**POLICY STATEMENT**

Starick is committed to an organisational culture that prioritises the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people engaged with its services, to support them to grow and develop in safe, caring environments free from abuse and harm.

Starick respects the rights of the child and recognises the significant role that the mother/carer play and seeks their involvement to support the safety and wellbeing of their child in the context of family and domestic violence.

Starick’s Children and Young People’s Safety and Wellbeing Policy is aligned to the United Nations Convention Rights of the Child [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Children (unicef.org.au)](https://www.unicef.org.au/our-work/information-for-children/un-convention-on-the-rights-of-the-child), the National Principles and Standards for Child Safe Organisations [Child Safe Organisations WA (ccyp.wa.gov.au)](https://www.ccyp.wa.gov.au/our-work/child-safe-organisations-wa/) and Australia’s Wellbeing Framework for Children and Young People [What's in the Nest? - Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY)](https://www.aracy.org.au/the-nest-in-action/the-nest-overview)

**PURPOSE**

The purpose of this Policy is to ensure Starick Board members, staff and students prioritises the needs of children and young people in the services we deliver. It identifies the different factors children and young people need to thrive and aims to ensure child safety and wellbeing are embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture.

**BACKGROUND**

The Child Safe Principles and Standards provide a framework for creating child safe organisations. They are designed to create, maintain and improve child safe practices. The Standards are based on extensive research and consultation by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. They provide clear guidance for organisations to create cultures, adopt strategies and act to put the interests of children first to keep them safe from harm.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child lays the foundation for all children and young people's safety and wellbeing.

In conjunction, the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY) has a national wellbeing framework for children and young people aged 0 to 24 years. This framework is called the ‘Nest’, it looks holistically at children and young people in the context of their daily lives, viewing wellbeing in a way that brings together six interconnected domains to help children and young people thrive and reach their potential.

The six domains of the Nest are:

* **Being valued, loved and safe:** embraces positive family relationships and connections with others, and feeling safe at home, in the community and online. Safety also means feeling safe about the future. Children
* and young people who are loved and feel safe are confident, have a strong sense of self-identity, and have good self-esteem. Children and young people who are loved and feel safe have better resilience.
* **Having material basics** meanschildren and young people have access to the things they need. They live in suitable, secure, and stable housing, with appropriate clothing, healthy food, clean water, and clean air. They have the resources they need to develop such as school supplies, sporting equipment and access to technology.
* **Being healthy** is whenchildren and young people have their physical, mental, and emotional needs met. They have access to services to support their growth and development and have access to preventative measures to address any emerging or potential physical, emotional, and mental health concerns.
* **Learning** is a continuous process throughout life. Children and young people learn through a variety of formal and informal experiences and learn to participate in and experience education that enables them to reach their full potential and maximise their life opportunities.
* **Participating** is about children and young people having a voice, being listened to, and taken seriously. It means having a say in decisions that impact them and being empowered to speak out and express themselves. Participating includes involvement with peers and groups through a variety of activities, including online communities. Participating means being an active member of society.
* **Having a positive sense of identity and culture** is central to the wellbeing of all children and young people and is particularly important for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and other culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) children and young people. This includes having a sense of spiritual wellbeing, a sense of connectedness, belonging and acceptance. It involves feeling safe and supported in expressing their identity, regardless of gender, sexuality, culture, or disability.

**Our Operating Principles to Support the Wellbeing of Children and Young People**

Children and young people are clients and are seen as individuals, whose voices are heard and consulted with in decisions that affect them. We focus on what is required holistically and partner with their mothers/carers to ensure their overall wellbeing and safety and advocate for their best interests.

**Culturally responsive**

We provide culturally safe responsive practice when working with Aboriginal and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CaLD) children and young people. We value cultural differences, are culturally informed and seek advice to be culturally inclusive in the way we work.

**Inclusive practice**

We actively welcome and value diversity and have a zero tolerance approach to discrimination and harassment. All children and young people have a right to feel valued, to feel they belong and to have their say in things that

are important to them. This includes children who are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, from newly arrived communities, who identify as LGBTQIA+ or have a disability.

**An evidence based and informed methodology**

We adopt and work with strategies, policies, programs, practices, and processes that are known to be effective in achieving better outcomes for children and young people.

**Prevention and early intervention**

Taking into account the developmental needs of children and young people we will focus our efforts towards preventing problems and intervening as early as possible in all interventions through a proportionate universal approach that prioritises safety and wellbeing.

**FDV and trauma informed practice**

We understand the effects of FDV on the psychological, social and emotional development of children and young people. Our interactions with them are genuine, supportive, strengths based and consider all aspects of individual family circumstances.

**A collaborative approach**

We work in partnership with children, young people, and their mothers/carers and families to achieve better outcomes.

