

Child Safe Environment

Purpose of this requirement

Safeguarding children from abuse, neglect and harm and ensuring the health, safety and wellbeing of children and young people, their families, Goodstarters and visitors to our Centres and sites is Goodstart's first and most important obligation. This document outlines how Goodstart maintains physical, psychological, and online environments that promote cultural safety and keep children safe and well.

Definitions

Swimming pool

An excavation or structure that is capable of being filled with water to a depth of 30 centimetres or more; and is capable of being used for swimming, bathing, wading, paddling or other human aquatic activities; and is used, designed, manufactured or adapted for the purpose mentioned above, despite its current use and includes spas and wading pools (other than portable wading pools), The Building Act 1975.

Applicability of this requirement

It is essential that centre teams educators and co-ordinators attend to children's wellbeing by providing cultural, emotional and physical safety through enacting the voice of children, playful, intentional teaching connected to child/ren's learning goals, effective and active supervision, warm, trusting relationships with children and families and predictable, inclusive, and safe and enabling learning environments.

The following policies, procedures and protocols detail how child safe environments are created and maintained at Goodstart. Goodstart policies and procedures are championed by leaders, understood by staff and available to the community on our website; <https://www.goodstart.org.au/policies-and-procedures>.

Code of Conduct

Goodstart's [Code of Conduct](#) and [Child Safe Behaviour Standards](#) set out the child safe behaviours expected from all Goodstart employees and contractors. This information can be found in the following policy documents:

1. BM1 Code of Conduct Policy
2. BM6 Employee Grievance and Complaints Handling Procedure
3. BM4 Whistleblower Policy.

Risk Management

Goodstart has a robust Risk Management Framework. We regularly review risks and implement appropriate strategies to minimise and manage these risks. At an operational level, safety, health and wellbeing hazards and risks are actively identified and managed to prevent harm. Goodstart achieves this via coordinated approaches to risk management, application of the hierarchy of controls in managing workplace health and safety risks, and in actively identifying and applying industry best practice for managing risks which are unique to our sector.

DOCUMENT NUMBER & TITLE		NQS2 Child Safe Environment REQUIREMENT			
CONTENT OWNER	Matthew Little, Chief Safety Officer	DOCUMENT AUTHOR	Nicole VanGurp, Head of Safety Specialists		
DATE PUBLISHED	01/06/2022	DOCUMENT VERSION	V17.0	REVISION DUE DATE	30/06/2024
Ensure you are using the latest version of this policy.					
Warning – uncontrolled when printed. This document is current at the time of printing and may be subject to change without notice.					

Recruitment

There are a range of recruitment strategies Goodstart adopts to ensure that Goodstart engages the most suitable and appropriate people to work or volunteer with children. This information can be found in the following policy documents:

- BM8 Recruitment of New CSO Staff Member Procedure
- BM8 Recruitment of New Centre Staff Member Procedure
- NQS7 Maintaining Working with Children Checks Requirement
- NQS2 Staff Suitability Procedure

Training and Support for employees and volunteers

Goodstart provides ongoing support to staff and volunteers about their role in maintaining child safe environments. Goodstart will ensure people management practices will support ongoing assessment of a person's suitability to work with children throughout the transition process and as they progress with their employment. This information can be found in the following policy documents:

- BM7 Online Learning Requirement

Children's Learning and Development

- Age-appropriate learning experiences / resources are planned, programmed and provided for children to ensure their physical and cultural safety, wellbeing, participation and development across the EYLF learning outcomes.
- Child agency is promoted within the program, learning environment, routines and interactions. Empowering children to participate in decision that impact them.
- Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships are maintained with children and families. Centre teams actively engage with families, partnering with them to enhance children's inclusion, learning, wellbeing and safety.
- A child's ability to express their culture and enjoy their cultural rights is encouraged and actively supported.
- Children and young people are informed about all of their rights, including to safety, information and participation.
- Where relevant to the setting or context, children and young people are offered access to sexual abuse prevention programs and to relevant related information in an age appropriate way.
- In accordance with the Sleep, Rest and Relaxation Requirement reasonable steps are taken to ensure that a child's need for sleep and rest are met, having regard to each child's age and development.
- Consideration is given to how children are grouped.

