5. **The Children**

**Relevant Laws and other Provisions**

The laws and other provisions affecting this policy group include:

- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010
- The Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
- ‘My Time, Our Place’ Framework
- Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004
- Children and Young Persons Act 1989
- The Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005
- Outside School Hours Care Quality Assurance Quality Practices Guide
- Working with children Act 2005
5.1 Protective Care policy

**Purpose:** To assist in preventing harm to children from physical, emotional and sexual abuse or neglect.

**Aims:**
- To make staff aware of the indicators of child abuse.
- To ensure staff act in a professional manner when making judgements about child abuse indicators.
- To ensure appropriate procedures are in place for reporting child abuse.

**Guidelines and procedures:**
- We recognise the complexity and sensitivity surrounding the issue of suspicion of child abuse, and the decision-making process of whether or not to report it.
- Whilst treating the interests of the child as paramount, our Service must respect the reputation of all involved in suspected cases of child abuse.
- Our Service recognises that relying on any information that is false, exaggerated or unjust can in itself lead to a serious breach of the law.
- The responsibility for deciding whether or not to report an incident of suspected child abuse shall rest with the Coordinator acting in conjunction with the School Principal, and use professional advice obtained from the Department of Child Safety.

- It is the responsibility of the Coordinator to ensure that staff receive appropriate and adequate training on a regular basis on child abuse and neglect and the responsibilities of mandatory reporting.
- It is the responsibility of staff to report any signs of child abuse to the Coordinator.
- The Coordinator is to act in conjunction with the School Principal in making decision whether or not to report it.
- OSHC staff do not need to prove that abuse has taken place they only need to have reasonable grounds for their belief.
- Permission is not needed from parents or caregivers prior to contacting the Child Protection Office to make a report, nor do they need to be informed that a report is being made.
- If staff make a report in good faith, then they cannot be held legally liable regardless of the outcome of the notification.
- Mandatory reporting requirements take precedence over professional codes of practice where confidentiality or client privilege is claimed.

**Allegation of Abuse inflicted by a staff member**

When a child raises a concern about a staff member:

- The appropriate people will be notified, i.e OSHC Coordinator, Assistant Principal, Principal.
- The staff member will be suspended from their duties until the matter has been further investigated. In the case of a permanent staff member they will be suspended with pay until the matter has been further investigated.
- Child Protection will be notified.

Reviewed July 2012
5.2 Arrival and Departure Policy

**Purpose:** To ensure that the children are accounted for on arrival and departure and are safely picked up by authorised people.

**Aims:**
- To ensure that all children attending a Before Care session are present at the time the bell rings for school to commence, unless they have left to attend extra curricula activities.
- To ensure that all children booked into an After Care session arrive and are signed in.
- To ensure the children are picked up from After Care by authorised people only.
- To ensure parents/guardians/authorised people correctly sign the children in and out of sessions.

**Guidelines and Procedures:**

**Before Care**
- Parents/guardians/authorised people must sign their child/ren into Before Care on the attendance roll located on the sign in/out desk. The name of the person must be recorded on the roll.
- Each individual child needs to be signed in.
- OSHC staff will conduct a roll check before the school bell rings to ensure all children attending are present. Staff are to sign out the children and note on the roll the time the children leave.
- If a child is not present or accounted for then the Missing Child Procedure needs to be put into action.
- Preps are walked to their classrooms by an OSHC staff member until the coordinator, parents and prep teachers at MAPS are in agreement the children will be able to safely manage their own passage to and from school. Individuals may still be accompanied if individual concerns are raised by parents, teachers or OSHC educators.

**After Care**
- Staff are to sign in the children when they arrive at the service after school. Staff will note the time the child arrives. The name of the educator must be recorded on the roll.
- The Assistant Coordinator or delegated staff member will collect the Preps from their classrooms to ensure they safely arrive at OSHC.
- At 3:45 the Coordinator will check the roll to see if any children have not yet arrived.
- If a child has not arrived the Missing Children Policy will be put into action.
- Parents are to give a written permission for their children to attend extra curricula activities at school.

