

**Section:** 2 Health and Safety

**Policy ID Number:** 2.13

**Link to National Quality Standard:** 2.2

**Link to Education and Care Services National Legislation:** As167 r103 - r110, r116, r117

### 1 Policy Statement

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The Coordination Unit will undertake a Health and Home Safety Check (HHSC) on all proposed Family Day Care (FDC) residences and repeat these at least annually on all FDC residences.

### 2 Rationale

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Family Day Care is committed to creating and maintaining a child safe organisation where protecting children and preventing and responding to child abuse is embedded in the everyday thinking and practice of all Educators, Educator family members, work experience/work placement students and volunteers irrespective of their involvement in child related duties.

To ensure the environment for education and care is safe and comfortable for Educators, families and children.

To ensure the assessing and reassessing of all environments the children are accessing, especially regarding risk minimisation and hazard elimination, is an ongoing and daily practice for all staff and Educators.

### 3 Procedures

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#### 3.1 Initial Assessment of a residence to be used as an Education and Care environment

- On application to become an Educator, the prospective Educator must provide information about the suitability of their residence and nominate the areas within the house that they intend to use for FDC.
- An initial HHSC will be completed during a visit to the prospective Educator's home by the Coordination Unit staff. This will be to determine if the residence is suitable and is consistent with the information provided in the application.
- During this visit the Coordination Unit staff will discuss with the prospective Educator any areas that require modification to ensure all risks are minimised in the environment. This information is provided in writing after the visit to the prospective Educator.
- Further visits are completed by Coordination Unit staff to determine all modifications have been made and risks minimised before the prospective Educator's registration is completed.
- Any areas within the indoor or outdoor environment that are nominated by an Educator as not accessible to children, must be made inaccessible by appropriate means at all times children are in care. These areas are not to be used for the education and care of children at any time. This will be checked both on home visits and during the annual HHSC.
- The Coordination Unit will provide a Certificate of Compliance once the HHSC is complete.

#### 3.2 Annual Assessment of a residence being used as an Education and Care environment

- An annual HHSC is carried out on each registered Educator's residence. If an Educator is on leave at the time their HHAC is due, this is completed prior to them recommencing work.
- Educators who fail to meet the required standard for the HHSC will be given notice to comply.
- The amount of time given to comply with this notice will depend on the level of risk and whether the area can be made inaccessible to children. If it is a high level risk the Educator may be suspended until the hazard is rectified or be given 24 hours to comply with the HHSC requirements.

- If an Educator is unwilling or unable to meet HHSC requirements, the Educator may be suspended from providing care until the breach of safety is rectified.
- A subsequent check will be performed and upon satisfactory completion of the HHSC the Educator's residence will be approved and a Certificate of Compliance will be provided.

### **3.3 Regular monitoring by the Coordination Unit**

- The safety of the environment will be monitored as part of regular home visits. The practices outlined above will apply to any risks identified.
- Coordination Unit staff may monitor targeted aspects of the HHSC at home visits.

### **3.4 Daily Home Safety Checklist**

- The Coordination Unit will provide each Educator with a Daily Home Safety Checklist. All Educators will complete this every day they are providing education and care for children.
- When Coordination Unit staff visit an Educator's residence, they will sight the Daily Home Safety Checklist and will also monitor the environment to ensure it is safe.

### **3.5 Educator Leave**

- If an Educator is on leave at the time their annual HHSC is due, this will be completed prior to children attending care.
- If an Educator takes a period of extended leave a HHSC will be completed before the Educator can resume providing education and care.

