

Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

Policy Relevant to:	Families, Educators, Team Members, children, students, visitors
Last Reviewed:	New
Next Review:	November 2024
NQF:	84, 155, 168, 358
NQS:	2.2, 2.2.1, 2.2.2, 2.2.3, 5.1.1, 7.1
Legislation / Regulation	S162(A) Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 Commission for Children and Young People Act 2016 The Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act 1997 (Tas) Child and Youth Safe Organisations Framework Family Law Act 1975 Child and Youth Safe Organisations Act 2023(Tas). Youth Justice Act 1997 (Tas) Registration to Working with Vulnerable People Act 2013 (TAS)

Rationale

Adventure Patch is committed to the safety, wellbeing and support of all children and young people in all aspects of operation within our services. We are required to comply and adhere to the Child and Youth Safe Standards under the *Child and Youth Safe Organisations Act 2023(Tas)*.

Adventure Patch is mandated to implement the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations to ensure a greater focus on the safety and wellbeing of all children, improve Aboriginal cultural safety and empower children and young people. Adventure Patch is committed to implementing an inclusive and culturally safe environment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

Purpose

Adventure Patch's *Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy* will ensure our services meet all obligations and requirements under *The Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act 1997*. Our *Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy* will work together with our *Code of Conduct*, *Recruitment Policy*, *Child Safe Environment Policy*, *Complaints and Grievances Policy*, and other related policies to develop a child safe culture within Adventure Patch services and community.

This policy will provide direction and guidance for all educators, team members and visitors (including students and volunteers) to comply with the 10 Child and Youth Safe Standards, and the one Universal Principle, to ensure a child safe environment for all children.

The Child and Youth Safe Organisation Framework (Tas) applies to Adventure Patch and its services. It sets out clear expectations for how Adventure Patch prioritises and promotes the safety and wellbeing of children and young people through the introduction of Tasmanian Child and Youth Safe Standards.

The 10 Child Safe Standards and one Universal Principal aim to create a culture where:

- the safety and wellbeing of children and young people is promoted.
- abuse and harm to children and young people is prevented and acted upon.
- benchmarks are created where organisations that engage with children and young people need to meet.
- organisations that engage with children and young people embed strategies in their day-to-day practice to realise these things.

Our Commitment to Child Safety and Wellbeing Statement

Adventure Patch is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people. We understand our responsibilities and statutory duty of care to comply with the Tasmanian Child Safe and Youth Safe Organisations Framework and the Reportable Conduct Scheme and to build our capacity as an organisation to prevent and respond to allegations of child abuse.

Adventure Patch is committed to implementing and abiding by our *Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy* based on the Child and Youth Safe Organisations Act 2023(Tas), which reinforces that Adventure Patch has *zero tolerance* for child abuse and raising awareness about the importance of child safety in our services and the community.

We are dedicated to protecting children from abuse and neglect and promote a child safe environment, maintaining children's wellbeing. We adhere to our *Child Protection Policy*, standing by our mandatory reporting responsibilities to protect children from physical, sexual, emotional, and psychological abuse and neglect.

We work to ensure there is a clear awareness between appropriate and inappropriate behaviour concerning adults and children.

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

We value diversity and do not tolerate any discriminatory practices.

We will ensure employees with a responsibility for child safety are provided with training and ongoing professional development to ensure they are skilled to meet their obligations to identify and respond to the potential risk of or actual, harm, abuse or neglect, including mandatory reporting obligations, and are responsive to their responsibilities in keeping children safe.

We understand our obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and actively work to inform children about their right to be safe and what to do if they feel unsafe. This includes encouraging them to express their views and thoughts on matters that directly affect them.

We listen to and empower children to act on any concerns they or others may raise, which is reflective in our policies and procedures in keeping children safe.

Implementation

From 2024 once an organisation becomes aware of an instance of alleged harm or abuse of children or young people, they must report it to the Independent Regulator. The Independent Regulator complements, rather than replaces or supersedes, existing child safeguarding processes.

Definitions

Child/Children refers to both children and young people under the age of 18 years.

