

## D-9

# PROVIDING A CHILD SAFE ENVIRONMENT



## POLICY STATEMENT

TWOOSH recognizes that the safety, welfare and wellbeing of every child is our paramount consideration, and this principle underpins all decisions, practices and interactions within our service. Educators will maintain the premises and equipment, adhere to procedures regarding safe practices and operate in line with legislative requirements relating to child protective practices and the Education and Care Services National Regulations and Law. Educators and Management are aware of their legal responsibility as Mandatory Reporters to take action to protect and support children they suspect may be at significant risk of harm.

## REFERENCES AND CONSIDERATIONS

- National Education and Care services Regulations (2010)
- Education and Care Services National Regulations (2011)
- National Quality Framework (2018) Quality Areas 2, 3, 4, 5, & 7
- NSW Department of Community Services Mandatory Reporter Guidelines
- NSW Children and Young Person's (Care and Protection) Act 1998
- Keep them Safe Keep Them Safe - A shared approach to child wellbeing 2009-2014
- Child safe standards – Office of the Children's Guardian

## Related TWOOSH documents

- TWOOSH Risk Assessments
- TWOOSH Parent/Guardian and Visitor Code of Conduct
- Family Information Booklet
- Staff Handbook
- Policy C-1 – Staffing
- Policy D-1 – Work Health & Safety
- Policy D-3 – Hazardous Substances
- Policy D-7 – Emergency Procedures
- TWOOSH's Commitment to Child Safety Statement
- Policy D-11 – Child Protection
- Policy D-13 – Management of incident, injury & illness
- Policy D-15 – Sleep and Rest
- Policy D17 - Safe use of Digital Technologies and Online Environments
- Policy D-16 - Supervision of Children

## PROCEDURES

### Child Safe Standards

#### Our Approach to Child Safety

TWOOSH's approach to Child Safety incorporates a range of interconnected practices that work together to create and maintain a safe environment for children and young people. The aspects

outlined below demonstrate how compliance with legal and regulatory requirements — including Working with Children Checks, National Child Safety training requirements for educators and volunteers, Mandatory Reporting obligations, Reportable Conduct requirements, and discrimination and privacy laws — is embedded within TWOOSH's policies and procedures to support a strong child safe culture. These practices are further strengthened through child safe recruitment, induction, and ongoing training compliance and processes that help ensure all staff and volunteers understand, uphold, and comply with their responsibilities.

## Our Relationship to the National Law

TWOOSH as an Approved Provider has various legal obligations to comply with per the Education and Care Services National Law. These obligations include compliance with the National Quality Standards and the various positive obligations outlined in the National Law.

TWOOSH recognises that continuously striving to be a quality service in accordance with the National Quality Standards supports being a child safe organisation and meeting the requirements of the Child Safe Standards. TWOOSH acknowledges its obligation to uphold children's rights, with child safety remaining a paramount consideration in all practices and decision-making. TWOOSH is committed to ensuring the safety of children and young persons when attending our service, as outlined in our Commitment Statement to Child Safety on our website.

## Managing the Service

### Security

- ◆ Only approved Educators, Management Committee members, Thornleigh West Public School (TWPS) personnel, cleaners, and Department of Education employees will be given a key to access the building and equipment areas. All other visitors must report to the Director/ Responsible person to sign in to the visitor's log.
- ◆ A key register will be maintained. Extra keys will only be cut if agreed by Management. The register records the person's receipt of the key, date received, and date returned on completion of employment or completion of term as a member of the Management Team. TWOOSH will adhere to key registry requirements of TWPS. The key register will be reviewed annually by the Director.
- ◆ Monies, important documents, and documents related to the current year will be kept in a lockable place/office and access will only be granted to approved Educators and members of the Management Team.
- ◆ At the end of the year all documents will be archived and clearly marked then stored in the locked storage facility. The bookkeeper and TWOOSH will keep copies of important documents required for audits.
- ◆ Educators will ensure that the building is left in a secure manner before leaving, as per the closing checklist.
- ◆ Educators will inform the police, the Management Committee, and the TWPS Principal (notify the Grounds Assistant (GA) and principal in writing) as soon as possible if there has been a break of any kind into TWOOSH. Educators will remain at TWOOSH until the police arrive or inform them of what to do.

### Buildings, equipment and maintenance

- ◆ The responsibility is shared between TWPS and TWOOSH. TWPS is responsible for building and fixtures maintenance and TWOOSH is responsible for any equipment.

