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| Policy Name | Child Safety Policy and Procedure | | |
| Functional area | Consumers | | |
| Relating to | Rights and Responsibilities | | |
| Audience | All Staff | | |
| Custodian | Practice owner | B Zeeman | |
| Effective date | 15.11.2023 | Review date | 15.11.2028 |
| Dates reviewed | | | |

Purpose

This policy explains how the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (the Department) implements the Child Safe Standards (the Standards) to promote child safety and wellbeing in our organisation.

All organisations involving children have to comply with the Standards under the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005*. The Standards require organisations to have policies and practices to keep children safe, prevent child abuse and respond properly to allegations of abuse. They aim to drive cultural change, so that protecting children from harm is part of everyday thinking and practice.

This policy sets out the department's:

- commitment to child safety and wellbeing
- approach to implementing the Standards.

In this document, we use 'child' to refer to children and young people up to the age of 18 years.

This policy applies to all staff. This includes:

- Employees: officers and officeholders consultants, contractors and labour hire employees, where their agreement with the department requires compliance. Contract managers must draw the policy to the attention of these staff.
- volunteers, interns, cadets, trainees and work experience students engaged by the department.
- This policy applies to all Bernadette Zeeman Practice activities which involve, result in or relate to contact with children. Examples are counselling and group work.

The 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

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 needs respected in policy and practice

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

Bernadette Zeeman is committed to providing an environment where children are safe and feel safe and have a say in decisions that affect their lives.

We are committed to:

- preventing harm to children by identifying risks and taking steps to reduce or remove those risks
- treating allegations of child abuse seriously, and notifying authorities where required by law and department policy
- hiring the right people to work with children, and training and supporting our staff to provide a child safe environment
- ensuring children, families, communities and staff feel safe to speak up about child safety
- aligning responses to children at risk of family violence with Tasmania's legislated family violence framework .
- ensuring the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, and ensuring that decision-making for Aboriginal children is made or informed by Aboriginal people wherever possible
- providing a safe and welcoming environment for all children, including Aboriginal children, children from multicultural and multifaith backgrounds, children with disability and LGBTIQ+ children
- embedding inclusive practice in our systems so we identify and respond to the diverse and intersecting needs of children and families
- listening to and empowering children so they can understand their rights and have a say in decisions about their lives
- listening to and learning from children with lived experience of involvement with the department.

Implementation of the Child Safe Standards

Standard 1: Cultural safety for Aboriginal children

The department respects and values the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children. Our senior leaders take responsibility for ensuring staff acknowledge and appreciate the strengths of Aboriginal culture and its importance to the wellbeing and safety of Aboriginal children. We support increased self-determination for Aboriginal people and work to ensure that Aboriginal children are safe, resilient and able to thrive in culturally rich and strong Aboriginal families and communities.

To achieve this, we:

- draw on our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural awareness to strengthen cultural safety through continuous learning and practice improvement
- work in partnership with Aboriginal communities
- provide detailed guidance to staff in clinician supervision. We expect our staff to encourage and support children to express their culture and enjoy their cultural rights, and to encourage and support participation and inclusion by Aboriginal children and their families.
- Encourage staff to complete training on Aboriginal cultural safety
- provide information and resources about cultural safety when requested
- take a zero-tolerance approach to racism in our organisation and deal with inappropriate staff behaviour

Standard 2: Commitment to child safety and wellbeing

We work to embed child safety and wellbeing in our leadership, culture and governance arrangements. To achieve this, we:

- publicise our commitment to child safety and wellbeing in this policy and socials
- provide information on where to source policy about promoting child safety and wellbeing
- outline expected standards of behaviour of staff in our clinical supervisions and team meetings and take appropriate action to deal with breaches

Standard 3: Taking child participation and empowerment seriously

We recognise the importance of empowering children so they can understand their rights and have a say in decisions about their lives. We also recognise the need to be responsive to their views. To achieve this, we:

- publish child-friendly information about how to raise complaints, feedback or concerns
- publish information about the Standards in accessible formats on our socials
- provide detailed guidance to staff in supervision and staff meetings about how to ensure we consider children's voices when making decisions
- promote the value of client voices
- support staff to seek, listen to and act on the voices of children through a range of initiatives

Standard 4: Involving families and communities

We also recognise the importance of involving families and communities in promoting child safety and wellbeing. We:

- publish information about our child safe policies and practices on our socials
- make it easy for people to provide feedback by giving people multiple options for contacting us, including by phone, email, post or online
- publish information on how to make a complaint in community languages
- provide detailed guidance to staff in team meetings and supervision about informing and involving families and communities in our work.

Standard 5: Respecting equity and diversity

We work to create an environment that recognises children's diverse circumstances and where all children feel safe, welcome and included, including Aboriginal children, children from multicultural and multifaith backgrounds, children with disability and LGBTIQ+ children.

To achieve this, we:

- train our staff on diversity, equity and inclusion.
- promote inclusiveness identity within our practice (pride flags etc)
- give children and families an opportunity to identify specific needs when engaging with our services
- provide access to information and complaints processes that are culturally safe, accessible and easy to understand, for example by publishing information on how to make a complaint in community languages.
- act when we identify racism, discrimination or exclusion in our organisation and services
- deliver services that reflect the diverse and intersecting interests, needs, experiences and cultures of the children and families we work with
- strive to reflect the diversity of the community in our staff and senior leadership
- acknowledge or celebrate important cultural dates in our workplace
- maintain a physical and online environment that celebrates diversity and inclusion
- commit to ensuring our facilities and online activities include children of all abilities.

