

# Greenvue Kindergarten

## Violent and Aggressive Individuals Policy

### PURPOSE

Greenvue Kindergarten Pty. Ltd. is committed to taking all reasonable precautions necessary to ensure the health, safety, welfare and well-being of its employees, parents/guardians and visitors, and endeavours to ensure that all individuals on its premises are protected from physical and verbal abuse. The Service acknowledges that there may be instances where violence and/or aggression forms part of the enrolment record. In these circumstances, the issue will be discussed with the family and form part of the enrolment record. This information will be recorded in the child's enrolment record and flagged to ensure that staff are aware. In addition, where deemed necessary, appropriate support will be put in place, e.g. staff member does not see the individual alone.

### Definition of Physical and Verbal Abuse and Violence:

#### Physical and verbal abuse includes:

1. Unreasonable and / or offensive remarks or behaviour / rude gestures / innuendoes
2. Sexual and racial harassment
3. Threatening behaviour (with or without a weapon)
4. Actual physical assault (whether or not it results in actual injury) includes being pushed or shoved as well as being hit, punched or attacked with a weapon, or being intentionally struck with bodily fluids or excrement
5. Attacks on visitors or members of staff
6. Discrimination of any kind
7. Damage to employee's or employer's property

#### Greenvue Kindergarten supports the policy of Zero Tolerance which defines violence as:

*"Any incident where staff are abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances related to their work, involving an explicit or implicit challenge to their safety, well-being or health".*

#### Violence and aggression towards a person may also be defined as:

*"A physical contact with another person which may or may not result in pain or injury. The contact is uninvited and is an attempt to cause harm, injury or to intimidate. Non-physical aggression includes the use of language which causes offence or threatens the safety of a member of staff".*

#### Types of difficult / angry individuals

- Withdrawn, secretive, vague - limits information as a form of control
- Critical – everything is wrong, bad
- Intimidating – highly sarcastic, cutting

#### Anger can be a common and normal reaction

- Often due to a loss of control, feelings of powerlessness
- Can sometimes be justified – e.g. due to late/missed diagnosis, medical errors, fatalities, poor quality care, inadequate pain control, excessive waiting times, rudeness, etc

**How you might recognise when someone is angry:**

- Raised voice/shouting
- Flushed face
- Wild gesticulations
- Angry words
- Rigid body
- Withdrawal
- Sarcasm
- Dismissive comments
- Gritted teeth, clenched jaw

This document sets out Greenvue Kindergarten's policy for dealing with violence and aggression whether it is committed by or against any parent, visitor, or person working in the service.

This policy applies throughout the premises, including car parks, grounds and any outbuildings.

**Service Responsibilities**

Greenvue Kindergarten will seek to ensure that it takes all measures to prevent:

- Physical or verbal abuse of its employees, including racial and sexual harassment.
- Physical assault on employees by any visiting individual and other members of staff.

Both management and employees of Greenvue Kindergarten have a responsibility for trying to prevent and control physical and verbal abuse by visitors and other members of staff.

**Greenvue Kindergarten will:**

- Ensure that the Certified Supervisor is responsible for the adequate supervision of all staff members to ensure that they do not put themselves at risk of physical and verbal abuse by visitors or other staff members.
- Ensure that the contents of this document are brought to the attention of all staff members.
- Undertake suitable and sufficient violence and aggression risk assessments, in those areas for which they are responsible to quantify any risks and to identify proactive measures to eliminate and/or control the risks.
- Ensure all staff members undertake approved conflict resolution training, and where appropriate, breakaway training.
- Ensure new staff members are made aware of this policy as part of their induction.
- Ensure victims of physical assault or serious non-physical assault are offered support through occupational health & safety.
- Ensure a culture exists in which all violence and aggression incidents are reported in accordance with all National Laws & Regulations.

**Greenvue Kindergarten will also undertake the following measures to ensure a safe work environment:**

- Carry out risk assessments to assess and review the duties of employees, identifying any "at risk" situations and taking appropriate steps to reduce or remove the risk to employees, particularly if they are working alone.
- Assess and review the layout of the premises to reduce the risk to employees where physically possible.
- Assess and review the provision of personal safety equipment, such as alarms.
- Develop policies, procedures and guidelines for dealing with physical and verbal abuse.
- Provide support and counselling for victims, or refer to suitably qualified health professionals.
- Make employees aware of risks and ensure employee involvement in suitable professional development training.
- Record any incidents on Staff Incident Report Form and take any remedial action to ensure similar incidents are prevented in future.

