

Risk Child Safety and Wellbeing

Policy number:	Risk 19	Version:	2
Responsible Person:	CEO	Reviewed by:	Board of Governance
Organisational Area:	Operational/ Risk	Review Date:	19/05/2025
Approved by:	Board of Governance	Next Review Date:	May 2026

Policy Statement

North Ringwood Community House (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.

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 2022** effective July 2023 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.

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 Policy*, *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,

Policy & Procedure

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.

Reference: Standard 11

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
 - 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

Policy & Procedure

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. An Annual Review will include input from children and people involved with NRCHI to ascertain how effectively NRCHI is delivering 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. *Reference: Standards 1 and 2*

Equity and Culturally safe environment

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

Reference: Standard 1

➤ 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.

➤ 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.

Policy & Procedure

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. 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, from Reception or at the Administration Office.

Reference: Standards 3 and 4

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 well-being 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.

Reference: Standards 3 and 7

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.

Reference: Standard 9

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 and 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

Reference: Standard 6

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.

Reference: Standard 8

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. This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure currency and compliance.

Reference: Standard 10

Related Documents

- Risk Child Protection Policy
- Complaints and Appeals 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

Date reviewed	Version	Details of changes (if any)	Date of next review
19/05/2025	2	Addition of addendum (Understanding Standards) Standards added to text where appropriate.	May 2026

Addendum May 2025

Understanding Victoria's Child Safe Standards

The Child Safe Standards (the Standards) commenced in Victoria in January 2016. Since then, we have seen how the Standards have improved safety for children and young people.

Changes in 2022 and 2023 have made our Standards even stronger.

Since 1 July 2022, organisations¹ covered by the Standards have to comply with 11 new Standards.

The 11 Standards set out minimum requirements and outline the actions organisations must take to keep children and young people safe.

The Standards provide more clarity for organisations and are more consistent with Standards in the rest of Australia.

The 11 Standards include specific requirements:

- to involve families and communities in organisations' efforts to keep children and young people safe
- for a greater focus on safety for Aboriginal children and young people
- to manage the risk of child abuse in online environments
- in relation to governance, systems and processes to keep children and young people safe.

What do organisations need to do?

Organisations must comply with the 11 Standards

The Commission has a range of resources available on our [website](#) to help organisations understand the Standards and to implement them.

We would also encourage you to subscribe [here](#) to be emailed when the Commission issues new information and guidance to help organisations comply with the Standards.

The Commission has powers to take action where an organisation may not be compliant with the Standards.

What are the Child Safe Standards?

There are 11 Child Safe Standards:

¹ All references to 'relevant entities' have been replaced in this document with 'organisation/s' for reasons of accessibility. A relevant entity is defined in section 3(1) of the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* and captures entities that are subject to the Child Safe Standards.

Child Safe Standard 1 -

Organisations establish a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children and young people are respected and valued

In complying with Child Safe Standard 1, an organisation must, at a minimum, ensure:

- 1.1 A child's ability to express their culture and enjoy their cultural rights is encouraged and actively supported.
- 1.2 Strategies are embedded within the organisation which equip all members to acknowledge and appreciate the strengths of Aboriginal culture and understand its importance to the wellbeing and safety of Aboriginal children and young people.
- 1.3 Measures are adopted by the organisation to ensure racism within the organisation is identified, confronted and not tolerated. Any instances of racism are addressed with appropriate consequences.
- 1.4 The organisation actively supports and facilitates participation and inclusion within it by Aboriginal children, young people and their families.
- 1.5 All of the organisation's policies, procedures, systems and processes together create a culturally safe and inclusive environment and meet the needs of Aboriginal children, young people and their families.

Child Safe Standard 2 -

Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture

In complying with Child Safe Standard 2, an organisation must, at a minimum, ensure:

- 2.1 The organisation makes a public commitment to child safety.
- 2.2 A child safe culture is championed and modelled at all levels of the organisation from the top down and bottom up.
- 2.3 Governance arrangements facilitate implementation of the child safety and wellbeing policy at all levels.
- 2.4 A Code of Conduct provides guidelines for staff and volunteers on expected behavioural standards and responsibilities.
- 2.5 Risk management strategies focus on preventing, identifying and mitigating risks to children and young people.
- 2.6 Staff and volunteers understand their obligations on information sharing and recordkeeping.

Child Safe Standard 3 -

Children and young people are empowered about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously

In complying with Child Safe Standard 3, an organisation must, at a minimum, ensure:

- 3.1 Children and young people are informed about all of their rights, including to safety, information and participation.
- 3.2 The importance of friendships is recognised and support from peers is encouraged, to help children and young people feel safe and be less isolated.
- 3.3 Where relevant to the setting or context, children and young people are offered access to sexual abuse prevention programs and to relevant related information in an age appropriate way.
- 3.4 Staff and volunteers are attuned to signs of harm and facilitate child-friendly ways for children and young people to express their views, participate in decision-making and raise their concerns.
- 3.5 Organisations have strategies in place to develop a culture that facilitates participation and is responsive to the input of children and young people.
- 3.6 Organisations provide opportunities for children and young people to participate and are responsive to their contributions, thereby strengthening confidence and engagement

Policy & Procedure

Child Safe Standard 4 -

Families and Communities are informed, and involved in promoting child safety and well being

In comply with Child Safe Standard 4, an organisation must, at a minimum

- 4.1 Families participate in decisions affecting their child
- 4.2 The organisation engages and openly communicates with families and the community about its child safe approach and relevant information is accessible
- 4.3 Families and communities have a say in the development and review of the organisation's policies and practices.
- 4.4 Families, carers and the community are informed about the organisation's operations and governance.

