



**Child Safe  
Organisations**  
National Principles

# Child Safe Organisations: Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy template

The National Principles for Child Safe Organisations emphasise the importance of each organisation having policies and procedures that document how the organisation is safe for children and young people. The National Principles also indicate the need for organisations to regularly review and improve their child safe policies and practices. As one key aspect of fulfilling these principles, your organisation should develop, implement and regularly review a Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy.

## Your organisation's Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy should:

- Demonstrate your organisation's commitment to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.
- Identify to leaders, staff and volunteers the actions required to keep children safe and well, and to promote and protect their rights.
- Clarify roles and responsibilities in relation to recognising and responding to child harm or abuse.
- Refer to relevant legislative requirements and to the organisation's other policies and procedures for keeping children safe and well.
- Be specific to the size, nature and risks of your organisation and the services it provides to children and young people.
- Be easy for people to access and understand.

## Steps in developing a Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy



## Step 1: Familiarise yourself with the National Principles

- Read the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations to gain an understanding of the ten principles and associated key action areas and indicators.

## Step 2: Plan, consult and prepare

- **Plan** – Use the Child Safe Organisations **Introductory self-assessment tool for organisations** to identify priority areas that may need particular attention or improvement in your organisation’s child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures and practices.
- Determine whether your organisation will update an existing policy or create a new policy. If developing a new policy, determine whether to consult on a prepared draft or to prepare a draft after consulting with relevant stakeholders.
- **Consult** – An important part of developing your policy is consulting with internal and external stakeholders so they can provide input and convey what they feel is important in keeping children safe and well. Internal stakeholders you may wish to consult with include board members, executive leadership, staff and volunteers. External stakeholders may include people who use your service or engage with your organisation including children, young people, parents and families, as well as community members and representatives of relevant government or industry bodies. Ensure that you give adequate notice of the consultation process and hold consultations in accessible locations that are welcoming for all involved.
- **Prepare** – To prepare your policy, consider using the **Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy template** below as a guide.

## Step 3: Finalise and approve

- Circulate the draft policy to leaders, staff and volunteers in your organisation for their review and feedback. Where appropriate, circulate the draft to others who were involved in the consultation process.
- Finalise the policy and have it approved through your board, management committee or other leadership structure.

## Step 4: Communicate and implement

- Make the policy easily accessible to everyone in your organisation and to the general public, including by putting it on your organisation’s website.
- Circulate the policy to leaders, staff, volunteers, families, parents, children and young people involved with your organisation. Identify needs for education or training on the policy.
- Make the policy available in formats and methods accessible to people with disability.
- Develop a child friendly version of the policy, a plain English version and/or a version in community languages, including Aboriginal languages, where appropriate.

## Step 5: Monitor and review

- Monitor implementation of the policy and assess awareness and understanding of it among leaders, staff, volunteers, families, parents, children and young people involved with your organisation. For example, this could be done through periodic audits, surveys or interviews.
- Review and update your Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy (and related policies and procedures) on a regular basis.
- In conducting reviews, seek the participation of children, young people, parents, families, volunteers, staff and leaders. Consider how the policy could be improved to address any failings identified through complaints or safety incidents.
- Report on the findings of the reviews to children, young people, parents, families, volunteers, staff and leaders.



## Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy template

This template provides general guidance and examples to assist an organisation to develop its own Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy. The content should be adapted to suit the nature, size and circumstances of each organisation and the services it provides to children and young people.

The template is structured in two parts: first, introductory content setting out the general parameters of the policy; and second, specific content on how the organisation promotes child safety and wellbeing through implementation of the ten National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.

Heading	What to include
<b>Policy title</b>	Name of the organisation's child safety and wellbeing policy.
<b>Purpose</b>	<p>Purpose of this policy.</p> <p>For example, a child safety and wellbeing policy should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Clearly demonstrate the organisation's commitment to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.</li><li>• 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.</li><li>• Give guidance on the processes and procedures that aim to ensure children's safety and wellbeing across all areas of the organisation's work.</li></ul>
<b>Scope</b>	<p>Who this policy applies to.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Generally a child safety and wellbeing policy should apply to all people who conduct work for the organisation in a paid or unpaid capacity. This may include, for example, board members, executive leadership, staff, volunteers, interns, trainees, contractors and consultants.</li></ul> <p>What this policy applies to.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Generally a child safety and wellbeing policy should apply to all activities in the organisation which involve, result in or relate to contact with children.</li></ul>



