

# CHILD SAFETY & WELLBEING

Document Status	DRAFT	FOR APPROVAL	APPROVED
Document Number:	6.1.29		
Version:	5		
Policy owner:	Child Safety and Professional Standards Officer		
Policy category:	Programs		
Level of approval:	Executive		
Policy Approved by:	Executive		
Date Approved:	April 2026		
Effective date:	January 2016		
Review Frequency:	Three Years		
Review Date:	April 2029		
Purpose:	To demonstrate Jesuit Social services' commitment to the National Child Safety Principles. This includes zero tolerance for child abuse and neglect, and a commitment to the delivery of child safe and child-friendly environments that include promoting the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, children who identify as being part of the LGBTIQ+ community, children from culturally and racially diverse backgrounds, and children with disability.		
Relevant legislation and/or standards:	<p><b>Commonwealth</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Family Law Act 1975 (Cth)</li> <li>- Commonwealth Child Safe Framework second edition 2020</li> <li>- National Principles for Child Safe Organisations 2018</li> </ul> <p><b>NSW</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection Act) 1998 (NSW)</li> <li>- Children's Guardian Act 2019 (NSW)</li> <li>- Child Protection (Offenders Registration) Act 2000 (NSW)</li> <li>- Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012 (NSW)</li> <li>- Commission for Children and Young People Act 1998 (NSW)</li> <li>- Crimes Act 1900 (NSW)</li> <li>- Office of the Children's Guardian - Child Safe Standards</li> <li>- The Ombudsman Act 1974 (NSW)</li> <li>- Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (NSW)</li> </ul> <p><b>NT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Care and Protection of Children Act 2007 (NT)</li> <li>- Criminal Code Act 1983 (NT)</li> <li>- Disability Services Act 1993 (NT)</li> <li>- Domestic and Family Violence Act 2007 (NT)</li> <li>- Information Act 2002 (NT)</li> <li>- Work Health and Safety (National Uniform Legislation) Act 2011 (NT)</li> </ul> <p><b>Victoria</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Charter of Human Rights &amp; Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic)</li> <li>- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (VIC)</li> <li>- Children Youth and Families Act 2005 (VIC)</li> <li>- Crimes Act 1958 (VIC)</li> <li>- Crimes Amendment Act (Grooming) 2014 (VIC)</li> </ul>		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Crimes Amendment (Protection of Children) Act 2014 (VIC)</li> <li>- Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (VIC)</li> <li>- Victorian Child Safe Standards</li> <li>- Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic)</li> </ul> <p>Family Violence Protection Act 2008 (VIC)</p>
Risk Awareness:	Governance, Commercial and Legal, Programs and Services, Systems and Infrastructure, Financial, Human Resources, Strategic
Related Documents:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Code of Conduct</li> <li>• Corporate Governance Practices</li> <li>• Duty of Care</li> <li>• Induction</li> <li>• Participant Consultation and Engagement, Feedback and Complaints</li> <li>• Participant Rights and Responsibilities poster</li> <li>• Practice Orientation Manual</li> <li>• Quality and Safety Framework</li> <li>• Recruitment</li> <li>• Responding to &amp; reporting suspected or disclosed sexual abuse, sexual assault and other criminal abuse</li> <li>• Staff Professional Development, Performance Reviews and Training</li> <li>• Staff Support and Supervision</li> <li>• Working with Children, Young People and Families</li> <li>• Workplace Behaviours Policy</li> <li>• Child-Wellbeing and Safety Training Plan</li> <li>• Transporting Participants in Vehicles Policy</li> </ul>
Scope:	All staff, volunteers and students on placement
Definitions:	N/A
Policy:	Jesuit Social Services is committed to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people who access our services and/or accompany adult participants. We create child-safe, child-friendly environments where all children are valued, supported and empowered. We have zero tolerance of child abuse and neglect. Staff are required to meet child safe standards and use contemporary practice approaches appropriate to their role to enhance safety and wellbeing
Responsibilities:	<p>All staff have responsibility to adhere to this policy with line managers having responsibility for supervising staff adherence to it.</p> <p>The Child Safety and Professional Standards Officer provides oversight and support to ensure adherence to this policy.</p>

## 1. CONTEXT

Children and young people are inherently vulnerable due to their stage of physical, emotional and psychological development. Many of the participants with whom we work come from disadvantaged backgrounds and some have histories of trauma, which can increase their vulnerabilities. All children have a right to safe and supportive environments (physical, social and emotional) that enhance their wellbeing and development, including specific cultural and other diversity needs. All adults have a responsibility for the protection of children. Adults working with children, directly or indirectly through an organisation, have additional responsibilities including reporting concerns or allegations.

Jesuit Social Services is a child safe organisation. It has zero tolerance for child abuse and neglect and aims to enhance the safety and wellbeing of all children with whom we engage. This is in keeping with the Jesuit value of *cura personalis*, having care and concern for the development of the whole person.

All Australian jurisdictions have endorsed National Principles for Child Safe Organisations through the Council of Australian Governments (COAG). These principles provide a consistent approach to creating organisational cultures that foster child safety and wellbeing and are supported by State/Territory standards. The following procedure meets the requirements of the National Principles and state and territory standards.

