



2.01 CHILD SAFETY

Purpose Statement

Family Day Care (FDC) staff and educators play an important role in protecting young children from harm and reducing its impact. Staff and educators have an obligation to report all forms of child abuse.

Scope

This policy applies to all salaried full time and part time staff (including casuals), educators and contractors.

Policy Statement

THAT FAMILY DAY CARE STAFF AND EDUCATORS PROTECT THE RIGHTS, SAFETY AND WELLBEING OF CHILDREN; AND PROVIDE A CHILD-SAFE ENVIRONMENT

Procedures

Windermere's Commitment to Child Safety

1. Windermere is committed to Child Safety. Children and young people have a right to:
 - a. Be cared for
 - b. Feel safe and comfortable
 - c. Be safe
2. Windermere will give its highest priority to the promotion and protection of a child's safety, health, development, education and wellbeing.
3. Windermere is committed to increasing community awareness on the importance of child wellbeing and child safety
4. The Coordination unit will support educators to develop their own commitment to Child Safety and assist them in meeting their obligations by providing training and ongoing mentoring.

NOTE: For more information regarding Windermere's Commitment to Child Safety refer to Our Commitment to Child Safety brochure (see attached).

Educator Responsibilities

All Family Day Care staff and educators are responsible for reporting child abuse and ensuring the protection of children.

There are a number of obligations as detailed in the table below:



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Obligations	Requirements
Duty of Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You must take reasonable steps to prevent injuries that are reasonably foreseeable and protect the wellbeing of children This duty requires you to take positive action and report any reasonable belief that a child is being abused
Education and Care Services National Law 2010 and Childrens Services Act 1996	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To operate in accordance with policy and procedures as a means of ensuring the adequate supervision, safety, health and wellbeing of the children being educated and care for To take reasonable precautions to protect children from harm and from any hazard likely to cause harm You must ensure children are not subjected to any form of corporal punishment (ie hitting or smacking or any form of punishment that aims to cause physical pain or discomfort)
Child Safe Standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To comply with all screening and recruitment procedures To understand your 'boundaries' when working with children (see 'Boundaries' section below) To promote the participation and empowerment of children by involving them making decisions and choices
Mandatory Reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For all VIT (Victorian Institute of Teaching) to comply with mandatory reporting requirements. It is a criminal offence to fail to report any reasonable belief that a child is being abused. For all VIT registered teachers to report to DHHS Child Protection or Victoria Police any reasonable belief that a child: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> is in need of protection from physical or sexual abuse is displaying sexually abusive behaviours and is in need of therapeutic treatment
Non-Mandated Reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Windermere requires all educators to report all forms of child abuse or suspected child abuse to Child FIRST or DHHS Child Protection via the Management team. All educators are required to report any reasonable belief that a child: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> is in need of protection from physical or sexual abuse is displaying sexually abusive behaviours and is in need of therapeutic treatment is at risk of abuse is at risk of not having basic care and developmental needs met. <p>Your co-coordinator will help you assess the severity of the harm or risk of harm and support you in making a report to the relevant authority</p>
'Failure to Protect'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To protect children from the risk of child sexual abuse by informing Management of any change to living arrangements within the Family Day Care residence. For example, notifying Management immediately if visitors, adult children and/or extended family (aged 18 years or above) are residing at the residence at which you educate and care for children To report to Management any concerns regarding an adult visiting or residing within your home that poses a risk of committing a sexual offence against a child in your care
'Failure to Disclose'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To understand that reporting child sexual abuse is a community wide responsibility To comply with legislation by reporting to Police any reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child under 16 years.



