

## Child Safe Policy

### Definition:

- **Child safety** refers to actions taken to protect children and young people (under 18 years) from harm and abuse. Victorian organisations that provide services for children are required by law to implement Child Safe Standards to protect children from harm.

**Our Commitment to Our Clients:** The mission of Elements Assessment Behaviour Consulting (EABC) is to empower others to reach their personal goals and experience positive changes in their life through person-centred care; where kindness, authenticity, safety, inclusion, proactive engagement and specialist knowledge are at the core of all of our relationships and services.

**Context:** On 19 February 2019 the Council of Australian Governments (COAG), which included the Victorian Government, endorsed the [National Principles for Child Safe Organisations](#) (National Principles). The National Principles embed the child safe standards recommended by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (The Royal Commission).

Changes have been made to make the Standards even stronger. The new Child Safe Standards came into force on 1 July 2022 and organisations now need to comply with these new Standards.

The Commission for Children and Young People provides further details on the standards.

<https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/child-safety/being-a-child-safe-organisation/the-child-safe-standards/>

### **The 11 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 people are respected and valued  
<https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/child-safe-standards/the-11-child-safe-standards/standard-1/>
- **Standard 2:** Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture  
<https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/child-safe-standards/the-11-child-safe-standards/standard-2/>
- **Standard 3:** Children and young people are empowered about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them, and are taken seriously  
<https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/child-safe-standards/the-11-child-safe-standards/standard-3/>

- **Standard 4:** Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing  
<https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/child-safe-standards/the-11-child-safe-standards/standard-4/>
- **Standard 5:** Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice  
<https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/child-safe-standards/the-11-child-safe-standards/standard-5/>
- **Standard 6:** People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice  
<https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/child-safe-standards/the-11-child-safe-standards/standard-6/>
- **Standard 7:** Processes for complaints and concerns are child-focused  
<https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/child-safe-standards/the-11-child-safe-standards/standard-7/>
- **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  
<https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/child-safe-standards/the-11-child-safe-standards/standard-8/>
- **Standard 9:** Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed:  
<https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/child-safe-standards/the-11-child-safe-standards/standard-9/>
- **Standard 10:** Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved  
<https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/child-safe-standards/the-11-child-safe-standards/standard-10/>
- **Standard 11:** Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people  
<https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/child-safe-standards/the-11-child-safe-standards/standard-11/>

Details on the National Child Safe Organizations Standards can be found here:

[https://childsafe.humanrights.gov.au/sites/default/files/2019-02/National\\_Principles\\_for\\_Child\\_Safe\\_Organisations2019.pdf](https://childsafe.humanrights.gov.au/sites/default/files/2019-02/National_Principles_for_Child_Safe_Organisations2019.pdf)

## **Our Commitment**

EABC is committed to ensuring the rights of every person we have contact with, within the provision of our services, are protected. We take extra care and duty with ensuring the safety and wellbeing of every child and young person is maintained and a top priority; recognising that the safety of children is everyone's responsibility. We respect, embrace and support the diversity in all participants, and particularly children and young people.

EABC will:

- Listen to the views of children or young people and respect what they say and involve them when we make decisions, especially about matters that will directly affect them
- Respect children and young people's rights, background, culture and beliefs as set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

- Comply with all relevant Commonwealth, State or Territory laws protecting children and young people
- Follow mandatory reporting requirements for children or young people suspected to be at risk of significant harm
- Safeguard children or young people at all times and not place them at risk of abuse, or condone behaviour which is unsafe
- Use appropriate language for the age and understanding of the child or young person, and avoid confusing or age-inappropriate discussions with sexual, discriminatory or violent references
- Avoid any actions or words intended to threaten, intimidate, shame, humiliate, belittle, embarrass or degrade children or young people

## **Policy Procedures**

### **Child Safe Recruitment Practices**

#### *Duty of Care Statement*

Each person's role within EABC is outlined within their corresponding position description; a number of responsibilities and expectations are clearly stated to ensure that employees, contractors and volunteers are held accountable for their actions and interactions with all participants including children and young people.

