

Child Safety Policy

Purpose

ETC is committed to providing a safe environment in which children's rights, needs and interests are met. We create a culture, adopt strategies, and take action to promote child safety and wellbeing and prevent harm to children and young people. This policy is to inform all Board members and staff about their and ETC's obligations to act ethically towards children, and their roles and responsibilities in ensuring the safety and wellbeing of children. The policy will help guide a consistent approach to child safety and wellbeing throughout our organisation.

Scope

This policy applies to all activities within ETC which involve, result in, or relate to contact with children and young people. It applies to all ETC Board members, managers and staff, volunteers/work experience placements, and contractors.

Policy

ETC is committed to implementing practices in keeping with the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations (see Appendix One), which outline ten Child Safe Standards recommended by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse and endorsed by the Council of Australian Governments.

To achieve the principles, ETC will:

- Provide information about child safety and our commitment to child safety to customers, staff and the community.
- Provide child safety-related L&D and resources for staff.
- Develop and regularly review procedures and workflows related to child safety.
- Monitor, identify and mitigate risks, both physically and on-line, to child safety and wellbeing.
- Screen staff to ensure it engages the most suitable and appropriate people to work with children and ensure child safety is understood by applicants and new staff.
- Ensure all existing and new staff have relevant state-based working with children checks prior to engagement
- Monitor and ensure staff maintain currency of working with children checks
- Seek young people's views and feedback about child safety and encourage their participation in decision making.
- Be responsive to the diverse needs of young people, in the context of their families, communities and cultures, including individualised responses and referrals with regards to any areas of identified possible risk.

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- Provide an organisational environment that is safe, friendly, welcoming, inclusive, and culturally safe for young people.
- Ensure safe on-line environments are provided and promoted to young people.
- Have in place processes for documenting, investigating and analysing complaints, responding to disclosures, and reporting (internal and external to the organisation). This includes mandatory reporting.
- Keep records and share information appropriately, ensuring privacy, including maintaining a secure register of Child Safety reports and issues.
- Maintain an internal Child Safety Reference Group (CSRG), including CEO and HR representation, to oversee Child Safety risks and responses.

Responsibilities

All ETC Board members, managers and staff have a responsibility to uphold attitudes and behaviours that respect the human rights of all children and young people.

Board Members and Executive/Senior Managers are responsible for ensuring ETC has in place the necessary structures, policies, procedures, training, and resources to ensure child safety and wellbeing.

All managers have a responsibility to promote best practice and share learnings about child safety and wellbeing, and to support and supervise staff to ensure child safety and wellbeing is maintained. Managers recruiting new staff are responsible for implementing ETC's child safety practices with regards staff recruitment and induction. Managers are responsible for ensuring appropriate responses (e.g. case management, referrals, and/or mandatory reporting) are implemented if a child may be exposed to risk externally to ETC and that these responses and the decisions underlying them are reported to the CSRG. Managers are also responsible for referring all child safety complaints or incidents occurring internally immediately to the CSRG. Managers should make notifications to the CSRG via the CEO, HR Manager, or General Manager People, Culture and Communications.

Staff (including volunteers and contractors) are responsible for reading, understanding, and complying with all relevant policies and procedures. Any concerns about child safety and wellbeing, risks to children, or signs of child harm or abuse, are to be reported immediately to their manager or another ETC manager and a mandatory report made if required.

The CSRG is responsible for ensuring that appropriate responses are made to child safety complaints or concerns, including that mandatory reporting is implemented when required; and supporting Child Safety related risk identification and policy and procedure development.

Breaches of Policy

Anyone breaching this policy will be subject to disciplinary action as per Performance and Misconduct Policy.

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Definitions

- Child/children means a person or persons under 18 years of age
- Child harm and abuse may include neglect, sexual, physical and emotional abuse, or psychological harm
- Mandatory reporting is the requirement to make a report to Child Safety if there is a reasonable suspicion that a child has suffered, is suffering or is at an unacceptable risk of suffering significant harm caused by physical or sexual abuse. Mandatory Reporting process are supported by Guidelines and Decision Making Tools (links for NSW and Qld provided below).

Related Documents and Policies

Related ETC Documents

- Working with Children Policy
- Anti-Discrimination and EEO Policy and Procedure
- Code of Conduct and Ethics Policy
- Complaints Appeals Handling Policy Procedures
- Human Rights Policy
- Privacy Policy
- Records Management Policy and Procedure
- Internet Email and Computer Use Policy
- Whistleblower Policy and Procedure
- Performance and Misconduct Policy and Procedure
- Child Safety Reference Group Terms of Reference
- Child Safety Reporting Procedure

Related Legislation and Standards

- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.
- Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012.
- Child Protection (Working with Children) Regulation 2013.
- Child Protection Legislation Amendment Act 2015.
- Child Safety clause in Employment Services Deeds.

Mandatory Reporting Guidelines and Decision-Making Tools

- **NSW:** <https://reporter.childstory.nsw.gov.au/s/mrg>
- **QLD:** <https://secure.communities.qld.gov.au/cpguide/engine.aspx>

Information Sharing Guidelines (information sharing between organisations/government etc to support child safety responses):

- **NSW:** [Information sharing for service coordination | Family & Community Services \(nsw.gov.au\)](https://www.nsw.gov.au/information-sharing-for-service-coordination)

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- **QLD:** <https://www.csyw.qld.gov.au/resources/dcsyw/child-family/child-family-reform/information-sharing-guideline.pdf>

Appendix 1 – National Principles for Child Safe Organisations

The National Principles for Child Safe Organisations are:

1. Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture
2. Children and young people are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them, and are taken seriously
3. Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing
4. Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice
5. People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice
6. Processes to respond to complaints and concerns are child focussed
7. Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training
8. Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed
9. Implementation of the national child safe Principles is regularly reviewed and improved
10. Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people.