<p><b>Responsibilities</b></p>	<p>An overview of who is responsible for particular aspects of child safety and wellbeing in the organisation.</p> <p>For example, this section may outline particular roles and responsibilities of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• board members and/or executive leadership</li> <li>• managers and staff</li> <li>• volunteers, interns and trainees</li> <li>• contractors and consultants.</li> </ul> <p>This section may include setting out who is responsible for implementing or complying with aspects of the organisation’s child safety and wellbeing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• policy</li> <li>• recruitment and screening practices</li> <li>• staff induction, training, supervision and support</li> <li>• policy or procedure for receiving and responding to complaints</li> <li>• risk assessment and management process</li> <li>• policies or procedures on external reporting, record keeping and information sharing</li> <li>• code of conduct.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Definitions</b></p>	<p>Definition of key terms used in this policy.</p> <p>This may include terms relevant to the particular organisational context, for example categories of paid and unpaid staff, particular positions or governance structures in the organisation.</p> <p>It may also include definition of standard terms such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• child/children</li> <li>• child harm or abuse</li> <li>• mandatory reporting</li> <li>• cultural safety.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Relevant legislation and standards</b></p>	<p>Reference and links to relevant legislation, regulations, external policies and standards on child safety and wellbeing, as relevant to the organisation and the services it provides to children and young people.</p> <p>For example, this may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.</li> <li>• Relevant Commonwealth, state or territory legislation or regulations, for example legislative requirements for working with children checks and mandatory reporting.</li> <li>• Relevant policies or standards, for example the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations and the National Standards for Out-of-Home Care.</li> <li>• Relevant local government regulations or policies.</li> </ul>



<p><b>Related organisational policies and procedures</b></p>	<p>Reference and links to other internal policies and procedures related to child safety and wellbeing in the organisation.</p> <p>For example, this may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child Safe Code of Conduct.</li> <li>• Policy or procedure for receiving and responding to complaints.</li> <li>• Risk assessment and management process.</li> <li>• Policies or procedures on record keeping, information sharing and external reporting.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Policy status and review</b></p>	<p>Who in the organisation approved this policy and when it came into effect.</p> <p>Who in the organisation people can go to for more information or assistance with this policy.</p> <p>When this policy is due to be reviewed and who is responsible for leading the review process.</p>



# Implementing the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations

## A commitment to child safety and wellbeing

This section is intended to give effect to **National Principle 1: Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture.**

Describe how the organisation puts into practice its commitment to child safety and wellbeing and how a child safe culture is modelled at all levels of the organisation.

This may include, reference or link to:

- A public commitment to child safety and wellbeing and the promotion and protection of children’s rights by the organisation and its leadership.
- Child safety and wellbeing policies and procedures, and governance arrangements that facilitate their implementation.
- Child Safe Code of Conduct.
- Risk assessment and management process.
- Policies and guidance on record keeping, information sharing and external reporting.

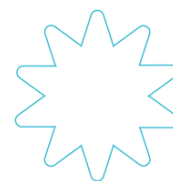
## Taking child participation seriously

This section is intended to give effect to **National Principle 2: Children and young people are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.**

Describe strategies used by the organisation to enable children and young people to have their rights respected, participate in decision-making and have their voices heard.

This may include, reference or link to:

- Programs or resources the organisation uses to educate and engage with children and young people about their rights, safe environments, protective strategies for staying safe and seeking help when needed.
- Information or training provided to staff and volunteers to ensure they understand child rights-based approaches and are skilled at engaging with young people.
- Ways the organisation seeks the views of children and young people and encourages their participation in decision-making, including on safety and wellbeing issues.
- Processes to regularly review opportunities for children and young people’s participation.
- Policies and practices for seeking children’s consent for relevant activities.



### Involving families and communities

This section is intended to give effect to **National Principle 3: Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.**

Describe how the organisation puts into practice effective communication and participation strategies for engaging with and responding to the diverse needs of families and communities.

This may include, reference or link to:

- How the organisation's child safety and wellbeing policies and procedures are made clear and accessible to families and communities.
- Ways the organisation seeks the input of families and communities on the organisation's approach to child safety and wellbeing, including when reviewing policies and procedures.
- How the organisation engages with families and communities to build cultural safety and inclusion through partnerships and respectful relationships.
- Policies and practices for seeking parental consent for relevant activities.

### Respecting equity and diversity

This section is intended to give effect to **National Principle 4: Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice.**

Describe how the organisation creates an environment where children and young people's diverse circumstances and needs are recognised, and all children feel safe, welcome and included.

This may include, reference or link to:

- Policies on accessibility, anti-discrimination, cultural safety, diversity and inclusion.
- Strategies used at all levels of the organisation to counter discrimination and exclusion, including guidance on creating environments that are safe and welcoming for all children.
- Ways in which the organisation considers and addresses the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children with disability, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, children who are unable to live at home, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex children and young people.
- Training for staff and volunteers on identifying and responding to children and young people with diverse backgrounds and needs.
- How the organisation provides accessible, child-friendly and culturally safe information to children and young people about the support and complaints processes available.



