# Purpose of this requirement

Goodstart is committed to safeguarding children from abuse, neglect and harm and ensuring the health, safety and wellbeing of children and young people, families, Goodstarters and visitors to our Centres and sites. This document outlines how Goodstart maintains physical, psychological, and online environments that promote safety and keep children safe.

# Definitions

Swimming pool

The Qld Building Act (1975) defines a swimming pool as ‘An excavation or structure that is capable of being filled with water to a depth of 30 centimetres or more; and is capable of being used for swimming, bathing, wading, paddling or other human aquatic activities; and is used, designed, manufactured or adapted for the purpose mentioned above, despite its current use and includes spas and wading pools (other than portable wading pools)’.

Safety

Safety refers to the measures and practices put in place to ensure that people, including children are protected from physical harm, accidents, and injuries. This includes creating a secure environment where children can explore and learn without being exposed to unnecessary risks.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding means taking actions to ensure that all children are empowered to feel safe and be safe within the organisation, their families, and their community. This involves creating conditions that reduce the likelihood of abuse, neglect, or harm, identifying any such issues, and responding appropriately to concerns, disclosures, allegations, or suspicions of harm.

# Applicability of this requirement

It is essential that educators and Centre Directors attend to children’s wellbeing by providing cultural, emotional and physical safety through enacting the voice of children, playful and intentional teaching connected to child/ren’s learning goals, apply effective and active supervision, develop and foster warm and trusting relationships with children and families and provide predictable, inclusive, safe and enabling learning environments.

The following policies, procedures and protocols detail how child safe environments are created and maintained at Goodstart. Goodstart policies and procedures are championed by leaders, understood by staff and available to the community on our website.

**Child Safe Standards and National Principles for Child Safe Organisations**

Every centre has implemented the state-based Child Safe Standards or the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, regardless of state legislation. Being a child safe organisation is about creating safe environments and about being safe for Goodstarters, children, and families to raise issues of concern, so that they know Goodstart will support them, and believe what they say.

**Cultural Safety**

Cultural safety is a fundamental human right and is an ongoing learning journey. Cultural safety is about creating a safe environment where everyone feels valued, respected and safe, regardless of their ethnicity, background, ability, language, family makeup, religion or gender identity. Cultural safety is the positive recognitiion and celebration of cultures. It is important to learn what cultural safety means to individual children and families and our local communities and to examine our own cultural values, knowledge, skills and attitudes and how these may affect others. Children will be supported to express their culture and enjoy their cultural rights. Racism and discrimination will not be tolerated.

**Code of Conduct and Child Safe Behaviour Standards**

Goodstart’s Code of Conduct and Child Safe Behaviour Standards set out the child safe behaviours expected from all Goodstarters including employees, students, volunteers and contractors.

**Risk Management**

Goodstart has a robust Risk Management Framework. We regularly review risks and implement appropriate strategies to minimise and manage these risks. At an operational level, child safe, safety, health and wellbeing hazards and risks are actively identified and managed to prevent harm both in the physical and the online environment.Goodstart achieves this via coordinated and proactive approaches to risk management, application of the hierarchy of controls in managing workplace health and safety risks, and in actively identifying and applying industry best practice for managing risks which are unique to our sector.

**Recruitment and Screening including management of Working with Children Checks**

There are a range of recruitment strategies Goodstart adopts to ensure that Goodstart engages the most suitable and appropriate people to work or volunteer with children including pre employment screening, induction, people management and supervision.

**Training and Support for employees and volunteers**

Goodstart provides ongoing support to staff and volunteers about their role and responsibilities in maintaining child safe environments, and safeguarding children from abuse, neglect and harm. Goodstart will ensure people management practices will support ongoing assessment of a person’s suitability to work with children throughout the transition process and as they progress with their employment.