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Understanding Your Boundaries

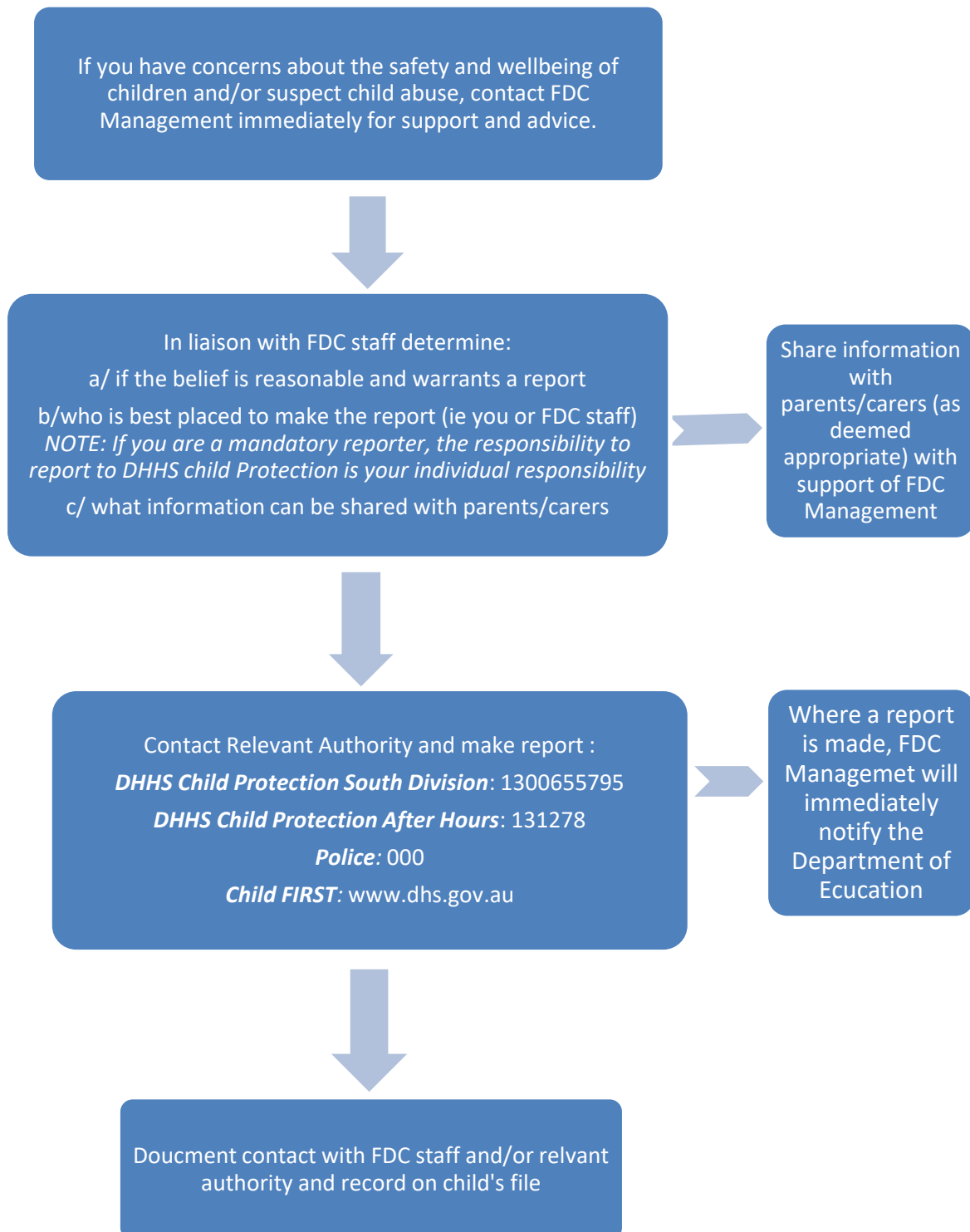
In your role as an educator, it is important to understand how to foster positive relationships in ways that do not compromise the safety and wellbeing of children. Details of the boundaries that are required to be established and maintained by educators are as follows.

Boundary Type	Inappropriate Behaviours (examples)
Physical contact	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Physical punishment• Unwanted touching personally or with an object• Use of physical restraint• Any unwanted close physical contact such as kissing, hugging, rubbing
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Commenting on a child's appearance excessively or negatively• Talking about a child, in their presence, without acknowledging them• Explicit and degrading language, jokes and actions• Consumer images and recordings on personal equipment kept after cessation of services
Contact outside of education and care hours of service	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Children attending an educator's home outside scheduled hours of care without parent/guardians consent• Children invited to connect via social media



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Reporting to Relevant Authorities





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Standards

- National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and Care Services including:
 - Education and Care Services National Law 2011
 - Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
- Victorian Child Safe Standards

Relevant Legislation

- Children, Youth and Families Act 2005
- Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic)
- Crimes Amendment (Protection of Children) Act 2014
- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2015
- Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014
- Victorian Information Privacy Principles
- Disability Services Act 2006

Our Commitment to Children and Young People

Windermere is committed to keeping children and young people safe. Children and young people have a right to:

- Be cared for
- Feel safe and comfortable
- Be safe

Everyone at Windermere works hard to make sure children and young people are protected from any harm.

