

CHILD SAFE ENVIRONMENT POLICY

WHY?

Thrive is committed to providing a safe environment to all children being educated and cared for by the service and will take every reasonable precaution to protect children from harm and from any hazard likely to cause injury. This is in accordance with the *Education and Care Services National Law 167* and the *Education and Care Services National Regulations – 168*

WHO?

This policy applies to the following persons

- Approved Provider (Thrive)
- Thrive Management
- All Staff
- Family Day Care Educators, Assistants and Relief Educators
- Volunteers
- Students on professional experience placements
- Others involved in the provision of education and care

All of the above will be made aware of the requirements of this policy and procedure and this will be undertaken as a part of the registration/induction process.

WHAT?

Daily checks of the environment and risk assessments will be undertaken by the Educator.

Where hazards specific to the environment are identified, they will be assessed and the appropriate management strategies will be developed and implemented to ensure these hazards are minimised and where possible, eliminated completely.

Under no circumstances, will tobacco, alcohol or illicit drugs be consumed while children are in care and to be stored out of reach and out of sight.

Children and others will be supported and educated regarding the implementation and maintenance of a safe environment.

Thrive and Educators will engage with children, families and relevant stakeholders to implement strategies for supporting and implementing a safe environment. Current information and resources will be readily available.

All persons on Thrive premises must adhere to the requirements of this policy and procedure.

WHEN?

This policy is not limited to the workplace or work hours, instead this policy extends to all functions and places that are work related. For example, work lunches, conferences, Christmas parties and client functions.

Any deliberate breaches of this policy may result in disciplinary action being taken against the employee/person.

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Thrive will provide all employees covered by this policy with the appropriate training so they are made aware of their responsibilities and obligations. Thrive will provide all employees covered by this policy with the appropriate training so they are made aware of their responsibilities and obligations.

Thrive retains the sole discretion to reasonably vary, terminate or replace this policy from time to time. Thrive will consult before any amendments are made and will notify and train those to whom the amendments apply.

All persons covered under the paragraph 'Who' that breach this policy may be subject to the appropriate disciplinary action in accordance with the Disciplinary Policy and Procedure or removal from the workplace or termination of services (workers, other than employees and other persons in the workplace).

POLICY VERSION & REVISION INFORMATION:

Policy Authorised by: General Manager
Review Date/s:
Review Date: As required by GM or as legislation changes

Original Issue: AUG19
Current Version: Mar22Ver1
NOTE: The digital version of this document is the most current version. Printed versions cannot be relied upon for accuracy and are always superseded by the digital copy.

CHILD SAFE ENVIRONMENT PROCEDURE

HOW?

Storage and Use of Hazardous Products:

Thrive and Educators will, whilst maintaining a hygienic environment, minimise the use of chemicals and substances that may cause harm or injury to people and the environment.

Potentially hazardous substances must be stored in the original container and as per the manufacturer's instructions. They must be clearly labelled and stored so that they are inaccessible to children.

Educators must ensure that the relevant safety measures are practiced with hazardous products i.e. use gloves, masks and ventilation.

Flammable products and materials must be stored away from heat sources and chemicals and other hazardous products, as well as being stored separately to food.

Medications must be stored in accordance with the Medical Conditions Policy and legislative requirements.

All products must be disposed of in accordance with manufacturer's instructions.

Plants and Vegetation:

Thrive acknowledges that some plants pose a risk to children, either through consumption, skin or respiratory irritation. Plants may also pose a danger through the attraction of bees, wasps and other animals or through vegetation, such as thorns.

Where a plant is identified as potentially toxic or hazardous (www.kidsafensw.org/growmesafely may be used as a reference to identify toxic and/or hazardous plants) the plants must be removed from the approved space and made inaccessible to children.

Where the plant is unable to be removed from the environment a risk management plan must be developed and implemented. This may include, but is not limited to age appropriate education, removal of the identified hazard part of the plant (i.e. berries, fruit). In the case of suspected poisoning, educators must contact the Poison Information Centre on 13 11 26.

