CatholicCare
DIOCESE OF BROKEN BAY

Agency Child Safe Policy

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Introduction

CatholicCare Diocese of Broken Bay (CatholicCare) is committed to fostering communities of safety and care for all people, especially for children and others in the community who are vulnerable. We uphold the special care and protections that apply to children (everyone under 18 years of age) as set out the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)* due to their vulnerability including:

- Their right to protection from exploitation and abuse,
- The right to be cared for and have a home, and
- The right to have a say in decisions which affect them.

The diocese has also developed a *Rights of the Child Framework* to cement our commitment to engage with children and safeguard their rights and protect them from harm.

Scope

This policy all CatholicCare Board of Directors, staff, volunteers, contractors and consultants, authorised carers, work experience students, and volunteers.

Policy statement

CatholicCare has practices in place to provide safe services for children to grow and flourish and has zero tolerance to any attitude or activity that makes children less than safe.

We are committed to upholding all relevant standards relating to child safety and child safe organisations through:

- Promoting and protecting the best interests of children involved in its programs.
- Supporting the active participation of children in our services, including in the development of child safe practices and procedures.
- Identifying suitable and competent staff and volunteers through robust recruitment processes.
- Listening and responding to concerns so risks be identified early and addressed.
- Taking every concern and allegation seriously, in line with the principles of procedural fairness.
- Communicating openly and honesty so that expectations, standards, structures, and processes for the protection of children and vulnerable adults is clear.

Everyone working at CatholicCare is responsible for the care and protection of children and vulnerable adults and reporting information about abuse.

Child Safe Practices

As an organisation CatholicCare must meet the following Safeguarding Standards:

- National Catholic Safeguarding Standards
- National Principles for Child Safe Organisations (DSS)
- NSW Child Safe Standards (OCG)

As shown in *Appendix 1 – Comparison of Standards*, there is cross-over and overlap in these Standards and we ensure our child safe practices meet the relevant child-related requirements in all three Standards as applicable.

The OCG have also provided an infographic showing the alignment of the Code of Practice for Out of Home Care and adoption to the Child Safe Standards and this is included in *Appendix 2 – Alignment of the Code of Practice*.

This is an example of how our child safe practices support compliance with the Ten NSW Child Safe Standards.

Standard	Child Safe Standard Description	Our Child Safe Practices
Standard 1	Child Safety is embedded in organisational leadership, governance & culture	ALL our practices are derived from strong leadership, risk management framework and a safeguarding culture. • *Code of Conduct & Ethics Framework* • *CatholicCare Advisory Council Governance Framework and Policies* • *Diocesan Safeguarding Office Charter* • *Quality Management System* • *Rights of the Child Framework* • *Whistleblowing Policy*
Standard 2	Children participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously	Our practices encourage involvement from children and young people particularly for issues which affect them. At CatholicCare the "voice" of the child is heard and valued. • *Children's Rights Policy* • *Children's Services Child Safe Environment Policy* • *Integrated Services Counselling Services Practice Guidelines* • *PSP Decision Making, Participation, and Involvement Practice Guidelines*
Standard 3	Families and communities are informed and involved	We are transparent about our processes and actively involve families and communities in our organisation. • *Community Participation Policy* • *Spirit Disability Services & Seniors Family & Carers Participation Policy* • *Children's Services Family Participation and Collaboration Policy* • *Client Feedback Practice Guidelines* • *Complaints and Feedback Policy* • *Social Media Practice Guidelines*
Standard 4	Equity is upheld and diverse needs are taken into account	We respect diversity and uphold equality through adapting and responding to the individual needs of the child. • *Children's Services Inclusion and Equity Policy*

