Hills Grammar

ECEC Child Safe Standards Procedure

Statement

The Early Childhood Education Centre (ECEC) procedures guide paid and volunteer staff members on how to behave when interacting and engaging with children in our centre. The procedures focus on how we can build and maintain a child safe environment which is inclusive, transparent and promotes child participation. At ECEC, we believe that all children have a right to:

- Be treated with respect and protected from harm
- Be asked for their opinions about things that affect them and be listened to
- Feel and be safe in their interactions with adults and other children and young people
- Understand as early as possible what is meant by feeling and being safe

In addition, it is important that children at ECEC learn;

- About feeling safe and their right to be safe
- To recognise appropriate touching and inappropriate touching
- They have a right to say no to a person who touches them inappropriately or who threatens their safety
- That the abuse is never their fault
- To tell trusted adults about anything that makes them feel unsafe
- That help is available to them at ECEC

Definitions

Abuse: abuse refers to any action that purposely causes harm, potential harm, or threat of harm to a child. This includes, but is not limited to, Physical, Sexual or Emotional Abuse and Bullying / Cyberbullying.

Neglect: neglect refers to the ongoing failure to meet a child's basic needs, either deliberately or through careless disregard. This includes, but is not limited to, Physical, Emotional, Educational, or Medical Neglect.

Reporting Thresholds: reporting thresholds are defined as the point at which suspicion or evidence of child abuse or neglect is sufficient to warrant reporting to the appropriate authorities.

- Reasonable Suspicion: This refers to when an individual, based on the facts or information gathered, believes that a child is at risk or has been a victim of abuse or neglect. This does not require proof but rather, reasonable concerns based on observations, professional knowledge or specific disclosures.
- Mandatory Reporting: This refers to the legal obligation of certain professionals or personnel to report suspected cases of child abuse or neglect to the relevant child protection authority. As a Child Care Centre, we fall under the category of mandatory reporters.

Strategies

Statement of Commitment to Child Safety

ECEC is committed to Child Safety and as such ECEC educators and staff were involved in creating a statement which reflects our practice at ECEC. The ECEC Statement of Commitment to Child Safety is available for all families to view upon being welcomed into the ECEC. The language in the statement is reflected in everyday conversations and practice by all staff, educators and children.

Child Safe Standards

Child Safety is embedded into the everyday practice at the ECEC. ECEC educators, staff, volunteers and visitors are committed to child safety. Based on the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations published by the Australian Human Rights Commission, which set out the following overarching standards that guide the development and regular review of our work systems, practices, policies and procedures to protect children from abuse and other harm.

Standard 1 – Child safety is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture;

Standard 2 – Children participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously;

Standard 3 – Families and communities are informed and involved;

Standard 4 – Equity is upheld, and diverse needs are taken in to account;

Standard 5 – People working with children are suitable and supported;

Standard 6 – Processes to respond to complaints of child abuse are child focused;

Standard 7 – Staff are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children safe through continual education and training;

Standard 8 – Physical and online environments minimise the opportunity for abuse to occur;

Standard 9 – Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is continuously reviewed and improved; and

Standard 10 – Policies and procedures document how the organisation is child safe.

Supervision of children

All children at ECEC have a right to feel safe and secure and as such, strong supervision is paramount in keeping children safe. ECEC routinely reviews risk management plans and supervision strategies and any changes made are communicated through staff meetings, regular emails and verbal conversations.

Managing drop offs and pick ups

ECEC operates between the hours of 7:30am – 6:00pm. During these hours, staffing is organised to ensure the correct ratios are maintained. At all times at ECEC, there are two educators on site including two educators to open the service at 7:30am and two educators on site to close the service at 6:00pm or until the last child has been signed out and collected by their parents or emergency contact person.

Photography and the use of images

ECEC families provide permission for photos to be used for any marketing and sharing purposes. Children's photos will not be used if their family has said no to any permissions related to photo use. ECEC uses an online app, Seesaw. Families are asked to sign, providing permission for their child to have their photo taken and to be included on Seesaw for other families to also view.

ECEC educators talk with the children about the purpose of photos being taken (to share the learning with families). Children have a right to say no to their photo being taken and this is respected by all ECEC educators.