Animals:

Animals and domestic pets may offer children a holistic extension to the program, offering much enjoyment, contentment and companionship, as well as the opportunity to develop a sense of connection, purpose and responsibility.

However, animals and pets may also pose a risk to children. To minimise any associated risks when children engage with animals and pets, the following must be implemented:

A risk assessment must be developed and implemented for each animal or pet introduced into the environment. Parental consent must be sought prior to children's engagement with animals and pets.

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FD11 THRIVE GROUP TASMANIA POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Family Day Care Service

Children's interaction with animals and pets must be directly supervised. Animals may be implemented into the Educational Program for short periods of time. All pets must be kept in a separate enclosure inaccessible to children. All pets must be vaccinated.

Thrive and Educators will engage children in age and developmentally appropriate educational practices regarding animals and pets. Where children and others have directly engaged with animals, effective hand hygiene must be implemented (as per the Health and Hygiene Policy).

Animals and the animal enclosure in which they are situated must be maintained in a safe, clean and hygienic manner. All equipment associated with the animal/pet, such as cages, food, water bowls, bedding, sleep areas, litter trays, toys and leads must be stored safely and kept out of reach from the children. Faeces must be removed before a child enters the area.

Unknown Animals at the Premises - Where there is an unknown animal on Thrive premises, Educators must make a professional decision with regards to children's health, safety and wellbeing. Where the animal is identified as posing a potential risk to children (and others) a lockdown will be enacted and the relevant person/s will be contacted to safely remove the animal (i.e. Local Council Animal Control). Any incident involving a child and an animal must be reported as soon as practicable to the Family Day Care Statewide Manager as a serious incident.

Environment Free from Tobacco, Alcohol & Illicit Drugs - Thrive and educators must ensure that children are provided with an environment that is free from tobacco, alcohol and illicit drugs at all times.

The approved provider must ensure that the nominated supervisor, staff members, volunteers and students on professional experience placement do not consume and are not affected by alcohol or drugs (including prescription medications) so as not to impair their capacity or judgement when supervising or providing education and care to children utilising the service.

Sun Protection - Where the UV level is three or above, sun protection practices must be implemented. Educators, volunteers, students on professional experience placement and those involved in the provision of education and care will actively role model sun protection practices. Other adults will be actively encouraged to positively role model sun protection practices. Sun protection strategies may include: planning excursions to ensure children are well protected from the sun.

Clothing - Children and adults will be encouraged to wear loose fitting clothing that covers as much of their body as possible. A broad spectrum, water resistant, minimum SPF30+ sunscreen must be used where the UV level is three or above. Thrive and Educators must ensure all sunscreen is in date.

Educators will support children to apply sunscreen in a hygienic manner. This may include washing hands before and after applying the sunscreen or using a pre-moistened disposable wipe. Sunscreen will be applied at least twenty minutes prior to going outdoors and reapplied every two hours, as applicable.

Where children are known to have an allergic reaction, families must provide an alternative sunscreen. Where families provide a child's individual sunscreen, the sunscreen must be in line with this policy, in the original container and clearly named.

CHILD SAFE ENVIRONMENT PROCEDURE

Where a child is not permitted to wear sunscreen, a written statement from a registered medical practitioner, outlining the reasons why, must be provided to Thrive. The record will be maintained in a confidential manner with the child's individual enrolment record.

Hats - Children and adults will wear legionnaires, broad brimmed or bucket style hats to protect the face, neck and ears. Caps and visors are considered inappropriate and for this reason are excluded from use.

Sunglasses - Close fitting, wrap-around sunglasses that comply with Australian Standards AS 1067:2003 (Category 2, 3 or 4) are encouraged but optional. Where practical, children and educators are encouraged to wear sunglasses to protect their eyes.

Shade - Shade may be generated from a range of options including natural, portable or man-made structures. Shade will be considered when developing the outdoor program (including excursions). Stationary experiences such as sandpits will be available to children within shaded areas. Children will be actively encouraged to use shaded areas where the UV level is three or above. In addition to this, consideration must also be given to:

Babies & Infants - Babies skin is sensitive and may easily burn. In line with the above procedure, where the UV level is three or above, the positioning of the baby's clothing, hat and shade must be regularly checked to ensure the child remains protected from the sun's UV rays. It is recommended that infants under twelve months of age are well-protected from direct sunlight.

