

Child Safe Environment - Physical and Online Environment

Background

At Peak Sports and Learning, we prioritise the health and safety of children as fundamental to their growth and development. To uphold this commitment, it is imperative to establish comprehensive policies and procedures ensuring a high standard of safety within our centers. Our goal is to minimise accidents and injuries through proactive measures.

We conduct regular safety hazard checks both indoors and outdoors on our premises, encompassing all equipment and resources. These checks are meticulously documented in the QIP Centre Diary, which serves as a record of identified issues and their corresponding solutions. Additionally, adherence to Work Health & Safety guidelines is mandatory for all staff and visitors at all times.

Furthermore, we recognise that the physical environment plays a crucial role in shaping children’s wellbeing, happiness, and creativity, while fostering independence and facilitating learning. Within the service, the choices we make regarding resources, materials, spaces, layout, air quality, and lighting directly influence the quality of learning experiences available to children. By providing access to a diverse range of experiences across both indoor and outdoor areas, we aim to enhance children's learning opportunities and active engagement.

Purpose

Peak Sports & Learning will ensure the environment is safe, clean, and well maintained for children, families, educators, and visitors. Children’s awareness of the environment and sustainable practice will be supported through daily practices, resources and interactions. The physical environment will support children’s participation and engagement, development, learning, and safety, and will provide supervised access to positive experiences and inclusive relationships.

Considerations & Legislative requirements

Education and Care Services National Regulations	National Quality Standard/s	Other Service policies/documentation	Other
National Regulation 73, 74, 75, 76, 80, 82, 84A, 86, 98, 99, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 113, 114, 115, 123, 156, 168, 170, 171	Quality Area 2- Children’s health and safety Elements: 2.1, 2.2, 2.2.1, 2.2.2, 2.2.3 Quality Area 3- Physical Environment	Child Safe Environment - Child Protection Policy Child Safe Environment – Supervision Policy Excursion & On-site Activity Policy Health, Hygiene and Cleaning Policy Sun Safety Policy	Education and Care Services National Act 2010 Working with Children Act (NSW) The Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 Family Law Act 1975 Child Safe Standards

Roles and Responsibilities

Approved Provider

- Ensure compliance with the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations.
- Ensure the implementation of the 'Providing a Child Safe Environment – Physical and Online Environment' policy and procedures, including conducting appropriate risk assessments and taking actions to minimise risks to children's health and safety.
- Ensure that risk assessments identify potential risks and hazards within the online and physical environment, minimising any risks without compromising a child's right to privacy, access to information, social connections, and learning opportunities.
- Provide an environment free from tobacco, illicit drugs, and alcohol, ensuring educators or staff are not impaired in their ability to supervise or care for children.
- Promote a culture of child safety and wellbeing that underpins all service operations, thereby reducing risks to children, including abuse.
- Take reasonable steps to ensure that nominated supervisors, educators, and staff adhere to the 'Providing a Child Safe Environment – Physical and Online Environment' policy and procedures.
- Ensure that copies of the policy and procedures are accessible to supervisors, coordinators, educators, staff, and available for inspection.

Nominated Supervisor / Responsible Person

- Implement the 'Providing a Child Safe Environment – Physical and Online Environment' policy and procedures.
- Ensure that daily hazard identification checks are completed and any identified risks to children are eliminated or minimised where possible.
- Ensure the physical environment is fit for purpose and set up to maximise children's learning opportunities and active engagement.
- Ensure that risk assessments are followed and updated to identify potential risks and hazards within the online and physical environment.
- Minimise any identified risks in the physical and online environment.
- Ensure all educators and staff know where to access the 'Providing a Child Safe Environment – Physical and Online Environment' policy and procedures.
- Provide an environment free from tobacco, illicit drugs, and alcohol.
- Maintain ongoing communication with educators and staff about their responsibilities and any changes to policies, procedures, and legislation.
- Support educators and staff in upholding the service's culture of child safety and wellbeing.

Educators

- Implement the 'Providing a Child Safe Environment – Physical and Online Environment' policy and procedures, following risk assessments.
- Uphold the service's culture of child safety and wellbeing.
- Provide an environment free from tobacco, illicit drugs, and alcohol.
- Participate in hazard identification and implement risk minimisation strategies in both the physical and online environment.
- Involve children and young people in decision-making affecting them, especially in safety issues and risk identification.

Procedures

At Peak Sports and Learning, we are committed to a proactive process of risk management, ensuring that safety checks are carried out on the premises, indoors and outdoors, and on all equipment to ensure the safety of our children and educators. All staff should be constantly aware of their surrounding environment and monitor safety at all times.

Physical Environment –

General Safety

- All areas of the school will be maintained in a clean and tidy manner.
- Pathways and floor spaces where appropriate will be kept clear and safe from trip hazards.
- Educators will regularly discuss dangerous situations, substances, and safety practices with the children, which will be reflected in the educational program across the curriculum.
- Simple warning signs will be posted around the school where potentially dangerous substances or items are stored.
- Children will not have access to water play activities unless supervised by educators.
- Educators will position themselves to allow good supervision of the play areas and children.
- Children will not be permitted to play on fences or gates, play with locks on gates, or throw sand or water.
- Children will be appropriately dressed according to our Sun Protection Policy, including wearing clothing and hats in line with sun safe standards, and enclosed shoes with covered toes for safety in sports and general play.
- No child will be allowed to leave the premises without an authorised adult.
- All Responsible Persons are required to have up-to-date First Aid, Asthma, and Anaphylaxis training, paid for by Peak Sports and Learning. There will always be at least one educator on-site with current approved first aid qualifications.
- As Peak Sports and Learning leases premises from the Department of Education or Private Schools, it is the lessor's responsibility to ensure the premises are sprayed annually by a professional pest controller (cockroaches, spiders, etc.).
- In conjunction with the school, the service will ensure there is adequate access to shaded areas through COLAs, shade sails, large trees, and awnings. Trees and shrubs found to have low or dangerous branches will be reported to the school maintenance.

