Glen Iris Child Care and Kindergarten

GI-005 – Child Protection and Mandatory Reporting Policy

Policy Number	GI-005
Quality Area	QA2 – Children's Health and Safety • QA5 – Relationships with Children • QA7 – Governance and Leadership
National Law	s.162 • s.165 • s.166 • s.167 • s.168 • s.169
National Regulations	Regs. 84 • 85 • 86 • 87 • 168 • 176
Related NQS	QA2.2.3 • QA5.1.1 • QA5.1.2 • QA7.1.2 • QA7.2.1
VEYLDF (2026)	Practice Principles – Respectful Relationships and Responsive Engagement • Equity, Inclusion and High Expectations • Collaborative Leadership and Teamwork
Victorian Child Safe Standards:	Standards 1–11
Version:	1.0
Approved By:	Centre Director
Approved Date:	July 2026
Review Date:	July 2027

OUR COMMITMENT

Glen Iris Child Care and kindergarten is committed to providing a child-safe environment where every child is protected from abuse, neglect, harm and exploitation.

We believe every child has the right to feel safe, be heard and be treated with dignity and respect. The safety, wellbeing and best interests of children are at the centre of every decision we make.

We have zero tolerance for child abuse and are committed to creating a culture where children are respected, listened to and empowered. All educators, leaders, students, volunteers and contractors share responsibility for protecting children and responding appropriately to any concerns regarding a child's safety or wellbeing.

LEGISLATIVE INTENT

This policy supports Glen Iris Child Care and kindergarten in meeting its obligations under the Education and Care Services National Law, National Regulations, Victorian Child Safe Standards and Victorian child protection legislation.

The policy establishes clear expectations for recognising, responding to and reporting concerns about child abuse, neglect or significant harm while promoting a proactive child-safe culture that places children's rights and wellbeing above all other considerations.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Protect children from abuse, neglect, harm and exploitation.
- Promote a strong child-safe culture across the service.
- Ensure all educators understand their legal and ethical child protection responsibilities.
- Provide clear procedures for identifying, responding to and reporting child protection concerns.
- Support children to feel safe, respected and empowered.
- Maintain partnerships with families while prioritising children's safety.
- Ensure compliance with legislative and mandatory reporting requirements.
- Promote ongoing professional learning and continuous improvement in child protection practices.

WHO THIS POLICY APPLIES TO

This policy applies to:

- Approved Providers.
- Centre Director.
- Nominated Supervisor.
- Educational Leader.
- Responsible Persons.
- Educators.
- Administration Staff.
- Students.
- Volunteers.
- Contractors.
- Families.
- Visitors.

DEFINITIONS

Child Abuse
Any act or omission that results in actual or potential harm to a child and includes physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional or psychological abuse, neglect, family violence and grooming.

Mandatory Reporter
A person who is legally required under Victorian legislation to report a reasonable belief that a child is in need of protection from physical injury or sexual abuse.

Reasonable Belief
A belief formed when a reasonable person, using the same information, would conclude that a child requires protection or has experienced, or is at risk of experiencing, significant harm.

Child Protection
The Victorian Government statutory service responsible for investigating concerns where children may be in need of protection.

Reportable Conduct
Conduct by a worker or volunteer towards a child that may require notification under the Victorian Reportable Conduct Scheme.

Disclosure
When a child or another person tells someone that abuse or harm has occurred or is occurring.

WHY THIS POLICY MATTERS

Children have the right to grow, learn and develop in environments where they are safe, respected and protected.

Early childhood professionals play a critical role in recognising indicators of abuse, responding appropriately to concerns and ensuring children receive the protection and support they need. Prompt action can significantly improve outcomes for children and families.

This policy provides clear guidance to ensure all staff understand their responsibilities, act confidently when concerns arise and contribute to a culture where child safety is everyone's responsibility.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Glen Iris Child Care and kindergarten is committed to:

- Upholding the rights, safety and wellbeing of every child as our highest priority.
- Embedding a strong child-safe culture through leadership, governance and everyday practice.
- Ensuring every educator understands their legal, ethical and professional child protection responsibilities.
- Listening to, believing and responding respectfully to children when they express concerns or disclose harm.
- Acting immediately when there are concerns about a child's safety or wellbeing.
- Working collaboratively with families and external agencies while always prioritising the best interests of the child.
- Maintaining confidentiality and privacy throughout all child protection processes.
- Providing ongoing professional learning to strengthen child protection knowledge and practice.
- Continuously reviewing child protection practices to ensure they reflect current legislation and recognised best practice.

