

Child Safe and Wellbeing Policy

Responsible officer: Director Strategy, Development and Marketing

Supersedes notification (if applicable): Supersedes 2.9 Children and Youth Safety Policy and Child Safe Policy

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is:

- To prevent child abuse occurring within EACH.
- To work towards an organisational culture of child safety.
- To ensure EACH personnel are aware of the responsibilities for identifying possible child abuse.
- To provide guidance to EACH personnel as to action that should be taken where they suspect any abuse within or outside of the organisation.
- To provide assurance that all cases of suspected abuse will be reported.
- To provide a clear statement to EACH personnel forbidding any such abuse.

2. Policy Statements

The following policy statements demonstrate EACH's commitment to the safety and wellbeing of children:

EACH is committed to promoting and protecting the best interests of children and supporting a child safe culture. EACH has a zero tolerance approach to child abuse. Everyone working at EACH is responsible for the care and protection of children and reporting suspected child abuse.

EACH Child Safe Commitment Statement:

All children who come to EACH have a right to feel and be safe. EACH is committed to the safety and well-being of all children whether they are direct service recipients or indirectly linked to our services such as children of customers. The welfare of children and young people will always be our first priority. We aim to create a child safe and child friendly environment where all children are valued and heard, are safe and protected.

Recruitment and selection

EACH will implement rigorous staff and volunteer recruitment and selection practices to support a child safe organisation for all appointments.

Training and induction

All EACH personnel must participate in an induction program, which includes information on child safety and participate in training programs and ongoing professional development.

Responding to and reporting child abuse and/or neglect

EACH personnel must report all suspected allegations of child abuse and/or neglect as per reporting procedures and relevant state legislation. There are also specific state guidelines to adhere to when responding to allegations of abuse involving children with disabilities. All reports will be managed in line with the EACH Child at Risk Procedure.

Allegations of reportable conduct

EACH will notify, investigate and report the findings of investigations and action taken in relation to allegations of EACH personnel reportable conduct to the relevant state or territory

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Ombudsman or Commission. All allegations will be managed in line with the EACH Allegations of Reportable Conduct of Child Abuse Procedure.

Privacy

All personal information considered or recorded will respect the privacy of the individuals involved unless there is a risk to someone's safety. EACH will have safeguards and practices in place to ensure any personal information is protected.

3. Principles

These principles underpin the child safe culture at EACH:

- Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in leadership, governance and culture.
- Children and young people are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.
- Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.
- Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice. This includes promoting the safety of children with disability, those unable to live at home and cultural safety of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander children, those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and LGBTIQ children.
- EACH personnel working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice through education, professional development and supervision.
- EACH personnel are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through education, professional development and supervision, including their legal obligations and duty of care.
- Report suspected abuse, neglect or mistreatment promptly to the appropriate authorities.
- Processes to respond to complaints and concerns are child focused.
- Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.
- Implementation of child safe principles is regularly reviewed and improved.
- Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people and support ongoing assessment and mitigation of risk.
- Share information appropriately and lawfully with other organisations to assess and manage family violence risk or to promote the wellbeing and safety of children.

5. Scope

This policy applies to all EACH personnel and customers and is inclusive of EACH services delivered offsite or in partnership with other agencies.

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6. Definitions

Child: A person under the age of 18 years.

Child Abuse: Any act against a child involving: physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional, abuse, neglect and exposure to family violence. It includes action or inaction that endangers a child's physical or emotional health or development.

Child Safety: Measures to protect children's health, safety and wellbeing.

Customer: EACH is committed to being a customer centric organisation. Our broad definition of customer means we are inclusive of all people who interact or engage with us, either externally or internally. Our customers include consumers, clients, participants, patients, carers, the community, stakeholders, partners, staff, volunteers and members. In the context of this procedure customer is used in reference to external customers.

Disability: For the purpose of this policy, a child has a disability if the child meets the definition outlined in relevant State/Territory Disability legislation or under the eligibility criteria for the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

EACH personnel: All employees (whether employed full-time, part-time, fixed term or on a casual basis), Board members, volunteers, students, contractors and sub-contractors performing work on behalf of EACH.

Safety: The state of being safe; freedom from the occurrence or risk of injury, danger, or loss.

Risk: Refers to anything that can threaten the safety and wellbeing of children.

Risk Assessment: Overall process of risk identification, risk analysis and risk evaluation.

Safe Culture: The ongoing and genuine provision of organisational beliefs and processes that support EACH as a workplace where all people are able to engage freely without the threat or potential threat of physical or psychological harm.

7. Contact Officer

For clarification of intention or interpretation of this policy the Director Strategy, Development and Marketing should be contacted.

