

## CHILD SAFE POLICY & PROCEDURE

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Document Owner	Company Secretary/Legal Counsel	Approval by	CEO

### 1. Purpose

This Policy covers all Spectrum employees, contractors, volunteers, students and partner organisations and includes any premises where Spectrum people conduct Spectrum business, including premises where Spectrum people attend functions, conferences and training sessions as representatives of the organisation. It also includes any premises where core work is undertaken, for example in clients' homes or community venues.

The workplace extends beyond the physical boundaries of Spectrum, and set work times, and includes interaction, in person and online between Spectrum, employees, volunteers, interactions with other organisations and members of the public.

### 2. Scope

Our organisation is committed to preventing child abuse and identifying risks early, and removing and reducing these risks. As a child safe organisation, Spectrum recognises its obligation to keep children safe from harm and abuse. We want children to be safe, happy and empowered.

We are committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, the cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for children with a disability.

We have zero tolerance of child abuse, and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated very seriously and consistently with our policies and procedures. Child abuse as defined in the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act (2005), is any act committed against a child involving; physical violence, sexual offences, serious emotional or psychological harm and the serious neglect of a child.

Our organisation has robust human resources and practices for all staff and volunteers. Our organisation is committed to regularly training and educating our staff and volunteers on child abuse risks.

We have specific policies, procedures and training in place that support our leadership team, staff and volunteers to achieve these commitments.

### 3. Policy Statement (inclusive of frameworks and practice principles)

Spectrum is committed to child safety, The Child Safe Standards guide the way in which Spectrum respects and protects children and is embedded through our Child Safe Policy and Child Safe Procedures, Statement of Commitment to Child Safety, Child Safe Code of Conduct and our organisational Code of Conduct.

Spectrum has legal and moral obligations to contact authorities if a child's safety is comprised, which we follow rigorously. Spectrum is subject to the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic), Child Youth Families Act (Vic), Charter of Human Right and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic), as well as the Child Safe Standards 2015 (Vic) and National Principles for Child Safe Organisations. Detailed reporting obligations are contained in the associated Child Safe Reportable Conduct Procedure.

The focus of this policy and the child safe standards and principles is to drive cultural change so that protecting children from abuse is embedded in everyday thinking and practice and

- promote the safety of children
- prevent child abuse
- ensure effective processes are in place to respond to and report allegations of abuse
- support and respect all children, as well as our staff and volunteers

The national principles for child safe organisations are as follows:

**Principle 1: Spectrum will aim to establish a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children and young people are respected and valued.**

Spectrum has a commitment to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children and will take to create an inclusive and welcoming physical and online environment for Aboriginal children and their families. Spectrum will support, guide or train staff and volunteers and leaders to understand, respect and value Aboriginal culture and to understand the importance of this to the safety and wellbeing of Aboriginal children. Spectrum will support and facilitate participation and inclusion within the organisation by Aboriginal children and their families. Spectrum will promote the participation and inclusion of Aboriginal children and their families.

**Principle 2: "Child Safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture"**

This principle provides guidance on the role of organisational leadership and governance in promoting inclusive and welcoming environments for children and young people, a culture of accountability and the ways in which a child safe culture is developed and maintained. Adoption of this principle shows that the organisation has a commitment to child safety and wellbeing through all levels of the organisation. Governance arrangements are transparent and include a child safety and wellbeing policy, practice guidance, a Code of Conduct and a risk management

framework. Governance arrangements vary depending on the type, nature and size of an organisation. Organisational leadership provides an authorising environment for the sharing of information about risks to children and young people.

To meet this principle Spectrum will:

- Maintain a public commitment to child safety
- Champion and model a child safe culture at all levels of the organisation
- Child safety and wellbeing Policy and Procedures in place and accessible
- Code of conduct that provides guidelines on expected behavioural standards and responsibilities for all staff and volunteers
- Risk management strategies focus on preventing, identifying and mitigating risks to children and young people
- All staff volunteers contractors students and partner organisations understand their obligations on information sharing and record keeping

### Principle 3: “Children and young people are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously”

Principle 3 focuses on organisational culture that supports children and young people understand what child safety and wellbeing means and are comfortable participating in decisions and communicating their views and concerns.

