



POLICY AND PROCEDURE

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SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN POLICY & PROCEDURE

1. POLICY STATEMENT

At Cairns Catholic Early Learning (CELCC), we are committed to creating a child-safe culture within our services, implementing the Universal Principle and Child Safe Standards, protecting children from harm and promoting children's safety and wellbeing while attending CELCC services. The purpose of this policy and procedure is to describe the roles and responsibilities of Cairns Catholic Early Learning and Care services (CELCC) in creating a working culture where children are respected, valued and protected, where all staff identify and manage risks to children's safety and wellbeing, where children's rights are championed.

2. APPLICATION

This policy applies to CELCC employees and CELCC Management, volunteers and students, children and families as well as contractors and visitors to CELCC Services in Identifying and managing risks to children's health and wellbeing, while complying with all relevant legislations and regulations regarding child safety.

3. PROCEDURE

The procedure for this policy will align with the Universal Principle and the Ten Child Safe Standards that organisations must implement if they are providing space and care for children under the age of 17.

Universal Principle:

The Universal Principle requires child safe entities to provide an environment that promotes and upholds the right to cultural safety of children who are Aboriginal persons or Torres Strait Islander persons.

These are put forward by Queensland's Child Safe Organisation System, with links to relevant legislations and regulatory authorities.

Under **Section 84 of the Education and Care Services National Regulations**, the Approved Provider of an Education and Care service must ensure that the Nominated Supervisor and Educators at the service who work with children are advised of:

- The existence and application of all current child protections laws: and
- Obligations they may have under that law

4. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Standard One: Leadership and Culture

Leaders, in collaboration with key stakeholders, develop and implement a statement of philosophy that clearly outlines the service's objectives in safeguarding children. This philosophy is embedded throughout the service's practices, environments, and curriculum, and is critically reflected upon as part of a continuous improvement cycle. Leadership actively fosters a work culture that advocates for the rights and wellbeing of children in their care.

- All educators and relevant visitors to the service must hold valid Blue Cards or Exemption Cards.
- As part of the recruitment process CELC engages with the **NQA IT** system to check if an applicant is a prohibited person on the **NQF Prohibited Persons Register** prior to employment.
- Effective induction and orientation processes are established to ensure all educators understand their roles, responsibilities, and the required knowledge related to child protection laws and regulations, including mandatory reporting requirements. Staff participate in ongoing child protection training to stay informed of changes in legislation.
- All staff and volunteers are trained in the organisation's policies and practices that prioritise children's safety and wellbeing.
- Comprehensive risk assessments are documented to identify and mitigate any risks to children's safety and wellbeing. These assessments are reviewed annually.
- Children's safety and wellbeing are standing agenda items in all leadership and service meetings.
- Organisational policies and procedures are shaped by input from children, ensuring their voices are heard and respected.
- Clear documentation is maintained for all actions taken in response to issues related to children's safety, including steps taken to resolve and prevent recurrence.
- Leaders and management incorporate children's safety and wellbeing objectives into staff performance reviews and embed safeguarding principles within organisational policies, procedures, and the Code of Conduct.
- The Code of Conduct outlines clear expectations for behaviour aligned with the mission and values of CELC, the ECA Code of Ethics, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, National Quality Standards, and relevant Laws and Regulations.
- CELC provides clear guidelines on appropriate interactions between employees and children, aimed at preventing abuse, neglect, and harm, and encouraging a culture of transparency and reporting see [Child Protection CELC Policy and Procedure 2025.docx](#)
- CELC employees, contractors, and volunteers will not disclose any information related to children, obtained through their role at CELC, to anyone other than those legally authorised or as required by law. All records regarding children and families are kept confidential, and only made available to authorised persons on request, or as required by law.

Standard Two: Voice of Children

Services have a responsibility to create environments where adults support children in understanding their rights, respecting their agency, and expressing their concerns. Children should be empowered to provide input and participate meaningfully in all aspects of their environments. Decision-making processes within each service must centre around children's perspectives and demonstrate genuine respect for their views. For more information refer to Quality Area 5 of the NQS (National Quality Standards) [Quality Area 5 – Relationships with children | ACECQA](#)

Educators actively facilitate and support children to:

- Express their views,
 - Participate in decision-making,
 - Raise concerns in a safe and supportive environment.
- Resources and tools that build children's foundational knowledge of their rights are integrated throughout the curriculum and learning environments.
 - Educators tailor their approaches to suit each child's age, developmental stage, cultural background, and individual needs, ensuring inclusive and equitable practices.
 - Educators are attuned and responsive to children, ensuring that no child is discriminated against based on gender, sexuality, age, ability, economic status, family structure, lifestyle, ethnicity, religion, language, culture, or national origin. [ECA-COE-Brochure-2016.pdf](#)
 - Children are respected as capable learners. Their perspectives are actively included in teaching, learning, and assessment practices.
 - Services value and respond to the contributions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families. They work to embed Indigenous cultures within the curriculum and environment, fostering trust and confidence and creating culturally safe spaces where children can actively participate.

