



# Child Protection Policy

<b>Purpose:</b>	<p>The purpose of this policy is to provide written processes about-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) how River School Early Childhood Centre will report suspicion of harm to a child; and</li> <li>(b) providing a child safe environment</li> </ul> <p>to comply with requirements for approval to conduct an early education and childcare facility.</p>	
<b>Scope:</b>	<p>Children attending the service, parents, families, and employees, including full-time, part-time, permanent, fixed term and casual employees, as well as contractors, volunteers and people undertaking work experience or vocational placements at River School Early Childhood Centre and covers information about the reporting of harm and abuse.</p>	
<b>Status:</b>	Approved	<b>Supersedes:</b> All previous Child Protection Policies
<b>Authorised by:</b>	Dee Farquharson (Centre Director)	<b>Date of Authorisation:</b> September 2021
<b>References:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Child Protection Act 1999</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Education and Care Services National Law (Queensland) 2011</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Education and Care Services National Regulations</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">National Quality Standard</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000 (Qld)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Regulations 2011 (Qld)</a></li> <li>• River School Early Childhood Centre Child Protection Procedure</li> <li>• River School Early Childhood Centre Risk Management Policy</li> <li>• River School Early Childhood Centre Child Safe Environment Policy</li> <li>• River School Early Childhood Centre Complaints Handling Policy</li> <li>• River School Early Childhood Centre Complaints Handling Procedure</li> <li>• River School Early Childhood Centre Work Health and Safety Policy</li> </ul>	
<b>Review Date:</b>	Annually	<b>Next Review Date:</b> September 2022
<b>Policy Owner:</b>	AMEL Board	

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## Definitions

**Child:** an individual under 18 years<sup>1</sup>

**Child in need of protection** is a child who —

- a) has suffered significant harm, is suffering significant harm, or is at unacceptable risk of suffering significant harm
- b) does not have a parent able and willing to protect the child from the harm.<sup>2</sup>

**Child Safety:** is the Department administering the *Child Protection Act 1999* (Qld). Currently this is the Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs.

**Early childhood education and care professional:** in respect of mandatory reporting responsibilities, means an individual, other than a volunteer or an individual under the age of 18, who is any of the following under the Education and Care Services National Law (Queensland)—

- (i) an approved provider
- (ii) a nominated supervisor for an approved education and care service
- (iii) an educator for an approved education and care service<sup>3</sup>

**Harm:** defined in the Child Protection Act 1999 (s9):

- (1) **Harm**, to a child, is any detrimental effect of a significant nature on the child's physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing.
- (2) It is immaterial how the harm is caused.
- (3) Harm can be caused by—
  - a) physical, psychological or emotional abuse or neglect; or
  - b) sexual abuse or exploitation.
- (4) Harm can be caused by—
  - a) a single act, omission or circumstance; or
  - b) a series or combination of acts, omissions or circumstances.<sup>4</sup>

**Parent:** of a child is the child's mother, father or someone else having or exercising parental responsibility for the child. However, a person standing in the place of a parent of a child on a temporary basis is not a parent of the child. A parent of an Aboriginal child includes a person who, under Aboriginal tradition, is regarded as a parent of the child. A parent of a Torres Strait Islander child includes a person who, under Island custom, is regarded as a parent of the child<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> *Child Protection Act 1999* s.8

<sup>2</sup> *Child Protection Act 1999* s.10

<sup>3</sup> *Child Protection Act 1999* s.13E

<sup>4</sup> *Child Protection Act 1999* s.9

<sup>5</sup> *Child Protection Act 1999* s.11

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## Policy Statement

River School Early Childhood Centre is committed to the safety and wellbeing of children enrolled at the service and will take appropriate action to help ensure the protection of children at risk of harm caused by abuse or neglect.

The approved provider, nominated supervisor and educators will be responsive to current child protection policy and procedures, aware of their legal responsibilities and be able to act when required to protect any child who they become aware is at risk of abuse or neglect<sup>6</sup>.

Early childhood education and care professionals will respond to their responsibilities as mandatory reporters for physical and sexual abuse as required by the *Child Protection Act 1999*.

All employees at River School Early Childhood Centre will ensure their behaviour towards and relationships with children, reflect proper standards of care for children. Employees will take all reasonable precautions so as not to cause harm to children. Employees will not subject a child to any form of corporal punishment, or any discipline that is unreasonable or excessive in the circumstances. The River School Early Childhood Centre Employee Code of Conduct should be read in conjunction with this Policy.

When the service receives any information alleging harm to a child it will deal with the situation compassionately and fairly so as to minimise any likely harm to the extent as far as is reasonably possible.

## What to Report

If, during the course of their employment at River School Early Childhood Centre, an employee forms a suspicion about harm to a child, they will immediately report it to Centre Director and/ or Nominated Supervisor.

