

# Child Safety & Wellbeing Policy

Meraki Early Learning Centre — Family Summary

## 1. Our Commitment

Meraki Early Learning Centre is committed to the safety, wellbeing, dignity and cultural identity of every child in our care. Child safety is a core value embedded in everything we do — from the way we design our environments and routines, to how we recruit and train our team, to the daily conversations we have with children and families.

We maintain a zero-tolerance policy towards child abuse, racism, bullying and anti-social behaviour, and we comply with the National Child Safe Standards and all applicable Victorian and Commonwealth legislation.

## 2. Scope

This policy applies to all educators, trainees, students, contractors, volunteers, family members and visitors at our Bayswater and Mooroolbark centres.

## 3. Guiding Principles

- Every child has the right to feel safe, respected and heard.
- The best interests of the child are paramount in every decision.
- Cultural safety, including for Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander children, is a fundamental right.
- Children with disability and neurodiverse children are equally protected and supported.
- Children's voices, opinions and questions are actively sought and taken seriously.
- Families are partners in keeping children safe.

## 4. Recruitment and Screening

All educators, trainees and volunteers must hold a current Working With Children Check and National Police Check before commencing. Recruitment includes structured child-safe interview questions, reference checks and a documented induction into our child safety policies and Code of Conduct.

## 5. Code of Conduct

All team members must:

- Treat every child with respect, warmth and patience.
- Maintain professional boundaries at all times.
- Never be alone with a child in a way that is not visible or observable.
- Use only centre-approved devices for documentation; personal phones are not permitted in learning spaces.
- Report any concerns about another adult's behaviour, no matter how small.

## 6. Training and Supervision

All team members complete training in the Child Safe Standards, mandatory reporting, recognising signs of abuse and neglect, and trauma-informed practice. Refresher training, reflective practice and team meetings focused on safeguarding are held regularly.

## 7. Physical and Online Safety

- Secure, monitored entry points and sign-in/out for every adult.
- Authorised collection lists for each child — children are never released to unauthorised adults.
- Educator-to-child ratios maintained at all times, indoors and outdoors.
- Photographs and observations are stored on centre-approved systems with explicit family consent.
- Children's images are never shared publicly without written family consent.

## 8. Cultural Safety

We acknowledge the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people as the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we operate. First Nations perspectives, cultures and languages are woven into our daily program. We celebrate the cultural diversity of all our families and ensure each child's identity is visible and valued.

## 9. Mandatory Reporting

All early childhood educators are mandatory reporters under Victorian law. If any team member forms a reasonable belief that a child has suffered, or is at risk of, significant harm, they are required to report to Child Protection or Victoria Police immediately. See the accompanying **Reporting a Concern — Quick Guide for Families** for parent-facing reporting steps and contact numbers.

## 10. Review

This policy is reviewed annually, or earlier if legislation, regulations or our practice changes. Families are notified of significant updates via our communication app.