#### *Screening*

All employees, contractors and or volunteers will be screened for their suitability to work with children using a Working with Children Check, NDIS Worker Screening Check, referee checks and identity checks

### **Communication of Child Safe Policy and Standards to EABC Employees**

EABC expects that practitioners behave appropriately with every child and explicitly ensures the child feels safe and is free from psychological, emotional or physical harm of any kind.

EABC ensures that every practitioner is trained in recognising signs and risks of child welfare, and their *duty of care* and reporting requirements. This is policy is reviewed as a core module in practitioners' induction training at EABC and requires a signature from practitioners authorising their understanding and agreement to adhere to the lawful requirements and EABC's commitment to protect children outlined in this policy.

## Communication of Child Safe Policy to Participants and Families / Organisations

EABC has zero tolerance for child abuse or inappropriate behaviour of any EABC employee towards a child. To achieve this, EABC will communicate the child safe practices that overarch service provision at the commencement of services with families and participants under the age of 18 years. This information is found in the Participant Information Booklet provided at the commencement of service.

## Implementation of Child Safe Policy in Practice

### Safe Relationships

- EABC maintains professional and courteous relationships with children and their families to provide services in a way that does not exploit or abuse our position
- We will actively work to listen to and empower children through genuine engagement with the child or young person and applying a person centred / strengths-based approach within assessment and intervention. This is further discussed in the *Commitment to Active Participation and Decision-Making Policy*
- We have respect for the best interests of the child as a primary consideration throughout our service provision
- We encourage children to report if they feel unsafe or concerned at any time, within any environment.
- Strategies to promote Children's active participation is further found here:

<https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/assets/resources/tipsheet-empower-participation-children.pdf>

### Protecting the Most Vulnerable

The Child Safe Standards are underpinned by the understanding that all children are vulnerable. However, three overarching principles require organisations to consider the increased vulnerability of:

- Aboriginal children
- Those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- Children with disabilities.

These groups of children and young people may be particularly vulnerable to being victimised and may face challenges in reporting an incident of abuse.

EABC is committed to promoting cultural safety of Aboriginal children, cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and to providing a safe environment for children with a disability.

- This is achieved through using appropriate communication tools and behaviours that promote the child's understanding and active participation throughout the duration of service.

### **Identification of Risk or Actual Harm**

- EABC is committed to identifying and reducing risks of harm or abuse towards a child or young person. This is achieved through effective risk assessment and mitigation strategies. Risks that are beyond our organisational control will be reported to the appropriate authorities as soon as they are identified.
- Some questions that are continually reviewed and screened for as part of this

Risk Assessment process include:

1. What could go wrong within a specific activity that EABC provides?
2. Are there any circumstances that could expose children to risk?
3. Is there a potential for bodily contact between adults and children during any activity?
4. Is there a low level of parental involvement in the service delivery?
5. Are there places where interactions between adults and children can be obscured from sight?
6. Are there circumstances where a staff member or volunteer could be left alone with a child?
7. What additional measures need to be put in place for our particularly vulnerable children, including children with disability, children in out-of-home care, children from culturally and linguistic diverse backgrounds and Aboriginal children?

Action Plans to mitigate against the risks identified for the child or young person will be completed in each case required, between the practitioner and supervisor.

- EABC will take all allegations seriously and will respond to them consistently in line with our ethical and legal responsibilities and duty of care. All incidents will be reported in line with our organisational incident reporting system and our State and National obligations.

- EABC will keep safe and secure accurate records outlined in our Incident Reporting Policy and Complaints Management Procedures.

## Definition of Breach of Child Safe Policy

- Failure to disclose: all adults in Australia with a reasonable belief that an adult has committed a sexual offence against a child have an obligation to report that information to the police
- Failure to protect: EABC will 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. All reportable incidents will be completed and submitted to the appropriate authorities for a staff member's failure to protect a child at risk of abuse.

\*Any breach of the child safe policy will result in immediate cessation of services provided by the person until the outcome of a thorough investigation of the incident is completed. A failure to protect a child at risk of abuse will result in immediate termination of their employment with EABC.

**By signing below, you acknowledge the importance of keeping children safe and agree to comply with the State and National Child Safe Standards and EABC policy.**

Staff Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_