The harm may be caused by physical, psychological or emotional abuse, neglect or sexual abuse or exploitation. Employees should refer to the full definition of harm provided in the Definitions Section of this Policy.

## Physical or Sexual Abuse

Under Section 13E (3) of the *Child Protection Act 1999*, if a doctor, registered nurse, teacher or early childhood education and care professional as defined by the Act forms a 'reportable suspicion' about a child in the course of their engagement in their profession, they will make a written report to the Chief Executive of Child Safety. The ecec professional will provide a copy of their report to River School Early Childhood Centre.

A **reportable suspicion** about a child is a reasonable suspicion that the child: -

- a) has suffered, is suffering, or is at unacceptable risk of suffering, significant harm caused by physical or sexual abuse

<sup>6</sup> Guide to the National Quality Framework, 3. National Quality Assessment and Rating, Element 2.2.3 Child Protection, p.170

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b) may not have a parent able and willing to protect the child from the harm.

### How to Report

Once an employee has formed a suspicion about harm, they will use River School Early Childhood Centre’s prescribed form for reporting suspected harm. A 'reportable suspicion' relating to physical or sexual abuse is reported to the chief executive in accordance with the previous section of this policy.

The completed form must be immediately provided to the Approved Provider - River School Board /Nominated Supervisor.

The River School Board/Nominated Supervisor will then confer with the reporter, manage and report the suspicion as appropriate, in accordance with this Policy.

In assessing whether a student is in need of protection, employees may utilise Child Safety’s [Child Protection Guide resource](#).

Employees will refer to River School Early Childhood Centre’s Child Protection Procedure and may utilise Independent Schools Queensland’s Child Protection Decision Support Tree for guidance on the process for reporting harm.

In the case of an emergency, the Nominated Supervisor or employees will notify the Police.

If an employee believes that the River School Board or Nominated Supervisor is in any way complicit in the harm, they must immediately report it to Child Safety themselves. For more information on reporting to Child Safety, see the section of the Policy below.

When making a report to Child Safety, early childhood education and care professionals will utilise the information in River School Early Childhood Centre’s prescribed report of suspected harm form.

Reports to Child Safety will be made to the appropriate [Child Safety Services’ Regional Intake Service](#).

### Other Appropriate Action

If an employee or Nominated Supervisor forms the view that that the suspected harm does not meet the threshold for reporting to Child Safety, other action may be appropriate so as to minimise any likely harm, to the extent reasonably possible.

The Nominated Supervisor or educator will consider options including, but not limited to:

- Discuss with the family a referral, with consent, to Family and Child Connect
- Discuss with the family ways in which the service may be able to directly support them
- Monitor the child and keeping appropriate records.

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## Reporting to the ECEC Service Regulatory Authority

In accordance with the *Education and Care Services National Law (Queensland) Act 2011 Part 6* and the *Education and Care Services National Regulations*, chapter 4, River School Early Childhood Centre will notify the Regulatory Authority, within 7 days of:

- Receiving notification of the suspension or cancellation of a working with children card or teacher registration of, or disciplinary proceedings under an education law of a participating jurisdiction in respect of, a nominated supervisor engaged by the service <sup>7</sup>
- Any incident where River School Board reasonably believes that physical or sexual abuse of a child has occurred or is occurring while the child is being educated and cared for at River School Early Childhood Centre. <sup>8</sup>
- Any allegations that physical or sexual abuse of a child has occurred or is occurring while the child is being educated and cared for at the River School Early Childhood Centre<sup>9</sup>.
- Circumstances arising at the service that pose a risk to the health, safety or wellbeing of a child.<sup>10</sup>

The service will also keep an 'incident, injury and trauma record' in accordance with the River School Early Childhood Centre Incident, Injury and Trauma Policy<sup>11</sup>.

## Awareness

The service will inform employees and parents/carers of its processes relating to health, safety and wellbeing of its children and conduct of employees, in communications to them and it will publish these processes on its website.

River School Early Childhood Centre will ensure that nominated supervisors and staff members at the service who work with children are advised of-

- (a) The existence and application of the current child protection law; and
- (b) Any obligations that they may have under that law.<sup>12</sup>

Employees are made aware of the River School Early Childhood Centre's child protection processes through onboarding training at the beginning of their employment and/or through annual child protection training via the Independent Schools Queensland online training portal.

Families are made aware of the processes of child protection through the family handbook, issued to each family upon enrolment, via regular emails, newsletters, Facebook posts and an annual awareness campaign by NAPCAN – Child Protection Week.

