

Department of Health

Framework



Summary

DRAFT





Foreword

Every day our health workforce provides essential services to children and young people across Tasmania.

From bringing new life into the world and aiding those precious first moments, to providing life-changing treatment, care, and support, our staff and volunteers are there every step of the way.

Working alongside families and caregivers to make a difference in the lives of children and young people is a privilege; ensuring they remain safe from harm is our duty.

While we each have a personal responsibility to uphold the rights of children and young people, it cannot be done alone. That is why the Department of Health is taking a systemic approach to enhance the way we work with children and young people.

Over the coming months, we will be prioritising the implementation of the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations. The National Principles are an ongoing commitment that will allow children and young people to grow and thrive in a health environment that is safe, welcoming, and supportive. This document provides a framework for how this will be done and importantly, how we can each contribute.

The action we take now as Tasmania's health agency will have a profound effect on the current and future generations in our State.

I am calling on each and every one of you to champion the safety and wellbeing of children and young people for a safer, brighter Tasmania.

Kathrine Morgan-Wicks

Secretary, Department of Health, Tasmania

2022



Statement of Commitment

All children and young people have the right to feel and be safe. Keeping children and young people safe is everyone's responsibility.

The Department is committed to improving the way we work with vulnerable people, with a specific focus on children and young people. Children and young people are particularly vulnerable, as they are dependent on adults to care for them, meet their basic needs, and make decisions for them. Adults are in positions of trust, and are responsible for the safety, wellbeing, and empowerment of children and young people. The Department has an opportunity to recognise the signs of harm to children and young people and respond accordingly, whether working directly with them or with their parents or caregivers.

The Department recognises that while all children and young people are vulnerable, some face additional risk of harm.

The Department is committed to meeting the diverse needs and ensuring the cultural safety of:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people
- children and young people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds
- children and young people who are unable to live at home
- children and young people with disability, and
- lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, gender diverse, intersex, queer, asexual and questioning (LGBTIQ+) children and young people.

The Department will put in place strategies and actions to promote child safety and wellbeing, empower, and prevent harm to children and young people. It will work towards an environment where children and young people feel safe and are safe, have their voices heard, and are involved in the decisions that affect their lives.

Signed by Health Executive



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Executive summary

The National Principles for Child Safe Organisations (the National Principles) were endorsed by the Council of Australian Governments in February 2019.

The Child Safety and Wellbeing Framework for Implementing the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations (the Framework) establishes a systemic approach to enhance the way the Department of Health (the Department) works with vulnerable people, specifically children and young people.

The Framework:

- ensures that structures, systems, and processes are in place to mandate and foster a child safe organisation and child safe culture. It recognises that effective leadership and governance must be embedded at all levels of the organisation to successfully foster this culture.
- establishes the National Principles as key priorities to be embedded into the Department's child safe approach. The National Principles set out a nationally consistent rights-based approach to creating an organisational culture that fosters child safety and wellbeing.
- applies to the entire Department, as well as organisations funded by the Department. While the operational practicalities of a child safe approach may differ across services, all services must uphold the Department's commitment to child safety and wellbeing. The Framework recognises that this commitment is an obligation of both the individual and the organisation and is a shared responsibility at all levels.
- details the responsibility and requirements to be met by all people engaged by the Department in protecting the health, safety, welfare, and wellbeing of children and young people. All workers must act in accordance with their legal obligations and relevant statutory directions, and the Department's child safe policies, frameworks, guidelines, and procedures.



About the Framework

The Framework was developed as part of the Department's response to implementing the National Principles. Organisation-wide implementation will provide the Department with the tools to contribute to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people, meeting their specific needs, rights, and interests within a child safe culture.

The Framework provides a common understanding of child safety and wellbeing and ensures that children and young people's voices are heard, and that they and their families and caregivers are involved in the decisions affecting them.

The Department's existing safety and quality principles and practice lay a strong foundation for the promotion and protection of the safety and wellbeing children and young people. The implementation of the National Principles requires a specific child-focused methodology to be applied to the Department's existing approach to meeting the National Safety and Quality Health Service (NSQHS) Standards against which it is assessed and accredited. They assist to provide a nationally consistent rights-based approach to creating organisational cultures that foster child safety and wellbeing.

