

Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

Policy Statement:	The aim of this policy is to ensure Welcoming Australia employees and volunteers demonstrate, conduct, and implement programs and events, that ensure the safety and protection of all children involved our activities.	
Scope:	All employees, volunteers, and participants	
Responsibility:	Board & CEO	
Authorised by:	Aleem Ali, CEO	Original Issue Date: 3 June 2019

Policy Statement: Our Commitment to the safety of children and young people

[Refers to National Principles 1: Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture]

Welcoming Australia is committed to safeguarding and promoting wellbeing of Children we work with by providing a safe and inclusive environment and by ensuring that everyone involved is educated and informed of their responsibilities to look after and protect Children.

All Children have right to feel safe and protected from harm or risk of harm. They have the right to participate in activities in a safe, positive and enjoyable environment.

We value and respect children and welcome them regardless of their abilities, sex, gender, or social economic or cultural background. We also pay particular attention to ensure that the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people are respected and valued. Bullying and harassment won't be tolerated.

This policy is part of our proactive approach to uphold our commitment to the safety, wellbeing, participation and empowerment of all children we work with. Our policy complies with the Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017, the Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Act 2016 and aligns with the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.

Definitions

In this policy, the following words are defined as:

'Australian Child Protection Legislation' means all state/ territory child protection legislation as amended from time to time.

'Bullying' means a person or group of people repeatedly and intentionally using words or actions, or the inappropriate use of power, against someone or a group of people to cause distress and risk to their wellbeing.

'Child or Children' means a child or young person, or two or more children or young persons, who is or are under the age of 18 years.

'Harassment' means any type of behaved towards a person that they do not want, and that is offensive, abusive, belittling or threatening and is likely to cause harm to the person subject to harassment.

'Harm or risk of Harm' are the overarching terms that cover the neglect and various forms of abuse (including physical, emotional, psychological, sexual and inappropriate use of power, exposure to family and domestic violence) that has caused, is causing or is likely to cause harm to a person's wellbeing, whether in person or as the result of a publication viewable by any other person by any means.

'not prohibited' in a working with children check indicates an individual's suitability to engage with Children, in accordance with Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Act 2016. In this policy, the term covers all terms used by different states and territory in determining an individual's suitability to work with Children (For eg: 'a valid blue card' for the state of Queensland, 'not prohibited' in South Australia or Victoria)

'Policy' is this Child Safety and Wellbeing policy including any schedules and annexures

Scope of Policy

[Refers to National Principles 1: Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture]

This Policy applies to all employees, board members, volunteers, students, consultants and any contractors referred collectively as workers throughout the policy.

The policy applies to all activities which involve, result in or relate to contact with children.

All workers are required to agree in writing to accept and act in accordance with the policy.

Communication

[Refers to National Principles 2 and 3

- *Principle 2: Children and young people are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.*
- *Principle 3: Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing]*

This policy and related documents are available on our website, on request and provided as part of a welcome pack at the first visit.

This child safe policy and related documents are provided to all workers as part of their induction following recruitment.

We encourage and respect the views of children and involve them in decision making as appropriate. We provide clear age-appropriate or developmentally appropriate explanations to children including their right to safety, their right to be listened to and that they can provide feedback or make a complaint if they have a concern, to any worker or ask their parent/guardian to do this on their behalf. We also

involve families in this process so that they can advocate their children and encourage them to provide feedback.

We will listen to and act upon any complaints or concerns that a child, their parent/guardian raises with us.

Code of Conduct

[Refers to National Principles 4 and 6

Principle 4: Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice.

Principle 6: Processes to respond to complaints and concerns are child focused.]

Code of Conduct for working with Children is outlined as **Annexure A: Child Safe Code of Conduct**

Recruitment and Screening

[Refers to National Principle 5: People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.]

We have defined a child-related position as the position that involves or may involve contact with children, either under position description or due to the nature of the role.

To ensure that we engage the most suitable people to work in a child-related position, we have the following recruitment practices in place:

1. Advertisement

All child-related positions will have the following statement in the position description and advertising:

Welcoming Australia is committed to protecting Children from harm or risk of harm. We require all applicants to undergo comprehensive screening process prior to appointment.

