

SA Montessori Pre-schools Policies

Child Protection Policy

Statement

SA Montessori Pre-schools aim to ensure the physical and emotional wellbeing of children at all times.

Rationale

Children can be subject to physical, emotional, sexual harm or risk of harm. This harm most commonly occurs from people known to the child. Staff have a legal mandate under the Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017 as Mandated Reporters to report all suspicions on reasonable grounds of harm or risk of harm. All employees, contractors and volunteers have both a moral and legal obligation to report suspected harm or risk of harm.

Procedures

Supporting Children and Families

- The centre's parent handbook/folder will advise parents that staff have a legal mandate to make notifications of suspected harm or risk of harm
- The centre's program will regularly provide information to children about personal safety and well-being
- Staff will use positive and empowering language with children
- Staff will actively cultivate safe, secure and respectful relationships with children to encourage them to feel comfortable communicating with these trusted adults
- Staff will communicate with children openly and securely in accordance with their training in the event of a disclosure or when discussing indicators
- Staff will comply with supervision responsibilities relevant to their duty of care
- Staff should not put themselves or others in compromising situations with children
- Staff should be aware of inappropriate physical contact with children and accept children's feelings about physical contact
- Staff should ensure children are free from any bullying or harassment
- Staff will ensure that any photos/videos of children that are collected, stored or shared meet the requirements of our Photography Policy
- Staff will support children and their families as best they can during and after any complaint, feedback, notification or investigation
- Our Child Protection Policy will be available for parents to access in hard copy at the centre, to download via our website, to receive in digital format via email if requested and on display at the centre during each annual review.

Staff and Volunteer Employment Checks

The recruitment process for new staff members and/or volunteers will consist of the following steps to ensure that only suitable individuals undertake a formal engagement in our environment:

- A review of the candidate's personal details (such as resume, cover letter and work history), checking of references, sighting of relevant qualifications and certification,
- At least one interview conducted in an area not accessible by children (or via teleconference) by management or senior leadership,
- A short trial in the classroom to be observed in their practices and interactions with children (for classroom based candidates).
- The member(s) of senior leadership or management conducting the interviews will obtain evidence from the candidate of a Non Prohibited Working with Children Check (WWCC) and child protection training prior to the new team member

undertaking formal engagement in the classroom.

- Staff will be selected for employment to maximise the protection of children, ensuring and the candidate expresses strong ethics regarding child protection

Staff and Volunteer Documentation and Record Keeping Requirements

- All staff members and regular volunteers (over the age of 14 years) will hold a current Not Prohibited Working with Children Check.
- Copies of WWCC, and child protection training, will be uploaded to the staff member's or volunteer's Child HR platform as a digital record for long-term reference and physical copies (where applicable) will be kept on premises for immediate access
- Centre Leadership will verify the accuracy of all WWCCs in the DHS Screening Unit portal as required under legislation.
- Centre leadership and Child HR will keep records of any relevant expiration dates for a staff member's and/or volunteer's certification and will remind the individual to update their certification and provide renewed copies to Child HR and to the centre as above. Staff will not be permitted to work with children in any capacity if their WWCC has expired.
- Work Experience students over the age of 14 years are required to obtain a WWCC.

Staff and Volunteer Training and Support

- Permanent classroom-based staff will undertake appropriate training in Child Safe Environments or similar approved training through a registered training organisation and update their certificate as required through refresher training.
- SA Montessori centres will provide in-house support and professional development for staff members and volunteers to understand their responsibilities in relation to child protection, including oversight and support from the centre leaders, individual performance management plans, the distribution of written resources, and covering related topics in staff meetings.
- Where possible, students will not be on placement unless they have done their Child Safe Environments training and hold a police clearance
- Work experience students who have not obtained formal child safe training will be provided with information about mandatory reporting obligations during their induction prior to engaging with children.

Notification Procedures

- Staff members are made aware that, as per the Criminal Law Consolidation Act 1935 that came in to effect on 1.6.2022, failure to report child sexual abuse may attract a maximum penalty of 3 years imprisonment (as per Section 64A) and failure to protect a child from sexual abuse may incur a maximum of 15 years imprisonment (as per Section 65).
- Staff members, volunteers and students on placement who suspect harm or risk of harm must make a notification to the Child Abuse Report Line (CARL) on 13 14 78.
- Staff members who suspect an immediate risk to the child may call 000 for emergency assistance in addition to making a notification to CARL.
- Staff can seek the support of the Centre Manager/Director when making a notification but this is not a requirement as the individual is entitled to make the notification independently.
- Staff will work in collaboration and consultation with other agencies who may be involved in the child's ongoing case.
- Written reports of all observed indicators, dates and notification steps will be kept. The written notes will remain confidential and kept at the centre and will not be made available to the parents or any other unauthorised person except where

there is a legal requirement to do so. A summary of events can be given to parents if requested and safe to do so

- Where parents are the suspected of harming their children, the centre will maintain confidentiality of the notification
- Notifications may come from sources other than the centre and may cause concern with staff that they may agree with or disagree with the notification. Staff will refrain from judging the matter and continue to support the families' involvement at the centre
- Where it is suspected that a member of staff is harming a child at the centre, a notification to CARL and Police must be made and the Centre Manager/Director and the SA Montessori Managers informed. The Education and Early Childhood Services Registration and Standards Board of SA must be notified.

