



Child Safety and Wellbeing

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Responsible Person:	CEO	Reviewed by:	
Organisational Area:	Operational / Risk	Review Date:	18 th July 2024
Approved and adopted by:	Board of Governance	Next Review Date:	July 2025

Acknowledgement of Country

North Ringwood Community House Inc (NRCHI) acknowledges the Wurundjeri People of the Kulin Nation as the traditional custodians of the land on which we operate. We acknowledge and respect their contributions, experience and knowledge as First Nations people. We pay our respects to their Elders, past and present.

Policy Statement

North Ringwood Community House (NRCHI) is committed to providing a child safe environment where children’s safety is supported and children feel respected, valued and encouraged to reach their full potential. NRCHI will ensure compliance with the **Victorian Child Safe Standards 2021** effective July 2022 and promote a culture of safety and well being to minimise the risk of harm to children whilst promoting children’s sense of security and belonging. Every child and young person accessing our facility has the right to feel safe and supported.

NRCHI embraces diversity and inclusion. All children regardless of their gender, gender identity, race, religious beliefs, age, disability, sexual orientation, family or social background, have equal rights to participate in a safe supportive environment and be protected from abuse. We firmly commit to the cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, and children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and to the provision of a safe environment for children and young people with a disability, LGBTIQ+ children, as well as other vulnerable groups of children and young people.

We recognise our Duty of Care and adhere to our comprehensive **Child Protection Policy**, standing by our mandatory reporting responsibilities to protect children from physical, sexual, emotional and psychological abuse and neglect.

Scope

This policy and procedure applies to management, staff, Board of Governance members, volunteers, families and children, visitors (including contractors) and students of the Service who have a role with children or have access to children’s personal information. This policy applies to all programs, activities and social interactions including room hire by 3rd parties conducted by and/or held at North Ringwood Community House.



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Purpose

To ensure all employees and volunteers understand the meaning and importance of providing a child safe environment and understand their obligations and requirements and outline the steps we take to do this. This Policy will work together with NRCHI *Child Protection Policy, Code of Conduct, Statement of Commitment to Child Safety, Employment Policy* and other related policies to develop a child safe culture within the Service and community. This policy will provide direction and guidance for all staff, contractors, and visitors (including students and volunteers) to comply with and adhere to the 11 Child Safe Standards to ensure a child safe environment for all children.

Definitions

- Child/Children:** refers to both children and young people under the age of 18 years.
- Racism:** prejudice, discrimination, or antagonism by an individual, community, or institution against a person or people on the basis of their membership of a particular racial or ethnic group, typically one that is a minority or marginalized
- Diversity:** the practice or quality of including or involving people from a range of different social and ethnic backgrounds and of different genders, sexual orientations, etc.
- Disability:** a physical, mental, cognitive, or developmental condition that impairs, interferes with, or limits a person's ability to engage in certain tasks or actions or participate in typical daily activities and interactions
- Gender:** the social, psychological, cultural and behavioural aspects of being a man, woman, or other gender identity. Depending on the context, this may include sex-based social structures (i.e. gender roles) and gender expression.
- LGBTIQ+:** is an abbreviation for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning, intersex, asexual, and more. These terms are used to describe a person's sexual orientation or gender identity.
- Complaint:** Expression of dissatisfaction made to or about an organisation related to its products, services, staff or the handling of a complaint where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected or legally required. [AS/NZS 10002:2014 Complaint Management Standard]
- Information Sharing Obligations:** refers to the Child Information Sharing Scheme
- Duty of care means:**
- acting on concerns quickly and in the child's best interests
 - protecting the safety, health and wellbeing of children in their care
 - seeking appropriate advice or consulting when unsure



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- reporting concerns to the relevant authorities
- providing ongoing support to a child and their family
- sharing information, upon request, to assist DFFH Child Protection or Police to protect and/or promote the wellbeing and development of a child

[NRCHI Child Protection Policy/Procedure](#): Provides detailed steps for managing allegations of Child Abuse.

Procedure

Board of Governance

The Board of Governance will champion and model a child safe culture at NRCHI and will work to create a positive culture around child safety issues so that people feel comfortable to raise concerns. They will promote an environment of understanding that children have a unique voice and should be encouraged to contribute to discussions about how they interact with NRCHI. When appropriate, an Annual Review will include input from children and people involved with NRCHI to ascertain how effectively NRCHI is ensuring child safety. Complaints, concerns and safety incidents will be analysed to identify causes and systemic failures to inform continuous improvement and will include references to:

- Culture
- Wellbeing
- Diversity
- Racism
- Disability
- Gender

Reports on the findings of the relevant reviews will be made available to staff, volunteers, community and families.

Equity and Culturally safe environment

NRCHI will ensure that equity is upheld and children's diverse needs are respected and considered without stereotyping or making assumptions. Refer NRCHI Access and Equity Policy and Procedure.

Aboriginal children and their families.

NRCHI is committed to creating environments where Aboriginal culture is celebrated and Aboriginal children, families and community members are welcomed and included. Strategies to embed cultural safety for Aboriginal children include:

- An Acknowledgement of Country at all formal meetings, on the NRCHI website and at Reception.
- Supporting children who wish to explore their culture, including consulting with their family and relevant Aboriginal organisations
- Seeking feedback from Aboriginal children, families and communities on their experience at NRCHI particularly how safe they feel expressing their identity and culture.



