

## CEO ADMINISTRATION GOVERNANCE

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<b>Ref:</b>	GOV11
<b>Name:</b>	Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
<b>Approved by:</b>	Chief Executive Officer
<b>Date effective:</b>	October 2023
<b>Due to be reviewed:</b>	October 2025

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## SECTION 1 – INTRODUCTION

### PURPOSE

The purpose of this Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy is to describe MS Plus Ltd.'s (MS Plus) commitment to respecting and valuing all children. This policy details how MS Plus will prioritise the safety and wellbeing of children and young people and the child safe practices that MS Plus will implement to create a culture where the safety of children is promoted, child abuse is prevented, and allegations of child abuse are taken seriously and acted upon.

The policy applies to all MS Plus activities and services, including direct service recipients or children who are indirectly linked.

This policy must be read in conjunction with the laws of the Commonwealth, the relevant State or Territory, and the National Child Safe Principles.

MS Plus operates a diverse range of support and accommodation services for people living with multiple sclerosis and other neurological conditions and is committed to applying an appropriate duty of care to all people in contact with MS Plus services. This includes protecting people's personal and cultural safety regardless of ability, cultural background, ethnicity, age, gender identity, sexual orientation or religion. MS Plus upholds the general principles of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities as directed by the Australian Human Rights Commission.

### SCOPE

This policy applies to all MS Plus Directors, Employees, Volunteers, Consultants, and Contractors (while they are working on MS PLUS business) and Agents whilst working or operating from any MS Plus workplaces, classified as 'the user' for the purposes of this document.

### MS PLUS COMMITMENT TO CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

MS Plus is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children. We create a child safe and child friendly environment where all children are valued and heard are safe and protected.

We have zero tolerance of child abuse and will embed and enact processes to respond to any allegations and safety concerns.

At MS Plus we understand that children are vulnerable, but some children need special care and protection to ensure they are safe, and children with a disability have an increased risk of being abused. We empower children with a disability to have the right to participate in decision-making that affects them.

MS Plus is committed to the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children and children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, in which their diverse and unique identities and experiences are respected and valued.

MS Plus complies with the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations and the Victorian Child Safe Standards. MS Plus acknowledges that child safety is a whole of community responsibility, and all our staff and volunteers must abide by our Code of Conduct.

**MS PLUS CHILD SAFETY AND WELLBEING CODE OF CONDUCT**

All MS Plus staff are responsible for the safety and wellbeing of children and young people who engage with MS Plus. All staff are expected to act in accordance with this Code of Conduct in their physical and online interactions with children and young people under the age of 18 years.

<p><b>I will:</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Act in accordance with MS Plus child safety and wellbeing policies and procedures at all times.</li> <li>• Behave respectfully, courteously and ethically towards children and their families and towards other staff.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Promote the human rights, safety and wellbeing of all children in MS Plus.</li> <li>• Demonstrate appropriate personal and professional boundaries.</li> <li>• Consider and respect the diverse backgrounds and needs of children.</li> <li>• Create an environment that promotes and enables children’s participation and is welcoming, culturally safe and inclusive for all children and their families.</li> <li>• Involve children in making decisions about activities, policies and processes that concern them wherever possible.</li> <li>• Contribute, where appropriate, to MS Plus policies, discussions, learning and reviews about child safety and wellbeing.</li> <li>• Identify and mitigate risks to children’s safety and wellbeing as required by MS Plus Risk Management Policy.</li> <li>• Respond to any concerns or complaints of child harm or abuse promptly and in line with MS Plus Complaints and Feedback Policy and Incident and Near Miss Management Policy.</li> <li>• Report all suspected or disclosed child harm or abuse as required by Australian law and as per Incident and Near Miss Management Policy mandatory reporting guidance.</li> </ul>
<p><b>I will NOT:</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage in any unlawful activity with or in relation to a child.</li> <li>• Engage in any activity that is likely to physically, sexually or emotionally harm a child.</li> <li>• Unlawfully discriminate against any child or their family members.</li> <li>• Be alone with a child unnecessarily.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arrange personal contact, including online contact, with children I am working with for a purpose unrelated to MS Plus activities.</li> <li>• Disclose personal or sensitive information about a child, including images of a child, unless the child and their parent or legal guardian consent or unless I am required to do so by MS Plus policy and procedure on reporting.</li> <li>• Use inappropriate language in the presence of children or show or provide children with access to inappropriate images or material.</li> <li>• Ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child harm or abuse.</li> </ul>
<p><b>If I think this Code of Conduct has been breached by another person in MS Plus, I will:</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Act to prioritise the best interests of children.</li> <li>• Take action promptly to ensure that children are safe.</li> <li>• Promptly report any concerns to my manager, Senior Manager Quality, the Chief Executive Officer or another manager or leader in MS Plus.</li> <li>• Follow MS Plus policies and procedures for receiving and responding to complaints and concerns.</li> <li>• Comply with legislative requirements on reporting if relevant and with the Incident and Near Miss Management Policy.</li> </ul>

