

Chabad North Shore and Camp Gan Izzy

Child Protection Policy

Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011

Regulation 84

Link to NQF Standard Area 2.2.3

Health & Safety

Goals:

Our goal is to ensure that every reasonable precaution is taken to protect children being educated and cared for by the service from harm. Our service (educators, staff, management and volunteers) has a responsibility to defend children's right to care and protection to ensure their safety, welfare and wellbeing, and a responsibility to report any children at significant risk of harm. We aim to ensure that all employees and volunteers understand their reporting obligations and are aware of our risk management strategy which includes practices designed to ensure the safety and well being of children is paramount.

Implementation

Under the *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998* **mandated reporters (includes all employees of a children's service** and unpaid managers of these services) must make reports if they suspect on reasonable grounds a **child is at risk of significant harm** because:

- the child's basic physical or psychological needs are not being met or are at risk of not being met
- the parents or other caregivers have not arranged and are unable or unwilling to arrange for the child to receive necessary medical care
- the parents or other caregivers have not arranged and are unable or unwilling to arrange for a school age child to receive an education
- the child has been, or is at risk of being physically or sexually abused or ill-treated
- the child is living in a household where there have been incidents of domestic violence and they are at risk of serious physical or psychological harm
- the parent's or other caregiver's behaviour means the child has suffered or is at risk of suffering serious psychological harm

Significant harm is where the circumstances that are causing concern are present to a significant state and warrant a response by a statutory authority, such as the NSW Police Force or Community Services, regardless of a family's consent. Significant is not minor or trivial and may reasonably be expected to produce substantial and adverse impacts on the child's safety, welfare or wellbeing. The significance can be a result of a single act or omission or an accumulation of acts and omissions.

Reasonable grounds refer to the need to have an objective basis for suspecting that a child may be at risk of abuse and neglect based on:

- First hand observation of the child or family
- What the child, parent or other person has disclosed
- What can reasonably be inferred based on observation, professional training and/ or experience

The reporter is not required to prove that abuse has occurred.

Child Protection Risk Management Strategy

The Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, employees and volunteers will implement a Child Protection Risk Management Strategy to ensure the health, wellbeing and safety of all children at the service, protect children from harm and protect the integrity of employees and volunteers. The Strategy includes the following components:

1. Goal (see above)
2. Code of Conduct

3. Recruitment, Selection and Training Procedures for employees and volunteers which include child protection principles
4. Procedures for handling disclosures and suspicions of harm Reporting and Documenting Abuse or Neglect
5. Procedures for Managing Breaches
6. Risk Management for High Risk Activities and Special Events
7. Strategies for Communication and Support

2. Code of Conduct

The service upholds the Code of Conduct in our Staffing Arrangements Policy for employers, educators, volunteers, students, families and children to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children.

3. Recruitment, Selection and Training Procedures

The Nominated Supervisor will implement recruitment, professional development and training procedures for employees and where relevant volunteers to ensure no-one at the service poses a risk to children and everyone understands how to manage disclosures or suspicions of harm Requirements include:

- processes which ensure employees and volunteers have clear Working With Children Checks or they are exempt (see Office of Children's Guardian <https://www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au/>)
- all new employees over the age of 18 are required to obtain and supply a police check.
- interview questions and referee checks which reference person's approach to child safety and protection
- documented induction/orientation checklists which reference child safety and protection, supervision, compliance with National Law and Regulations, NQS, Code of Conduct, policies and procedures
- annual training and development to ensure individuals are clear about their roles and responsibilities to protect children from harm, are aware of their reporting obligations, can confidently recognise the indicators of harm (see Appendix A) and understand documenting and reporting procedures
- annual performance appraisals for employees
- regular inclusion of child protection and risk management strategy at least every 6 months in staff meetings and annual review of written training plans which must include Child Protection matters (e.g. disclosures and suspicions of harm)
- providing access to relevant legislation and other resources to help employees and volunteers meet their obligations

4. Procedures for managing disclosures and suspicions of harm

What is a *disclosure* of harm?