### **3.6 Renovations**

- Prior to commencing any renovations, the Educator is required to provide one month's notice to the Coordination Unit and families as well as meet their Public Liability Insurance provider's requirements.
- The Educator is responsible to determine whether any building permits are required. If required, copies of these must be provided to the Coordination Unit or a letter stating that a permit is not required.
- Prior to commencing any works, the Educator must submit a copy of plans and explanation of any works to be undertaken to the Coordination Unit. If the Educator intends to continue providing care for the duration of the works, they will also provide a safety plan for approval. The safety plan must detail how children will be kept safe.
- Coordination Unit staff will work with the Educator to identify if there will be any risks to the health safety and wellbeing of children while works are being completed. The Coordination Unit will provide approval for care to continue if the environment can be made safe for children or the Educator will have to take leave if the environment can't be made safe.
- If care can proceed the Educator will notify families of the works and the safety plan and ensure the safety plan is enacted at all times while children are in care.
- If providing care and education while having works done the Educator will ensure compliance will all legislation and service policies and procedures.
- Upon completion of renovations, Coordination Unit staff will complete a HHSC prior to children accessing the area, or to ensure the area is inaccessible to children. All requirements of the HHSC must be in place before a Certificate of Compliance will be issued and children can recommence care.

### **3.7 Urgent repairs to the FDC residence**

- If an Educator requires urgent repairs to their residence, they must notify the Coordination Unit immediately. If this is outside office hours the Educator will call the emergency phone.

- The Coordination Unit staff and the Educator will discuss the situation that has arisen and determine if the environment can be made safe for children. As part of this, the Educator will outline the safety measures they can implement to keep the environment safe.
- If the environment can be made safe the Educator will:
  - Implement any agreed safety measures and send photo evidence to the Coordination Unit; and
  - Notify families of the urgent repairs and safety measures put in place; and
  - Ensure the safety measures are in place at all times children are in care.
- Coordination Unit staff will visit the residence as soon as possible to support the Educator and ensure the environment is safe.
- Depending on the nature of the urgent repairs if required the Coordination Unit will complete a HHSC once repairs are completed.

### **3.8 Change of residence**

- The Educator must provide one month notice to the Coordination Unit prior to a change of residence.
- Prior to caring for children in a new residence a HHSC will be completed by Coordination Unit staff. For the purposes of the check the environment must be set up in the manner it will be used for FDC.
- Care will not commence in the new residence until Coordination Unit staff have approved the new residence. This may mean the Educator needs to take leave until they have met all safety standards.
- The Coordination Unit will provide a Certificate of Compliance once the HHSC is complete.

### **3.9 Heating and Cooling**

- All gas heaters must be checked every two years to ensure it is safe from Carbon Monoxide emissions. This needs to be completed by a registered Plumber/Gas Fitter and documentation must be provided to the Coordination Unit.
- The Educator's residence must be maintained at a comfortable temperature that is cooled in summer and warmed in winter.
- All heating and cooling units, including use of open or enclosed wood fires must be adequately secured and guarded to prevent injury to children.
- All portable and fixed fans must be inaccessible to children.
- Portable kerosene heaters are not to be used and not to be accessible to children.

### **3.10 Keeping of Animals**

- All animals and birds on an Educator's property are to be adequately cared for that is, kept clean and healthy, regularly wormed and immunised.
- Educators must ensure that any dog is made inaccessible to children.
- All animal contact by children in care shall be directly supervised by the Educator at all times.
- Bird cages are to be kept at a reasonable distance from food preparation areas and out of reach of children. Cages are to be cleaned on a regular basis and not during care hours.
- Educators will advise the Coordination Unit of the acquisition of any animal or bird at their home. Provision for their pet's housing is to be agreed to by the Coordination Unit.

## **4 References**

- [Education and Care Services National Law Act](#)

- [Education and Care Services National Regulations](#)
- [National Quality Standards](#)
- [ACECQA](#)
- Educator Agreement

### Revision History

Date	Revision No.	Revision Section	Revision Description
December 2016	1.0	All	Initial Policy Release (creation date)
October 2021	2.0	All	Updated from old Policy to new format and current information.
October 2023	Next Review Date		

**This policy and procedure supersedes the one in the Family Day Care Policy Manual dated 2016.**