**Children’s Learning and Development**

* When using digital technologies with children within a Goodstart centre educators must adhere to the relevant procedures. Goodstart’s Feel Safe, Be Safe [Protective Strategies Kit](https://intranet.goodstart.org.au/inside-goodstart/safeguarding-children/protective-behaviours) provides age and stage-appropriate protective strategies that when taught to young children, equip them with the skills to recognise and respond to potentially unsafe situations including online.
* Age-and stage appropriate learning experiences / resources are planned, programmed and provided for children to ensure their physical and cultural safety, wellbeing, participation and development across the EYLF V2 learning outcomes.
* Child agency is promoted within the program, learning environment, routines and interactions. Empowering children to participate in decision that impact them.
* Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships are maintained with children and families. Centre teams actively engage with families, partnering with them to enhance children’s inclusion, learning, wellbeing and safety.
* A child’s ability to express their culture and enjoy their cultural rights is encouraged and actively supported.
* Children and young people are informed of their rights, including to safety, information and participation.
* Where relevant to the setting or context, children and young people are offered access to sexual abuse prevention programs and to relevant related information in an age-appropriate way. Goodstart’s Feel Safe, Be Safe: Protective Strategies help to prevent child sexual abuse, by empowering children with the knowledge that they have a right to feel safe and be safe all of the time and they can talk to a trusted adult about anything. When these age and stage appropriate strategies are taught to young children, they are equipped with the skills to recognise and respond to all potentially unsafe situations (including online), understand their bodies, emotions and early warning signs, set boundaries, and persist in seeking help from a trusted adult.
* In accordance with the Sleep, Rest and Relaxation Requirement reasonable steps are taken to ensure that a child's need for sleep and rest are met, having regard to each child’s age and development.
* Consideration is given to how children are grouped.

**Participation of families and children**

* Training programs may be implemented at an individual centre level to educate and engage with children and young people about their rights, safe environments, protective strategies for staying safe and seeking help when needed. A child friendly complaints procedure (look, do, tell poster) should also be available in classrooms.
* Training is provided to staff, students and volunteers to ensure they understand child rights-based approaches and are skilled at engaging with young people (search for ‘chid rights’ on the learning hub)
* The organisation seeks the views of children and families through online surveys
* Policies and procedures are in place to seek consent for relevant activities
* Where appropriate, safety activities and initiatives invite children’s voice on safety (e.g., outdoor safety inspection). Information sessions/newsletters for parents may be implemented at an individual centre level to educate and inform parents/carers on policies, procedures, centre updates, and training in safety and safeguarding strategies which apply to them and their children.

**Infection Control, Medication Management and Medical Conditions**

* Adequate health and hygiene and infection control practices are implemented.
* Reasonable steps are taken to prevent the spread of infectious diseases and ensure that the parent or emergency contact of each child enrolled at the service is notified of the occurrence of an infectious disease as soon as possible.
* Medication must not be administered to a child without authorisation by the parent or a person with authority to consent to medication administration for the child.
* We have procedures in place for the effective management of medical conditions, specific health care needs and allergies. All staff and volunteers are informed about the practices that must be followed. If a child enrolled at the service has a health care need, allergy or other relevant medical condition, parents must be provided with a copy of the policy.
* Adequate, developmentally, and age-appropriate toilet, washing and drying facilities are available for use by children being educated and cared for by the service.

**Supervision**

* Apply Supervision: The super 7 to ensure effective and active supervision of all children at all times, including school age children, in accordance with the National Law and Regulations. Active supervision requires focused and intentional observation of children, watching, scanning, and listening at all times whilst simultaneously using knowledge of each child to engage playfully to extend, support or redirect learning.
* Recording videos and photographs of children, does not impede the ability to effectively supervise, interact and engage with children
* Ensure all children are supervised across all learning areas and simultaneous use of indoor and outdoor environments cognisant of supervision risk and controls.
* Educators, staff and volunteers must comply with the Code of Conduct, and Child-Safe Behaviour Standard Requirement while providing care within our centre environments.

