



Child Safety Guide



Do all the good you can
because every life matters

‘Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as ever you can.’

Our commitment to child safety

Wesley Mission is firmly committed to safeguarding children and young people under 18 years of age from all forms of abuse or harm.

All children and young people who encounter the work of Wesley Mission have a right to feel and to be safe. Our policies and procedures prioritise child safety and promote shared responsibility, not just at the leadership level but also by outlining responsibilities that each of us has as staff.

As a child-safe organisation, we recognise the importance of maintaining an open and aware culture, which encourages the participation and empowerment of children, and creates an environment where all staff are know their child safe responsibilities and are comfortable and equipped in reporting inappropriate behaviour.

By working together, we can do all the good we can to ensure all children and young people are safe.



Rev Stu Cameron
CEO and Superintendent
Wesley Mission





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Children and young people who encounter the work of Wesley Mission have a right to feel and to be safe.

As a child safe organisation, we always aim to:

- prevent harm to children and young people
- ensure that any harm that does occur is reported
- respond appropriately and immediately to disclosures, allegations and / or suspicions of harm
- work together with the community to prioritise the needs of children.

Achieving these outcomes takes more than just putting systems and policies in place. It relies on all of us helping to protect children and young people from harm. Every single person has a role to play in ensuring that we provide a safe environment for children and young people.

Our Child Safety Guide has been developed to help you understand how Wesley Mission upholds child safe practices and the responsibilities that you have to keep children and young people safe.



We maintain a child safe culture

The safety and well being of children and young people is of the utmost importance to Wesley Mission.

In addition to upholding legal requirements, we have a strong culture of child safety and zero tolerance to child abuse.

Abuse thrives on secrecy. To prevent abuse, we maintain an open and aware culture. Research demonstrates organisations that listen to children and have an open culture, which encourages the early detection and reporting of concerns, are better equipped to keep children safe.¹

Characteristics of a child safe culture

Maintaining a culture of child safety at Wesley Mission is everyone's responsibility. It means:

- providing a warm, welcoming environment for all children and young people
- maintaining standards of behaviour guided by our code of conduct and values
- actively supporting the safety and well being of all children and young people, including those from diverse cultural backgrounds, and those living with disability
- involving children, young people, families and carers in decisions, and encouraging them to share ideas or concerns
- reporting your concerns if you witness or suspect inappropriate behaviour.

How our leaders can strengthen our child safe culture

Effective leadership is vital to our child safe culture. If you are a manager or supervisor, you have an important role in strengthening the safety of our services for children and young people by:

- encouraging attitudes and behaviours that value children and young people
- fostering a culture of openness where everyone feels confident sharing concerns
- preventing, identifying and reducing risks
- promptly addressing questionable or unacceptable behaviour
- considering how child-safety can be upheld before starting new programs
- routinely reviewing policy and procedures to continually improve outcomes for children and young people.

We treat kids with respect

We build respectful relationships with children and young people.

Children and young people who are treated with respect are more likely to develop a positive sense of identity, self worth and confidence.

By showing respect towards children and young people, we teach them that they can be in control of their environment, and influence what is happening around them, which reduces the risk of abuse.

How we treat children and young people with respect

Treating children and young people with respect means:

- supporting their right to be safe and cared for
- listening to them and giving them a chance to be heard
- acknowledging and valuing their beliefs and perspectives
- encouraging them to participate and supporting them to make their own choices.

How you can help

If you work with children and young people, you can help them feel respected by:

- building their self esteem
- acknowledging good behaviour
- being fair and consistent when applying rules
- handling conflict calmly
- teaching by example
- encouraging children to change inappropriate behaviour themselves
- showing care
- demonstrating your willingness to learn about, and be inclusive of, different cultural needs.

¹Principles for child-safe organisations released for consultation,' The NSW Office of the Children's Guardian, 11 April 2017



We encourage kids to participate in decisions which affect them

The best interests of children and young people are at the heart of our decision making.

We believe children and young people should be able to have a say about decisions that affect them.

Before important decisions are made about child safety, we regularly ask children and young people for their views. Their views are taken seriously, and they influence what we do.

Benefits of involving children and young people in decisions

Involving children and young people in decisions:

- allows them to feel heard
- shows them that we value their opinions
- helps them to understand and speak up about their rights
- helps us to understand what makes them feel safe and unsafe
- creates an environment where they feel more confident to share concerns about their safety.

