

Providing a Child Safe Environment

POLICY STATEMENT:

SHARE provides an environment that ensures the safety, health and wellbeing of children at all times. The welfare and protection of all children is of paramount importance. Educators will maintain the premises and equipment adhere to procedures regarding safe practices and operate in line with legislative requirements relating to child protective practices and the Education and Care Services National Regulations and Law. Educators and management are aware of their legal responsibility as Mandatory Reporters to take action to protect and support children they suspect may be at significant risk of harm. Educators will ensure that children are adequately supervised at all times and that every reasonable precaution is taken to protect children from harm and any hazard likely to cause injury or trauma (National Quality Standards 2.3.1 & 2.3.2).

PROCEDURES:

(a) Managing the Facility

- SECURITY:
 - Only approved educators and management members will be given a key to access the building and equipment areas.
 - A key register will be maintained that indicates the person's receipt of the key, date received, and date returned on completion of employment or completion of term as member of Management. Extra keys will only be cut after agreement by the management and a record made of where they are.
 - All monies and important documents will be kept in a lockable place and access will only be permitted by approved staff and management members.
 - Educators will ensure that the building is left in a secure manner before leaving and all windows, cupboards, safe, and other relevant areas are locked. All heating and lighting will be switched off and all doors properly secured. (end of day check list)
 - Educators will inform the police and the committee as soon as possible if there has been a break into the service of any kind.
 - If an Educator arrives at **SHARE** and it appears that the **SHARE** has been broken into the Educator should ring the Police. Educators will remain at the service until the police arrive or inform them of what to do. Educators should not enter the building alone or put themselves at risk.
- BUILDINGS, EQUIPMENT AND MAINTENANCE:
 - Equipment will be chosen to meet the children's developmental needs and interests. There will be sufficient access to furniture, materials and developmentally appropriate equipment suitable for the education and care for each child.
 - Service premises and all equipment and furniture will be maintained in a safe, clean condition and in good repair at all times.
 - Children will be provided with adequate, developmentally and age-appropriate toilet, washing and drying facilities. These will enable safe use and convenient access by children.
 - There must be no damaged plugs, sockets, power cords or extension cords.
 - All plug sockets shall be maintained as child safe.
 - Electrical appliances shall be in good working order.
 - Electrical circuit breakers will be installed and be maintained.

- Provision will be made in the budget for regular maintenance and repair work and for deferred costs of major capital repairs.
- SHARE will only employ qualified contractors with their own public liability insurance.
- The service and equipment will be regularly checked to ensure that they are in a good and safe condition, comply with relevant Australian Standards and have appropriate soft-fall surfacing maintained.
- Equipment will be regularly washed and cleaned.
- Recycled craft materials should be checked for potential hazards.
- Educators should ensure safe handling of all tools if used as part of any activity.
- Families will be encouraged to notify educators of any safety issues they observe.
- Anything that requires maintenance is to be reported to the Nominated Supervisor as soon as possible.
- Faulty equipment should be removed or protection placed around any dangerous building sites.
- A maintenance book will be kept that records any maintenance that needs to be addressed.
- The maintenance book will record:
 - ✓ Type of problem
 - ✓ Date that it was observed
 - ✓ Who notified the Nominated Supervisor and when?
 - ✓ What was done to rectify the problem?
 - ✓ Date repaired
 - ✓ Tradesperson employed to repair the problem
- For urgent repairs the Nominated Supervisor will organise a contractor to attend to the problem.
- Wherever possible, repair work will be scheduled for times when children are not in the building.
- Non – urgent repairs that require large expenditure or major decisions will be brought to the attention of the committee. The Committee and the Nominated Supervisor will organise to rectify the problem.
- The Nominated Supervisor will also give a review of works completed by any tradesman employed, for future reference.
- It is the responsibility of the committee, once a problem has been raised, to ensure that it is rectified in the most efficient manner and that the service is safe for educators and clientele.
- Should **SHARE** be considered unsafe or as being a health risk, then **SHARE** will be closed, after notice has been given to all relevant parties, until the problem has been rectified.
- **SHARE** will have an appropriate number of first aid kits that are suitable to the ages and needs of the children attending. The first aid kit will be well stocked and be easily recognised and accessible at all times.
- STORAGE:
 - A storage system should be devised that ensures easy access and un-cluttered storage of all equipment.
 - Storage areas will be cleaned and tidied at least twice a year or when seen as necessary.
 - Play equipment and toys should be easily accessible to all children during the operating hours of the service.
 - Children will show respect for the equipment and be expected to pack equipment away that they have used to avoid trip hazards.
 - All equipment is to be neatly packed away at the end of each session.