**Excursions/ Incursions**

* Risk assessments are completed for all excursions and incursions and must include assessment of any child safe and safeguarding children risks.
* The Water Safety requirement is followed for all excursions to swimming pools or near water.

**Incidents and Emergencies**

* The centre has lock down and emergency evacuation procedures.
* An up-to-date risk register is maintained.
* An appropriate number of first aid kits are provided that are easily recognisable and readily accessible to adults.
* A minimum of (1) person with a current First Aid and CPR qualification will be on site at all times.
* Incident management procedures must be followed in the event that a child is involved in incident, is injured, becomes ill or subjected to trauma. The parent or emergency contact must be notified as soon as possible. An incident report must be kept and stored until the child is 25 years of age.
* All staff are familiar with the Emergency Preparedness and Evacuation Drills Requirement.
* Ensure children are only released into the care of authorised persons.
* If children have not been collected by closing time, follow the ‘Managing Attendances and Absences ‘procedure. Closing staff must not leave the centre before the parent or authorised person has collected all children.
* Physically check each area to ensure that all children are accounted for, including sleep areas, outdoor areas and storage sheds.
* All staff who work with children are aware of the current child protection law in the services jurisdiction and understand their obligations under that law.
* All staff are aware of the current ‘Protecting children from child abuse, neglect and harm’ Procedure, ‘Managing allegations or suspicions of Child Abuse, Neglect and Harm Involving a Goodstarter’ Procedure and Managing Children’s Sexual Behaviours Procedure and understand their obligations and responsibilities to uphold.

**Preventing, identifying and responding to Child Abuse, Neglect and Harm**

At Goodstart, we take any action necessary to ensure all children feel safe, are safe and are heard. This means we are dedicated to safeguarding children from abuse, neglect and harm, and fostering an environment of cultural safety where every child, family and staff member feels valued, respected and included. We recognise and celebrate the rich diversity of cultures, language and traditions within our community including First Nations People, those with culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, LGBTIQA+ and those with diverse abilities. We are committed to keeping all children safe and protected, ensuring they gain a strong sense of wellbeing, optimism and confidence so they have the learning, development and wellbeing outcomes they need for school and life. This is more than just meeting compliance responsibilities. Underpinned by the ‘Look, Do, Tell’ framework, we amplify and promote the voice and rights of children through the prevention, identification and response to child abuse, neglect and harm

**Reporting and responding to complaints or feedback**

Goodstart provides information on dealing with complaints and feedback.

**Indoor and Outdoor Spaces and Fencing**

* Complete regular safety checks of the indoor environment and equipment throughout the day.
* Check all indoor areas, including sleep areas for any defects or hazards likely to cause injury. If a defect or hazard is identified take the required action as outlined in the Physical Environment Policy and any relevant associated procedures to make the area safe and escalate a permanent solution.
* Children’s bags stored within classrooms are checked daily and any dangerous objects or medications are removed and stored in areas inaccessible to children.
* Ensure hazardous products including chemicals are stored securely at all times in accordance with the Hazardous Substances Management Procedure.
* Indoor spaces must be well ventilated, have adequate natural light and maintained at a temperature that ensures the safety and wellbeing of children.
* There is an operating telephone or other means of communication, to communicate and receive calls (this includes for excursions).
* There is an adequate area available at the service for conducting the administrative functions, consulting with parents and conducting private conversations.
* The service has access to laundry facilities and procedures for dealing with soiled clothing, nappies, and linen, including hygienic facilities for storage prior to their disposal or laundering.
* Safety plugs are in all unused electrical outlets.
* Complete the Outdoor Safety Inspection prior to entering an outdoor space with children.
* Any outdoor space used by children must be enclosed by a fence or barrier that is of such height and design that, children of pre-school age and under, cannot go through, over or under it. Physically check the perimeter of all outdoor areas used by children for any defects or hazards each time before children are taken into the playground. This includes, in instances where vegetation is in close proximity and may come into contact with the fence, or after major weather events, physically checking all external boundary fences by pushing against each fence panel to check structural integrity. If the fence appears to have any part/s that have become loose of dislodged, notify the Nominated Supervisor/Responsible person immediately and do not use the outdoor space.
* The outdoor space provides adequate shaded spaces to protect children from overexposure to ultraviolet radiation from the sun.
* The service complies with the Sun Safety and Heat Stress Requirement to ensure all children and staff are protected against the harmful effects of the sun’s heat and UVR.
* At centres with a swimming pool, the Water Safety requirement is followed.

