CatholicCare
DIOCESE OF BROKEN BAY

Children's Services Supervision

Policy

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What do we believe?

At CatholicCare Diocese of Broken Bay, we are committed to the safety and wellbeing of children and hold this at the centre of our decision-making and practice. We believe in the principle of paramountcy of the safety of children. This means that the safety, wellbeing, and best interests of the child are the primary consideration in all decisions, actions, and practices. Where there is a conflict between the interests of a child and those of adults or the organisation, the child's safety and wellbeing will always come first.

We believe that effective supervision is fundamental to ensuring the safety, health, wellbeing and learning of every child. We recognise that children thrive when they are supported by attentive, engaged and responsive educators who actively supervise, build meaningful relationships and create environments that encourage exploration while minimising risk. We are committed to providing safe, inclusive and well-planned environments where children can confidently participate in play and learning experiences, knowing their individual needs, abilities and developmental stages are understood and supported.

What are we going to do?

To ensure children remain safe and supported, we will provide active supervision at all times through appropriate educator positioning, ongoing observation, engagement with children and continuous assessment of the environment. We will maintain required educator-to-child ratios, develop service-specific supervision plans, identify and minimise potential risks, and ensure educators understand their roles and responsibilities in providing effective supervision. We will regularly review our supervision practices, support educators through ongoing training, and work collaboratively with children, families and our teams to create safe, responsive and engaging learning environments that promote children's health, safety, wellbeing and development.

How will it be done?

Educator to Child Ratios

Educators must ensure that correct educator-to-child ratios are adhered to at all times and in accordance with the *Education and Care Services National Regulations*.

In centre-based children's services, there must also be at least two (2) educators on the service premises at any time children are in attendance.

For Out of School Hours Care (OSHC) services where less than five (5) children are attending and there is school support available, one (1) educator may be considered after discussions with the Practice Manager and General Manager with consideration being given to Safeguarding and the Responsible Person on site.

If a service is unable to secure a second educator, the Service Coordinator or Director must contact their Practice Manager immediately to seek support in sourcing a suitable replacement. Where no CatholicCare casual educators are available, the engagement of an agency educator must be approved by either the Practice Manager or the General Manager, Children Services, before the position is filled.

Educator to child ratios is as follows:

Age of Child	Educator to Child Ratio
ELCC: Birth to 24 months	1: 4
ELCC: 25 to 35 months	1: 5
ELC: 36 months up to and including preschool age	1: 10
OSHC	1: 15 (day to day ratio) 1: 10 (excursions) 1: 5 (water-based activities and excursions)

Active Supervision and Duty of Care

Principles of active supervision

Supervision is one of the most important caregiving strategies and skills required by staff/educators to develop and master. Active supervision is a combination of listening to, actively engaging with and watching children play, being aware of the environment and its potential risks, the weather conditions, the time of day, managing small and large groups of children, and an understanding of child development including theories about how children play.

It is also crucial that staff/educators are aware of the different ages, personalities, behaviours, and characteristics of the children in their care. How children interact, communicate, and play with one another is dependent on staff/educators building relationships with children to learn about who they are, how they react in certain situations and to discover their interests. These are vital skills to develop as they assist staff to predict children's play patterns, which affect how staff/educators plan and establish environments and coordinate supervision strategies to maximise children's safety and ability to play free from harm or injury.

Where a staff member is temporarily alone with the children (nappy change, assisting with toileting, etc.) other staff must be within sight and/or hearing at all times. Child safety and protection must always be the primary consideration.

Points of consideration in the supervision of children include:

- Positioning of staff/educators in the environment
- Scanning the environment
- Listening when children play
- Knowledge of the environment and its potential risks
- Setting up the environment
- Knowledge of the children in care
- Understanding how groups of children interact and play together
- Transitioning groups of children
- Promoting play and learning experiences
- Doing periodic head counts

Supervision Guidelines

- Active supervision of children can be achieved in a variety of ways, including:
- Careful planning of rosters to ensure that educators are always available to respond to children.
- Policies and procedures that address supervision.
- Flexible supervision arrangements to allow for supervision of individual children or small groups, such as sleeping children or indoor and outdoor experiences offered simultaneously.
- Close observation of children to provide support and to extend children's play experiences. Educators who closely observe children and are attuned to their needs and interests can recognise when children wish to play without adult involvement.

