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Dear Families,

The Victorian Government has introduced Child Safe Standards to improve the way in which organisations who provide services for children, prevent and respond to child abuse that may occur within their organisation, or to children attending their organisation.

The aim of the standards is to drive cultural change within organisations, so that protecting children from abuse is embedded into the everyday thinking of management, educators, students and volunteers and is demonstrated in their practices.

As part of this cultural change, Bright Horizons Australia Childcare has developed a Child Safe Policy. A copy of this policy is included for your information. The centre has a Child Safe folder available in the foyer, which contains a range of information regarding the standards and risk assessments undertaken by the centre in relation to this matter.

A Child Safe Officer has also been appointed and can be contacted via our Head Office on (07) 5557 6000.

Yours sincerely,

Tamir Tukino  
National Operations Manager

**Evidence of link to Regulations (ECSNR):**

Part 4.2 Div 6 R100, R101

Part 4.4 Div 7

Part 4.5 R155, R156

**Evidence of link to NQS:**

QA2 St.2.3 E2.3.4

Version	Date	Author	Change Description
1.1	October 2016	Kim Kelley	Created to reflect Child Safe Standards

## Policy Objective

The objective of this policy is to ensure the health and safety of all children whilst complying with the Victorian Child Safe Standards.

This policy also aligns with The Education and Care Services National Regulations, 2011, Part 4.2, Part 4.3, Part 4.4, Part 4.5 and Part 4.7.

These sets out the requirements for the leadership and service management policies in relation to child protection risk management.

This policy is the overarching Child Safe Policy and directly links to the following policies:

- Code of Conduct – Interactions with Children Policy (QA4-P25)
- Child Protection Policy – Victoria (QA5-P03)
- Reporting of Child Abuse and Neglect Policy – Victoria (QA2-P25)

## Our commitment to child safety

Our Organisation is committed to child safety. We want children to be safe, happy and empowered. We support and respect all children, as well as our staff, students, families and volunteers. We actively promote and educate children in relation to their rights as articulated through the United Nation Convention on the Rights of the Child.

We are committed to the safety, participation and empowerment of all children.

We have zero tolerance of child abuse, and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated very seriously and consistently with our vigorous policies and procedures.

We have legal and moral obligations to contact authorities when we are worried about a child's safety, which we follow rigorously.

Our Organisation is committed to preventing child abuse and identifying risks early, and removing and reducing these risks.

Our Organisation has vigorous human resources and recruitment practices for all staff, students and volunteers.

Our Organisation is committed to regularly training and educating our staff, students and volunteers on child abuse risks.

We support and respect all children, as well as our staff, families, students and volunteers.

We are committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, the cultural safety of children from a culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for children with a disability.

We have specific policies, procedures and training in place that support our leadership team, staff, students and volunteers to achieve these commitments.

If you believe a child is at immediate risk of abuse phone 000.

## Children's rights to safety and participation

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Our Organisation empowers children to be vital and active participants in our Organisation. We involve them when making decisions, especially about matters that directly affect them. We listen to their views and respect what they have to say. Our Organisation teaches children about what they can do if they feel unsafe. We listen to and act on any concerns children and their families raise with us.

## Valuing diversity

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Our Organisation values diversity and we do not tolerate any discriminatory practices. To achieve this we:

- Promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children and their families
- Promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and their families
- Welcome children with disability and their families and act to promote their participation
- Seek appropriate staff from diverse cultural backgrounds

## Our team members, students and volunteers

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Our team members, students and volunteers must agree to abide by our Code of Conduct – Interactions with Children Policy (QA4-P25) which specifies the standards of conduct required when working with children. All team members, students, volunteers, as well as children and their families, are given the opportunity to contribute to the review of the Code of Conduct – Interactions with Children Policy.

## Recruitment – team members and volunteers

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Our Organisation applies the best practice standards in the recruitment and screening of team members and volunteers. We develop selection criteria and advertisements which clearly demonstrate our commitment to child safety and an awareness of our social and legislative responsibilities. Our Organisation understands that when recruiting team members and volunteers we have ethical as well as legislative obligations. We actively encourage applications from Aboriginal peoples, people from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and people with a disability.

We interview and conduct referee checks on all team members and volunteers and require Working with Children Checks for all team members, students and volunteers.

## Training and supervision

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Training and education is important to ensure that everyone in our Organisation understands that child safety is everyone's responsibility.

Our Organisational culture aims for all team members, students and volunteers (in addition to parents/carers/families and children) to feel confident and comfortable in discussing any allegations of child abuse or child safety concerns. We train our team members, students and volunteers to identify, assess, and minimise risks of child abuse and to detect potential signs of child abuse.