There are also legal requirements to report abuse and/or neglect of children across Australian jurisdictions.

## 2. PROCEDURE

### 2.1 Concerns about the safety of a child or young person

**If you have a reasonable belief that a child or young person is at immediate risk, you should call police with support from line management.**

Any other concern about the safety of a child or young person must be discussed with your line manager who may also suggest consultation with the Jesuit Social Services Child Safety Officer and/or specialist, external services.

Further direction can be found in policy 6.1.18 *Responding to & reporting suspected or disclosed sexual abuse, sexual assault and other criminal abuse*.

### 2.2 Establishing culturally safe environments for Aboriginal children and young people

All staff are required to attend cultural safety training led by an Aboriginal organisation. This training is accessible through the internal training calendar.

All formal meetings, internal and external, are to commence with a Welcome to/Acknowledgement of Country (see 5.3.3 *Acknowledgement of and Welcome to Country Protocols* on GEMBA)

Cultural safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants should be discussed on a regular basis at team meetings. (see 2.7.1f *Program Team Meeting Agenda Template* on GEMBA)

Staff are required to read the *Jesuit Social Services' Reconciliation & Justice Action Plan* as part of staff induction and are encouraged to engage with activities within it, including events that celebrate First Nation's Peoples and acknowledge their histories, including National Reconciliation Week and Sorry Day events.

### 2.3 Child safety is embedded in organisational leadership and culture

The Board actively lead and monitor child safety within the organisation.

Two senior staff occupy the role of Child Safety Officers (CSOs): the Principal of the Ignatius Learning Centre (specifically for school issues) and the General Manager Practice Development and Innovation, who is the organisational Child Safety and Professional Standards Officer.

The General Manager Practice Development and Innovation (organisational CSO) maintains a register of child safety issues and reports:

- quarterly to the Executive and People Practice and Quality sub-committee of the Board through the Quality and Safety Indicators report; and
- six-monthly, in February and August, to the full Board and the People Practice and Quality sub-committee against the National Principles for Child Organisations.

Other mechanisms that embed child safety and wellbeing practices in organisational culture include:

- Accountable governance - *refer to governance practices*
- Reporting processes – *refer to 4.2.2 Quality and Safety Framework*
- Supervision and support – *refer to 8.4.17 Staff Support and Supervision*
- Training and Professional Development – *refer to 8.4.11 Staff Professional Development Performance Reviews and Training, 8.4.11 Staff Professional Development Performance Reviews and Training*
- Team meetings -*refer to 2.7.1f Program Team Meeting Agenda Template*

## **2.4 Children and young people are empowered**

Our work is relational, trauma-informed and family aware. Children and young people are actively involved in the services/supports they receive, being encouraged to identify goals and work collaboratively to achieve them.

Jesuit Social Services' practice framework, *Our Way of Working*, guides how we work. It includes the following key practice approaches:

- Developmental perspective
- Strengths based approach
- Culturally responsive practice
- Trauma-informed approach
- Restorative

Our Lived Experience Framework provides guidance on the various mechanisms used within the organisation to elevate the voices of our participants, including children. Feedback is encouraged at both the individual and program levels and there is an annual process for organisation-wide participant feedback. At the program and project level, examples of how we have elevated the voice and experience of children and young people include The Men's Project Youth Advisory Group and engagement with young people as part of the design of What's OK? Australia. A report of the annual survey is provided to the People, Practice and Quality sub-committee of the Board.

*(see Jesuit Social Services' 6.1.4 Practice Orientation Manual and 6.1.28 Participant Consultation and Engagement Feedback and Complaints)*

## **2.5 Families and communities are involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing**

Jesuit Social Services has a long history of advocating for young people, and particularly those at the margins. We use our practice wisdom and research evidence to guide our policy and advocacy work at the community and systems levels.

Our Advocacy and Strategic Communications team elevates the voices and stories of our participants. For example, we have been a leader in community action on issues such as raising the age of criminal responsibility, and our Men's Project was established to build evidence and test approaches for helping men and boys lead healthy lives that are protective of women and children.

Staff are expected to contribute to policy and advocacy initiatives through team meetings and organisation-wide planning processes.

Staff working with children and young people are expected to actively engage with families as central to the wellbeing of our participants. And where a child or young person is estranged from their family, they should seek to assist them to repair relationships where possible, or work with other natural supports where appropriate.

## **2.6 Diversity is respected and celebrated**

Jesuit Social Services aims to be a culturally safe place for everyone, our workforce and our participants; ensuring that participants, families and carers, staff, volunteers and other stakeholders do not encounter barriers when using our services or engaging with our organisation, and that everyone who interacts with Jesuit Social Services feels culturally safe and able to be their authentic self.

Staff should acquaint themselves with the organisation's *Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategy and Action Plan* and are required to attend training on diversity including anti-racism, LGBTIQ+ and gender.

