

Child Safe Policy

CPSN is committed to creating and maintaining a child safe environment where the safety, wellbeing and rights of children and young people are paramount. We have zero tolerance for child abuse, neglect or harm in any form and are committed to acting in the best interests of children at all times.

We are committed to fostering safe, inclusive and respectful environments and ensuring all employees, contractors and volunteers uphold the highest standards of conduct and child safety.

Record of policy development

Version	Date approved	Date for review
Version 3.0	March 2026	February 2028

Responsibilities and delegations

This policy applies to:	Members, Clients, and where appropriate, their decision makers, all staff, workers, volunteers, contractors, and the Board of CPSN
Policy approval:	Board
Review of Policy Compliance	CEO
Specific responsibilities:	Board CEO Human Resources Manager CPSN Leadership Team CPSN workers All clients (and where appropriate, their decision makers)

Policy context	
Service Standards	<p>NDIS Practice Standards and Quality Indicators, November 2021 Version 4</p> <p>National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, 2018</p> <p>Victorian Child Safe Standards, 2015 and 2021 (in force from 1 July 2022)</p> <p>NDIS Practice Standards, 2020</p> <p>Victorian Child Safe Standards</p>
Legislation	<p>Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006, Victoria</p> <p>Family Law Act 1975 (Cth)</p> <p>Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)</p> <p>Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)</p> <p>Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)</p> <p>National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013 (Cth)</p> <p>Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)</p> <p>Disability Act 2006 (Vic)</p> <p>Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)</p> <p>Freedom of Information Act 1982 (Vic)</p> <p>Privacy and Data Collection Act 2014 (Vic)</p> <p>Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)</p> <p>Ombudsman Act 1976 (Vic)</p> <p>Worker Screening Act 2020 (Vic)</p> <p>Disability Service Safeguards Act 2018 (Vic)</p> <p>Disability Service Act 1986 (Cth)</p>
Contractual obligations	<p>NDIS Practice Standards</p> <p>NDIS Quality and Safeguarding Framework, 2016</p> <p>NDIS Practice Standards and Quality Indicators, 2020</p> <p>NDIS Practice Standards Verification Module – Required Documentation, 2020</p>
Organisation policies	<p>Human Rights Policy and Framework</p> <p>Practice and Governance Policy and Framework</p> <p>Quality Policy and Framework</p> <p>Risk Management Policy and Framework</p> <p>Diversity and Inclusion Policy</p> <p>Vulnerable Persons Policy</p> <p>Privacy and Confidentiality Policy</p> <p>Complaints Management Policy</p> <p>NDIS Code of Conduct</p> <p>Financial and Fraud Risk Management Policy</p> <p>Conflict of Interest Policy</p> <p>Worker Screening Policy</p> <p>Incident Management Reporting Policy</p> <p>Bullying and Harassment Policy</p> <p>Handling Participants' Money Policy Position</p>
Other Conventions	<p>United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (CRPD), 2006</p> <p>Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006, Victoria</p>

Definitions

CPSN has adopted the Victorian Child Safe Standards 2022 definitions, below.

Child means a child or young person under the age of 18 years.

Child abuse means a sexual offence committed against, with or in the presence of, a child, whether or not a criminal proceeding in relation to the offence has been commenced or concluded, sexual misconduct, committed against, with or in the presence of, a child, physical violence committed against, with or in the presence of, a child, any behaviour that causes significant emotional or psychological harm to a child or significant neglect of a child including emotional or psychological abuse, grooming, neglect, family violence, exploitation or online/digital abuse

Child Safe Standards as made under section 17(1) of the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005*

Employee means a person who is employed by CPSN with wages or salary.

Staff means all the people employed by CPSN or within a specific work area.

Worker means any person engaged by CPSN to perform a service, paid or unpaid, and may include but is not limited to employees, consultants, contractors, employees of a labour hire company, apprentices, trainees, students or volunteers.

Policy statement

Policy Statement

CPSN has zero tolerance for child abuse and is committed to acting in the best interests of children and young people and keeping them safe at all times. This includes ensuring we consistently act in the best interests of the child or young person, respecting and upholding their right to safety. Participation and being heard, respecting their dignity, identity and diversity and recognising that children with disability face higher safeguarding risks.

CPSN acknowledges its responsibility to uphold and promote the safety and wellbeing of all children including children with disability, Aboriginal children, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and children who are LGBTQIA+ and young people, and to respect and listen to the opinions of children and young people who are involved with CPSN.

