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## 3.6 Security of Building and Confidential Information Policy

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## Aims

Cootamundra Preschool aims to:

- (1) Keep all preschool buildings secure both during and outside of session times, as well as safe for all those using the building
- (2) Store all confidential information about children and families securely and limit access to these records as is appropriate and ethical

## Legislative Requirements

Australian Privacy Act 1988

Australian Workplace Relations Act 1996

Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011

Children (Education and Care National Law Application) Act 2010

## Who Is Effected By This Policy?

**Children**

**Staff**

**Local families and centre families**

## Relevant Early Childhood Professional Standards

Early Childhood Code of Ethics:	1-1, 1-2, II-3, II-10, VI-1,
Early Years Learning Framework:	Outcomes 1.1, 1.2, Principles – 1, 2, 4
Education & Care Services Australian National Regulations:	104, 105, 181-183, 168(2,l)
National Quality Framework:	Quality areas: 2.1.2, 2.2.1, 2.2.2, 3.1.1, 3.1.2, 6.1, 6.1.2, 7.1.2

## Sources/References

Australian Government, Office of the Information Commissioner: Privacy Act 1998 (retrieved January 2012):

<http://www.privacy.gov.au/law/act>

Australian Government, Health Records & Information Privacy Act 2002 (plus NSW four additional statutory guidelines) (retrieved January 2012):

[http://www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au/lawlink/privacynsw/ll\\_pnsw.nsf/pages/PNSW\\_03\\_hripact#3](http://www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au/lawlink/privacynsw/ll_pnsw.nsf/pages/PNSW_03_hripact#3)

Education & Care Services Australian National Regulations

NSW Privacy & Personal Information Protection Act 2002 (retrieved January 2012):

[http://www.ipc.nsw.gov.au/lawlink/privacynsw/ll\\_pnsw.psf/pages/PNSW\\_03.project](http://www.ipc.nsw.gov.au/lawlink/privacynsw/ll_pnsw.psf/pages/PNSW_03.project)

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Next review date: May 2020

## Procedures

### **1. Security of buildings**

Procedures for maintaining security and safety are as follows:

- 1.1 All visitors to the centre (including visiting parents) will be referred straight to the Director and be shown where to sign in to the service and given a lanyard to where for their duration of their stay.
- 1.2 Centre staff will continually be alert to suspicious people loitering near the centre. This should be brought to the Director's attention whereupon he/she will decide whether to call the police
- 1.3 Check on arrival that 'normal conditions' are prevailing eg being observant of the building when approaching it etc
- 1.4 Staff will park their cars as near as possible to the service, particularly if they are leaving after sunset
- 1.5 Staff will store their personal belongings out of sight and if possible locked away. Staff should avoid wearing expensive jewellery or bringing large sums of money to the centre
- 1.6 The internal playroom must be well lit at all times when the centre is being used
- 1.7 If the centre has a security system it must be appropriately maintained in line with the installer's instructions. Records/receipts of this maintenance will be held either by the Director or Committee of Management's financial records
- 1.8 Staff will report relevant maintenance issues (eg problems with outdoor lighting) immediately to the Committee of Management via the Director. The committee will take steps to rectify the situation as soon as possible
- 1.19 Staff will close and lock all windows when closing the service.
- 1.10 Staff will securely store all equipment at the end of each day and check the outdoor equipment shed is locked before leaving. If the centre has an alarm, staff will ensure it has been set by the last person who leaves
- 1.11 Staff will check the sign out book and attendance register before finally closing the service
- 1.12 Notify management if they are working at the service outside of regular operating hours
- 1.13 Keys are issued on a strict needs only basis as decided by the Director and Committee of Management, and recovered when an employee leaves the service. A register of key holders is maintained by management and audited at the end of each year. Two signatures are required when a key is to be replaced or another sought
- 1.14 The centre's office door should be closed during the day when the clerk is not in attendance.
- 1.15 Where night security lighting is in place, lights will be checked monthly to ensure they work properly

