

# TRAUMA MANAGEMENT POLICY

A traumatic event is a frightening, dangerous or violent event that poses a threat to a child's life or bodily integrity (The National Child Traumatic Stress Network). A child witnessing a frightening or dangerous event can also be traumatic.

Traumatic experiences, or witnessing a traumatic experience, can lead to strong emotional or physical reactions that can last long after the traumatic incident or event has ended. Trauma experienced in childhood has been shown to cause neurobiological changes that impact development, and changes to structures in the brain.

Children who have experienced or been witness to an incident of trauma can often have difficulty regulating emotions, lack impulse control and may be more easily triggered or 'set off' and is more likely to react intensely.

## NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD (NQS)

QUALITY AREA 2: CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND SAFETY		
2.1.2	Health practices and procedures	Effective illness and injury management and hygiene practices are promoted and implemented.
2.2	Safety	Each child is protected.
2.2.1	Supervision	At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from harm and hazard.
2.2.2	Incident and emergency management	Plans to effectively manage incidents and emergencies are developed in consultation with relevant authorities, practiced and implemented.
2.2.3	Child Protection	Management, educators and staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities to identify and respond to every child at risk of abuse or neglect.

EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL REGULATIONS	
12	Meaning of serious incident
85	Incident, injury, trauma and illness policies and procedures
86	Notification to parents of incident, injury, trauma and illness
87	Incident, injury, trauma and illness record
88	Infectious diseases
89	First aid kits
97	Emergency and evacuation procedures
161	Authorisations to be kept in enrolment record
162	Health information to be kept in enrolment record
168	Education and care service must have policies and procedures
174(2)(a)	Prescribed information to be notified to Regulatory Authority
176(2)(a)	Time to notify certain information to Regulatory Authority

## RELATED POLICIES

Administration of First Aid Policy Administration of Medication Policy Anaphylaxis Management Policy Asthma Management Policy Control of Infectious Disease Policy COVID-19 Management Policy Diabetes Management Policy Epilepsy Policy Incident Management Policy Administration of First Aid Policy Illness Management Policy	Family Communication Policy Handwashing Policy Health and Safety Policy Immunisation Policy Medical Conditions Policy Privacy and Confidentiality Policy Record Keeping and Retention Policy Sick Children Policy Work Health and Safety Policy Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Record Policy
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## PURPOSE

This policy has been established to ensure clear lines of action are identified to effectively manage an event involving a child becoming involved in an incident or occurrence where there is a risk of trauma to the child in any Happy Haven OSHC setting.

## SCOPE

This policy applies to children, families, staff, and visitors of the Happy Haven OSHC Service.

## IMPLEMENTATION

### TRAUMA

Trauma is defined as the impact of an event or a series of events during which a child feels helpless and beyond their ability to cope. There are a range of different events that might be traumatic to a child, including accidents, injuries, serious illness, natural disasters (bush fires), assault, and threats of violence, domestic violence, neglect or abuse and wars or terrorist attacks. Parental or cultural trauma can also have a traumatising effect on children. This definition firmly places trauma into a developmental context:

*“Trauma changes the way children understand their world, the people in it and where they belong”* (Australian Childhood Foundation, 2010).

Trauma can disrupt the relationships a child has with their family and staff who care for them. It can transform children’s language skills, physical and social development and the ability to regulate their emotions and behaviour.

Behavioural responses for pre-school aged children and young children who have experienced trauma may include:

- New or increased clingy behaviour such as constantly following a parent, carer or staff around
- Anxiety when separated from parents or carers
- New problems with sleeping, eating, going to the toilet and paying attention
- Shutting down and withdrawing from everyday experiences
- Difficulties enjoying activities
- Being jumpier or easily frightened
- Physical complaints with no known cause such as stomach pains and headaches
- Blaming themselves and thinking the trauma was their fault.

Children who have experienced traumatic events often need help to adjust to the way they are feeling. When families and staff take the time to listen, talk, and play they may find children begin to say or show

how they are feeling. Providing children with time and space lets them know you are available and care about them.

It is important for staff to be patient when dealing with a child who has experienced a traumatic event. It may take time to understand how to respond to a child's needs and new behaviours before families, educators and staff are able to work out the best ways to support a child. It is imperative to realise that a child's behaviour may be a response to the traumatic event rather than just 'challenging' behaviour.

Happy Haven OSHC staff can assist children dealing with trauma by:

- Observing the behaviours and expressed feelings of a child and documenting responses that were most helpful in these situations
- Creating a 'relaxation' space with familiar and comforting toys and objects children can use when they are having a difficult time
- Having quiet time activities available (i.e., reading a story)
- Trying different types of play that focus on expressing feelings (e.g., drawing, playing with play dough, dress-ups and physical games)
- Helping children understand their feelings by using reflecting statements (e.g., 'you look sad/angry right now, I wonder if you need some help?')

There are several ways for families and staff to look after their own wellbeing and maintain awareness, so they continue to be effective when offering support to children who have experienced traumatic events.

Strategies to assist families, educators and staff to cope with children's stress or trauma may include:

- Taking time to calm yourself when you have a strong emotional response. This may mean walking away from a situation for a few minutes or handing over to another educator or staff member if possible
- Forward-planning with a range of possibilities in case difficult situations occur
- Remembering to find ways to look after yourself, even if it is hard to find time or you feel other things are more important. Taking time out helps adults be more available to children when they need support.
- Using supports available to you within your relationships (e.g., family, friends, colleagues).