We will value and respect children and young people’s identity and culture, be comfortable and skilled in engaging with them , understand their developmental needs and build on children and young people’s strengths and capacities .

To meet this principle Spectrum will:

- Ensure that children and young people in our programs are informed about all their rights, including safety, information and participation
- Implement strategies that recognise and encourage the importance of friendship from peers to assist children and young people to feel safe and less isolated.

Ensure employees and volunteers are appropriately trained and able to identify signs of harm and facilitate child –friendly ways for children and young people to express their views participate in decision making and raise their concerns

### Principle 4: “Families and communities are informed, and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing”

Principle 4 focuses on range of ways an organisation can involve families and the community in its approach to child safety and wellbeing, relevant policies and practices and the provision of

accessible information to assist parents and carers about safeguarding children and young people and encourage their feedback and input.

To meet this principle Spectrum will:

- Encourage and include families to participate in decisions affecting their child
- Openly communicate and engage families and communities about our child safe approach and ensure relevant information is accessible and available
- Seek feedback from families and communities on issues of child safety and wellbeing and incorporate this into our policies and practices

#### Principle 5: “Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy & practice”

Principle 5 focuses on recognition of children and young people’s diverse circumstances and enables organisations to work in a more child centred way that empowers children and young people to participate more effectively. This builds an organisational culture that acknowledges strengths and individual characteristics of children and embraces all children regardless of their abilities, sex gender or social, economic or cultural background.

Cultural identity and safety is fundamental to a child’s overall wellbeing. We will at all times respect the wide variety of family structures, cultural differences and variations in child rearing practices due to a family’s personal, cultural or religious beliefs. At the same time we recognise that these differences should not reduce a child’s right to be safe or the organisation’s responsibility to protect children and young people from harm.

To meet this principle Spectrum will:

- ensure employees and volunteers respect, support and encourage diversity of all types, including but not limited to culture, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or intersex status and demonstrate a zero tolerance towards discrimination and ensure children, young people and their families feel comfortable with the services we deliver
- promote understanding and acceptance of diversity and policies for identifying risks and responding to concerns and ensure all client related documents and information are produced in Easy English versions and provided in multiple languages and have positive images of a range of cultures, in term of decoration and artwork in our physical and media environment
- create an environment that is respectful of Aboriginal culture by incorporating symbols and images to create a sense of identity and a culturally safe environment

#### Principle 6: “People working with children and young people and suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.”

Principle 6 focuses on recruitment and employee development policies including appropriate screening, induction training, understanding of child safety responsibilities and cultural safety concepts and appropriate supervision of employees & volunteers. Reporting

obligations and training in record keeping and information sharing are in place for employees & volunteers with relevant practice tools to better safeguard children and young people.

To meet this principle Spectrum will:

- have recruitment policies and practices including advertising, reference checks and position descriptions that emphasise child safety and wellbeing
- ensure all relevant employees volunteers contractors, students and partner organisations have a working with children check and/or equivalent background checks
- ensure our induction programs include awareness of our responsibilities to children and young people including record keeping, information sharing and reporting obligations
- Staff support, supervision and performance management processes involve child safety elements

#### Principle 7: “Processes to respond to complaints and concerns are child focused”

Principle 7 focuses on human resource management policies and practice and effective and accessible complaints management processes. Complaints management processes will be linked to the Child Safe Code of Conduct and provide details about where breaches of the Code have occurred. Have training strategies in place to assist employees and volunteers to recognise and respond to neglect, grooming and other forms of harm and to provide support to children and young people and meet our legal requirements.

To meet this principle Spectrum will:

- have an accessible complaint handling policy & procedure
- have reporting requirements under the reportable conduct scheme clearly articulated in our incident management Policy & Procedure
- have clearly articulated process and timelines for investigating and responding to complaints
- have reporting and privacy obligations clearly articulated through both incident management and privacy Policy & /or Procedure

#### Principle 8 ; “Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education training”

Principle 8 emphasises the importance of information, ongoing education and training for staff and volunteers. Staff and volunteers build their knowledge and skills through professional seminars and memberships, supervised peer discussions, team training and access to research and publications. Maintain contemporary understanding of child development, safety and wellbeing and be able to identify indicators of child harm, respond in a culturally appropriate and effective way to children young people and their families.