Standard Three: Family and Community

CELC services recognise the importance of fostering strong, transparent relationships with families and communities as valued contributors to the shared responsibility of protecting children. A foundation of open communication, trust, and mutual respect underpins the service's philosophy, environments, and practices, creating collaborative and inclusive child-safe approaches.

- Services support families as children's first and most important teachers and respect their right to make decisions about their children. This is achieved by providing multiple opportunities for families to participate in decisions affecting their child.
- CELC enrolment and orientations procedures specify the requirements for obtaining parental consent for relevant activities, including who is authorised to seek such consent,
- Services listen to and learn with families, engaging in shared decision-making, planning, and assessment practices related to children's learning, development, and wellbeing.
- Respectful relationships are built through open communication, encouraging family engagement and fostering a strong sense of belonging.
- Services learn about, respect, and respond to the uniqueness of each family—their circumstances, culture, family structure, customs, language, beliefs, and kinship systems.
- Services uphold families' right to privacy and maintain confidentiality in all interactions and documentation.
- Families and key stakeholders are provided with clear and accessible information about the service's safety and wellbeing policies and practices.
- Service leaders ensure that families and communities have a voice in the development and review of policies and procedures.
- Regular communication channels are established to keep families informed and to share progress on child safety and wellbeing initiatives, maintaining transparency and trust.
- Services actively involve families, carers, and the broader community in operations and governance, recognising their vital role in creating safe and supportive environments for children.

For further guidance, refer to **Quality Area 6 – Collaborative Partnerships with Families and Communities** as outlined by ACECQA. [Quality Area 6 – Collaborative partnerships with families and communities | ACECQA](#)

Standard Four: Equity and Diversity

CELC recognises that creating environments where every child feels valued, respected, supported, and culturally safe is essential to high-quality early childhood education and care. Equity is embedded in every policy, decision, and action to ensure all children have fair access to nurturing environments and the opportunity for a healthy future.

Equity means recognising and responding to the unique needs of each child. This includes children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, children who are refugees or asylum seekers, children with disability and members of the LGBTQIA+ community. Services actively work to remove barriers to participation and ensure inclusive practices that promote belonging and wellbeing for all children.

Services actively work with families and communities to develop an understanding of the diverse cultures and the comprehensive needs of the children and families within their services and communities.

- CELC ensures that their policies and procedures highlight and advocate for the inclusions of all children and families regardless of their cultural background or diverse circumstances.
- CELC provides service leaders with workshops regarding embedding Indigenous and Torres Strait Islander culture within their services.
- Services work with local Indigenous and Torres Strait Islander communities and Elders to establish strategies too holistically embed Indigenous and Torres Strait Islander culture within their services.
- Services develop partnerships with local and specialised organisations to further support the families within their service and community.
- Services ensure that the resources and environments reflect the children's/families and communities culturally diverse backgrounds.
- Services ensure that communication and materials within their service are accessible in a variety of formats/languages and are presented in a culturally appropriate manner. Services create a workplace culture where staff are invited to share and embed aspects of their cultural knowledge, world views and perspectives to the workplace and feel included.

Standard Five: People

CELC recognises the critical importance of ensuring the suitability and capability of all staff and volunteers within its learning environments to create safe, supportive spaces for children. CELC is committed to recruiting and maintaining a workforce that prioritises children's safety and wellbeing.

- **Child Safety as a Recruitment Priority:** CELC conducts a rigorous recruitment process, ensuring that job advertising, referee checks, and pre-employment screening for staff and volunteers have a focus of child safety and wellbeing.
- **Clear Role Expectations:** All position descriptions outline the responsibilities and expectations of staff and volunteers related to children's safety and wellbeing, cultural awareness and inclusive practices.
- **Compliance Monitoring:** CELC ensures and continuously monitors that all relevant staff and volunteers hold current Working with Children Checks or equivalent background checks at all times when working with children.
- **Comprehensive Induction:** All staff and volunteers receive a thorough induction that includes their responsibilities regarding child safety, recordkeeping, information sharing, and mandatory reporting obligations.
- **Ongoing Training:** Staff and volunteers participate in regular training focused on children's safety and wellbeing.

