



ABUSIVE VERBAL/PHYSICAL CONTACT BY A PARENT

Best Practice – Quality Area 6

Purpose

- To ensure staff are provided with a safe and secure working environment
- To ensure the safety of all children, families and visitors within the service.
- To ensure that all staff are aware of and follow procedures for responding to abusive parents or visitors.

Procedures

Phone Calls

- If a call is abusive and from a person known to educators, educators should let the caller know that they are willing to discuss the issue when the caller is calm and that they will discontinue the call if the abuse continues. Staff should use a calm soothing voice and show empathy to the caller.
- Abusive calls from unknown callers should be dealt with by discontinuing the call and letting the nominated supervisor/responsible person in charge know of the call.
- Abusive phone calls should be recorded as an Incident using the Incident, injury, trauma and illness record and a copy forwarded to Central Office within 24 hours.

In Person at the Children's Service

- If a staff member is verbally abused, they are to escort the parent to a suitable private place away from children and other families to give them time to calm down
- Where possible the staff member needs to: stay in view of another staff member and position themselves carefully to ensure there is a clear exit.
- When the parent has calmed down the responsible person in charge should arrange a suitable time outside of session times to discuss the issue. This meeting should include the Nominated Supervisor and/or if required a representative from Central Office. At no time should any staff meet alone with an agitated parent.
- If parent continues to be abusive, the responsible person in charge should inform the parent that it is unacceptable to behave in this manner. If the parent refuses to calm down the responsible person in charge is to open the door and ask the parent to leave.
- If the parent refuses to leave the responsible person in charge is to inform the parent that the police will be contacted to escort them from the premises. Shine Bright EYM Central Office to be notified as soon as possible.
- Staff members are not to touch the parent.
- Staff are to have regard for their own, other staff and children's safety.
- Other staff are to be informed of what they need to do in this potentially escalating situation, staff may need to gather the children together for a group mat time in another area if required. Emergency procedures may need to be followed i.e. lock down or lock out, or evacuate. This situation should be practiced as one of your emergency drills.
- Staff should seek assistance from each other if required.
- Staff should develop a code sign or word to alert each other when they are feeling unsafe.
- Staff must document the incident and report it to Shine Bright EYM Central Office who will notify DET if children have been involved or witnessed the event.
- Shine Bright EYM Central Office will organise counselling for educators and children where necessary.

Legislation and standards

Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

- *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* (Vic)
- *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* (Vic), as amended 2011
- *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* (Vic), as amended 2011
- *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010*: Sections 167, 174
- *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011*: Regulations 157, 175
- *National Quality Standard, Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety*
National Quality Standard, Quality Area 4: Staffing Arrangements
National Quality Standard, Quality Area 6: Collaborative Partnership with Families and Communities
- *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004*
- *Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2007*

Sources

- Early Childhood Australia, *Code of Ethics*: www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au
- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights: www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/

Related Policies

- *Complaints and Grievances Policy*
- *Occupational Health and Safety Policy*
- *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy*
- *Staffing Policy*
- *Child Safe Environment*
- *Emergency and Evacuation*
- *Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness*
- *Staff Health & Wellbeing*
- *Workplace Bullying*

Authorisation

This policy was adopted by the Approved Provider, Shine Bright EYM in October 2019.

Review date: 2022