The National Principles reflect a broad scope that spans beyond child sexual abuse to cover children and young people's rights and other forms of potential harm. They are intended to guide institutions to be child safe by setting out nationally agreed good practice, based on best available evidence. The principles also set benchmarks to assess an organisation's child safe capacity, and a structured framework to assess, and minimise or mitigate, the risks that contribute to institutional child abuse.

The National Principles outline the 10 elements that are fundamental for making an organisation safe for children and young people.

The National Principles are:

- 1 Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance, and culture.
- 2 Children and young people are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.
- 3 Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.
- 4 Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice.
- 5 People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.
- 6 Processes to respond to complaints and concerns are child focused.
- 7 Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training.
- 8 Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.
- 9 Implementation of the national child safe principles is regularly reviewed and improved.



- 10** Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people.

How does the Framework help?

The Framework establishes a formal rights-based approach to child safety and wellbeing. It enables the Department to demonstrate to consumers, the community, government, and peers that it is accountable for the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.

The Framework outlines the commitment of the Department to the promotion of child rights, safety and wellbeing, and the prevention of harm to children and young people. Critically, it demonstrates a commitment to the empowerment of children and young people as active participants in the institutions which are a part of their lives. The Framework supports the achievement of a culture that promotes child wellbeing and prevents harm to children and young people.

It articulates the professional and legal responsibilities that employees, consultants,

contractors, and volunteers (workers) engaged by the Department must follow, whether directly or indirectly involved with children and young people to provide a child safe culture where children and young people feel safe and are safe, and able to actively participate in the decisions that affect their lives.

The Framework guides and informs workers on safe ways to behave, interact and engage with children and young people. It also references the tools, and resources available and the interagency arrangements in place to assist workers to meet their responsibilities. The Framework aims to ensure a consistent and best practice Departmental approach that promotes the health, safety, empowerment, and wellbeing of children and young people in accordance with the guidance and obligations as referred to throughout.

Aim

The Framework aims to empower and improve the wellbeing of children and young people, their families and caregivers, ensuring equitable, inclusive practice.

It pays particular attention to groups of children and young people for whom equity and inclusion is a particularly critical safeguard, including:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people
- children and young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds

- children and young people who are unable to live at home
- children and young people with disability
- Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, gender diverse, intersex, queer, asexual and questioning (LGBTIQ+) children and young people.

It aims to minimise any risks that may impact the safety and wellbeing of children and young people and strengthens the Department's capacity to detect and respond effectively to harm in line with the principles of trauma-informed care.



The Framework:

- promotes a child safe culture where the Department works collectively to improve the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people in its care
- enables the Department to empower and better anticipate the diverse needs of children, young people, their families and caregivers and universally adapt environments, communication and ways of working to ensure equitable, inclusive practice
- outlines the requirements the Department must meet in relation to the National

Principles, statutory obligations, and relevant standards and accreditation processes

- details structures, systems, and processes that enable compliance with the principles and accountability for child safety and wellbeing to be demonstrated, and
- requires prevention and risk mitigation strategies, monitoring and continuous quality improvement systems and processes to be embedded and supported at all levels to improve the wellbeing of children and young people.

Concepts

Safeguarding children and young people

Safeguarding children and young people involves the duty of care and responsibility of the Department and its workers to promote the human rights and welfare of children and young people and protect them from harm.

It encompasses the adoption of proactive, preventative, and responsive systems, policies, and practices that ensure that children and young people do not come to harm as a result of any direct or indirect contact with the Department.

Child and youth wellbeing

The *Tasmanian Child and Youth Wellbeing Framework*, developed in partnership with people who work with children, young people, and their families, defines wellbeing as:

‘... the state where a child or young person feels loved and safe; has access to material basics; has their physical, mental and emotional health needs met; is learning and participating; and has a positive sense of culture and identity.’

Tasmania’s definition of wellbeing is based on six domains inspired by The Nest, a national evidence-based initiative on child and youth wellbeing developed by the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY).

Safeguarding concerns to children and young people

The Department considers a safeguarding concern to children and young people to encompass any actual or potential harm, loss or damage to any child or young person’s rights, or psychological, physical, or cultural safety and welfare.

Concerns may arise from any event, circumstance, act, or omission that may have occurred while they were accessing, visiting, or receiving health services, or where a duty of care is owed.