A disclosure of harm occurs when someone, including a child, tells you about harm that has happened, is happening, or is likely to happen to a child. Disclosures of harm may start with:

- I think I saw...||
- Somebody told me that...||
- Just think you should know...||
- I'm not sure what I want you to do, but...||

What is a *suspicion* of harm?

A suspicion of harm is when someone has a reasonable suspicion that a child has suffered, is suffering, or is at an unacceptable risk of suffering significant harm.

Note there may be circumstances where there is concern for a child's welfare but it does not reach the threshold to be considered a disclosure or suspicion of harm. In this case educators will connect families with

referral agencies with the family's consent. Contact details are available in the resources section of the ChildStory Reporter website <https://reporter.childstory.nsw.gov.au>.

The Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, employees and volunteers may suspect harm if:

- a child says they have been harmed
- someone else, for example another child, a parent, or an employee, says harm has occurred or is likely to occur
- a child tells them they know someone who has been harmed (it is possible that they may be referring to themselves)
- they are concerned at significant changes in the behaviour of a child, or the presence of new unexplained and suspicious injuries
- they see the harm happening

Managing and recording a disclosure of harm

If the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, educators have concerns about the safety of a child they will:

- find a private place to talk
- remain calm and listen in an attentive, active and non-judgemental way
- encourage the person (including a child) to talk in their own words
- take anything a child says seriously
- allow children to be part of decision-making processes where appropriate
- ask just enough open ended questions to act protectively without asking any leading questions which suggest an answer and could compromise later investigations
- tell the person they have done the right thing in revealing the information and they'll need to tell someone who can help keep them safe
- not try to investigate or mediate the matter themselves
- record their own observations as well as accurate details of any conversation with a parent (who may for example explain a noticeable mark on a child)
- document as soon as possible so the details are accurately captured including:
 - time, date, location and who was present
 - full details of the (suspected) abuse
 - exactly what the person said using "I said", "they said," statements
 - the questions educators asked
 - any comments educators made
 - educators' actions following the disclosure
- ensure the management and storage of records complies with our Privacy and Confidentiality Policy
- follow our reporting procedures

See template at Appendix B

Managing and recording a suspicion of harm

The Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, employees and volunteers will:

- remain alert to any warning signs or indicators
- pay close attention to changes in the child's behaviour, ideas, feelings and the words they use
- make written notes of observations in a non-judgemental and accurate manner, and manage in line with our Privacy and Confidentiality Policy
- assure a child that they can come to talk when they need to, and listen to them and believe them when they do
- follow our reporting procedures

See template at Appendix B

Making a Report

A report will be made using the following procedure preferably on the same day there is a disclosure or suspicion of significant harm, and no later than 24 hours after the disclosure or suspicion.

The Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, employees and volunteers will:

1. Consider whether disclosure or suspicion needs to be reported to Police

- contact the police on 000 if there is an immediate danger to a child and intervene immediately if it is safe to do so
- contact the police where the child has been or may be the victim of a criminal offence (including where a child is at risk of significant harm outside the family)
- get clear guidance from Police about who will tell child's parents about the disclosure and who can give ongoing support

2. Consider whether the disclosure or suspicion must be reported to Child Protection

- use the online Mandatory Reporter Guide which is available on the ChildStory Reporter website to help make decisions about whether there is a risk of significant harm. The Guide covers physical abuse, neglect (supervision, physical shelter/environment, food, medical care, mental health care, and education), sexual abuse, problematic sexual behaviour, psychological harm, relinquishing care and carer concerns to do with substance abuse, mental health, and domestic violence).
- make a report by phone to the Child Protection hotline on 132 111 (available 24 hours/7 days a week) eReporting is available for non-urgent notifications at ChildStory Reporter website
- make the report with the assistance or support of the Nominated Supervisor. If the Nominated Supervisor does not follow through and make the report, employees and volunteers will make the report
- get clear guidance from the person answering about who will tell child's parents of the disclosure and who can give ongoing support

3. Consider whether referral is needed to family services

- connect families with referral agencies where concerns of harm do not meet the threshold of significant harm. Contact details are available in the resources section of the ChildStory Reporter website. Obtain family consent before making referrals.