- Some craft equipment (such as textas, pencils, paper, scissors, glue sticks, boxes, tape) will be accessible to the children during the session in places such as the craft trolley and the re-use area. Other craft equipment that may pose a higher risk without specific supervision will be stored in the craft storeroom or cupboards that are only accessed by Educators.
- All craft equipment is to be properly washed and cleaned before storage.
- Where room permits, a separate storage area will be available for sporting and large outdoor equipment to prevent clutter.
- All items such as cleaning materials, disinfectants, flammable, poisonous and other dangerous substances, tools, toiletries, first aid equipment, and medications should be stored in the designated secured area which is inaccessible to the children. Educators are responsible to ensure that these areas remain secure and that they do not inadvertently provide access to these items.
- Educators and management will ensure that all family records are kept in a nominated secure place, ensuring that records are kept confidential and not left accessible to others during the course of the daily operations.
- VENTILATION, TEMPERATURE AND NATURAL LIGHT:
 - All heating and cooling systems will be of good quality and checked regularly to ensure safety and reliability.
 - All heating and cooling systems and power cords will be kept in a safe area and away from children.
 - Educators will take individual needs and specific activities into account when ensuring that heating, ventilation levels are comfortable.
 - Should educators, children or families complain about the temperature in the service not being at a comfortable level, this matter will be drawn to the attention of management and steps will be made to address the problem.
 - Adequate ventilation will be provided at all times. Windows will be properly maintained to ensure easy opening and protection from bugs and insects.
 - Where activities involve toxic materials such as paints and glues, Educators are to ensure there is adequate ventilation before undertaking the activity.
 - Windows if possible are to be opened during operation of the service unless closed to protect from extreme weather conditions.
 - Natural light is considered to be most desirable. Provision of natural light areas will be enhanced as much as possible.
 - In areas made available for children's homework or other fine detail, natural light will be made available where possible and good overhead lighting provided.
 - Adequate light will be maintained both indoors and outdoors. A security light will be placed at the entrance to the service that clearly provides unobstructed view of the door and surrounding areas.
 - Outdoor lighting will be suitable so that families, staff and children can enter and exit the building without any unsafe dark areas.
- PEST CONTROL:
 - Equipment and especially food items will be properly stored so as not to attract pests and vermin.
 - Refuse bins and disposal areas will be emptied and cleaned daily.
 - Kitchen, food preparation areas and storage will be cleaned and maintained daily.
 - All areas will be checked daily for any signs of pests or vermin.

- Should any pests or vermin be identified then action should be taken to rid the service of the problem by:
 - o Initially using non-chemical methods such as physical removal, maintaining a clean environment, and use of any non-chemical products.
 - o Low irritant, environmentally friendly sprays to be used minimally and only with adequate ventilation and preferably not in the presence of the children.
 - o Other methods such as the employment of a pest control company if deemed necessary by management where the above methods have failed.
- If urgent, the Nominated Supervisor may obtain a contractor from management list to address the problem.
- If non urgent, the Nominated Supervisor will bring the problem to the attention of management in their report and management will decide on the appropriate course of action.
- All families will be notified of any use of chemicals.
- Any use of chemical products should only be conducted outside the hours of the children and educators' presence in the building.
- All action will be taken to remove the children, educators, families and visitors from the environment for as long as is safe and viable.

(b) Managing the indoor and Outdoor Environment:

- **INDOOR ENVIRONMENT:**

- **SHARE** indoor environment will be smoke free and no smoking notices will be prominently displayed.
- The Nominated Supervisor will only enrol the number of children in the service, which can comfortably fit into the building space and in accordance with the National Regulations.
- Separate areas in the indoor environment will be provided for:
 - ✓ Signing children in/out of the service.
 - ✓ Collection of fees, answering phones, and maintaining daily records.
 - ✓ Educators and families to talk in confidence.
 - ✓ Children to store their bags and belongings.
 - ✓ Storage of equipment, food, dangerous materials, and family records.
 - ✓ Preparation of food and drinks.
 - ✓ Kitchen and other refuse.
 - ✓ Cleaning of equipment.
 - ✓ Male and female toilet, hand basins and hand drying facilities.
 - ✓ Creative and other activities.
 - ✓ Large and small group activities.
 - ✓ Display of children's activities and work.
 - ✓ Quiet space for children to retreat to, or do homework, or lie down if unwell.
- The indoor area is to be set up to allow children to participate in a variety of activities with easy access to equipment. Drawing paper and other materials will be made available to the children at all times.
- Easy access to areas should be maintained by making clear easily definable passageways and walkways though the building.

- Educators will ensure that children properly store their bags and that bags and other items are not thrown into walkways or play areas.
- All items obstructing areas are to be removed and placed in the correct storage areas.
- Areas must be set up to ensure that proper supervision can be maintained at all times.
- Access to the outdoor environment should be clear and easily accessible by the children and staff.
- The mainhall area is equipped with sound dampening pads to reduce the risk of hearing damage.
- Toilet facilities for adults are separate from those used by the children.