Child Abuse refers to a sexual offence committed against a child, an offence committed against a child such as grooming, physical violence against a child, causing serious emotional or psychological harm to a child, serious neglect of a child *The Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act 1997 (Tas)*.

Complaint: Expression of dissatisfaction made to or about an organisation related to its products, services, staff or the handling of a complaint where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected or legally required. [AS/NZS 10002:2014 Complaint Management Standard]

Information Sharing Obligations refers to the Child Information Sharing Scheme that is a part of the Tasmanian Child and Youth Safe Organisations Framework.

Significant Harm refers to circumstances causing concern for the safety, welfare and wellbeing a child or young person present to a significant extent. This means it is sufficiently serious to warrant a response by a statutory authority irrespective of the family's consent.

What is significant is not minor or trivial and may reasonably be expected to produce a substantial and demonstrably adverse impact on the child's or young person's safety, welfare, or wellbeing. In the case of an unborn child, what is significant is not minor or trivial and may reasonably be expected to produce a substantial and demonstrably adverse impact on the child.

Reasonable grounds refer to the need to have an objective basis for suspecting that a child may be at risk of abuse and neglect based on:

- firsthand observation of the child or family
- what the child, parent, or other person has disclosed
- what can reasonably be inferred based on observation, professional training and/or experience that causes the mandated reporter to believe the child has been abused or is likely to be abused or,
- signs of physical or sexual abuse leading to the belief that the child has been abused.

Failure to disclose refers to the failure of a mandated reporter who has reasonable belief that a child under 16 has had an offence of abuse or neglect committed to them by an adult to make a report to the police.

Failure to protect refers to a person of authority in the organisation who has the power or responsibility, but who negligently fails to reduce or remove the threat of substantial risk of child abuse or neglect.

Risk of Harm refers to when a child is likely to be, is being, or has been, abused or neglected.

Tasmania's Child Safe and Youth Safe Standards

Universal Principal

Organisations must provide an environment that ensures Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children's right to cultural safety is respected.

Through the identification and journey of establishing a culturally safe organisation, Adventure Patch will:

- Show respect and a commitment to reconciliation by developing a reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).
- promote cultural safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.
- reflect on the current level of cultural competence of our educators and team members.
- model and provide guidance to educators and team members to ensure compliance with a zero tolerance of racism within our services.
- build and strengthen our knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories and contributions.
- attend professional development to support educator and staff knowledge and understandings of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and perspectives.
- identify and challenge our own cultural assumptions, beliefs and commitments to cultural competency.
- engage with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait families and communities.
- invite Elders and Traditional Owners to speak to children, educators, team members and families about the histories and cultures of the local area.
- develop an Acknowledgement of Country in collaboration with Elders, community members, children and families which will be displayed and given during special events and incorporated into the program on a regular basis.
- develop awareness and meaningful understanding about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as part of the cultural heritage of all Australians.
- encourage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to access children services.
- show sensitivity and respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages by incorporating verbal and visual languages into the service environment.
- ensure our *Equal Employment and Anti-Discrimination Policy* is adhered to, so all children, families, educators and team members are welcomed and treated equitably and with respect.
- ensure our *Interaction with Children Policy* is adhered to as educators develop positive relationships with children based on respect and fostering children's self-esteem and development.

In Relation to Standard 1: *Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance, and culture.*

In the planning, development and implementation of a *Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy*, Adventure Patch will:

- create and maintain a child safe environment and comply with the Child and Youth Safe Organisations Act 2023(Tas).
- ensure a *Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy* is developed, implemented and reviewed with children, families and educators.
- complete a self-audit to assess our progress in meeting the requirements of the Child Safe Standards
- maintain and review our Code of Conduct and ensure the Code of Conduct is adhered to by all educators, team members and visitors to set behavioural expectations when working with children.
- ensure compliance of the *Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy* and implementation of the one Universal Principle and 10 Child Safe Youth Safe Standards within our services.
- include child safety as a regular agenda item at team meetings.
- adhere to a zero tolerance for child abuse.
- value the input of and communicate regularly with families and carers regarding our *Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy*.
- embed the ten Child and Youth Safety Standards and one Universal Principle into Adventure Patch policies and procedures.
- foster a culture of openness and respect where children and adults feel safe to disclose risk of harm to children.