8. References/Relevant legislation

Services in each state or territory site must comply with relevant legislation:

- [Australia: Family Law Act \(1975\)](#)
- [Victoria: Children's Youth and Families Act \(2005\)](#)
- [Victoria: Child Wellbeing and Safety Act \(2005\)](#)
- [NSW: Children and Young Person's \(Care and Protection\) Act 1998](#)
- [Queensland: Child Protection Act \(1999\)](#)
- [Tasmania: Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act \(1997\)](#)
- [Family Violence Act \(2004\)](#)
- [ACT: Children and Young People Act \(2008\)](#)
- [South Australia: Child Protection Act \(1993\)](#)

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- [Western Australia: Children and Community Services Act \(2004\)](#)
- [Northern Territory: Care and Protection of Children \(2007\)](#)
- [Disability Act 2006 \(Victoria\)](#)
- [Disability Services Act 2006 \(Qld\)](#)
- [Disability Inclusion Act 2014 \(NSW\)](#)
- [Disability Inclusion Regulation 2014 \(NSW\)](#)
- [Disability Services Act 1991 \(ACT\) republication date 1 July 2014](#)
- [Disability Service Act 2011 \(TAS\)](#)
- [Victoria: Responding to allegations of abuse and neglect involving people with disabilities \(2017\)](#)
- [Early Childhood Intervention National Best Practice Guidelines \(2016\)](#)
- [Family Violence Protection Act 2008 \(Vic\)](#)
- [The Children Legislation Amendment \(Information Sharing\) Act 2018 \(Vic\)](#)
- [Education and Child Care Services National Regulations 2015](#)
- [Education and Care Service National Law Act 2010](#)
- [Child Safe Standards \(Vic\)](#)
- [National Principles for Child Safe Organisations](#)
- [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child](#)

9. Related Policies/Documents

EACH policies and procedures to support the Child Safe policy;

- [Freedom from Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation Policy](#)
- [Freedom from Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation Procedure](#)
- [Child at Risk Procedure](#)
- [Whistleblower Policy and Procedure](#)
- [Recruitment and Selection Policy](#)
- [Learning and Development Policy](#)
- [Supervision Policy and Procedure](#)
- [Working with Children Check Policy](#)
- [Working with Children Check Procedure](#)
- [Police Records Check Policy](#)
- [Police Records Check Procedure](#)
- [Allegations of Reportable Conduct of Child Abuse Procedure](#)
- [Customer Feedback Policy](#)
- Customer Feedback Procedure
- Customer Information Privacy Policy

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- Customer Rights and Responsibilities Procedure
- EACH Code of Conduct and Ethics
- Incident Management Policy
- Incident Management Procedure
- [NDIS Commission Reportable Incidents Procedure](#)
- Risk Management Policy
- Risk Management Procedure

Termination of Employment Policy

10. Implementation Procedures

Responsibility	Implementation Actions
Board of Directors	Knowledge of their governance role in respective jurisdictional legislation and the Child Safe National Principles and the Victorian Child Safe standards. The Board is responsible for ensuring appropriate and effective internal control systems are in place.
CEO	Dealing with and investigating reports of child abuse. Ensuring EACH personnel are aware of relevant laws, policies and procedures and the Code of Conduct. Ensuring EACH personnel are aware of their obligation to report suspected child abuse in accordance with relevant laws and policies and procedures. Approval of supporting policies and procedures. Providing adequate resources for effective implementation.
EACH Managers and Team Leaders	Promote child safety at all times. Review child safety risks (as appropriate) in the annual EACH risk assessment process. Educate employees about the prevention and detection of child abuse. Facilitate the reporting of any inappropriate behavior or suspected abuse.
Human Resources	Support the induction and training in child safe and mandatory reporting procedures. Ensure rigorous recruitment and selection processes.
Communications	Promote child safe policy and related professional development opportunities through EACH communication channels, as requested by policy owner.

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Responsibility	Implementation Actions
Quality and Risk	<p>Every two years and following every reportable incident a review will be conducted to assess whether the child safe policies and procedures require modification.</p> <p>Make available United Nations Declaration of the Rights of the Child to all EACH locations/sites.</p>
Service Design	<p>Create, promote and continuously improve a Child Safe Guide.</p> <p>Embed Child Safe practice within Service Guides.</p>
EACH personnel	<p>Familiarise themselves with the relevant laws, Code of Conduct and policies and procedures in relation to child safety and comply with all requirements. This includes direct and indirect interactions with children at EACH.</p> <p>Respond to and report child risk to a manager and the relevant authorities and fulfil obligations as mandatory reporters.</p> <p>Promote a child safe culture.</p>