## REVIEW CYCLE

This policy will be reviewed biennially. It will be modified or replaced whenever MS Plus becomes aware that this policy no longer complies with the organisation's requirements or relevant legislation.

## SECTION 2 – POLICY

### 2.1 Involving Families and Community

- 2.1.1 MS Plus is committed to having in place practices that ensure effective communication and participation strategies for engaging with and responding to the diverse needs of families and communities.
- 2.1.2 MS Plus recognises the important role of families and involves parents and carers when making significant decisions about their child. Parents, families and communities are welcome to provide feedback at any time through our contact email address and are encouraged to raise any concerns with us.
- 2.1.3 MS Plus informs children and families of their rights, including safety, information and participation and our child safe policies and practices through various measures, including:
- 2.1.3.1 Publishing this Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and Code of Conduct on our website
  - 2.1.3.2 Including information about our child safe approach and policy in the MS Plus Welcome Pack.
  - 2.1.3.3 Providing families and children with the opportunity to participate in decision-making as part of the service agreements made with the families when providing services.
  - 2.1.3.4 Having policies and practices for seeking parental consent for relevant community activities
  - 2.1.3.5 Including articles and information on child safety and wellbeing and reminders about our policies and procedures in our newsletter.

## **2.2 Cultural Safety and responding to Racism, including Aboriginal Children and Families**

- 2.2.1 MS Plus is committed to responding to children with diverse needs and respecting and valuing children.
- 2.2.2 All MS Plus staff and volunteers have the responsibility to:
  - 2.2.2.1 Encourage and support children to express their culture and enjoy their cultural rights.
  - 2.2.2.2 Ask all clients, including children, about their culture and cultural needs.
  - 2.2.2.3 Welcome and support the participation of all children, including children with disabilities, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, those who are unable to live at home, LGBTIQ children and Aboriginal children and their families.
  - 2.2.2.4 Understand that child wellbeing and child protection within families from culturally and linguistically diverse communities is complex and sensitive, and have an awareness of the resources available to support vulnerable children from culturally diverse backgrounds.
  - 2.2.2.5 Acknowledge and recognise occasions that are important to different cultures and dietary requirements.
  - 2.2.2.6 Have zero tolerance of racism and other forms of discrimination and take action when discrimination or exclusion is identified.
- 2.2.3 MS Plus leadership is responsible for supporting everyone involved with the organisation to acknowledge and appreciate the strengths of diverse cultures, including Aboriginal culture, and understand the importance of culture to the wellbeing and safety of children.
- 2.2.4 MS Plus creates an inclusive and welcoming physical and online environment for Aboriginal children and their families through:
  - 2.2.4.1 Supporting children who wish to explore their culture, including consulting with their family and relevant Aboriginal organisations.
  - 2.2.4.2 Providing training for staff and volunteers to understand, respect and value Aboriginal culture and understand the importance of this to the safety and wellbeing of Aboriginal children.
  - 2.2.4.3 Celebrating NAIDOC Week and acknowledging significant events, including National Sorry Day and National Reconciliation Week.
  - 2.2.4.4 Seeking feedback from Aboriginal children, families and communities on their experience at MS Plus, particularly how safe they feel expressing their identity, including their culture.