- Actively engaging with children to support their learning. Effective supervision requires a combination of observation and engagement. Educators need to assess and respond to children's supervision needs in conjunction with engaging with children to promote quality learning opportunities.
- Scanning or regularly looking around the area to observe all children in the environment ensures that all children are actively supervised. Educators who are aware of the environment can identify appropriate positions for maximum visibility of children. Educators should avoid standing with their backs to children and undertaking tasks that will distract them from supervising children, such as administrative tasks.
- Listening carefully to children and noting any changes of tone or volume in their voice. Noting these changes can assist in supervising children who may not be in direct vision.
- Evaluating situations to determine the potential risks and benefits for children's health, safety and wellbeing. Observing children's play and anticipating what may occur next allows educators to assist children as difficulties arise and to intervene when there is a potential danger to children.

All educators have a duty of care to maintain vigilant supervision of children. In doing so, educators must adhere to the following guidelines:

Situation	Supervision Guidelines
Visitor, Volunteer or Student	Educators will not leave children solely in the care or supervision of any visitor, volunteer, or student. These persons must not be counted in the educator-to-child ratios except when using volunteer parents or students to assist on excursions.
Mealtimes	Children will be well supervised during mealtimes. Educators are encouraged to sit with the children during mealtimes for active engagement.
Bottles	In ELCs, babies will be supervised while drinking from bottles. They will never be put to sleep in a cot while having a bottle.
Outdoor Activities	Outdoor environments and staffing arrangements will be organised so that educators have a clear view of all children. Educators will include in their supervision plan strategies for how supervision should occur during the transition between indoor and outdoor activities.
Experiences that require close supervision	Special attention will be paid to planning for experiences that require close supervision, such as woodwork and cooking
Administration of Medication	Special attention will be paid to the administration of medication. Please refer to the Children's Services Medication Policy
Sleeping children	In ELCs, sleeping children will be supervised at all times, which includes ten-minute close visual checks. Please refer to the *Safe Sleep and Rest Policy* for further information.
Gates	Educators will ensure that all gates leading out of the centre are always kept closed.
Moving to other areas	Children will be supervised by an educator when they are entering certain areas, such as the kitchen and reception area.
Phones	Staff member's personal phones will be locked away and not on hand, unless the appropriate authorisation has been completed.

Do's and Don'ts of Supervision

Do's	Don'ts
Always maintain active supervision of all children.	Do not leave children unsupervised, even for a short period.
Position yourself so you can see and hear all children.	Do not stand with your back to the children or position yourself where you are unable to see the children.
Regularly scan the environment and continually assess children's safety.	Do not become distracted by conversations, paperwork, admin work or other tasks that reduce supervision.

Do's	Don'ts
Engage with children while supervising their play and learning.	Do not assume children are safe simply because they are nearby.
Plan supervision during indoor, outdoor and transition times.	Do not allow children to move between areas without supervision.
Closely supervise higher-risk activities, meals, bottle feeding and sleeping children.	Do not leave children unattended during meals, bottle feeding, sleep or higher-risk experiences.
Ensure visitors, volunteers and students are always supervised by an educator.	Do not leave visitors, volunteers or students alone or responsible for children.
Keep gates secure and supervise children near exits and restricted areas.	Do not allow children to access exits, kitchens, offices or staff areas unsupervised.

Excursions

Educators will ensure that excursions are appropriately supervised with an adequate ratio of adults to children. Refer to the *Excursion Workshops Policy* for further details.

When ELC's and Vacation Care are on excursions outside the centre, personal phones can be used for emergency purposes only with required approval after the emergency.