Electrical Equipment

- All electrical cables will be kept out of the reach of children, shielded by furniture, and clipped in place wherever possible.
- Electrical equipment will be tested and tagged annually by a qualified electrician to ensure and regulate equipment functionality.

Dangerous substances

- All dangerous substances, including chemicals, must be kept out of children's reach and stored in their original containers with their original labels attached. Environmentally friendly, less harmful products will be purchased where possible and stored in tubs, clearly labeled and out of reach of children.

Water supplies

- A fresh drinking supply will be available and accessible to all children, staff, and visitors at all times through school bubblers and Peak's own supply of beverages. Children will be encouraged to remain hydrated.
- All hot water taps accessible to children will be thermostatically controlled to ensure that the temperature of the water does not exceed 40°C. This is part of the school's/lessor's responsibility.

Toys and Equipment

- Equipment purchased will be checked for safety.
- Toys and equipment will be in good condition, clean, and appropriate to the age and development of the children. Damaged or broken toys and equipment will be repaired or replaced when found or will be withdrawn from use until repaired. Toys and equipment will be cleaned regularly with disinfectant.
- Toys and equipment will be put away when not in use.
- Potentially dangerous items used with the children (e.g., knives for cooking experiences) will be supervised by educators during activities. Items will be removed from activity areas when not in use and stored appropriately.
- All outdoor equipment used will comply with current Australian Standards.
- When setting up the playground environment, educators will be aware of various safety considerations, including soft fall surfaces, equipment height, age and development of the children, and maintaining equipment in good order.

Building, Furniture, Fittings, Fencing and Gates

- The building will be maintained in good working order by the school/lessor. The school will be kept clean and tidy. Floors will be smooth and even with non-slip surfaces, and paint on walls will be maintained in a reasonable and safe condition to ensure children have no access to old paint.
- Furniture and fittings will be kept in good condition, cleaned daily, and suitable for the age group of the children using them.
- Shelving or cupboards will be secure, and furniture and equipment will be placed in safe positions to avoid tripping hazards and not placed near windows or glass.

Fixed Equipment

Fixed equipment may be used during the centre operating times.

Educators will follow safety strategies to minimise risk of injury whilst using equipment.

These include and are not limited to:

- Safety instructions made clear to all children.
- Equipment checked prior to use for any dangers/hazards and reported if necessary.
- Not being used in wet weather or following wet weather which could cause slipping or loss of grip.
- Checking equipment in hot weather, using good judgement if dangerously hot. In particular, metal handrails etc
- Consider age and abilities when supervising children on equipment
- Use equipment properly – e.g. slide feet first
- Avoid overcrowding

Online Environment

Peak Sports and Learning is committed to creating and maintaining a safe online environment with the support and collaboration of children, young people, educators, staff, families, and the community.

The service will ensure that:

- Anti-virus and internet security systems are installed to block access to unsuitable websites, newsgroups, and chat rooms.
- Confidential data is stored securely, either offline or online.
- Software and devices are regularly updated to prevent any breach of confidential information.
- Personal mobile phones are not used to take photos or videos of children at the Service.
- Children are always supervised when using any technology.
- Children who bring their own devices to Peak will be required to complete a device agreement with staff. Parents will be asked to provide permission for their child to use their device at Peak and to reinforce the terms of this agreement.
- Where possible, students will use the Department of Education's internet to ensure safe and appropriate internet searches.
- If a child is inadvertently exposed to inappropriate content, center staff will respond promptly, and the child's family will be informed.
- Children will not be permitted to use their own mobile phone devices in the service. These devices are to remain in the child's school bag at all times.
- Intentional programming will ensure that children are educated on online safety risks, such as online abuse, how to stay safe online, and where to seek help.

Risk Assessments

Risk assessments are conducted and reviewed annually. They document identified hazards, identify individuals at risk, outline controls and safety measures in place, assess the seriousness of the risk or potential injury, detail any further actions needed to control the risk, designate responsibility for each action, specify when and how often actions will be undertaken, and establish methods for monitoring and checking, as well as who will perform these tasks.

All services will have a Risk Management Plan for their daily activities. Additionally, all excursions away from the centres undergo individual risk assessments. In instances where the service plans an excursion, a risk assessment will be conducted, and all educators will be required to read and acknowledge it.

The service will also maintain a Child Safe Risk Management Plan, which addresses both the physical and online environments, outlining associated risks and the control measures in place to reduce or minimise those identified risks.

All staff members undergo training in the risk assessment process to ensure their understanding and compliance.

Version Control Table

Version Control	Date Released	Next Review	Approved by	Amendment
1	Jan 2014	March 2018	Directors	Amendments to procedures as needed annually.
2	March 2018	April 2019	Directors	Version Control table introduced. Rewritten and edited to reflect 2018 updated Quality Standards.
3	April 2019	April 2020	Directors	Amendments to include reference to QIP daily hazard identification checks.
4	February 2020	May 2020	Directors	Moved to new document review timeline.
5	May 2020	May 2022	Directors	Small amendments to updated Risk Assessments and terms
6	May 2022	May 2024	Directors	Amendment to General safety rules and addition of fixed equipment safety strategies.
7	March 2024	May 2025	Directors	Addition of online environment. Policy renamed and amended to form part of overall Child Safe Environment related policy and procedures.