Children’s Learning and Development

Furniture, Materials, Resources and Toys

* Each child must have access to sufficient furniture, materials, and developmentally appropriate equipment.
* Equipment is safe, clean and in good repair and maintained in accordance with the Scheduled General Maintenance Procedure.
* All products and equipment purchased are safe for the intended use.
* Minimise any possible risk of hot water burns by running taps for 30 seconds the first time you use them for any children's programs e.g. cooking activities, playdough recipes. Complete a thorough Risk Assessment before any activity involving hot water.
* Minimise any possible risks of trips and falls by putting away toys which are not being used.

**Food Preparation and Storage**

* Safe practices are used for handling, preparing and storing food in accordance with the [Food Safety Program](http://intranet.childcare.com.au/home/DocumentManager/CO/foodsafetyprogram/1281665365).
* Staff prepare and consume their own hot food and drinks away from children. Staff food and hot drinks must not be prepared in, taken into or carried through a classroom, playground, classroom kitchenette or a classroom storeroom.
* Minimise any possible risk of lead exposure by running cold taps for 30 seconds the first time you use them each day, only drinking and cooking with water from the cold tap and only making infant formula and filling water bottles with water from the cold tap or sterilised water (where required).

**Cleaning and Maintenance**

* Conduct day-to-day cleaning tasks as outlined in the Goodstart Cleaning Guide to the standard provided
* Mix bathroom cleaning products according to the manufacturer’s instructions.
* Ensure cleaning buckets are emptied immediately after use and are not left in areas accessible to children.

**Staffing Arrangements**

* Two staff must be at the centre at all times.
* Staff must ensure that visitors are not left unaccompanied with children.
* All children, including school age children must be adequately supervised (in accordance with the Supervision Procedure) and educator: child ratios maintained at all times.
* Consideration is given to allowing school age children to earn autonomy and collaborate with peers whilst being adequately supervised. For school age children, educators should be aware of where each child is and be able to respond if necessary.
* Be aware of any corners or areas that are less visible and may be a hazard, providing extra vigilance in hard to supervise spaces.
* Educators, staff and volunteers must not consume alcohol or be affected by alcohol or drugs (including prescription medications) that may impair their capacity to provide education and care.
* Closing staff must not leave the centre before the nominated closing time.
* Two staff must remain at the centre with a child who is collected after the nominated closing time.
* Beginning and end of day duties such as cleaning, preparing early learning environments and securing the centre must not compromise the adequate supervision of children.
* Educators must ensure all children are signed in and out of the CCMS.

**Health and Hygiene**

* Adequate health and hygiene and infection control practices are implemented.
* Reasonable steps are taken to prevent the spread of infectious diseases and ensure that the parent or emergency contact of each child enrolled at the service is notified of the occurrence of an infectious disease as soon as possible.
* Medication (including prescription, over the counter and homeopathic medications) must not be administered to a child without authorisation by the parent or a person with authority to consent to medication administration for the child.
* The Children's Health and Safety Policy and associated procedures set out practices for dealing with the management of medical conditions, specific health care needs and allergies. All staff and volunteers are informed about the practices that must be followed. If a child enrolled at the service has a specific health care need, allergy or other relevant medical condition, parents must be provided with a copy of the policy.
* Adequate, developmentally and age-appropriate toilet, washing and drying facilities are available for use by Visitors.
* In accordance with the Visitors to the Centre Procedure, the identification of visitors must be verified, and access only provided with appropriate authority.