**Child Collection**
- An authorised person to collect a child (must be 18 years old) includes those persons nominated on the Registration Form and a person nominated in writing or verbally to the Coordinator or Assistant Coordinator who can sufficiently identify themselves.
- When a parent/guardian/authorised person arrives to collect a child they are to sign the child/ren out and note the time of collection on the roll on the sign in/out desk. The name of the person must be recorded on the roll.
- The parent/guardian/authorised person collecting the child/ren is to make themselves known to the Educator on duty in the main room.
- In the situation where the child is being picked up by someone listed as an emergency contact, but is unknown to the Coordinator or Assistant Coordinator, the authorised person is to identify themselves and offer photo identification. The name of that person will be recorded on the roll next to their signature.
- If the Funcare staff have not been notified by the parent/guardian in writing that another person not listed as an emergency contact will be picking up the child/ren, the parent or guardian will be contacted. The adult collecting a child is to identify themselves and offer photo identification. The name of that person will be recorded on the roll next to their signature.
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- No child is to be permitted to leave with an unauthorised person.
- No child/ren may leave the program unless accompanied by his/her parents/guardian/ authorised person.
- If an unauthorised person takes a child despite Funcare refusing access, this will be considered kidnapping and the police are to be immediately called. The parents/guardians will then be informed of the situation and the principal will be called. Refer to the Emergency Management Procedures.
- Staff are not to attempt to physically restrain the person, but should attempt to gather information such as car registration, car descriptions, physical descriptions, etc to pass on to the police.

Missing children

- If a child/ren is/are not present or accounted for by 3:45pm, the MAPS Early Leavers book (located at the reception desk at the MAPS office) is checked to ascertain if the child/ren went home early or sick.
- If not accounted for the child/ren’s names are called over the school public address system to attend OSHC immediately.
- If at 3:50pm, a child/ren is/are still not present, the parents/guardians will be contacted by the Coordinator to enquire as to why their child/ren did not arrive at After Care.
- If the parents/guardians cannot be reached the listed emergency contacts will be called to see if they can supply any additional information.
- If the whereabouts of the child/ren is/are still unknown, the Principal or Assistant Principal will be informed.
- The school and the OSHC Coordinator will work together to establish the whereabouts of the child.
- If a child is not present and accounted for, the Assistant Coordinator will check with the classroom teacher.
- If after contacting parents/guardians, emergency contacts, classroom teacher and principal/assistant principal children still cannot be accounted for police will contacted and a missing persons report will be made by the coordinator.

Non collected children:

- If a child/ren have not been collected by closing time and OSHC staff have not been advised of parent/guardian lateness then OSHC staff will contact parent/guardian to enquire as to the expected pickup time.
- If the parents/guardians cannot be reached the listed emergency contacts will be called and will be requested to pick up the child/ren.
- If OSHC Staff arrange for an emergency contact to pick up the child/ren and in the meantime the parent/guardian arrives, it is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to cancel the arrangements.
- If OSHC staff are unable to contact parents/guardians or the emergency contacts within thirty minutes after closing time then:
  - The Principal or Assistant Principal will be informed and;
  - The police will be requested to collect the child/ren;
  - The Department of Human Services will be informed. The child/ren will be taken into their custody.
  - Contact details:

    Department of Human Services Eastern Regional Office  
    833 Whitehorse Road, Box Hill  
    Main switchboard: 03 9843 6000 Out of Hours Emergency 131 278

In the event of late pickup the late pickup fees policy will apply.

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5.3 Staffing Ratios

Purpose:
To provide an environment that is safe and to ensure the children are properly supervised at all times.

Aims:
- To meet the Education and Care Services National Law 2010 and Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011.
- To ensure that the children are safe from harm from individuals outside the program.
- To ensure children do not engage in dangerous activities or bullying.
- To ensure staff members are provided to supervise at the agreed and legal staff/child ratio for all activities.
- To ensure all educators have the required level of support to fully complete all aspects of their job.

Guidelines:
OSHC operates under the following staffing ratios:
- There is always a minimum of one trained educator per 15 children and one qualified educator per 30 children; who must be directly involved in the program.
- There is always one qualified staff member on duty and directly involved with the program.
- The Coordinator is to conduct a risk assessment of venues of outings to determine the appropriate adult supervision for the excursion. If required the staff/child ratio can be increased depending on the findings of the risk assessment.
- There is always a maximum of 5 children per one educator when water based excursions take place. The 15 children per educator must be maintained, but extra carers may be paid or unpaid.
- Extra carers must be considered medically fit enough and of an appropriate age, maturity to ensure the safety of the children and hold a current Working with Children Check.
- Only educators working directly with children will be counted in the ratio.

Reviewed August 2012
5.4 Positive guidance of children policy

Will be updated as MAPS school policy is updated, and fall directly into line with school policy on guidance of children.

