**PURPOSE**

[Organisation] aims to ensure it is a child safe organisation by providing a clear and accountable framework for Board members, management, and staff which prioritises the safety of children and young people in a safe, nurturing, and positive environment.

This framework incorporates the National Child Safe Principles and Standards recommended by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (the Royal Commission) for making organisations safer for children.

A child safe organisation is one that systematically:

* creates conditions to reduce the likelihood of children being harmed
* creates conditions that increase the likelihood of identifying and reporting harm
* responds appropriately to disclosures, allegations, and suspicions of harm

**RESPONSIBLITIES**

Board members, staff, volunteers or students on placement or internships who work either directly or indirectly with children and young people are required to understand and adhere to their role and responsibilities in accordance with [Organisation] Child Safe Organisation Policy and Procedures.

[Organisation] has developed a range of strategies to ensure a culture of awareness and accountability for maintaining child safe practices within all levels of the organisation.

**ORGANISATIONAL STRATEGIES**

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| **Board of Management and CEO** | * Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance, and culture. * [Organistion] considers children’s diverse circumstances and responds effectively to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children with disability, and children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. * Equity is upheld and diverse needs are respected in policy and practice. * [Organisation] regularly reviews and improves implementation of the National Child Safe Principles and Standards. * Complaints are analysed to identify causes and systemic failures to inform continuous improvement. * Staff have clear disciplinary and grievance procedures that are linked to [Organisation] Child Safety Code of Conduct and feedback/complaint mechanisms. * Guidelines for acceptable use of electronic media systems and associated tools such as mobile phones, computers and tablets for child related work are available for staff and volunteers. * Staff behaviours that are inappropriate with children in an online or physical environment can be identified. * [Organisation], as far as is feasible within its available resources provides opportunity for staff to attend child safe and inclusive practices training. * Funding is allocated annually to the Children’s Program budget to purchase child safe resources. * [Organisation] fosters open and positive relationships with other Family and Domestic Violence services to share child safe practices. * A communication strategy publicly commits to child safety and supports the implementation of the Child Safe Organisation Policy and Child Safe Code of Conduct. |

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| **Management** | * [Organisation] Child Safe suite of policies and practices are discussed at induction. * Regularly review the implementation of the National Child Safe Principles and Standards at Manager meetings for continuous improvement. * Monitor and support the implementation of child safe policies by reviewing current practice and developing procedures to support child safe environments with staff and families on an ongoing basis. * Staff working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice. * Refuges select appropriate cultural symbols, images, food, and objects in consultation with its families to create a sense of identity and belonging. * Appropriate support and culturally inclusive information are available and accessible to all clients. * Risk management strategies focus on preventing, identifying and mitigating risks to children. * Staff understand their obligations on information sharing and accurate record keeping. * Opportunities to discuss child safe policies are provided during staff supervision through reflective practice. Staff are encouraged to ask questions and clarify their understanding. * Child safety and participation is a standing Agenda item at staff meetings. * Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice. * Staff are equipped with the knowledge and skills to communicate effectively with families and build relationships. * Staff are provided with ongoing education and training to build their capacity to implement child safe principles in practice. * The views of children and young people are seriously considered in all aspects of service provision. * Families have a say in [Organisation] policies and practices through a variety of feedback mechanisms, including but not limited to; anonymous suggestion box, house meetings, exit interview, discussion, and consultation. * Children have access to counselling, abuse prevention programs and information such as Protective Behaviours. * Child Advocates are provided with the necessary resources to deliver Protective Behaviours across Children’s Programs. * Feedback from children and young people is analysed to facilitate quality improvement. * An effective complaints management procedure is in place making sure children know who they can talk to about their concerns. * Staff are knowledgeable to signs of harm and facilitate child-friendly ways for children to communicate and raise their concerns. * Provide support to staff who have been directly involved in or affected by processing a disclosure. Debriefing and counselling (EAP) is to be offered. |

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| **Staff** | * Adhere to [Organisation] Child Safe Code of Conduct and Child Safe policies and procedures. * Deliver Protective Behaviours as an individual program and/or group program across the broader Children’s Program. * Provide activities for children that are safe and developmentally and culturally appropriate. * Educate children and young people about their rights and consult with them in decisions that affect them. * Inform and involve families in promoting child safety and wellbeing through two-way communication and having culturally appropriate information available e.g., ‘Reducing Risk of Harm Online’, eSafety Commissioner. * Encourage children to provide feedback on all aspects of service provision, with compliment and complaint mechanisms in place. * Take seriously complaints made by children and support them through the process to speak up. * Participate in ongoing education and training to build capacity and implement child safe principles in practice. * Support, model and encourage parents to supervise their children in refuge areas. * Renew WWC Checks at least one month before expiry. * Carry their WWC Check with them at all times when on organisational business. * Call the police if a child is at serious risk of harm. |