- **Supervision and Performance Management:** CELC ensures that services engage in a regular and ongoing performance management cycle that highlights ongoing professional Development opportunities around children’s safety and wellbeing, while also monitoring staff suitability and conduct within their rolls.

Standard Six: Complaints Management

CELC is committed to developing and embedding an effective, child-focused process for complaints and concerns, to ensure that all children, families/carers, staff and volunteers feel safe and supported to raise their concerns. CELC works to ensure that any complaints and concerns are managed in a timely, transparent and respectful manner.

- Each service ensures that they develop and maintain child friendly processes for children to raise concerns and provide feedback regarding the spaces in which they engage in, the educational curriculum and grievances.
- Educators are trained and supported to respond to disclosures in a sensitive manner, with a focus on supporting and protecting children throughout the process that follows a disclosure.
- CELC ensures that a clear process is in place and understood by all staff regarding disclosures from children and how to escalate these disclosures and the steps to take after a report has been made.
- CELC ensures that policies are in place and outline the process is highlighted for staff to provide feedback and report any grievances they may experience.
- CELC ensures that policies and procedures are in place for families and communities relating to the complaints and feedback processes. All CELC services must ensure that any complaints and investigations are handled promptly, sensitively and in line with laws and regulations.
- All records and information related to safeguarding and child protection will be treated with strict confidentiality. These records will be securely stored in electronic files with controlled access to ensure the safety and privacy of all individuals involved.

Standard Seven: Knowledge and Skills

CELC is committed to fostering a culture of continuous learning and ongoing quality improvement. Educators engage in regular education, training, and mentoring to build their knowledge, skills, and awareness in proactively safeguarding children across all interactions.

CELC implements structured and mandatory training schedules and regular refresher courses to ensure all staff participate in ongoing professional development and remain up to date and informed regarding changes to legislation and best practice standards.

Training covers a wide range of topics relevant to each role, including cultural safety, child protection, and trauma-informed care.

Staff receive ongoing training in:

- Identifying and responding to risks.
- Recognising signs of abuse, neglect, and harm.
- Responding appropriately to disclosures from children.
- Cultural awareness.

This commitment to continuous learning ensures that all staff are equipped to uphold the highest standards of child safety and wellbeing, contributing to a safe, responsive, and reflective learning environments

All centre staff, volunteers, students, and nominated supervisors must be made aware of the existence and application of current child protection laws as required under Regulation 84 of the Education and Care Services National

Regulations. This includes understanding any and all legal obligations they may hold in relation to child safety and protection.

All CELC staff and volunteers must be aware of the existence and application of CELC policies and procedures relating to children protection and their roles and responsibilities under these policies.

Additional training and resources are available in ELMO's course catalogue and staff may be required to complete additional training as directed by their nominated supervisor or operations manager.

In accordance with Section 162A of the Education and Care Services National Law, the Approved Provider must ensure that all Nominated Supervisors, Persons in Day-to-Day Charge, and Family Day Care Coordinators complete child protection training as required by Queensland jurisdiction.

This includes successful completion of one of the following nationally recognised units through a Registered Training Organisation (RTO): **CHCPRT025, CHCPRT001, CHCPRT026, CHCPRT002, or CHCECE057**.

This is a **once-off requirement** unless the unit has already been completed as part of a **Certificate III or Diploma qualification**. **In-house training does not meet this requirement.**

Standard Eight: Physical and Online Environments:

CELC recognises the need to provide environments where children not only are but also feel safe, secure, respected and supported.

- CELC implements and embeds a cycle of actively identifying, assessing and mitigating risks in all the spaces that children in their care will access.
- Services consider all risks posed by planned experiences within their educational programmes including the risks posed from external services and incursions provided within these programmes.
- Services take a strengths-based approach prioritising the physical, social, spiritual, emotional and cultural and wellbeing of all the children who are in their care and within their environments.
- Services and CELC management regularly conduct audits of all the physical spaces that are accessed by staff and children, identifying any hazards and mitigating any risks found.

