

Policy

Child Safety

Cafs Philosophy

Cafs is here for those who need us. We are committed to providing an environment where all people, especially children and young people, are safe and feel safe and where their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives. We are committed to ending family violence. We nurture a culture of inclusion and equity for all, and ensure we are a powerful platform and leader in their community for social change.

Purpose

Cafs is committed to promoting and protecting the safety of children. Cafs has zero tolerance for child abuse or maltreatment of children. We are committed to ensuring children and young people are empowered to 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, LGBTIQ children and children from LGBTIQ families.

This policy demonstrates the strong commitment of Cafs Board, Leadership, and Cafs people (employees, volunteers, students, contractors, and carers) to child safety and to provide an outline of the principles that underpin keeping children and young people safe from harm, including abuse.

Scope

This policy applies to all Cafs people (Board, leaders, employees, volunteers, students, contractors, and carers), in all programs and services within Cafs:

Policy Statement

Children's rights to safety and participation

We are committed to:

- ensuring children and young people are empowered to participate in decisions that affect their lives, and ensure the client voice is at the centre of what we do
- understanding what makes children feel safe in our organisation and regularly communicate with children about what they can do if they feel unsafe
- promoting a culturally safe environment where children are empowered to speak up about issues that affect them.

Valuing diversity

We value diversity and do not tolerate any discriminatory practices. To achieve this we:

- support the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children and their families, and children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and their families
- welcome children with disability and their families and act to promote their participation
- seek to recruit appropriate staff from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
- welcome same-sex attracted, intersex and gender diverse children and families
- have a physical environment that actively celebrates diverse cultures and recognises cultural difference
- commit to ensuring our workplaces promote inclusion of children of all abilities.

Recruiting staff and volunteers

We apply a best practice approach in the recruitment and screening of staff and volunteers, ensuring child safety requirements are addressed and met in the recruitment process through strategies including:

- assessing the level of contact and responsibility the role will have in regard to children
- assessing the qualifications and prerequisites required to ensure that staff are appropriately skilled for the role
- assessing the training, guidance and supervision requirements for the position and the current resources available to meet these
- recruitment processes including child safe job adverts and position descriptions and child safety focused interviews and reference checks
- national and international police checks, working with children checks and disqualified carer checks are undertaken when required for all Cafs people and in line with Cafs procedures
- all Cafs people sign the Cafs Child Safe Code of Conduct upon commencement and annually thereafter.

Supporting staff and volunteers

We are committed to:

- ensuring all Cafs people receive training to ensure they understand their responsibilities in relation to child safety
- assisting all Cafs people to incorporate child safety considerations into decision-making
- ensuring the Cafs Child Safety Learning Pathway includes an introduction to Cafs Child Safety Framework, Policies and Procedures, the identifying indicators of child abuse, how to respond to disclosures of child abuse, reporting child abuse, and awareness of professional boundaries in relation to working with children and young people.

Child Safety Officers

We are committed to:

- ensuring Cafs people and young people are aware of who our Child Safety Officers are, and how they can support child safety concerns
- ensuring Cafs people and young people are aware of all avenues of reporting child safety concerns.

Reporting allegations or incidents of child abuse

We are committed to:

- ensuring we have robust procedures implemented, which guide Cafs people on how to report allegations or incidents of child abuse
- ensuring Cafs people and young people understand that all reports of child abuse will be treated as serious, whether they are made by an adult or a child
- ensuring that when an allegation of child abuse is received, all mandatory reporting requirements will be met, including reporting to:
 - Police
 - Child Protection
 - Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (CIMS)
 - Commission for Children and Young People (Reportable Conduct Scheme)
 - Department of Families, Fairness and Housing - Human Services Regulator (Section 81/82 Reporting)

Record keeping and incident monitoring

We are committed to:

- best practice record keeping
- recording all reports of child abuse within our incident management system
- retaining all records in line with the Office of Public Records
- ensuring Cafs leadership monitor all reports of child abuse and complaints about child safety

Risk management

We recognise the importance of a risk management approach to minimising the potential for child abuse or harm to occur and use this to inform our policies, procedures and activity planning. Therefore, we are committed to:

- assessing for risks of child abuse all existing and new activities and facilities
- reducing all identified risks of child abuse by designing and implementing appropriate preventive measures
- ensuring Cafs people are aware of their responsibility for identifying risk of child abuse and their obligations to work with management on reducing those risks
- identifying, recording, managing and reviewing risks to child safety
- families and children are aware of how to report identified risks of child abuse.

Non-compliance with this policy and Cafs Codes of Conduct

Cafs will enforce this policy and the Cafs Codes of Conduct. Following any non-compliance, we will instigate a review that may result in restriction of duties, suspension or termination of employment or other corrective action.

[More information](#)

[Betrayal of Trust Report \(Nov 2013\)](#)

[Royal Commission into institutional responses to child sexual abuse \(Dec 2013\)](#)

[United Nations convention on the rights of the Child](#)

[Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006](#)

[Victorian Child Safe Standards](#)

[National Principles for Child Safe Organisations](#)

[Client Voice Framework for community services](#)

[Community Services Quality Governance Framework](#)

[Complaint Handling Guide: Upholding the rights of children and young people](#)

[Commission for Children and Young People](#) - website

[Resources for Child Safe Standards](#) DFFH webpage

[Victorian Carer Register](#) DFFH webpage

Internal Files/Links:

[Child Safe Code of Conduct](#)

[Child Safety Commitment Statement](#)

[Child Safety Framework](#)

Quality Document References:

[Cafs Definitions & Acronyms](#): Manual -Quality & Compliance