**PROCEDURES**

**Recruitment**

* Recruitment, including advertising and screening, emphasises child safety.
* Selection processes for child related work acknowledge the importance of child safety and demonstrated cultural awareness in the duty statement and selection criteria.
* Job descriptions reflect any requirement for a WWC Check.
* Include behavioural based questions to determine attitudes, motivations and values regarding children and young people.
* Request applicant to disclose if they have been charged with child exploitation offences and record their response.
* Reference checks include questions regarding any concerns about the candidate’s conduct in working or interacting with children and young people.
* Child safe policies, procedures and Code of Conduct are discussed at induction.
* A person cannot be engaged in child-related work on more than five days in a calendar year unless they hold a current WWC Card or have applied for one.
* Ensure all volunteers, students (18+ years) and paid employees who do not require a WWC Check obtain a National Police Check for Volunteers or a National Police Certificate.

**Working with Children Checks (WWC)**

* [Organisation] delegates an authorised representative responsible for WWC Checks.
* The authorised representative:
* Signs the WWC Check applications
* Validates and records WWC Cards using the online service on the WWC Check website
* Periodically checks WWC cards are still valid and have not been cancelled
* Completes the ‘Register Card Holders’ online form to advise when new staff have a WWC Check Card from a previous employer
* Ensure WWC Checks are renewed every three years, at least one month before expiry
* Maintains adequate records to demonstrate compliance with the WWC Check Act
* Receives all outcomes and related correspondence from the WWC Unit
* Communicates outcomes of WWC Checks to relevant line managers
* Ensures staff and volunteers are reimbursed for the cost of WWC Checks.

**Reporting**

**While [Organisation] staff have an obligation to treat information provided by clients as confidential, child safety concerns take precedence over this obligation.**

Staff are required to act as soon as possible and consult with their line manager when they have concerns about a child. With any allegation of child abuse or neglect it is crucial that an accurate and detailed record of events is kept by the staff involved by:

* documenting all concerns, including a record of the conversation in the child’s own words or observations made
* recording details of the date, time, location, child’s full name, age, the person suspected of causing the harm and facts surrounding the allegation
* where the line manager and CEO agree, a report must be made within 24 hours or as soon as practicable to the Department of Communities (Child Protection and Family Support) and/or the WA Police Child Abuse Unit.
* staff involved in a disclosure or who witness child abuse are encouraged to access the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) for confidential counselling and support.

**Helping children and young people to make a complaint**

Staff are to be mindful that changes in children’s behaviour or non-verbal cues can mean they are not happy about something. Making a complaint can be frightening for children and young people, staff can support them through the process and encourage them to speak up.

Let children know their rights and that they have the right to:

* **Be** safe, **Be** included, **Raise** concerns, **B**e treated with kindness and respect, and **H**ave their views valued. Let them know that adults and organisations like [Organisation] have a responsibility to make sure these rights are met and make changes when they are not met. Encourage them to give feedback on [Organisation] and services they visit.
* Be a supportive listener and let them use their own words and take their concerns seriously.
* Be honest about what you don’t know, don’t make promises you can’t keep.
* Provide creative mechanisms other than verbal for children and young people to make a complaint.
* Help the child or young person to be clear about their complaint, Ask:
* What they are not happy about
* How the problem has made them feel
* What would help fix the problem
* What they would like to happen
* How you can best support them during and after the complaint.
* If the complaint is with an external organisation advocate on behalf of the child or young person and record the date, who you spoke with and a summary of the conversation.
* Ask what options are available if the complaint cannot be fully resolved and follow up if required.

**EVALUATION AND REVIEW**

Review of these procedures will be completed by Management in consultation with relevant staff and

the CEO, and with children and young people as part of the Policy and Procedure review schedule, or as practical application requires it.

**RELATED DOCUMENTS AND RESOURCES**

* A Guide to Child Safe Standards, NSW Office of the Children’s Guardian
* Commissioner for Children and Young People WA (2013), Are you Listening? Guidelines for making complaints systems accessible and responsive to children and young people.
* Commissioner for Children and Young People WA (2016), Child Safe Organisations WA: Guidelines, Commissioner for Children and Young People Perth.
* Commissioner for Children and Young People WA (2021), Involving Children and Young People, Participation Guidelines
* Consulting with children and young people Resource Toolkit, Starick in partnership with the Perth Metropolitan Eastern Corridor Refuges.
* Creating Safe Environments for Children-Organisations, Employees and Volunteers, National Framework, Community and Disability Services Ministers’ Conference (2005)
* United Nations 1989, Convention on the Rights of the Child.
* United Nations 2007, Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

**RELATED [ORGANISATION] DOCUMENTS**

* List here

**RELEVANT ACTS AND REGULATIONS**

* Children and Community Services Act 2004
* Equal Opportunity Act 1984 (the Act)
* Working with Children (Criminal Record Checking) Act 2004
* Working with Children (Criminal Record Checking) Regulations 2005

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