Standard 6: Ensuring that staff are suitable and supported

We are committed to making sure we hire the right people to work with children, and that we support them to promote child safety in their work. We:

- state our commitment to child safety in position descriptions for roles involving children
- take reasonable steps to employ skilled people with necessary qualifications and experience. Our recruitment policies and guides include advice on asking interview questions that address experience and qualifications for working with children.
- conduct pre-employment screening, including reference checks and police checks
- require staff engaged in child-related work to hold a Working with Children Check (unless exempt)
- train relevant staff on our child safety policies and procedures
- train relevant staff on our responsibilities for assessing and managing family violence risks with children
- support staff through day to day supervision, peer support and learning and wellbeing programs.

Standard 7: Child-focused complaint systems

We want all staff, families and children to feel confident about reporting child abuse, family violence and other child safety concerns. We are committed to making our systems easy to access, responsive and focused on the needs and rights of children.

To achieve this, we:

- publish child-friendly information on our socials for children about how to make a complaint
- give people a choice about how to report their concerns, such as by phone, email, mail or online through our Complaints webpage
- register complaints and concerns in our systems, respond within a reasonable time and keep people informed of progress and any delays
- record all service delivery incidents that result in harm to a client
- require staff to treat allegations of child abuse and harm seriously
- provide information and/or training for staff about how to respond to allegations and concerns
- notify the appropriate authorities of alleged or suspected child abuse in accordance with the law and department policy.
- We manage information arising from complaints, notifications and investigations under the law and our Privacy Policy

Standard 8: Staff knowledge, skills and awareness

We are committed to making sure our staff have knowledge and skills to keep children safe. To achieve this, we:

- Encourage staff who work with children to train on topics such as identifying potential signs of child abuse and trauma-informed practice
- support our staff through ongoing supervision and learning programs

Standard 9: Safe physical and online environments

We promote child safety and wellbeing in department-operated physical and online environments. We:

- reflect our commitment to safe physical and online environments in operational procedures
- work with Tasmanian Police and other organisations on issues such as sexual exploitation and online safety.

Standard 10: Review of child safe policies and practices

We review this policy and at least once every five years.

Standard 11: Documenting policies and procedures

This policy is our general approach to child safety and wellbeing and our expectations of staff.

When developing policies and procedures, we draw on research, best practice and feedback from a range of sources, including unions, regulatory and integrity bodies, other government departments and the community.

Reportable conduct

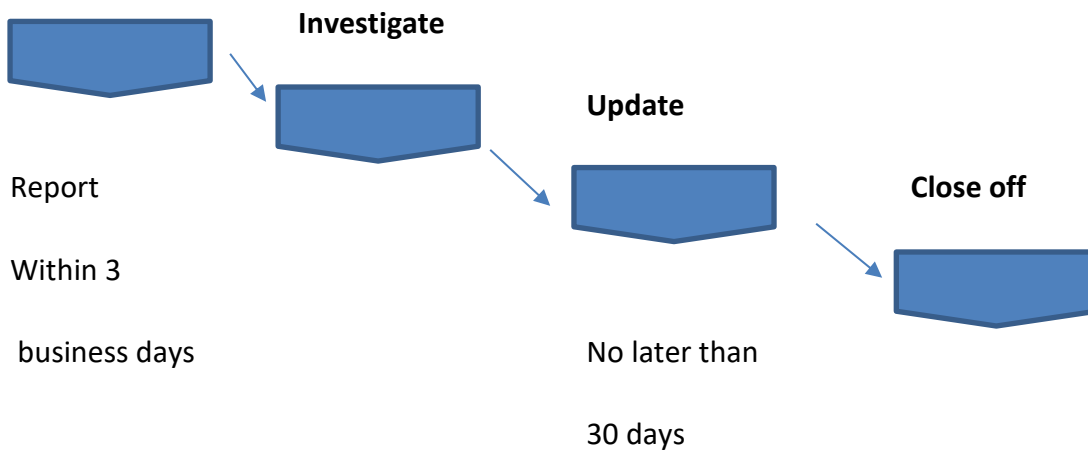
The definition of reportable conduct under the Reportable Conduct Scheme is broader than suspected criminal behaviour alone.

Reportable conduct includes:

- significant emotional or psychological harm
- significant neglect
- physical violence
- a sexual offence
- sexual misconduct
- grooming
- relevant offences such as failing to report child abuse and female genital mutilation.

Reporting Time frame for conduct

Report



The Reportable Conduct Scheme is an obligation for Lonvara leaders requiring Lonvara to notify an independent regulator when concerns that are raised about the conduct related to child abuse involving a worker and conduct investigations must be reported within this time period.

In cases where the leader of the Lonvara conducts the investigation, the following steps must be taken:

- **Within three business days:** Leaders must report reportable conduct to the Independent Regulator in writing and provide basic details such as the worker's name.
- **As soon as possible:** Leaders must start an investigation (or get an independent investigator to do so).
- **Within 30 days:** Leaders must provide detailed information to the Independent Regulator, including:
 - information about the allegation or conviction
 - whether any actions have been taken (for example, placing a limit on a worker's contact with children)
 - any written submissions.
- **At the end of the investigation:** Leaders must provide the following information to the Independent Regulator:
 - findings of the investigation
 - reasons for the findings
 - details of any actions that have been taken as a result

Breach of policy

Staff members who are deemed to have breached branding guidelines outlined in this policy may be subject to disciplinary action.

Review and changes

This policy is to be reviewed every three years. This policy remains in effect unless otherwise determined by the Director.

Related legislation and standards

This policy is informed by the following legislation:

- Privacy Act 1988
- *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005*
- *Family Violence Act 2004*

6.3.2 Standards

- Commission for Children and Young People, [*A Guide for Creating a Child Safe Organisation*](#)