## **2.3 Child-focused Complaint Systems**

- 2.3.1 MS Plus is committed to ensuring we have complaint systems where children and young people feel comfortable and empowered to make a complaint or raise a concern. All reports of child abuse and child safety concerns will be treated seriously, whether they are made by an adult or a child and whether they are about the conduct of an adult or a child.
- 2.3.2 To establish a child-focused complaint handling and support a positive complaints culture for children MS Plus:
  - 2.3.2.1 demonstrate a practical commitment to children exercising their right to speak up by ensuring our staff and volunteers receive training and measures, including publicly displaying information posters and providing an easy-to-understand complaints information sheet in the MS Plus Welcome Pack for children, families and the community to know about the complaint process and the supports available to those making a complaint and those involved in the complaint process.

- 2.3.2.2 When a complaint is raised, MS Plus will deal with it promptly and thoroughly as per MS Plus Feedback and Complaints Policy, ensuring our complaints handling processes are understood by children, families, staff, and volunteers.
- 2.3.2.3 Ensure reporting, privacy and employment law obligations are met as per the MS Plus Feedback and Complaints policy.
- 2.3.3 MS Plus will take a trauma-informed approach to child safety incidents that:
  - 2.3.3.1 recognises that emotional, physical or sexual abuse and other negative life experiences such as racism or violence constitute trauma.
  - 2.3.3.2 understands that the impact of abuse on children can be profound, especially when it occurs at developmentally vulnerable times of their lives.
  - 2.3.3.3 uses strategies to help children participate in complaints processes without causing further trauma.
- 2.3.4 Where a complaint or any child safety concern is raised by any MS Plus staff, volunteers or clients, this will be reported and managed according to the Incident and Near Miss Management Policy. This includes:
  - 2.3.4.1 Any child safety concern where MS Plus staff or volunteers, in the course of their work, form a reasonable belief that a child or young person has suffered or is likely to suffer abuse or harm - whether caused by an adult or by another child.
  - 2.3.4.2 Any child safety complaint against MS Plus, including any allegation of Reportable Conduct made against MS Plus Staff (excluding contractors), either within work or outside of work.
  - 2.3.4.3 Any breach of MS Plus's Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy, including the Child Safety and Wellbeing Code of Conduct included within.
- 2.3.5 Under the complaint handling and disciplinary policies, staff and volunteers may be subject to actions to support child safety, including:
  - 2.3.5.1 Being stood down during an investigation or terminated following an investigation.
  - 2.3.5.2 Having their duties altered so they do not engage with children at MS Plus.
  - 2.3.5.3 Not allowing unsupervised contact with children at MS Plus.
  - 2.3.5.4 Removing their access to the MS Plus IT system and facilities.
  - 2.3.5.5 If there is a concern for the immediate safety of a child, immediately call 000.

## **2.4 Safe Physical and Online Environments**

- 2.4.1 MS Plus recognises the importance of identifying and managing child harm and abuse risks. We conduct regular biennial risk assessments and have a risk management plan to address the risk of child abuse and harm. Review schedules are amended as needed, with additional reviews scheduled as risk changes or new risks are identified.
- 2.4.2 Safe Online environment considerations include the education of staff in relation to online safety and appropriate behaviour, outlining how MS Plus responds to the misuse of digital devices and unacceptable online behaviours, having clear processes for reporting online safety issues or breaches of acceptable use policies and ensuring data safety are reviewed for compliance with the MS Plus ISO 27001-certified Information Security Management System (ISMS) policies and procedures (IT) and Privacy Policy.
- 2.4.3 MS Plus conducts risk assessments to ensure physical environment safety in the locations where we provide services and where community events, such as family camps, may be held. Any children attending our services or community events must have an adult parent or guardian present at all times.

2.4.4 Any contractors or other providers of services where they may be in direct contact with children will always be supervised by a staff member while working with us to ensure child safety and acknowledge the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and Code of Conduct.

## **2.5 Defining Child Abuse and Harm**

2.5.1 There are five types of child abuse recognised in Australia. These include:

- sexual abuse and misconduct
- physical abuse
- emotional or psychological abuse and
- significant neglect
- exposure to family violence

2.5.2 Defining abuse is recognised as complex. Drawing from research, their experience, using empathy and listening well, MS Plus staff must exercise good professional judgement as they work with each unique child in each context. It is also important for human services, health, criminal justice and other professionals to make decisions of abuse definitions collaboratively. For example, in the case of Indigenous children and children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, it is important to involve specialist cultural advisers in planning and decision-making.

