# Child Safety and Wellbeing POLICY

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| **Responsibility** | Office of Chief Executive Officer | | |
| **Establishment Date** | 12/03/2012 | **Review Cycle** | Annual |
| **Previous Date Reviewed** | 20/01/2025 | | |
| **Approval** | 18/11/2025 by Carinity Council | | |

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# 1 PURPOSE OF POLICY

The purpose of this policy is to:

a. Clearly demonstrate Carinity's commitment to the safety, wellbeing and the protection of children, and to implementing and complying with the Child Safe Standards contained in the *Child Safe Organisations Act 2024* (Qld);

b. Inform all leaders, staff, and volunteers of their obligations to act ethically towards children and their roles and responsibilities in ensuring the safety and wellbeing of children; and

c. Outline the processes and procedures that aim to ensure children's safety and wellbeing across all areas of Carinity.

# 2 SCOPE

This policy applies to all members of the Carinity workforce (which includes staff, volunteers, agency and placement workers, and contractors, hereafter 'worker'), suppliers, and the Carinity Council.

# 3 RESPONSIBILITES

## 3.1. All Workers

Everyone in our organisation is expected to carry out the requirements specific to their role to keep children safe. This includes:

- Upholding Carinity's commitment to child safety and wellbeing;
- Delivering services to young people and children within a culturally appropriate and safe and supportive environment;
- Complying with legislation, this policy, and all other Carinity Policies and Procedures relating to Child Safety and Wellbeing. This includes (but is not limited to):
    - Our ***Child Safe Reporting Policy***
    - Our safe recruitment practices;
    - Our Risk Management systems.
    - our ***Code of Conduct (General)***; and
    - for workers who work in our Education Services, Youth Services, and Disability Services, our ***Code of Conduct for Engaging with Children***;

  *See **Annexure 2** for an outline of the applicable policies and procedures*
- Reporting all breaches of our policies or any allegations of child harm or abuse (including but not limited to Reportable Conduct), and meeting all external reporting obligations;
- Completed child safety training as required for their role; and
- Taking part in our regular reviews of our child safe documents and procedures to support continuous improvement as required.

## 3.2. Education, Youth, and Disability Services Workers

All Carinity workers engaged to provide services directly to children through our Education services, Youth Services, and other Community Services are responsible for the above matters and are also responsible for:

- Providing children and families with the resources, spaces, and opportunities necessary for them to have a voice and be involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing; and
- Maintaining physical and online environments that promote the safety and wellbeing of children, and minimise the opportunity for children to be harmed and
- Reporting any reasonable suspicion of harm (or risk of harm) or disclosure in accordance with our ***Child Safe Reporting Policy***.

### 3.3. Managers

All managers are responsible for the above matters, and for supporting staff to comply with our policies and procedures as necessary.

Managers of our services that directly engage with children, being our Education facilities, Youth Services, and other Community Services are also responsible for:

- The oversight of Risk Management Frameworks for each service, including:
    - Identifying, assessing, eliminating/minimising, and monitoring risks to the safety and wellbeing of children
    - Utilising various risk management tools to assist in this process
    - Keep appropriate records of decisions made and actions taken in relation to specific risks.
- Undertaking regular reviews of Carinity's child safe policies and procedures
- Reporting to Executive Management where appropriate to ensure compliance and continuous improvement;
- Monitoring workers' training completions to ensure they are aligned with legislative requirements
- Reporting to external authorities as required; and
- Leading continuous quality improvement initiatives

### 3.4. Executive Management, including Chief Executive Officer

Executive Managers are responsible for the above matters, as well as monitoring and reviewing Carinity's child safety policies and procedures, and reporting to Carinity Council and relevant authorities as required.

## 4 CARINITY STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

# STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT CHILDREN'S SAFETY AND WELLBEING

Carinity is committed to the safety and wellbeing of children. As part of that commitment, Carinity has implemented a Statement of Commitment – Children's Safety and Wellbeing.

We understand that children have unique developmental needs, and we are committed to empowering children and to listening to them. We are committed to engaging with children to ensure that their views are heard and that we can promote their safety and wellbeing in a way that is appropriate for them.

We do not tolerate child abuse or harm, and we endeavour to provide safe and supportive service environments for children and to protect them from potential harm. All allegations and safety concerns will be treated very seriously and consistently with our robust policies, procedures, and risk identification and management processes.