<sup>7</sup> Education and Care Services National Law (Queensland) s.173(2)(a)

<sup>8</sup> Education and Care Services National Regulation reg.175(2)(d)

<sup>9</sup> Education and Care Services National Regulation reg.175(2)(e)

<sup>10</sup> Education and Care Services National Regulation reg.175(2)(c)

<sup>11</sup> Education and Care Services National Regulation reg.87

<sup>12</sup> Education and Care Services National Regulation reg.84

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## Training

The service will train its employees in processes relating to the health, safety and wellbeing of its children and conduct of employees on their induction and will refresh training annually.

All employees of the River School Early Childhood Centre are required to undertake child protection training via the Independent Schools Queensland online training portal upon employment and renew this training annually.

## Implementing the Processes

The service will ensure it is implementing processes relating to the health, safety and wellbeing of its children and conduct of employees by auditing compliance with the processes regularly.

The service will ensure on-going risk assessment and management is built into day-to-day operations to ensure a consistently safe environment.

The service will ensure appropriate records of suspicions of harm to children are kept, stored, and retained according to this Policy and the River School Early Childhood Centre Privacy and Record Retention Policies.

The service will ensure appropriate records of complaints or circumstances at the service relating to a risk to the health, safety or wellbeing of a child are kept, stored, and retained according to this Policy and the River School Early Childhood Centre Privacy, Record Retention and Incident, Injury and Trauma Policies.

## Accessibility of Processes

Copies of this policy and any related procedures are readily accessible and available for inspection by the Nominated Supervisor, employees and families.

Parents of children enrolled at the service will be notified at least 14 days before the service makes any change to a policy or procedure that may have a significant impact on the service's provision of education and care to any child enrolled at the service, or the family's ability to utilise the service.

## Complaints Procedure

Suggestions of non-compliance with the service's processes may be submitted as complaints under River School Early Childhood Centre Complaints Handling Policy.

Complaints alleging that a serious incident has occurred or is occurring while a child was or is being educated and cared for at the service or that the National Law has been contravened, will be reported to the regulatory authority within the specified time frame.<sup>13</sup>

## Appendices

1. Report of Suspected Harm or Sexual Abuse form
2. Child Protection – Reporting by Legislation document

<sup>13</sup> *Education and Care Services National Law (Queensland) s.174(2)(b)*

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Appendix 1

**Report of Suspected Harm or Sexual Abuse**

**Private and Confidential**

Date:
Centre Name:
Phone:
Centre Email:
Centre Address:

DETAILS OF CHILD HARMED OR AT RISK OF HARM/ABUSE:	
Legal Name:	Preferred Name:
DOB:	Sex:
Year Level:	Cultural Background:
Primary language spoken:	
Aboriginal <input type="checkbox"/> Torres Strait Islander <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander <input type="checkbox"/>	
Does the student have a disability verified under EAP: Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not known <input type="checkbox"/>	Disability Category:
Student's Residential Address:	Phone:
	Student's Personal Mobile:

FAMILY DETAILS	
Parent/caregiver 1:	Relationship to Student:
Address (if different from student):	
Phone: (H):	(W): (M):
Parent/caregiver 2:	Relationship to Student:
Address (if different from student):	
Phone: (H):	(W): (M):
Is the student in out of home care? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Are there any Family Court or Domestic Violence orders in place? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/>	

PERSON ALLEGED TO HAVE CAUSED THE HARM OR ABUSE	
<input type="checkbox"/> Adult family member	<input type="checkbox"/> Child family member <input type="checkbox"/> Other adult
<input type="checkbox"/> Student/other child	<input type="checkbox"/> Unknown

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**PROVIDE ALL INFORMATION YOU HAVE WHICH LED TO THE SUSPICION OF HARM OR ABUSE** (Attach extra pages if necessary).

**Details of any harm and/or sexual abuse to the student** – please include: Time and date of the incident; location of the incident, source of information; details of person alleged to have caused the harm or sexual abuse; physical appearance of any injury; immediate and ongoing safety concerns; any disclosures made by student; any previous incidents of harm; behavioural indicators of harm; presence of any medical needs or developmental delays; and if the information relates to an unborn child, the alleged risk to the unborn child.

**Please indicate the identity and particulars of anyone else who may have information about the harm or abuse**

**Additional information provided as an attachment** YES  NO

**Name of staff member making report if not the Principal:**

<b>Position:</b>	<b>Signature:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
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<b>Nominated Supervisor:</b>	<b>Signature:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
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**Nominated Supervisor's email address:**

**Response requested by centre:**

**ACTION TAKEN**

Form was emailed to (please tick which agencies the form was sent to):	<input type="checkbox"/>	Queensland Police Services (QPS)
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Department of Child Safety, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Family and Child Connect

(Adapted from EQ SP-4 Report of Suspected Harm or Risk of Harm)

**Confirm receipt of emailed form and ensure original is stored in a secure location along with any other documentation collected for the purpose of this report.**

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Appendix 2

See attached

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