2.5.3 Further information regarding the types of child abuse is available from the Australian Institute of Family Studies <https://aifs.gov.au/resources/resource-sheets/reporting-child-abuse-and-neglect>

## **2.6 Identifying Child Abuse**

2.6.1 MS Plus staff and volunteers may become aware of an incident, allegation or suspicion of child abuse or harm (either by adults or by other children) in a number of ways, such as:

- A complaint is made through the MS Plus complaints process;
- A child states they, or someone they know has been abused (noting that sometimes the child may be referring to themselves);
- Behaviour consistent with that of an abuse victim is observed;
- Someone else has raised a suspicion of abuse but is unwilling to report it;
- observing suspicious behaviour; and/or
- MS Plus staff and volunteers are also expected to be familiar with signs that may indicate a child is being abused and how to respond to these.

2.6.2 MS Plus Staff are expected to be familiar with the common behavioural indicators/signs across the different types of child abuse and harm detailed in the Child Safety and Wellbeing learning module.

## **2.7 Responding to children's disclosure of abuse**

2.7.1 MS Plus acknowledges that an adult's response to a child or young person's disclosure of abuse can be central to a child or young person's ongoing safety and recovery from the abuse trauma.

2.7.2 MS Plus supports staff to respond appropriately to a child disclosure by providing training and resources to guide staff, including the Australian Institute of Family Studies Responding to Children and Young People's Disclosures of Abuse guide.

## **2.8 Reporting Obligations and Procedures**

2.8.1 MS Plus must report child safety incidents in accordance with the relevant reporting obligations and procedures outlined below each time they become aware of any further grounds for the reasonable belief of abuse or harm.

## 2.8.2 Internal Reporting

2.8.2.1 MS Plus must report ALL Child Safety Incidents internally by:

- a) notifying their manager verbally as soon as possible.
- b) completing an Incident Report Form and
- c) notify the Senior Manager Quality or Child Safety Officer.

2.8.2.2 If MS Plus staff become aware of a child safety incident via the MS Plus complaints process or any other complaints process, they must complete an Incident Report by transferring the information contained within the complaint to that form, providing any other relevant information available and submitting it as above.

*\*If the incident involves a supervisor or Manager, please notify the Senior Manager of Quality you wish to remain anonymous, you can notify via the MS Plus Whistleblower process.*

## 2.8.3 External Reporting

2.8.3.1 Anyone who suspects, on reasonable grounds, that a child is at risk of being abused and/or neglected should report it to the reporting authority in their state or territory.

2.8.3.2 MS Plus staff are subject to legal obligations regarding reporting child abuse, harm or other child-related misconduct to external authorities, outlined below.

2.8.3.3 The external reporting obligations for each child safety incident will depend on the nature and circumstances of that incident and the state or territory in which the incident occurred in. Differences exist in the types of abuse and neglect that must be externally reported.

In NSW jurisdictions, it is mandatory to report suspicion on reasonable grounds, obtained during the course of or from the person's work, that a child is at risk of significant harm because of the presence to a significant extent of circumstances of neglect, physical abuse, sexual abuse, psychological abuse, risk of harm through exposure to domestic violence, and failure to engage with services after a pre-natal report.

In Victoria and ACT jurisdictions, except for sexual abuse, it is only cases of significant abuse and neglect that must be reported.

In Tasmania, mandatory reporting includes knowledge or a belief or suspicion on reasonable grounds that a child has been or is being 'abused' or 'neglected' in any of the types of abuse.

2.8.3.4 External reporting instructions for each MS Plus jurisdiction are outlined in the Mandatory External Authorities' Incident Notification guide in the Incident and Near Miss Management Policy.

## 2.9 Information Sharing and Record Keeping

2.9.1 MS Plus is committed to ensuring best practice record keeping in line with the Records Management Policy and Privacy Policy and Procedures. MS Plus acknowledges that the care and protection of children and young people depends on accurate and relevant shared information.

2.9.2 MS Plus is committed to protecting individuals' privacy. It will manage all child-safety records as prescribed by the Privacy Act 1988 and the relevant state and territory Health Records Acts documented in the Records Management policy. MS Plus will keep information about child safety incidents and complaints confidential, except where it is necessary to share information to respond properly to a complaint or to prioritise child safety.