## Ensuring that staff are suitable and supported

This section is intended to give effect to **National Principle 5: People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.**

Describe how the organisation puts into practice its recruitment and staff development policies including screening, induction and supervision to ensure that staff and volunteers reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.

This may include, reference or link to:

- Policies or guidance on recruitment, including advertising, selection criteria, pre-employment screening, referee checks and duty statements.
- Systems for ensuring that all relevant staff have current working with children checks or equivalent background checks.
- Induction training for all staff and volunteers on their child safety and wellbeing responsibilities, the organisation's child safety and wellbeing policies and procedures, external reporting obligations (eg mandatory reporting) and the Code of Conduct.
- Policies and strategies for ongoing supervision, support and performance management of staff and volunteers.

## Child focused complaint systems

This section is intended to give effect to **National Principle 6: Processes to respond to complaints and concerns are child focused.**

Describe how the organisation ensures that it has accessible and responsive complaints management processes that are focused on the needs of children and young people.

This may include, reference or link to:

- An accessible policy for receiving, responding to and investigating complaints of child harm or abuse that prioritises the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. Complaints may relate to concerning conduct, misconduct or criminal conduct.
- How the organisation provides child-friendly and culturally safe information to children and young people, families and communities about how they can raise concerns and how those concerns will be responded to and investigated.
- The organisation's approach to responding to concerns or complaints relating to harm caused to a child by another child.
- Policies on reporting to external authorities, record keeping and information sharing, and systems to ensure the organisation meets its reporting requirements and employment law and privacy obligations.
- Training for staff and volunteers on the complaints process, their roles and responsibilities, reporting and privacy obligations, and responding to children who disclose abuse (including recognising the different ways that children may disclose).





### Staff knowledge, skills and awareness

This section is intended to give effect to **National Principle 7: Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training.**

Describe how the organisation promotes child safety and wellbeing by ensuring that staff and volunteers are provided with relevant knowledge and skills on an ongoing basis.

This may include, reference or link to:

- Periodic training for staff and volunteers on children’s rights, child development, the organisation’s child safety and wellbeing policies and procedures, recognising signs of harm or abuse, responding to disclosures, understanding and responding to harmful behaviours by a child towards another child, record keeping, risk assessment and management, external reporting obligations, and creating culturally safe environments.
- Ongoing professional development and information exchange opportunities relating to child safety and wellbeing.
- Strategies for ensuring that staff or volunteers who disclose harm or risk to children and young people are supported.

### Safe physical and online environments

This section is intended to give effect to **National Principle 8: Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.**

Describe how the organisation promotes child safety and wellbeing in physical and online environments in order to reduce the risk of harm.

This may include, reference or link to:

- Risk assessment and management processes for physical and online environments that address risks arising from those environments, organisational activities, adult to child interactions and child to child interactions.
- How staff and volunteers minimise risks without compromising children’s right to privacy, access to information, social connections and learning opportunities.
- Requirements that staff and volunteers use online environments in line with the Code of Conduct, an online safety policy and/or relevant communication protocols.
- How the organisation provides information to children, young people and families about physical and online safety and appropriate conduct in physical and online environments.
- How the organisation promotes cultural safety in physical and online environments.
- How the organisation meets its workplace health and safety responsibilities, as they relate to child safety and wellbeing.
- Policies or procedures for ensuring that visitors to the organisation are appropriately logged and supervised.
- Procurement policies that aim to ensure child safety and wellbeing when contracting third parties.



## Review of child safe policies and practices

This section is intended to give effect to **National Principle 9: Implementation of the national child safe principles is regularly reviewed and improved.**

Describe how the organisation continues to reflect on and improve its child safety and wellbeing policies and practices.

This may include, reference or link to:

- A commitment to review this policy, and the organisation's other child safety and wellbeing policies and procedures, on a regular basis.
- How the organisation engages children, young people, families, communities, staff and volunteers in review processes and provides feedback on review outcomes.
- How the organisation records and regularly analyses complaints, incidents and concerns in order to identify causes or systemic weaknesses and implements improvements.

## Documenting policies and procedures

This section is intended to give effect to **National Principle 10: Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people.**

Describe how the organisation documents and makes available its policies and procedures for ensuring the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.

This may include, reference or link to:

- Other documents that demonstrate how the organisation ensures child safety and wellbeing (such as a Code of Conduct, risk assessment and management process, and policies on record keeping, information sharing and external reporting).
- How the organisation ensures these documents are easy to access, in a language and format that is easy to understand, culturally safe and informed by stakeholder consultation.
- Strategies the organisation uses to monitor understanding and implementation of its child safety and wellbeing policies and procedures by its leaders, staff and volunteers.
- How the organisation engages with children and young people, families and communities to assess awareness of and confidence in its child safety policies and procedures.