Signing in and out

Educators must ensure that parents sign children in on arrival, and out on departure, via the Electronic Sign In attendance record each day. In addition to this being a regulatory requirement, this attendance record must be kept in case of an emergency.

For OSHC Services, educators will sign children out before taking them to school and sign them in after collecting them from school in the afternoons. Educators in the OSHC service will take children to school in the mornings and collect them from school in the afternoons. Children will be accompanied by an educator while making this transition. Educators will check that all children enrolled in the after-school care program are collected from the school unless they have been advised that the child is absent for the day.

At the end of the day, educators will check that all children have been signed out before closing the centre.

Refer to the *Delivery and Collection of Children Policy* for further procedures.

Supervision Plan and Risk Assessment

Each service must develop a service specific supervision plan. This plan should include:

- An assessment of any supervision risks and strategies for minimising the risks. Nominated Supervisors must ensure that a risk assessment of the service' supervision is conducted and reviewed every 12 months or when there is a change in circumstances.
- Plans of indoor and outdoor areas and positioning of educators to maximise supervision of the areas.
- Strategies for transitioning the children around the environment, such as head counts, roll call, double checking the environment.

Nominated Supervisors must ensure that all educators are knowledgeable of the Supervision Policy and service specific Supervision Plan and their responsibilities to follow the Policy and plan. Staff are to sign the Policy Sign Off sheet to acknowledge their receipt and understanding of the policy and plan.

Who is responsible?

Roles	Responsibilities
Approved Provider	• Ensure that the premises are designed and maintained to facilitate supervision of children at all times while considering the need to maintain the rights and dignity of all children. • Ensure that the age and supervision requirements for educators are maintained at all times. Any educators who are under eighteen years of age may work at the centre-based service, provided they do not work alone and are adequately supervised at all times by an educator who is over eighteen years of age. • Ensure the rights, interests, safety and wellbeing of children are paramount. • Notify the regulatory authority within 24 hours if a child appears to be missing, cannot be accounted for, appears to have been taken or removed from the premises, or has mistakenly been locked in or out of the education and care service's premises. • Ensure that policies and procedures address the principles of active supervision. • Ensure that the National Regulations specifications are met in regard to the number of educators required to educate and care for children and the qualifications of these educators. • Ensure supervision arrangements support the active monitoring and accounting for every child at all times. • Ensure staffing arrangements, educator deployment and service operations reflect risk-based decision making and the principles of active supervision. • Ensure educators are supported to identify and respond to supervision risks, blind spots, environmental hazards and emerging concerns relating to children's safety and wellbeing. • Promote a child-safe culture where supervision is recognised as a shared responsibility and critical safeguarding practice.
Practice Manager	• Monitor service practices to ensure supervision arrangements align with legislation, organisational policies and child safe requirements. • Support Nominated Supervisors to develop, implement and review service specific supervision plans and risk assessments. • Provide guidance and support to services to ensure educator deployment, staffing arrangements and active supervision practices effectively protect children's safety and wellbeing. • Monitor compliance with educator to child ratios, Responsible Person requirements and supervision expectations across services. • Support services to identify and address supervision risks, including environmental hazards, staffing concerns and emerging child safety issues. • Ensure supervision incidents, hazards and identified risks are reviewed, and appropriate corrective actions are implemented. • Promote a culture of continuous improvement by monitoring supervision practices, providing coaching, and supporting professional learning. • Escalate significant supervision concerns, regulatory breaches or child safety risks to the Approved Provider or General Manager as required.
Nominated Supervisor	• Carefully plan rosters that ensure continuity of care and adequate supervision at all times when children are being cared for and educated in the service and on excursions. • Ensure that a risk assessment is carried out before an authorisation is sought for an excursion. The risk assessment will consider and identify the number of adults required to ensure continuous adequate supervision throughout the excursion.