All CELC services are required to conduct regular risk assessments and implement strategies to manage risks to children's safety and wellbeing. These assessments must address the following areas:

- **Indoor and outdoor environments**
- **Sleep and rest activities** (to be reviewed annually)
- **Centre-based Child Abuse, Neglect and Harm Risk Assessment** (to be reviewed at annually)
- **Visitor management** – ensuring safe interactions and controlled access by visitors to the services
- **Activity planning** – including excursions, extracurricular activities, and transportation of children
- **Safe arrival procedures** – ensuring children are safely received into care
- **During and following investigations** into child abuse, neglect, or harm – ensuring ongoing safety and support

In accordance with **Regulation 168 (ha) of the Education and Care Services National Regulations**, CELC maintains a policy for the safe use of digital technologies and online environments, including -

(i) The taking, use, storage and destruction of images and videos of children being educated and cared for by the service; and

(ii) obtaining authorisation from parents to take, use and store images and videos of children being educated and cared for by the service; and

(iii) the use of any optical surveillance devices at the service; and

(iv) the use of any digital device issued by the service; and

(v) the use of digital devices by children being educated and cared for by the service

CELC develops policies and procedures for managing and reducing the risks associated with digital technologies within the service and educational curriculum. [Digital Communications and Device CELC Policy 2025.pdf](#)

- Only CELC-issued electronic devices are to be used when taking images or videos of children while providing education and care to children.
- CELC services establish and implement clear expectations and protocols for the supervision of children within all learning environments both physical and digital.
- Services work with key stakeholders to design and implement environments and curriculums that are representative of different cultures, identities and abilities and respects diversity.

Standard Nine: Continuous Improvement

Children's safety is a core priority at CELC, therefore building an organisational culture that is responsive to change and engages in a cycle of continuous improvement ensures that children's safety is a top priority within the organisation. CELC recognises that continuous improvement is guided by constant reflection and review of what is working and where challenges or opportunities for improvement exists is prioritised.

In alignment with the **Child Safe Organisations Act 2024**, CELC utilises the Queensland Family and Child Commission's Child Safe Standards Self-Assessment Tool to evaluate readiness, identify areas for improvement, and ensure continuous compliance with child safeguarding obligations.

- CELC engages in regular reviews and evaluations of the policies and practices relating to children's safety and wellbeing in conjunction with key stakeholders (children, families and members of the community) to ensure that policies and practices remain up to date and in line with laws and regulations.
- Services in collaboration with CELC management track and analyse complaints, concerns and incidents relating to safety. To then identify root causes and systemic failures that then inform continuous improvement within each service.
- Services regularly engage in a self-assessment process and develop a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) as a live action plan that documents each service's strengths and improvements in an ongoing cycle of continuous improvement.
- Services create action plans that are interwoven throughout the QIP demonstrating the implementation of changes to practices, environments, policies and procedures and risk management in a cycle of continuous improvement.
- Services and CELC develop and implement a variety of formal and informal channels for staff, volunteer's, children, families and other key stakeholders to provide feedback on a variety of topics including the effectiveness of child safety and wellbeing and culturally safe practices.
- CELC uses data from evaluations, complaints, feedback and customer/educator surveys to further enhance practices, pedagogy and policies and procedures.

Standard Ten: Policies and Procedures

CELC recognise the way that services are delivered can impact children and young people both directly and indirectly. Accordingly, all staff regardless of role or level are expected to understand and uphold their individual responsibilities in maintaining child safe standards.

- CELC maintains clear, accessible, and well-documented policies and procedures that reflect child safe standards and the universal principle across all operations.
- Policy development and implementation are driven by continuous improvement and best practice. CELC and service leaders actively promote and model compliance, ensuring alignment with organisational standards.
- CELC conduct regular evaluations of its policies and procedures to ensure they remain effective, relevant and aligned with best practice and child safe standards, laws and regulations.
- CELC embed the 10 child safe standards within their policies, practices and environments.

5. CHILD PROTECTION REPORTING PROCESSES

All children have the right to feel safe and be protected from abuse and harm. When this right is compromised, it is the responsibility of adults to take appropriate action.

Under **Section 84 of the Education and Care Services National Regulations**, the **Approved Provider** of an education and care service must ensure that the **Nominated Supervisor** and **Educators** working with children are informed of:

- The existence and application of current child protection laws; and
- Their legal obligations under those laws.

This includes clear processes for:

- Responding to harm or allegations of harm involving children in CELC services;
- Reporting a **reportable suspicion** under **Section 13E of the Child Protection Act 1999 (Qld)**; and
- Complying with reporting requirements to the **regulatory authority**, as defined by the **Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations**.

Under **Section 13E of the Child Protection Act 1999 (Qld)**, **early childhood education and care professionals** are recognised as **mandatory reporters**. They are legally required to report any **reasonable suspicion** of child abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities.