We value the uniqueness and diversity of each child and their right to feel safe, happy, and protected from harm in a welcoming environment that respects their individual cultures and differences.

As an organisation, our values underpin all of our activities, and when applied to the safety and wellbeing of children, they are:

**It is the responsibility of ALL workers to ensure that they and their co-workers adhere to our Carinity Child Safety and Wellbeing Policies and Procedures. We are committed to regularly training and educating all our workers on Child Safety and Wellbeing.**

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Chief Executive Officer

## 5 COMMUNITY INFORMATION AND PARTICIPATION

- Carinity will work to create an inclusive and supportive environment that encourages children and families to contribute to our child safety approach and to understand their rights and responsibilities.
- Carinity will keep and maintain a Child Safety and Wellbeing Community Information Booklet, which will include:

  a. A copy of our *Statement of Commitment to Children's Safety and Wellbeing*;
  b. A copy of our *Statement of Commitment to Cultural Safety*;
  c. An outline of all of our child-related policies and procedures (See **Annexure 2** for applicable policies and procedures);
  d. A reference to the rights of children and families, and the Child Safe Standards contained in the *Child Safe Organisations Act 2024* (Qld);
  e. Our expectations and of our workers, including acceptable and non-acceptable behaviours;
  f. Information about how feedback and complaints can be made if a person

believes we are not complying with our obligations or if they have concerns about child safety matters more broadly;

g. Encouragement for children, parents, and carers from all backgrounds to give input on how our Child Safety and Wellbeing practices can be improved;

The Child Safety and Wellbeing Community Information Booklet will be:

a. Accessible on our website, including on the separate pages for individual services;
b. Available in print (or PDF) format on request and at significant locations (e.g. school offices, community service reception areas, etc.);
c. Provided to new service users upon enrolment/engagement

Wherever possible, Carinity will partner and collaborate with other local organisations, agencies, and community groups in promoting child safety and cultural safety. This could include joint training sessions, information sharing, and coordinated efforts to address child safety issues.

# 6 CHILD SAFE PRACTICES

- Carinity requires all of our workers to engage with children in a manner that is safe, and consistent with the *Code of Conduct for Engaging with Children*. This includes ensuring that:

a. We make our environment safe for children, including by:

i. Ensuring that our grounds, premises, and equipment are safe for children's use;
ii. Having systems and processes in place to manage bullying and other peer-to-peer harm, to protect the psychological safety of children;
iii. Respecting the diverse needs and cultures of all children we engage with;
iv. Having appropriate first aid training and facilities at all sites;
v. Ensuring that our workers are familiar with and comply with our emergency plans relevant to the service, including evacuation and lockdown procedures.

b. We provide appropriate supervision to children using our services, including by:

i. Providing active supervision of children in our care
ii. Avoiding situations where a worker is alone in an enclosed space with a child without the permission of their parent or carer (including while travelling)

c. Our workers maintain professional relationships and boundaries with children at all times. This includes by:

i. Limiting physical contact as appropriate in the circumstances
ii. Keeping relationships professional (i.e. not attending children's homes or social events with children without permission, not showing favouritism, etc.)
iii. Not communicating directly with children on the worker's personal devices
iv. Not taking photographs of children without their parents/guardian's permission
v. Managing conflicts of interests
vi. Not accepting gifts and benefits that to not align with our ***Gifts Procedure***.

d. Our workers are appropriate in their behaviour at all times, including by:

i. Not being under the influence of illicit drugs or alcohol
ii. Not using tobacco products at Carinity sites
iii. Ensuring that all language used with children is appropriate (i.e. is respectful, does not use derogatory or offensive language, etc.)

iv. Using all electronic devices appropriately while at work, including not accessing offensive material.

- Carinity also requires all of our workers to engage with children and families in a manner that respects their diverse needs, experiences, cultures, and life experiences, in line with our *Cultural Safety Policy* and our *Diversity and Inclusion Policy*.

# 7 REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

All our workers must comply with our *Child Safe Reporting Policy* which outlines the requirements and procedures for reporting (including complaints, allegations, disclosures, reports, and external reporting) for all workers. This policy also outlines the specific requirements for mandatory reporters.