2. Position Descriptions

All child-related positions will include our commitment to child safety in the position descriptions as well as in selection criteria. Example of appropriate selection criteria may be:

Must have experience working with Children;

Demonstrates understanding of acceptable behaviour when working with children

3. Applications and Interviews

All applicants are required to submit a written application or application in other acceptable format addressing the role requirements.

All applicants for child-related positions are required to attend interview in person or on a videoconference platform such as Teams. Behavioural questions to determine applicant's suitability to work with Children must be included.

4. Reference, Qualifications and Registration Checks

We will conduct at least two reference checks for the preferred applicant to gather additional information regarding applicant's suitability for the role applied. Reference check will include questions to confirm the applicant's suitability to work with children.

If applicable, we will verify the applications educational or vocational qualifications or professional registrations of the preferred candidate.

5. Working With Children Checks

Working With Children Check (WWCC) laws are currently in place in all Australian States and territories. Whether a particular individual is required to undertake a check depends on the WWCC laws of the relevant state or territory.

In accordance with these laws and the Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Act 2016, our organisation is registered with the relevant screening units of the states we operate in (eg: DHS screening Unit, Blue Card Services, Department of Justice and Regulation, Working with Children Check Unit) and we link all Working With Children Checks with relevant units.

All workers working in a child-related role must hold a current, not prohibited (or equivalent) WWCC issued by the relevant State Screening Unit, provide evidence of this prior to commencing employment and renew it in line with the requirements of the relevant state. We will verify accuracy of all WWCCs in the relevant screening unit portal as required by law.

We will immediately contact the State relevant Screening Unit when we become aware of certain information regarding any person involved with our organisation, including any serious criminal offence, child protection information, or disciplinary or misconduct information.

Training, supervision and support for workers

[Refers to National Principles 5 and 7

Principle 5: People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.

Principle 7: Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training.]

We have strategies in place to supervise, train and support workers to understand our organisation's child safe policy, their mandatory reporting obligations, how to build culturally safe environments and their responsibilities to create a child safe and friendly environment. Our strategies include:

- Training:
 - ensure all workers read and understand this policy and the Mandatory Notification Requirements for their relevant state during induction.
 - support ongoing training and education of our workers to ensure child safety information is provided and updated as required.
 - ensure that our staff and volunteers have up to date information regarding relevant legislation they operate in or may travel to as part of their duties.
 - include child safety as a standing item on meeting agendas.
- Supervision:
 - regular supervision sessions that include a focus on child safety and wellbeing
- Support:

- an induction process for all new workers including a copy of this policy document
- regular one on one meetings and group sessions that discuss child safeguarding

Reporting and Responding to harm or risk of harm

[Refers to National Principle 6: Processes to respond to complaints and concerns are child focused.]

We aim to ensure that children 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 notifiers 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 notifiers have a legal obligation to notify the police and/ or the relevant State/Territory Child Protection Agency as soon as practicable if they have a reasonable belief that a child is or may be at risk of harm.

If the child or young person is at immediate risk, you must ensure their safety by:

- calling 000 for medical and/ or police support to respond to urgent health or safety concerns
- administering first aid
- separating at-risk Child and others involved
- identify appropriate contact person for ongoing liaison with police

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 provided in **Annexure C:**

Reporting Information

All adult workers (even if not a mandated notifier) 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 the relevant Child Protection Authority, workers must make an internal report to management.

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

If a worker is reported to the Child Protection Authority for causing harm or risk of harm to a child, 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 the Child Protection Authority, 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.

Reporting and responding to general complaints or feedback

[Refers to National Principle 6: Processes to respond to complaints and concerns are child focused.]

Providing opportunities for complaints and feedback ensures that children and their families feel valued and respected and enables us to improve the quality of our service. Children, young people and their families are informed that they can provide feedback or make a complaint at their first appointment. Information on how to make complaint is also available on our website.

We will deal with all complaints and feedback received from children, young people or their families promptly, sensitively and fairly in accordance with our Formal Complaints Policy.

If the child, young person or their family is not happy with the outcome from the complaints process they can contact Australian Human Rights Commission Online: www.humanrights.gov.au Tel: 1300 656 419

Risk management

[Refers to National Principle 8: Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.]

