

Introduction

C&K is committed to promoting and protecting children's best interests, health and safety. Safe, protective and healthy environments in which children live, learn and are cared for are fundamental to every child having the opportunity to achieve their educational and developmental potential.

C&K has a zero tolerance for child harm. All C&K employees, volunteers, students and external contractors will **immediately** report and escalate concerns if they have a reasonable suspicion a child is being or is at risk of being harmed within a C&K centre / program. All reports are treated seriously.

All C&K employees, volunteers, students and external contractors are required to undertake position responsibilities in accordance with the [*Early Childhood Australia \(ECA\) Code of Ethics*](#) and C&K values, policies and procedures.

Who can report?

- Any person (e.g. child, employee, parent / guardian, visitor, student, volunteer or external contractor) can report a concern or suspicion a child is being harmed or is at risk of being harmed within a C&K centre / program.
- All concerns including those raised by children will be heard, treated seriously and consistently.

What is reportable?

- Any allegation, disclosure and suspicion of child harm within a C&K centre / program.
- A serious concern for a child's safety and wellbeing whilst they are attending a C&K centre / program.
- Appendix 1 of this procedure provides child harm examples and definitions.

Making a report

- Any allegation, disclosure and suspicion of child harm must be immediately reported to a centre Director, Committee President or Early Childhood Education Manager. Contact details are located on the Service Profile display (at a centre) or available on the C&K Intranet on the contact page. Alternatively, reports can be made by telephoning C&K Central (07 3552 5300) emailing feedback@candk.asn.au, or via [Online Feedback](#) on the C&K website.

If a child is in immediate risk of harm, immediately report the matter to the police (000).

Notifying and escalating a report – branch centres

Immediately	1.	Educator / Director to notify their Early Childhood Education Manager. If not available, notify Regional Manager.
Within 24hrs of notification	2.	The Early Childhood Education Manager (ECEM) will: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Immediately notify their Regional Manager and Human Resource Business Partner (HR). As a matter of priority, action HR direction.

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		<p>b. Notify the regional regulatory office via telephone.</p> <p>c. Complete notification as per <i>Procedure Child Incident Reporting</i> and email to nqf@candk.asn.au. Access notification form from the NQF Intranet page.</p>
	3.	<p>The Quality and Regulation Team will:</p> <p>a. Submit notification via the NQAITS system.</p> <p>b. Email a notification receipt to ECEM (and relevant / appropriate stakeholders). Email will detail immediate actions and if applicable, communication guidance. If allegation is complex, Legal and Governance review and approval of communication guidance must be obtained.</p> <p>c. Implement <i>Procedure Complaint management</i> if allegation was received as a complaint.</p>
	4.	<p>The Early Childhood Education Manager will:</p> <p>a. (If allegation was <u>not</u> raised by the child's parent / guardian) Notify child's parent / guardian. Refer to communication guidance provided by the Quality and Regulation Team. Face to face or telephone communication is preferred. Do not email or text message confidential allegation information.</p> <p>Continue to communicate with child's parent / guardian until the matter is finalised.</p>
Within 48hrs of notification	5.	<p>The Early Childhood Education Manager will:</p> <p>a. With the assistance of their Regional Manager and HR, draft a decision brief for the Risk and Safety Panel. Decision brief templates available from HR.</p>
	6.	<p>The HR Business Partner will:</p> <p>a. Forward the finalised decision brief to the Risk and Safety Panel.</p>
As a matter of priority	7.	<p>The Risk and Safety Panel will:</p> <p>a. Convene a meeting as per Risk and Safety Panel Charter. The Chair will immediately advise the Regional Manager, Early Childhood Education Manager and HR of their decision and any required actions.</p> <p>b. Contact / notify the Child Protection Investigation Unit if allegation could relate to a criminal offence. An internal workplace investigation may be initiated after authorisation from Child Protection Investigation Unit.</p>

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Notifying and escalating a report- affiliate centres

Immediately	1.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Educator to notify Director / Committee President. b. Committee President to notify Early Childhood Education Consultant.
Within 24hrs of notification	2.	<p>The Early Childhood Education Consultant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Will immediately notify their Regional Manager and advise Committee to seek HR advice from Community Management Solutions (CMSolutions) b. (If requested by centre) With the assistance of the Q&R Team, provide communication guidance to centre. If allegation is complex, Legal and Governance review and approval of communication guidance must be obtained.
		<p>The Director / Committee President:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Will notify the regional regulatory office via telephone. b. Will complete notification via the National Quality Agenda IT System as per <i>Procedure Child Incident Reporting</i>. c. Is strongly encouraged to consider CMSolutions information regarding appropriate response and actions. d. Will contact / notify the Child Protection Investigation Unit if allegation could relate to a criminal offence. An internal workplace investigation may be initiated after authorisation from Child Protection Investigation Unit.
	3.	<p>If allegation was <u>not</u> raised by the child's parent / guardian, the Director / Committee President will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Notify child's parent / guardian. Face to face or telephone communication is preferred. Do not email or text message confidential allegation information. Refer to communication guide provided by C&K. <p>Continue to communicate with child's parent until the matter is finalised.</p>
Within 48hrs of notification	4.	<p>The Early Childhood Education Consultant will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. With the assistance of their Regional Manager, draft an information brief for the Risk and Safety Panel. Information brief templates available from HR Department.
As a matter of priority	5.	<p>The RSP will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Convene a meeting as per Risk and Safety Panel Charter. b. Review the information brief and note as an agenda item. The Chair will immediately advise the Regional Manager, Early Childhood Education Consultant of any required actions. The Early Childhood Education Consultant to refer the Committee to CMSolutions for HR support and advice if required.