A safeguarding concern to a child or young person does not include harm, loss or damage resulting from safety events in the course of evidence-based service provision or clinical care in line with accepted norms or from the normal or expected progression of their clinical condition.



Child Safety and Wellbeing Principles

I Leadership, governance, and culture

All adults should do what is best for children and young people. When adults make decisions, they should think about how their decisions will affect children and young people. (Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 3)

Table I. Snapshot of Leadership, governance, and culture

National Principle I: Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance, and culture



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

Our approach

The Department has established a policy framework to implement the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations. The Department will take action to promote child safety and wellbeing, empower, and prevent harm to children and young people.

The Department supports a culture where:

- the safety and wellbeing of children and young people is everyone's priority
- there is open disclosure and support for any child or young person harmed while receiving care or services
- safeguarding concerns are managed with a primary focus on child safety and wellbeing and acted on
- risks are managed
- rigour is applied when investigating concerns
- the principles of trauma informed care are applied
- lessons learned are shared
- diversity is recognised and equity is promoted
- children, young people, their families and carers are aware of their rights and involved in decision-making
- workers are supported through education and training, and
- the implementation of the National Principles is regularly monitored.

A Child Safety and Wellbeing (CSW) Panel will be established to provide expert, independent oversight for the management of child safeguarding concerns.

A Child Safety and Wellbeing Service will be established to support the CSW Panel in the management of child safeguarding concerns and promote the implementation of the National Principles.

The allocation of child safety and wellbeing to a portfolio within the Health Executive will provide oversight and direction of child safety and wellbeing within the Department.

The State Service Code of Conduct and professional standards underpin the requirement to comply with the Framework.

The Department will develop risk management tools to support the ongoing management of risks relating to child safety and wellbeing.

The Department will balance an individual's right to privacy and adequate information sharing to provide optimal care as well as protect children and young people from harm.



2

Empowering children and young people

Children and young people have the right to give their opinion, and for adults to listen and take it seriously. (Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 12)

Table 2. Snapshot of Empowering children and young people to participate

National Principle 2 Children and young people are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously



- 2.1 Children and young people are informed about all of their rights, including to safety, information, and participation.
- 2.2 The importance of friendships is recognised and support from peers is encouraged, to help children and young people feel safe and be less isolated.
- 2.3 Where relevant to the setting or context, children may be offered access to sexual abuse prevention programs and to relevant related information in an age-appropriate way.
- 2.4 Staff and volunteers are attuned to signs of harm and facilitate child-friendly ways for children to express their views, participate in decision-making and raise their concerns.

Our approach

The Department is committed to the safety, participation, and empowerment of children and young people.

The Department upholds the rights of children and young people, and commits to the following values:

- child-focused care
- access to quality care
- children and young people are safe and supported
- respectful care
- participation and partnerships
- a right to information
- a right to privacy, and
- feedback and improvement.

The Department will ensure that children and young people participate in building a culture that is safe for them. The Department observes the guiding principles that characterise effective and genuine participation as outlined by the Commissioner for Children and Young People Tasmania.

The Department supports children, young people, their families, and caregivers to understand its commitment to child safety and wellbeing. Its child safe approach, policies and resources will be made publicly available, in clear, accessible and age-appropriate formats. The development of an online portal dedicated to child safety and

wellbeing will be a key channel for the communication of these resources.

The Department's child safe approach and associated resources will support children, young people, their families and caregivers to access education and awareness information, including supports, complaints processes, preventative programs, rights and the right to safety, opportunities to participate, recognising safe environments, and understanding protective strategies.

The Department will provide age-appropriate platforms to regularly seek the views of children, young people, their families and caregivers and encourage their involvement in decision-making. The development of a consumer engagement guide for workers will support them to effectively engage and consult with children and young people.

The Department will provide training, education and awareness to workers to promote a workplace where the identity and culture of children and young people is valued and respected, and where workers are comfortable and skilled in engaging with them, understand their developmental needs, and build on their individual strengths and capabilities.



3

Involving family and community

Families and caregivers have the responsibility to help children and young people learn to exercise their rights, and to ensure that their rights are protected. (Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 5)

Table 3. Snapshot of Involving family and community

National Principle 3 Families and communities are informed, and involved in promoting child safety



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

Our approach

The Department is committed to protecting the best interests of children and young people by respecting and facilitating the role of families and caregivers. The Department acknowledges the primary responsibility of parents and caregivers for the care of their child.