2.9.3 MS Plus may also need to share information about incidents or complaints with external authorities to comply with the law or to prioritise safety.



2.9.4 When responding to and investigating child safety incidents, MS Plus will keep children and families informed where appropriate and safe to do so whilst balancing confidentiality and risks to children. The safety of children will be prioritised throughout these processes.

**2.10 Ensuring that staff are suitable have the knowledge, skills, awareness and training**

2.10.1 MS Plus ensures the best practice standards in recruiting and screening personnel and will ensure these meet the National Principles of Child Safe Organisations and Victorian Safe Standards. All MS Plus recruitment procedures comply with the Recruitment Policy, addressing child safety requirements.

2.10.2 All MS Plus Positions are advertised with the MS Plus Child Safe Commitment Statement.

2.10.3 Working with Children Checks (or equivalent) are required for all staff roles that have been risk assessed and meet the legal requirements for working with children’s checks or working with vulnerable people checks in each MS Plus jurisdiction as per the MS Plus Screening Policy.

2.10.4 All MS Plus staff required to have Working with Children Checks under this Policy will be required to have a valid/current/appropriate check before commencement.

2.10.5 Referee checks include screening regarding working safely with children where applicable.

2.10.6 All new MS Plus staff will be provided with the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and training relevant to the role. Mandatory training for all staff includes identifying, preventing and reporting child abuse and harm as part of their induction on commencement.

2.10.7 MS Plus ensures that all staff are provided with the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy to inform them of MS Plus’s expectations, practices and approach concerning child safety. To ensure ongoing awareness, all MS Plus staff will receive annual training/education about child safety and wellbeing, including identifying, preventing and reporting child abuse and harm.

2.10.8 Records of the completion of child safety training will be maintained.

**2.11 Roles and Responsibilities**

Role	Responsibilities
Managers and leaders, including Board Directors and Executives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Model a culture of child safety and wellbeing.</li> <li>• Understand and comply with their obligations in relation to child safety and wellbeing.</li> <li>• Ensure Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy implementation.</li> <li>• Ensure compliance with recruitment and screening practices.</li> <li>• Monitor staff induction, training, supervision and support.</li> <li>• Ensure adherence to policy or procedure for receiving and responding to complaints.</li> <li>• Ensure adherence to policies or procedures on external reporting, record keeping and information sharing.</li> </ul> <p>In addition, the CEO is responsible for meeting specific requirements under the Reportable Conduct Scheme and ensuring these are implemented within legislated timeframes.</p>
All staff and volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meet the legal requirements for working with children’s checks or equivalent as per screening check policy.</li> </ul>



Role	Responsibilities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participate in training and education in relation to child safety and wellbeing as required.</li> <li>• Report any concerns about the safety and wellbeing of a child or young person.</li> <li>• Comply with the Child Safety and Wellbeing Code of Conduct.</li> <li>• Provide environments for children and young people where they feel safe, empowered and can participate.</li> <li>• Behave safely and appropriately with children and young people.</li> <li>• Be aware of culturally appropriate services that support children's services.</li> </ul>
Contactors and consultants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The management of contracts includes but is not limited to, all agreements, leases, licences, grant recipients, funded partners and labour hire.</li> <li>• Anyone managing these contracts will ensure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- All third-party operators are provided with a copy of the MS Plus Child Safety Commitment Statement</li> <li>- Contracts contain the relevant child safe clauses, including the requirement for Working with Children Checks where relevant.</li> <li>- Monitoring of compliance with child safety requirements.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Senior Manager Corporate Risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undertake the development and monitoring of risk assessment and management processes.</li> </ul>
Senior Manager Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote a child safety and wellbeing culture across the organisation.</li> <li>• Provide guidance, information and training to teams, supporting them in embedding child safety in their work.</li> <li>• Ensure compliance requirements are met, and continuous improvement activities are undertaken to support improving child safety practices.</li> </ul>
People, Culture and Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure MS Plus recruitment and screening policies and procedures reflect the legal and child safe standard requirements.</li> <li>• Ensure all staff commencing roles have appropriate screening checks and referee checks.</li> <li>• Ensure compliance with induction and mandatory learning requirements in relation to Child Safety.</li> <li>• Support staff following child abuse incidents.</li> <li>• Manage disciplinary procedures as they relate to child safety and wellbeing.</li> </ul>