Training and communication

- This procedure is outlined:
 - Internally (e.g. *C&K Intranet and compliance training*) and externally via the C&K website.
 - During the induction of all new employees, volunteers, students, external contractors and visitors. All employees and continuing volunteers, students and external contractors are required to complete annual compliance refresher training.
- Reporting suspected harm can be distressing. Take care of yourself. If needed, access the Employee Assistance Program or ICARE (counselling services that may be of preference to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees).

Acknowledgements and references

- Defining Reportable conduct – NSW Ombudsman
https://www.ombo.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0006/40992/FS11-Notifying-and-identifying-reportable-conduct-170210.pdf
- Queensland Government Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services website – child abuse
<https://www.communities.qld.gov.au/childsafety/protecting-children/what-is-child-abuse>
- An overview of the Victorian Child Safe Standards
- Child Protection Tool Kit – ourcommunit.com.au
- Early Childhood Australia (ECA) Code of Ethics
- *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers*

Appendix 1 – Examples of child harm

Physical abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical abuse occurs when a child has suffered, or is at risk of suffering, non-accidental physical trauma or injury. It can include (but not limited to) hitting, pushing, shoving, dragging, throwing objects or making threats to physically harm a child. • Physical abuse does not always leave a visible mark or injury.
Sexual abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sexual abuse occurs when an adult, stronger child or adolescent uses their power or authority to involve a child in a sexual activity. • Sexual abuse can be physical, verbal or emotional and can include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ kissing or holding a child in a sexual manner ○ exposing genitals to a child ○ having sexual relations with a child under 16 years of age ○ talking in a sexually explicit way that is not age or developmentally appropriate ○ making obscene phone calls or remarks to a child ○ sending obscene mobile text messages or emails to a child ○ fondling a child in a sexual manner ○ persistently intruding on a child's privacy ○ penetrating the child's vagina or anus by penis, finger or any other object ○ oral sex ○ rape ○ incest ○ showing pornographic films, magazines or photographs to a child ○ having a child pose or perform in a sexual manner ○ forcing a child to watch a sexual act ○ child prostitution • Refer to '<i>The Traffic Light Framework – a guide to identify, understand and respond to children's sexual behaviour</i>' (<i>True Relationships and Reproductive Health</i>) to identify and classify child sexual behaviour.
Grooming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grooming refers to the process by which a person who are responsible for the sexual abuse groom children to establish trust and gain access to a child. • Grooming behaviour can be difficult to identify as it can sometimes include appropriate behaviours. Examples of grooming behaviour may include (but is not limited to): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Inappropriately extending a relationship outside of work / education and care service. ○ Inappropriate personal communication that explores sexual feelings or intimate personal feelings with a child. ○ Persuading a child or group of children that they have a 'special' relationship by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Spending inappropriate special time with a child – Inappropriately giving gifts – Inappropriately showing special favours to one child / ren – Inappropriately allowing the child to overstep rules – Asking the child to keep this relationship to themselves. ○ Testing boundaries: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Undressing in front of a child

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Encouraging inappropriate physical contact (even where it is not overtly sexual) - Talking about sex - 'Accidental' intimate touching
Emotional abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emotional abuse occurs when a child's social, emotional, cognitive or intellectual development is impaired or threatened. • It can include emotional deprivation due to persistent rejection, hostility, teasing / bullying, yelling and / or criticism and is inconsistent with the following C&K procedures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Supporting Relationships and Partnerships</i> ○ <i>Guiding Children's Behaviour</i>
Neglecting to protect a child's safety, health or well-being	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neglect can include an action or inaction by a person who has care responsibilities towards a child. • Supervisory neglect - An intention or reckless failure to adequately supervise (as per <i>Procedure Supervision</i>) a child, or a significantly careless act or failure to act that results in harm to a child or death. • Carer neglect - Grossly inadequate care that involves depriving a child of basic necessities such as food and drink, clothing, critical medical care or treatment or shelter. • Reckless act (or failure to act) - A reckless act or failure to act that involves a gross breach of professional standards (i.e. <i>C&K Code of Conduct</i>, the <i>ECA Code of Ethics</i> and <i>Australian Professional Standards for Teachers</i> (Queensland registered teachers only) and has the potential to result in significant harm to a child or death. • Failure to protect from abuse - An obvious or very clearly unreasonable failure to respond to information strongly indicating actual or potential serious harm of a child.
Ill-treatment - Failing to protect children's health or well-being	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ill-treatment includes circumstances where a person treats or interacts with a child in an unreasonable, improper, inhumane or cruel manner. The focus is on the alleged conduct rather than the effect on the child. • Ill-treatment can include interaction with a child, disciplining or correcting a child in an unreasonable / inappropriate manner that is inconsistent with the <i>ECA Code of Ethics</i> and the following C&K policies and procedures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Supporting Relationships and Partnerships</i> ○ <i>Guiding Children's Behaviour</i> ○ <i>Code of Conduct</i>