Participation of families and children

- Training programs may be implemented at an individual centre level to educate and engage with children and young people about their rights, safe environments, protective strategies for staying safe and seeking help when needed.
- Training is provided to staff and volunteers to ensure they understand child rights-based approaches and are skilled at engaging with young people (search for 'child rights' on the learning hub)
- The organisation seeks the views of children and families through online surveys
- Policies and procedures are in place to seek consent for relevant activities
- Where appropriate, safety activities and initiatives invite children's voice on safety (e.g. outdoor safety inspection).

Related policies, procedures, and documents:

- NQS5 Relationships with children Policy
- NQS6 Managing Family Complaints Procedure
- BM1 Code of Conduct Policy
- BM1 Child-Safe Behaviour Standards Requirement

DOCUMENT NUMBER & TITLE		NQS2 Child Safe Environment REQUIREMENT			
CONENT OWNER	Matthew Little, Chief Safety Officer	DOCUMENT AUTHOR	Nicole VanGurp, Head of Safety Specialists		
DATE PUBLISHED	01/07/2022	DOCUMENT VERSION	V17.0	REVISION DUE DATE	30/06/2024
Ensure you are using the latest version of this policy.					
Warning – uncontrolled when printed. This document is current at the time of printing and may be subject to change without notice.					

Infection Control, Medication Management and Medical Conditions

- Adequate health and hygiene and infection control practices are implemented.
- Reasonable steps are taken to prevent the spread of infectious diseases and ensure that the parent or emergency contact of each child enrolled at the service is notified of the occurrence of an infectious disease as soon as possible.
- Medication (including prescription, over the counter and homeopathic medications) must not be administered to a child without authorisation by the parent or a person with authority to consent to medication administration for the child.
- We have procedures in place for the effective management of medical conditions, specific health care needs and allergies. All staff and volunteers are informed about the practices that must be followed. If a child enrolled at the service has a specific health care need, allergy or other relevant medical condition, parents must be provided with a copy of the policy.
- Adequate, developmentally, and age-appropriate toilet, washing and drying facilities are available for use by children being educated and cared for by the service.

Supervision

- Enact Supervision: The super 7 to ensure effective and active supervision of all children at all times, including school age children, in accordance with the NQS2 Supervision Requirement and the National Law and Regulations. active supervision requires focused and intentional observation of children, watching, scanning, and listening at all times whilst simultaneously using knowledge of each child to engage playfully to extend, support or redirect learning.
- Ensure all children are supervised across all learning areas and simultaneous use of indoor and outdoor environments cognisant of supervision risk and controls, in accordance with NQS2 Room/area supervision plan procedure.
- Closing staff must not leave the centre before the nominated closing time
- Two staff must remain at the centre with a child who is collected after the nominated closing time.
- Educators, staff and volunteers must comply with the BM1 Code of Conduct, and BM1 Child-Safe Behaviour Standard Requirement while providing care within our centre environments.

Related Documents:

- NQS7 Maintaining Working with Children Checks Requirement and Appendices; NQS7 Maintaining Working with Children Checks - CSO Requirement; BM8 Recruitment of New CSO Staff Member Procedure; BM8 Recruitment of New Centre Staff Member Procedure; BM8 Mandatory Document Requirement Appendix; NQS2 Staff Suitability Procedure

Excursions/ Incursions

- A SAFER risk assessment is completed for all excursions and incursions.
- The Water Safety requirement is followed for all excursions to swimming pools or near water.
- Related Policy: NQS2 Excursions Procedure

Incidents and Emergencies

- The centre has appropriate lock down and emergency evacuation procedures.
- An up-to-date risk register is maintained.
- An appropriate number of first aid kits are provided that are easily recognisable and readily accessible to adults.
- A minimum of (1) person with a current First Aid and CPR qualification will be in attendance at all times.
- Relevant incident management procedures must be followed in the event that a child is injured, becomes ill or suffers a trauma. The parent or emergency contact must be notified as soon as possible. An incident report must be kept and stored until the child is 25 years of age.
- All staff are familiar with the Emergency Preparedness and Evacuation Drills Requirement.