- ◆ Equipment will be sourced and chosen to ensure children have suitable and sufficient access to developmentally appropriate furniture and material. Service premises and all equipment and furniture will be maintained in a safe, clean condition and in good repair at all times.
- ◆ Children will have access to adequate, developmentally and age-appropriate toilet, hand washing and drying facilities.
- ◆ All power sockets will be maintained as child safe, with outlet plug protectors. TWOOSH will take all reasonable steps and precautions to ensure plugs, sockets, power cords or extension cords are maintained in safe working order.
- ◆ TWOOSH will take all reasonable steps and precautions to ensure electrical appliances are in good working order and tested and tagged annually by an external company or electrician.
- ◆ Provision will be made in the budget for regular maintenance and repair work and for deferred costs of major capital repairs.
- ◆ All contractors are required to have their own public liability insurance prior to undertaking any work at the service/premises.
- ◆ The spaces and equipment used by TWOOSH will be regularly checked to ensure that they are in a good and safe condition and comply with relevant Australian Standards.
- ◆ TWOOSH will take steps to ensure equipment is regularly washed and cleaned.
- ◆ Steps will be taken to ensure recycled craft materials are free of any potential hazards.
- ◆ Educators are expected to ensure safe handling of all tools, if used as part of any activity.
- ◆ Families are encouraged to notify TWOOSH of any safety issues they observe by writing to the Director.
- ◆ Educators and Guardians are encouraged to report anything requiring maintenance to the Director as soon as possible.
- ◆ The TWOOSH Director will inform TWPS in writing (via email) of any maintenance issues requiring their attention.
- ◆ Faulty equipment will be removed and in instances where this is not immediately possible, TWOOSH will seek to mitigate any risks by placing protection around any affected areas.
- ◆ The TWOOSH Director will contact TWPS to organise urgent repairs.
- ◆ TWOOSH will record non-urgent repairs in the maintenance book. The Director will note this and bring it to the attention of the Management Committee at the next available meeting. Management and the Director will organise to rectify the problem.
- ◆ Maintenance reviews will be raised as required as part of the Director's report at each meeting. The Director will also give a review of works completed by any tradesperson employed for future reference where relevant.
- ◆ If TWOOSH is considered unsafe or poses a health risk, the service may be closed under WHS obligations after notifying all relevant parties, until the problem has been rectified.
- ◆ TWOOSH maintains an appropriate number of first aid kits that are suitable for the children attending. The first aid kits will be well stocked, easily recognisable, and accessible at all times. The Director is responsible for ensuring these are maintained and re-stocked as needed.

## Storage

- ◆ A storage system is in place to ensure easy access and uncluttered storage of all equipment.
- ◆ Storage areas are cleaned and tidied at least twice a year or when necessary.
- ◆ Play equipment and toys are easily accessible to all children during the operating hours.
- ◆ Children are expected and encouraged to show respect for the equipment and pack equipment away that they have used to avoid trip hazards.
- ◆ All equipment is to be neatly packed away at the end of each session.
- ◆ Craft equipment will be stored in a separate area. Children are to ask permission before removing any craft equipment from the cupboards when it has not been set up by the educators.
- ◆ All craft equipment is to be immediately cleaned before storage.

- ◆ Separate storage areas will be available for sporting and large outdoor equipment. These areas are out of bounds to children.
- ◆ All items such as cleaning materials, disinfectants, flammable, poisonous and other dangerous substances, tools, toiletries, first aid equipment, and medications are stored in designated secured areas, inaccessible to children. Educators are responsible to ensure that these areas remain secure and that they do not inadvertently provide access to these items.
- ◆ The medication cupboard will remain unlocked for ease of access in the case of an emergency. Children are not to access this space freely. Individual containers are used to store children's individual medications and are clearly labelled with names, medical conditions, and a photo of the child.
- ◆ Bins will be available in the kitchen and other areas. The bins will be cleaned and emptied daily.
- ◆ Educators and the Management Team will ensure that all family records are kept in a nominated secure place, ensuring that they are kept confidential and not accessible to others during daily operations.

### Ventilation, temperature and natural light

- ◆ All heating and cooling systems are maintained to be of good quality and checked regularly to ensure safety and reliability.
- ◆ All heating and cooling systems and power cords will be kept in a safe area and away from children.
- ◆ Educators will take individual needs and specific activities into account when ensuring that heating and ventilation levels are comfortable.
- ◆ Adequate ventilation will be provided at all times. Windows will be properly maintained to ensure protection from insects and other bugs.
- ◆ Where activities involve materials which may potentially emit fumes or smells such as paints and glues, Educators are to ensure there is adequate ventilation before undertaking the activity.
- ◆ Windows are to be opened during operation of TWOOSH unless it is necessary to be closed to protect from extreme weather conditions.
- ◆ Natural light is considered best and will be provided as much as possible.
- ◆ Adequate light will be maintained and appropriate based on the activities both indoors and outdoors. A security light will be placed at the entrance to TWOOSH that clearly provides unobstructed view of the door and surrounding areas.
- ◆ Outdoor lighting will be suitable and adequate so that visitors, Educators and children can enter and exit the building safely. These are maintained by TWPS. Any issues regarding timing of lights are to be reported to TWPS.