The Department observes the guiding principles for genuine engagement:

- participation,
- people-centred,
- mutual respect,
- accessible and inclusive,
- partnership,
- diversity,
- support,
- influence, and
- continuous improvement.

The Department is committed to promoting a collaborative healthcare environment where children, young people, their families and caregivers can ask questions, are informed about their options, have their values and preferences heard, and can engage in shared decision making. Prior to the age of 18, parents and caregivers can provide consent for children, with the proviso that young people become increasingly competent to make decisions regarding their own healthcare and this competency must be observed.

The Department will involve families and communities including in the Department's Consumer and Community Engagement Council and Statewide Health Senate to ensure that families and communities have a say in the development and review of the organisation's policies and practices.



4

Equity upheld and diverse needs respected

All children and young people have rights, no matter who they are, where they live, what their parents do, what language they speak, what their religion is, their sex or gender, what their culture is, whether they have disability, whether they are rich or poor. (Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 2.1)

Table 4. Snapshot of Equity upheld and diverse needs respected

National Principle 4 Equity is upheld, and diverse needs respected in policy and practice	
	4.1 The organisation, including staff and volunteers, understand children and young people’s diverse circumstances, and provides support and responds to those who are vulnerable.
	4.2 Children and young people have access to information, support and complaints processes in ways that are culturally safe, accessible and easy to understand.
	4.3 The organisation pays particular attention to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children with disability, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, those who are unable to live at home, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex children and young people.

Our approach

The Department recognises and acknowledges the diverse circumstances of children and young people.

The Department is focused on ensuring that its culture, values, and behaviours respect children, young people, their families, and caregivers and helping them have equal access to opportunities and resources.

The Department recognises the diverse circumstances of children and young people and acknowledges how these circumstances enable it to work in a more child-centred way, empowering children and young people to participate more effectively.

The Department acknowledges the strengths and individual characteristics of children and young people and embraces children and young people regardless of their abilities, sex, gender, or social, economic, or cultural background.

The Department will ensure a welcoming environment where children and young people feel comfortable and where services are provided in culturally safe and inclusive ways to reduce the risk of discrimination, exclusion, bullying, and abuse.

The Department will ensure that children and young people have access to information, support and complaints processes in ways that are culturally safe, accessible and easy to understand through the development of an online portal dedicated to child safety and wellbeing.

The Department has specialist teams dedicated to improving health outcomes for individuals, families,

and communities, with a focus on children, young people, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and other people experiencing poorer health outcomes. These teams work with all levels of government, community sector organisations, youth services, schools, early childhood services, and other stakeholders, and provides advice, resources, and training based on the latest evidence.

Accessing, understanding, or appropriately using health information is difficult for many people. Workers have a role in making it easier for children, young people, their families, and caregivers to access, understand, and use health information and services. This includes the way in which they communicate, provide services, and respond to people's needs.

The Department's Health Literacy Action Plan sets out a range of actions to help improve health literacy for individuals, communities, and organisations. It prioritises health literacy awareness, the development of health literate organisations and workforces, and the creation of partnerships to improve health outcomes. The plan builds upon existing Departmental and cross-sector initiatives, including a statewide Health Literacy Network and health literacy campaigns.



5

Managing staff and volunteers

Children and young people should feel confident about the standards established in an organisation, particularly in the areas of safety, health, number and suitability of staff, as well as supervision. (Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 3.3)

Table 5. Snapshot of Managing staff and volunteers

National Principle 5 People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice



- 5.1 Recruitment, including advertising, referee checks and staff and volunteer pre-employment screening emphasise child safety and wellbeing.
- 5.2 Relevant staff and volunteers have current working with children checks or equivalent backgrounds.
- 5.3 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.
- 5.4 Ongoing supervision and people management is focused on child safety and wellbeing.

Our approach

The Department is committed to upholding its ethical and legislative obligations when recruiting and inducting workers, with advertising, screening, recruitment, and induction processes supported by best practice standards for child safety and wellbeing.

The Department acknowledges that robust recruitment and staff development policies, including appropriate screening, are foundational to a child safe organisation.

Workers will be supported with training and practice tools to understand child safety responsibilities and cultural safety concepts, reporting obligations, recordkeeping and information sharing requirements to better protect children and young people.

