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Approved on	Jan 2023
Review cycle	1 year
Policy Number	QA 3
Version	2

Supervision of Children Policy

Purpose

This policy will provide guidelines to ensure:

- the provision of a safe and secure environment for all children at Ewing Kindergarten
- adequate supervision of all enrolled children is maintained at all times.

Policy Statement

Values

Ewing Kindergarten is committed to:

- providing adequate supervision of all enrolled children in all aspects of the program
- ensuring all children are directly and actively supervised by educators employed or engaged by Ewing Kindergarten
- maintaining a duty of care (refer to Definitions) to all children at Ewing Kindergarten ensuring there is an understanding of the shared legal responsibility and accountability between, and a commitment by, all persons to implement the procedures and practices outlined in this policy.

Scope

This policy applies to the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, Certified Supervisor, educators, staff, students on placement, volunteers, parents/guardians, children and others attending the programs and activities of Ewing Kindergarten, including during offsite excursions and activities.

Background and Legislative Requirements and Guiding Documents

Background

Supervision is essential in ensuring that children's safety is protected in the kindergarten environment.

Supervision is an integral part of the care and education of children and requires staff members to make ongoing assessments of the child and the activities in which they are engaged. Active supervision assists in the development of positive relationships between educators, children and their families, and informs ongoing assessment and future planning. Adequate supervision (refer to Definitions) requires teamwork and good communication between educators.

Five Essential Elements of Supervision:

Knowing:

- where each child is
- the number of children in attendance
- the correct staff child ratio

- which experiences, areas and equipment need special supervision?
- which children need higher levels of supervision?
- where other staff are positioned – staff should always notify other staff if they leave the area they are supervising for any reason.

Listening:

- different sounds in child's play
- for silence
- for different sounds in the kindergarten
- to what children are telling you
- to other staff and instructions/advice
- for different types of verbal language

Positioning:

- to ensure you get the best possible view of the area at all times
- with backs to wall or fence looking out into the room or play area
- so we can see difficult spaces inside and outside
- stand away from other staff to ensure a wide range of supervision so there are no children behind us who are out of sight

Scanning:

- continually look and be aware of all children in the area, even when working with an individual
- scan the area by lifting your head and looking around constantly.
- scan where other staff are

Be within physical reach:

- when children are involved in high risk activities
- when children are very young
- when fast, direct physical contact is the most likely way to prevent injury
- to use physical contact appropriate for the situation, the potential danger and the age/stage development of children.

Considerations for Effective Supervision:

- grouping and ages/developmental levels of children
- range of children attending
- physical layout and equipment/facilities

Legislative Requirements

Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010: Sections 165, 167, 169, 174
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011: Regulations 101, 168, 176
- National Quality Standard, Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety
 - Standard 2.3: Each child is protected

- Element 2.3.1: Children are adequately supervised at all times
- Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004

The most current amendments to listed legislation can be found at:

- Victorian Legislation – Victorian Law Today: www.legislation.vic.gov.au
- Commonwealth Legislation – Federal Register of Legislation: www.legislation.gov.au

Strategies for Policy Implementation/ Procedures

The Approved Provider is responsible for:

- complying with the legislated educator-to-child ratios at all times (Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010: Sections 169(1), Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011: Regulations 123, 355, 357, 360)
- counting only those educators who are working directly with children at the kindergarten in the educator-to-child ratios (Regulation 122)
- ensuring a minimum of two educators are rostered on duty at all times children are in attendance at the kindergarten
- ensuring that children being educated and cared for by the kindergarten are adequately supervised (refer to Definitions) at all times they are in the care of that service (Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010: Section 165(1))
- considering the design and arrangement of the service environment to support active supervision. This may be supported by a supervision plan (refer to Attachment 1 – Sample supervision risk management template)
- identifying high-risk activities, including excursions (refer to Excursions and Service Events Policy, Road Safety and Safe Transport Policy and Water Safety Policy), through a risk management process, and implementing strategies to improve children’s safety e.g. increasing adult-to-child ratios above regulatory requirements (Regulation 101)
- ensuring supervision standards are maintained during educator breaks, including during lunch breaks
- providing safe play spaces for children, which allow for adequate supervision, including safe fall zones, good traffic flow, maintenance of buildings and equipment, and minimising trip hazards
- providing staff rosters, and casual and relief staff lists
- developing procedures to inform casual and relief staff about the supervision strategies outlined in this policy
- notifying the Regulatory Authority (DET) within 24 hours of:
 - a serious incident (refer to Definitions) occurring at the kindergarten, including when a child appears to be missing or cannot be accounted for (Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010: Section 174(2)(a), Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011: Regulations 12, 176(2)(a))
 - a complaint alleging that the health, safety or wellbeing of a child has been compromised or that the law has been breached (Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010: Section 174(2)(b), Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011: Regulations 175(2)(c), 176(2)(b))
- notifying parents/guardians of a serious incident (refer to Definitions) involving their child as soon as possible, but not more than 24 hours after the occurrence