Vitamin D Deficiency - Where a person believes there may be a Vitamin D deficiency (or belongs to a group within the population that is at higher risk of vitamin D deficiency) they are encouraged to consult a registered medical practitioner.

Where the UV Level is Below Three - Where the UV level is below three, sun protection practices are not required unless at high altitudes or near highly reflective surfaces such as snow.

Water Safety:

Engagement with water and water based experiences may offer a unique sensory extension to the program and a holistic link to exploring the natural environment. To support educators and services in offering an enriching program, balanced with safety and knowledge, the following procedures must be implemented:

Educators will actively identify water hazards within the education and care environment including the immediate environment (e.g. scalds, proximity to water in both the indoor and outdoor environment), experiences offered and during routine outings and excursions (e.g. proximity of water, swimming, paddling).

A risk assessment must be developed and implemented for any water experience and a risk matrix will be used to identify the level of associated risk. The level of risk associated to any identified water hazards will be determined by the ages and numbers of children, ratios, the educator's knowledge of the children, the environment and group dynamics. Where a level of 'extreme' is given, the experience must not be undertaken and/or access restricted to children.

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Where the experience is conducted in the outdoor environment, considerations must be given to the weather and changeable weather conditions. Reference must be given to the implementation of sun protection practices (see Sun Protection section).

Supervision - Children require a high level of supervision near water (e.g. regular head counts). Age and developmentally appropriate active supervision must be implemented with regards to all water-based experiences.

Water experiences must be directly supervised, with equipment filled just before use. All containers must be safely emptied after use and stored so that they do not collect water.

Children must be within an arms-length of an educator while near water. Educators must ensure doors to areas including potential water hazards (e.g. laundry) are closed and inaccessible to children when unattended by an adult. Note: age appropriate access, including maintenance of (move next line up) appropriate privacy levels, must be maintained with regards to children accessing bathroom and toilet facilities).

Where children paddle (i.e. walking in water, to approximately mid-calf range) while being educated and cared for, they must be within sight and arms-length of an Educator (or another appropriate adult).

Implementing Specific Ratios for Swimming - Where children engage in a swimming experience while being educated or cared for:

If at a beach or open water, the beach/water must be patrolled by a qualified lifeguard.

At least one adult must hold a current Bronze Medallion. Lifeguards may only be counted in ratios if they do not hold general lifeguard duties and their sole responsibility is to the children attending the Thrive program.

Swimming is prohibited on unpatrolled beaches, dams or in stagnant water.

Public water slides are not to be used by children under school age. Diving boards are not to be used at any time by any child enrolled and attending Thrive.

In addition to the required permissions, prior to children engaging in the experience, parents must verify their child's swimming ability and/or water experience.

A ratio of one adult to each child (1:1) applies to children under five years of age who swim. A ratio of one adult to four children (1:4) applies with children over five years of age who swim. Discussions (move next line up) regarding water safety and expectations will be conducted with children, families and relevant stakeholders. This may include, but is not limited to expectations; water awareness; building awareness of and limiting potential hazards such as: nappy (and other) buckets; toilets; water features, including fish ponds; pet water bowls; dams, rivers, creeks and pools.

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Visitors:

Visitors to the education and care service must be supervised at all times. Visitors must not be left alone with children.

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Visitors to a Family Day Care premise or venue, while children are being educated and cared for must also completed the Visitor's Register including their signature and the time of arrival and departure.

Acceptance and Refusal of Authorisations:

Acceptance and refusal of authorisation will be gathered during the enrolment process and as required (e.g. excursions).

Acceptance and refusal of authorisations from staff and other persons associated with Thrive may be gathered during the induction process and as required (e.g. role of nominated supervisor).

Written acceptance and refusal of authorisations may include, but are not limited to:

Enrolment at the service.

