

## 1. Introduction

Wayss is committed to providing a child safe organisation and sets organisational standards of expected behaviour towards children, which inform the development of systems and processes supporting the prevention and management of risks to children and young people at Wayss.

## 2. Scope

The Policy applies to Wayss' Board members, staff (including temporary or casual staff), contractors, volunteers, and students.

## 3. Principles

Wayss has zero tolerance for any abuse or mistreatment of children and does not condone any failure to report actual or suspected abuse. Wayss recognises that children have the right to safety and the right to participation and Wayss fosters a culture of trust that is committed to hearing the voices of children.

All allegations and concerns about the abuse and mistreatment of children are taken very seriously; contact will be made with the appropriate authorities when there are concerns about a child's safety and wellbeing.

Wayss is an inclusive organisation and is committed to protecting the rights and values of all children and young people including, but not limited to:

- the cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children
- the cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
- providing a safe environment for children with a disability
- the safety of children with diverse sexualities, intersex status, and gender identity

## 4. Worker Screening

In support of providing a child safe environment all staff are to present prior to confirmation of employment with clean Police Checks, current Working With Children Checks and vouched references from previous employment.

## 5. Roles and Responsibilities

### 5.1. CEO and Executive Team

The CEO is responsible for

- establishing and implementing processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse
- reporting to external bodies as required by laws and regulations

The Executive Team will:

- be proactive in assessing and managing the risk of abuse to children, including by ongoing audits and reviews of its child safe practices to enable continuous improvement
- foster environments where the views, values and concerns of children are respected and heard
- provide a safe and welcoming environment for children
- work in accordance with Victoria's Child Safe Standards
- have clear policies and procedures in place to enable Wayss to be a child safe organisation

## Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

### 5.2. General Manager, Client Services

The General Manager, Client Services is responsible for ensuring critical incident and emergency response obligations meet the welfare requirements for children.

### 5.3. General Manager, People Enablement

The General Manager, People Enablement is responsible for:

- providing ongoing training and education to board members, staff, students and volunteers on child safe practices and behaviours
- implementing robust human resource management and recruitment practices to reduce the risk of child abuse by board members, staff, students, and volunteers
- developing procedural guidance for recruitment of staff who may require a working with children check
- ensuring appropriate checks are in place for all staff prior to commencement in role and during their employment

### 5.4. Staff, contractors, volunteers, and students

Staff, contractors, volunteers, and students will:

- comply with all relevant laws, regulations, policies, processes, and guidelines
- maintain a valid working with children check, unless there is a ground for exemption
- treat children with respect
- listen, respond to, and escalate all complaints and allegations of abuse to children
- be committed to ensuring children actively participate in decisions affecting their lives, recognising that safety and risk are understood differently by children and adults
- inform children of their rights and seek to hear, value and act on the voices of children, recognising that they have skills and knowledge they have developed through lived experience
- ensure that information is presented in a child-friendly, culturally sensitive, relevant, and accessible manner
- report any instances of suspected child abuse in accordance with the Procedure for Reporting Suspected Child Abuse and understand and comply with any requirements under the Child Information Sharing Scheme
- comply with any child safety training, registration or accreditation requirements which may be relevant to their duties or activities
- recognise that children of adult victim survivors of domestic violence are also victim survivors in their own right and require a separate assessment of their risks and needs.
- protect the privacy of children and their families in accordance with the Client Privacy Policy
- ensure that technology and social media are used appropriately in connection with children, including by obtaining all necessary approvals from parents, guardians, or otherwise in accordance with relevant processes and guidelines and ensuring that any use of images, technology and social media is not detrimental to the child or harmful to the child's safety
- always maintain appropriate contact with children, using Wayss technology (not personal devices), only for service delivery purposes and not creating expectations of social interactions
- avoid actions or behaviours that could be construed as child abuse (including, physical, sexual, verbal, or psychological abuse), specifically:
  - using language or behaviour towards children that is inappropriate, harassing, abusive, sexually provocative, demeaning or culturally inappropriate
  - exploiting or harassing children in any way

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- engaging in unauthorised personal contact with children, including through social networking sites
- developing special relationships that could be viewed as favouritism or grooming

### 6. Reporting to external parties

All Wayss Board, staff (including temporary or casual staff), contractors, volunteers and students must immediately report any concerns or allegations of child abuse or non-compliance with this policy to an Executive Manager who will advise on the external body to receive the report. This includes any behaviour that is suspected of being child exploitation including possession of child exploitation material.

Any matter with regard to child safety relating to Wayss' activities, and which is reported to an external party (including the Police) will be reported to the Chair of the Board within 48 hours of discovery, regardless or not whether Wayss staff were involved.

### 7. Monitoring and Management

For each sitting the Quality Risk and Compliance Committee will receive a report on matters relating to child safety since the last meeting; the report will be escalated to the Board for noting including any matters identified as an opportunity to increase child safety options.

### 8. Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years or more frequently if required.

### 9. Related Policies and Resources

- Procedure for Reporting Suspected Child Abuse
- Procedure for Information Sharing under the Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme and Child Safety Information Sharing Scheme
- Child Wellbeing & Safety Act 2005
- Children Youth and Families Act 2005
- Family Violence Protection Act 2008
- Reportable Conduct Scheme
- Worker Screening Act 2020

### 10. Change History

Date	Version	Summary of changes	Authoriser
17/11/2020	1.0	Various additions and has changed from a commitment statement to a policy.	Board
18/10/2022	2.0	Review and update	Board