

KU Children's Services (KU) is a child safe organisation committed to protecting children from harm and abuse. The safety, rights and best interests of children are paramount and inform all aspects of our decision-making. Our longstanding commitment to child safety and wellbeing is demonstrated by our zero tolerance for child abuse, a strong culture of reporting concerns, and respect for children's voices and participation. We embed the Child Safe Standards in everyday practice, comply with child safe legislation, and foster a culture in which children are safe, valued and heard.

INTRODUCTION

This overarching policy gives an overview of the suite of child safe policies, practices and documents which guide child safe practice at KU and affirms our commitment to embedding the Child Safe Standards (CSS) in our day-to-day practice. KU's policies, Code of Conduct and resources clearly articulate KU's child safe expectations and support a strong child safe culture.

KU was an early voluntary adopter of the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations and have used these principles and state-specific child safe standards to weave strong child safe practices and expectations across KU. NSW, Victoria, ACT and Queensland have a legislated requirement for organisations working with children to embed the state's Child Safe Standards. The requirements of child safe schemes sit alongside broader regulatory child safe obligations under the National Quality Framework (NQF).

At KU, children's safety is an individual and shared responsibility. All KU staff have a legal and ethical duty of care to keep children safe and protect them from harm. The safety, rights and best interests of children is the paramount consideration guiding decisions and practices.

OBJECTIVES

1. Support the paramountcy of children's safety, rights and wellbeing in governance, leadership and practice.
2. Ensure an organisation-wide understanding of, and compliance with, legislated child safe requirements and KU's child safe practices.
3. Build the capacity of all staff to embed child safe standards in day-to-day practice.

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DEFINITIONS

Child safe culture: The safety of children guides practice, decision making and service delivery. Active steps are consistently taken to prevent abuse and harm, at every level of the organisation.

Child safe organisation: A child safe organisation is one that:

- ▶ Has a child's rights approach where children are treated with respect. Children know they will be listened to, and their ideas and opinions valued.
- ▶ Creates conditions to reduce the likelihood of children being harmed by having robust child safe practices embedded into day-to-day practice.
- ▶ Has a strong reporting culture. Children, families and employees are confident to raise concerns.
- ▶ Ensures employees take appropriate action when there is a disclosure, allegation or concern of harm to a child.

Child safe scheme: The Child Safe Scheme is a regulatory framework designed to ensure organisations that work with children prioritise their safety and wellbeing. Each state and territory has a legislated requirement for organisations to embed the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, or Child Safe Standards into their everyday practices, culture, and operations.

Child safe standards: A set of state or territory specific legislated principles designed to support organisations working with children to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children. Collectively the standards reduce the risk of child abuse, create a culture of child safety, and promote the rights of children.

Child Safeguarding: The proactive measures an organisation and an individual takes to protect children from abuse, neglect and exploitation. This includes policies, procedures and practices that build a child safe culture where children's safety and wellbeing is prioritised and voices are heard.

Children's rights: These special rights are in addition to human rights. They support children to develop to their full potential and protect them from exploitation and abuse.

National Principles for Child Safe Organisations (National Principles): Ten principles that set out a nationally consistent approach to guide organisations to promote a culture of child safety and develop child safe practices. The principles prioritise children's safety and wellbeing and prevent harm and abuse.

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Paramount consideration: The protection of the safety, rights and best interests of children attending education and care services must be the paramount consideration. The paramount consideration is a legal requirement for all individuals involved in the provision and delivery of early childhood education (ECE) and care in Australia to put the safety, rights and best interests of children first.

IMPLEMENTATION

KU has embedded the ten National Principles across the organisation. Each state has legislated state-specific Child Safe Standards which are very close aligned with the ten National Principles. Victoria however has 11 child safe standards. The additional Victorian child safe standard requires organisations to establish a culturally safe environment for Aboriginal children.