Child Safe Standard 5 -

Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice

In complying with Child Safe Standard 5, an organisation must, at a minimum, ensures

- 5.1 The organisation, including staff and volunteers, understands children and young people's diverse circumstances, and provides support and responds to those who are vulnerable.
- 5.2 Children and young people have access to information, support and complaints processes in ways that are culturally safe, accessible and easy to understand.
- 5.3 The organisation pays particular attention to the needs of children and young people with disability, children and young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, those unable to live at home, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex children and young people.
- 5.4 The organisation pays particular attention to the needs of Aboriginal children and young people and provides/promotes a culturally safe environment for them.

Child Safe Standard 6 -

People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice

In complying with Child Safe Standard 6, an organisation must, at a minimum, ensure:

- 6.1 Recruitment, including advertising, referee checks and staff and volunteer pre-employment screening, emphasise child safety and wellbeing.
- 6.2 Relevant staff and volunteers have current working with children checks or equivalent background checks.
- 6.3 All staff and volunteers receive an appropriate induction and are aware of their responsibilities to children and young people, including record keeping, information sharing and reporting obligations.
- 6.4 Ongoing supervision and people management is focused on child safety and wellbeing.

Policy & Procedure

Child Safe Standard 7 -

Processes for complaints and concerns are child focused

In complying with Child Safe Standard 7, an organisation must, at a minimum, ensure:

- 7.1 The organisation has an accessible, child focused complaint handling policy which clearly outlines the roles and responsibilities of leadership, staff and volunteers, approaches to dealing with different types of complaints, breaches of relevant policies or the Code of Conduct and obligations to act and report.
- 7.2 Effective complaint handling processes are understood by children and young people, families, staff and volunteers, and are culturally safe.
- 7.3 Complaints are taken seriously, and responded to promptly and thoroughly.
- 7.4 The organisation has policies and procedures in place that address reporting of complaints and concerns to relevant authorities, whether or not the law requires reporting, and co-operates with law enforcement.
- 7.5 Reporting, privacy and employment law obligations are met.

Child Safe Standard 8 -

Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training

In complying with Child Safe Standard 8, an organisation must, at a minimum, ensure:

- 8.1 Staff and volunteers are trained and supported to effectively implement the organisation's child safety and wellbeing policy.
- 8.2 Staff and volunteers receive training and information to recognise indicators of child harm including harm caused by other children and young people.
- 8.3 Staff and volunteers receive training and information to respond effectively to issues of child safety and wellbeing and support colleagues who disclose harm.
- 8.4 Staff and volunteers receive training and information on how to build culturally safe environments for children and young people.

Child Safe Standard 9 -

Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed

In complying with Child Safe Standard 9, an organisation must, at a minimum, ensure:

- 9.1 Staff and volunteers 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.
- 9.2 The online environment is used in accordance with the organisation's Code of Conduct and child safety and wellbeing policy and practices.
- 9.3 Risk management plans consider risks posed by organisational settings, activities, and the physical environment.
- 9.4 Organisations that contract facilities and services from third parties have procurement policies that ensure the safety of children and young people.

Child Safe Standard 10 -

Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved

In complying with Child Safe Standard 10, an organisation must, at a minimum, ensure:

- 10.1 The organisation regularly reviews, evaluates and improves child safe practices.
- 10.2 Complaints, concerns and safety incidents are analysed to identify causes and systemic failures to inform continuous improvement.

Policy & Procedure

10.3 The organisation reports on the findings of relevant reviews to staff and volunteers, community and families and children and young people.

Child Safe Standard 11 -

Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people

In complying with Child Safe Standard 11, an organisation must, at a minimum, ensure:

- 11.1 Policies and procedures address all Child Safe Standards.
- 11.2 Policies and procedures are documented and easy to understand.
- 11.3 Best practice models and stakeholder consultation informs the development of policies and procedures.
- 11.4 Leaders champion and model compliance with policies and procedures.
- 11.5 Staff and volunteers understand and implement policies and procedures.

Child Safe Standards regulators and peak or industry bodies may be able provide information and support to assist organisations to comply with the Standards. An overview of the different Child Safe Standards regulators is provided on the Commission's [website](#).

You can contact the Commission with questions or queries:

 Telephone: 1300 782 978

 Email: contact@ccyp.vic.gov.au

 Visit the Commission's website: www.ccyp.vic.gov.au

If you need an interpreter, please call the Translating and Interpreting Service on 13 14 50 and ask them to contact the Commission for Children and Young People on 1300 782 978.

If you are deaf, or have a hearing or speech impairment, contact us through the National Relay Service. For more information, visit: www.relayservice.gov.au.