

Child safe

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Introduction

The protection of children and young people is a cornerstone in safeguarding and improving the lives of children and young people with a disability. While providing supports and services under the NDIS, workers are uniquely placed to identify and respond to the needs and vulnerabilities of children or young people with a disability. Everyone has a responsibility to protect the wellbeing and safety of children or young people whom they have contact, and report any case a child or young person is suspected to be at risk of significant harm.

Our organisation is committed to ensuring our practice is compliant with all relevant legislation for our state, as well as national legislation and regulations, including the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations

Policy objective

This policy aims to ensure that the organisation provides supports and services in a child-safe environment and that concerns about the welfare or safety of children and young people are responded to appropriately. The purpose of this policy is to:

- adhere to the Child Safe Organisations National Principles
- set out appropriate standards of behaviour and practices for people working and volunteering with children and young people in a Child safe code of conduct
- provide standards by which the organisation can be held accountable to workers, volunteers, parents, guardians, carers, children and young people that are involved with the organisation
- increase worker awareness of factors that create a risk of harm to children and young people and the strategies in place to minimise risks
- build worker knowledge of how to identify if a child or young person is, or may be, at risk of harm and how to respond appropriately to allegations, concerns or instances of harm
- ensure that all workers understand reporting requirements and processes to be followed when making a report
- encourage organisational leaders to promote sharing good practice and learnings about child safety and wellbeing.
























When

- applies to all sites and services.

Who

- applies to all representatives including key management personnel, directors, full time workers, part time workers, casual workers, contractors and volunteers.

Governing regulations for this policy

	Care and Protection of Children Act 2007 (NT)
	Child Protection (International Measures) Act 2003 (Qld)
	Child Protection (Offender Reporting and Offender Prohibition Order) Act 2004 (Qld)
	Child Protection Act 1999 (Qld)
	Child Protection Regulation 2011 (Qld)
	Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act 1997 (Tas)
	Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)
	Children and Community Services Act 2004 (WA)
	Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017 (SA)
	Children and Young People (Safety) Regulations 2017 (SA)
	Children and Young People Act 2008 (ACT)
	Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 (NSW)
	Childrens Court Act 1992 (Qld)
	Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Act 2016 (SA)
	Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Regulations 2019 (SA)
	Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)
	Family Services Act 1987 (Qld)
	National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013 (Cth)
	National Principles for Child Safe Organisations
	NDIS (Children) Rules 2013 (Cth)
	NDIS (Quality Indicators) Guidelines 2018 (Cth)
	Working with Children (Criminal Record Checking) Act 2004 (WA)
	Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Regulation 2011 (Qld)

1.0 National Principles for Child Safe Organisations

The National Principle for Child Safe Organisations this policy is based on are as follows:

1. Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture.
2. Children and young people are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.
3. Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.
4. Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice.
5. People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.
6. Processes to respond to complaints and concerns are child focused.
7. Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training.
8. Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.
9. Implementation of the national child safe principles is regularly reviewed and improved.
10. Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people.

2.0 When is a child or young person at risk?

A child or young person is at risk when they have suffered, or there is a likelihood they will suffer, harm. The relevant harm may be physical, emotional or psychological. A child or young person is also at risk where the parent or guardian is unable or unwilling to care for the person.

3.0 What is a child safe environment?

Child safe environments are safe and friendly settings where children and young people are protected and feel respected, valued and encouraged to reach their full potential. To provide an environment safe for children and young people, we will:

- take a preventative, proactive and participatory approach on child wellbeing and safety issues
- seek out and embrace the opinions and views of children and young people on issues relating to our services that they consider important or impact them
- take action to protect children and young people from harm.

4.0 Commitment to the safety of children and young people

At Insight PBS, we are committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of children and young people in all aspects of our operations. Our policies comply with the Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017, the Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Act 2016 and are aligned with the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations. We do not tolerate bullying and harassment. We foster a culture of respect, inclusivity, and support, treating all individuals with dignity and kindness. Our dedication ensures we provide safe, valued, and empowering environments for all.

At Insight PBS, we believe that children and young people deserve respect and care, and we are committed to ensuring their safety and well-being. We welcome all children and young people and prioritize the protection of their safety at all levels of our organization. Our goal is to create an environment where children feel valued, respected, and empowered to reach their full potential.

