



INCLUDING YOU CHILD SAFE AND WELLBEING POLICY



If you need help to understand this policy, please contact Including You head office on 03 8407 0940 or via email: admin@includingyou.com.au

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy is to ensure that all managers, employees and contractors engaged by Including You are aware and understand our commitment to Child Safety and Wellbeing in creating a child safe organisation.

This policy outlines how Including You's prioritises the safety and wellbeing of children and the organisations expectations about child safe practices.

Including You Child Safe and Wellbeing Policy demonstrates our commitment to create and maintain a child safe and child friendly organisation. We strive to empower children who are vital and active participants of Including You. We involve them when making decisions, especially about matters that directly affect them. We listen to their views and respect what they have to say.

THE CHILD SAFE STANDARDS

The Child Safe Standards were introduced via an amendment to the *Child Safety and Wellbeing Act 2005* and are compulsory for all Victorian organisations that provide services or facilities for children. Compliance with the Standards is regulated and monitored by the Commission for Children and Young People. AS a provider of services to children, Including You has a legal obligation to comply with the Standards.

There are eleven standards to drive cultural change so that protecting children from harm and abuse is embedded in the everyday practice of all staff and volunteers. The eleven Standards are as follows:



Child Safe Standards	
Standard 1	Organisations establish a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal Children and Young Adult people are respected and valued
Standard 2	Child Safety and Wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture
Standard 3	Children and Young People are empowered about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously
Standard 4	Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing
Standard 5	Equity is upheld and diverse need respected in policies and practices
Standard 6	People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice
Standard 7	Processes for complaints and concerns are child-focused
Standard 8	Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training
Standard 9	Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed
Standard 10	Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved
Standard 11	Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people

OUR COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFETY & WELLBEING

Including You is committed to child and young people safety and wellbeing. Our organisation:

- Has zero tolerance for child abuse
- Has systems in place to protect children and young people from abuse
- Actively listens to and empowers children and young people
- Promotes and respect cultural safety for aboriginal children and young people, for those from other culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and for children with a disability
- Provides safe physical and online environments



- Takes all allegations, complaints and concerns seriously, responding to them consistently and in line with the organisations policies and procedures

DEFINIATIONS

Adult: A person who is aged 18 years and over.

Child/Children/Young Person: A person who is under the age of 18 years old

Child Abuse: is defined in the *Child wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (VIC)* as including:

Any Act committed against a child which endangers their health, wellbeing and/or development involving, and not limited to:

- A sexual offence committed against a child
- An offence committed against a child under section 49M (1) of the *Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)*, such as grooming
- Physical Violence against a child
- Causing serious emotional or psychological harm to a child
- Serious neglect of a child

Child Safety: Measures to protect children from abuse

Cultural Abuse: Actions and attitudes that deliberately ignore, denigrate or attack the culture of a person or their community

Cultural Safety (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children): the child being provided with a safe, nurturing and positive environment where they are comfortable with being themselves, expressing their culture, their spiritual and belief systems and they are supported by the staff who respects their Aboriginality and therefore encourages they sense of self and identity

Family Violence: Behaviour by a person towards a family member of that person if that behaviour is:

- Physically or sexually abusive
- Is emotionally or psychologically abusive
- Is economically abusive
- Is threatening or coercive
- In any way controls or dominates the family member and causes that family member to feel fear for the safety and wellbeing of that family member or another person

Intersectionality: Understanding that different aspects of a child's identity that can expose them to overlapping forms of discrimination and marginalisation. These aspects can include gender, class, ethnicity and cultural background, religion, disability and sexual orientation

Mandatory Reporting: A legal requirement of certain groups (inc: Including You) to report a reasonable belief of child physical or sexual abuse to child protection authorities.

Including You

Child Safe and Wellbeing Policy

Version 3.0

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Reportable Conduct Scheme: The Reportable Conduct Scheme has been designed to ensure that the commission will be aware of every allegation of certain types of misconduct involving children in organisations that exercise care, supervision and authority over children

OUR STAFF

This policy is a guide for our staff and volunteers on the expectations for the standards of behaviour expected to keep our participants safe. All staff and volunteers must abide by our Child Safe Code of Conduct which specifies that standards of conduct required when working with children. All our staff must agree to abide by our conditions of employment which specifies the standards of conduct required when working with all individuals of Including You.

Training and Supervision

Training and education are important to ensure that everyone at Including You understands that child safety is everyone's responsibility.

Our organisational culture aims for all staff, parents/carers, and children to feel confident and comfortable in discussing any allegations of child abuse or child safety concerns. We train our staff to identify, assess, and minimise risks of child abuse and to detect potential signs of child abuse.

We also support our staff through information sharing on our online staff portal to develop their skills to protect children from abuse; and promote the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, the cultural safety of children from linguistically and/or diverse backgrounds, and the safety of children with a disability.