KU is committed to making sure children are safe, valued and heard. We will:

- 1. Uphold standards of excellence in child safety and wellbeing.** Our Board, Executive, and leaders champion a strong child safeguarding culture, embedding child safe values and practices across KU to ensure children are safe, respected, and protected.
- 2. Empower children to know their rights and have a voice.** We recognise children as active participants whose views, experiences, and perspectives are valued, and create meaningful opportunities for them to influence decisions that affect them.
- 3. Work in partnership with families and communities.** We promote children's safety, wellbeing, participation and rights through collaborative relationships with families and communities.
- 4. Provide culturally secure environments for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.** We respect and support children's connection to family, community, culture and Country.
- 5. Promote equity and inclusion for every child.** We proactively promote the safety, inclusion, participation, and belonging of all children, particularly children with a disability, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, children who have experienced trauma, or any child who may face increased vulnerability or risk of exclusion.
- 6. Maintain rigorous child safe recruitment.** We ensure employees, volunteers, students, and agency-employed casual educators are suitable to work with children and are aware of their child safe responsibilities, including reporting obligations.
- 7. Staff have the knowledge, skills, and awareness to keep children safe.** Staff receive regular training in KU's child safeguarding practices, enabling them to identify and manage child safe risks and respond appropriately to child protection concerns.

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- 8. Foster a strong culture of reporting and speaking up.** We take complaints seriously and support children, staff and families to raise concerns and report risks without fear of reprisal. Children's safety and wellbeing is the focus of our process for responding to child safe complaints.
- 9. Create safe physical and online environments.** We actively identify, manage and reduce risks to children in the physical environment and promote the safe and responsible use of digital technologies.
- 10. Commit to continuous improvement.** We regularly review and strengthen our systems and practices to improve outcomes for children.
- 11. Establish clear child safe policies and procedures.** Our policies, procedures, and Code of Conduct set clear expectations for everyone working with children.

Key KU Child Safe Policies and Documents

The *KU Code of Conduct*, policies and processes ensure robust child safe practices and a strong child safe culture. Following are the key child safe policies, documents, trainings and tasks which guide and support child safe practice across KU.

Child Protection Policy

The KU Child Protection Policy guides staff in how to respond to concerns that a child may be at risk of harm in their home or the community. Taking action to protect children when they are at risk of harm in their home or community is a fundamental child safe practice. Staff who work directly with children and families are mandatory reporters and play an important role in protecting children. The policy outlines the KU process for reporting child protection concerns and provides information about identifying risk of harm, reporting thresholds, contact details of child protection agencies and other support agencies and provides guidance about the processes for child safe information exchanges.

Child Safe Incidents, Allegations and Complaints Policy

The *KU Child Safe Incident, Allegation and Complaint Policy* is followed when a child safe incident occurs, or a concern is raised alleging that while at a service or program a child's health, safety or wellbeing was put at risk by the actions or inactions of a staff member. These include but are not limited to:

- ▶ Abuse or harm to children in services or programs
- ▶ Inappropriate behaviour management practices
- ▶ Practices, interactions and relationships with children that do not meet professional standards

Child Safeguarding

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- ▶ A child exhibiting harmful sexual behaviour at a service
- ▶ Inadequate supervision of a child or children
- ▶ Unsatisfactory management of a child's health/medical needs including allergies
- ▶ Ineffective management of a child's illness or injury

KU has a strong reporting culture, and staff are expected to take action if they have any concerns about children's safety at a service. Our 'See Act Tell' poster is prominently displayed throughout our services and programs, reinforcing our reporting culture.

Protected Disclosures Policy

Reporting child safe concerns plays a crucial role in managing risk and ensuring children's safety. The *Protected Disclosures Policy* outlines the safe and confidential process for raising concerns about misconduct, breaches of the National Law, or risks to children, and the *protections* available to the individual. All information received from a person making a protected disclosure will be treated sensitively and confidentially and KU will do their best to protect the staff member from retribution.