4. Consider whether you must notify ECEC (Early Childhood Education and Care) Regulatory Authority and other Authorities

- notify the Regulator about any incident, including any suspected or alleged incident, of child abuse that has occurred at the service. This includes any physical or sexual abuse that has occurred or is occurring while the child is at the service.
- notify the NSW Ombudsman within 30 days of becoming aware of any allegations and convictions for abuse or neglect of a child made against an employee or volunteer and ensure they are investigated and appropriate action taken (See Attachment G NSW Ombudsman's Office.)
- notify the Office of the Children's Guardian of sexual misconduct and serious physical assault involving children by an employee/volunteer (See Attachment G Office of the Children's Guardian.)

Allegations against Service Personnel

The reporting procedure above will also be followed where there are allegations of harm against the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, employees or volunteers. The Nominated Supervisor will:

- complete an Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Record and notify the Regulatory Authority within 24 hours of making the report
- notify the NSW Ombudsman within 30 days of becoming aware of any allegations and convictions for abuse or neglect
- liaise with the Office of the Children's Guardian to see if you must notify sexual misconduct or serious physical assault involving children by an employee/volunteer
- provide appropriate support for any employee/volunteer who has an allegation made against them
- protect the identity of employees/volunteers in relation to unsubstantiated complaints

- review the person's duties, and if they continue to interact with children, ensure they are appropriately supervised at all times
- seek legal advice about restricting that person's work activities if relevant

Confidentiality

It is important that individuals keep a Report confidential while the matter is investigated. Employees or volunteers will not discuss the Report with people who are not involved, or inform the person they have made the complaint about, to ensure the matter can be investigated without prior knowledge and contamination of evidence.

Safeguards for reporters

Reports made to Community Services are kept confidential. However, a law enforcement agency may access the identity of the reporter if this is needed in connection with the investigation of an alleged serious offence against a child. Under the *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998* if the report is made in good faith:

- the report will not breach standards of professional conduct
- the report can't lead to defamation proceedings
- the report is not admissible in any proceedings as evidence against the person who made the report
- a person cannot be compelled by a court to provide the report or disclose its contents
- the identity of the person making the report is protected

A report is also an exempt document under the *Freedom of Information Act 1989*.

Support after disclosure

The Nominated Supervisor will provide assistance to access appropriate support and counselling services for all parties affected by a disclosure of harm.

5. Procedures for Managing Breaches

All employees and volunteers working with children have a duty of care to support and protect children which is breached if a person:

- does something that a reasonable person wouldn't do in a particular situation
- fails to do something that a reasonable person would do in the circumstances
- acts or fails to act in a way that causes harm to someone owed a duty of care

In relation to our Child Protection Risk Management Strategy, a breach of that duty of care includes any action or inaction by an employee, volunteer or child that fails to comply with any of the seven components of the Strategy.

Employees, volunteers or families should report the breaches to the Approved Provider who will manage an investigation into the breach in a fair, unbiased and supportive manner in line with our Grievance Policy and Procedure (see Report Breach template at Appendix C). For example:

- those involved in the breach will be able to provide their version of events
- matters discussed in relation to the breach will be kept confidential
- an appropriate outcome will be decided
- everyone affected will receive a clear written statement (letter, email or SMS) of the outcome
- records will be kept about the details of the breach, including the versions of all parties and the outcome of the breach

Depending on the nature of the breach outcomes may include:

- emphasising the relevant component of the Child Protection Risk Management Strategy, for example, the Code of Conduct
- providing closer supervision
- professional development and training
- mediating between those involved in the incident (where appropriate)

- disciplinary procedures if necessary
- reviewing current policies and procedures and developing new policies and procedures if necessary
- termination of employment