Reviewed August 2012
5.5 Exclusion for Behavioural Reasons Policy

**Purpose:** To ensure that the Services Duty of Care is provided to all children who attend and staff who work during hours of the Service operation.

**Aims:**
- To ensure that the environment is safe and friendly to all children and staff.
- To ensure staff act in a professional manner /when dealing with behaviour issues.
- To ensure appropriate procedures are in place for staff to follow.

**Guidelines and procedures:**
The Service has a Duty of Care to all children who attend and staff who work within, the Service. If:
- a child exhibits inappropriate behaviour, or behaviour which threatens the safety or wellbeing of any child or other person in the Service;
- in the Coordinator’s reasonable opinion, the behaviour amounts, or may amount, to a threat to the safety or wellbeing of any child or other person in Service; and
- the behaviour support and management procedures have been properly applied first but without success, or the behaviour presents such an immediate potential threat that it is not reasonably possible to apply those procedures;
then the child whose behaviour is inappropriate or has caused the threat to safety or wellbeing may be excluded from the Service temporarily or, in some cases permanently.

First and second instance of a breach of rules which is unacceptable behaviour:
Staff member who was present will write an incident report detailing the incident. Staff member to sign the report and parent/guardian and child are requested to do so. If either the parent or the child refuse to sign the report the Coordinator is to sign the report noting refusal.

Third incident:
- In addition to the above steps, after a third incident has been recorded the parent/guardian will be notified that the child cannot return to the Service for one week.
- At the end of that week, a meeting will be held between the Coordinator, parent and child and the Principal/Assistant Principal of the school to discuss possible strategies for including the child back into the program.
- If the child is included back into the service and the same behaviour continues upon return, the child will be excluded permanently from the Service.

Physical danger to child or others:
- If a child’s behaviour causes or may reasonably cause physical danger to other children, staff or the child himself or herself, the parent/guardian of that child will be contacted immediately and asked to collect the child.
- The child will be excluded from the program effective immediately and the lifting of the exclusion will be at the discretion of the Coordinator and the Principal/Assistant Principal of the school/

Reviewed July 2012
5.6 Anti-bullying policy

**Purpose:** To ensure that the children attending OSHC are safe from bullying. To educate the children to identify bullying and what they can do to challenge it.

**Aims:**
- To educate children to identify bullying.
- To establish and maintain clear and known boundaries relating to children’s behaviour.
- To foster a caring environment where children can talk openly with staff about bullying.
- To educate staff through professional development and literature to identify and how to challenge it.
- To educate children about what they can do when they are being bullied or see someone being bullied.
- To ensure all reports of bullying are dealt with appropriately.

**Guidelines and Procedures:**

**Staff will:**
- Model caring and tolerant behaviour towards children, parents and other staff members.
- Manage all observed or reported incidences of bullying as set out in this policy under “Responding to a Bullying Incident”.
- Carefully monitor children’s behaviour while participating in any of the service’s programs or activities.
- Encourage children to report any incidents of bullying that they are either involved in or witness.
- Protect the target from further harm.
- Use restorative practices to help maintain the relationships of all involved.
- Keep a record of bullying behaviour.

**Children will:**
- Report any incidents of bullying that they are either involved in or witness.
- Do everything they can to keep the play safe and happy.
- Use the strategies that they have been encouraged to use to deal with a bullying incident.

**Parents will:**
- Encourage their child to report if they are bullied.
- Watch for signs of bullying.
- Speak to OSHC staff if their child is being bullied or they suspect bullying.
- Work with the service in seeking a permanent solution.
- Promote strategies that enable their child to feel empowered and confident if they have to deal with a bullying incident.

**Responding to a Bullying Incident**

Parents of the child who is being bullied and the parents of the child accused of bullying should be informed of the situation. It is important that parents are able to talk openly with their children about what is happening. The Co-ordinator will work with the School on a case by case basis as required.

*The service is* committed to implementing positive and permanent solutions to bullying. Staff, children and parents will work together to stop all bullying as part of the ‘no tolerance’ approach.
5.7 Children’s individual needs policy

**Purpose:** To ensure that OSHC is meeting the needs of the children attending the service.

**Aims:**
- That educators actively build relationships with the children attending OSHC and take a genuine interest in who each child is as an individual.
- Children are consulted about the program that OSHC runs in relation to activities, toys, excursions, etc.
- To ensure that each child attending OSHC feels that they can approach educators about any suggestions or concern they may have; and that staff take these suggestions into consideration or act on the concerns of the child/ren.
- Children will collaborate with staff at the beginning of each term to set a clear set of expectations for the behaviour of both staff and children attending the service.