Child Safe Code of Conduct

All KU staff, Board members and contractors are required to abide by KU's child safe expectations. The *KU Code of Conduct* sets out the agreed standards of behaviour expected of all staff. The *Child Safe Code of Conduct* outlines acceptable and unacceptable interactions with children and all staff are required to sign an agreement of behaviour they will and will not engage in when working with children. All staff are required to complete the online *Child Safe Code of Conduct* eLearning module and sign the *Code of Conduct and Child Safe Agreement* every 12 months.

Child Safe Environment Policy

The *Child Safe Environment Policy* supports staff to provide settings where children are protected from physical, emotional, and psychological harm, and where their wellbeing, rights, and safety are actively promoted through safe practices, supervision, and responsive care. Everyone has a legal responsibility to implement health and safety policies, procedures, and practices to maintain a safe and healthy environment for children and staff.

Child Safe Recruitment, Induction and Training Policy

KU has a child safe focus when recruiting staff and has made a commitment to only recruit staff who share our commitment to being a child safe organisation. All staff working in KU services have a validated current Working with Children Check (WWCC), Prohibited Person Check and are entered on the Early Childhood Worker Register.

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All new staff complete the eLearning *Child Safe Code of Conduct* module and attend the KU training *Safeguarding at KU for new staff* during their orientation. The training provides information about the KU process for managing allegations of concerning employee interactions with a child including external reporting requirements to the Regulatory Authority, Child Protection, Police and the Reportable Conduct Scheme.

Online Safety Policy

KU's *Online Safety Policy* protects the images of children. Staff are not permitted to have their personal devices on them when they are working with children (except in exceptional circumstances and only if approved by GM ECE). Teachers and educators can only take and store photographs of children on KU devices. Visitors are not permitted to use personal electronic devices to photograph, video or record children when at the service. Family members who attend for purposes other than drop off and pick up are considered visitors and are expected not to use personal devices.

KU Promise to Children

KU employees promise children:

- ▶ We will nurture your confidence and identity and help you feel safe and well
- ▶ We will value who you are and your family background and treat everyone fairly
- ▶ We will encourage you to communicate your feelings
- ▶ We will make sure you are heard
- ▶ We will act on what you tell us to make sure you feel safe and well
- ▶ We will help you understand your rights and what to do to stay safe and well

Statement of KU's Commitment to Children's Safety, Rights, and Wellbeing

KU Children's Services was founded in 1895 based on principles of equity, inclusion and social justice. Children's safety and wellbeing and the rights and best interests of children have always guided our practice. In 2019 KU formalised our commitment to being a child safe organisation and developed the KU Statement of Commitment. The initial statement was based on the National Principles for Child Safe Organisation. The Statement has been regularly reviewed and today includes the additional Victorian Child Safe Standard 1, in which KU commits to welcoming Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families and commits to culturally safe practices and environments.

Provision of Child Safe Environments

Child Safe and Child Protection Risk Management Plans

Each KU service and program has an individual *Child Safe and Child Protection Risk Management Plan* developed in consultation with the KU Child Safeguarding team. The plan is structured around the Child Safe Standards and identifies service-specific child safe practices which keep children safe. The plans ensure services have an ongoing child safe focus and reflect on the importance of the embedded child safe practices.

Child Safe Training

Under the *Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations* there are legislated state-specific child protection requirements, the national child safety training requirement, as well as expectations for organisations to provide child safe training.

KU Child Safe Training

KU provides *Child Safeguarding at KU for new staff* training as part of orientation. The training provides current information about:

- ▶ The paramount consideration for the early childhood staff, services and organisations
- ▶ The KU process for responding to child protection concerns in the home or at the service and how to fulfil mandatory reporting responsibilities
- ▶ The *KU Child Safe Code of Conduct* – appropriate and inappropriate interactions with children
- ▶ Information about Inappropriate Conduct and Inappropriate Discipline
- ▶ Raising concerns about a staff member's interaction with a child and Protected Disclosures
- ▶ The KU process for managing concerns about inappropriate or concerning interactions including external reporting requirements to the Regulatory Authority, Child Protection, Police and the Reportable Conduct Scheme
- ▶ How KU staff, policies and processes embed child safe standards in day-to-day practice
- ▶ The role of the KU Child Safeguarding team

New staff also complete the *Child Safe Induction eLearning* module.