Principles

CPSN's foundational Human Rights Policy and Framework, and Practice and Governance Policy and Framework embed its commitment to safeguarding human rights of all involved in all that we do. This includes children and young people.

All clients, workers, volunteers, partners, and contractors share a responsibility for safeguarding children and young people. We do not tolerate violence, abuse, neglect, exploitation, discrimination, bullying or harassment. We take a trauma-informed approach to all that we do.

CPSN is committed to practice that protects children and young people from the risk of harm and ensuring a culture of safeguarding children and young people.

CPSN will ensure compliance with all laws and regulations to maintain a child safe culture.

We will treat everyone equally, regardless of who they are or their age. We will ensure that everyone feels safe, welcome, and respected.

We will ensure that children and young people are informed of their physical, emotional, and online rights and what actions to take if they feel unsafe.

Where it is safe to do so, we will involve families and communities in our approach to child safety and wellbeing.

We will support children and young people to work towards their goals in life and to develop their independence.

We will ensure that children and young people feel safe and comfortable in working with us. All people in our organisation will be supported to safely disclose risks of harm or serious concerns for children and young people. We will take seriously, and act immediately in relation to, any reports of child abuse and will ensure the safety of the child/young person is the primary consideration.

We will ensure that all employees and volunteers have been screened and trained to work positively with children and young people.

CPSN identifies and assesses safeguarding risks and develops strategies to mitigate them and regularly reviews and improves its policies, procedures, and systems to enhance the safeguarding of the human rights of all involved in the work of CPSN.

CPSN has policies and procedures for managing incidents, complaints, work health and safety, bullying and harassment, and underperformance and misconduct that will be followed where allegations of violence, abuse, neglect, exploitation, discrimination, bullying, harassment, underperformance, or misconduct have been made.

CPSN will only disclose information about children, without their/parental consent, where required by law.

We will seek input and feedback from children and young people and empower them to participate in decisions affecting their lives and our practice, policies, and procedures.

We will support children and young people to provide feedback and complaints and we will take their input seriously.

We will ensure that our physical and online interaction with children and young people promote safety and wellbeing.

We will document, regularly review, and continuously improve our policies and procedures to promote and uphold child safety and wellbeing.

Implementing this policy

While the responsibility to protect children and young people is shared by the whole CPSN community, the following roles communicate and operationalise this policy:

Roles and Responsibilities

The Board

The Board is accountable for service quality and safety of all people involved in services provided by CPSN, and leading a culture that demonstrates its values, commitment to inclusion, safeguarding, continuous improvement, and accountability for practice. The Board is responsible for delegating operational requirements and decisions to the CEO.

Specifically, the Board is responsible for:

- ensuring appropriate policies, procedures and protection measures are in place
- ensuring that appropriate and effective internal control systems are in place
- ensuring reporting and disclosure requirements are met to protect the welfare of children and young people.

The CEO

The CEO is responsible for:

- ensuring organisational adherence to legislation and principles that underpin safeguarding
- ensuring zero tolerance of abuse
- creating a culture of person-centredness, safety, inclusion and continuous improvement of service provision, systems and governance that ensures CPSN achieves its strategic and operational goals
- promoting a flexible and equitable work environment that values human rights, diversity, and safeguarding
- leading and demonstrating respect, inclusion, and safeguarding for all diverse people and practices, including beliefs and taboos

- managing risks, incidents, complaints, and quality improvement
- reporting any concerns for child safety resulting from interaction with workers or volunteers as required by the Reportable Conduct Scheme
- performing the role of Child Safe Officer for CPSN to consider and respond to questions about child safety and to be the primary contact person in the event of any incident or allegation in relation to the safety of children and young people
- ensuring that all Board members, workers, contractors, and volunteers are aware of relevant laws, CPSN policies and procedures, and the Code of Conduct
- education and support to Board members, workers contractors, and volunteers in relation to this policy
- receiving, investigating, and managing reports of abuse, neglect, exploitation
- ensuring that CPSN follows Police or Child Protection Victoria instructions during external investigations and fully supports such investigations
- where an external investigation is not required, an internal investigation will be conducted to prevent future occurrences of similar incidents. Internal investigations will be conducted in accordance with the principles of natural justice and will remain confidential (however there may be a need to interview or consult other staff members during the investigation)
- ensuring that all Board members, workers, contractors, and volunteers within the CPSN community are aware of their obligation to report suspected violence, abuse, neglect, exploitations, bullying and harassment
- ensuring timely reporting to relevant bodies, including Police, NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission, Commission for Children and Young People, Victorian Child Protection Service, and the Victorian Worker Registration Board
- including child safety risks in the organisation's risk management policy and processes. This includes risks in physical (both in-home, transport and community), and online environments, people in contact with children, and any specific vulnerabilities of the children and young people.
- monitoring and reviewing the effectiveness and proportionality of CPSN's safeguarding approach
- reviewing this policy at the noted interval but also following each reportable incident involving the safety of a child or young person, in order to ensure that the policy represents best practice
- reviewing compliance with this policy and ensuring the overall integrity of this policy.