Our Organisation supports our staff and volunteers through ongoing supervision to: develop their skills to protect children from abuse; and promote the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, the cultural safety of children from linguistically and/or diverse backgrounds, and the safety of children with a disability.

All team members, students and volunteers will be supervised regularly to ensure they understand our organisation's commitment to child safety and that everyone has a role to play in protecting children from abuse, as well as checking that their behaviour towards children is safe and appropriate (refer to Code of Conduct – Interactions with Children Policy (QA4-P25) for information regarding appropriate behaviour). Any inappropriate behaviour will be investigated and reported through appropriate channels, including the Department of Education and Training, Department of Health and Human Services (Child Protection) and Victoria Police, depending on the severity and urgency of the matter.

## Allegations, concerns and complaints

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Our Organisation takes all allegations seriously and has practices in place to investigate thoroughly and quickly. Our team members, students and volunteers are trained to deal appropriately with allegations. Our Organisation works to ensure all children, families, team members, students and volunteers know what to do and who to tell if they observe abuse or are a victim, and if they notice inappropriate behaviour. We all have a responsibility to report an allegation of abuse if we have reasonable belief that an incident took place. If an adult has a **reasonable belief** that an incident has occurred, then they must report the incident.

## Legislative responsibilities

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Our Organisation takes our legal responsibilities seriously, including:

- **Failure to disclose:** Reporting child sexual abuse is a community-wide responsibility. All adults in Victoria who have a reasonable belief that an adult has committed a sexual offence against a child under 16 have an obligation to report that information to the police.

- **Failure to protect:** People of authority in our Organisation will commit an offence if they know of a substantial risk of child sexual abuse and have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, but negligently fail to do so.
- **Mandatory Reporters:** All teachers, doctors, nurses, midwives, principals and police are mandatory reporters and therefore must report to child protection if they believe on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection from physical injury or sexual abuse.
- **Grooming offence:** targets communication, including online communication, with a child under the age of 16 or their parents with the intent of committing child sexual abuse. This offence targets predatory conduct undertaken to prepare a child for sexual abuse at a later time with the groomer (aged 18 years old or over) or another adult.

## Risk management

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Our Organisation recognises the importance of a risk management approach to minimising the potential for child abuse or harm to occur and use this to inform our policies, procedures and activity planning. In addition to general occupational health and safety risks, we proactively manage risks of abuse to our children.

We have risk management strategies in place to identify, assess and take steps to minimise child abuse risks, which include risks posed by physical environments and online environments.

## Child Safety Officer

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The Organisation has appointed a Child Safety Officer who is available to discuss any concerns or queries that team members, students, volunteers, families or children may have in relation to their, or another person's health and safety.

## Relevant Legislation

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- *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011:* Part 4.2, Part 4.3, Part 4.4, Part 4.5 and Part 4.7
- *National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and Care*
- *The Children, Youth and Families Act 2005*
- *Victorian Working With Children Act 2005*
- *Crimes Amendment (Grooming) Bill 2013*
- *Crimes Amendment (Protection of Children) Act 2014*

## References

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*Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (VIC) (Version 1 December 2009) (Current version No: 96, 1st January 2011)*

*United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child*

*Working with Children Act 2005*

*Working with Children Check* [www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au](http://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au)

*A Guide for Creating a Child Safe Organisation (Version 2.0 December 2015)*

<http://www.cyp.vic.gov.au/downloads/creating-a-childsafe-organisation-guide.pdf>

## Resources

*The Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority:* <http://www.acecqa.gov.au/>

*Working with Children Check* [www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au](http://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au)

*A Guide for Creating a Child Safe Organisation (Version 2.0 December 2015)*

<http://www.cyp.vic.gov.au/downloads/creating-a-childsafe-organisation-guide.pdf>

## Notes

Information relating to this policy is communicated throughout the Service using a variety of the following:

Newsletters, emails, Parent and Team handbooks, Team meetings and memos, planned experiences for the children, notice boards and posters, pamphlets and information sheets in the foyer, role modelling and signs displayed around the classrooms and Service.

<b>Policy Written by:</b> Kim Kelley		<b>Date:</b> October 2016
<b>Approved by:</b> Bright Horizons Australia Childcare	<b>Approved Date:</b> August 2019	<b>Next review date:</b> August 2020
<b>Version 1.0</b>		<b>Change Description:</b> Created to reflect Child Safe Standards

**Team Members Sign:**