Roles	Responsibilities
	• Ensure the rights, interests, safety and wellbeing of children are paramount. • Conduct risk assessments and make professional judgments to determine approaches to supervision. Consideration will be given to the environment, the children, and the context of activities the children participate in. • Ensure supervision arrangements are regularly reviewed and adjusted in response to changes in attendance, staffing, children's needs, routines, environments or identified risks. • Ensure systems are implemented to account for every child during all transitions, including arrivals, departures, movement between indoor and outdoor environments, excursions and emergency situations. • Ensure educators understand their roles and responsibilities relating to active supervision, child accountability and child-safe practices. • Monitor supervision practices across the service to identify potential risks, blind spots or gaps in supervision.
Educators	• Educators will develop a supervision strategies and plans for both indoor and outdoor environments. This will support educators in implementing the principles of active supervision (location and number of children, being with, positioning, scanning, listening, anticipating, engaging and redirecting, communicating). They will take into consideration the layout of the premises and grounds, any higher risk activities, the location of activities and the location of bathroom and nappy change facilities. • Promote children's agency and participation in genuine decision making, promoting the rights, interests, safety and wellbeing of children • Ensure that supervision arrangements support observation and active engagement with children to support their learning. • Listen carefully to children and note any changes of tone or volume in their voice. Noting these changes can assist in supervising children who may not be in direct vision. • Evaluate situations to determine the potential risks and benefits for children's health, safety and wellbeing. Observing children's play and anticipating what may occur next allows educators to assist children as difficulties arise and to intervene when there is a potential danger to children. • Inform new and relief educators about supervision arrangements and what is required of them in relation to supervising children. • Regularly review the supervision plan and strategies to evaluate the effectiveness of the plan and its implementation by educators. The supervision plan and strategies will be displayed for families in all rooms and in the outdoor area. • Seek to ensure that two educators are present, within view, when working with children and when supporting children with toileting/hygiene routines. • Arrange the education and care environment to maximise the ability of educators to supervise all areas accessible to children with particular focus on gates, the fence line, and doors during arrival and departure times. • Be aware of the importance of communicating with each other about their location within the environment, as well as supporting individual children. • Ensure that correct child: educator ratios are maintained throughout the education and care environment. All children will be in sight or hearing of educators at all times. No child will be left alone while eating or at nappy change and toileting times. • Supervise children during rest periods. Children will be positioned and supervised according to the Safe Sleep & Rest Time policy. Risk assessments for sleep and rest arrangements will be included. • Ensure that hazardous equipment, machinery, and chemicals are inaccessible to children. • Ensure that supervision arrangements are respectful and that interactions with children are meaningful. Educators will encourage children's independence while respecting individual abilities and needs. • Scan the environment while interacting with individuals or small groups. Educators will position themselves to maximise their view of the environment and the children's play. • Implement consistent supervision strategies and not perform other duties while responsible for the supervision of children.

Roles	Responsibilities
	• Actively account for the attendance and whereabouts of every child at all times. • Conduct regular head counts and attendance checks, particularly during transitions, routine changes, indoor/outdoor movement and high-risk activities. • Immediately respond to and report any situation where a child cannot be accounted for, appears missing, or supervision has been compromised. • Position themselves strategically to minimise blind spots and maintain active supervision of all children and environments. • Ensure that supervision practices support child-safe environments and reduce opportunities for harm, inappropriate conduct or unsafe interactions. • Maintain heightened supervision during higher-risk times including arrival and departure periods, toileting, sleep and rest, excursions, mealtimes and transitions.
Parents / Guardians	• Sign children in and out using the approved attendance system each day. • Ensure children are handed directly to an educator on arrival and collected from an educator on departure. • Follow the service's arrival and departure procedures and support educators to account for every child. • Inform the service of any authorised nominee or changes to collection arrangements before collection occurs. • Advise educators of any changes to their child's health, wellbeing, behaviour or circumstances that may impact supervision or require additional support. • Work in partnership with educators by sharing information that assists in maintaining their child's safety and wellbeing. • Follow service procedures during excursions, special events and transitions to support the safe supervision of children. • Raise any concerns regarding supervision or child safety with the Nominated Supervisor or service leadership as soon as possible.