It is not okay for anyone to hurt a child.

It is okay for a child to say NO to an adult if they are asked to do something that makes them feel unsafe or uncomfortable.

About Windermere

Windermere is an independent community service organisation working across south east Victoria to help those who need it most. Since our beginning more than 150 years ago, we have been working to create a stronger, more connected and supported community.

Our support comes in many forms as we work together to find the right solutions for the many and varied complex issues faced by children, families and individuals in our community.

Our aim is to get in early by providing programs and services within these primary areas:

1. Family Wellbeing to create positive behavioural changes, greater understanding and respond to violence and/or neglect
2. Childhood Development, Education & Support including child care and services for children and adults with developmental delays and disability
3. Assistance and support for victims of trauma, assault and/or violent crime
4. Community Strengthening designed to respond quickly to critical and emerging needs.

Whilst we receive funding for some services from state and federal governments, others are funded solely by donors and sponsors to whom we are truly grateful.

We believe that everyone is someone in our community and that is reflected in our approach with those we work with everyday.



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Our Commitment to *Child Safety*



windermere.org.au

Child Safety Policy:

- Windermere will give its highest priority to the promotion and protection of a child's safety, health, development, education and well-being
- Windermere will guide its people on acceptable behaviour and appropriate boundaries when interacting with children
- Windermere is committed to increasing community awareness on the importance of child wellbeing and child safety
- If we believe a child or young person is at risk of being harmed or has been harmed, we must report it to Windermere management for appropriate action
- Any form of child abuse is a crime in Victoria and concerns of this nature must be raised and referred to Police and/or Child Protection authorities
- Windermere works with children and young people in accordance with the Child Safety and Wellbeing Act 2005 and the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005.

NOTE: For a more detailed outline of Windermere's reporting process please request a copy of Windermere's Child Safety policy.

Reporting Process:

- Every member of the community has a responsibility to keep children safe and report to police any reasonable belief they have that a child¹ is being sexually abused
- Everyone who works with us is expected to report suspected abuse
- The child's family is included and informed as much as possible when reporting abuse.

¹ Under the age of 16 years

Physical Abuse

Where a person means to hurt a child by punching, beating, flogging, shaking, biting or burning them.

- Hitting a child and leaving marks, welts or bruises
- Shaking a baby/child out of frustration
- Burning a child with a cigarette.

Emotional Abuse

Where adults repeatedly say things to children that make them feel bad, mad or sad; feel threatened or rejected.

- Telling a child they are no good
- Not giving a child love or affection
- Leaving a child alone or locking up a child
- Not allowing a child to have friends
- Subjecting a child to family violence (seeing or hearing parents or adults in the home fighting).

Neglect

Where a child is hurt because their parent or carer doesn't give them what they need in the way of food, nurturing, a home, physical and emotional care.

- Not taking the child to the doctor or hospital when they are sick or hurt
- Repeatedly ignoring a child when they are upset and needing a hug
- Not sending children to school
- Not providing children with food, clothing or hygienic housing.



Sexual Abuse

Where an adult or older child does sexual things to a child or gets a child to do sexual things to them or someone else, or expose them to explicit sexual activity or images.

- Forcing or coercing children to have sex or engage in sexual acts with other children or adults.
- Inappropriate touching
- Saying things that are obscene or suggestive
- Taking or exposing children to sexually explicit images and videos.

Grooming

Where a trusted person seeks a special bond with a child/adolescent with the intent of involving them in sexual activity.

- Favouring or giving gifts to a child or young person
- Inappropriate interactions with children either in person or via social media
- Asking a child or young person to keep a secret of any aspect of their relationship
- Ignoring professional boundaries or rules.