DOCUMENT NUMBER & TITLE		NQS2 Child Safe Environment REQUIREMENT			
CONENT OWNER	Matthew Little, Chief Safety Officer	DOCUMENT AUTHOR	Nicole VanGurp, Head of Safety Specialists		
DATE PUBLISHED	01/07/2022	DOCUMENT VERSION	V17.0	REVISION DUE DATE	30/06/2024
Ensure you are using the latest version of this policy.					
Warning – uncontrolled when printed. This document is current at the time of printing and may be subject to change without notice.					

- The ‘Managing the collection of children’ procedure is followed to ensure children are only released into the care of authorised persons.
- If children have not been collected by closing time, follow the ‘Managing the collection of children’ procedure. Closing staff must not leave the centre before all children have been collected by the parent or authorised person.
- Physically check each area to ensure that all children are accounted for, including sleep areas, outdoor areas and storage sheds.
- All staff who work with children are aware of the current child protection law in the services jurisdiction and understand their obligations under that law. All staff are aware of the current ‘Protecting children from significant harm’ procedure and understand their obligations and responsibilities to uphold.

Reporting and responding to harm or risk of harm

All Goodstarters have a responsibility to champion and model a culture that promotes and protects the safety and wellbeing of children in everything we do. Together we “look, do, tell” and prevent, identify and respond to child abuse, neglect and harm. Goodstarters have an obligation to report all allegations and suspicions of child abuse, neglect and harm in accordance with the NQS2 Protecting Children from Abuse, Neglect and Harm Procedure, the NQS2 Managing Allegations or Suspicions of Child Abuse, Neglect and Harm involving Staff and Volunteers Procedure and the NQS2 Managing Children’s Sexual Behaviours Procedure.

Reporting and responding to complaints or feedback

Goodstart provides information on dealing with complaints and feedback. This information can be found in the following policy documents:

- NQS6 Managing Family Complaints Procedure
- BM6 Employee Grievance and Complaints Handling Procedure

Indoor and Outdoor Spaces and Fencing

- Complete regular safety checks of the indoor environment and equipment throughout the day.
- Check all indoor areas, including sleep areas for any defects or hazards likely to cause injury. If a defect or hazard is identified take the required action as outlined in the Physical Environment Policy and any relevant associated procedures to make the area safe and escalate a permanent solution.
- Children’s bags stored within classrooms are checked daily and any dangerous objects or medications are removed and stored in areas inaccessible to children.
- Ensure hazardous products including chemicals are stored securely at all times in accordance with the Hazardous Substances Management Procedure.
- Indoor spaces must be well ventilated, have adequate natural light and maintained at a temperature that ensures the safety and wellbeing of children.
- There is an operating telephone or other means of communication, to communicate and receive calls (this includes for excursions).
- There is an adequate area available at the service for conducting the administrative functions, consulting with parents and conducting private conversations.
- The service has access to laundry facilities and procedures for dealing with soiled clothing, nappies, and linen, including hygienic facilities for storage prior to their disposal or laundering.
- Safety plugs are in all unused electrical outlets.
- Complete the iAuditor Outdoor Safety Inspection prior to entering an outdoor space with children. If iAuditor is unavailable at the time of inspection, complete the paper form NQS2 Outdoor Safety Inspection Appendix and enter inspection results into iAuditor when it becomes available again.
- Any outdoor space used by children must be enclosed by a fence or barrier that is of such height and design that, children of pre-school age and under, cannot go through, over or under it. Physically check the perimeter of all outdoor areas used by children for any defects or hazards each time before children are taken into the playground.

DOCUMENT NUMBER & TITLE		NQS2 Child Safe Environment REQUIREMENT			
CONENT OWNER	Matthew Little, Chief Safety Officer	DOCUMENT AUTHOR	Nicole VanGurp, Head of Safety Specialists		
DATE PUBLISHED	01/07/2022	DOCUMENT VERSION	V17.0	REVISION DUE DATE	30/06/2024
Ensure you are using the latest version of this policy.					
Warning – uncontrolled when printed. This document is current at the time of printing and may be subject to change without notice.					