The CEO is responsible for delegating responsibility for finance, people and culture, operations, record keeping, policy development and accountability to the CPSN Leadership Team.

The CEO also has responsibilities as listed below for CPSN Leadership Team where any direct reports are included in this policy.

Human Resources Manager

The Human Resources Manager is responsible for:

- education and support to workers and volunteers in relation to this policy. All staff, volunteers and managers will be trained in identifying, assessing and managing these risks, and detecting signs of abuse. Training will also include protective factors that reduce the risk of abuse, and ways to promote these protective factors in the context of the organisation, as well as an understanding the consequences of failure to protect.
- ensuring selection processes (including reference checks NDIS Worker Screening Checks & Working With Children Checks), induction, training, supervision, and performance management of staff emphasise an understanding of, and ongoing development of skills in staff to safeguard children
- ensuring all workers compliance expectations of external bodies are met including Commission for Children and Young People, Victorian Child Protection Service, NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission and the Victorian Worker Registration Board
- where a person is terminated from the organisation due to being found to have committed an offence, the, Human Resources Manager in consultation with the CEO has responsibility for notifying the relevant bodies for child protection and safety.

CPSN Leadership Team

The Leadership Team are responsible for the following:

- leading and demonstrating respect, inclusion, and safeguarding for all diverse people and practices, including beliefs and taboos
- communicating and supporting workers contractors, and volunteers in understanding their responsibilities under this policy
- empowering children and young people to participate in decisions affecting their lives and in reviews of our practice, policies, and procedures
- supporting children and young people to provide feedback and complaints and responding with respect
- ensuring procedures and work instructions are clear to staff
- regularly assessing the risks to children and young people and developing proportionate controls to mitigate these risks
- supporting workers to take a trauma informed approach to safeguarding
- supporting the reporting of suspected violence, abuse, neglect, exploitation, discrimination, bullying, and harassment
- responding to and managing any breaches of this policy
- maintaining appropriate records
- monitoring implementation and contributing to review of this policy.

CPSN Workers

All CPSN Workers are responsible for:

- always promoting the safety of children and young people
- demonstrating respect for individual culture, diversity, values, and beliefs and safeguarding children and young people
- actively engaging and participating in all required training and development programs, including programs designed to increase awareness, and understanding of the Code of Conduct and safeguarding children and young people
- being familiar with the relevant laws, the Victorian Child Safe Standards, Code of Conduct and CPSN's policies and procedures in relation to safeguarding children and young people and complying with all requirements
- assessing the risk of abuse within their area of control and eradicating/minimising any risk to the extent possible
- reporting, and supporting others to report any incident (using the CPSN Incident Management Procedure, or Complaints Management Procedure) to CPSN management where discriminatory or disrespectful practices have occurred, or where it is reasonable to suspect that a child's safety or welfare is at risk, including reporting inappropriate practices/behaviour themselves where required
- if a person believes that another person is at risk of immediate harm or the victim of a criminal offence, they must immediately report it to the Police by calling 000, and then inform the CEO or their Team Leader.
- providing an environment that is supportive of all people's emotional and physical safety.
- reporting any changes to their records which may affect their worker screening – for example, address changes, changes in police records.
- providing feedback on the implementation and review of this policy.

Maintaining appropriate records

Records will be kept for seven years.

CPSN records are maintained using cloud-based technology systems, covering HRIS, CRM and Operational documentation.

Forms that apply to this policy:

- Individual Supports Service Agreement

- Support Coordination Service Agreement
- Goals and Outcomes Procedure
- Diversity and Inclusion Procedure
- Training and Professional Development Procedure
- Individual Supports Manual
- Support Coordination Manual
- Risk Register
- Incident Management Procedure (contained in Policy)
- Complaints Management Procedure
- Worker Screening Procedure
- Professional Boundaries Policy & Procedure

Document Revision History

This document is only valid on the day it was printed.

Who	Version	Date	Description of review
	V1	Unknown	
CEO	V2	Feb 2024	Updated with new titles
CEO	V3	Feb 2026	Bi Annual Review Updated responsibilities re organisational restructure