All workers will receive induction around child safety and wellbeing and are aware of their responsibilities, including reporting obligations. The Department will continue to implement and monitor human resources and recruitment practices to ensure they meet the requirements of the National Principles.

The Department will outline its commitment to child safety and wellbeing when recruiting new workers. Selection criteria and reference checks will contain safety and suitability requirements that demonstrate that children and young people are

valued and respected, and that the Department is focused on meeting their diverse needs.

Pre-employment checks allow the Department to make informed decisions about the suitability and eligibility of workers to better ensure the safety and wellbeing of all people, including children and young people.

Specific pre-employment checks required for a position are listed as essential requirements in the statement of duties as, as well as in job advertisements. Students and volunteers also require pre-employment checks.

Under the *Registration to Work with Vulnerable People Act 2013* (Tas), workers that engage directly or indirectly with children or their records must hold a valid Working with Vulnerable People (Children) Registration as a condition of employment, unless they are exempt under the legislation.

The Department is committed to proactively anticipating, managing and resolving potential, perceived, or actual conflicts of interest to protect children, young people, and workers.



6

Child friendly complaint processes and reporting

Organisations should ensure that children and young people are properly cared for and protect them from violence, abuse and neglect by their parents, or anyone else who looks after them. (Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 19)

Table 6. Snapshot of Child friendly complaint processes and reporting

National Principle 6 Processes to respond to complaints and concerns are child focused



- 6.1 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.
- 6.2 Effective complaint handling processes are understood by children and young people, families, staff and volunteers, and are culturally safe.
- 6.3 Complaints are taken seriously, and responded to promptly and thoroughly.
- 6.4 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.
- 6.5 Reporting, privacy, and employment law obligations are met.

Our approach

The Department's safeguarding policies and procedures build on existing safety event management processes and reflect contemporary governance and management of child safeguarding concerns. They outline roles and responsibilities for workers and detail the Department's approach to dealing with different types of safeguarding concerns, including harm to children and young people by other children and young people.

The Department will take a trauma-informed approach to the management of safeguarding concerns to children and young people. This approach aims to ensure the best outcomes for children and young people and considers the widespread impact of trauma, seeking to actively resist re-traumatisation. The Department will uphold the guiding principles of trauma-informed practice.

The Department provides workers with guidance about their mandatory reporting obligations and making a report. Workers can be supported by the Department's Child Safety and Wellbeing Service to make a mandatory report. Where the Service identifies a requirement to report has not been fulfilled, they may take action to facilitate the process.

The Department provides pathways and process options and platforms for children, young people, their families, and caregivers to raise concerns that best meets their individual needs, such as developmental, age, physical ability, intellectual capacity, language, technology, communication, information, cultural, support and social needs.

The Department's policy directives on open disclosure support the achievement of an open culture and provides statewide consistency for communication with children, young people, their families, and caregivers following unexpected health care outcomes and harm. They ensure that any child or young person harmed will, as soon as practicable, be provided with information from services about what went wrong and why, and what that service is doing to mitigate the risk of future events in line with the Australian Open Disclosure Framework.

The Department acknowledges that human resource management policies and practices and effective safeguarding concern management processes should be accessible, responsive to, and understood by children and young people, families, and workers.

The Department will support workers to recognise and respond to neglect, grooming, and other forms of harm, provide appropriate support to children and young people in these instances, and meet legal requirements. This includes training to assist in responding to different complaint types, privacy considerations, listening skills, disclosures of harm, and reporting obligations.



7

Education and development

Organisations should take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect children and young people from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in their care. (Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 19.1)

Table 7. Snapshot of Education and development

National Principle 7 Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training



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

Our approach

The Department is committed to providing information, ongoing education, and training for workers to help them develop awareness and insights, and understand child development, safety, and wellbeing.

For support identifying what constitutes a safeguarding concern to a child or young person, workers will be able to refer to the Department's child safety and wellbeing protocols and guidelines.

Workers will be supported to have a sound knowledge of children and young people's rights and supported to recognise indicators of child harm including harm caused by other children and young people. They will be able to prevent harm and respond in culturally appropriate and effective ways to children, young people, their families and caregivers and support their colleagues.

The Department acknowledges the conditions that encourage and support victim-survivors to disclose and seeks to embed these conditions wherever possible. Safe environments for disclosure must consider the diverse needs and circumstances of children and young people in order to uphold the principles of inclusion and accessibility.

