

Purpose

Cafs is committed to promoting and protecting the safety of children. Cafs has zero tolerance for child abuse. This policy sets out our expectations and values in relation to the safety of children in our care, in our service and in our community.

The purpose of this policy is to:

1. Ensure children are safe at Cafs and abuse of children does not occur at Cafs.
2. Ensure we develop and continue to promote a culture of child safety.
3. Ensure that all Cafs people understand their role in preventing and reporting child abuse.
4. Ensure all Cafs people know what action is expected of them should they suspect child abuse within or outside Cafs.
5. Be clear that abuse of children in any form is forbidden at Cafs.
6. Be clear that all and any abuse will be reported and investigated.

Scope

This policy applies to all Cafs people:

- Members of the Board of Governance
- Managers
- Staff (corporate and clinical)
- Contractors
- Students
- Volunteers
- Foster carers
- Kinship carers
- Permanent carers
- Mentors and anyone else engaged in tasks on behalf of Cafs.

This policy applies to everyone mentioned herein including:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders;
- LGBTIQ+
- People of different race, ethnicity, cultural background
- People of all abilities;
- People of all religions or religious beliefs.

Policy Statement

- Cafs is committed to promoting and protecting the safety of children.
- Cafs has zero tolerance for child abuse or maltreatment of children.
- Any child who discloses abuse/child safety concern to a Cafs person will be believed, supported and protected.
- All Cafs people will respond to disclosures in the same manner as mandated persons.
- We are committed to ensuring children and young people are able to actively participate in decisions that affect their lives.
- We understand our legal and moral obligations to treat any child safety concerns seriously.
- We report any allegations and wellbeing concerns to authorities.
- We are committed to the cultural safety of all children including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe and inclusive environment for children with a disability and LGBTI children and children from LGBTI families.
- Engaging children and young people to promote their active and genuine participation in decision making is a core component of our work.
- Participation is an ongoing process through which children and young people:
 - are actively listened to
 - are supported to express their views
 - have their views taken into account and recorded
 - are involved in decision making processes.

Responsibilities

Cafs Board is ultimately responsible for the organisational response to child abuse/child safety concerns, including its detection and prevention. This includes:

1. Ensuring appropriate systemic controls are in place
2. Monitoring effectiveness of these controls
3. Ensuring effective policies, procedures and codes of conduct are in place
4. Setting parameters for the reporting of incidents of abuse and other occurrences that impact on the safety of children.

Cafs CEO is responsible for:

1. Ensuring all reports of child abuse/child safety concerns at Cafs are recorded and investigated
2. Ensuring all Cafs people are aware of their responsibilities legally, ethically and in relation to Cafs policy, procedures and code of conduct
3. Ensuring all Cafs people are aware of their obligation to report suspected abuse/child safety concern
4. Providing support and assistance for people reporting suspected abuse/child safety concern
5. Overseeing the work of Cafs Child Safety Committee.

Child Safety Officers are responsible for:

1. Developing and maintaining rigorous child safety procedures and embed these procedures in to Cafs processes and culture
2. Ensuring Cafs is meeting the relevant child safety standards
3. Developing and implementing processes for the investigation, review and remediation of child safety related matters
4. Leading or monitoring the management of investigations, reviews or other activity related to child safety matters
5. Developing and embedding robust processes for the voice of children to be heard and understood, including child safety policies and the code of conduct
6. Overseeing the implementation of personal safety/protective behaviour education to children and young people
7. Operationalising these tasks with the child safety committee
8. Providing a quarterly report to the Board and management team on progress, issues and themes arising.

Child Safety Officers through the mandate of this policy is authorised to pursue any relevant line of inquiry in relation to allegations of abuse or child safety concern and to report this to the relevant management structure.

Cafs Managers and Leaders are responsible for:

1. Promoting a culture of child safety at all times
2. Assessing risk of abuse/child safety issues in their area of control and work with the Child Safety Committee and/or child safety officer to eradicate or reduce this risk
3. Ensuring all staff understand their responsibilities in recognising and reporting abuse/child safety concern
4. Ensuring all staff know they can report child abuse/safety concern without fear
5. Supporting and/or facilitating the reporting of abuse/child safety concern
6. Where delegated, undertake the role of child safety officers.

All Cafs people are responsible for:

1. Familiarising themselves with the relevant legislation, policy, procedure and code of conduct
2. Attending mandatory training provided by Cafs every two years on child safety, which includes responding to child abuse/child safety concerns. Staff will also be supported to understand their obligations in this area via supervision, training and performance review
3. Responding to signs of abuse and disclosures in accordance with the reporting child safety concerns procedure
4. Providing an environment that is supportive of all children's physical and emotional safety
5. Ensuring regular home visits and individual time with children by Cafs people are conducted and evidenced in files, as appropriate to the service.

More Information

Definitions for this procedure can be found in the [Cafs Definitions and Acronyms Manual](#).

Child Safe Standards