# 8 RISK MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

- Each Carinity service will have and maintain their own *risk management framework* to manage risks to children specific to their service area.
- The risk management frameworks will include reference to all risks relevant to the particular service/site, including the following risks:
    a. Child injured while in our care (including peer-to-peer harm to a child);
    b. Worker misconduct causing physical or psychological harm to a child;
    c. Worker not equipped to handle disclosures of harm;
- Each risk management framework will include mechanisms to monitor continuous improvement and benchmarks for evaluating the effectiveness of child safety measures. This could include regular audits and analysis of performance metrics
- Risk management frameworks will be regularly reviewed and updated.

# 9 REVIEW OF THIS POLICY

- We send out regular email reminders to our community about our child safe documents and invite feedback regularly.
- This policy will be reviewed annually, or after any significant events (such as changes to legislation, or a material breach of this policy).

# 10 LEGISLATIVE OBLIGATIONS

Carinity is committed to complying with the obligations imposed on Carinity under all legislation relevant to the safety and wellbeing of children, including but not limited to the *Child Safe Organisations Act 2024* (Qld) and the *Child Protection Act 1999* (Qld).

# 11 RELATED DOCUMENTATION

## 11.1. External Documents

The obligations and statements contained in this Policy will be made available to service users and the public by way of our ***Child Safety and Wellbeing Community Information Booklet***.

## 11.2. Internal Documents

This policy is part of a broader framework of policies and procedures which exist to protect the safety and wellbeing of children who are connected to Carinity.

An outline of the structure of these policies and procedures is included as **Annexure 2** below.

# 12 Annexure 1 – DEFINITIONS

**Allegation:** Means a claim or assertion, without definitive proof that a wrongdoing (i.e. abuse or grooming of a child) has happened or is likely to happen.

**Child:** A person under 18 years of age.

**Child Safety and Wellbeing:** includes physical, social, spiritual, cultural, and emotional safety and wellbeing.

**Child abuse:** Is physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and/or neglect of a child. Each of these are defined in more detail in the ***Child Safe Reporting Policy***.

**Disclosure**: When someone, including a child, tells another person about child abuse that has happened or is likely to happen.

**Harm:** to a child, is any detrimental effect of a significant nature on the child's physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing. It does not matter how the harm was caused, and harm can be caused by a single act/omission/circumstance or a series or combination of the same.

**Manager:** Refers to managing party; i.e. manager, supervisor, principal etc.

**Mandatory Reporter:** a person who is required by law to report to Child Protection Authorities any reasonable suspicion that a child:

- has suffered, is suffering, or is at unacceptable risk of suffering, significant harm caused by physical or sexual abuse, and
- may not have a parent able and willing to protect the child from harm.

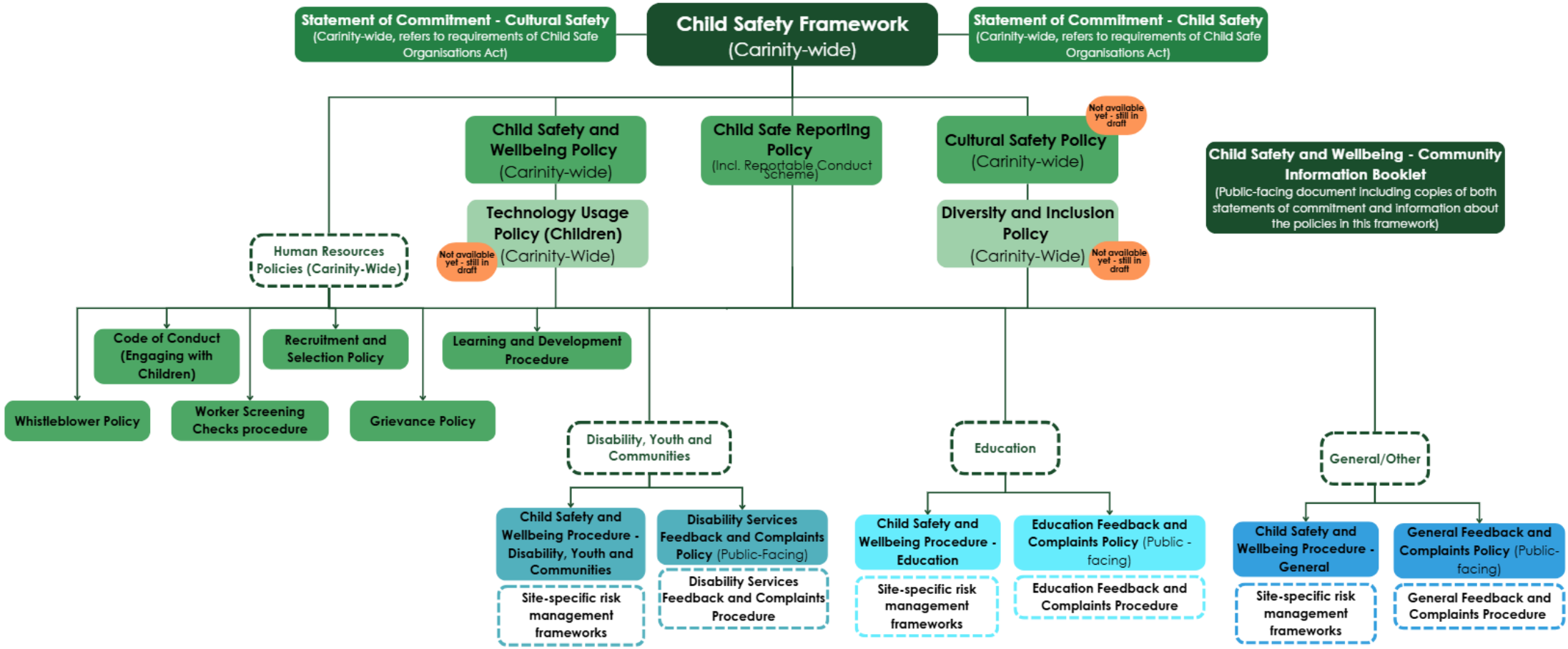
Sections 13E and 13F of the *Child Protection Act 1999* (Qld) specify that mandatory reporters include:

- Doctors, Registered Nurses, Police Officers, and Early Childhood Education and Care Professionals
- Teachers
- A person employed in a departmental care service, licensed care service, or residential facility where a child has been placed for protection.
- An approved carer

**Risk Management Framework**: Means a written strategy required to be developed and implemented.

**Worker:** Refers to all members of the Carinity workforce, that is employees, volunteers, students, trainees, independents contractors and subcontractors.

# 13 Annexure 2 – POLICY STRUCTURE



## I am an **Education** Worker

The Child Safety and Wellbeing Policies and Procedures that apply to me are:

- Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Cultural Safety Policy
- Child Safe Reporting Policy & Procedure
- Diversity & Inclusion Policy
- Code of Conduct (Engaging with Children)
- Technology Usage Policy (Children)
- **Child Safety and Wellbeing Procedure - Education**
- **Education Feedback & Complaints Policy and Procedure**

Other Applicable Procedures include:

- Disability Discrimination for Education Services Policy & Procedure
- Restrictive Practices for Education Services Procedure
- Sun protection for Carinity Education Services Policy & Procedure
- Protocol for Contact
- Carinity Education Model of Service
- Carinity Education WHS Framework (site-specific)
- Visitor Policy and Procedure for Education Services

## I am a **Youth/Disability Support** Worker

The Child Safety and Wellbeing Policies and Procedures that apply to me are:

- Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Cultural Safety Policy
- Child Safe Reporting Policy & Procedure
- Diversity & Inclusion Policy
- Code of Conduct (Engaging with Children)
- Technology Usage Policy (Children)
- **Child Safety and Wellbeing Procedure - Youth and Communities**
- **Disability Services and/or General Feedback & Complaints Policy & Procedure**

Other applicable procedures include:

- Managing a SIRS/NDIS Reportable Incident in Community Services Work Instruction
- Disability Services Policy and Procedure
- On Track Policy and Procedure Manual
- Orana Policies and Procedures Manual
- Counselling Services Policy and Procedure Manual
- Reporting Missing Children: Guidelines for Approved Carers and Care Services

## I am a Human Resources worker

The Child Safety and Wellbeing Policies and Procedures that apply to me are:

- Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Cultural Safety Policy
- Child Safe Reporting Policy & Procedure (Reportable Conduct Scheme Only)
- Diversity & Inclusion Policy
- **Recruitment & Selection Policy**
- **Learning and Development Procedure**
- **Worker Screening Checks Procedure**
- **Grievance Policy**

Other applicable procedures include:

- Investigations Policies (as they relate to investigations involving children)
- Whistleblower Policy

## I do not work with children*

The Child Safety and Wellbeing Policies and Procedures that apply to me are:

- Child Safety & Wellbeing Framework
- Cultural Safety Policy
- Child Safe Reporting Policy & Procedure (Reportable Conduct Scheme only)
- Diversity & Inclusion Policy

*And I am not managing Workers who work with children