- The outdoor space provides adequate shaded spaces to protect children from overexposure to ultraviolet radiation from the sun.
- The service complies with the Sun Safety and Heat Stress Requirement at all times to ensure all children and staff are protected against the harmful effects of the sun's heat and UVR.
- At centres with a swimming pool, the Water Safety requirement is followed.

Children's Learning and Development

Furniture, Materials, Resources and Toys

- Each child must have access to sufficient furniture, materials, and developmentally appropriate equipment.
- Equipment is safe, clean and in good repair and maintained in accordance with the Scheduled General Maintenance Procedure.
- All products and equipment purchased are safe for the intended use.

Food Preparation and Storage

- Safe practices are used for handling, preparing and storing food in accordance with the Food Safety Program.
- Staff prepare and consume their own hot food and drinks away from children. Staff food and hot drinks must not be prepared in, taken into or carried through a classroom, playground, classroom kitchenette or a classroom storeroom.
- Minimise any possible risk of lead exposure by running cold taps for 30 seconds the first time you use them each day, only drinking and cooking with water from the cold tap and only making infant formula and filling water bottles with water from the cold tap or sterilised water (where required).

Cleaning and Maintenance

- Mix bathroom cleaning products according to the manufacturer's instructions. Spray bottles should not be topped up with water to ensure the detergent is not too diluted.
- Complete the activity listed on the cleaning and maintenance schedule daily.
- Ensure cleaning buckets are emptied immediately after use and are not left in areas accessible to children.

Staffing Arrangements

- Two staff must be on premises at all times.
- In accordance with the Supervision Requirement, all children, including school age children must be adequately supervised (in accordance with the Supervision Procedure) and educator: child ratios maintained at all times.
- Consideration is given to allowing school age children to earn autonomy and collaborate with peers whilst being adequately supervised. For school age children, educators should be aware of where each child is and be in a position to respond if necessary.
- Be aware of any corners or areas that are less visible and may be a hazard, providing extra vigilance in hard to supervise spaces.
- Educators, staff and volunteers must not consume alcohol or be affected by alcohol or drugs (including prescription medications) that may impair their capacity to provide education and care.
- Closing staff must not leave the centre before the nominated closing time.
- Two staff must remain at the centre with a child who is collected after the nominated closing time.
- Beginning and end of day duties such as cleaning, preparing early learning environments and securing the premises must not compromise the adequate supervision of children.
- Educators must ensure all children are signed in and out of the attendance record and if not, staff must enter the time of arrival/departure for the parent to acknowledge on their next attendance at the centre.
- Educators, staff and volunteers must comply with the BM1 Code of Conduct, NQS7 Victoria – Complying with the Child Safe Standards Requirement and BM1 Child-Safe Behaviour Standard Requirement while providing care within our centre environments.

DOCUMENT NUMBER & TITLE		NQS2 Child Safe Environment REQUIREMENT			
CONENT OWNER	Matthew Little, Chief Safety Officer	DOCUMENT AUTHOR	Nicole VanGurp, Head of Safety Specialists		
DATE PUBLISHED	01/07/2022	DOCUMENT VERSION	V17.0	REVISION DUE DATE	30/06/2024
Ensure you are using the latest version of this policy.					
Warning – uncontrolled when printed. This document is current at the time of printing and may be subject to change without notice.					

Incidents and Emergencies

- The centre has appropriate lock down and emergency evacuation procedures.
- An up-to-date risk register is maintained.
- An appropriate number of first aid kits are provided that are easily recognisable and readily accessible to adults.
- A minimum of (1) person with a current First Aid and CPR qualification will be in attendance at all times.
- Relevant incident management procedures must be followed in the event that a child is injured, becomes ill or suffers a trauma. The parent or emergency contact must be notified as soon as possible. An incident report must be kept and stored until the child is 25 years of age.
- All staff are familiar with the Emergency Preparedness and Evacuation Drills Requirement.
- The Managing the collection of children procedure is followed to ensure children are only released into the care of authorised persons.
- If children have not been collected by closing time, follow the Managing the collection of children procedure. Closing staff must not leave the centre before all children have been collected by the parent or authorised person.
- Physically check each area to ensure that all children are accounted for, including sleep areas, outdoor areas and storage sheds.
- All staff who work with children are aware of the current child protection law in the services jurisdiction and understand their obligations under that law. All staff are aware of the current protecting children from significant harm procedure and understand their obligations and responsibilities.

