

# Child Safe Policy

## Quality and Impact



<p><b>Introduction</b></p>	<p>The policy outlines Learning Links commitment to embedding a culture of safety for children and young people throughout our organisation. We aim to meet and maintain the <i>National Principles for Child Safe Organisations</i> and the <i>NSW Child Safe Standards</i> by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing a safe environment</li> <li>• Empowering children and young people</li> <li>• Educating staff and the community about child protection responsibilities</li> <li>• Responding appropriately to child safety concerns</li> </ul> <p>The principles and standards are complementary in addressing the necessary elements for child safe practices.</p>
<p><b>Eligibility</b></p>	<p>The policy applies to all Learning Links staff including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Volunteers, students, and trainees</li> <li>• Contractors</li> <li>• Consultants</li> </ul> <p>It particularly applies to staff interacting with and/or working directly with children, to management staff responsible for those staff, and to staff in recruitment of those workers. It applies to all activities that involve, result in or relate to contact with children and young people.</p> <p>The policy impacts on all those aged under 17 years.</p>
<p><b>Policy</b></p>	<p>As a Child Safe organisation, Learning Links is committed to the safety and wellbeing of children and expects that all children and young people who participate in its programs will have a safe and happy experience.</p> <p>All staff are required to assume duty of care for the children and young people we support at centre-based locations and in community settings. Your duty of care is your legal responsibility to take all reasonable action to protect children and young people from risks of harm that can be reasonably predicted.</p> <p>Duty of care requires you to directly supervise children between the time they are collected from the parent/ carer until the time responsibility for supervision is returned to the parent/carer on completion of the session.</p> <p>Duty of care in the delivery of online services requires you to directly interact with the child for the duration of the session in accord with the Child Safe Service Delivery Procedure.</p> <p>Learning Links is committed to the <i>NSW Child Safe Standards for Child Safe Organisations</i>. These standards are based on the National Principles developed in response to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Child safety and well-being is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture.</li> <li>2. Children and young people are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.</li> <li>3. Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and well-being.</li> <li>4. Equity is upheld, and diverse needs respected in policy and practice.</li> <li>5. People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.</li> <li>6. Processes to respond to complaints and concerns are child focused.</li> <li>7. Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training.</li> <li>8. Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.</li> <li>9. Implementation of the National Child Safe Principles is regularly reviewed and improved.</li> <li>10. Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people.</li> </ol>

	<p>This policy is a statement of our commitment to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensuring adherence to the NSW Child Safe Standards</li> <li>• Ensuring compliance with NSW worker screening checks (WWCC)</li> <li>• Ensuring adherence with the NSW Reportable Conduct Scheme</li> <li>• Ensuring adherence with the NDIS Reportable Incident Policy and Procedure</li> </ul> <p>As a Child Safe organisation, Learning Links is committed to meeting the following requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and implement Child Safe Policies</li> <li>• Reflect Child Safe practices and values in the Code of Conduct</li> <li>• Ensure effective staff recruitment and training</li> <li>• Understand privacy considerations</li> <li>• Have a plan for managing risk</li> <li>• Encourage children and young people to participate</li> <li>• Effectively deal with concerns or complaints about behaviours towards a child or young person.</li> </ul> <p>Staff in child-facing roles are required to undertake Child Protection Training and understand their legislated responsibilities to ensure the wellbeing of children accessing Learning Links programs and support at its service centres, online and in external locations.</p>
<p><b>Children's Participation</b></p>	<p>Our organisation supports the active participation of children and young people in the programs, activities, and services we conduct.</p> <p>We create an environment that supports children's wellbeing and development and facilitates their meaningful participation by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promoting children's safety and wellbeing in both physical and online environments</li> <li>• Being alert to children at possible risk of harm and following the procedures for either mandatory reporting or reportable conduct.</li> <li>• Responding to disclosures made by children or young people and following the procedures for either mandatory reporting or reportable conduct.</li> <li>• Involving children in decision making, especially about matters that will directly affect them. We listen to children, respect their opinions, and take them seriously.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Recruitment</b></p>	<p>Our organisation maintains a rigorous and consistent recruitment, screening, and selection process.</p> <p>All roles within the organisation are assessed to determine the inherent risks and the associated worker screening requirements. This includes relevant interview questioning, confirming Working with Children Check status, NDIS Worker Screening Checks, and thorough reference checking of all preferred applicants for roles that engage or work with children and young people.</p> <p>All Employees, Volunteers, Board Members and Consultants are required to hold a valid, cleared and verified NSW Working with Children Check (WWCC) prior to commencing employment or volunteering. It is the Employee's, Volunteer's, Board Members and Consultants responsibility to obtain a NSW Working with Children Check (WWCC) and to renew prior to expiry. The cost of a WWCC is tax deductible.</p> <p>The induction of new staff includes a focus on child protection and child safety and wellbeing.</p>
<p><b>Training, Support and Supervision of Workers</b></p>	<p>We adhere to all legislation related to managing complaints, reporting concerns for a child's safety and well-being, and reporting allegations of staff misconduct.</p> <p>Mandatory reporters use the ChildStory Reporter website to determine risk of significant harm and to report when advised. Staff follow the Child Safe Mandatory Reporting Policy.</p>