Related Documents

***Emergency Management Documents:*** [*BM10 Emergency Preparedness and Evacuation Drills - Centres REQUIREMENT*](https://abcniececom.sharepoint.com/%3Aw%3A/r/sites/policies/PoliciesandProcedures/BM10%20Emergency%20Preparedness%20and%20Evacuation%20Drills%20-%20Centres%20REQUIREMENT.docx?d=w05855def1fde43ac99268b2f1eb28f98&csf=1&web=1)*;* [*BM10 Managing a Natural Disaster PROCEDURE*](https://abcniececom.sharepoint.com/%3Aw%3A/r/sites/policies/PoliciesandProcedures/BM10%20Managing%20a%20Natural%20Disaster%20PROCEDURE.docx?d=wbd6c83c198fd48f8a597af65305961b3&csf=1&web=1)

***Physical Environment or Facilities Document:***[*NQS2 Closing Checklist APPENDIX*](https://abcniececom.sharepoint.com/%3Aw%3A/r/sites/policies/PoliciesandProcedures/NQS2%20Closing%20Checklist%20APPENDIX.docx?d=w87ff0a8f0d524cb4a8768a263e5b7ebd&csf=1&web=1)*;* [*NQS2 Outdoor Safety Inspection APPENDIX*](https://abcniececom.sharepoint.com/%3Aw%3A/r/sites/policies/PoliciesandProcedures/NQS2%20Outdoor%20Safety%20Inspection%20APPENDIX.docx?d=w5a1e9ffeee804ba5adcd648d7c337e7a&csf=1&web=1)*;* [*NQS3 Emergency Maintenance PROCEDURE*](https://abcniececom.sharepoint.com/sites/policies/NQS/_layouts/15/Doc.aspx?sourcedoc=%7B27410B8A-4093-44FF-9108-AC670748FEEA%7D&file=NQS3%20Emergency%20Maintenance%20PROCEDURE.docx&action=default&mobileredirect=true&DefaultItemOpen=1)*;* *Goodstart Cleaning Guide*

**Child-Safe Standards and National Principles for Child Safe Organisations**

[*BM1 Child-Safe Behaviour Standard REQUIREMENT*](https://abcniececom.sharepoint.com/%3Aw%3A/r/sites/policies/PoliciesandProcedures/BM1%20Child-safe%20behaviour%20standards%20REQUIREMENT.docx?d=w74a181eeb9cf4697a858f78fda37d239&csf=1&web=1); [*BM10 Child Abuse, Neglect and Harm Risk Assessment and Control Form APPENDIX*](https://abcniececom.sharepoint.com/%3Aw%3A/r/sites/policies/PoliciesandProcedures/BM10%20Child%20Abuse%20Neglect%20and%20Harm%20Risk%20Assessment%20and%20Control%20Form%20APPENDIX.docx?d=w38fa50a140314ff996043cf361fd3fbc&csf=1&web=1); [*NQS2 Safeguarding Children REQUIREMENT*](https://abcniececom.sharepoint.com/%3Aw%3A/r/sites/policies/PoliciesandProcedures/NQS2%20Safeguarding%20Children%20REQUIREMENT.docx?d=wb0c248965cf04a28a92c4334dfbc9cd7&csf=1&web=1)