6. Risk Management Plan for High Risk Activities and Special Events

The Nominated Supervisor and educators will analyse the risk of ‘harm’ to children for all relevant events including purchase of new equipment as well as high risk activities where there is an increased risk of harm to children for example:

- water based activities
- special events like service concerts and family information days where there will be a large number of visitors or people present
- events or activities where visitors will be present
- excursions
- playground renovations
- activities using dangerous equipment

The Nominated Supervisor and educators will:

1. Identify all the elements of an activity (e.g. objectives, location, participants, transportation, toileting/change room procedures, appropriate supervision and adult to child ratios, photography policy, managing medications, managing illness and injury, procedure applying to visitors, physical environment)
2. Identify the risks
3. Analyse the likelihood and consequences of the risks
4. Evaluate the level of risk (e.g. low, moderate, high, extreme)
5. Implement strategies to eliminate or minimise the risk
6. Review the activity to determine how it could be improved

See Appendix D for a Risk Management template.

Where relevant (e.g. playground renovations) the Nominated Supervisor will encourage families to provide feedback on the risk of harm to children and strategies to minimise the risk. Feedback may be sought via newsletters or survey forms, or during parent information sessions.

7. Strategies for Communication and Support

The Nominated Supervisor will implement the following to ensure families, employees, volunteers and children are aware of our Child Risk Management Strategy:

- advise families and prospective families via service, emails or other modes of communication about the reasons for and components of our risk management strategy, where they can access our Child Protection Policy and Risk Management Strategy, and that we welcome feedback about the Policy/Strategy. We may include what we aim to teach children about protective behaviour (see Attachment E)
- provide written information about our risk management strategy during enrolment and orientation and include in Parent Handbook
- regularly include (at least every 6 months) the reasons for and components of our risk management strategy in staff meetings and include in Staff Handbook
- ensure educators talk to children about the Strategy where appropriate and provide any feedback to the Nominated Supervisor
- display posters about child protection issues, including safe and supportive environments
- include child protection issues and our risk management strategy in employees’ performance and training plans
- make available to employees and families relevant resources from the office of the children’s Guardian website at <https://www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au/>

Sources

Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012
Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998
The Ombudsman's Act 1974
ChildStory Reporter website NSW Government (includes Mandatory Reporting Guide)
The Commission for Children and Young People Act 1998
Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations
The Office of the Children's Guardian
Centre Support

Staff Commitment to Child Protection Guidelines

I, _____ have read this child protection policy and understand my responsibilities in relation to ensuring and promoting the safety of children and young people and will observe and comply with the guidelines.

Signature of Employee or Volunteer

Date

Signature of Witness

Date

Name of Witness

Position

Review

The Policy, including Child Risk Management Strategy, will be reviewed annually and after any disclosure or suspicion of harm being actioned. The review will include checks to ensure the strategy reflects current legislation, continues to be effective, or whether any changes and additional training are required. The review will be conducted by:

- Management
- Employees
- Families
- Interested Parties

- | |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Date Reviewed: July 2020• Date for Review: July 2021• Management Approval Signature:• The Approved Provider/Nominated Supervisor will ensure that this policy is maintained and implemented at all times |
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Appendix A

Indicators of Abuse

There are many indicators of harm to children. Behavioural or physical signs which assist in recognising harm to children are known as indicators. The following is a guide only. One indicator on its own may not imply abuse or neglect. However a single indicator can be as important as the presence of several indicators. Each indicator needs to be considered in the context of other indicators and the child's circumstances. A child's behaviour is likely to be affected if he/she is under stress. There can be many causes of stress and it is important to find out specifically what is causing the stress. Abuse and neglect can be single incidents or ongoing, and may be intentional or unintentional.