Consent for relevant medical treatment for the child from a registered medical practitioner, hospital or ambulance service.

Transportation of the child by an ambulance service. The administration of medication (including where applicable, self-administration by a school age child).

Authorisation for the child to leave the service premises, including for the purposes of an excursion, regular outing or emergency.

The use and inclusion of the child's image in any form of digital media or display.

The designation in writing of the role of educational leader.

The designation and acceptance for a person to be placed in day to day charge.

The designation and acceptance in writing of the role of nominated supervisor. Any other authorisation required from time to time by Thrive.

All records will be maintained confidentially in line with legislative requirements.

Maintaining a Safe Physical Environment:

Thrive and Educators must ensure that the physical environment (indoor and out), premises and all equipment and furniture used by the education and care service is maintained in good repair, in a safe, clean and hygienic manner.

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The physical environment (including the premises and facilities) must be maintained to support supervision as well as the dignity and rights of children.

In addition to the requirements previously outlined in this policy, to support the provision and maintenance of a safe physical environment, Thrive and Educators must:

Identify any hazards relevant to the environment Hazard Identification Checklists). This may include removing any broken, unsafe or dangerous equipment immediately from the approved space or making these items or areas inaccessible to children. Maintenance registers may also support a safe and engaging physical environment.

Fencing – Where children preschool age or under are in attendance, the outdoor space used by children must be enclosed by a fence or barrier of a safe height that is 1 metre between footholds and design that children preschool age or under cannot go through, over or under it. Any vertical bars must be a maximum of 125mm apart. Any fence or barrier must not pose a choking hazard.

Furniture, Materials & Equipment – The resources, furniture, materials and equipment must be sufficient in number, age and developmentally appropriate for the children in attendance. Resources, furniture, materials and equipment must be readily accessible to children and support each child's comfort and engagement in the program.

Laundry & Hygiene Facilities – Laundry and hygiene facilities must be available or accessible.

Space – Outdoor and indoor spaces are fit for purpose, including supporting the access of every child.

Toilet & Hygiene Facilities – Adequate developmentally and age appropriate toilet, as well as hand washing, and drying facilities will be readily accessible to children. These facilities will be maintained in a safe and hygienic manner.

Outdoor Equipment – Any equipment 60cm and over must have appropriate soft fall (see Kidsafe guidelines for soft fall requirements).

Trampolines – Must meet AS4989, be fully supervised, only accessed by 1 child at a time, netted, secured to the ground and locked when not in use and a mat covering the springs.

Swings – Soft fall (see Kidsafe guidelines for appropriate soft fall requirements), secured at height when not in use and fully supervised when in use.

Nappy Change Facilities – Nappy change mat or table and appropriate equipment must be provided. The space, facilities and practices must be respectful. Nappy change mat to be cleaned after every use. Current nappy changing procedure to be available. Nappies to be disposed of in a lidded bin separate from daily use.

Ventilation & Natural Light – Indoor spaces used by children must be well ventilated, have adequate natural light and be maintained at a temperature that ensures the safety and wellbeing of children.

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Glazing – In relation to Family Day Care residences or venues, where glazing is accessible to children and is of or below the height above floor level, specified by AS 1288-2006 (if approved before 1 June 2014, is 0.75 metres or less above floor level), the glazed area must be safety glass (where required by the Building Code of Australia) or in any other case treated with a product that prevents glass from shattering if broken; or guarded by barriers that prevent a child from striking or falling against the glass. As per National Regulation 117.

Telephone or Other Communication Equipment – Educators must be contactable at all times when educating and caring for children. Educators must, at all times, maintain access to an operating telephone to support communication between parents, Thrive services and emergency services as applicable.

Storage Facilities – Adequate and appropriate storage must be available for children's belongings as well as play equipment, resources, materials, medication, chemicals and confidential records.

BREACH OF THE PROCEDURE

Any breach of this procedure may result in disciplinary action including, but not limited to, termination of employment.

Thrive retains the sole discretion to reasonably vary, terminate or replace this procedure from time to time. Thrive will consult before any amendments are made and will notify and train those to whom the amendments apply.