**ECFKI CHILD SAFETY & WELLBEING POLICY**

**PURPOSE**- The Child Safety and Well-being Policy outlines Earlwood Caring for Kids commitment to embedding a culture of safety for children throughout our centre. It outlines the centre’s expectations of its workers (paid and volunteer) when interacting and engaging with children. The Policy focuses on how ECFKI can build and maintain a child safe environment that is inclusive, transparent and promotes children’s participation. ECFKI aims to meet and maintain the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations and the NSW Child Safe Standards by providing a safe environment, empowering children, and young people, educating staff and the community about their child protection responsibilities, and responding appropriately to child safety concerns.

**SCOPE**- This Policy applies to the Approved Provider, to both paid and unpaid workers and any other persons interacting with and/or working directly with children, to supervisors responsible for those workers, and to management in recruitment of those workers. It applies to all activities that involve, result in, or relate to contact with children. This Policy is related to persons aged under 18 years.

**DEFINITIONS**- In this Policy the terms below have the following meanings:

1. ***Child***- A person aged under 18 years. Under child protection legislation, a child is defined as aged under 16 years for Mandatory Reporting, and as under 18 years for Reportable Conduct. A young person is defined as aged 16 and 17 years for Mandatory Reporting.
2. ***Child related work***- Providing services for under 18s, where the work normally involves being face to face with children or where contact with children is more than incidental to their work. (As defined by the Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012).
3. ***Child Safe Organisation***- An organisation that consciously and systematically creates conditions that reduce the likelihood of harm to children; creates conditions that increase the likelihood of identifying and reporting harm to children; and responds appropriately to disclosures, allegations, and suspicions of harm to children.
4. ***Mandatory reporting***- The legal requirement for any person delivering a service to children or in management of a service for children to report concerns for a child at risk of significant harm.
5. ***Other worker***- Other worker includes contractors or subcontractors engaged through a third-party supplier; students gaining work experience or volunteers.
6. ***Reportable conduct***- Allegation against staff involving: A sexual offence with or in the presence of a child; Sexual misconduct with or in the presence of a child; Ill treatment of a child; An assault against a child; Neglect/failure to protect a child from abuse or harmful environments; and/or psychological harm.
7. ***Well-being***- The state of doing well especially in relation to one’s happiness or success. When children are safe, they are most likely to succeed and be happy.
8. ***Working with Children Check***- A clearance to work with children that is required of anyone involved in child related work.

**POLICY STATEMENT**-

ECFKI is committed to the safety and well-being of children and expects all children who participate in its programs or engage in its activities will have a safe and happy experience.

ECFKI is committed to the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations:

1. Child safety and well-being is embedded in organisational leadership, governance, and culture.

2. Children and young people are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.

3. Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and well-being.

4. Equity is upheld, and diverse needs respected in policy and practice.

ECFKI is committed to the NSW Child Safe Standards:

1. Child safety is embedded in organisational leadership, governance, and culture.

2. Children participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.

3. Families and communities are informed and involved.

4. Equity is upheld, and diverse needs are taken into account.

5. People working with children are suitable and supported.

6. Processes to respond to complaints of child abuse are child focused.

7. Staff are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and awareness to keep children safe through continual education and training.

8. Physical and online environments minimise the opportunity for abuse or other kinds of harm to occur.

9. Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is continuously reviewed and improved.

10. Policies and procedures document how the organisation is child safe.

**POLICY CRITERIA-**

The following represent ECFKI’s commitment to children’s safety & well-being.

1. Staff recruitment- The service has & maintains a thorough recruitment, screening & selection process including appropriate interview questioning, checking of a minimum of two relevant and up-to-date references & confirming WWCC status before employment and on a regular basis throughout. Furthermore, orientation & induction of new employees includes a focus on child protection and child safety and well-being.
2. Staff training & skill development- this area is prioritised and budgeted for each year. All employees are provided with current child protection information and attend regular meetings to discuss relevant issues, practice the MRG tool & to discuss any concerns they have regarding this part of their role. All permanent staff are offered accredited training in “Identify and Respond to Children and Young People at Risk” and attend refresher training every two years or as needed. Other employees are offered refresher training, webinars & general non-accredited training on keeping children safe.
3. Risk Management- The service adopts a risk management approach to the safety of children through the effective recruitment and training of staff; identifying and mitigating risks in the physical and online environments; developing action plans to deal with risks; encouraging and involving children in decision making; and ensuring children are informed of their rights and empowered to identify and report when they feel unsafe.
4. Children’s Participation- The service promotes children’s safety and well-being in both physical and online environments and staff are alert to children at possible risk of harm and follow the procedures for either mandatory reporting or reportable conduct. In addition, children are heard with their opinions taken seriously, valued & respected. Children, whenever possible, are involved in decision making, especially about matters that will directly affect them. Consideration is given to children with a disability who may be particularly vulnerable and may need support to communicate any safety issues.
5. Complaints management and reporting- ECFKI abides by all legislation related to the management of complaints, reporting concerns for children’s safety & wellbeing, and reporting allegations of staff misconduct. Staff will follow the relevant reporting procedures (Child story Reporter to determine risk of significant harm & associated outcomes) and report any concerns related to reportable conduct of employees, volunteers, or subcontractors to their supervisor & follow the appropriate procedures thereafter.
6. Communication- This policy & associated procedures will be given to all employees upon orientation & updated on a regular basis or when required by law or circumstance. It will be on the ECFKI website for all stakeholders to access and made available to families upon request.

**LAWS & STANDARDS**-

* Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012 (NSW)
* Children & Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 (NSW)
* Children’s Guardian Act 2019
* Crimes Act 1900
* Disability Inclusion Act 2014
* Anti-Discrimination Act 1977
* National Principles for Child Safe Organisations and the NSW Child Safe Standards
* The NSW Child Safe Standards
* United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
* Other- ECFKI Child Protection Policy, ECFKI Code of Conduct & Statement of Commitment to Child Safety.

*August 2023*

*Next Review Date- August 2024*