Standard	Child Safe Standard Description	Our Child Safe Practices
		• *Cultural Competency Policy* • *DF & Seniors Service Access & Inclusion* • *Policy Inclusion and Diversity Policy*
Standard 5	People working with children are suitable and supported	Our People & Culture team support our Managers to ensure the initial and ongoing suitability of our staff and volunteers through robust processes. • *Children's Services Staffing Arrangements Policy* • *Engaging Volunteers Practice Guidelines* • *Probity Checks and Renewals Practice Guidelines* • *PSP Assessment and Selection of Carers Policy* • *PSP Carer Register Policy* • *PSP Immediacy of Placement Practice Guidelines* • *PSP Working with Labour Hire Agencies* • *Recruitment & Selection Practice Guidelines* • *Residential Care Worker Register – Internal* • *Process Staff Performance and Development* • *Procedure Worker Induction Practice Guidelines*
Standard 6	Processes to respond to complaints of child abuse are child-focused	Our safeguarding culture ensures staff awareness, training and appropriate action in relation to complaints or concerns of child abuse. • *Children's Services Completing Reports and Making Notifications Practice Guidelines* • *Child Protection and Risk of Significant Harm Practice Guidelines* • *PSP Foster Carer Keep them Safe Practice Guidelines* • *Reportable Conduct & Incidents Practice Guidelines*
Standard 7	Staff are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children safe through continual education and training.	Staff training and development is important at CatholicCare at both induction and for ongoing employment. • *Children's Services Interaction with Children* • *Policy Children's Services Professional Training and Development Policy* • *Learning & Development Practice Guidelines PSP* • *Reflective Practice Practice Guidelines Positive* • *Behaviour Support Policy* • *Promoting Positive Child Development Policy Staff* • *Performance and Development Procedure Worker* • *Induction Practice Guidelines*
Standard 8	Physical and online environments minimise the opportunity for abuse to occur.	Practices are in place to keep our children safe in both physical and online environments. • *Children's Services Supervision Policy* • *Children's Services Child Safe Environment Policy* • Safe Use of Digital Technologies Policy • *DF Restrictive Practice Practice Guidelines* • *PSP Environments Policy* • *PSP Safety Plan Practice Guidelines* • *PSP Restrictive Practice Authorisation Practice Guidelines*

Standard	Child Safe Standard Description	Our Child Safe Practices
Standard 9	Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is continuously reviewed and improved.	All policies and practices are reviewed and improved on a regular basis. • *Children's Services Monitoring of Standards and Compliance Policy* • *Policy Development and Review Practice Guidelines* • *Continuous Improvement Practice Guidelines*
Standard 10	Policies and procedures document how the organisation is child safe.	All the above documents.

Our child safe practices include:

1. Supporting children's participation

CatholicCare supports the active participation of children in our organisation. We treat all children with dignity; listen to their views, respect what they say and involve them when we make decisions, especially about matters that will affect them.

2. Providing clear expectations of conduct

CatholicCare's Board of Directors, Senior Leaders and Managers create and maintain a child safe culture, ensuring all staff understand that keeping children safe is everyone's responsibility. Our *Code of Conduct and Ethics Framework* is clear on the expectations CatholicCare has for staff, contractors and volunteers who work with children. This framework identifies some of the positive child safe behaviours expected as well as some of the behaviours considered unacceptable.

Engaging in unacceptable practices and behaviours towards a child or young person is a breach of the Code and will be assessed and managed within the terms of current CatholicCare Policy and Practice Guidelines as well as relevant state and federal legislation. Any suspected criminal behaviour towards a child or young person will be reported to the NSW Police, as well as other statutory bodies as required.

3. Reporting on suspicions of 'risk of significant harm'

CatholicCare requires all staff to report suspicions of 'risk of significant harm' to their manager or the Safeguarding Team; and if they are a mandatory reporter they will report directly to Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ).

- *PSP ROSH Mandatory Reporting Practice Guide*
- *ROSH Mandatory Reporting Practice Guide*

4. Exchanging Information relating to safety and wellbeing

CatholicCare staff will exchange information with other prescribed bodies under Chapter 16A, of the *Children and Young Person's Care and Protection Act 1998*; where the information will contribute to the safety, welfare or wellbeing of a child or young person. This includes requests for information made under Chapter 16A via the Residential Care Workers Register.

- *Checklist for Requesting Information under Chapter 16A*
- *Letter for Providing Information under Chapter 16A*
- *Letter Requesting Information under Chapter 16A*
- *Letter Declining a Chapter 16A Request*
- *Letter Agreeing to a Chapter 16A Request*
- *Residential Care Worker Register Information Sheet*
- *RCWR – OCG Part 1 – Agency requesting information*
- *RCWR – OCG Part 2 – Agency recording and providing information*

5. Recruitment

We identify the safest and most suitable people who share CatholicCare values and commitment to protect children and vulnerable adults. CatholicCare has rigorous, consistent recruitment, selection, and probity check processes in place to attract and employ suitable competent staff.

Our position descriptions are reviewed when a vacancy exists to ensure we adequately describe the role. Advertisements and criteria for short list candidates are developed from the position description. The interview process is consistent for all selected candidates.

Our interview questions and reference checks are based on key competencies for the role. If the role is identified as child related and needing a Working with Children Check Clearance number, specific questions regarding conduct with children are asked and the answers assessed.