How you can involve children and young people in decisions

You can help involve children and young people in decision making at Wesley Mission by:

- educating them about their rights
- incorporating their preferences into the decision making process
- letting them know how and when decisions that affect them will be made
- considering their age, developmental stage, culture and their wishes
- providing vital information in a format that they can easily understand
- offering additional support to children or young people who have a disability, or have other barriers to communication
- helping those from different cultures, or who speak different languages, to get involved
- letting the child or young person decide how involved they want to be
- acting on their feedback
- showing them how their input has made a difference.

We encourage kids to speak up about our service

Wesley Mission encourages all of our clients to speak up about the service they receive. This helps us to understand what we do well and where we can improve.

It is important that children and young people feel comfortable telling us about any concerns in confidence, knowing that the matter will be dealt with fairly and quickly.

How we support children and young people to speak up

If a child or young person wishes to comment about our service, they can:

- speak directly to a staff member,
- talk to us by phone, or
- ask another person to speak to us on their behalf.

We will:

- listen to them and respect their confidentiality
- consider different viewpoints and perspectives
- update them on progress if a complaint is made
- deal with any complaints quickly
- ensure no one who makes a complaint is treated unfairly because they spoke up.

How you can help children and young people to speak up

You can help children and young people feel confident to speak up about the services they receive. If a child or young person comes to you with a comment or complaint:

- Listen to their concerns. Let them know you are willing to act.
- Ask how the issue could be fixed or be prevented from happening again.
- Believe any child or young person who makes an allegation related to harm or abuse.
- Provide reassurance and help them to report their concerns.



We keep kids safe

Wesley Mission is focused on protecting children and young people from behaviours that could harm them. This includes physical abuse, emotional maltreatment, exposure to domestic violence, grooming and sexual abuse, and neglect.

We expect our staff and volunteers to always act in the best interests of children and young people and do everything possible to ensure their safety, both in the workplace and outside of the workplace.

As a staff member or a volunteer, it is important that you take responsibility for your own behaviour, and that you take immediate action if you see someone else behaving inappropriately towards a child or young person.

Do	Don't
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Maintain clear boundaries between social and professional relationships.• Listen to children and young people, believe what they say, and respect their wishes.• Adopt positive approaches to behaviour management. Follow the behaviour management strategy if there is one.• Respect the privacy of children, young people and their families.• Use an approved child restraint when transporting children.• Take reasonable steps to protect children and young people from harm.• Respond professionally and with care to address any instance of harm or abuse.• Immediately document and report any instance of abuse, or any situation which suggests a child or young person may be at risk.• Be aware of and follow your legal responsibilities if you are a Mandatory Reporter.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Give out your personal details to clients or their families without your supervisor's permission.• Contact or connect with clients via your personal social media accounts.• Be alone with a child or young person unless you can be seen by others.• Intervene physically unless a child or young person is at immediate risk of harm, such as crossing a road without looking. Never smack a child or young person.• Give gifts to clients unless your supervisor has given permission. Gifts are to be logged and given on behalf of Wesley Mission.• Give medication to a child or young person without the permission of a parent or other authorised person.• Use your personal phone or camera to take photos or videos of clients.• Ignore any concerns, suspicions or people who tell you about child abuse.

Where complaints are made against staff or volunteers, Wesley Mission investigates and reports the matter promptly to relevant authorities, in accordance with the law and Wesley Mission policy.

We reduce and manage risk

Reducing risk is important to help keep children and young people safe.

By identifying risks and developing interventions, we can reduce the probability of harm occurring.

Risk management is an ongoing process. We must always be looking out for new and different risks to keep children and young people safe from harm.

How we reduce and manage risk

Wesley Mission uses consistent methods to assess and manage risk at all levels of the organisation. We make sure our environment is as safe as possible for children and young people by:

- communicating expected behaviour and the responsibilities of staff to keep children safe
- involving staff at all levels in risk assessments and harm prevention strategies
- creating environments that make it difficult for abuse to occur, for example, designing meeting spaces where staff and children can be easily seen
- working with parents, carers, children and young people to develop safety plans
- using thorough recruitment and screening processes to employ only the most capable and suitable staff
- providing regular and planned staff supervision, including opportunities for discussion and skill development
- providing staff and volunteers with on going training and support.