New employees will receive all Child Safe documentation and Induction PowerPoint regarding the eleven Child Safe Standards within the first month of their employment. They will then receive this on an annual basis for the duration of their employment. They will also receive regular supervision (sight visit for casuals and talk to families) to ensure they understand our commitment to child safety and that everyone has a role to play in protecting children from abuse, as well as checking that their behaviour towards children is safe and appropriate (please refer to conditions of employment, Including You's Child Safe Code of Conduct and Including You's Core Policy Manual 2022).

Any inappropriate behaviour will be reported through appropriate channels, including the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH), Commission of Children and Young People and Victoria Police, depending on the severity and urgency of the matter.

Recruitment

We take all reasonable steps to employ skilled people to work with children. We develop selection criteria and advertisements which clearly demonstrate our commitment to child safety and an awareness of our social and legislative responsibilities. We encourage applications from Aboriginal



people, people from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, people with diverse sexual identities and people with a disability.

Including You understand that when recruiting staff, we have ethical as well as legislative obligations.

All employees of Including You, contractors must hold a valid Working with Children's Check and provide evidence of this check before they commence employment. Three profession reference checks and NDIS Screening are conducted for all new staff.

Fair procedures for staff

The safety and wellbeing of children is our primary concern. All allegations of child abuse and safety concerns will be securely recorded and stored in accordance with Including You Complaints Handling and Reporting Policy. If an allegation of abuse or a safety concern is raised, updates to children and their families on progress and actions taken will be provided by the Director.

Privacy

All personal information considered or recorded will respect the privacy of the individuals involved, whether they be staff, volunteers, children or family members unless there is a risk to someone's safety. Everyone is entitled to know how information is recorded, what will be done with it and who will have access to it. Including You have practices in place to ensure that any personal information is protected. This is intended to protect reporters and to ensure the comfort of all staff to disclose any allegation or concern in relation to child safety without repercussions. All reported allegations and concerns records must be kept for 45 years.

Legislative Responsibilities

Failure to disclose: All adults in Victoria who have a reasonable belief that an adult has committed a sexual offence against a child under 16 years of age have an obligation to report that information to the relevant authorities i.e.: Victoria Police. Any person who believes on reasonable grounds that another form of abuse has occurred, or the child is in need of protection is required to report. A reasonable belief is formed if a reasonable person in the same position would have formed the belief on the same grounds. It does **NOT** require proof.

Mandatory Reporting: Any staff member of Including You are mandatory reporters. All member of Including You must comply with their duties. Reporting may need to be referred to regulatory authorities (NDIS commission).

Failure to protect: Where there is a substantial risk that a child under the care/supervision of Including You may become a victim of a sexual offence committed by an adult associated with Including You, staff commit an offence if they know of a substantial risk of child sexual abuse and have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, but negligently fail to do so.



Reportable Conduct: The Director must be made aware of any allegations of physical and/or sexual abuse, sexual misconduct, significant emotional or psychological harm or significant neglect by an employee or volunteer towards a child. The Commission for Children and Young People must also be notified of the allegation.

Duty of Care: If a child is abused by an individual associated with Including You, our organisation is presumed to have breached its Duty of Care unless it can prove that it took reasonable precautions to prevent the abuse in question.

OUR PARTICIPANTS

This policy is intended to empower children and young people, who are a vital, valued and active part of Including You. We involve them when making decisions, especially about matters that directly affect them. We listen to their views and respect what they have to say.

We welcome children from all backgrounds and understand that different aspects of a child's identity can expose them to forms of discrimination and marginalisation. These can include gender, class, ethnicity and cultural background, religion, disability and sexual orientation. Including You is committed to promoting cultural safety, participation and empowerment of all children by:

- Identifying barriers children face from diverse backgrounds
- Understanding the importance of providing a culturally safe environment for Aboriginal children and their parents
- Ensuring children with a disability can participate equally and that staff and volunteers have a focus on the child and what they can do, as well as provide support with a goal of achieving the child's aspirations that is tailored to their needs
- Applying culturally sensitive practice and support to children from linguistically diverse backgrounds

Including You has Zero Tolerance to child abuse and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated seriously and consistently in line with our policies and procedures. We understand that we have a legal and moral obligation to contact relevant authorities when we have concerns about a child's safety or wellbeing and are committed to following processes to keep children safe.



Children and families of Including You have a right to have a say in what happens to them and to participate in decision made regarding them, it is Including You's responsibility to listen and empower all participants and their families. If a child or a family member would like to make a complaint regarding the safety of a child, they can do this via:

- Our Website – www.includingyou.com.au - Child Safe Page
- Email – admin@includingyou.com.au
- Phone – 8407 0940
- Mail – 158 Roycroft Avenue. Mill Park – Attention: The Director – Private and Confidential
- All Including You Child Safe Documentation can be found on our website or via our office

ALLEGATIONS, CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS

Including You take all allegations seriously and has practices in place to investigate thoroughly and quickly (*refer Including You Child Safe Complaints Handling and Reporting Policy*). We ensure all children, families, management, staff and volunteers know what to do if they observe abuse or are a victim, and if they notice inappropriate behaviour.

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Consultation	Including You Leadership Team
Endorsed by	Belinda Toohey (Director)
Endorsed on	18 th October 2022
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