## SECTION 4 – REFERENCE AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

## DEFINITIONS

Word/Term	Definition
Children	In this Policy, the term child or children includes children and young people under the age of 18 years.
Child safe culture	A child safe culture means an organisation has shared attitudes, values, policies and practices that prioritise the safety of children.
Child safe organisation	<p>A child safe organisation creates a culture, adopts strategies and takes action to promote child wellbeing and prevent harm to children and young people.</p> <p>A child safe organisation consciously and systematically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creates an environment where children’s safety and wellbeing are at the centre of thought, values and actions.</li> <li>• Places emphasis on genuine engagement with and valuing of children and young people.</li> <li>• Creates conditions that reduce the likelihood of harm to children and young people.</li> <li>• Creates conditions that increase the likelihood of identifying any harm.</li> <li>• Responds to any concerns, disclosures, allegations or suspicions of harm.</li> </ul>
Sexual Abuse	<p>Child sexual abuse is when a person uses power or authority over a child to involve them in sexual activity. It includes a broad range of behaviours involving a sexual element that are committed against, with or in the presence of a child.</p> <p>Sexual offences include sexual assault, indecent acts, possession of child abuse material, and grooming a child in order to commit a sexual offence.</p>
Sexual Misconduct	Sexual misconduct includes a variety of sexualised behaviours against, with or in the presence of a child. These behaviours may not meet the threshold for a sexual offence but can still pose a significant risk to children. Behaviours could include inappropriate conversations of a sexual nature, comments that express a desire to act in a sexual manner, or, in some cases, behaviour that crosses a professional boundary, such as having or seeking to establish an inappropriate or overly personal or intimate relationship with a child.
Physical Violence	<p>Physical violence is the intentional or reckless use of physical force against, with or in the presence of a child without their consent, which causes or could cause the child harm to their health, development or dignity. It may also include the threat of abuse where the child reasonably fears it may occur.</p> <p>Physical violence can include hitting, punching, kicking, pushing or throwing something that strikes a child. It also includes using words or gestures that cause a child to believe they are about to suffer physical abuse.</p>

Word/Term	Definition
Emotional and psychological abuse	<p>Emotional and psychological abuse can arise from experiencing a sexual offence, sexual misconduct, physical abuse or neglect. Emotional and psychological harm may also occur in circumstances that involve persistent verbal abuse, coercive or manipulative behaviour, hostility towards a child, humiliation, belittling or scapegoating, conveying to a child that they are worthless, unloved, inadequate or rejected, or causing a child to feel frightened or in danger frequently.</p> <p>For emotional or psychological harm to be serious, it must involve an act (or the cumulative effect of many acts) resulting in harm that is more than significant, being either substantial and protracted, or that endangers life.</p>
Significant Neglect	<p>Neglect is a failure to meet the basic needs of a child (such as their wellbeing and safety). Neglect can arise as a result of a single event or a combination of different events.</p> <p>Significant neglect occurs when there is a significant, deliberate or reckless failure to meet the basic needs of a child in circumstances where the adult understood the needs of the child or could have understood those needs if they had turned their mind to the question and had the opportunity to meet those needs but failed to do so.</p>
Grooming	<p>Grooming behaviour can involve the use of a variety of manipulative and controlling techniques used to build trust or normalise sexually harmful behaviour. Grooming is often described as the 'preparation' phase of child sexual abuse, undertaken by the perpetrator to gain a child's trust and to establish secrecy and silence.</p>
Cultural rights	<p>Cultural rights are the rights of each child (individually or as part of a group of people) to develop and express their background, customs, social behaviour, language, religion or spirituality, beliefs and way of living.</p> <p>Aboriginal people have distinct cultural rights to enjoy their identity and culture, maintain the use of their language, maintain their kinship ties, and maintain their relationship with the land, waters and other resources with which they have a connection under traditional laws and customs.</p>
Cultural safety	<p>Cultural safety is the positive recognition and celebration of cultures. It is more than just the absence of racism or discrimination and more than 'cultural awareness' and 'cultural sensitivity'. It empowers people and allows them to contribute and feel safe to be themselves.</p>
Cultural safety for Aboriginal children	<p>Cultural safety for Aboriginal children has been defined as 'the child being provided with a safe, nurturing and positive environment where they are comfortable with being themselves, expressing their culture, their spiritual and belief systems, and they are supported by the carer (who) respects their Aboriginality and therefore encourages their sense of self and identity'.</p>
Direct contact	<p>Any contact between a person and a child that involves:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• physical contact; or</li> <li>• face to face contact; or</li> <li>• contact by post or other written communication; or</li> </ul>