All staff complete the *Child Safe Code of Conduct eLearning* module and sign the *Child Safe Agreement* annually.

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State and Territory Child Protection Training Requirements

In NSW all staff working with children must understand their obligations as mandatory reporters and when and how to make a report to child protection. Nominated Supervisors and persons in day-to-day charge must complete CHCPRT025 - *Identify and report children and young people at risk*, or one of the previously approved child protection courses. The course only needs to be completed once. In Victoria, all staff working directly with children must complete Victoria's child protection training online module EC PROTECT annually. In the ACT staff who work with children must complete the online training module *Keeping children and young people safe training* every two years.

National Child Safety Training

All service staff, staff who regularly visit services and persons with management and oversight responsibility must complete the mandatory *National Child Safety* training courses for their role every two years.

All staff working in KU services and programs and persons with management and oversight responsibility must complete the Foundation Courses 1 and 2. This ensures staff can identify abuse and mistreatment of children and understand their legislated reporting responsibilities as a mandatory reporter.

Teachers, educators and any staff member who may have direct unsupervised contact with children, as well persons with management and oversight responsibility must also complete *National Child Safety* training Course 3 and 4.

Evidence of each staff members current state-specific *Child Protection* training and *National Child Safety* training must be kept by the Director or Nominated Supervisor at the service and in the individual staff members me@ku record.

Children's Participation and Empowerment

KU has a strong child's rights approach. Giving children a voice and encouraging children to speak up helps keep children safe. Teachers and educators create opportunities for children to express their views and concerns and participate in decision making. Refer to *KU Child Safe in Practice Folder, Chapter 3 Rights, Participation and Empowerment*.

Supervision of Children

The key to keeping children safe is supervision. There are a minimum of two staff working with each group of children at our services. No adult is alone with a child. Adults working with children are always in line of sight of each other. Each service and program has a *Supervision Plan* which guides staff placement, ensuring line of sight is maintained between staff working with children. Students and visitors are supervised by KU staff.

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Teaching Children Personal Safety Messages

KU staff use a range of children's books and resources to teach personal safety messages, including the NSW SAFE series, Victorian Kids Roar and the Educate2Empower resources. These age-appropriate resources teach children simple child safe messages such as the Undies Rule. Children are regularly reminded about personal safety messages, and teachers and educators begin teaching the concept of consent from a young age. Children are taught age-appropriate child safe messages. For more information about teaching personal safety messages refer to *KU Child Safe in Practice Folder Fact Sheet 3.8* and *Practice Guide 4 Responding to Children's Sexual Behaviour*.

KU Child Safe Resource Library

The KU Child Safeguarding Resource Library has resources to equip KU staff with information and tools to support KU's child safe approach. Behind each tile is a selection of helpful resources relevant to each of the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations and, in turn, the ACT, NSW, Victorian and Queensland Child Safe Standards.

KU Child Safe in Practice Resource Folder

As part of KU's Child Safe project (2019 -2022) the *Child Safe in Practice at KU* folder was developed. The 'Factsheets' and 'Think abouts' were developed by KU staff with expertise in inclusion, children's rights, and child safety. The *Child Safe in Practice at KU* folder provide KU staff with a set of practical tools to facilitate discussion and guide child safe practice. It encourages staff to reflect on the child safe strengths and challenges at their service, or across the organisation, and provides staff with guidance about incorporating key child safe practices and messages in their everyday practice.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Safeguarding children from harm is a shared responsibility. Everyone at KU has a duty of care to support and protect children and contribute to maintaining safe, inclusive and respectful environments. All staff adhere to the *Code of Conduct*.