Specific risks to children and actions to minimise or mitigate risk are listed as **Annexure B: Child Safe Risk Management**

Related policies and procedures

[Refers to National Principle 10: Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people.]

- Formal complaints policy and procedure
- Child Safe Code of Conduct (Annexure A)
- Incident Policy & Procedure

Relevant Legislation and Standards

- Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017
- the Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Act 2016
- the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations
- Working with Children by State
- Australian Child Protection Legislation

Policy review

[Refers to National Principle 9: Implementation of the national child safe principles is regularly reviewed and improved.]

We will, at a minimum, review this policy and the related procedures once every two years, in line with our policy review practices and no later than every five years as required by the Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017.

We will also review this policy when:

- new or added risks are identified for children, which may require a change in the policy or procedures
- a critical incident where a child has experienced harm through involvement in the organisation
- concerns are raised by anyone involved in your organisation about child safety or welfare in the organisation
- awareness or compliance to the child safe policy and/or procedures is low
- legislative changes/requirements.

We will lodge a new child safe environments compliance statement with the Department of Human Services (SA) and other reporting entities each time we review and update this policy.

Date	Revision	Description of Revision	Revised By
October 2017	1	Policy created	Elizabeth Young
3/6/2019	2	Reviewed & updated	Aleem Ali
15/7/2021	3	Reviewed	Maia
May 2022	4	Reviewed & updated	Judy, Aleem, Board
Jan 2024	5	Reviewed and updated	Niyati
July 2024	6	Policy Rewritten	Niyati

Next review date: July 2026

Annexure A

Child Safe Code of Conduct

Welcoming Australia is committed to safeguarding and promoting wellbeing of Children we work with by providing a safe and inclusive environment. As part of this, it is important that everyone involved is educated and informed of their responsibilities to look after and protect Children.

This Child Safe Code of Conduct (this Code) aligns with the Child Safe Policy and aims to protect Children and reduce an opportunities for harm or risk of harm and applies to all workers in the organisation.

All workers are responsible for promoting and protecting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people by:

- adhering to the Welcoming Australia'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 race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, social class, physical ability or attributes and religious beliefs with respect and honesty and ensure equity is upheld.
- paying particular attention to ensure that the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people are respected and valued.
- being a positive role model to children and young people in all conduct with them
- ensuring that any physical contact with children is safe, visible and appropriate to the delivery of activities and based on the needs of the child or young person such as assisting with the use of equipment, assisting/coaching a child in water, technique, treatment by a health practitioner or administrating first aid
- For physical contact/ touch initiated by child, use the "safe hands" cue to reduce and minimise the contact
- setting clear boundaries about appropriate behaviour between yourself and 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. As such, we require a parent/ guardian to always be present and supervise their children during our events and activities.
- being alert to children and young people who have been harmed, or may be at risk of harm and reporting this quickly to the relevant Child Abuse Report Line
- 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

- use sarcasm, insults or make inappropriate jokes with children
- discriminate against any child or young person because of age, gender, cultural background, religion, vulnerability or sexuality.

Breaches

Breaches or suspected breaches of this Code should be reported as soon as practicable to the initiative manager or executive team member either in person, by telephone or via email.

Breaches or suspected breaches of the Code of Conduct will be taken seriously and dealt with quickly, fairly and transparently.

Any worker who breaches the Code of Conduct will face disciplinary action and depending on severity of the breach, the worker may have their employment terminated.

Acknowledgement

By reading and agreeing to this code you acknowledge your responsibility to adhere to this code and the Child Safe Policy and immediately report any breach to your relevant supervisor or manager.

I have read this Code of Conduct and agree to always abide by it.