National Quality Standards (NQS)

Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety		
2.2	Safety	Each child is protected
2.2.1	Supervision	At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from harm and hazard
2.2.2	Incident and emergency management	Plans to effectively manage incidents and emergencies are developed in consultation with relevant authorities, practiced and implemented.

Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations	
S. 2A	Paramount consideration—safety, rights and best interests of children
S. 3A	Paramount consideration
S.5AA	Meaning of inappropriate conduct
S. 12	Meaning of serious incident
S. 162B	Child safety training
S.165	Offence to inadequately supervise children
S.166A	Offence to subject child to inappropriate conduct Offences relating to inappropriate conduct

Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations	
S.167	Offence relating to protection of children from harm and hazards
S.174	Offence to fail to notify certain information to Regulatory Authority
Part 6A	Devices in education and care services
13	Meaning of working directly with children
84A	Sleep and rest
84B	Sleep and rest policies and procedures
100	Risk assessment must be conducted before an excursion
101	Conduct of risk assessment for excursions
102C(2)(g)	Supervision during transportation
102E	Children embarking a means of transport- centre based service
102F	Children disembarking a means of transport- centre based service
115	Premises designed to facilitate supervision
120	Educators who are under 18 to be supervised
121	Application of Division 3
122	Educators must be working directly with children to be included in ratios
123	Educator to child ratios-Centre based services
126	Centre based services-general educator qualifications
131	Requirement for early childhood teacher—centre-based services—fewer than 25 approved places
132	Requirement for early childhood teacher- centre based services 25-59 children
133	Requirement for early childhood teacher- centre based services 60-80 children
134	Requirement for early childhood teacher- centre based services- more than 80 children
151	Record of educators working directly with children
168	Education and care service must have policies and procedures
170	Policies and procedures to be followed
176	Time to notify certain circumstances to Regulatory Authorities
264	General qualifications for educators – Centre based

Related documents

Children's Services policies

- *Child Safe Environment Policy*
- *Delivery and Collection of Children*
- *Excursion and Workshops Policy*
- *Medication Policy*
- *Safe Arrival and Departure of Children Policy*
- *Safe Sleep and Rest Policy*

Forms

- *Service Risk Assessment*

Resources

External

- *Education and Care Services National Regulations*
- *Education and Care Services National Law Act*
- *ACECQA National Quality Framework*

Glossary

ACECQA – Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authorities

The independent national authority that works with all regulatory authorities to administer the National Quality Framework, including the provision of guidance, resources and services to support the sector to improve outcomes for children.

Active Supervision

Children are monitored actively and diligently, including knowing where the children are at all times.

Child Paramountcy

Child paramountcy refers to the obligation to ensure that the best interests, safety, and wellbeing of children are paramount above all other considerations. All decisions, practices, and actions must prioritise the protection and wellbeing of children, particularly where competing interests exist.

Duty of Care

The act of taking responsible care to provide a safe environment for children.

ELC

All centre-based services for children aged 0-5 years including Long Day Care and Preschool services.

OSHC

Out of School Hours Care

Practice Manager

A practice manager oversees and supports a cluster of services within a local area. They work with the Nominated supervisor to ensure services operate safely, meet legal and quality requirements, and follow organisational policies. They do not work directly with children day to day.

Risk Assessment

A systematic process of evaluating the potential likelihood and consequences of risks that may be involved in a projected activity or undertaking.

Student

Is enrolled in an approved Early Childhood Education and Care qualification or equivalent. Is completing a supervised practicum or work placement at the education and care service as part of that qualification.

Sign off and review

This document remains valid until it is either superseded by a new version or officially revoked.

CatholicCare values your input and welcomes feedback on this policy. Your suggestions help us improve and better support your work. Please send any feedback to policy.updates@catholiccaredbb.org.au.

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