OUR POLICY

Glen Iris Child Care and kindergarten has zero tolerance for child abuse, neglect, exploitation or any behaviour that places a child at risk of harm.
All educators, leaders, students, volunteers and contractors have a shared responsibility to create and maintain a child-safe environment where children feel safe, respected, valued and empowered.
Where there are concerns that a child may be experiencing abuse, neglect or significant harm, educators will respond immediately in accordance with legislative requirements, service procedures and the Victorian Child Safe Standards.
The service will ensure:

- Children's safety is prioritised above all other considerations.
- All concerns are taken seriously and responded to promptly.
- Mandatory reporting obligations are understood and fulfilled.
- Educators receive regular child protection training.
- Children are supported in ways that are trauma-informed, respectful and developmentally appropriate.
- Accurate, objective and confidential records are maintained.
- Appropriate notifications are made to Child Protection, Victoria Police and other relevant authorities where required.
- Families are treated respectfully while recognising there are circumstances where informing families may place a child at further risk and therefore may not be appropriate.

HOW WE PUT THIS POLICY INTO PRACTICE

Creating a Child-Safe Culture

Glen Iris Child Care and kindergarten will:

- Promote children's rights, participation and wellbeing in all aspects of service delivery.
- Embed the Victorian Child Safe Standards into everyday practice.
- Maintain clear child-safe policies, procedures and codes of conduct.
- Ensure recruitment, induction and supervision processes support child safety.
- Foster respectful, trusting relationships between children and educators.
- Encourage children to speak up if they feel unsafe or worried.

Recognising Indicators of Harm

Educators will remain alert to possible indicators of:

- Physical abuse.
- Sexual abuse.
- Emotional or psychological abuse.
- Neglect.
- Family violence.
- Grooming behaviours.
- Cumulative harm.
- Exposure to unsafe environments.

Educators understand that a single indicator does not necessarily confirm abuse; however, patterns of behaviour, observations and disclosures must always be taken seriously and documented objectively.

Responding to Concerns or Disclosures
When a concern arises, educators will:

- Remain calm, supportive and reassuring.
- Listen carefully without asking leading questions.
- Allow the child to speak freely using their own words.
- Reassure the child they have done the right thing by telling a trusted adult.
- Never promise to keep information secret.
- Record the disclosure as soon as possible using the child's exact words where practicable.
- Immediately notify the Centre Director or Responsible Person unless doing so would place the child at further risk.
- Follow legislative reporting requirements without delay.

Mandatory Reporting
Where a reasonable belief exists that a child requires protection, mandatory reporters will fulfil their legal obligations by making a report to the appropriate authority.
Glen Iris Child Care and kindergarten will ensure:

- Reports are made as soon as practicable.
- Educators understand that mandatory reporting is an individual legal responsibility.
- The safety of the child remains the primary consideration throughout the reporting process.
- Staff receive support following the reporting of child protection concerns.

Documentation and Confidentiality
The service will:

- Maintain accurate, factual and objective documentation.
- Record observations, disclosures, actions taken and relevant communications.
- Store records securely in accordance with privacy legislation.
- Limit access to confidential information to authorised persons only.
- Maintain confidentiality while recognising that information may need to be shared with relevant authorities to protect a child.

Professional Learning
Glen Iris Child Care and kindergarten will:

- Provide regular child protection and mandatory reporting training.
- Include child protection in educator induction.
- Regularly review child-safe practices during staff meetings.
- Encourage reflective practice to strengthen educator confidence and decision-making.
- Ensure educators remain informed of changes to legislation and best practice.

Partnerships with Families

The service will:

- Communicate the Sun Protection Policy during enrolment.
- Encourage families to provide SunSmart clothing where required.
- Inform families of the importance of daily sun protection.
- Work collaboratively with families regarding individual medical needs relating to sun protection.
- Share information and resources that promote healthy sun-safe practices.

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Approved Providers

Will:

- Promote a strong child-safe culture across the organisation.
- Ensure child protection policies remain current and compliant.
- Support educators in fulfilling their child protection responsibilities.
- Allocate appropriate resources for child protection training.
- Ensure all child safety concerns are managed appropriately.

