

What are the responsibilities of Big Fat Smile staff?

Our staff support children and families in many ways; from understanding child development and behaviour, connecting families with local community supports as well as working collaboratively with family's existing support networks to promote child health, safety and wellbeing.

Staff have the responsibility to respond to and identify any incidents, disclosures or suspicions of risk of harm to children. Educators are also mandatory reporters.

What is Mandatory reporting?

NSW Law compels any person working in Education and Care Services in a professional or paid capacity has a duty to report current concerns that a child (under the age of 16 years) is at risk of significant harm where there are reasonable grounds to suspect this. Such concerns are reportable to the Child Protection Helpline (NSW Department of Communities & Justice)

Big Fat Smile policy: Staff in Big Fat Smile services must report concerns regarding risk of harm and child abuse to their direct line manager and the Child Protection Manager. Where there are reasonable grounds to suspect risk of significant harm, concerns must be reported to the Child Protection Helpline following Big Fat Smile procedures.

What are reasonable grounds?

Reporting to the child protection helpline is a serious action. It is not necessary for the reporter to have proof that the alleged abuse has or will actually occur, however the legal requirement is that the reporter must have a reasonable basis for suspecting risk of significant harm. There is a mandatory reporter guide to assist reporters to determine next steps.

Concerning Conduct

Organisations have a duty of care to ensure that children are safe and feel safe in the care of an organisation. Big Fat Smile's role is to prevent harm to children by putting in place a host of policies, procedures, training, screening, induction and supervision mechanisms to reduce any risk of children's safety being put at risk through adult interactions. We detail our approach in our comprehensive Child Safe Framework.

Our child safe culture is vital to our approach and our Code of Conduct explicitly outlines behavioural and practice expectations of all workplace participants. Our culture of 'speaking up and out' about inappropriate or concerning interactions with children empowers children, staff and families alike to raise concerns about behaviours of adults in our organisation. Concerns are treated seriously and acted upon in line with internal and external investigation and reporting requirements which may include reporting to the Early Childhood Education and Care Directorate (ECECD), NSW Police, Department of Communities and Justice and/or the Office of the Children's Guardian under the Reportable Conduct Scheme.

What can children, families and communities do if they have concerns about child safety at a Big Fat Smile service or program?

In the first instance any concerns should be raised with the Centre Director.

Operations Managers or our Child Protection Manager can be contacted on 4283 9900

You can also provide feedback through the feedback email at: feedback@bigfatmile.com.au

Child feedback forms are available at each site and we welcome children's contributions whether verbal, written or drawn.

The Care, Wellbeing and Protection of Children.



Information about
Child Wellbeing and Child
Protection at Big Fat Smile



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Our commitment to the protection of children and young people

Big Fat Smile is a values-led organisation. Our vision is to enrich the lives and minds of our children and families in their communities. Our values are Safety, Leadership, Integrity, Inclusion, Child-centric and Collaboration. Big Fat Smile is a child safe organisation, committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of children entrusted to our care. We demonstrate this commitment through embedding the NSW Child Safe Standards in our philosophy, recruitment and training, organisational culture, policies, procedures and practice. Big Fat Smile has a zero tolerance for child abuse and any allegation or safety concern is treated seriously and acted upon.

Who is responsible for the safety of children?

Big Fat Smile has a Child Safe Framework and proactive Child Safe Organisation action plan which ensures the Child Safe Standards are implemented.

The health, safety and wellbeing of children is important and protecting children from harm is everyone's responsibility. In Australia, each state has laws to keep children safe and ensure their needs are met within the care of organisations, as well as in their community. Child protection and safeguarding children is the shared responsibility of families, community, government and non-government agencies.

Like all of our policies, our Safeguarding Children Policy and Education and Care Policies:

- Are based on NSW Law
- Are based on Education and Care National Law and Regulations
- Align with the National Principles of Child Safe Organisations and the NSW Child Safe Standards
- Align with the National Quality Framework
- Meet the current professional expectation of Education and Care Providers in NSW
- Reflect the duty of care responsibilities of those who work in education and care services.

Big Fat Smile upholds its commitment to child safety and wellbeing and legal responsibilities in the following ways:

- Caring for children by:
 - » Valuing and inviting children's participation and views
 - » Acting in their best interest and upholding their rights
 - » Taking all reasonable steps to ensure protection from harm and hazards
- Providing professional development for child protection. This includes:
 - » Duty of care responsibilities
 - » Child and family centred practice
 - » National Principles of Child Safe Organisations
 - » Legal reporting requirements
 - » Identification of abuse and risk of harm
 - » Reportable Conduct
 - » Interagency cooperation
- Providing age appropriate protective behaviours education for children
- Implementing robust recruitment and screening processes to ensure that all workplace participants are fit and proper persons to work in our services and programs.
- Designated subject matter experts as organisational support managers in the area of Child Protection, National Law and Regulation, Compliance as well as Pedagogy and People & Culture.
- Implementing integrated child safety, compliance of risk frameworks across the organisation.
- Developing clear procedures for children, families and staff to raise concerns and feedback about staff practices and interactions of concern and processes to respond to complaints raised.
- Exchanging information under the legislative provisions in NSW
- Strong governance processes predicated on what is in the best interest of the child.

FAQs

What is Child Abuse and Neglect? The NSW Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998, identifies 5 main subtypes of child abuse and neglect.

1. Physical Abuse is a non accidental injury or physical harm to a child. This includes intentional or reckless use of physical force against a child that results in harm to the child's health, development or dignity, or which has a high likelihood of resulting in such harm. Injuries may be caused by excessive discipline, use of an implement, beatings, shaking of a child. Injuries may also include bruising, lacerations, welts, burns, fractures or dislocations.

2. Psychological Harm/Emotional Abuse relates to a variety of behaviours by a carer that are persistent, repetitive and have a negative impact on a child, or corrupting behaviour, or deliberately exposing children to traumatic events. A child may be experiencing psychological/emotional distress as a result of parent/carer behaviour such as family and domestic violence, a carer's mental health or a carer's substance abuse.

3. Neglect occurs when a child is harmed by the failure to provide basic physical and emotional necessities e.g. shelter, food, hygiene, clothing, emotional security, affection, medical or mental health care, education and adequate supervision.

4. Sexual Abuse is any sexual activity or behaviour that is imposed, or is likely to be imposed on a child/young person by another person. There may be concerns that a child is at risk of sexual abuse, indicators of sexual abuse or a child may be displaying problematic sexual behaviours towards others. This includes contact behaviours, non contact behaviours as well as online sexual exploitation.

5. Exposure to Family & Domestic Violence refers to any behaviour in a family or intimate relationship which is violent, threatening, coercive or controlling and causes a person to fear for their own or someone else's safety.