5.0 Scope of Policy

This policy applies to all staff and contractors at Insight PBS. Referred to throughout the policy collectively as workers.

All workers are required to acknowledge and act in accordance with the policy.

6.0 Communication

Our child safe policy and related documents are readily available on our website and can be requested on demand. We provide these documents as part of our Participant Welcome Pack and to all workers during their induction after recruitment.

We value the opinions of children and young people and involve them in decision-making when appropriate. We offer children and young people clear age-appropriate explanations of their rights to safety, being heard, and the ability to provide feedback or register a complaint if they have a concern with any worker. They also have the option to ask their parent/guardian to do this on their behalf.

We take all complaints or concerns raised by children or young people seriously and act upon them accordingly.

7.0 Code of conduct

Caring for children and young people brings additional responsibilities for workers. All workers are responsible for promoting and protecting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people by:

- sticking to the organisation's child safe policy at all times and taking all reasonable steps to ensure the safety and protection of children and young people
- treating everyone, including those of different races, ethnicities, genders, gender identities, sexual orientations, ages, social classes, physical abilities or attributes and religious beliefs with respect and honesty and ensuring equity is upheld
- being a positive role model to children and young people in all conduct with them
- setting clear boundaries and maintaining appropriate behaviours with children and young people - boundaries help everyone to understand their roles
- listening and responding appropriately to the views and concerns of children and young people
- being alert to bullying behaviours and responding promptly and appropriately
- ensuring another adult is always present or in sight when conducting one to one consulting, coaching, instruction or other activity
- being alert to children and young people who have been harmed or may be at risk of harm and reporting this quickly to the Child Abuse Report Line (13 14 78)
 - responding quickly, fairly and transparently to any complaints made by a child, young person or their parent/guardian
 - encouraging children and young people to 'have a say' on issues that are important to them.

Workers must not:

- engage in rough physical games
- develop any 'special' relationships with children and young people that could be seen as favouritism such as the offering of gifts or special treatment
- do things of a personal nature that a child or young person can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes
- discriminate against any child or young person because of age, gender, cultural background, religion, vulnerability or sexuality.

Breaches or suspected breaches of the Code of Conduct should be reported as soon as practicable to management either in person, by telephone on 1300 824 930, or via email at support@insightpbs.com.au. Breaches or suspected breaches of the Code of Conduct will be taken seriously and dealt with quickly, fairly and transparently.

8.0 Recruitment and worker screening

To ensure that we attract the most suitable individuals to work with children and young people, we have established certain recruitment practices which we strictly adhere to. These practices include:

- Incorporating our commitment to child safety in all job advertisements.
- Providing clear position descriptions that highlight our commitment to child safety and wellbeing

- Conducting face-to-face interviews with behavioural questions that help us assess the applicant's knowledge of child safeguarding.
- Conducting at least two referee and qualification checks.

In accordance with the Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Act 2016, our organization is registered with the DHS Screening Unit, and we link all Working with Children Checks (WWCC). All individuals over the age of 14 who will be working in a position involving children and young people must possess a current, unprohibited WWCC issued by the Screening Unit of the Department of Human Services. They must provide proof of this prior to employment and renew it every five years. We will verify the accuracy of all WWCCs in the DHS Screening Unit portal as required by law.

If we become aware of any assessable information regarding any person involved with our organization, including any serious criminal offence, child protection information, or disciplinary or misconduct information, we will immediately contact the Department of Human Services Screening Unit.

9.0 Training, supervision and support for workers

We have implemented various strategies to ensure that our workers understand our organization's child safety policy, their mandatory reporting obligations, how to create culturally safe environments, and their responsibilities to establish a child-friendly environment. Our strategies include the following:

- **Training:** As part of their induction, we ensure that all workers undertake our internal training on Mandatory Reporting and have acknowledged our policies regarding Mandatory Reporting.
- We provide training on 'Responding to Risk of Harm, Abuse and Neglect' every three years
- We include child safety as a regular item on meeting agendas
- **Supervision:** We conduct regular supervision sessions that focus on child safety and wellbeing
- **Support:** We provide an induction process for all new workers, which includes access to this policy document
- **We conduct regular performance appraisals that discuss child safeguarding**
- We appoint a child safety officer who has an educative role within our organization.