Centre Director

Will:

- Lead the implementation of this policy.
- Support educators in responding to child protection concerns.
- Ensure required notifications are made where appropriate.
- Maintain confidential documentation.
- Coordinate ongoing child protection training.
- Promote a culture where child safety is openly discussed and prioritised.

Educational Leader

Will:

- Support educators to embed children's rights and child-safe practices within the educational program.
- Facilitate reflective discussions about child protection responsibilities.
- Encourage professional learning and continuous improvement.
- Promote trauma-informed and child-centred practice.

Responsible Persons

Will:

- Respond promptly to child protection concerns raised during their shift.
- Support educators to follow reporting procedures.
- Ensure children's immediate safety is prioritised.
- Inform the Centre Director where appropriate.
- Maintain confidentiality throughout the process.

Educators

Will:

- Act in the best interests of every child.
- Remain vigilant to indicators of abuse, neglect and harm.
- Respond appropriately to disclosures.
- Fulfil mandatory reporting obligations where required.
- Maintain accurate and objective records.
- Participate in ongoing child protection training.
- Uphold the Child Safe Standards and Code of Conduct at all times.

Students, Volunteers and Contractors

Will:

- Follow the Child Protection and Mandatory Reporting Policy.
- Immediately report any concerns regarding a child's safety or wellbeing to the Centre Director or Responsible Person.
- Maintain professional boundaries and confidentiality.
- Participate in induction relating to child safety.
- Support a culture that prioritises children's safety and wellbeing.

GLEN IRIS IN PRACTICE

At Kids on Gallaghers Child Care Centre, child protection is embedded in every aspect of our service. We believe that creating a child-safe culture is a shared responsibility and is demonstrated through our everyday interactions, decision-making and commitment to children's rights.

All educators' complete child protection and mandatory reporting training during induction and participate in ongoing professional learning to ensure they remain confident in recognising, responding to and reporting concerns. Child safety is a standing agenda item at team meetings, where educators engage in reflective discussions, review legislation, analyse scenarios and strengthen their understanding of their professional responsibilities.

Children are supported to develop trusting relationships with educators who listen respectfully, acknowledge their feelings and encourage them to express their ideas, worries and emotions. Educators intentionally create environments where children know they have trusted adults they can talk to if they feel unsafe.

The leadership team promotes open communication and a culture where concerns are raised promptly, documented objectively and acted upon immediately. Child safety is always prioritised over organisational reputation or individual interests, ensuring every decision reflects the best interests of the child.

CHILDREN'S VOICE IN ACTION

Children are active participants in creating a child-safe environment.
Children's voices are supported when they:

- Develop trusting relationships with familiar educators.
- Feel safe to express their thoughts, feelings and concerns.
- Participate in discussions about emotions, relationships, personal safety and respectful behaviour.
- Learn about their rights in age-appropriate ways.
- Know they can speak to a trusted adult if something worries them or makes them feel unsafe.
- See educators respond respectfully when they communicate their needs.

Educators actively listen to children's verbal and non-verbal communication and respond in ways that uphold each child's dignity, rights and wellbeing.

EXCEEDING PRACTICE

Glen Iris Child Care and kindergarten goes beyond legislative requirements by embedding child protection into our everyday culture rather than viewing it solely as a compliance responsibility.

Leadership actively promotes critical reflection, professional dialogue and continuous learning around child safety. Educators regularly engage in discussions using real-life scenarios, legislative updates and reflective practice to strengthen their confidence in recognising indicators of harm and responding appropriately.

Children's rights, participation and wellbeing are intentionally embedded throughout the educational program, daily routines and service decision-making. Families are informed of our child-safe commitment through enrolment, orientation, policies and ongoing communication, reinforcing that child safety is a shared responsibility between the service, families and the broader community.

Our commitment to continuous improvement ensures child protection remains visible, understood and consistently implemented across every aspect of service delivery.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Glen Iris Child Care and kindergarten is committed to continually strengthening child protection practices.
This policy will be reviewed through:

- Regular child protection training.
- Staff meetings and reflective practice discussions.
- Child Safe Standards reviews.
- Feedback from educators, families and children where appropriate.
- Review of incidents, concerns and reporting processes.
- Quality Improvement Plan goals.
- Changes to legislation, Child Safe Standards and recognised best practice.
- Consultation with relevant child protection authorities and professional organisations where appropriate.