General indicators of abuse and neglect

- marked delay between injury and seeking medical assistance
- history of injury
- the child gives some indication that the injury did not occur as stated
- the child tells you someone has hurt him/her
- the child tells you about someone he/she knows who has been hurt
- someone (relative, friend, acquaintance, sibling) tells you that the child may have been abused

Neglect

Child neglect is the continued failure by a parent or caregiver to provide a child with the basic things needed for his or her proper growth and development, such as food, clothing, shelter, medical and dental care and adequate supervision. Some examples are:

- inability to respond emotionally to the child
- child abandonment
- depriving or withholding physical contact
- failure to provide psychological nurturing
- treating one child differently to the others

Indicators of Neglect in children

- poor standard of hygiene leading to social isolation
- scavenging or stealing food
- extreme longing for adult affection
- lacking a sense of genuine interaction with others
- acute separation anxiety
- self comforting behaviours, e.g. rocking, sucking
- delay in development milestones
- untreated physical problems

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is a non-accidental injury or pattern of injuries to a child caused by a parent, caregiver or other person. Educators will be particularly aware of looking for possible physical abuse if parents or caregivers:

- make direct admissions from parents about fear of hurting their children
- have a family history of violence
- have a history of their own maltreatment as a child
- make repeated visits for medical assistance

Indicators of Physical Abuse in children

- facial, head and neck bruising
- lacerations and welts
- explanations are not consistent with injury
- bruising or marks that may show the shape of an object
- bite marks or scratches
- multiple injuries or bruises
- ingestion of poisonous substances, alcohol or drugs
- sprains, twists, dislocations
- bone fractures
- burns and scalds

Emotional Abuse in children

Emotional abuse occurs when an adult harms a child's development by repeatedly treating and speaking to a child in ways that damage the child's ability to feel and express their feelings. Some examples are:

- constant criticism, belittling, teasing of a child or ignoring or withholding praise and affection
- excessive or unreasonable demands
- persistent hostility, severe verbal abuse, rejection and scape-goating
- belief that a particular child is bad or "evil"
- using inappropriate physical or social isolation as punishment
- exposure to domestic violence

Indicators of emotional abuse in children

- feeling of worthlessness about them
- inability to value others
- lack of trust in people and expectations
- extreme attention seeking behaviours
- other behavioural disorders (disruptiveness, aggressiveness, bullying)

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse is when someone involves a child in a sexual activity by using their power over them or taking advantage of their trust. Often children are bribed or threatened physically and psychologically to make them participate in the activity. Educators will be particularly aware of looking for possible sexual abuse if parents or caregivers are suspected of or charged with child sexual abuse or display inappropriate jealousy regarding age appropriate development of independence from the family. Sexual abuse includes:

- exposing the child to sexual behaviours of others
- coercing the child to engage in sexual behaviour with other children
- verbal threats of sexual abuse
- exposing the child to pornography

Indicators of Sexual Abuse in children

- they describe sexual acts
- direct or indirect disclosures
- age inappropriate behaviour and/or persistent sexual behaviour
- self destructive behaviour
- regression in development achievements
- child being in contact with a suspected or known perpetrator of sexual assault

- bleeding from the vagina or anus
- injuries such as tears to the genitalia

Psychological Abuse

Psychological harm occurs where the behaviour of the parent or caregiver damages the confidence and self esteem of the child, resulting in serious emotional deprivation or trauma. In general it is the frequency and duration of this behaviour that causes harm. Some examples are:

- excessive criticism
- withholding affection
- exposure to domestic violence
- intimidation or threatening behaviour

Indicators of psychological abuse in children include

- constant feelings of worthlessness
- unable to value others
- lack of trust in people
- lack of people skills necessary for daily functioning
- extreme attention seeking behaviour
- extremely eager to please or obey adults
- takes extreme risks, is markedly disruptive, bullying or aggressive
- suicide threats
- running away from home

Domestic Violence

Domestic and family violence includes any behaviour in a domestic relationship, including intimate partner relationships and family relationships, which is violent, threatening, coercive or controlling, causing a person to live in fear for their own or someone else's safety. It is usually manifested as part of a pattern of controlling or coercive behaviour.

