

1. Purpose

The safety and wellbeing of children is paramount for Barnardos. The *Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy* explains the principles and commitments informing our approach to children's safety and wellbeing and outlines related roles and accountabilities.

2. Policy Statement

For Barnardos, children come first. Children have the right to be safe from abuse and neglect; to be empowered and heard; and to reach their full developmental potential.

We emphasise prevention and early intervention approaches in working with children and their families and carers. We make decisions based on children's best interests.

Our policies, procedures and practices optimise children's safety, wellbeing and healthy development. We prioritise continuous improvement.

3. Scope

The Policy applies to all Barnardos employees (including Board members, staff, volunteers, students and contractors) and carers (including their adult household members) at all sites in NSW and the ACT.

This policy applies to all physical and online environments in Barnardos wherever children are participating in activities, programs and services. This policy should be read in conjunction with the Barnardos Child Safety and Wellbeing procedure, Barnardos Code of Conducts and Barnardos Practice Framework.

4. Definitions

A **child/ren** is defined as a person under the age of 18 years.

Child abuse includes "All forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power".¹

5. Principles & Statement of Commitments

Barnardos:

- Promotes and protects children's rights.
- Values and listens to children's voices and supports children to participate in decisions that affect them.
- Demonstrates inclusive practice when engaging and working with children and their families and carers.
- Recognises and embeds children's safety and wellbeing as the paramount consideration in our policies, procedures and practices.

¹ World Health Organisation (2016), *Child abuse and neglect by parents and other caregivers*.

- Implements strategic and dynamic approaches to preventing, identifying and managing risks to children’s safety and wellbeing.
- Takes all possible actions to recruit and retain employees and carers who are safe and suitable to work with children.
- Trains, supervises and supports employees and carers to understand and meet their responsibilities to uphold children’s rights and keep them safe.
- Empowers, educates and supports children to speak up about their safety concerns.
- Empowers, and supports people to speak up about child safety concerns.
- Ensures that child safety concerns, allegations and incidents are reported, recorded and responded to in accordance with all relevant policy, legislative and regulatory obligations.
- Takes a child focused approach to handling and resolving complaints.
- Respects children’s privacy while sharing information relevant to the safety and wellbeing of children when it is necessary and appropriate to do so.
- Facilitates continuous practice improvement, informed by robust analysis, in the interests of the ongoing safety and wellbeing of children.

6. Responsibilities

Against the principles and commitments outlined above, the following table summarises the related roles and responsibilities within Barnardos.

Who	Commitment	Actions and responsibility
Board	Promote, drive and monitor an organisational culture of child safety and wellbeing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gives paramount consideration to child safety and wellbeing in setting and monitoring strategic directions and risk management. • Ensures that adequate child safety and wellbeing systems, policies and procedures are in place and adhered to. • Monitors actions taken to support continuous organisational improvement in relation to ensuring child safety and wellbeing.
CEO	Ensure Barnardos is a child safe organisation that complies with relevant policy, legislative and regulatory obligations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Champions and leads an organisational culture of child safety and wellbeing. • Supports the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) to implement child safety and wellbeing systems, policies and practices. • Reports to the Board on Barnardos’ performance as a child safe organisation and actions to support continuous improvement.
Executive Management Team (EMT)	Establish and monitor systems, policies and procedures for ensuring children’s safety and wellbeing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishes, monitors, and continuously improves child safety and wellbeing systems, policies and procedures. • Drives compliance with child safe policies and procedures.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensures that child safety concerns, allegations and incidents are appropriately managed and responded to. • Reports to the CEO on Barnardos' performance as a child safe organisation and actions to support continuous improvement.
Management Team	Operationalises systems, policies and procedures for ensuring children's safety and wellbeing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruits, trains and supervises employees, volunteers and carers who are safe and suitable to work with children and understand their responsibilities in relation to child safety and wellbeing. • Ensures employees and carers comply with child safe policies and procedures • Encourages employees and carers to provide feedback about improving Barnardos' child safety and wellbeing systems, policies and procedures. • Reports to the ELT on significant operational issues relating to child safety and wellbeing.
All employees (including Board members, staff, volunteers, students and contractors) and carers (including adult household members)	Understand and comply with policies and procedures for ensuring children's safety and wellbeing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote and uphold the rights, safety and wellbeing of children. • Respect and listen to children. • Comply with child safe policies and procedures. • Report any child safety concerns, allegations or incidents. • Provide feedback and suggestions for strengthening child safe systems, policies and procedures.

7. Monitoring and Review

The policy will be reviewed at least every three years unless an early review is required due to legislative or organisational changes. This policy will be communicated to children and young people, their families and carers. This policy can be accessible on the Barnardos website and will be included as part of the induction and training of new staff.

8. Related Information

Internal

This policy has been written with reference to the Practice Framework and operates in conjunction with the following policies and procedures:

- Child Safety & Wellbeing Procedure
- Policy – Code of Conduct

- Policy – Reportable Conduct
- Policy – Complaints
- Policy – Rights and Responsibilities
- Policy – Incident Management
- Policy – Privacy
- Policy – Strategic Risk Management
- Policy – Operational Risk Management
- Procedure – Child Safety & Wellbeing
- Procedure – NSW Responding to Reportable Conduct Allegations
- Procedure – ACT Responding to Reportable Conduct Allegations
- Procedure – Investigating Reportable Conduct

External

This policy has been written with reference to and operates in conjunction with the following legislation and external standards:

International

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
World Health Organisation

Commonwealth

Family Law Act 1975
Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986
National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013
National Principles for Child Safe Organisations

NSW

Adoption Act 2000
Anti-Discrimination Act 1977
Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998
Crimes Act 1900
Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012
Children’s Guardian Act 2019
NSW Child Safe Standards
NSW Standards for Permanent Care
Charter of Rights for Children & Young People in Out of Home Care

ACT

Adoption Act 1993
Children and Young People Act 2008
Crimes Act 1900
Discrimination Act 1991
Ombudsman Act 1989

Child Safety & Wellbeing Policy NSW & ACT



Working with Vulnerable People (Background Checking) Act 2011
 ACT Care and Protection Organisation Standards
 ACT Out of Home Care Standards
 Charter of Rights for Kids in Care

Version control and change history

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