Workers will be assisted to create a safe, supportive environment for children, young people, and victim-survivors to express their views and concerns through the Department's child safety and wellbeing policy directives. These resources will assist workers to be aware of, and open to, different ways children, young people, and victim-survivors might disclose to ensure that they are supported, made safe, and believed even following tentative, unclear, or partial disclosures.

The Department seeks to make all workers aware of and comply with the National Principles and their commitment to child safety and wellbeing and child safe approach when providing services to children and young people and/or their family or caregivers.

The following topics will constitute the capability framework:

- children and young people's rights and wellbeing
- safeguarding and identifying and responding to concerns
- child-safe culture and governance
- risk-management strategies
- participation and empowerment
- child safe behaviours
- reporting obligations
- education and prevention, and
- responsive care and support.

The Department will work in conjunction with services to provide resources to support child safety and wellbeing in practice in accordance with the National Principles, and actively promote the dissemination of information about child safe practice to workers.

Workers are supported to develop awareness and insight into attitudes towards children and young people and have a contemporary understanding of child development, safety, and wellbeing. Workers can identify indicators of child harm, respond effectively to children and young people and their families, and support their colleagues.

Workers will be supported to respond in culturally appropriate ways to children and young people who disclose or show signs that they are experiencing harm inside or outside the organisation. They uphold the rights of children and young people in relation to record keeping and understand the possible uses and audiences for records that may be created.



8

Safe environments

Children have the right to get information that is important to their wellbeing from radio, newspapers, books, computers, and other sources. Adults should make sure that the information children get is not harmful and help them find and understand the information they need. (Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 17)

Table 8. Snapshot of Safe environments

National Principle 8 Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed



- 8.1 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.
- 8.2 The online environment is used in accordance with the organisation's code of conduct and child safety and wellbeing policy and practices.
- 8.3 Risk management plans consider risks posed by the organisational settings, activities and the physical environment.
- 8.4 Organisations that contract facilities and services from third parties have procurement policies that ensure the safety of children and young people.

Our approach

The Standards for the Care of Children and Adolescents in Health Services aim to ensure that quality care is provided in an environment that is safe and appropriate for the age and stage of development of a child or young person. The National Quality Framework (NQF) provides a national approach to regulation, assessment, and quality improvement for early childhood education, care, and outside school hours services across Australia. The Department observes these standards and supports their application to service provision, ensuring that the physical environment is safe, suitable, and promotes learning and development.

The Department's technological platforms provide valuable education, communication, and help seeking tools. Risks of harm associated with these platforms are minimised through all necessary means, including:

- education of children and young people, parents and caregivers, and staff and volunteers about expectations of online behaviour
- the application of security and safety filters, and communication protocols

The Department supports the implementation of the Strategies to Mitigate Cyber Security Incidents developed by the Australian Cyber Security Centre (ACSC). The ACSC Information Security Manual

provides guidance to protect Departmental information and systems from cyber threats. ACSC guidance resources and mitigation strategies assist the Department to protect users against a wide range of cyber threats unique to the online environments used by the Department.

The Department's Health Information Management Services (HIMS) ensures the Department operates in accordance with approved Australian Standards when managing health information.

The Department accounts for child safety and wellbeing when considering all third-party services, including where contact with children and young people is incidental or not standard to the funded activity.

Risk management strategies clarify potential risks of interactions where children and young people are involved, or where the physical environment is unsafe.

A collaborative approach is taken with third-party providers to manage the safeguarding of children and young people in the delivery of services.

Third-party providers will be supported to ensure the best interests of children are promoted and encouraged to implement the National Principles.

9

Continuous improvement

In all actions concerning children and young people, the best interests of the child or young person shall be a primary consideration. (Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 3.1)

Table 9. Snapshot of Continuous improvement

National Principle 9 Implementation of the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations is regularly reviewed and improved



- 9.1 The organisation regularly reviews, evaluates and improves child safe practices.
- 9.2 Complaints, concerns and safety incidents are analysed to identify causes and systemic failures so to inform continuous improvement.
- 9.3 The organisation reports on the finding of relevant reviews to staff, volunteers, community, families, and children and young people.

Our approach

The Department commits to improving the experience of children, young people, their families and caregivers accessing its services and values their feedback. Feedback, whether it is a complaint, compliment, or suggestion, provides the Department with another mechanism to support consumer engagement and participation in health care service improvement.