Indicators of Domestic Violence in children

- show aggressive behaviour
- develop phobias & insomnia
- experience anxiety
- show symptoms of depression
- have diminished self esteem
- demonstrate poor academic performance and problem solving skills
- have reduced social competence skills including low levels of empathy
- show emotional distress
- have physical complaints

Appendix B

Disclosure of harm

A disclosure of harm occurs when someone, including a child, tells you about harm that has happened, is happening, or is likely to happen to a child. Disclosures of harm may start with:

- I think I saw...||
- Somebody told me that...||
- Just think you should know...||
- I'm not sure what I want you to do, but...||

Child's name

What is the name of the person who made the disclosure?

Are they related to the child?

Yes

No

If yes, what is the relationship?

What did the person disclose? Try to use the exact words they used. Use "I said" "they said" statements, include any questions you asked and comments you made

What date did the person make the disclosure? _____ What time? _____ AM/PM

Where did the disclosure occur?

Was anyone else present during the disclosure?

Yes

No

If yes what is/are their name, role and employer?

Have you followed the procedure in the Child Protection Policy for making a report?

Yes No

Describe the actions you have taken following the disclosure

Name of person completing form

Signature of person completing form

Date _____

Time _____ AM/PM

Suspicion of harm

Educators may suspect harm if:

- a child says they have been harmed
- someone else, for example another child, a parent, or an employee, says harm has occurred or is likely to occur
- a child says they know someone who has been harmed (it is possible that they may be referring to themselves)
- they are concerned at significant changes in the behaviour of a child, or the presence of new unexplained and suspicious injuries
- they see the harm happening

Child's name

Why do you suspect harm? Try to use the exact words a child or someone else uses if relevant. Provide as much detail as possible

If relevant, what date did the person say something? _____ What time? ____ AM/PM

Have you followed the procedure in the Child Protection Policy for making a report?

Yes No

Describe the actions you have taken because of your suspicion

Name of person completing form

Signature of person completing form

Date _____

Time _____ AM/PM

Appendix C

Date breach occurred _____ Time breach occurred _____
Location of breach _____

Name of person(s) involved in the breach

Description of the breach

Immediate action taken

If no action taken – reason

Name of person completing form

Signature of person completing form

Date

Time AM/PM

Authority breach reported to (if relevant)

Name of person reported to

Appendix D

Child Protection Risk Management Strategy – Template for High Risk Activity	 Management
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STEP 1	STEP 2	STEP 3	STEP 4	STEP 5	STEP 6
Describe the activity <i>Identify all elements of the event from beginning to end e.g. activity, objectives, location, participants</i>	Identify Risks <i>Something that could happen that results in harm – also consider physical, emotional, sexual and cultural risks from children, adults, visitors, employees, volunteers</i>	Analyse the Risk <i>How likely is the risk, what would happen if the risk did occur?</i>	Evaluate the Risk <i>Likelihood/Consequences</i>	Manage the Risk <i>Assess the options to reduce the risk</i>	Review <i>Nominate who will review after the event/activity</i>

Determine **likelihood** of the risk by using the left hand column of the **Risk Analysis Matrix** (below). Use the impact information to determine the **consequences** level. Combine the Consequence and Likelihood ratings to arrive at the **Risk Level** (i.e. Low, Medium, High or Critical). **CONSEQUENCES**

Likelihood	Insignificant	Minor	Moderate	Major	Extreme
Very likely Expected to occur in most circumstances	Medium	Medium	High	Critical	Critical
Likely Will probably occur in most circumstances	Low	Medium	High	High	Critical
Possible Might occur at some time	Low	Medium	Medium	High	High
Unlikely Not expected to occur	Low	Low	Medium	Medium	High
Rare Occurs in exceptional circumstances only	Low	Low	Low	Medium	Medium

Appendix E

Educating Children about Protective Behaviour

Educators will regularly include child protection issues in the curriculum. For example they will intentionally teach children:

- about acceptable/unacceptable behaviour, and appropriate/inappropriate contact in a manner suitable to their age and level of understanding
- that they have a right to feel safe at all times
- to say ‘no’ to anything that makes them feel unsafe
- the difference between ‘fun’ scared that is appropriate risk taking and dangerous scared that is not ok
- to use their own skills to feel safe
- to recognise signs that they do not feel safe and need to be alert and think clearly
- that there is no secret too awful, no story too terrible, that they can’t share with someone they trust
- that educators are available for them if they have any concerns
- to tell educators of any suspicious activities or people
- to recognise and express their feelings verbally and non-verbally
- that they can choose to change the way they are feeling

The main resource used by educators to teach protective behaviour is the SAFE Series

<https://www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au/child-safe-organisations/safe-series>

The books support the rights of children and promote them having a voice.

- Help children identify the parts of their body that are private
- Help them understand their feelings
- Encourage them to think about five people who they trust to help them if they feel scared, sad or upset

Educators believe that:

- children are capable of the same range of emotions as adults
- children’s emotions are real and need to be accepted by adults
- an adult’s response to a child during their early emotional development can be hugely positive or detrimental depending on the adult’s reaction
- children are very in touch with their bodies’ reactions to their emotions
- children who better understand their body’s response to an emotion are more able to foresee the outcome of a situation and avoid them or ask for help

Attachment G

Child Protection Agencies

The following agencies have responsibilities regarding child protection. Our service will liaise with these services and agencies should child protection become an issue at our service.

Child Protection Helpline: Department of Family and Community Services

- Receive, assess and where appropriate Investigate reports of children who are at risk of significant harm.
- May plan, conduct and manage Reports in conjunction with other agencies including NSW with Police, the NSW Health.
- Exchange relevant information with a range of agencies including NSW Police, NSW Health and the Department of Education and Communities.
- Provide, arrange and request care and/or support for children and families.
- Inform reporting agencies of the progress and outcomes of assessments and investigations as permitted by law.

Child Wellbeing Unit

Child Wellbeing Units have been established in the four government agencies with the largest number of child protection reports. These include the Department of Education and Communities and the Department of Family and Community Services. They can be contacted through the Department's switchboard or contact details are available in the resources section of the ChildStory Reporter website.

NSW Ombudsman's Office

- Monitors the investigation of and in some cases investigates reportable allegations made against employees in government and non-government agencies, such as children's services.
- The Ombudsman must be notified of all allegations of abuse or neglect of a child by a children's services employee.
- A volunteer is also counted as an employee in this situation.

Children's Services Employers must report to the NSW Ombudsman any reportable allegations and convictions made against an employee and ensure they are investigated by the Approved Provider/owner of the Child Care Service with appropriate actions being taken when the investigation is complete. The Approved Provider/owner of the Child Care Service must notify the Ombudsman within 30 days of becoming aware of any reportable allegations or conviction made against an employee in children's services.

Reportable allegations include any sexual offence, or sexual misconduct, committed against, with or in the presence of a child (including a child pornography offence), any assault, ill treatment or neglect of a child, any behaviour that causes psychological harm to a child. Employees include:

- any employee of the agency, whether or not employed in connection with any work or activities of the agency that relates to children, and
- any individual engaged by the agency to provide services to children (including in the capacity as a volunteer) and
- work experience participants, students on placements, e.g. TAFE, secondary or tertiary students

The Ombudsman needs to be informed of any allegation regardless of the outcome. These matters are only reported to the Child Protection Helpline if they meet the threshold of significant harm.

Visit www.ombo.nsw.gov.au for fact sheets and any forms required.

The Office of the Children's Guardian

The Office of the Children's Guardian is an independent government agency that works to protect children by promoting and regulating quality, child safe organisations and services. One of its roles is administering the Working With Children Check.

Children's services employers must report findings of sexual misconduct and serious physical assault involving children by a child related worker to the Office of the Children's Guardian. See the Fact Sheet 'Information for reporting bodies' at www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au