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Diversity

NRCHI recognises that each child is different and will experience the world differently. They may have a disability, or come from different cultures, speak different languages, are unable to live at home, are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, non-binary, gender diverse, or intersex. NRCHI will make sure children can easily get the information and help they need in formats that are culturally safe and easy to understand.

Communication for Child Safety

We respect the rights of children and provide them with information about their rights including the right to be safe. We ensure that they have access to information, support and complaints processes in ways that are culturally safe, accessible and easy to understand.

Children have a unique voice and should be encouraged to contribute to discussions about how they interact with our organisation. Where applicable, we ask children what makes them feel safe and unsafe and tell them about what is being done to help keep them safe. Making sure they are consulted in an age-appropriate manner, ensuring the experience is a positive one. Letting them know their views are valued and respected and will be used to inform the policies in the organisation

NRCHI ensures families are always welcome and feel comfortable asking questions on how we prioritise child safety. We provide opportunities for consultation and collaboration about decisions, policies and procedures regarding their child's safety whilst at NRCHI including the provision of an easily accessible process for managing allegations and/or grievances.

Information will include methods that include child friendly, plain language to ensure everyone can understand NRCHI child safety policies and this procedure and related material will be reviewed every 12 months to ensure currency.

All relevant policies and procedures are available on the NRCHI website, on Notice Boards or at the Administration Office.

Complaints, investigations and reporting

An easy to understand complaints information sheet will be provided for children, families and the community explaining the NRCHI complaint process and the supports available to those making a complaint. Complaints will be managed in accordance with the NRCHI Complaints and Appeals policy. Allegations of child abuse will be managed in accordance with the steps outlined in our Child Protection Policy/Procedure. The CEO is a first point of contact to provide advice and support to children, young people, parents, employees and volunteers regarding the safety and wellbeing of children and young people in our organisation. If a staff member, volunteer or contractor becomes aware of an incident, complaint or allegation of abuse, the first responsibility is to ensure that the child or children are safe and the risks of further abuse or harm are mitigated and the CEO is notified.



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Physical and Online environment

Staff and volunteers will identify and mitigate risks in the online and physical environments without compromising a child's right to privacy, access to information, social connections and learning opportunities. The online environment is used in accordance with this policy and the organisation's Code of Conduct and Child Protection Policy.

When contracting facilities and services from third parties, enquiries will be made to ensure that they have procurement policies that ensure the safety of children and young people.

Recruitment

All advertisements, position descriptions and Interview question pro-formas for positions that have a role with children will include references to the Child Safe Standards. Board of Governance Members, permanent employees and Admin Volunteers and other individuals who have a role with children or have access to children's personal information at NRCHI are required to hold current Working With Children and National Police checks.

All applications will be processed in accordance with NRCHI Employment Policy and will include conducting robust interviews using an open-ended style of behavioural-based questioning which will provide insight into the applicant's values, attitudes and understanding of professional boundaries and accountability, checking resumes of previous experience, and reference checks

Induction/Training

The CEO will ensure that appropriate child safety training for staff and volunteers is identified and completed. A comprehensive induction process is undertaken which will enable all Board of Governance members, staff, volunteers, and visitors (including contractors) and students of the Service who have a role with children to feel confident and comfortable in discussing the requirements for keeping children safe, and have an understanding of the diverse circumstances of children. This will include gaining an understanding of the Code of Conduct, all current policies including Child Protection, Child Safety and Wellbeing, the Reportable Conduct Scheme and other related policies to ensure a child safe environment.

Emphasis will be given to understanding the requirements of ensuring the cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and to the provision of a safe environment for children and young people with a disability, LGBTIQ+ children, as well as other vulnerable groups of children and young people.

Non Compliance

Potential breaches of this policy, the Code of Conduct and any other child safety and wellbeing policies will be investigated and may result in termination of room hire, restriction of duties, suspension or termination of employment or engagement or other corrective action.



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Related Documents

Child Protection Policy
Complaints and Appeals Policy
Access & Equity Policy
Employment Policy
Staff Handbook
Code of Conduct
Room hire policy
Social media policy
Marketing policy

References:

Child Safety Standards:

Child Safety Standards 1.1 - 1.5
Child Safety Standards 2.1 -2.4
Child Safety Standard 4.1-4.4
Child Safety Standard 5.1-5.4
Child Safety Standard 6.1-6.4
Child Safety Standards 7.1 -7.5
Child Safety Standards 8.1 -8.4
Child Safety Standard 9.4
Child safety Standard 10.1 - 10.3
Child Safety Standard 11.1 - 11.5

Supporting Legislation

[Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 \(Vic\)](#)
[Children Youth and Families Act 2005 \(Vic\) including reporting to Child Protection](#)
[Crimes Act 1958 \(Vic\) including Failure to Protect and Failure to Disclose offences](#)
[Wrongs Act 1958 \(Vic\) including Part XIII - Organisational liability for child abuse](#)

Document Locations

Electronic file folders accessible by NRCHI Administration staff
Policy & Procedure Manual
Website

Date reviewed	Version	Details of changes (if any)	Date of next review
18/02/2024	V3	Minor grammatical amendments	July 2025