- reporting notifiable incidents (refer to Definitions) to WorkSafe Victoria
- evaluating supervision procedures regularly in consultation with the Nominated Supervisor, educators and management representatives
- ensuring that educators and staff comply with the kindergarten's Road Safety and Safe Transport Policy
- encouraging parents/guardians to comply with the kindergarten's Road Safety and Safe Transport Policy.

The Nominated Supervisor is responsible for:

- ensuring that the prescribed educator-to-child ratios are met at all times and that educators have required qualifications (Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010: Sections 169(3)&(4), Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011: Regulations 123, 355, 357, 360)
- counting only those educators who are working directly with children at the kindergarten in the educator-to-child ratios (Regulation 122)
- ensuring a minimum of two educators are rostered on duty at all times children are in attendance at the kindergarten
- ensuring that children being educated and cared for by the kindergarten are adequately supervised (refer to Definitions) at all times they are in the care of that kindergarten (Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010: Section 165(2))
- considering the design and arrangement of the kindergarten environment to support active supervision. This may be supported by a supervision plan (refer to Attachment 1 – Sample supervision risk management template)
- identifying high-risk activities, including excursions (refer to Excursions and Service Events Policy, Road Safety and Safe Transport Policy), through a risk management process, and implementing strategies to improve children's safety e.g. increasing adult-to-child ratios above regulatory requirements (Regulation 101(2))
- ensuring supervision standards are maintained during educator breaks, including during lunch breaks
- evaluating supervision practices regularly in consultation with other educators and the Approved Provider
- ensuring that educators and staff comply with the kindergarten's Road Safety and Safe Transport Policy
- encouraging parents/guardians to comply with the kindergarten's Road Safety and Safe Transport Policy.

Certified Supervisors and other educators are responsible for:

- providing adequate supervision (refer to Definitions) at all times
- being alert to, and aware of, risks and hazards and the potential for incidents and injury throughout the kindergarten and not just within their own immediate area, and using supervision skills to reduce or prevent incident or injury to children and adults
- developing procedures to ensure that all children are accounted for, including by referring to attendance records (refer to Definitions) at various times throughout the day, both before and after outdoor activities
- adjusting supervision strategies to suit the kindergarten environment, educator skills, and age mix, dynamics and size of the group of children being supervised and the activities being undertaken
- maintaining a duty of care to children at all times (including when the child is on the premises but not signed into or out of the care of the service and the parent/guardian or person delivering or collecting the child is responsible for supervising that child)
- communicating with other educators regularly to ensure adequate supervision at all times
- informing parents/guardians and volunteers at the kindergarten about the Supervision of Children Policy and the ways that they can adhere to its procedures

- ensuring doors and gates are closed at all times to prevent children from leaving the kindergarten unaccompanied or from accessing unsupervised/unsafe areas of the kindergarten
- deciding when to interrupt and redirect children’s play to ensure safety at all times
- identifying opportunities to support and extend children’s learning while also recognising their need to play without adult intervention
- conducting daily safety checks of the environment to assess safety and to remove hazards
- arranging the environment (equipment, furniture and experiences) to ensure effective supervision while also allowing children to access quiet/private spaces
- providing direct and constant supervision when a child is near water (refer to Water Safety Policy) or near a road (refer to Road Safety and Safe Transport Policy)
- conducting a risk assessment prior to an excursion to identify risks to health, safety or wellbeing and specifying how these risks will be managed and minimised (refer to Excursions and Kindergarten Events Policy)
- notifying the Approved Provider in the event of a serious incident (refer to Definitions) occurring at the kindergarten or of a complaint being made alleging the health, safety or wellbeing of a child has been compromised
- assisting the Approved Provider and the Nominated Supervisor to evaluate supervision practices regularly
- supervising children’s daily departure from the kindergarten and being aware of the person who has authority to collect the child (refer to Delivery and Collection of Children Policy)
- complying with the kindergarten’s Road Safety and Safe Transport Policy.

Parents/Guardians are responsible for:

- ensuring educators are aware that their children have arrived at or departed from the kindergarten
- ensuring that doors and gates, including playground gates, are closed after entry or exit
- being aware of the movement of other children near gates and doors when entering or exiting the kindergarten
- enabling educators to supervise children at all times by making arrangements to speak with them outside program hours
- supervising their own children before signing them into the program and after they have signed them out of the program
- familiarising themselves with the service’s Road Safety and Safe Transport Policy
- supervising other children in their care, including siblings, while attending or assisting at the kindergarten.