Online Environments

The children at ECEC have access to Interactive Whiteboards and iPads. These online devices are managed and supervised by the ECEC educators. Experiences which require the use of an Interactive Whiteboard or iPad is controlled and supervised by the ECEC educators. These devices are used for educational purposes not for gaming. The ECEC educators oversee the online information is age appropriate before sharing it with the children.

Children's participation

ECEC supports children to be actively involved and to participate in the curriculum, activities and services that are offered. ECEC provides a range of ways for children to provide feedback or raise concerns. Their voices are heard, listened to, respected, and included on curriculum documents, in daily routine decisions and via the ECEC Children's Council.

Recruitment

Statement – Hills Grammar and ECEC maintains a rigorous and consistent recruitment, screening and selection process.

Practice – applicants are interviewed, references are checked, Working with Children Checks are checked and verified, 100 points of ID are checked, Police Checks are completed for all staff taking on the role of Responsible Person

Complaints Management and Reporting

- The Hills Grammar Complaints Resolutions Policy and the ECEC Dealing with Complaints Policy outline ways for staff and families to raise concerns or complaints. Reporting requirements under government agencies are included in these policies.
- Children are encouraged to raise concerns or complaints to educators or to share thoughts via the ECEC Children's Council and in daily conversations with the ECEC educators. Minutes from this Council meeting are recorded and displayed, and resolutions are a priority.
- The Nominated Supervisor is the Child Safety Contact Person and manages all complaints in the first instance.

Training, support and supervision of workers

- We promote respect, fairness, and consideration for all educators and staff. All educators and staff have a more senior staff member assigned to support them.
- New employees read and sign all ECEC policies and procedures and have access to these documents via the Hills Grammar intranet and via hard copy at ECEC. The Nominated Supervisor or delegate meets with each new educator or staff member or new volunteer to discuss all policies and to clarify their understanding of these.
- Before an educator signs to be a Responsible Person, the Nominated Supervisor meets with them and discusses this responsibility.
- All staff receive a copy of the ECA Code of Conduct and meet with the Nominated Supervisor to discuss this.
- Child safe is a standing agenda at meetings and staff are encouraged and supported to ask questions and contribute to the continuous improvement of child safe policies, practices and procedures at ECEC.

Communication

- ECEC create regular opportunities for information sessions for staff, children and volunteers.
- Volunteers, university and TAFE students and new educators and staff to ECEC will meet with the Nominated Supervisor as part of their induction, where the policies, processes and procedures will be discussed.
- This policy, the Code of Conduct, Child Protection Policy and Dealing with Complaints Policy are available to families via the Hills Grammar intranet and families are provided with the log in details for this on enrolment.
- A policy per week is shared in the Hills Grammar Bulletin which is available to families each week. Families are encouraged to read these policies and provide feedback at any time.

Statutory Legislation and Considerations

Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010

Education and Care Services National Regulations

Guide to the National Quality Standard ACECQA

Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998

The Commission for Children and Young People Act 1998

Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012

Sources

Department of Communities and Justice Child Safe Standards - The Child Safe Standards (nsw.gov.au)

Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) www.acecqa.gov.au

Office of the Children's Guardian https://ocg.nsw.gov.au/

Links to other policies

ECEC Child Protection Policy
ECEC Code of Conduct Policy
ECEC Dealing with Complaints Policy
ECEC Determining a Responsible Person Policy
ECEC Enrolment and Orientation Policy
ECEC Inclusion and Diversity Procedure
ECEC Interactions with Children Policy
ECEC Participation of Volunteers Policy
ECEC Providing a child safe Environment Policy
ECEC Supervision Procedure
ECEC Technology Procedure

Internal Policies

Hills Grammar Values, Vision and Mission Statement
Hills Grammar Child Protection Policy
Hills Grammar Community Code of Conduct

Hills Grammar Complaint Resolution Policy

Hills Grammar Privacy Policy

Hills Grammar Student Management and Behaviour Policy

Hills Grammar Whistleblower Policy

Industry Standards

Early Childhood Australia Code of Conduct

Review

This policy is reviewed by management, employees and families as required or when legislative requirements change.

Families and staff are essential stakeholders in the policy review and will be given the opportunity and encouragement to be actively involved.