Code of Conduct and Centre Risk Management Plan

- A Child Protection Risk-Benefit Management Plan will be developed and reviewed annually within each SA Montessori centre to identify measures that can be taken to protect and empower children and to mitigate risks of harm
- All staff members, volunteers and work experience students will adhere to the procedures outlined in our **Ethical Conduct Policy**, including following the expected behaviours stated in **Early Childhood Australia's Code of Ethics**
- Any action taken with staff suspected of harm or risk of harm must reflect natural justice and procedural fairness.
- The SA Montessori Managers will support any ensuing police or child protection investigations.
- Where a critical incident occurs resulting from harm to a child who attends the centre support services will be sourced for staff, children and families. Refer to the **Critical Incident Policy** procedures.
- Any media will be dealt with by the managers of SA Montessori Pre-schools and staff should not provide comment (see **Media Policy**).
- The centre will ensure that any computer systems are blocked for access to any site that promotes exploitation and abuse of children, women or others. Disciplinary action will be taken against any staff member who tries to access these sites.

Training and awareness

This Policy will be accessible through the SA Montessori staff Onboarding and Ongoing Development course to ensure staff are knowledgeable about its principles, contents and requirements.

Linkage to other policies

Confidentiality Policy

Critical Incident Policy

Duty of Care Policy

Ethical Conduct Policy

IT Policy

Media Policy

Photography Policy

Police Clearance Policy

Sourcing

National Law: Section 166-167

Department for Child Protection

Childwise

NAPCAN

Parenting SA

Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics

Children & Young People (Safety) Act 2017

Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Act 2016

Statutes Amendment (Child Sexual Abuse) Act 2021

Training and awareness

This Policy will be accessible through the SA Montessori staff Onboarding and Ongoing Development course to ensure staff are knowledgeable about its principles, contents and requirements.

Policy Review and Updates

This Policy will be reviewed annually to ensure it meets current regulations, ethical standards and best practice guidelines. Any updates will be communicated to staff and families promptly. Staff and families can provide feedback on Policies at any time for consideration and continuous improvement. A new Child Safe Environments Compliance Statement will be lodged with DHS when the policy is significantly altered.

Development date

08/07/08

SA Montessori' Definition

For the purposes of these Policy documents the term 'SA Montessori' refers to a collective of centres functioning as a professional network with shared management through 'MMM'. These documents have been developed by MMM with intellectual property rights retained. By accepting these Policy documents, the company directors, approved providers and/or persons with management or control (PMCs) of each entity acknowledge that these policies do not release them from their responsibilities, obligations, or liabilities.

SA Montessori Pre-school centres include:

Cedars Montessori Pre-school
Chancery Lane Montessori Pre-school
Echoes Montessori
Jescott Montessori Pre-school
Little Oxford Montessori
Lilliput Village Montessori
Rosemont House Montessori

Review date

All SA Montessori Policies will be reviewed at least annually by MMM. In addition to the annual review, individual policies may be adjusted at any time in the event of community feedback, changes to guiding documents or legislative updates. A new child safe environments compliance statement will be lodged with DHS in the event that the policy is significantly changed.

Review history:

Date	Policy satisfactory	Policy amended	Comments	Next review due:
16/12/08	√			6/10
20/6/10	√			6/11
26/5/11	√			6/12
4/4/12		√	Reviewed and changed from JSC Montessori Pre-schools to SA Montessori Pre-schools	4/13
2/4/13		√	Add to Source: National Law: Section 166-167 National Regulations: Regulation 84, 168	4/14
29/8/13		√	Add to Source: The written notes will remain confidential and kept at the centre and will not be made available to the parents or any other unauthorised person except where there is a legal requirement to do so. A summary of events can be given to parents if requested	8/14

3/4/14	√			4/15
12/3/15		√	New centres added to SA Montessori listing	4/16
21/4/16		√	Amended new centre name. Removed Montessori On The Park & Montessori From The Start. Changed to Rosemont House Montessori	4/17
18/4/17	√			4/18
26/4/18		√	Amended the name Babthorpe Montessori Preschool to reflect the new centre's name being Lilliput Village Montessori.	4/19
5/4/19		√	Added new centre, Little Oxford Montessori, to SA Montessori listing	4/20
28/2/20	√			4/21
15/7/21		√	Added new centre, Echoes Montessori, to SA Montessori listing	4/22
10/5/22		√	Added section titles as per DHS <i>Guideline to writing a policy</i> and adjusted language from 'abuse or neglect' to 'harm or risk of harm'.	4/23
23/8/22		√	Changed wording 'abuse and neglect' to 'harm or risk of harm'. Added references to Children & Young People (Safety) Act 2017 Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Act 2016. Added The centre Manager/Director can contact SA Police on 000 if a child is at risk right now or Child Abuse Reptot Line (CARL) on 13 14 78 Replaced wording 'offender history report' with 'Working with Children Clearance'. Added Policy to be reviewed every 3 years	4/23
29/11/22		√	Incorporated feedback from DHS regarding refinements to language and insertion of reference to the penalties of the Criminal Law Consolidation Act.	4/23
27/4/23	√			4/24
6/7/24		√	Addition of Training and Awareness, SA Montessori Definition & Review Date Minor adjustments to formatting / headers	7/25
9/8/24		√	Added references to the Photography Policy in relation to safely capturing, storing and sharing photos/images of children	7/25