		Policy
sdn children's services		**Governance Infrastructure**
	Providing Access to Child Safe Physical and Online Environments	**GI-HLP-1.07**

Rationale

All children have the right to experience quality services in environments that safeguard and promote their health, safety and wellbeing.

This policy focuses on providing safe physical and online environments for children. For guidance regarding child protection and reporting, see SDN's *Child Protection Policy*.

Scope

This policy, and its associated documents, applies to the entirety of SDN Children's Services and the entirety of its wholly owned subsidiaries.

This policy applies to the provision of access to safe physical and online environments for all children whilst participating in services run by SDN.

This policy must be read in conjunction with the policies listed in the Related Documents section at the end of this document.

Policy

SDN is committed to promoting the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children and we put children's best interests at the centre of everything we do. This means providing physical and online environments that are safe.

Children will always be adequately supervised. For centre-based programs where parents and/or other family members are not present, children will be supervised by staff with appropriate skills and training. For programs where parents and other caregivers may attend alongside their children, SDN staff may provide support to parents to engage with their children and monitor the physical safety of the environment.

The physical environments of SDN services will be organised to minimise inappropriate risks to children while also promoting opportunities for learning and development and enhancing children's wellbeing.

Risk assessments will be conducted to determine an approach to supervision and risk management, taking into account the needs and abilities of the children, the context of the activities and the physical environment (for example: gates, fences, doors).

Hazards will be monitored and minimised in line with relevant Workplace Health and Safety legislation, Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011, and best practice.

Every reasonable and practical precaution will be taken to protect children from any hazard likely to cause injury, while also upholding the National Quality Standards (NQS) requirement for physical environments

Minor/legislative amendment or modification history: February 2025	Details: Adding to risk assessment section (for example: gates, fences, doors and considers relevant risk assessments) Adding vaping as being banned within grounds and within 4 meters of entrances and any enclosed space where SDN operates		
June 2025	Adding online environments to policy		
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which promote competence and support exploration and play-based learning. Activities and environments with elements of appropriate and manageable risk will be provided so that children can explore their environment, learn to take and manage appropriate risks, develop skills and make decisions.

All property (for example: gates, fences, doors), equipment and materials used at an SDN service will meet relevant safety standards and consider the relevant risk assessment.

Worn and damaged equipment that may provide a safety risk for children will be repaired or replaced in a timely manner.

Learning environments will be established to provide appropriate child groupings and sufficient, accessible spaces, and will include carefully chosen and well-maintained resources and equipment. Smoking and vaping will be banned within the grounds of, and within four metres of, any entrances of any enclosed space where SDN operates a service for children.

Child safe online environments in Early Learning services

SDN will prevent children in early learning services from accessing online environments.

However, staff may utilise online resources in development or delivery of education programs for children, including researching activities and programming. Staff may also utilise online resources when delivering the educational program to complement or extend learning, for example, showing short videos to children.

In order to prevent children using any devices to access online environments and manage any risk to child safety:

- Only staff can use devices which can access the internet and online environments

- Children will not be given access to electronic devices whilst the device is connected to the internet

- Devices will be closely supervised when in use

- Devices will be stored securely when not in use to prevent access by children.

If staff plan to show children online videos then the following is required:

- View the whole video first to ensure that it does not contain inappropriate content

- Prevent children from seeing advertising where possible

- Use reputable sources for online videos

Exceptions for children requiring communication assistance

In some cases an individual child may use electronic devices for communication due to disability or additional needs. In this case SDN will be guided by the child's family and any therapeutic or medical advice. SDN will work with the child's family and any relevant services to reduce the risk of access to online environments. In this scenario the following risk measures will apply:

- Only the child who requires the specific device will be allowed to use the device

- The device will only be used for the approved purpose

- The device will not be connected to the online environment or will be restricted in what can be accessed. This may require working with the child's family to adjust device settings

- Devices will be closely supervised when in use

- Devices will be stored securely when not in use to prevent access by children.

National Quality Standard for Education and Care Services

This policy is in line with the National Quality Standards, in particular Quality Area 2 – Children's health and safety and Quality Area 3 – Physical environment.

Standard 2.1	Health	Each child's health is promoted.
Element 2.1.2	Health practices and procedures	Effective illness and injury management and hygiene practices are promoted and implemented.
Element 2.1.3	Healthy lifestyle	Healthy eating and physical activity are promoted and appropriate for each child.
Standard 2.2	Safety	Each child is protected.
Element 2.2.1	Supervision	At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from harm and hazard
Standard 3.1	Design	The design of the facilities is appropriate for the operation of a service.
Element 3.1.1	Fit for purpose	Outdoor and indoor spaces, buildings, fixtures and fittings are suitable for their purpose, including supporting the access of every child.
Element 3.1.2	Upkeep	Premises, furniture and equipment are safe, clean and well maintained.
Standard 3.2	Use	The service environment is inclusive, promotes competence and supports exploration and play-based learning.
Element 3.2.1	Inclusive environment	Outdoor and indoor spaces are organised and adapted to support every child's participation and to engage every child in quality experiences in both built and natural environments.
Element 3.2.2	Resources support play-based learning	Resources, materials and equipment allow for multiple uses, are sufficient in number, and enable every child to engage in play-based learning.

Related SDN Documents

Policies

- GI-HLP-1.06: Risk Management

- GI-HLP-1.08: Critical Incidents

- GI-HLP-1.10: Code of Conduct

- GI-HLP-1.33 Child Protection

- SD-OP-2.05: Supervision of Children

- SD-OP-2.11: Nutrition

- SD-OP-2.14: Children with Medical Conditions and Illness

- SD-OP-2.15: Child Incident, Injury, Trauma, and Illness

- SD-OP-2.16: UV (Sun) Protection

- SD-OP-2.17: Water Safety

- SD-OP-2.18: Excursions, Incursions and Regular Outings

- SD-OP-2.24: Interactions with Children

- WHS-HLP-4.01: Work Health and Safety

- WHS-OP-4.03: Infectious Diseases

- WHS-OP-4.05: First Aid

- WHS-OP-4.06: Emergency Preparedness

Procedure
- GI-PRO-1.07-01: Providing access to Child Safe Physical and Online Environments

Forms
- SD-FRM-2.09-01-02: Daily Arrival Check Centres Form

- SD-FRM-2.09-01-03: Daily Departure Check Centres Form

- SD-FRM-2.04-01 Behaviours of Concern Assessment Tool

Relevant Legislation/Regulations
- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010, sections 165, 166 and 167

- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011, regulations 99, 158-159, 168(f), 168 (h), 176

  - Schedule 1: National Quality Standards

- Work Health and Safety Act 2011

- National Principles for Child Safe Organisations

Related documents/references

https://www.kidsafensw.org/