Related policies

[*NQS2 Safety, Health and Wellbeing POLICY*](https://abcniececom.sharepoint.com/%3Aw%3A/r/sites/policies/PoliciesandProcedures/NQS2%20Safety%2C%20Health%20and%20Wellbeing%20POLICY.docx?d=w5a01411e145f4d74aab4fa1a7486bb0b&csf=1&web=1); [*NQS3 Physical Environment POLICY*](https://abcniececom.sharepoint.com/%3Aw%3A/r/sites/policies/PoliciesandProcedures/NQS3%20Physical%20Environment%20POLICY.docx?d=wf1a8458b29ac4b8c959fb1f55b89f0b3&csf=1&web=1); [*NQS4 Staffing Arrangements POLICY*](https://abcniececom.sharepoint.com/%3Aw%3A/r/sites/policies/PoliciesandProcedures/NQS4%20Staffing%20Arrangements%20POLICY.docx?d=w6d5cd13f33684422b49fb0d369643d48&csf=1&web=1); [*NQS6 Collaborative Partnerships with Families and Communities POLICY*](https://abcniececom.sharepoint.com/%3Aw%3A/r/sites/policies/PoliciesandProcedures/NQS6%20Collaborative%20Partnerships%20with%20Families%20and%20Communities%20POLICY.doc?d=wb2248b9db3cf46499a0ddcd667b94073&csf=1&web=1)

Responsibilities

This requirement is to be implemented by: All Goodstart staff.

Examples of responsibilities which relate to maintaining child safe environments are provided in Appendix A. The table of responsibilities contained in Appendix A is an extract from the ACECQA document *Policy Guidelines, Providing a Child Safe Environment*. This example information is provided as a reference which may be of interest.

**APPENDIX A:** Example Responsibilities for Maintaining Child Safe Environments (ACECQA Reference)

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| --- | --- |
| **Approved Provider** | * Ensure that obligations under the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations are met
* Ensure that the Providing a child safe environment policy and procedures are implemented, the appropriate risk assessments and action plans are completed, and all identified actions are taken to minimise the risks to children’s health and safety (also known as a risk minimisation plan)
* Ensure all educators and staff have undertaken current child protection legislation training, including on mandatory reporting requirements and obligations in their state/territory. If not, develop a plan to ensure training is undertaken in a suitable timeframe
* Provide an environment that is free from the use of tobacco, illicit drugs and alcohol and ensure no educators or staff are affected by alcohol or drugs (including prescription medication) so as to impair their capacity to supervise or provide education and care to children in the service
* Take reasonable steps to ensure that nominated supervisors, educators and staff follow the Providing a child safe environment policy and procedures
* Ensure that copies of the policy and procedures are readily accessible to nominated supervisors, co-ordinators, educators and staff, and available for inspection
* Notify families at least 14 days before changing the policy or procedures if the changes will:

 Affect the fees charged or the way they are collected or- Significantly impact the service’s education and care of children or - Significantly impact the family’s ability to utilise the service. |
| **Nominated Supervisor** | * Implement the Providing a child safe environment policy and procedures and ensure that any plans developed from risk assessments are in place for individual children and are carried out
* Ensure all educators and staff are aware of current child protection legislation, including the mandatory reporting requirement and obligations in their state/territory
* Meeting staff to child ratios to ensure adequate supervision
* Ensure all educators and staff know where to access the Providing a child safe environment policy and procedures
* Ongoing communication with educators and staff about their responsibilities and any changes to policies, procedures and legislation
* Regularly monitor child protection training schedules and ensure all educators and staff are up -to date with their training
* When required, work collaboratively with appropriate services and/or professionals to support children’s access, inclusion and participation in the program
* Ensure the safety and wellbeing of children attending the service by keeping a visitors’ record, including signatures and arrival/departure times Ensure Safeguarding Children responsibilities are embedded in daily practice.
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| **Educators** | * Be aware of current child protection legislation, including the mandatory reporting requirements and obligations
* Implement the Providing a child safe environment policy and procedures and ensure that any action plans for individual children are carried out
* Know the individual needs and action plans for the children in your care
* Maintain current accredited child protection, first aid and approved CPR, asthma and anaphylaxis training
* Monitor and maintain staff to child ratios to ensure adequate supervision of children
* Provide an environment that is free from the use of tobacco, illicit drugs and alcohol
* keep a visitors’ record, including signatures and arrival and departure times
* Involve children in decision-making to provide an environment that encourages them to reach their potential.
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*Source: Australia Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA). 2021. Providing a Child Safe Environment, Policy Guidelines.*