### **2. Security of confidential information**

#### **Introduction**

This aspect of security is particularly important in small rural communities where social networks are small and tightly interwoven. Details of the centre's (1) financial and legal dealings, (2) any family background information including medical forms etc, plus (3) the children's individual educational planning records, are highly confidential and need to be

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stored correctly by the Director. It is expected that the centre's treasurer and secretary will have approved access to (1) but that the Director must ensure these committee members cannot also access (2) or (3), it is expected that the Director will control access of (2) in relation to dispersing information among staff and it is expected that all staff may have access to (3) at the Director's discretion and under her/his guidance. Parents may view and discuss their individual child's plans but only with the Director present. These records will not be removed from the centre.

In line with National Regulations the term 'confidentiality' covers records about:

- Individual child records such as reports, notes and observations, attendance records, enrolment records, medication records, incident, injury, trauma and illness records etc
- staff records, e.g. records of educators working directly with children, record of certified supervisors etc
- the record of service compliance, all legal and insurance details and grievance submissions

To this end the centre's procedures are as follows:

**2.1** Should any committee members need to work with financial records which are in hard copy, the Director must have the relevant files out for them to use in her/his office and not allow free access to the filing cabinet. The filing cabinet should remain locked with the Director having the key

**2.2** Should any committee members need to work with financial records that are in electronic form, the Director must ensure that those people cannot access other confidential records eg by placing this latter information under a different user name which has a password only known to the Director

**2.3** The Director will ensure security arrangements, computer passwords and back up details etc are kept confidential

**2.4** Confidential information will be kept in a secure way by the Director, and when no longer needed, will be destroyed by shredding undertaken by the Director, or by using certified, commercial, confidential shredders or it will be incinerated by the Director

**2.5** At the initial enrolment interview the Director will ensure that every parent/guardian is provided with clear information about:

- what personal information is kept and why
- any legal authority to collect personal information
- third parties to whom the service discloses such information as a usual practice

**2.6** As per the centre's 'Staffing Policy,' the Director will ensure that every employee is provided with clear guidelines detailing:

- what information is to be kept confidential and why
- what confidential information they may have access to in order to fulfil their responsibilities and how this information may be accessed
- who has a legal right to know what information
- where and how the confidential information should be stored

**2.7** Confidential conversations that staff members have with parents, or that the Director has with staff members will be conducted in a quiet area away from other children, parents and staff. The Director will decide if these conversations will be documented. Any conversations with parents about their child's progress will not occur within the child's hearing

**2.8** Personnel forms and employee information will be stored securely and only accessed by the Director, or if an individual staff member wishes to access her/his records, that person must do so with the Director present so as to ensure that the privacy rights regarding the personal information of the other staff members are preserved. The Treasurer/Secretary of the Committee of Management may also have limited access to this information but only with the Director's approval and if considered necessary, supervision. Such access could well be required at times, eg for the Treasurer to complete staff pay/salary transactions etc

**2.9** No member of staff may give information or evidence on matters relating to children and/or their families to anyone other than the responsible parent/guardian, unless prior written approval by the responsible parent/guardian is obtained. Exceptions may apply regarding information about children when subpoenaed to appear before a court of law. Notwithstanding these requirements, confidential information about a child which may be exchanged between parents and staff members at the centre can and should be passed on to the Director

**2.10** Staff will protect the privacy and confidentiality of other staff members by not relating confidential information about another staff member to anyone, either within or outside the centre

**2.11** As noted in the centre's 'Staffing Policy,' students on work experience or volunteer helpers will not make staff/children or families at the centre an object for discussion outside of the centre, nor will they at any time use family names in recorded or tutorial information. The Director will make this clear to such centre visitors and will protect the privacy of children, families and other employees on a continuing basis by only sharing objective, factual information etc. It needs to be noted that all TAFE and university students who may be working in the centre are also subject to their own institution's requirements re ethical behaviour and confidentiality

**The Director will ensure that this policy is maintained and implemented at all times.**