](#)[National Quality Standard](#)[Education and Care services National Regulations](#)[Education and Care Service National Law Act 2010](#)[Early Childhood Australia](#)[Australian Government - Reporting Abuse & Neglect](#)[Australian Child Protection Legislation](#)[Victorian Child Safety Standards](#)[National Principles for Child Safe Organisations](#)[Child Protection Legislation by Jurisdiction](#)[Australian Government Mandatory Reporting](#)[Cultural safety of Aboriginal children:](#)[Cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds:](#)[Safety of children with a disability](#)[ECA Code of Ethics.](#)[National Comparison of Child Protection Systems](#)[Australian Human Rights Commission – Child Safe Organisations](#)[Bravehearts](#)[Bravehearts – Ditto's Keep Safe Adventure Show](#)[Children's Guardian Act 2019](#)[NSW Office of the Children's Guardian - Reportable Conduct Scheme](#)**VERSION CONTROL**

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years and/or in line with legislation and organisation requirements.

Version	Date	Owner	Responsibility	Change Description
1	01/10/2023	Chief Pedagogy & Safeguarding Officer	Policy Development Officer	Replace all previous versions
2	14/11/2023	Chief Pedagogy & Safeguarding Officer	Policy Development Officer	Inclusion of Supervision policy reference
3	22/12/2023	Chief Pedagogy & Safeguarding Officer	Policy Development Officer	Inclusion of Intimate Care
4	10/01/2024	Chief Pedagogy & Safeguarding Officer	Policy Development Officer	Revised Grouping of Children guidelines
5	12/08/2024	Chief Pedagogy & Safeguarding Officer	Policy Development Officer	Added reference to child focused complaint policy and procedure

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