The Department will analyse trends, compare, and implement improvement initiatives based on patient experience. Quality and safety teams oversee patient experience surveys and administer a consumer feedback form and email service. The Department will enable children, young people, their families and caregivers to provide their feedback through patient experience surveys that are accessible and inclusive of diversity.

The Department will regularly review and improve its child safe practices in line with its Quality Governance Framework and key child safety and wellbeing indicators to effectively inform continuous improvement. Reviews help to achieve the best outcomes for children, young people, their families, and caregivers and ensure the ongoing improvement of environments where children and young people feel safe and are safe.

The Department commits to the regular review and improvement of the implementation of the National Principles, including the development of measurable objectives and targets aimed at the elimination of safeguarding concerns to children and young people. Child safety and wellbeing performance and monitoring will be implemented at all levels of the organisation, such as child safety and wellbeing audit and risk management tools.

Transparency will be ensured by sharing the outcomes of recommendations and lessons learnt from the review, investigation, and analysis of risks and safeguarding concerns involving children and young people.

All safeguarding concerns require a level of analysis with a structured investigation using an agreed and validated methodology.

The Department will use best practice analysis and investigation techniques when managing safeguarding concerns. A variety of analysis, investigation and management methodologies are recommended within the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care (ACSQHC) Measurement for Improvement Toolkit and the Patient Safety Essentials Toolkit by the Institute for Healthcare Improvement.

The Department's Child Safety and Wellbeing Service will be responsible for liaising with quality and safety teams and Human Resources to monitor and identify trends, patterns or systemic weaknesses relating to child safeguarding across the service.

Reviews are conducted to ensure that Departmental policies and procedures are being implemented. These reviews incorporate the participation and involvement of workers, children, young people, their families, caregivers and the community.

The Department is committed to the regular reporting of review findings and sharing good practice.



10

Accessible and inclusive child safety and wellbeing policies

The Department has a responsibility to ensure children’s rights are protected. They can help families to protect children’s rights and create an environment where children and grown and reach their potential. (Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 4)

Table 10. Snapshot of Accessible and inclusive child safety and wellbeing policies

National Principle 10 Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people



- 10.1 Policies and procedures address all national child safe principles.
- 10.2 Policies and procedures are documented and easy to understand.
- 10.3 Best practice models and stakeholder consultation informs the development of policies and procedures.
- 10.4 Leaders champion and model compliance with policies and procedures.
- 10.5 Staff and volunteers understand and implement policies and procedures.

Our approach

The Department recognises the importance of having a clearly documented child safety and wellbeing policy framework that ensures consistent application of child safe practices across the organisation.

A child safety and wellbeing policy framework also enables the Department to examine, through

review processes, adherence to child safety and wellbeing principles and practices.

The Department commits to raising awareness of its approach to creating an environment that is safe for children to all workers, children, young people, their families, and caregivers.



Appendix I

The National Principles for Child Safe Organisations: How do I contribute to child safety and wellbeing?

All workers have a responsibility to protect the health, safety, welfare, and wellbeing of children and young people with whom they have contact. The following outlines how workers can contribute to upholding the National Principles and is based on the training resources developed by the Australian Human Rights Commission.

National Principle 1

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

- Prioritise the best interests of children and young people in your daily work.
- Understand your duty of care to protecting the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people.
- Know the rights of every child and young person.
- Create a welcoming, inclusive and supportive environment for children and young people.
- Understand and comply with the Department's child safe policies and procedures to make sure you know how you can keep them safe.
- Be aware of and understand the governance structures and reporting lines that exist for child safety and wellbeing.

- Understand your responsibilities and legal obligations around recordkeeping and information sharing.
- Be open, transparent, and willing to listen.
- Stay informed and openly discuss issues regarding the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.
- Help identify and mitigate risks to children and young people.

National Principle 2

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

- Support children and young people to understand their rights and the Department's commitment to their safety and wellbeing.
- Help children and young people to find information about their rights, and the different ways they can raise concerns.
- Check-in regularly with children and young people.