Excursions

- A SAFER risk assessment is completed for all excursions.
- The Water Safety requirement is followed for all excursions to swimming pools or near water.

Health and Hygiene

- Adequate health and hygiene and infection control practices are implemented.
- Reasonable steps are taken to prevent the spread of infectious diseases and ensure that the parent or emergency contact of each child enrolled at the service is notified of the occurrence of an infectious disease as soon as possible.
- Medication (including prescription, over the counter and homeopathic medications) must not be administered to a child without authorisation by the parent or a person with authority to consent to medication administration for the child.
- The Children's Health and Safety Policy and associated procedures set out practices for dealing with the management of medical conditions, specific health care needs and allergies. All staff and volunteers are informed about the practices that must be followed. If a child enrolled at the service has a specific health care need, allergy or other relevant medical condition, parents must be provided with a copy of the policy.
- Adequate, developmentally and age-appropriate toilet, washing and drying facilities are available for use by Visitors.
- In accordance with the Visitors to the Centre Procedure, the identification of visitors must be verified, and access only provided with appropriate authority.

DOCUMENT NUMBER & TITLE		NQS2 Child Safe Environment REQUIREMENT			
CONENT OWNER	Matthew Little, Chief Safety Officer	DOCUMENT AUTHOR	Nicole VanGurp, Head of Safety Specialists		
DATE PUBLISHED	01/07/2022	DOCUMENT VERSION	V17.0	REVISION DUE DATE	30/06/2024
Ensure you are using the latest version of this policy.					
Warning – uncontrolled when printed. This document is current at the time of printing and may be subject to change without notice.					

Related Documents

Emergency Management Documents: [BM10 Emergency Preparedness and Evacuation Drills - Centres Requirement](#); [BM10 Managing a Natural Disaster Procedure](#).

Physical Environment or Facilities Documents [NQS2 Lock Up Checklist Appendix](#); [NQS2 Outdoor Safety Inspection Appendix](#); [NQS2 Indoor Environment Checklist Appendix](#); [NQS3 Emergency Maintenance Procedure](#); [NQS3 Scheduled Maintenance Procedure](#)

Child-Safe Standards and National Principles for Child Safe Organisations

[BM1 Child-Safe Behaviour Standard Requirement](#)

Safeguarding Children Responsibilities for Nominated Supervisors
Safeguarding Children Requirement

General Children's Health and Safety Documents:

- [NQS2 Administration of Medication to Children Procedure](#); [BM5 Driver and Vehicle Requirement](#); [NQS2 Excursions Procedure](#); [NQS2 Food and Nutrition Requirement](#); [NQS2 Hand Washing and Gloves Procedure](#); [BM10 Infectious Disease Identification, Management and Exclusion Procedure](#); [NQS2 Managing Centre Incidents Procedure](#); [NQS2 Infection Control Procedure](#); [NQS2 Medical Conditions Requirement](#); [NQS2 Medication Consent Appendix](#); [NQS2 Sleep, Rest and Relaxation Requirement](#); [NQS2 Sun Safety and Heat Stress Requirement](#); [NQS2 Supervision Requirement](#); [NQS2 Toileting Procedure](#); [NQS2 Transporting Children on Goodstart Bus Procedure](#); [NQS2 Transporting Children – Walking, Public Transport and Private Charter Bus Procedure](#); [NQS2 Visitors to the Centre Procedure](#); [NQS2 Water Safety Requirement](#); [NQS4 Child Number Checks Appendix](#)

Related policies

- [NQS2 Safety, Health and Wellbeing Policy](#); [NQS6 Collaborative Partnerships with Families and Communities Policy](#); [NQS3 Physical Environment Policy](#); [NQS4 Staffing Arrangements Policy](#)

Responsibilities

This requirement is to be implemented by: All Goodstart staff.