Word/Term	Definition
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• contact by telephone or other oral communication; or</li> <li>• contact by email or other electronic communication, including apps and social media platforms.</li> </ul>
Online environments	Online environments are any technological platforms which an organisation uses or controls, such as computers, phones, websites, intranet, social media and video conference facilities, regardless of where such platforms may be accessed by children.
Physical environments	Physical environments are the physical places where an organisation operates or conducts activities, such as a building, facility or space and includes physical environments operated by third parties.
National Child Safe Principles 2018	The National Principles reflect ten child safe standards recommended by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse and are the vehicle for giving effect to recommendations relating to the standards. The National Principles have a broader scope that goes beyond child sexual abuse to cover other forms of potential harm to children and young people.
Victorian Child Safe Standards	The Victorian Child Safe Standards are a compulsory framework that support organisations to promote the safety of children by requiring them to implement policies to prevent, respond to and report allegations of child abuse and harm. New updated Standards were released by the Victorian Government in 2021 and apply from 1 July 2022.

## SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Name	Link
Worker Screening Policy	Policy Hub
Learning and Development Policy	Policy Hub
Risk Management Policy	Policy Hub
Records Management Policy	Policy Hub
Feedback and Complaints Policy	Policy Hub
Volunteer Involvement Policy	Policy Hub
Responding to Abuse Policy	Policy Hub
Whistleblower Policy	Policy Hub
Information Security Policy	Policy Hub
Device Email and Internet Policy	Policy Hub
Marketing and Communications Policy	Policy Hub
Incident and Near Miss Management Policy	Policy Hub
Mandatory External Authorities Incident Notification Reporting	Policy Hub
Australian Institute of Family Studies Responding to Children and Young People's Disclosures of Abuse guide	<a href="https://aifs.gov.au/resources/practice-guides/responding-children-and-young-peoples-disclosures-abuse">https://aifs.gov.au/resources/practice-guides/responding-children-and-young-peoples-disclosures-abuse</a>

Name	Link
Australian Institute of Family Studies Responding to Children and Young People's Disclosures of Abuse infographic	<a href="https://aifs.gov.au/resources/practice-guides/responding-children-and-young-peoples-disclosures-abuse">https://aifs.gov.au/resources/practice-guides/responding-children-and-young-peoples-disclosures-abuse</a>
Mandatory reporting of child abuse and neglect (National Guide)	<a href="https://aifs.gov.au/resources/resource-sheets/mandatory-reporting-child-abuse-and-neglect">https://aifs.gov.au/resources/resource-sheets/mandatory-reporting-child-abuse-and-neglect</a>
Speak Up Poster	<a href="https://www.childsafety.gov.au/resources/speak-up-make-complaint">https://www.childsafety.gov.au/resources/speak-up-make-complaint</a>
National Principles for Child Safe Organizations Poster	<a href="https://www.childsafety.gov.au/system/files/2022-09/national-principles-poster-english.pdf">https://www.childsafety.gov.au/system/files/2022-09/national-principles-poster-english.pdf</a>
Victorian Child Safety Standards Poster	<a href="https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2018-10/child-safety-standards-childrens-poster.pdf">https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2018-10/child-safety-standards-childrens-poster.pdf</a>
Child Safe Learning Modules	<a href="https://childsafef.humanrights.gov.au/learning-hub/e-learning-modules">https://childsafef.humanrights.gov.au/learning-hub/e-learning-modules</a>
Victoria's Child Safe Standards Plain Language Summary Poster	<a href="https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/assets/resources/New-CSS/Victorias-Child-Safe-Standards-Plain-language-poster-10.02.2023.pdf">https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/assets/resources/New-CSS/Victorias-Child-Safe-Standards-Plain-language-poster-10.02.2023.pdf</a>