Continuous improvement ensures our child protection systems remain current, effective and centred on the rights, safety and wellbeing of every child

RELATED LEGISLATION

Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010

- **s.162** – Health, safety and wellbeing of children.
- **s.165** – Offence to inadequately supervise children.
- **s.166** – Offence to use inappropriate discipline.
- **s.167** – Protection from harm and hazards.
- **s.168** – Education and care service policies and procedures.
- **s.169** – Policies and procedures to be followed.

Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011

- **Reg. 84 –** Awareness of child protection law**.**
- **Reg. 85 –** Incident, injury, trauma and illness policies and procedures.
- **Reg. 86 –** Notification to parents of incident, injury, trauma and illness**.**
- **Reg. 87 –** Incident, injury, trauma and illness record.
- **Reg. 168 –** Education and care service policies and procedures.
- **Reg. 176 –** Time to notify certain information to Regulatory Authority**.**

National Quality Standard

Quality Area 2 – Children's Health and Safety

- QA2.2.3 – Child protection.

Quality Area 5 – Relationships with Children

- QA5.1.1 – Positive educator to child interactions.
- QA5.1.2 – Dignity and rights of the child.

Quality Area 7 – Governance and Leadership

- QA7.1.2 – Systems are in place to manage risk and enable the effective management and operation of a quality service.
- QA7.2.1 – Continuous improvement.

Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF) 2026

- Practice Principles for Learning and Development.
- Respectful Relationships and Responsive Engagement.
- Equity, Inclusion and High Expectations.
- Collaborative Leadership and Teamwork.

Victorian Child Safe Standards

This policy supports all Victorian Child Safe Standards (Standards 1–11) by embedding child safety across leadership, governance, culture, recruitment, participation, reporting, continuous improvement and organisational practices**.**

RELATED DOCUMENTS

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Child Safe Environment Policy
- Code of Conduct Policy
- Reportable Conduct Scheme Policy
- Privacy and Confidentiality Policy
- Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy
- Supervision Policy
- Behaviour Guidance Policy
- Inclusion, Equity and Anti-Bias Policy
- Complaints and Feedback Policy
- Recruitment and Selection Policy
- Staff Induction Policy

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

The following documents support the implementation of this policy:

- Child Protection Reporting Procedure
- Mandatory Reporting Guide
- Four Critical Actions for Schools and Early Childhood Services (Victoria)
- Reportable Conduct Scheme Procedure
- Child Safe Risk Assessment
- Child Safety Code of Conduct
- Child Protection Training Records
- Staff Induction Checklist
- Incident and Concern Records
- Quality Improvement Plan

EVIDENCE OF PRACTICE

Glen Iris Child Care and kindergarten demonstrates this policy through:

- Annual child protection and mandatory reporting training for all educators.
- Child Safe Standards embedded within everyday practice.
- Child protection discussed during staff meetings and professional learning.
- Clear reporting procedures displayed and understood by educators.
- Objective documentation of concerns and actions taken.
- Child-safe recruitment, induction and supervision practices.
- Children being supported to understand their rights and identify trusted adults.
- Partnerships with families that promote child safety and wellbeing.
- Regular critical reflection and review through the Quality Improvement Plan.

REFLECTION & CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Critical reflection strengthens our ability to protect children and continually improve our child-safe culture.

Reflective questions include:

- Do all educators feel confident in recognising and responding to indicators of abuse, neglect and harm?
- How do we ensure children's voices influence our child-safe practices?
- Are our reporting procedures clearly understood and consistently followed?
- How effectively do our recruitment, induction and supervision processes support child safety?
- In what ways do we embed the Victorian Child Safe Standards into everyday practice?
- How do we support educators following child protection concerns or mandatory reports?
- What improvements can further strengthen our child protection systems and organisational culture?

Outcomes from these reflections inform professional learning, leadership decisions, policy review and the Quality Improvement Plan.

VERSION HISTORY

Version	Date Approved	Approved By	Summary of Changes
1.0	July 2026	Centre Director	Initial policy developed as part of the Glen Iris Child Care and kindergarten Governance, Policy and Procedures Manual. Developed to align with the Education and Care Services National Law, National Regulations, National Quality Standard, VEYLDF (2026), Victorian Child Safe Standards and Victorian child protection legislation.