KU Board, CEO and Executive

Child safety is embedded in KU's vision, values and strategic plan. The KU Board, CEO, and Executive Team lead an organisation-wide culture that actively prioritises the safety, wellbeing and rights of children. They provide strategic support and guidance for child safe initiatives, ensuring adequate resourcing across the organisation. Collectively they are aware of emerging risks and safeguarding themes from incidents, complaints, and investigations. The CEO is the operational delegate for the Approved Provider as well as the Head of the Relevant Entity and decision maker for Reportable Conduct Investigations.

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KU Child Safeguarding Team

KU has a dedicated Child Safeguarding (CS) team. This experienced team guides and oversees the embedding of child safe practice across the organisation. The CS team provides information to ensure staff understand KU's child safe expectations, have current knowledge of child protection and safeguarding children. The CS team supports staff when responding to children at risk of harm, as well as conducting investigations into child safe incidents and concerns. KU promotes a reporting culture, and we take seriously any child safe concern raised by a child, parent, visitor or staff member. The team works with Directors, Nominated Supervisors and Coordinators to develop service specific *Child Safe and Child Protection Risk Management Plan*.

All KU Staff, Students and Volunteers

KU has a volunteer elected board. Volunteers are not engaged at KU services. All KU employees and volunteers are expected to contribute to creating safe and supportive environments for children. Every staff member has an individual duty of care to understand and follow KU policies and processes and to put children's safety, rights and best interests at the centre of their day-to-day practice.

Staff working with children play a vital role in identifying and responding to concerns about a child's safety and wellbeing in their home, the community or at the service. Staff must take immediate action if they witness an incident or form a reasonable belief that a child has been, or is at risk of being, abused or harmed. This obligation applies even if the incident was not witnessed but a child or someone else has disclosed a concern that abuse or harm may have occurred.

EVALUATION

The policy will be reviewed and updated as required in response to changes in regulatory requirements, emerging risks, or significant incidents, and learnings arising from child safe incidents, allegations and complaints to ensure continuous improvement and maintain the highest standards of child safety.

LEGISLATIVE APPLICATIONS

Commonwealth

- ▶ Education and Care Services National Law
- ▶ Early Childhood Legislation Amendment (Child Safety) Act 2025
- ▶ Education and Care Services National Regulations
- ▶ Education and Care Services National Amendment Regulations 2026

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- ▶ National Quality Standards
- ▶ National Principles for Child Safe Organisations

ACT

- ▶ Children and Young People Act 2008
- ▶ ACT Ombudsman Act 1989
- ▶ Working with Vulnerable People (Background Checking) Act 2011
- ▶ ACT Child Safe Standards

NSW

- ▶ Education and Care Services National Law
- ▶ Children (Education and Care Services National Law Application) Amendment Act 2025
- ▶ Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998
- ▶ Children's Guardian Act 2019
- ▶ Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012
- ▶ NSW Child Safe Standards

Victoria

- ▶ Children, Youth and Families Act 2005
- ▶ Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005
- ▶ Worker Screening Act 2020
- ▶ Commission for Children and Young People Act 2012
- ▶ Victorian Crimes Act 1958
- ▶ Victorian Child Safe Standards

RESOURCES AND REFERENCES

- ▶ Child Safe in Practice at KU Resource Folder
- ▶ [KU Child Safeguarding Resource Library](#)
- ▶ KU Commitment to Child's Safety and Wellbeing Statement
- ▶ KU Promise to Children
- ▶ Child Safe wall poster See/Act/Tell
- ▶ [NSW Office of The Children's Guardian](#)
- ▶ [Victorian Commission for Children and Young People](#)

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RELEVANT POLICIES

- ▶ Child Protection
- ▶ Child Safe Environment
- ▶ Child Safe Incidents, Allegations and Complaints
- ▶ Child Safe Recruitment, Induction and Training
- ▶ KU Code of Conduct (including Child Safe Code of Conduct)
- ▶ KU Guiding Children's Behaviour – Guidelines for Physical Interactions
- ▶ Online Safety Policy
- ▶ Practice Guide 4 - Protocols for Managing Children's Sexual Behaviour
- ▶ Protected Disclosures
- ▶ Supervision Policy

NEXT REVIEW

July 2029