

Pregnancy Policy

Introduction

Pregnancy is a time of significant physical and emotional change, and these changes can affect a woman's ability to manage certain types of work. Our Outside School Hours Care (OSHC) Service is committed to supporting pregnant staff members by creating a safe and healthy workplace, ensuring their wellbeing, and providing access to information and leave entitlements. This policy reflects our service's obligations under the National Law, National Regulations, the National Quality Standard (2025), the Early Childhood Australia (ECA) Code of Ethics, and the My Time, Our Place Framework.

Connection to the National Quality Frameworks

This policy supports Quality Area 4 of the National Quality Standard, which highlights the importance of continuity of staff for children's wellbeing, and Quality Area 7, which ensures effective systems of governance and risk management. It also aligns with Regulation 88 regarding infectious diseases and Regulation 168, which requires services to have comprehensive policies and procedures in place.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all pregnant employees are supported throughout their pregnancy in a way that promotes health, safety, and wellbeing. We aim to provide flexibility in working arrangements, protect staff from avoidable risks, and encourage open communication between staff, families, and management.

Scope

This policy applies to permanent staff members who have been employed for more than twelve months.

Implementation and Responsibilities

The experience of pregnancy varies for each staff member, and some employees may be able to continue their usual duties throughout their pregnancy, while others may require adjustments to their workload or environment. Pregnant staff are encouraged to discuss their health and safety needs with the Nominated Supervisor or Approved Provider as soon as possible. Management will also exercise their duty of care to identify risks and implement strategies to support staff wellbeing.

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Health and Safety

The health and safety of pregnant staff members is central to this policy. The Nominated Supervisor will discuss potential workplace risks with staff and, where necessary, adapt duties or environments to minimise risks. Management will also ensure that all staff remain informed of workplace health and safety responsibilities. Pregnant staff will be advised about health concerns such as exposure to infectious diseases, workplace chemicals, physical strain, and stress. Preventative strategies will be implemented to reduce these risks, such as adjusting physical tasks, limiting exposure to harmful substances, and supporting staff to manage workload and stress.

Manual handling and Physical wellbeing

Pregnancy increases the risk of back pain and injury due to physiological changes. Our service will provide guidance to pregnant employees on safe manual handling techniques, reducing lifting, avoiding prolonged standing, and maintaining correct posture. Equipment such as adult-height furniture, footrests, trolleys, and stepladders will be made available to minimise strain. Staff will be encouraged to seek medical advice if they experience discomfort or injury.

Stress Management

We recognise that pregnancy can increase vulnerability to stress. To support staff, our service will provide flexibility in working hours, encourage the use of leave entitlements, and facilitate open discussions about workload. Pregnant staff will also be supported to access professional medical advice where required, and management will ensure that staff are informed of their entitlements under the Fair Work Act and relevant industrial awards.

Infectious Diseases and Immunisation

Given the close contact staff have with children, the risk of contracting infectious diseases during pregnancy is significant. Pregnant employees will be provided with up-to-date information on immunisation and infection control practices. Staff will be advised about vaccine-preventable illnesses such as rubella, measles, varicella, and pertussis, as well as infections without vaccines such as cytomegalovirus, parvovirus B19, and toxoplasmosis. Staff are encouraged to practise rigorous hand hygiene, avoid tasks that involve exposure to bodily fluids, and seek medical advice promptly if exposed to infectious diseases.

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Roles and Responsibilities of Management

The Approved Provider and Nominated Supervisor will take reasonable steps to provide a safe and supportive environment for pregnant staff. This includes working flexibly to accommodate staff needs, liaising with medical professionals when required, ensuring infection control measures are followed, and preventing discrimination or negative treatment. Management will also maintain confidentiality regarding pregnancy-related matters and ensure compliance with workplace legislation and anti-discrimination laws.

Roles and Responsibilities of Management

Pregnant employees are encouraged to inform management of their pregnancy early, so that appropriate adjustments can be made. Employees are also responsible for keeping management informed about medical advice, obtaining the necessary medical certificates, and adhering to workplace health and safety procedures. Employees must notify management in writing of their expected date of birth at least ten weeks in advance and provide four weeks' notice of their intended parental leave dates. They must also provide medical clearance if continuing work within six weeks of the expected due date.

Employee Entitlement

Our service recognises both government and workplace entitlements for parental leave. Pregnant staff are entitled to four weeks of paid leave at their regular weekly wage, which may be taken before or during pregnancy. Eligible staff may also access the Australian Government's Paid Parental Leave Scheme, which provides up to eighteen weeks of leave at the national minimum wage, including thirty flexible days. In addition, all employees who have worked with our service for at least twelve months are entitled to up to twelve months of unpaid parental leave, with the option to request an extension of up to twenty-four months. Management will also provide information about Dad and Partner Leave, Keeping in Touch days, and return-to-work options.

Returning to Work

All employees on parental leave are entitled to return to their pre-leave position or, if that position no longer exists, a role of similar status and pay for which they are qualified. Management will support staff to transition back into the workplace with consideration for their wellbeing and family responsibilities. Flexible working arrangements will be discussed where possible, and staff returning to work will not be discriminated against in relation to breastfeeding or expressing milk.

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Commitment to Families and Children

This policy also ensures continuity of care for children and reassures families that our service values the wellbeing of educators. By protecting the health of pregnant staff, we uphold the principles of the My Time, Our Place Framework, which emphasises relationships, respect, and responsibility. Families can be confident that our service maintains high standards of governance, professionalism, and ethics, in line with the National Quality Standard and the ECA Code of Ethics.

Sources

This policy draws on guidance from the Australian Children’s Education & Care Quality Authority, the Australian Government Department of Health, the Australian Human Rights Commission, the Fair Work Ombudsman, Safe Work Australia, the National Health and Medical Research Council, and other relevant authorities.

Child Safe Standards and Paramountcy Principle

The Service is committed to upholding the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations and embedding a strong child safe culture across all practices. In accordance with the Paramountcy Principle, the safety, wellbeing and best interests of the child are the primary and overriding consideration in all decisions, actions and practices undertaken by the Service, including those relating to the support of pregnant employees. This means that while supporting the health, safety and wellbeing of pregnant staff, all workplace adjustments, risk management strategies and staffing arrangements must ensure that the safety, supervision and quality care of children are not compromised. Educators, staff and management are required to exercise professional judgement to ensure that any changes to duties, environments or staffing structures continue to prioritise child safety above all other considerations.

The Service will ensure that appropriate workplace modifications and supports are implemented for pregnant staff in a way that maintains a safe, stable and consistent environment for children. This includes ensuring adequate supervision, effective risk management, and continuity of care, while supporting staff wellbeing in accordance with legislative and regulatory requirements.

All practices relating to pregnancy and staff wellbeing must support a safe, inclusive and responsive environment for children, ensuring their safety, dignity and wellbeing remain the highest priority at all times.

Review

Date:	Changes:	Reviewed by:
02/06/2023	New policy (All updated)	Charmayne Nathan
07/08/2024	No changes - reviewed	Charmayne Nathan
18/09/2025	Policy was updated, information was condensed.	Charmayne Nathan
29/04/2026	Child Safe Standards & Paramountcy Principle was implemented in align with new laws and regulations	Charmayne Nathan