- Identifying a supportive person to talk to about your experiences. This might be your family doctor or another health professional.
- Accessing support resources- BeYou, Emerging Minds
- Accessing Happy Haven OSHC's internal Employee Assistance Program

*Living or working with traumatised children can be demanding so it is important to be aware of your own responses and seek support from management when required.*

### TRAUMA INFORMED PRACTICES:

*'Internationally and in Australia, more and more education and care institutions are referring to 'trauma-aware practice' to recognise and address concerns for children and young people living with the outcomes of complex trauma.' (Trauma-aware early childhood education and care, Early Childhood Australia, 2020).*

Happy Haven OSHC has been engaging the services of child behaviour experts from Connect.Ed to support our services in trauma informed care. Through this project educators have the opportunity to critically reflect on their practice and guidance of children's behaviour.

Connect.Ed promotes a regulatory and relationship-based approach to supporting children's learning and development and focus is on supporting children to regulate their emotional experiences using their emotional connection with educators ([Connect.Ed](#), 2022). Through Happy Haven OSHC's engagement with Connect.Ed, educators have access to ongoing professional development, and resources to support children within our services. Educators professional development within this program is strengthened with a sound knowledge and familiarity with trauma informed practice.

*'Educators who are attuned to children's thoughts and feelings support the development of a strong sense of wellbeing and social competencies. Exhibiting qualities of fairness, humour, sympathy and understanding builds respectful and trusting relationships with children, families, colleagues and other professionals. Educators foster independence and initiative thereby nurturing children's agency and leadership skills'*  
*(Department of Education and Training 2011, p. 11).*

### EDUCATORS WILL ENSURE:

- Happy Haven OSHC policies and procedures are adhered to at all times
- Families are notified as soon as practicable and no later than 24 hours of the trauma occurring
- *An Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Record* is completed accurately and in a timely manner as soon after the event as possible (within 24 hours)
- First aid qualified educators are present at all times on the roster and in the OSHC service
- First aid kits are suitably equipped and checked on a monthly basis (see *First Aid Kit Checklist*)
- First aid kits are easily accessible when children are present at the OSHC service and during excursions
- First aid, emergency anaphylaxis management training, and asthma management training is current and updated as required
- If the incident, situation or event presents imminent or severe risk to the health, safety and wellbeing of any person present at the OSHC service, or if an ambulance was called in response to the emergency (not as a precaution) the regulatory authority will be notified within 24 hours of the incident
- All instances of trauma are documented in the service's *Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Record*
- Critically reflect on past incidents to ensure effectiveness of current policy and procedure in place and adapt this where necessary
- Give all staff access to appropriate up to date information, or professional development on the management of incidents
- All staff have access to the National Regulations and Law and are aware of their responsibilities under these, ensuring that this occurs as part of staff induction or orientation to the service

### EDUCATORS WILL:

- Ensure that all children have opportunities to engage in experiences that enhance their sense of wellbeing and allow children to take risk that are developmentally appropriate and in a controlled environment
- Consider the planning of the physical environment and experiences, ensuring that all spaces are safe
- Follow strategies outlined in our *Guiding Children's Behaviour Policy* and accompanying documents
- Seek further support or advice from their direct line managers when unsure

- Thoughtfully group children to effectively manage supervision and any potential risks to children's health and wellbeing
- Respond to children in a timely manner and provide reassurance to ensure children's emotional and physical wellbeing is paramount at all times
- Be aware of the signs and symptoms of trauma and update their understanding as part of ongoing professional development
- Be involved in regularly reviewing and discussing policy and procedure and consider any improvements that can be made

## RESOURCES

[Be You](#)

[Connect.Ed Resources](#)

[Emerging Minds Community Trauma Toolkit](#)

[Gowrie SA](#)

## SOURCE

Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2014).

Australian Childhood Foundation. (2010). Making space for learning: Trauma informed practice in schools: <https://www.theactgroup.com.au/documents/makingspaceforlearning-traumainschools.pdf>

Australian Government Department of Education, Skills and Employment. (2011). My Time, Our Place: Framework for School Age Care in Australia.

Beyond Blue: <https://beyou.edu.au/>

Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics. (2016).

Early Childhood Australia. (2020). Trauma-aware early childhood education and care. <https://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/our-publications/research-practice-series/research-practice-series-index/2020-issues/trauma-aware-early-childhood-education-care/>

Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010. (Amended 2018).

[Education and Care Services National Regulations.](#) (2011)

Gowrie Australia Publication (Issue 3, 2019). Empathetic Educators and Outside of School Hours Care.  
<https://gowriesa.org.au/docs/Reflections-2019-3.pdf>

Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations. (2017).

Guide to the National Quality Framework. (2017). (amended 2020).

Journal of Human Behaviour in the Social Environment (Vol. 28, Issue 3, 2018). The impact and long-term effects of childhood trauma.

Raising Children Network: <https://raisingchildren.net.au/guides/a-z-health-reference/fever>

Revised National Quality Standard. (2018).

SafeWork Australia: <https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/first-aid>

The National Child Traumatic Stress Network. <https://www.nctsn.org/>

## REVIEW

POLICY REVIEWED	JUNE 2022	NEXT REVIEW DATE	JUNE 2023
MODIFICATIONS	New policy taken from childcare desktop template and archived HH policies. Transferred into HH formatting and new resources sourced for relevance.		
POLICY REVIEWED	PREVIOUS MODIFICATIONS		NEXT REVIEW DATE
Month YYYY	•		Month YYYY
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