How you can help us to reduce and manage risk

You have an important role in reducing risk of harm to children and young people in your program or service. This includes children and young people who are clients, as well as visitors. You can help by:

- maintaining appropriate working relationships with children and young people
- speaking with children, young people and their families about safety
- participating in the development of plans and strategies to reduce risks
- recognising risks in your work environment and reporting any concerns to your manager or supervisor.

We keep information about kids and their families safe

To deliver our services, Wesley Mission collects and manages personal information related to children, young people and their families.

We respect each person's right to privacy and make sure it is maintained according to the law.

Our privacy policy, information security policy and workplace procedures outline how staff must collect and manage personal information.

How can you help?

Whether you work directly with children and young people, or handle personal information about them, you have a responsibility to maintain their privacy and the privacy of their families. This involves:

- collecting only personal information that is required
- only using personal information for the intended purpose, or a purpose that would be reasonably expected
- taking reasonable steps to protect records against loss, unauthorised access, use, modification or disclosure
- understanding that in certain circumstances the law, under Chapter 16A of the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998, allows organisations to exchange information to support the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children and young people.

We support you to help keep kids safe

As a staff member or volunteer with Wesley Mission, you have an important role in helping to keep children and young people safe.

We are committed to helping you fulfil this role by providing training, support and resources to assist you.

Ongoing training and professional development

Wesley Mission offers a range of training opportunities related to child safety. Depending on your role, this may include on-the-job training, internal workshops, e-learning or external training opportunities. If you feel you need further training, please speak to your manager or supervisor.

Support and guidance

If you have a concern or need help managing difficult situations related to child safety, your manager or supervisor will support you.

If you need additional help, contact Wesley Mission's child protection team, childprotection@wesleymission.org.au

More information

For child safety resources and more information go to our child safety page on the intranet.

intranet.wesleymission.org.au/about-us/child-safety/

Glossary

Child

Age 0–15 years.

Young person

Age 16–17 years.

Physical abuse

Using physical force that could cause harm to a child or a young person, including but not limited to; hitting, shaking, kicking or pushing, whether for disciplinary or other reasons.

Emotional maltreatment

Repeated rejection or threatening behaviours towards a child or young person, such as constant criticism, yelling, ridicule, or denial of any opportunities to engage in social activities. This can also involve restricting a child or young person's movement within a particular environment or subjecting a child to harsher or more humiliating punishment than other children.

Harm

Any negative effect of a significant nature on a child or young person's physical, psychological or emotional well-being. Harm can be caused by:

- physical, psychological or emotional abuse or neglect
- sexual abuse or exploitation
- a single act, omission or circumstance
- a series of combination of acts omissions or circumstances.

Mandatory Reporter

A mandatory reporter in NSW is an individual required by, under Section 27 of the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998, to report to the Child Protection Helpline when he/she has reasonable grounds to suspect that a child or young person, or a class of children/young people, is at risk of significant harm from abuse or neglect, and those grounds arise during the course of or from the person's work.

Neglect

Persistent failure to provide a child or young person with what they need for their physical and emotional wellbeing, including food, clothing, shelter, education, medical attention or adequate supervision.

Sexual abuse

Includes (but is not limited to) unwarranted or inappropriate touching, inappropriate conversations, gestures or jokes of a sexual nature, showing sexually suggestive images or media, sexual exhibitionism, sending personal correspondence related to sexual feelings, or deliberately exposing a child or young person to the sexual behaviour of others.

Grooming Behaviour

Behaviours which involve befriending, influencing or manipulating children or their carers with the intention of committing sexual abuse.

Exposure to domestic and family violence

Violent or threatening behaviour directed at a family member, which causes the family member to fear for their personal wellbeing or safety.

Legal Framework

Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 (NSW)

Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012 (NSW)

Children's Guardian Act 2019 (NSW)

Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 (NSW)

Crimes Act 1900 (NSW)

National Principles for Child Safe Organisations

NSW Office of the Children's Guardian Child Safe Standards

NSW Child Safe Standards and Permanent Care 2015

National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013 (Cth) and relevant NDIS Rules

Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)



Get involved

To volunteer, donate or leave a gift in your Will
visit wesleymission.org.au

Wesley Mission
220 Pitt Street Sydney NSW 2000
PO Box A5555 Sydney South NSW 1235
(02) 9263 5555
communications@wesleymission.org.au
wesleymission.org.au

CEO and Superintendent: Rev Stu Cameron
ABN 42 164 655 145 Wesley Mission is a part of the Uniting Church in Australia.

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we work. We pay our respects to their Elders
and the Elders from other communities past, present and future generations.

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