- Let children and young people know who they can go to if they need to talk to someone.
- Encourage and empower children and young people to ask questions and participate in decision-making about the things that affect them.
- Support children and young people to know of what they can expect from you and the people around you, and what is safe and unsafe behaviour both in-person and online.
- Teach children and young people about the signs of harm and the role that they can take in protecting themselves and their peers.
- Do what you say you will do.
- Use inclusive and empowering, child-friendly language in everyday activities.
- Develop your skills to engage effectively and appropriately with children and young people.

National Principle 3

Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.

- Respect that families and caregivers have primary responsibility for keeping their child or young person safe.
- Involve families and caregivers in the care of their child or young person.
- Support families and caregivers to understand the rights of their child or young person.
- Help families and caregivers to find information about rights, and the different ways they can raise concerns.
- Provide families and caregivers with information that is accessible and tailored to their needs.
- Encourage and support families and caregivers to talk to their child or young person about safety and wellbeing.

- Help families and caregivers to know of what they can expect from you and the people around you, and what is safe and unsafe behaviour.
- Encourage and empower families and caregivers to provide feedback.

National Principle 4

Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice.

- Recognise the diverse backgrounds needs and circumstances of children and young people and be alert to the challenges they may face due to their diversity.
- Tailor your communication to suit the different cultural backgrounds, needs and abilities of children and young people, and their families and caregivers.
- Make sure information and communication is age-appropriate and is provided in an appropriate language and format.
- Stay up to date with training, education, strategies and resources available to help you meet the diverse needs of children and young people, and their families and caregivers.
- Understand and comply with the Department's policy directives on diversity and inclusion, and respectful behaviour.

National Principle 5

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

- Take up training and development opportunities to better understand how you can keep children and young people safe and well.



- Undergo appropriate background checks and communicate relevant information if anything changes.
- Understand and practice safe behaviours when providing care to children and young people.
- Understand your reporting obligations and know where to report concerns.
- Normalise and encourage appropriate behaviour between children and young people and the people around them.
- Maintain a current knowledge and understanding of child development where relevant to your role.
- Maintain relevant experience with working with children and young people where relevant to your role.
- Understand and follow policies and procedures and know your responsibilities.

National Principle 6

Processes to respond to complaints and concerns are child focused.

- Take children and young people seriously when they raise concerns and provide feedback and take action to keep them safe.
- Remain alert to the signs of harm and risks to children and young people and the ways different children and young people may disclose.
- Always raise and address concerns as soon as you recognise them.
- Normalise and encourage a safety culture of reporting and learning from all concerns.
- Understand and comply with the Department's policies and procedures about safeguarding children and young people.
- Understand and comply with your legal obligations to report harm to children and young people.

- Raise awareness about safety and wellbeing, and how to raise concerns.
- Let children and young people, and their families and caregivers know how to raise concerns, and what will happen when a concern is reported.
- Be transparent about your information sharing responsibilities and situations where you may have to tell someone else about a concern.

National Principle 7

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

- Take up training and development opportunities to better understand how you can keep children and young people safe and well.
- Be aware of local support services and resources to help support children and young people, and their families and caregivers.
- Stay up to date with the latest evidence and best practice relevant to your role.
- Talk with your manager about professional and performance development and supervision strategies that can help you better keep children and young people safe and well.
- Talk with your colleagues about how to best uphold child safety and wellbeing in practice.
- Join a professional association or peak body and encourage your peers to do the same where relevant to your practice.



National Principle 8

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

- Review if there are any risks in your work environment or if there's anything you think we can do to improve the wellbeing and safety of children and young people.
- Help children and young people to understand what a safe environment looks like and encourage them to seek help if they come across something that makes them feel unsafe.
- Let children and young people know about spaces that are off limits or out of bounds, such as storerooms, dark areas, or staff rooms.
- Comply with the Department's policy directives regarding online environments, images and media.
- Support children and young people to engage safely online.
- Understand what information and facilities you are allowed to access and what is restricted.

National Principle 9

Implementation of the national child safe principles is regularly reviewed and improved.

- Stay up to date with any new or changed child safe policies and procedures or legal requirements that may affect your obligations.
- Stay open to suggestions for improvement and seek advice from relevant experts if you are unsure about the best approach.
- Make suggestions if you feel something could be improved.

National Principle 10

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

- Understand and comply with the Department's child safe policies and procedures to make sure you know how you can keep them safe.
- Make sure the Department's child safe policies and procedures can effectively help you to uphold the safety and wellbeing of children and young people and make suggestions if you feel something could be improved.