An **Approved Provider**, is legally required to notify the **Regulatory Authority** within **24 hours** (or within 24 hours of becoming aware) of the following:

- **Any incident** where there is a **reasonable belief** that **physical and/or sexual abuse** of a child has occurred or is occurring at the service. *(Refer to Regulation 175(2)(d) and Regulation 176(2)(bb) of the Education and Care Services National Regulations)*
- **Any allegation** that **physical and/or sexual abuse** of a child has occurred or is occurring at the service. *(Refer to Regulation 175(2)(e) and Regulation 176(2)(bc) of the Education and Care Services National Regulations)*

Catholic Early Learning and Care (CELC) acknowledges that matters involving child abuse and the reporting of allegations are highly sensitive. These must be handled with consistency, professionalism, confidentiality, and compassion.

For further guidance on **mandatory reporting procedures** and **Information sharing and confidentiality** staff should refer to the [Child Protection Policy and Procedures](#)

6. INFORMATION TO THE REGULATORY AUTHORITY

Under the **Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations**, the **Approved Provider** must notify the **Regulatory Authority** within **24 hours** (or within 24 hours of becoming aware) of any **serious incident** occurring at the service.

Definition of a Serious Incident

As outlined in **Regulation 12**, a serious incident includes:

- **The death of a child** while being educated and cared for by the service, or following an incident at the service.
- **Serious injury or trauma** to a child requiring:
 - Urgent medical attention from a registered medical practitioner; or
 - Attendance at, or reasonable expectation to attend, a hospital (e.g. broken limb).
- **Serious illness** of a child requiring hospital attendance (e.g. severe asthma attack, seizure, or anaphylaxis).
- **Any emergency** where emergency services attended due to imminent or severe risk to health, safety, or wellbeing.
- **Missing children**, or children who:
 - Cannot be accounted for;
 - Appear to have been taken or removed from the service in breach of regulations;
 - Are mistakenly locked in or out of the premises.

Additional Notification Requirements

Refer to the above section regarding child protection reporting process for any **incident** where there is a **reasonable belief** that **physical and/or sexual abuse** of a child has occurred or is occurring at the service.

Complaints and Risk Circumstances

Notifications must also be made for:

- Complaints alleging that a serious incident has occurred.
- Circumstances at the service that pose a risk to the health, safety, or wellbeing of children.

7. BREACHES OF THE POLICY

Disciplinary action will be taken by the Catholic Early and Care against any educators found to have breached this policy.

Action will be appropriate to the breach and may include: an official warning and note on the individual's personnel file; a formal apology; counselling; demotion; transfer; or suspension or dismissal for very serious matters

8. ENQUIRIES

Catholic Early Learning and Care Executive Director

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Professional Standards and Safeguarding Office

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safeguarding@cns.catholic.edu.au

Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs

Regional Intake Service Far North Queensland

FNQRISIntake@communities.qld.gov.au

Telephone: 1300684062

9. SEE ALSO

- Education and Care Services National Regulations [Education and Care Services National Regulations](#)
- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2011 [Education and Care Services National Law \(Queensland\) Act 2011 - Queensland Legislation - Queensland Government](#)
- Child Safe Standards [Child Safe Standards | Queensland Family and Child Commission](#)
- Family and Child Commission Act 2014 [Family and Child Commission Act 2014](#)
- Risk Management Code of Practice 2000 [Model Code of Practice: How to manage work health and safety risks](#)
- Early Childhood Code of Ethics [ECA-COE-Brochure-web-2019.pdf](#)
- UN Conventions Rights of the Child [unicef-convention-on-the-rights-of-the-child-poster.pdf](#)
- Quality Area Two of the National Quality Standards [Quality Area 2 – Children's health and safety | ACECQA](#)
- Quality Area of Seven of the National Quality Standards [Quality Area 7 – Governance and leadership | ACECQA](#)
- Child Protection Act 1999 –reform amendment Act 2014 [Child Protection Reform Amendment Act 2014](#)
- Guide to Education and Care Services National Law 2010 [NQF-Resource-02-Guide-to-ECS-Law-Regs.pdf](#)
- Guide to the National Quality Framework [Guide-to-the-NQF-250101.pdf](#)
- National Catholic Safeguarding Standards 2022 [National-Catholic-Safeguarding-Standards-Edition-2_FINAL_December2022.pdf](#)
- Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000 [Working with Children \(Risk Management and Screening\) Act 2000](#)

10. APPENDICES

Steps for reporting Harm or Suspected Harm. [QLD Child Protection Guide](#)

Regulatory Authority Notifications [Reporting requirements about children | ACECQA](#)

CELC State Authority Report

Child Protection Risk Management Strategy [Child Safety Risk Management Resources | National Office for Child Safety](#)

11. APPROVAL



Alison Forster

Director

Catholic Early Learning and Care

Date: 9/12/2025