To meet this principle Spectrum will:

- Induct all new employees and volunteers into Child Safe policies and practices
- Ensure all relevant employees attend Child Safe training on a bi annual basis

- Ensure employees working with children will participate in regular supervision activities
- Make Child Safe professional development opportunities available to appropriate employees

**Principle 9 ; “Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed”**

Principle 9 highlights that reducing the risk of harm in physical and online environments is an important preventative mechanism. Risk management strategies clarify potential risks where adult to child or child to child interactions occur, or where the physical environment is unsafe.

To meet this principle Spectrum will:

- Ensure our risk management strategy addresses physical and online risks, including risks arising from child to child and adult to child interactions and the state and nature of physical spaces
- Consider ways in which the physical environment might promote cultural safety
- Ensure staff and volunteers access and use online environments in line with the organisation’s relevant policies and/or communication protocols

**Principle 10 ; “Implementation of the national child safe principles is regularly reviewed and improved.”**

Principle 10 emphasises that child safe organisations seek to continuously improve their delivery of child safe services and their operations. They also conduct reviews to ensure that organisational policies and procedures, including record keeping practices, are being implemented by staff and volunteers. The participation and involvement of staff, volunteers, children and young people, families and community mentors in these reviews will strengthen the organisation’s child safeguarding capacities. This includes the importance of reporting on the finding of reviews, and sharing good practice and learnings on a regular basis. Regular reviews ensure that organisations address new challenges or concerns that arise.

To meet this principle Spectrum will:

- Regularly review, evaluates and improve child safe practices
- Review complaints, concerns and safety incidents to identify causes and systemic failures so as to inform continuous improvement

**Principle 11: “Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people”**

Principle 11 outlines the importance of organisations having a clearly documented child safety and wellbeing policy. This will ensure that all stakeholders, including organisational staff and volunteers, children and young people and their families and carers, are aware of how the organisation is planning to meet its obligations to create an environment that is safe for children. Partner agencies or organisations funded to provide services to children and young people should demonstrate adherence to child safety and wellbeing policies and practices.

Documenting policies and procedures ensures consistent application of child safe practices across the organisation. It also enables organisations to examine, through review processes, adherence to child safety and wellbeing principles and practices.

To meet this principle Spectrum will:

- Have policies and procedures that address all national child safe principles
- Have policies and procedures that are documented and easy to understand
- Use best practice models and stakeholder consultation to inform the development of policies and procedures
- Ensure leaders champion and model compliance with policies and procedures

#### 4. Relevant Legislation & Guidance

- Child Safe Standards & Reportable Conduct Scheme (Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005) (Vic)
- Child Youth Families Act 2005 (Vic)
- The Family Violence Protection Act (Cth) (2008) Family Violence Amendment (Information Sharing) Act 2017
- The Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)
- Disability Services Act (Vic) 2006 – Disability Worker Exclusion Scheme National Disability Insurance Scheme 2013 (Cth)
- Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic)
- Working with Children Act (2005)
- The Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 (Vic)
- UN Conventions on the Rights of the Child
- UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (Vic)
- Commission for Children and Young People <https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/child-safety/being-a-child-safe-organisation/the-child-safe-standards/>
- Child Safety Procedure
- Confidentiality Policy
- Feedback and Complaints Policy
- Spectrum Client Incident Policy
- Spectrum Recruitment and Selection Policy
- Safety Screening Policy
- National Principles for Childsafe Organisations

#### 5. Procedure

This policy is meant to be read in conjunction with Spectrum’s Reportable Conduct Policy and other Child Safe documents

#### Version Control

Document Review			
Review	Date approved	Approved by	Next review due
1	Feb 2021	CEO	June 2022
2	June 2022	CEO	June 2023
3	May 2023	CEO	May 2026
Document/version control			
Date	Version	Change Made	Author
Feb 2021	3		
June 2022	4		Company Secretary/Legal Counsel
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