- *Child Related Roles Interview Template*
- *Child Related Roles Reference Check*

6. Probity checks

With the exception of NDIS risk assessed roles; all other preferred applicants will be required to undergo a National Police Check and any disclosable court outcomes will be risk assessed prior to commencement. National Police Checks will be required at least every three years.

If a staff member or contractor works for Spirit Disability Services in a risk-assessed role, they will be required to have a NDIS Workers Check (NDISWC) instead of a Police Check. The NDIS Worker Check application is screened by Office of the Children's Guardian, and the outcome is uploaded to the NDIS Worker Screening Database.

If the role involves working with children, a current, valid Working with Children Check Clearance Number will also be required. This Clearance number will be verified with the Office of the Children's Guardian. Contractors, volunteers, and carers who also work with children will also be required to provide a current, valid Working with Children Check Clearance Number.

Potential and current Residential Care Workers in our Permanency Support Program will have their details added to the Residential Care Workers Register which will also include the outcomes of their Working with Children Check and Other Agency Check if applicable.

Our People and Culture team record and verify all NDIS Worker Checks Applications and Working with Children Check Records.

7. Support for staff, volunteers, and students

We promote respect, fairness and consideration for all staff, volunteers, and students.

All new staff, volunteers and students receive our *Code of Conduct & Ethics Framework* and some important CatholicCare policies outlining our expectations prior to commencing. New staff undergo orientation and induction training specific to their role. All staff, volunteers and students are supported and supervised by a Supervisor or Manager.

Staff are informed during their induction to CatholicCare about their obligations in regard to safeguarding via the iinduct online learning safeguarding module, completed by ALL new staff.

Professional development or other learning opportunities are available as required or when needs are identified.

8. Dealing with complaints

CatholicCare encourages feedback and complaints from all our service users. Children and young people who make complaints will be provided with age-appropriate information about our complaint handling process. They will be listened to, treated with respect by staff actively involved in the complaint process; and, where possible, provided with reasons for our decisions. Children and young people will also be notified of what further options are available to them if they are unhappy with a decision resulting from their complaint. All complaints will be dealt with within a reasonable timeframe.

- *Kids Complaint Flyer*
- *Kids Complaint Form*

9. Reporting on and investigating any allegations against staff

CatholicCare requires any misconduct or inappropriate behaviour by a staff member to be reported. We also have a Safeguarding Office which will risk assessment and investigate any allegations against staff. Our *Reportable Conduct and Incidents Practice Guideline* sets out the process and procedure for reporting complaints, managing risk and conducting investigations.

We also have a *Whistleblowing Policy* where staff are encouraged to report on reasonable grounds of suspicion and can do so anonymously if they wish.

10. Communication

CatholicCare holds regular information sessions relating to Child Safety and Safeguarding.

Child Safety is discussed during interviews, in induction, and throughout the staff member's employment. It is also a part of the induction process for volunteers and students.

Our *Rights of the Child Framework*, *Complaints and Feedback Policy*, and *Our Commitment to Safeguarding* are available on our website for easy access by all service users.

Related policies

As listed in *Child Safe Practices Table*.

Related forms & resources

- *Checklist for Requesting Information under Chapter 16A*
- *Child Related Roles Interview Template*
- *Child Related Roles Reference Check*
- *Kids Complaint Flyer*
- *Kids Complaint Form*
- *Letter Agreeing to a Chapter 16A Request*
- *Letter Declining a Chapter 16A Request*
- *Letter for Providing Information under Chapter 16A*
- *Letter Requesting Information under Chapter 16A*
- *PSP ROSH Mandatory Reporting Practice Guide*
- *RCWR – OCG Part 1 – Agency requesting information*
- *RCWR – OCG Part 2 – Agency recording and providing information*
- *Residential Care Worker Register Information Sheet*
- *ROSH Mandatory Reporting Practice Guide*

Links and references

- *A Guide to the Child Safe Standards*
- *Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012 (NSW).*
- *Child Safe Standards (NSW)*

- *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 (NSW)*
- *Crimes Act 1900 (NSW)*
- *Diocesan Office for Safeguarding Charter*
- *Healthdirect: Child Abuse*
- *National Catholic Safeguarding Standards Edition 2, December 2022*
- *National Principles for Child Safe Organisations 2019*
- *NSW Office of the Children's Guardian*
- *OCG Code of Practice*
- *OCG – Other Agency Checks and Residential Register*
- *Risk Management and the Child Safe Standards Part 1 Responding to Risk*
- *Risk Management and the Child Safe Standards Part 2 Identifying to Risk*
- *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)*

Glossary

Child

A person under the age of 18 (unless otherwise specified in relevant legislation).