	<p>All staff report to their supervisor any concerns related to reportable conduct of staff or contractors. Staff follow the steps outlined in one or more of the following procedures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mandatory Reporting Procedure</li> <li>• Reportable Conduct Procedure</li> <li>• NDIS Reportable Incident Procedure</li> </ul> <p>We have a Feedback and Complaints Policy and Procedure and two nominated Child Safety Officers to manage complaints, including those made against staff working with children. We want staff and clients to be confident that we will deal with complaints honestly, fairly, and transparently.</p> <p>All complaints or concerns about a child’s wellbeing must be reported, documented and responded to.</p> <p>We respect the privacy rights of children, their parents and our staff.</p> <p>We have safeguards regarding the collection, use and disclosure of personal information and only advise those people required to be aware of a child protection matter.</p>
<b>Communication</b>	<p>This policy is placed on Learning Links website and promoted through a communications plan.</p> <p>This policy will be available in various forms, where possible, to cater for diverse language backgrounds or special needs.</p> <p>We are committed to keeping staff, children and the community updated regarding child protection issues and responsibilities.</p> <p>Child Safe information is shared with staff in several ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Professional Learning webinars and resources</li> <li>• Team Meetings</li> <li>• Staff Briefings</li> <li>• Child Safe Course modules on the KAJABI platform</li> <li>• Induction information and sessions for all new staff, volunteers and students on placement</li> <li>• Emails</li> <li>• Scheduled information sessions</li> </ul>
<b>Related Documents</b>	<p>Related documents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child Safe Mandatory Reporting Policy</li> <li>• Child Safe Mandatory Reporting Procedure</li> <li>• Child Safe Reportable Conduct Policy</li> <li>• Child Safe Reportable Conduct Procedure</li> <li>• Child Safe Service Delivery Policy</li> <li>• Child Safe Service Delivery Procedure</li> <li>• Child Safe Sexual Abuse Policy</li> <li>• NDIS Reportable Incident Procedure</li> <li>• Learning Links Child Safe Organisation Role-based Training Requirement Matrix for Staff and Volunteers</li> </ul>
<b>Review</b>	<p>This policy and guidelines will be reviewed every two years and will incorporate current information, legislation and feedback as required.</p> <p>This policy is owned by: Service Quality, Risk and Compliance</p> <p>Policy updated on: 25 November 2022  Policy updated by: GM, Service Quality, Risk and Compliance  Version number: 2.0  This version approved by: CEO  This document can be viewed on: Learning Links Intranet, Preschool Website, Martian Logic, Kajabi</p> <p>Policy due for review: 25 November 2024</p>