Diversity, and how to provide inclusive supports should be discussed regularly at team meetings including sharing examples of good practice in this space  
(see item 8, *2.7.1f Program Team Meeting Agenda Template* on GEMBA)

## **2.7 Staff working with children have appropriate safety checks and supervision**

Jesuit Social Services seeks to attract and retain high quality employees, volunteers and students on placement. We have a comprehensive set of policies and processes to ensure we recruit and support staff who are suitable for working with children. Staff who recruit to any position within the organisation are required to follow the recruitment guidelines which include:

- Position descriptions and advertisements must include reference to our commitment to child safety and child safe practices
- Interviews and referee contacts must include specific questions related to child-safety
- All staff must have a current police-check and working with children check (or Victorian Institute of Teaching registration for staff of the Ignatius Learning Centre) relevant to the jurisdiction/s in which they work

Coordinators and managers should actively monitor and guide staff in relation to good practice in relation to child wellbeing and safety through regular supervision.

All staff are required to participate in annual performance reviews.

see the following documents:

- 8.4.6a Position Description Template
- 8.6.5f Job Advertising Template
- 8.6.6 Police Checks and other Relevant Checks
- 8.6.4 Working with Children Checks
- 8.4.17 Staff Support and Supervision
- 8.4.21 Supervision Handbook
- 8.4.11 Staff Professional Development, Performance Reviews and Training

## **2.8 Feedback and complaints processes are accessible and adapted to the developmental stage of participants**

All children and young people accessing our services are to be provided with a Feedback and Complaints brochure (see 6.1.28e *Feedback and Complaints brochure* on GEMBA) when they commence with a program. The brochure is written in simplified English and is available in a range of community languages. Staff should also explain the processes for feedback and complaints verbally when providing the brochure. As a component of good practice, staff should regularly encourage participants to provide feedback and remind them of the feedback and complaints process routinely.

The Complaints Officer is available to meet with young people who wish to make a complaint and adapts the process to ensure the young person has appropriate support and feels comfortable.

See the following documents:

- 6.1.28 *Participant Consultation and Engagement, Feedback and Complaints*
- 6.1.28e *Feedback and Complaints Brochure*

## **2.9 Staff receive ongoing support in relation to child safety and wellbeing**

All staff are required to complete Child Safety and Wellbeing training as part of their induction to Jesuit Social Services This provides a base for ongoing awareness raising and skill development.

The Learning and Practice Development Unit consults across the organisation to develop a training plan and deliver an annual training calendar that includes child safety and wellbeing topics. The unit also provides consultancy support to individual teams as requested.

Staff and supervisors should discuss any training needs related to child-safety and wellbeing through the annual performance development and review process and register for training to address individual need.

Coordinators and managers can contact the Learning and Practice Development Unit to discuss child safety and wellbeing training needs that are specific to their program and may be addressed by team-based training or consultancy.

The Child Safety Officers are available to provide support and guidance to staff on individual child-safety issues including reporting or referring to external bodies including Child Protection and Police.

## **2.10 Physical and online environments are welcoming and promote safety and wellbeing**

Jesuit Social Services seeks to provide its services in contemporary and welcoming premises and community locations. Visual cues, such as posters in workplaces and website pages aim to be welcoming and promote safety, including for children and young people from diverse backgrounds.

Managers should review physical environments routinely to ensure they remain welcoming and adapt to the needs of any changes to the participant demographics.

Children and young people are often transported by staff in direct service programs. Staff in these roles are required to ensure both physical and psychological safety while transporting children at all times. See 6.6.3 *Transporting Participants in Vehicles*

The safety of physical and online environments for children and young people is addressed as part of the start-up process of any new program and monitored on an ongoing basis through the organisational risk assessment and management process.

Staff should assess any new outreach location for risk in line with the organisational outreach policy.

Jesuit Social Services aims to take proactive steps to disrupt and deter the viewing, distribution and proliferation of child sex abuse materials within our ICT networks and operating environments.

Staff should raise any concerns about the safety of sites through their line manager. See 7.1.1 *Occupational Work Health and Safety (including Manual Handling Guidelines)*.

## **2.11 Policies and procedures guide practice that is safe and nurturing for children and young people**

Jesuit Social Services has a comprehensive set of policies and procedures that guide practice. These are accessible to all staff through the online portal GEMBA. Practice is further enhanced through the organisational practice framework, *Our Way of Working*.

A list of all policies specific to child-safeguarding is at Attachment A

All staff are required to be aware of policies and guidelines applicable to their role.

Practice staff are required to undertake training on our practice framework in the first year of employment.

## **2.12 Child safe policies are regularly reviewed and improved**

All policies and guidelines are reviewed and updated according to the organisational policy review schedule. This process is overseen by the Quality Manager and supported by the Quality Risk Compliance and Policy committee which meets monthly.

Our policies are also subject to review through our accreditation processes.

Changes to policies are notified to all staff through organisation wide email updates. Staff should familiarise themselves with any changes relevant to their role.

END OF DOCUMENT

### Document history table

Version	Reason for update	Date approved
5	Review due, updates to legislation. Inclusion of Attachment 1	April 2026

## Attachment 1 Jesuit Social Services Child Safety & Wellbeing Policy & Guidelines Overview