Child abuse

Child abuse is any behaviour that harms or could harm a child or young person, either physically or emotionally. It does not matter whether the behaviour is intentional or unintentional.
There are different types of child abuse, and many children experience more than one type:

- Physical abuse: using physical force to deliberately hurt a child.
- Emotional abuse: using inappropriate words or symbolic acts to hurt a child over time.
- Neglect: failing to provide the child with conditions needed for their physical and emotional development and wellbeing.
- Sexual abuse: using a child for sexual gratification.
- Exposure to family violence: when a child hears or sees a parent or sibling being subjected to any type of abuse or can see the damage caused to a person or property by a family member's violent behaviour.

Child protection

Any measure taken to safeguard children from abuse or harm.

Grooming

Any act with the aim of befriending, building rapport, and gaining the trust of a child for the purpose of subjecting them to abuse. Signs of grooming include giving gifts or special attention, or inappropriate touching such as tickling or wrestling with a child.

Online grooming

Establishing a relationship with a child or young person online with the aim of meeting him/her in person for sexual activity. This can include online chat or sexting, and the abuser may lie about their age or identity.

Harm

Any significant detrimental effect on a child's physical, psychological, or emotional wellbeing.

Sexual abuse

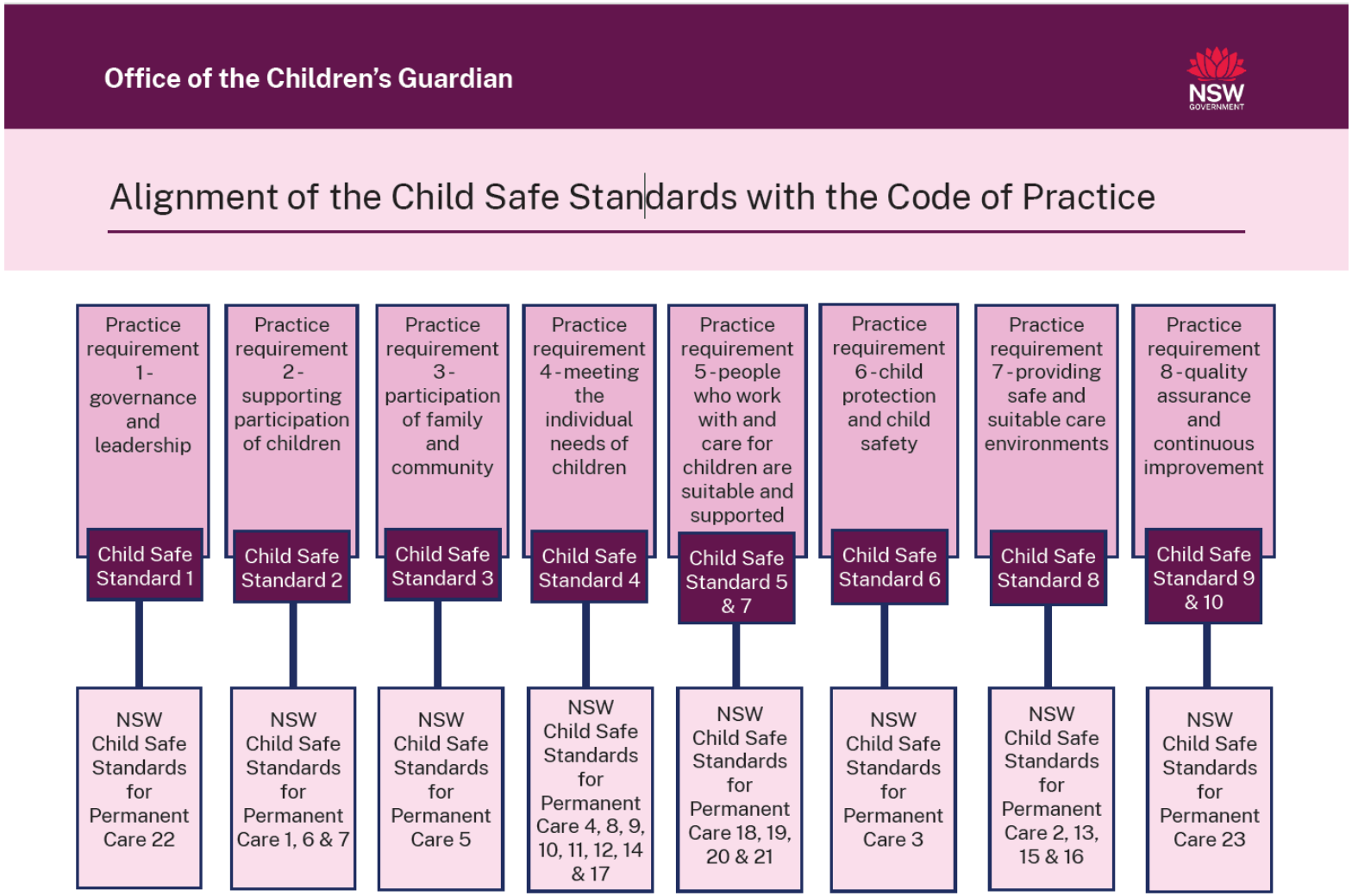
Occurs when an adult or another child or young person uses power and authority to involve a child in sexual activity, and can be physical, verbal, or emotional.

