



Wesley Mission policy

Child safe

1. Purpose

An overarching, whole of Wesley Mission, policy provides the framework to enhance the consistent application of child protection legislation and child safe principles. This policy is a binding and public commitment to the provision of safety for persons under 18 years of age, who encounter the work of Wesley Mission. Relevant Australian guidelines and standards have been adopted and built upon in the creation of this policy regarding child safety to ensure Wesley Mission's approach is consistent and exceeding of community expectations.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all people engaged with and connected to Wesley Community Services inclusive of all board members, executive officers, managers, and all employees, volunteers, and contractors within all of Wesley Community Services. This policy applies to all children that may come into contact with a Wesley Community service, regardless of their official status as a client. This includes children that may be visitors to a service, or that may live with parents that are engaged in a Wesley Community Services program.

For this policy, a child is defined as anyone under the age of 18 years.

3. Policy statement

All children who are involved in Wesley Community Services activities, events and/or programs have a right to feel and to be safe. Wesley Mission is committed to provide safe environments where children are cared for, respected, nurtured and continually empowered.

As a child safe organisation, Wesley Mission shall continuously strive to:

- Reduce the likelihood of harm to children
- Increase the likelihood of harm being discovered
- Respond appropriately and immediately to disclosures, allegations and/or suspicious harm
- Work together with the community to ensure that children's needs are being prioritised

Our policies and practices will prioritise child safety and promote shared responsibility, not just at a leadership level, but by also outlining all staff responsibilities.

Wesley Community Services is committed to Aboriginal cultural safety, culturally and/or linguistically diverse cultural safety and the safety of children with disability.

Abuse thrives on secrecy. To prevent child abuse across Wesley Community Services, we are committed to developing and maintaining an open and aware culture. We are invested in ensuring safeguards exist to protect children from all forms of abuse. Wesley Community Services affirms that we are subject to upholding legislation and processes as prescribed by law as well as continually adopting industry standards for best practice in all relevant areas.

4. Principles



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To ensure child safe practice, Wesley Mission shall uphold and ensure the following areas are of operational focus:

- Systems to ensure Adaptation, Innovation and Continuous Improvement
 - Transparent and accountable processes are routinely assessed for improvement through action, assessment, and reflection.
 - Care is taken to ensure that a broad application of duty of care is present through all tenders, and throughout interaction with external stakeholders.
 - Privacy is protected and treated with the utmost respect in person, and through giving due diligence to data protection.
 - Recognition that safety, welfare, and wellbeing of children takes priority over privacy for adults who may cause this to be compromised.
 - We will be open to external feedback and advice, ensuring that all feedback and advice is registered, analysed and forms the basis of organisation wide continuous improvement.
- Participation and Empowerment of Children
 - Recognition exists, and is discussed regularly of power imbalances between employees and children who are receiving a service.
 - Children's views are sought, that directly influence policy, practice and service delivery of all programs that they're involved in.
 - Inclusive and empowering language is used in all resources and documentation in programs that involve children.
 - Strategies are created which encourage children to be able to self-advocate about the service that they receive.
- Human Resources Management
 - A clear code of conduct for all employees, volunteers and contractors illustrates clear expectations of behaviour that is required for their roles.
 - Organisational commitment to child safety is felt externally through advertising and branding.
 - Reference checks and record checks for fitness and propriety are conducted with fairness and accountability to ensure as far as possible, that safe persons are engaged for work.
 - Position descriptions are regularly reviewed for any necessary inclusions regarding child safety.
 - Systems exist to ensure staff receive support, supervision and performance management in a fair, but accountable way.
 - Complaints management and disciplinary proceedings are conducted where necessary with integrity; focusing on fairness through comprehensive and balanced investigation.
 - Complaints are dealt with transparently and responses to those making them are issued in a timely manner.
- Awareness and Understanding of Child Abuse and Organisational Responsibilities
 - Risk management of all situations is inclusive of risks that are posed to children, and where risks are identified, priority is given to reducing those risks as much as possible.
 - Appropriate relationships between staff and children are encouraged in service areas where this is appropriate, and these are regulated with transparency and through continual monitoring to ensure a safe, but warm environment exists for children.
 - Training and education is provided to all employees, volunteers, and contractors that are involved in child related work, to provide an awareness of both expected behaviour, and responsibilities for safeguarding children.



- Statutory authorities are reported to with urgency, and significant weight for the immediate safeguard of any child who is, or appears to be enduring harm. This includes, prompt involvement with Police, Community Services, and Health facilities to ensure immediate concerns are addressed prior to risk to agency is to be assessed.
- Cultural Environment is a safe place for children
 - Children are received warmly by staff at all centres, having genuine interest given to them for the duration of their stay.
 - Children are not to be given any medication without the expressed permission from a parent or other suitable authorised person.
 - Children are not to be left alone with a staff member unless assessment reveals that this is appropriate to do so, and safeguards are in place. In all circumstances, this is strategically analysed to ensure that children don't feel victimised by this action.
 - Staff are encouraged to actively advocate for, and promote the safety, welfare, and wellbeing of children in all circumstances.
 - Children who experience a service actively have their feedback sought on a regular basis, and this feedback is given significant weight.
 - Staff approach children without assumptions for the child's experience, and instead utilise curiosity to engage and enquire as to the child's experience.
 - All interactions with children are sensitive to their development stage, their ability level, culture, and their wishes.
 - Children displaying challenging behaviours are to be treated in a respectful and calm manner that ensures the continuity of both their emotional and physical safety at all times. Any service areas that necessarily have to adopt strategies where this is not clearly achieved, have clear and thorough processes to reduce any possible harm and attempt the safest resolution possible.

5. Responsibility and policy owner

The owner of this policy is the Group Executive Manager , Wesley Dalmar Child & Family.

The owner is responsible for implementing the policy and achieving the desired outcomes.

6. Consultation and approval

This policy has been developed in consultation with Child Safety Implementation Group, and the Wesley Mission QRC Review Group.

The policy has been approved by the Group Executive Manager, Wesley Dalmar Child & Family and the Wesley Mission Management Committee.