- OUTDOOR ENVIRONMENT:

SHARE's unique situation in a public park provides unique learning opportunities and connections with the local community, but it also presents unique challenges for supervision and safety.

- Children play in a large, unfenced area, so it is extremely important that possible exits are supervised at all times. Approaches to supervision in the outdoor space are outline in SHARE's Supervision Policy.
- The park is divided into zones with consistent boundaries, and children can only play in a zone if it is adequately supervised.
- Using a space that is also accessible to the public means that unexpected hazards can be introduced to the space at any time. SHARE will check the outdoor spaces they use thoroughly before each session and tick off that they have done so in the green "Daily External Safety Check List" folder located in the office. Possible hazards and how to deal with them are outlined in the *Outdoor Risk Assessment: Identifiable Hazards* document. In cases where a hazard can be removed it will be. In cases where a hazard is identified that cannot be removed, a plan will be followed that keeps the hazard from endangering the children.
- Approaches to hazards that can occur spontaneously, such as aggressive animals or strangers acting dangerously, can be found in the *Outdoor Risk Assessment: Emergencies* document.
- The outdoor environment provides each child with at least 7 square metres of unencumbered outdoor space in compliance with National Regulation 108.
- SHARE Educators will endeavour, through relocating the children or communicating with members of the public, to keep the children in as smoke free an environment as possible. NSW law bans smoking with 10 metres of children's playgrounds, or on paths and throughfares within 4 metres of a building or garden entrance.
- The outdoor space will be set up in a variety of ways to encourage participation.
- Areas will be made available where children can play in large or small groups or by themselves.
- Supervision should be properly maintained. Children are only to play in areas that are clearly visible to educators, and where child/educator ratios are maintained.
- Clear sightlines will be maintained if it is necessary go outside the boundaries (such as retrieving a ball from the bushes).
- Adequate shade via trees and coverings will be maintained.
- As far as possible, activities will be set up in shaded areas.
- Use of other outdoor venues will be considered where access to the area is safe, adequate supervision can be maintained, the area is considered of value to the children's physical development and personal comfort, and where adequate staff/educator ratios can be maintained.

- Parents and carers who have dogs with them will be asked not to tie their dog up in high-traffic areas such as the entrance to SHARE. If they are uncomfortable leaving their dog further away, SHARE educators can organise to sign their child out for them.

Child Protective Practices

- **MANDATORY REPORTING:**

- A Mandatory Reporter is anybody who delivers services to children as part of their paid or professional work.
- In OSHC services mandatory reporters are:
 - o Educators that deliver services to children
 - o Management, either paid or voluntary, whose duties include direct responsibility or direct supervision for the provision of these services.

Educators are mandated to report to Community Services if they have current concerns about the safety or welfare of a child relating to section 23 of the NSW Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998.

SHARE has a separate policy covering Child Protection which includes Mandatory Reporting, Information Exchange Reportable conduct, Recruitment and Orientation of Educators

CONSIDERATIONS:

Education and Care Services National Law & Regulations	al \Quality Standards & Elements	Links to other Service Policies	Other Documentation/ Evidence
S162, 165, 166, 167, 169, 170, 171, 174 R77, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 89, 97, 98, 99, 100, 103, 105, 107, 108, 109, 110, 114, 115, 168, 170, 175, 176.	Standards 2.1, 2.2, 3.1, 4.1, 7.1 Elements 2.1.1, 2.1.2, 2.2.1, 2.2.2, 2.2.3, 3.1.1, 3.1.2, 4.1.1, 7.1.2	- Health and Safety policies and procedures - Staffing policies and procedures	- NSW Children and Young Person's (Care and Protection) Act 1998 - Commission for Children and Young People Act 1998 - Child Protection (Prohibited Employment) Act 1998 - Ombudsman Act 1974 (with relevant Child Protection Amendments) - NSW Department of Community Services Mandatory Reporting Guidelines - NSW Child Protection Interagency Guidelines (2006) - Legislation Amendment (Wood Inquiry Recommendations) Act 2009 No 13 - Keep Them Safe – Information session/ overview participants manual 2009/ 2010 - My Time, Our Place. - Parent handbook - Staff handbook - Risk Assessments - Safety Checks

ENDORSEMENT BY THE SERVICE:

Educator reviewed on 23.7.24 by: Chris, Kurt, Luca, Isabella, Yeon Hee, Margaret, Elana, Emily, Imogen, Naomi, Ethan C, Alec, Lauren, Henry, Ethan G, Sofie

Approval date: 18 August 2024

Date for Review: August 2025

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ken Campbell". The signature is written in a cursive style and is contained within a white rectangular box.