Appendix 1 – Comparison of Standards

National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (Ed. 2, 2022)	National Principles for Child Safe Organisations (2019) DSS	Child Safe Standards - OCG
Standard 1: The safeguarding of children and adults is embedded in the entity's leadership, governance, and culture.	**Principle 1: Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance, and culture.**	**Standard 1: Child safety is embedded in organisational leadership, governance, and culture**
Standard 2: Children and adults are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.	**Principle 2: Children and young people are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.**	**Standard 2: Children participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously**
Standard 3: Families, carers, and communities are informed and involved in promoting the safeguarding of children and adults.	**Principle 3: Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.**	**Standard 3: Families and communities are informed and involved**
Standard 4: Equity is upheld, and diverse needs respected in policy and practice.	**Principle 4: Equity is upheld, and diverse needs respected in policy and practice.**	**Standard 4: Equity is upheld, and diverse needs are taken in to account**
Standard 5: People working with children and adults are suitable and supported to reflect safeguarding values in practice.	**Principle 5: People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.**	**Standard 5: People working with children are suitable and supported**
Standard 6: Processes for raising concerns and complaints are responsive, understood, accessible and used by children, adults, families, carers, communities, and personnel.	**Principle 6: Processes to respond to complaints and concerns are child focused.**	**Standard 6: Processes to respond to complaints of child abuse are child focused**
Standard 7: Personnel are equipped with knowledge, skills, and awareness to keep children and adults safe through information, ongoing education and training.	**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.**	**Standard 7: Staff are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and awareness to keep children safe through continual education and training**

National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (Ed. 2, 2022)	National Principles for Child Safe Organisations (2019) DSS	Child Safe Standards - OCG
Standard 8: Physical and online environments promote safety and contain appropriate safeguards to minimise the opportunity for children and adults to be harmed.	**Principle 8: Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.**	**Standard 8: Physical and online environments minimise the opportunity for abuse to occur**
Standard 9: Entities regularly review and improve implementation of their systems for keeping children and adults safe.	**Principle 9: Implementation of the national child safe principles is regularly reviewed and improved.**	**Standard 9: Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is continuously reviewed and improved**
Standard 10: Policies and procedures document how the entity is safe for children and adults.	**Principle 10: Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people.**	**Standard 10: Policies and procedures document how the organisation is child safe**

Appendix 2 – Alignment to the Code of Practice



Sign off and review

This document remains valid until it is either superseded by a new version or officially revoked.

CatholicCare values your input and welcomes feedback on this document. Your suggestions help us improve and better support your work. Please send any feedback to policy.updates@catholiccaredbb.org.au.

Version	Authorised by	Approved date	Review cycle	Review due
1.0	Executive Director	18 November 2019	1 years	November 2021
2.0	Executive Manager Quality Safeguarding Risk and Compliance	1 June 2021	2 years	1 June 2023
3.0	Executive Manager Quality Safeguarding Risk and Compliance	9 January 2024	Review date adjusted to align with new review schedule	January 2027

Revision history

Version	Description	Author	Amendment date
1.0	Policy	Policy Specialist	12 February 2019
2.0	Policy	Policy Specialist	1 June 2021
2.1	Policy	Policy Specialist	21 February 2022
2.2	Policy	Policy & Document Support Officer	28 June 2023
3.0	Policy	Policy Specialist/Safeguarding Team	9 January 2024
3.1	Policy	Policy Specialist/Safeguarding Team	18 March 2024
3.2	Added link to CS National Model Code Policy	Policy Specialist	18 August 2025
3.3	Included Appendix 2 Alignment to the Code of Practice	Policy Specialist	21 October 2025
3.4	Link changes	Policy And Program Officer	6 August 2026