## SECTION 5 – GOVERNANCE

### RELATED EXTERNAL REFERENCES

Name	Link
<a href="#">ACT: Disability and Young People ACT (2008)</a>	<a href="#">ACT: Disability and Young People ACT (2008)</a>
<a href="#">ACT Human Rights Act 2004</a>	<a href="#">ACT Human Rights Act 2004</a>
<a href="#">Australian Human Rights Commission National Principles for Child Safe Organisations</a>	<a href="#">Australian Human Rights Commission National Principles for Child Safe Organisations</a>
<a href="#">Australia: Family Law Act (1975)</a>	<a href="#">Australia: Family Law Act (1975)</a>
<a href="#">Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic)</a>	<a href="#">Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic)</a>
Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012	<a href="https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/whole/html/inforce/current/act-2012-051">https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/whole/html/inforce/current/act-2012-051</a>
<a href="#">Childrens Guardian Act 2019 (NSW)</a>	<a href="#">Childrens Guardian Act 2019 (NSW)</a>
<a href="#">Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)</a>	<a href="#">Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)</a>
<a href="#">Children, Youth, and Families Act 2005 (Vic)</a>	<a href="#">Children, Youth, and Families Act 2005 (Vic)</a>
<a href="#">Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act 1997 (Tas)</a>	<a href="#">Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act 1997 (Tas)</a>

Name	Link
<a href="#">Commission for Children and Young People Act 2012 (Vic)</a>	<a href="#">Commission for Children and Young People Act 2012 (Vic)</a>
<a href="#">Convention on the Rights of the Child 1990</a>	<a href="#">Convention on the Rights of the Child 1990</a>
<a href="#">Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)</a>	<a href="#">Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)</a>
<a href="#">Disability Act 2006 (Vic)</a>	<a href="#">Disability Act 2006 (Vic)</a>
<a href="#">Disability Inclusion Act (2014) (NSW)</a>	<a href="#">Disability Inclusion Act (2014) (NSW)</a>
<a href="#">Disability Act 1992</a>	<a href="#">Disability Act 1992</a>
<a href="#">Enhancing Online Safety for Children Amendment Act 2017</a>	<a href="#">Enhancing Online Safety for Children Amendment Act 2017</a>
<a href="#">Family Law Act 1975 (Cth)</a>	<a href="#">Family Law Act 1975 (Cth)</a>
<a href="#">Family Violence Protection Act 2008 (Vic)</a>	<a href="#">Family Violence Protection Act 2008 (Vic)</a>
<a href="#">Family Violence Act (2004) (Tasmania)</a>	<a href="#">Family Violence Act (2004) (Tasmania)</a>
<a href="#">Health Records Act 2001 (Vic)</a>	<a href="#">Health Records Act 2001 (Vic)</a>
<a href="#">National Principles for Child Safe Organisations 2018</a>	<a href="#">National Principles for Child Safe Organisations 2018</a>
<a href="#">NSW: Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998</a>	<a href="#">NSW: Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998</a>
<a href="#">Ombudsman Act 1976</a>	<a href="#">Ombudsman Act 1976</a>
<a href="#">Privacy Act 1988 Act (Cth) (including the Australian Privacy Principles)</a>	<a href="#">Privacy Act 1988 Act (Cth) (including the Australian Privacy Principles)</a>
<a href="#">Registration to Work with Vulnerable People Act 2013 Tas)</a>	<a href="#">Registration to Work with Vulnerable People Act 2013 Tas)</a>
<a href="#">Tasmania: Charter of Rights</a>	<a href="#">Tasmania: Charter of Rights</a>
<a href="#">United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child</a>	<a href="#">United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child</a>
<a href="#">Worker Screening Act 2020 (Vic)</a>	<a href="#">Worker Screening Act 2020 (Vic)</a>
<a href="#">Working with Vulnerable People (Background Checking) Act 2011</a>	<a href="#">Working with Vulnerable People (Background Checking) Act 2011</a>

## RESPONSIBILITY

<b>Process Owner</b>	Executive Manager Client Engagement and Wellbeing
<b>Content Holder(s)</b>	Executive Manager Client Engagement and Wellbeing
<b>Recommending Body</b>	Quality Committee
<b>Endorsed by</b>	CEO

## CHANGE HISTORY

Version	Effective Date	Author	Change
1	October 2023	Executive Manager, Client Engagement and Wellbeing	New Policy