We promote a collaborative approach and strengthen networks with other professionals for the wellbeing and safety of children and young people engaged with our services.

**SCOPE**

This Policy applies to all Board members, employees, volunteers, students, and interns of Starick.

All stakeholders are responsible for understanding their role in promoting the safety, wellbeing, inclusion and empowerment of children and young people.

**DEFINITIONS**

**A child** refers to all children under the age of 18 years.

**Aboriginal peoples** are the first people of mainland Australia and many of its islands such as Tasmania, Groote Eylandt, Hinchinbrook Island and Fraser Island.

**Code of Conduct**

Conduct and behaviour expected of all employees of [Organisation] whether by way of appointment, contract, temporary arrangement, volunteering or student placement.[insert link to form]

**Child Safe Code of Conduct** Conduct and behaviour expectations of all employees working for Starick whether by way of appointment, contract, temporary arrangement, volunteering, or student placement that promotes the safety, wellbeing, and empowerment of children in line with Starick’s culture and values.

**Culturally and linguistically diverse (CaLD)**, represents communities with diverse languages, ethnic backgrounds, nationalities, traditions, societal structures, and religions.

**Cultural safety** is an environment that is safe and nurturing for children and young people where they are comfortable with being themselves, expressing their culture, their spiritual and belief systems and they are supported to do so.

**Disability** is any condition that makes it more difficult for a person to do certain activities or effectively interact with the world around them. These conditions, or impairments, may be cognitive, developmental, intellectual, mental, physical, sensory, or a combination of multiple factors. Impairments causing disability may be present from birth or can be acquired during a person's lifetime.

**FDV trauma informed practice demonstrates** a way of working that acknowledges the effect of trauma on cognitive and emotional development and social functioning. It strengthens practice through recognition of the critical importance of relationships, safety, empowerment perception of self and the mental and emotional states of complete engagement.

**LGBTIQA+** is an initialism that collectively represents people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer (or those questioning their gender identity).

**Organisational culture** is the system of shared assumptions, values and beliefs that influence the way people behave in an organisation. Leaders have an important role in creating organisational cultures that are safe for children, but ultimately the decisions and behaviours of all adults in an organisation contribute to its culture.

**Proportionate universalism** combines the benefits of a universal approach (where preventive services and actions are provided to whole populations) with a targeted approach (where services and actions are directed as needed to priority or vulnerable populations).

**Torres Strait Islander peoples** are of Melanesian origin and are the indigenous people of the Torres Strait Islands, located between Australia and Papua New Guinea.

**Trauma** results from an event, series of events or set of circumstances that is experienced by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or life threatening and has lasting adverse effects on the individual’s functioning and mental, physical, social, emotional, or spiritual wellbeing.

**United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child** is a human rights treaty that sets out an international agreement on childhood that includes the civil, political, economic, social, health and cultural rights of children.

**Wellbeing** encompasses all different areas of health: physical, mental, emotional, social, spiritual and cultural.It includes having good mental health, high life satisfaction, a sense of meaning or purpose, and being able to manage stress.

**Young people** are aged between 12-25 years.

**RESPONSIBILITIES**

**Board and CEO**

Board members and the CEO are responsible for ensuring child safety and wellbeing are embedded in Starick’s organisational leadership, governance, and culture.

**Management**

Managers have responsibility for monitoring and supporting the implementation of child safety and wellbeing policies by reviewing current practices and developing procedures on an ongoing basis. Managers work with staff to build their capacity and knowledge to ensure policies and practices are implemented.

**Staff**

Staff are required to understand and adhere to their role and responsibilities in accordance with Starick’s suite of Child Safe Organisation policies and procedures.

**EVALUATION AND REVIEW**

This policy will be reviewed through a child safe lens in accordance with Starick’s ***Document Control Procedure*** as part of a formal evaluation process or as practical application requires it. Comments and suggestions from our stakeholders, including staff, children and families will be incorporated.

**RELATED STARICK DOCUMENTS**

* Code of Conduct
* Child Safe Code of Conduct
* Child Safe Organisation Policy and Procedure
* Complaints and Allegations Policy
* Empowerment and Participation of Children and Young People Policy
* Incident Reporting Policy and Procedure
* Photo and Video Consent Form
* Photography and Video Policy

**RELATED DOCUMENTS**

* A Guide to the Child Safe Standards, NSW Office of the Children’s Guardian
* National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, Australian Human Rights Commission
* The Nest action agenda, Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY)
* Exploring Australia’s Wellbeing Framework for Children and Young People, ARACY
* United Nations 1989, Convention on the Rights of the Child
* United Nations 2007, Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
* Working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Families: Providing Culturally Responsive Practice

**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