## **Employee Responsibilities**

At all times, employees should take care to ensure a safe work environment and must consider their own safety and that of their colleagues. They must:

- Familiarise themselves with this Policy and conform to the requirements, guidelines and instructions contained within it
- Ensure they are familiar with the location of equipment or devices provided for use in at risk situations (e.g. alarms, mobile phones etc.) and know how to use them.
- Be responsible for their own security and the security of others who may be affected by their acts and omissions
- Co-operate with management on security matters and observe all safety rules at all times
- Undertake and participate in relevant training made available by Greenvue Kindergarten
- Promptly report all incidents of physical or verbal abuse (threatened or actual), violence and aggression incidents, hazards or near misses and damage within 24 hours
- Record all details of incidents in compliance with the National Laws & Regulations
- Contribute towards reviews by Approved Provider, or the Certified Supervisor concerning any incidents in which they have been involved
- Suggest precautionary measures involving changes in the layout of the work environment that can reduce risk, such as removal of possible weapons or projectiles
- Make use of any staff support and counselling available through the Service, if required.
- Advise the administration of any perceived risks involved in work activities
- Never attempt to physically tackle someone during a violent or aggressive incident

## **Service support for employees subjected to abuse**

Greenvue Kindergarten takes a serious view of any incidents of physical and verbal abuse against its employees and will support them, if assaulted, threatened or harassed, so long as the employee is correctly carrying out his or her duties.

The first concern of the management after an incident is to provide appropriate debriefing and counselling for affected employees. Depending on the severity of the incident, this counselling may be undertaken by trained professionals.

The Certified Supervisor will assist victims of violence with the completion of the Staff Incident Report Form and where appropriate will report the incident to Victoria Police & DET.

In the event of serious physical and or verbal abuse, individuals causing this will be blacklisted from entering the service's premises.

### **Dealing with violence in the Waiting Foyer Area:**

The essential points when dealing with violence in the waiting foyer area are to:

1. Dial 000 to call the police.
2. Use the emergency panic procedure.
3. Work as a team.
4. Do not put yourself or your colleagues in danger.
5. Activate the Emergency Lockdown protocol, if need be.

### **If an incident occurs**

- Ask the perpetrator to stop behaving in an unacceptable way, remaining calm. Under no circumstances should you respond in the same manner ([see Appendix 1](#)).
- If a member of staff receives an abusive telephone call, they should warn the caller that they will terminate the call if they do not modify their behaviour. If the caller continues to be abusive, the staff member has the authority to terminate the call.
- If the perpetrator continues, call the Certified Supervisor to attend the incident, explaining, in a calm manner, what has occurred. Ideally the perpetrator should also be able to hear what you are saying.
- Should the perpetrator be breaking the law, physically assault anyone or cause damage to the premises, call the police straight away.
- Do not attempt to remove the person from the premises unless it is under extreme circumstances. Call the police.
- If it is necessary to resort to calling the police and having the person removed, all staff involved in the incident should make a written statement, giving as many details as possible, including exact words used by the perpetrator. This statement should be undertaken straight away while the incident is fresh in the mind.
- A Staff Incident Report Form should be completed as soon as possible after the incident.
- It is the policy of Greenvue Kindergarten to press charges against any person who physically or verbally assaults another, damages or steals property.
- Where the perpetrator is a member of staff, disciplinary proceedings may also be instigated where deemed appropriate.

### **Actions following an incident**

#### **Notifying WorkSafe & DET of Incidents reported to or being investigated by Victoria Police**

Greenvue Kindergarten is required to report to WorkSafe & DET any incident reported to, or investigated by the police that is associated with the delivery of the service and affects or may affect the health, safety and welfare of a person using the service, its staff, or anyone who visits the service.