### Utility outages

- ◆ In the event of a utility outage such as electricity or water, the Director will assess any potential risk to the safety of the children and Educators.
- ◆ The Director is expected to inform and discuss these risks with TWPS Management, agree to a proper course of action and discuss those outcomes with the Management Committee where relevant.
- ◆ If the outage occurs during a school day and it is deemed necessary for Guardians to pick up their children as soon as possible, the Director will inform parents as appropriate. TWOOSH will continue to operate until all children have been collected.
- ◆ If a prolonged outage occurs, the Director may decide it is not safe to open for the day and will inform parents of this decision as soon as possible. In this scenario, TWOOSH will continue to have at least 2 Educators on site to advise any Guardian who arrives to drop off their children that TWOOSH is not operating.

### Pest control

- ◆ Proper food storage will be maintained as per Policy D-14.

- ◆ Kitchen, food preparation areas and storage will be cleaned and maintained after each session.
- ◆ All areas will be checked regularly for any signs of pests or vermin.
- ◆ Professional pest control will be engaged annually during our Christmas closure time; this is documented in the maintenance register.
- ◆ Should any pests or vermin be identified then action should be taken to get rid of the problem:
  - Initial options should include using methods such as physical removal or non-chemical products.
  - Low-irritant, environmentally friendly sprays should be used minimally and only with adequate ventilation, preferably not while children are on site.
  - Other methods such as engaging the services of a pest control company will only be used if deemed necessary by the Management Committee where other methods have failed.
- ◆ Where the services of a pest control company is necessary:
  - If urgent, the Director may obtain a contractor to address the problem.
  - If not urgent, the Director will bring the problem to the attention of the Management Committee in their report and the Management Committee will decide on the appropriate course of action.
- ◆ If it is necessary to use commercial grade chemicals:
  - The MSDS of all chemicals will be reviewed and all required controls implemented.
  - Children, Educators and visitors will be removed from the environment, or the chemicals are to be used outside of TWOOSH operating hours.
  - All Guardians will be notified.

## Managing the environments

### Indoor environment

- ◆ TWOOSH ensures all indoor environments are managed in a way that prioritises children's safety, wellbeing, participation and developmental needs.
- ◆ TWOOSH ensures the indoor environment provides space for each child in compliance with National Regulations.
- ◆ The TWOOSH environment will be free from the use of tobacco, illicit drugs and alcohol as per TWPS Policy.
- ◆ The Director will only enrol the number of children in TWOOSH which can comfortably fit into the building space and in accordance with the National Regulations.
- ◆ Where children are indoors for long periods due to weather conditions, special activities will be planned and other areas sought to disperse the group such as E block, library, the school hall (if vacant) and COLAs.
- ◆ Separate areas in the indoor environment will be provided for:
  - answering phones and maintaining daily records
  - private discussions between Educators and Guardians
  - children to store their bags and belongings
  - storage of equipment, food, dangerous materials, and family records
  - preparation of food and drinks
  - kitchen rubbish and other refuse
  - cleaning of equipment
  - toilets, hand basins and hand drying facilities
  - creative and other activities
  - large and small group activities
  - display of children's activities and work
  - quiet space for children to retreat to, do homework or lie down if unwell

- ◆ The indoor area is set up to allow children to participate in a variety of activities with easy access to equipment. Drawing paper and other materials will always be accessible to the children.
- ◆ Easy access to areas should be maintained by making clear easily definable passageways and walkways through the building.
- ◆ Educators will ensure that children store their bags and other items properly, clear of walkways or play areas.
- ◆ All items obstructing areas are to be removed and placed in the correct storage areas.
- ◆ Areas must be set up to ensure that proper supervision and child:Educator ratios is maintained at all times.
- ◆ Access to the outdoor environment should be clear and easily accessible by the children and Educators.