Name:

Role:

Signature:

Date:

Annexure B

Child Safe Risk Management

Identified risk	Actions to minimise risk
<p>Culture of organisation is not child-safe focused</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • child focused Code of Conduct is in place that sets the behavioral standards expected including what happens when a breach occurs • culture of management reflects our strong commitment to the safety of children and young people • the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations are embedded in policies and procedures • we meet the requirements of the <i>Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017</i> (which mandates child safe environments) and the <i>Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Act 2016</i> (which mandates Working with Children Checks)
<p>Organisational workers harm children/young people</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recruitment processes including undertaking referee checks to ensure the suitability of persons before they are employed/volunteer with our organisation • interview questions (no prior preparation) should gauge an applicant’s understanding of child safe principles and actions that would be taken to prevent harm to children and young people • all workers in child-related roles have WWCC with ‘not prohibited’ result prior to working with children and young people • WWCCs updated at frequency required by relevant state or territory and status remains as ‘not prohibited’ • children and young people and their families are given a copy of our Child Safety and Wellbeing policy and complaints and feedback process
<p>Organisational workers don’t understand their obligations to report harm and risk of harm to the relevant Child Abuse Report Line (or Police if child/young person is at immediate risk)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all workers must abide by the child safety and wellbeing policy and Code of Conduct (latter is signed on commencement with organisation) • ensure all workers read and understand the Mandatory notification information/ booklet available • all workers trained in Safe Environments and Responding to Risk of Harm training on commencement and refresher training every three years.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant workers trained or enrolled in Safeguarding Children and Young People in sport induction
Physical contact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • any physical contact must be appropriate to the delivery of services being provided such as assisting with use of equipment or technique, administering first -aid • 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 for their permission (or their family if this is more appropriate) before proceeding • unnecessary physical contact is not allowed • For physical contact/ touch initiated by child, use the “safe touch” cue to reduce and minimise the contact
Electronic or Online communications	<p>For any electronic or online communication with children, worker must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • adopt a two-deep model i.e. copy/ include in the organisation and parent/guardian in all communication eg: email, Whatsapp groups • ensure the content is directly associated with delivering our work, professional, devoid of any prohibited language and not promote unauthorised contacts or activities
Transport of children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents/guardians are responsible for organising the transportation of their children to and from activities (e.g., training and games). • In instance where third-party transport is required or organised (e.g. bus) we will ensure that vehicles are insured, the driver has a current and appropriate license for the vehicle being used and the appropriate safety measures are in place (e.g., fitted working seatbelts and appropriate restraints for children). • Welcoming Australia workers must not be transporting any child participant/s.
Supervision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • children are to be supervised by parents/guardians at all times • if a child is not collected by parent/guardian at end of class/training, two adults are to stay with the child until they are collected

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • when providing one to one consultation with a child, it will be in line of sight of another adult
Taking images of children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • consent of child and their parent/guardian required before taking an image • We will only use images of children that are relevant to our organisation’s activities and ensure that they are suitably clothed. • disclosure will be made as to how the image is to be used and consent must be provided by the child 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
Change room requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a minimum of two adults of the same gender as the children must be present • supervision will be provided ensuring the child or young person’s right to privacy • adults must not shower or change whilst supervising children or young people • phones, cameras and recording devices must not be used in change room

Annexure C

Reporting Information

If you believe that a child is in immediate danger or a life-threatening situation, call **Triple Zero (000)**

Further information about making appropriate reports of harm or risk of harm is available on the relevant State or Territory Child Protection website as below:

SA	Reporting Child Abuse Mandatory Notifiers	Child Abuse Report Line (CARL) 13 14 78 In cases involving Aboriginal children and young people, support is provided by Yaitya Tirramangkotti - an Aboriginal team, via the CARL number
QLD	Reporting Child Abuse Mandatory Reporters Failure to Report Offence	Call Regional Intake Services Child Safety After hours services 1800 177 135
VIC	Reporting Child Abuse Mandatory Reporting Failure to Disclose Offence	Business hours: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North Division: 1300 598 521 • South Division: 1300 555 526 • East Division: 1300 360 452 • West Division: 1300 360 462 Child Protection Emergency Service (after hours) 13 12 78
NSW	Reporting Child Abuse	Child Protection Helpline 13 21 11
TAS	Stronger Families Safe Kids Child Protection Notification Form Mandatory Reporters Reportable Conduct Scheme	Advice and Referral line 1800 000 123
ACT	Report Child Abuse or Neglect Online Child Concern Report Mandatory Reporters Failure to Report Offence	Child Concern Reporting line 1300 556 729
WA	Reporting your Concern Mandatory Reporting	Central Intake Team 1800 273 889
NT	Report Child Abuse	Child Abuse Hotline 1800 700 250