- A meeting to undertake a significant event analysis will be convened as soon as possible which will include the admin & all the staff concerned. Following discussion, further action (if any) will be decided, (e.g. verbal or written warning, blacklisting from entering the service's premises).
- Where there are significant mitigating circumstances, (e.g. severe mental problems), these may be taken into account when deciding on any further action.
- Details of the incident will be entered in the employee's record file unless it has been decided that no further action will be taken, if the employee was found to be the perpetrator.
- Any employee involved in a violent incident will be offered counselling and / or medical treatment and encouraged to utilise the an assistance on offer, if required.

## **Notifying WorkSafe & DET of Serious Injury to a person**

The Approved Provider of Greenvue Kindergarten is responsible for notifying WorkSafe & DET within 24 hours about events that lead to:

- Serious injury to any person within the premises of the service.
- An injury requiring treatment by a healthcare professional to avoid death or serious injury.

These serious injuries include:

- **Injuries that lead to or are likely to lead to permanent damage – or damage that lasts or is likely to last more than 28 days – to:**
  - A person's sight, hearing, touch, smell or taste
  - Any major organ of the body (including the brain and skin)
  - Bones
  - Muscles, tendons, joints or vessels
  - Intellectual functions, such as
    - ❖ Intelligence
    - ❖ Speech
    - ❖ Thinking
    - ❖ Remembering
    - ❖ Making judgments
    - ❖ Solving problems.
- **Injuries or events leading to psychological harm, including:**
  - Post-traumatic stress disorder
  - Other stress that requires clinical treatment or support
  - Psychosis
  - Clinical depression
  - Clinical anxiety
  - Any injury or other event that causes a person pain lasting or likely to last for more than 28 days
  - Any injury that requires treatment by a healthcare professional in order to prevent:
    - ❖ Death
    - ❖ Permanent injury
    - ❖ Any of the outcomes, harms or pain described above.

## **AUTHORISATION**

This policy was adopted by the approved provider of Greenvue Kindergarten Pty. Ltd. on 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2024.

**REVIEW DATE: March 2026**

## Appendix 1 - Do's and Don'ts when facing angry individuals

*If, at any time, an individual's behaviour starts to escalate beyond your comfort zone, disengage.*

Do...	Don't...
Recognise your own feelings	Meet anger with anger
Project calmness; move and speak slowly, quietly, and confidently.	Raise your voice, point or stare or communicate in a way that might generate hostility (such as apathy, brush-off, coldness, condescension).
Put yourself in their shoes	Be sensitive or take their acts or words personally
Be prepared to apologise if necessary	Threaten any intervention unless you are prepared to act on it
Assert yourself appropriately	Make them feel trapped or cornered
Be patient - allow people to get things off their chest – when they are calmer and quieter, express your ideas / point of view	Argue or even feel that you have to win the argument
Be an empathetic listener. Encourage the person to talk and listen patiently.	Reject all of a client's demands from the start.
Focus your attention on the other person to let them know you are interested in what they have to say.	Pose in challenging stances such as standing directly opposite someone, hands on hips, or crossing your arms.
Maintain a relaxed, yet attentive, posture and position yourself at a right angle, rather than directly in front of the other person.	Avoid any physical contact, finger pointing, or long periods of fixed eye contact.
Acknowledge the person's feelings. Indicate that you can see he (or she) is upset.	Make sudden movements that can be seen as threatening. Notice the tone, volume, and rate of your speech.
Ask for small, specific favours such as asking the person to move to a quieter area.	Challenge, threaten, or dare the individual. Never belittle the person or make him (or her) feel foolish.
Establish ground rules, if unreasonable behaviour persists. Calmly describe the consequences of any violent behaviour.	Criticize or act impatiently toward the agitated individual.
Use delaying tactics that will give the person time to calm down. For example, offer a drink of water— in a disposable cup.	Attempt to bargain with a threatening individual.
Be reassuring and point out choices. Break big problems into smaller, more manageable problems.	Try to make the situation seem less serious than it is.
Accept criticism in a positive way. When a complaint might be true, use statements like, "You're probably right," or "It was my fault." If the criticism seems unwarranted, ask clarifying questions.	Make false statements or promises you cannot keep or try to impart a lot of technical or complicated information when emotions are high.
Ask for their recommendations. Repeat back to them what you feel they are requesting of you.	Take sides or agree with distortions.
Arrange yourself so that a visitor cannot block your access to an exit.	Invade the individual's personal space. Make sure there is a space of 1.5 metres between you and the hostile/irate person.