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## Child Safe Policy

### Policy

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#### 1 Purpose

This policy applies to New Horizons Enterprises (New Horizons) and provides a framework to enable the consistent application of child protection legislation. This policy has been developed to give effect to the [National Principles for Child Safe Organisations](#).

New Horizons promotes and maintains a culture that does not tolerate child abuse, neglect or exploitation. This policy establishes New Horizons expectations of all staff to provide a safe environment for children.

This Policy is operationalised by the New Horizons Child Safe Code of Conduct, which all employees in a child related role are required to read and sign to demonstrate understanding and a commitment to the Code.

#### 2 Scope

This policy applies to all people engaged with and connected to New Horizons inclusive of all board members, executive officers, managers, and all employees, volunteers and contractors within all of New Horizons (referred to as employees). These guidelines must be applied in respect of all children and young persons who may come into contact with a New Horizons program, regardless of their official status as a client. This includes children that may be visitors to a service, or that may live with parents who are engaged in a New Horizons program.

This Policy is distributed to all new and existing employees and volunteers and is freely available and accessible to the public on our website.

This Policy should be read in conjunction with the New Horizons Child Safe Code of Conduct.

#### 3 The National Principles for Child Safe Organisations

The National Principles 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 focused.
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.

#### **4 Policy Statement**

At New Horizons, we are committed to the National Principles. We place paramount importance on promoting and protecting the safety and wellbeing of children, including First Nations children, children with disabilities, children from cultural and language diverse backgrounds and children that are gender diverse. Across our work, we endeavour to proactively create environments where all children can feel, and be, safe and welcomed, and where their participation is valued. We have zero tolerance for any form of child abuse and enact processes to respond to incidents. Where reasonably possible, we involve children when making decisions, especially about matters that directly affect them.

#### **5 Reporting**

All New Horizons staff are responsible for reporting any risks of harm, abuse or allegations of abuse, and any breaches of this policy or the Child Safe Code of Conduct. Reporting occurs via the Incident Management System as well as direct reporting to the relevant supervisor. Staff working with children should also be familiar with the Mandatory Reporting process via the Department of Communities and Justice Child Protection Helpline. This is outlined in the New Horizons Child Protection and Mandatory Reporting Procedure. Whenever there are concerns that a child or young person is in immediate danger the Police should be called on 000. When operationally faced with a child safety incident or child safe concern or complaint, employees should immediately act in the best interests of the child to make them safe before promptly reporting the matter internally. Internal reporting must occur as soon as possible once safety has been established, before the end of the employees shift. In significant extenuating circumstances, the matter may be reported within but no later than 24 hours.

#### **6 Accountability and Responsibility**

Safeguarding children is a shared responsibility within our organisation. It is the responsibility of all employees and volunteers to create and maintain a child safe culture, including immediately reporting any breaches of this policy or the Child Safe Code of Conduct. Complaints under this policy will be investigated quickly and thoroughly with due regard to the privacy and dignity of all involved.

Further responsibilities for each role are outlined below.

##### **All staff are responsible for:**

- Read and follow this Policy, the Child Protection and Mandatory Reporting Procedure and the Child Safe Code of Conduct

##### **All Managers are responsible for:**

- ensuring their relevant employees have read and understood this Policy
- supervising and holding their relevant employees to account for complying with this Policy
- promoting a culture of reporting that recognises and responds to child abuse and harm, including reporting breaches of this Policy and the Child Safe Code of Conduct.

- Ensuring their employees and volunteers have a valid Working with Children's Check
- Ensuring employees and volunteers are equipped with appropriate induction and training on children's rights, child safety and wellbeing
- Ensuring relevant program documentation is reflective of the views of the child

#### **Enterprise Risk & Business Assurance Team are responsible for:**

- Ensuring this Policy, and associated procedures and processes, are reviewed every two years, for effectiveness and utility in creating a child safe environment
- Ensuring incidents and complaints involving children are handled effectively and appropriately
- Reporting to the Clinical Governance and Practice Committee in relation to child safety
- Completing periodic child safety self assessments.

## **7 Resources**

<b>Which supporting documents can I refer to?</b>	New Horizons Child Safe Code of Conduct New Horizons Child Protection and Mandatory Reporting Procedure
<b>What relevant legislation and external documents apply?</b>	<a href="#">What are the Child Safe Standards</a> <a href="#">About the National Principles</a> <a href="#">Children's Guardian Act 2019</a> <a href="#">Children's Guardian Regulation 2022</a> <a href="#">Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998</a> <a href="#">Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Regulation 2022</a> <a href="#">Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012</a> <a href="#">Child Protection (Working with Children) Regulation 2013</a>
<b>Where can I get additional information or resources about this topic?</b>	Enterprise, Risk & Business Assurance Team