



SECTION 3

HEALTH & SAFETY POLICIES

3.2 Child Protection Policy

Background

Children are powerless to protect themselves from abuse; they have the right to be safe in their homes and the community. Children will only be protected from abuse and neglect if responsible adults take action on their behalf. Since our work involves children and they are placed in our care and control for long periods of the day it is our responsibility and legal duty to report any suspected case of child abuse or neglect.

Child abuse can happen to any child in any family. It hurts and has lasting, damaging effects. Some children even die of child abuse. Reporting child abuse and neglect is the first step in stopping the abuse and protecting children from further harm.

The view on child abuse has changed and it is now considered that it is the responsibility of the whole community to protect our children. Reporting *suspected* abuse also gives Families SA the chance to help families in situations where a child or children may be at risk. Types of child abuse include physical, sexual, emotional, and neglect.

Aim:

1. To ensure the physical and emotional safety of children at all times.
2. To ensure staff recognise their legal role to identify the suspected abuse of children in our care.

Process:

1. All staff working at The Gums Childcare Centre will complete Child Safe Environment training prior to or within 3 months of commencing work.
2. The Child Safe Environments training certificate is current for 3 years, from completion. The Child Safe Environments 7-hour course, must be completed in the first instance; thereafter the 3-hour refresher course should be completed.
2. Staff will understand the process of notifying and the steps involved in reporting suspected cases of abuse and/or neglect.
3. Staff will be supported by the Centre to notify any suspected cases.
4. Parents/guardians will be informed of the Centre's legal role to report suspected cases in the Centre's information booklet.
5. Confidentiality should be maintained at all times. The staff member is not required to discuss their suspicions of abuse or neglect with any other person, including staff, parents, or the child.
6. Staff shall record any suspected cases including the date and the observations.
7. Staff should be aware of any non-authorised persons who may have contact and access with a child.
8. Staff will use the risk checklist as a guide to decide when a child is at risk and when abuse should be reported.

Date of Implementation: October 2013

Date of Last Review: July 2017

Date of Next Review: July 2020

9. It is mandatory for any one who works with children to report suspected child abuse.

PHONE NUMBER of CHILD ABUSE REPORT LINE (CARL): 131478

10. If there is any suspicion that a child has been sexually, physically, or emotionally abused by any staff member in the Centre (including students & volunteers) then all the following steps will be followed:

- Notify CARL
- Notify the Director / Assistant Director for personal support if needed.
- The staff member may be asked to take leave whilst the situation is being investigated by Families SA. If not, then the staff member is not to be left in a situation where s/he is alone with any child until the situation has been deemed safe by Families SA.
- Community support services eg: counseling will be offered to the reporting staff member.
- Absolute confidentiality shall be maintained

11. Any written documentation of any concern or report will be kept in a confidential locked file.

12. All staff shall be supported by the Director / Assistant Director during child protection procedures.

SOURCE: Child Protection Act 1993.

Relates to Quality Area 2: element 2.3, National Regulation 168(2)(h)