

# **CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**



## **INTRODUCTION**

Reid Early Childhood Centre (RECC) is committed to the safety and well-being of children who attend the Centre. This includes supporting the application of the *Children and Young People Act 2008* and ensuring that the Centre Director and all staff that work with children are advised of the existence and application of *The Act* and their obligations under it as required by Regulation 84 of the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 under the Education and Care Services National Law (ACT) Act 2011.

*The Children and Young People Act 2008* aims to promote the well-being, care and protection of children and young people. It recognises the right of children to grow in a safe and stable environment.

## **DEFINITIONS (AS DEFINED IN THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE ACT 2008)**

Physical Abuse (also referred to as non-accidental physical injury)

Is a non-accidental act resulting in an injury to a child or young person by a parent, caregiver or another person who has the responsibility for the child. The injury can be caused by a single episode or repeated episodes of physical abuse.

Sexual Abuse

Is any sexual act or sexual threat imposed on a child by an adult or someone else bigger or older than them. Children or young people are most likely to be sexually abused by someone who is known to them, including a family member, neighbour or family friend.

Emotional Abuse

Is the term used to describe chronic and repetitive ill treatment of a child or young person which causes significant harm to their psychological, social, emotional or cognitive development. Constant yelling, belittling, ignoring & ridiculing are all examples of emotional abuse.

Neglect

Is the failure by a parent or caregiver to provide a child or young person with the basic requirements necessary for their proper growth and development, such as food, clothing, shelter, medical and dental care and adequate supervision.

Reporter

The *Children and Young People Act 2008* provides for the prevention of abuse and neglect of children and young people, acknowledging the roles and responsibilities of government,

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parents and families, the community, and others who have responsibility for them including childcare centres.

**Child care workers in the Australian Capital Territory are mandated to make a 'Child Concern Report' to Care and Protection Services if they believe or suspect a child is currently being abused or is at risk of abuse.**

Whilst the reporting of neglect is not mandated in the ACT, Care and Protection Services strongly recommends for mandated reporters to report any case of abuse or neglect to their intake service as soon as possible. RECC supports this recommendation.

### **EXCEPTIONS TO MANDATORY REPORTING**

It is not mandated to make a report where someone else has made a report:

- about the same child in relation to the same suspected abuse or neglect; and the other person has reported the same reasons for their belief.

It is also not necessary to make a report if a person believes on reasonable grounds that:

- the child has experienced, or is experiencing non-accidental physical injury caused by another child or young person; and
- the child's parent/guardian is willing and able to protect the child from further injury.

### **PROCEDURE**

If a staff member suspects or believes on reasonable grounds that a child attending the centre is experiencing or has experienced abuse or neglect, they should discuss their concerns with the Centre Director. The mandated reporter is not required to prove that abuse has occurred.

ACT Care and Protection Services contact details are phone: 1300 556 728, email: [childprotection@act.gov.au](mailto:childprotection@act.gov.au), fax: 6205 0641.

### **IMPLEMENTATION**

RECC provides all employees access to the child protection information folder (including current literature on this topic) which is available in the staff room. The RECC Director and Room Leaders encourage staff to check the folder regularly for updates and discuss any queries.

In addition, RECC staff are encouraged to raise general concerns regarding children's well-being at the centre's regular staff meetings. If the concern relates to a specific child, it should be discussed privately with the RECC director.

As part of the programming and planning, staff in every room at RECC observe children in all areas of their development. If any of the observations reflect a child's unusual behavioural change or signs of non-accidental physical injury and staff have a belief on reasonable grounds that a child may be in danger, as prescribed by *the Children and Young People Act 2008*, they will raise their concern with the RECC Director.

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### **EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

Staff members are required to attend 'Mandatory Reporting' workshops on a regular basis to ensure they understand their obligations under *The Children and Young People Act 2008*.

The “Keeping Children and Young People Safe: A guide to reporting child abuse and neglect in the ACT” (the training manual for mandated persons in the ACT) folder is kept in the staff room, which staff members can access at any time.

### **RELATED POLICIES:**

Arrivals, Departures and Access to the Centre Policy

Behaviour Guidance and Management Policy

Partnership with Families Policy

### **SOURCES:**

Child and Young People Act 2008, (Section 356, [www.austlii.edu.au](http://www.austlii.edu.au))

Education and Care Services National Law (ACT) Act 2011

Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011

'Keeping children safe, a guide to reporting child abuse and neglect in the ACT', November 2012, available from [www.communityservices.act.gov.au](http://www.communityservices.act.gov.au)

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child