10.0 Risk management

Identified risk	Actions to minimise risk
Physical contact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • any physical contact must be appropriate to the delivery of services being provided • where physical contact is required, this is undertaken in a safe way by explaining why contact is required and what will happen, and asking the child/young person for their permission (or their family if this is more appropriate) before proceeding • unnecessary physical contact is not allowed

Online communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · cyber safety and social media guidelines are in place and provided to all workers · appropriate supervision is provided for all online activities · workers must not communicate with children or young people via social media
Supervision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · children and young people are to be supervised by parents/guardians at all times · if providing one to one consultation with a child or young person, it will be in line of sight of another adult
Taking images of children and young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · consent of child young person and their parent/guardian required · disclosure will be made as to how the image is to be used and consent must be provided by the child, young person and parent/guardian · images must be presented in a way that de-identifies the child or young person
Physical environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · maintain a risk register that is reviewed annually to ensure effectiveness · conduct risk assessments for all activities · ensure all equipment is in good working order
Privacy and confidentiality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · all documents containing confidential information will be stored privately in a locked filing cabinet (or similar place with restricted access) · digital files containing confidential information shall be protected electronically by restricting the access to only those requiring it to perform their duties · workers must not disclose information regarding any child or young person without written consent of the child, young person and their parent/guardian

11.0 Reporting concerns about children and young people at risk

We aim to ensure that children and young people are safe from harm and risk of harm. Section 17 of the Safety Act defines 'harm' to mean physical or psychological harm (whether caused by an act or omission), including harm caused by sexual, physical, mental or emotional abuse or neglect.

Mandated reporters in our organisation are workers who:

- provide services to children and young people
- hold a management position in the organisation the duties of which include direct responsibility for, or direct supervision of, the provision of those services to children and young people.

Mandated reporters have a legal obligation to notify the Child Abuse Report Line (CARL) on 13 14 78 as soon as practicable if they have a suspicion that a child or young person has been harmed or may be at risk of harm. If the child or young person is at immediate risk, report to South Australia Police (SAPOL) on 000.

Even if not a mandated reporter, any person can report harm or risk of harm to a child or young person. The individual who identifies the harm or risk of harm is encouraged to make the report to authorities and can request the support from another worker to do so if required.

Information about making appropriate reports of harm or risk of harm is available from the South Australian Department for Child Protection website: <https://www.childprotection.sa.gov.au/reporting-child-abuse>.

All adult workers (even if not a mandated reporter) have a legal obligation to report child sexual abuse to the police and to protect a child from sexual abuse. Failure to meet these obligations may be considered a criminal offence.

Following a report being made to CARL or SAPOL workers must make an internal report to management.

We will be guided by the Department for Child Protection and/or SAPOL after a report has been made as to whether we can conduct an internal investigation.

If a worker is reported to CARL or SAPOL for causing harm or risk of harm to a child or young person, they will be removed from any role that involves working with any child or young person until authorities have concluded their investigation.

Following a report to CARL or SAPOL we will support the child or young person by:

- referring the child, young person or their family to other appropriate services
- continuing to provide a service to the child, young person and their family and monitor their circumstances.

We will document all information received regarding the report and store this securely in a separate file.

The below table provides a reference for local state/territory authorities and legislation related to reporting children and young people at risk.

State/territory	Local authority	Relevant local legislation
ACT	Child and Youth Protection Services	Children and Young People Act 2008 (ACT)
NSW	Department of Family and Community Services	Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 (NSW)
NT	Territory Families Report child abuse	Care and Protection of Children Act 2007 (NT)

QLD	Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs	Child Protection Act 1999 (Qld)
SA	Department for Child Protection	Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017 (SA)
TAS	Department of Communities Tasmania	Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act 1997 (Tas)
VIC	Department of Health and Human Services	Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)
WA	Department of Communities, Child Protection and Family Support	Children and Community Services Act 2004 (WA)

12.0 Working with children and young people

The standards and requirements identified below in our commitment to child safety identify the professional boundaries, ethical behaviours that are accepted and behaviours that are unacceptable. All staff are required to abide by and follow these standards and requirements.