Volunteers and students, while at the service, are responsible for

- following this policy and its procedures.

Related Policies and Procedures

- Child Protection Policy
- Complaints and Grievances Policy
- Dealing with Medical Conditions Policy
- Delivery and Collection of Children Policy
- Excursions and Service Events Policy
- Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy

- Interactions with Children Policy
- Occupational Health and Safety Policy
- Road Safety and Safe Transport Policy
- Staffing Policy

References and Further Sources

- Kidsafe: www.kidsafe.com.au
- The Royal Children’s Hospital Melbourne Safety Centre: www.rch.org.au/safetycentre
- WorkSafe Victoria: www.worksafe.vic.gov.au
- Guide to the National Quality Standard (ACECQA)
- Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 (ACECQA)

Evaluation

In order to assess whether the values and purposes of the policy have been achieved, the approved provider will:

- regularly seek feedback from everyone affected by the policy regarding its effectiveness
- record and monitor complaints and incidents in relation to the supervision of children and amend the policy and procedures as required
- keep the policy up to date with current legislation, research, policy and best practice
- revise the policy and procedures as part of the service’s policy review cycle, or as required
- notify parents/guardians at least 14 days before making any changes to this policy or its procedures.

Definitions

The terms defined in this section relate specifically to this policy.

Adequate supervision: (In relation to this policy) **supervision** entails all children (individuals and groups) in all areas of the service, being in sight and/or hearing of an educator at all times including during toileting, sleep, rest and transition routines. Services are required to comply with the legislative requirements for educator-to-child ratios at all times. Supervision contributes to protecting children from hazards that may emerge in play, including hazards created by the equipment used. Adequate supervision refers to constant, active and diligent supervision of every child at the service. Adequate supervision requires that educators are always in a position to observe each child, respond to individual needs, and immediately intervene if necessary. Variables affecting supervision levels include:

- number, age and abilities of children
- number and positioning of educators
- current activity of each child
- areas in which the children are engaged in an activity (visibility and accessibility)
- developmental profile of each child and of the group of children
- experience, knowledge and skill of each educator
- need for educators to move between areas (effective communication strategies).

Attendance Record: Kept by the service to record details of each child attending the service including name, time of arrival and departure, signature of person delivering and collecting the child or of the Nominated Supervisor or educator (Regulation 158(1)).

Duty of care: A common law concept that refers to the responsibilities of organisations to provide people with an adequate level of protection against harm and all reasonable foreseeable risk of injury.

Hazard: A source or situation with a potential for harm in terms of human injury or ill health, damage to property, damage to the environment or a combination of these.

Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Record: Contains details of any incident, injury, trauma or illness that occurs while the child is being educated and cared for by the service. Any incident, injury, trauma or illness must be recorded as soon as is practicable but not later than 24 hours after the occurrence. Details required include the:

- name and age of the child
- circumstances leading to the incident, injury, trauma or illness (including any symptoms)
- time and date
- details of action taken by the service including any medication administered, first aid provided or medical personnel contacted
- details of any witnesses
- names of any person the service notified or attempted to notify, and the time and date of this
- signature of the person making the entry, and time and date of this.

These details need to be kept for the period of time specified in Regulation 183. A sample *Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Record* is available on the ACECQA website.

Notifiable incident: An incident involving workplace health and safety that is required by law to be reported to WorkSafe Victoria. Notification is required for incidents that result in death or serious injury/illness, or dangerous occurrences. For a complete list of incidents that must be reported to WorkSafe Victoria, refer to the *Guide to Incident Notification* on the WorkSafe Victoria website: www.worksafe.vic.gov.au

Serious incident: A serious incident is defined in Regulation 12 as:

- the death of a child while being educated and cared for by the service
- any incident involving an injury or trauma, or the illness of a child that requires or ought to have required:
 - attention of a registered medical practitioner, or
 - attendance at a hospital examples include whooping cough, broken limb, anaphylaxis reaction
- any incident requiring attendance by emergency services
- a circumstance where a child appears to be missing, is unaccounted for, has been removed from the service contrary to the Regulations, or has been locked in or out of the service premises.
- The Approved Provider must notify the Regulatory Authority (DET) in writing within 24 hours of a serious incident occurring at the service (Regulation 176(2)(a)). The Notification of serious incident form (available on the ACECQA website) is to be completed and submitted online using the National Quality Agenda IT System (NQA ITS). Records are required to be retained for the periods specified in Regulation 183.