## Outdoor environment

- ◆ TWOOSH ensures all outdoor environments are managed in a way that prioritises children's safety, wellbeing, participation and developmental needs.
- ◆ TWOOSH ensures the outdoor environment provides space for each child in compliance with National Regulations.
- ◆ Every effort will be made to maintain a smoke-free outdoor environment. Educators will ask visitors who smoke, vape or use e-cigarette devices on the grounds to leave.
- ◆ Every effort will be made to ensure the environment is secure, ensuring all TWPS gates remained locked, with the exception of the Giblett Avenue gate, for guardian access.
- ◆ The outdoor space will be inspected daily for any obstacles or dangerous items and the hazard check will be recorded.
- ◆ Any hazardous items will be disposed of safely and carefully prior to the children playing in the area.
- ◆ The outdoor space will be set up in a variety of ways to encourage participation.
- ◆ Areas will be made available where children can play in large or small groups or by themselves.
- ◆ A space will be provided for signing children in/out of TWOOSH
- ◆ Supervision will be properly maintained. Children are only to play in areas that are clearly visible to Educators, and where child:Educator ratios are maintained.
- ◆ Clear boundaries will be set and enforced.
- ◆ When it is necessary to go outside the boundaries or line of supervision, an Educator must accompany children.
- ◆ Adequate shade via trees and coverings will be maintained. As far as possible, activities will be set up in shaded areas, as per Policy D-6.
- ◆ Use of other outdoor venues will be considered if access to the area is safe, adequate supervision can be maintained, the area is considered of value to the children's physical development and personal comfort, and where adequate child:Educator ratios can be maintained.
- ◆ If it is very windy or there are any wind weather warnings, children will be kept in areas away from trees to avoid falling branches. Please refer to the 'Winds, Falling Branches' risk assessment.

## Protecting the children

### Child protection practices (please refer to Policy D-11) Harassment and threats of violence

- ◆ Children's safety is the primary consideration in the design, supervision and ongoing risk assessment of all indoor and outdoor spaces.
- ◆ Educators are to be aware of any unfamiliar person on the premises and find out what they want as quickly as possible.
- ◆ If a person/s known or unknown to TWOOSH harasses or makes threats to children or Educators at the centre, or on an excursion:

- Educators will calmly move the children away to where they cannot see or hear the person and commence lock down procedures.
  - Educators will calmly and politely ask the person to leave the centre or the vicinity of the children.
  - Educators will be firm and clear, and remember their primary duty is to the children in TWOOSH care.
  - If they refuse to leave, Educators will explain that it may be necessary to call the police to remove them.
  - If they still do not leave, Educators will call the police.
  - If the Responsible Person on duty is unable to make the call another Educator should be directed to do so.
  - No Educator is to attempt to physically remove the unwelcome person. Educators are to the best of their ability, remain calm and keep the person as calm as possible whilst waiting for the police.
- ◆ In the event of harassment, threats or violence by guardians or other authorised pick-up personnel, they will be required to read, sign and return the guardian code of conduct.
  - ◆ Failure to do so may result in exclusion of the family from TWOOSH until this is complete. If the incident was physically harmful, the land act will be enforced, and they will be unable to access school grounds.
  - ◆ If guardians are in breach of the code of conduct, they may be excluded for a period decided by management in consultation with the school.

### Information exchange

- ◆ To provide effective support and referral it may be necessary to exchange information with other prescribed bodies including government agencies or non-government organisations and services.
- ◆ The NSW Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 has been amended (2009) to include chapter 16A Information Exchange.
- ◆ Chapter 16A requires prescribed bodies to take reasonable steps to coordinate decision making and the delivery of services regarding children and young people.
- ◆ Under Chapter 16A NSW Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998, Educators will exchange information that promotes a child's safety, welfare, or wellbeing, particularly if the child is potentially at risk. This can occur whether or not the child is known to Community Services or the child has given consent to the information exchange.
- ◆ The information requested or provided must relate to the safety, welfare, or wellbeing of the child. Information includes:
  - a child's history or circumstances
  - a parent or other family member, significant or relevant relationship
  - The agency's work now and in the past.
- ◆ Where information is provided in good faith and according to legal provisions, under section 29 & section 245G NSW Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998, reporters cannot be seen as breaching professional etiquette or ethics or as a breach of professional standards. There can be no liability for court action.

### Dealing with complaints

- ◆ Should an incident occur that involves a child being put at risk of harm from an Educator, volunteer, trainee or person visiting TWOOSH, this is regarded as 'reportable conduct' and is to be reported to the NSW Ombudsman 24 hours, as well as reported to the Committee President. Please refer to Policy D-11 for more information.

### Recruitment and staff orientation (please refer to Policy C-11)

## Revisions

Date of next review: December 2027

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<b>Date</b>	<b>Reviewer</b>	<b>Approved by</b>
<b>18.06.18</b>		TWOOSH Management Committee
<b>18.03.19</b>		TWOOSH Management Committee
<b>25.05.20</b>	CB, MK	TWOOSH Management Committee
<b>22.06.21</b>	MK	TWOOSH Management Committee
<b>02.12.22</b>	MS	TWOOSH Management Committee
<b>10.09.24</b>	AB	TWOOSH Management Committee
<b>18.05.26</b>	JS	TWOOSH Management Committee

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