**Guidelines:**

**Building Relationships:**
Educators seek to build relationships with the children by:

- Engaging the children in meaningful conversation
- Interacting with the children in one on one activities/play or group activities/play
- Share observations of the children with other staff
- Creating partnerships with the children to complete a task, eg. Reorganising the storeroom, creating a display together, etc

**Consultation:**
Educators should consult with the children on:

- Program planning
- Food program planning
- Resources and equipment
- Room set up
- Expectations of Educators and children

**Approachability:**
Educators should always:

- Attend to children as a priority
- Take the time to sit down and listen to a child/ren when they have a suggestion or concern.
- Act on that suggestion or concern. If a child says they are bored, brainstorm solutions together; if they have an activity idea run it if it is possible
- Put relevant procedures into action when a concern is more serious, ie child protection, bullying etc
- Follow up to ensure that the solution solved the concern

Reviewed August 2012
5.8 Inclusion and Anti Bias policy

Purpose: The intent is to ensure that all children’s experiences are recognised and valued and that they have equitable access to resources and participation and opportunities to demonstrate their learning. (Framework for School Age Care, page 24)

Aims:
- To ensure positive attitudes towards inclusion is held by all those involved in OSHC.
- To encourage participation in OSHC by all families and children.
- Fostering respect and an appreciation of diversity of cultures and religion in all staff, children and families.
- To ensure no family, child or staff member feels discriminated against by OSHC

Guidelines and Procedures:

Inclusion involves taking into account all children’s social, cultural and linguistic diversity (including learning styles, abilities, disabilities, gender, family circumstances and geographical location) in curriculum decision making processes.

- Promoting a sense of positive identity and self identity within the children through inclusive planning and professional development among the staff that caters for varying levels of ability, multiculturalism and is not gender biased.
- Accepting in a positive way all cultures, language and ability levels and embracing these aspects throughout our program planning and interactions with the children.
- Communicating with the children, family, community and staff and encouraging these four groups to be proactive in our program.
- Building relationships among the four groups so they can express ideas and plan opportunities for the children attending the program.
- Celebrating and participating in community events such as school fairs.

Cultural Inclusion:

- Families, children and staff are encouraged to be involved in all aspects of the program planning, including activities, toys, food, etc.
- OSHC encourages the presence of cultural diversity in the program as a way of families, children and staff sharing aspects of their culture with others that are unfamiliar with it. It helps to foster respect and an appreciation of the diverse ways in which people all around the world approach daily life.
- Cultural inclusion should not be done in a manner that is tokenistic, but should permeate all aspects of the daily operations of the service, eg using cooking equipment from other cultures, recipes, utensils, toys, games, posters, activities, musical instruments, music, celebrations, etc.
- In situations where cultural customs and values contradict those at the service, families are welcomed to discuss this with the OSHC staff so an alternative can be reached together.

Religious Beliefs Inclusion:

- Many religions differ in doctrine and therefore beliefs, opinions and customs vary. Although OSHC is non-denominational, religious beliefs and customs are a part of everyday life in many families and staff should therefore ensure that the needs of the families attending are respected.
- Staff should work together with families to ensure OSHC caters for any individual needs of the children and families.

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Anti bias approach:

Staff will:

- Be aware of the backgrounds and particular needs of the children/families attending the service
- Develop a program that reflects the cultural and social needs of all the children/families in attendance
- Draw on the skills, talents, knowledge and expertise of people from other cultures. Diversity should be shared and appreciated.
- Be aware that it is not enough to offer the occasional “multicultural” afternoon tea, for example, and assume the anti-bias aspect of the program has been addressed. This approach is often described as a “tourist approach” as it only happens once in a while, with only a brief glimpse of different cultures. Emphasize the day-to-day living, not just special holidays and customs.
- Be aware of the possible needs for modifications to the environment to enable physical access, printed materials or posters in community languages, try to find pictures, books, music and other items representative of the children’s cultures or special needs; reflect an anti-bias approach in every aspect of the program every day of operation.

In order to create an inclusive environment staff must first examine their own attitudes and recognise their own prejudices and learn to deal with them in a positive way. The challenge is for all staff to empower themselves and others to confront and resolve discrimination issues.

All staff must endeavour to develop a rapport with families as they are the most significant people in children’s lives.

The program will endeavour to incorporate aspects of the local community.

The children’s program will incorporate activities that acknowledge and celebrate people differences.

Reviewed August 2012