Examples of responsibilities which relate to maintaining child safe environments are provided in Appendix A. The table of responsibilities contained in Appendix A is an extract from the ACECQA document *Policy Guidelines, Providing a Child Safe Environment*. This example information is provided as a reference which may be of interest.

DOCUMENT NUMBER & TITLE		NQS2 Child Safe Environment REQUIREMENT			
CONENT OWNER	Matthew Little, Chief Safety Officer	DOCUMENT AUTHOR	Nicole VanGurp, Head of Safety Specialists		
DATE PUBLISHED	01/07/2022	DOCUMENT VERSION	V17.0	REVISION DUE DATE	30/06/2024
Ensure you are using the latest version of this policy.					
Warning – uncontrolled when printed. This document is current at the time of printing and may be subject to change without notice.					

APPENDIX A: Example Responsibilities for Maintaining Child Safe Environments (ACECQA Reference)

Approved Provider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that obligations under the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations are met • Ensure that the Providing a child safe environment policy and procedures are implemented, the appropriate risk assessments and action plans are completed, and all identified actions are taken to minimise the risks to children's health and safety (also known as a risk minimisation plan) • Ensure all educators and staff have undertaken current child protection legislation training, including on mandatory reporting requirements and obligations in their state/territory. If not, develop a plan to ensure training is undertaken in a suitable timeframe • Provide an environment that is free from the use of tobacco, illicit drugs and alcohol and ensure no educators or staff are affected by alcohol or drugs (including prescription medication) so as to impair their capacity to supervise or provide education and care to children in the service • Take reasonable steps to ensure that nominated supervisors, educators and staff follow the Providing a child safe environment policy and procedures • Ensure that copies of the policy and procedures are readily accessible to nominated supervisors, co-ordinators, educators and staff, and available for inspection • Notify families at least 14 days before changing the policy or procedures if the changes will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Affect the fees charged or the way they are collected or- Significantly impact the service's education and care of children or - Significantly impact the family's ability to utilise the service.
Nominated Supervisor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement the Providing a child safe environment policy and procedures and ensure that any plans developed from risk assessments are in place for individual children and are carried out • Ensure all educators and staff are aware of current child protection legislation, including the mandatory reporting requirement and obligations in their state/territory • Meeting staff to child ratios to ensure adequate supervision • Ensure all educators and staff know where to access the Providing a child safe environment policy and procedures • Ongoing communication with educators and staff about their responsibilities and any changes to policies, procedures and legislation • Regularly monitor child protection training schedules and ensure all educators and staff are up -to date with their training • When required, work collaboratively with appropriate services and/or professionals to support children's access, inclusion and participation in the program • Ensure the safety and wellbeing of children attending the service by keeping a visitors' record, including signatures and arrival/departure times Ensure Safeguarding Children responsibilities are embedded in daily practice.
Educators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be aware of current child protection legislation, including the mandatory reporting requirements and obligations • Implement the Providing a child safe environment policy and procedures and ensure that any action plans for individual children are carried out • Know the individual needs and action plans for the children in your care • Maintain current accredited child protection, first aid and approved CPR, asthma and anaphylaxis training • Monitor and maintain staff to child ratios to ensure adequate supervision of children • Provide an environment that is free from the use of tobacco, illicit drugs and alcohol • keep a visitors' record, including signatures and arrival and departure times • Involve children in decision-making to provide an environment that encourages them to reach their potential.

Source: Australia Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA). 2021. Providing a Child Safe Environment, Policy Guidelines.

DOCUMENT NUMBER & TITLE		NQS2 Child Safe Environment REQUIREMENT			
CONENT OWNER	Matthew Little, Chief Safety Officer	DOCUMENT AUTHOR	Nicole VanGurp, Head of Safety Specialists		
DATE PUBLISHED	01/07/2022	DOCUMENT VERSION	V17.0	REVISION DUE DATE	30/06/2024
Ensure you are using the latest version of this policy.					
Warning – uncontrolled when printed. This document is current at the time of printing and may be subject to change without notice.					