13.0 Child safe code of conduct

As part of our commitment to child safety, all workers and volunteers in the organisation will:

- Act in accordance with child safety and wellbeing policies and procedures at all times.
- Behave respectfully, courteously and ethically towards children and their families and towards other staff.
- Listen and respond to the views and concerns of children, particularly if they communicate (verbally or non-verbally) that they do not feel safe or well.
- Promote the human rights, safety and wellbeing of all children in the organisation.
- Demonstrate appropriate personal and professional boundaries.
- Consider and respect the diverse backgrounds and needs of children.
- Create an environment that promotes and enables children's participation and is welcoming, culturally safe and inclusive for all children and their families.
- Involve children in making decisions about activities, policies and processes that concern them wherever possible.
- Contribute, where appropriate, to policies, discussions, learning and reviews about child safety and wellbeing.
- Identify and mitigate risks to children's safety and wellbeing as identified by risk assessments and Risk management policies and processes.
- Respond to any concerns or complaints of child harm or abuse promptly and in line with the Complaint management policy and Manage complaint process.
- Report all suspected or disclosed child harm or abuse as required by relevant state and federal legislation and the Report incident process.
- Comply with protocols on communicating with children.
- Comply with relevant state and federal legislation and policies and procedures on record keeping and information sharing.

All workers and volunteers in the organisation will not:

- Engage in any unlawful activity with or in relation to a child.
- Engage in any activity that is likely to physically, sexually or emotionally harm a child.
- Unlawfully discriminate against any child or their family members.
- Be alone with a child unnecessarily.
- Arrange personal contact, including online contact, with child participants for a purpose unrelated to work activities.
- Disclose personal or sensitive information about a child, including images of a child, unless the child and their parent or legal guardian consent or as a result of reporting requirements.
- Use inappropriate language in the presence of children, or show or provide children with access to inappropriate images or material.
- Work with children while under the influence of alcohol or prohibited drugs.
- Ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child harm or abuse.

14.0 Online and social media safety

Online spaces provide additional challenges to maintaining the safety of children and protecting them from harm.

Social media also poses a variety of risks to children. It is vital that staff, parents and carers understand these risks and the responsibility to ensure there are codes of conduct in place for the use of social media when interacting with children and young people.

Each child's risk management plan will include risks relating to social media. These risks include:

- exposure to inappropriate content
- overfamiliar relationships between children and people in positions of power (e.g. children interacting with teachers on social media)
- cyber bullying
- the sharing of inappropriate images
- physical health challenges, such as headaches
- mental health challenges, such as depression and social isolation
- data breaches and data misuse
- grooming.

Our risk management plans will include an overview of each risk, as well as mitigation and management strategies. In addition, our risk management plans and strategies will be developed in conjunction with staff, the child, other professionals and advocates, as well as the child's support network. This will help ensure that all relevant parties are empowered to provide early help if online incidents occur.

Staff, parents and carers are responsible for teaching children social media safety. Some key principles of social media safety include:

- only sharing information the child would be happy for their grandparents, parents and teachers to see
- understanding that people online can lie about their identities
- remembering that a post, once published online, cannot always be taken back; even if a post has been removed, it may have already been saved and shared
- ensuring that all social media accounts are set to 'private'
- understanding the importance of secure passwords
- blocking people that exhibit negative behaviours, such as cyberbullying
- considering that content can always be shared, even if it is sent in a private message.

In addition to the above, it is vital to have appropriate online privacy settings and child safety filters in place and discuss with the child the reasons these are in place.

All staff at our organisation will be trained to:

- support children to engage with online spaces in a safe manner

- be engaged, open and supportive in relation social media use
- understand the devices and platforms children are using
- set reasonable rules around social media use
- understand the needs and preferences of each child in relation to social media use
- understand and manage the risks associated with social media
- respond to the misuse of digital devices and to unacceptable online behaviours in line with disciplinary policies
- maintain clear processes for reporting online safety issues or breaches of acceptable use in line with incident reporting requirements
- manage complaints and incidents in a compliant manner.

Any inappropriate use of social media by staff will be reported to the relevant authorities in line with the Complaints management and Disciplinary policies.

15.0 Breach of child safe policy

Breach of this policy, or the Child safe code of conduct, may result in disciplinary action and/or referral to the appropriate government authority.

In addition to this, all adults in Australia with a reasonable belief that an adult has committed a sexual offence against a child have an obligation to report that information to the police (failure to report). Key management will commit an offence if they know of a substantial risk of child sexual abuse and have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, but negligently fail to do so (failure to protect).