In Relation to Standard 2: *Children and young people are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.*

With a focus on children's rights to safety and participation, Adventure Patch will:

- listen to and act decisively on any child safety concerns or allegations of abuse that are made.
- recognise, respect and foster children's rights where their voices and views are listened to and valued.
- promote the inclusion of children's voices in all decisions that affect them.
- ensure every child will be equally valued. Their achievements and learning will be celebrated.
- collaborate with children and families to support children's learning.
- ensure information about the child's participation in the program is available for families.
- view children as active participants and decision makers, working with each child's unique qualities and abilities.
- undertake critical reflection practices to reflect upon children's participation within the educational program.
- ensure educators and team members adhere to the *Interaction with Children Policy* and provide a child safe, comfortable and happy environment where children's concerns are always taken seriously and responded to.
- support children's consent by acknowledging and respecting a child's right to refuse or say no.
- never force a child to do something against their requests: This includes rest, eat, participation in group experiences and activities.

- respond respectfully and appropriately to children's attempts as they participate within the educational program.
- empower children to speak up and raise any concerns.
- encourage children to develop confidence in their ability to express themselves.
- ensure children are aware of how to raise concerns or provide feedback.
- respond or report to children about how their feedback has been acted upon.
- discuss with children how their photos and images will be used within the service or outside of the service and where age-appropriate ask children's permission before taking photos or videos.
- ensure all educators, team members and volunteers are committed to identifying possible risk and significant risk of harm to children and young people and adhere to the *Child Protection Policy*.
- ensure the *Behaviour Guidance Policy* is adhered to as educators and team members provide support and direction for children to raise concerns.
- educate children about protective behaviours through educational programs that are at an age-appropriate level and understanding.
- complete a Risk Assessment regarding the implementation of Child Protection Educational Programs.
- provide opportunities for children to contribute to the development of the Adventure Patch *Philosophy* and policies and procedures.

In Relation to Standard 3: *Families, carers and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.*

As we endeavour to inform and involve families and communities in establishing and maintaining a Child Safe approach, Adventure Patch will:

- ensure new families are provided with a copy of the *Enrolment and Parent Handbook* during the enrolment and orientation process to share information regarding service operations and governance of our services.
- ensure all families are welcomed and respected at our services and are encouraged and supported to participate in decision making.
- maintain confidentiality and privacy as per our *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy* when working with children, families and educators in relation to Child Protection matters.
- respond to requests for information from Information Sharing Entities (ISEs) to improve children's wellbeing and safety under the Child Information Sharing Scheme.
- ensure families are informed of our *Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy* upon enrolment through the Family Handbook and Orientation process.
- ensure families are invited and encouraged to participate in the development and review of policies and the *Adventure Patch Philosophy*
- provide regular information about our services and ongoing opportunities for families to contribute to our curriculum.
- inform families about the processes for providing feedback and making complaints.
- encourage families to contribute to the continuous quality improvement progression within our services through their involvement in the self-assessment and QIP reviews.
- invite families to be involved with the self-assessment process and be informed of goals developed that form the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP)

In Relation to Standard 4: *Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice.*

As we aim to recognise and support diversity and work to promote vulnerable children, Adventure Patch will:

- work in partnership with families and other professionals to ensure specific consideration and adaptations allow children with additional needs access and participation and achieve positive learning outcomes.
- ensure all children are supported to participate in the educational program.
- be responsive to each child, irrespective of their additional needs and abilities.
- practice inclusivity and support children with additional needs to enable them to have equitable access to resources and participation of the educational program.
- gather information about children's additional needs, cultural background and supports that may be required through the enrolment and orientation process.
- support educators to implement inclusive strategies and practices in the delivery of quality education and care.
- ensure the educational program and curriculum are inclusive and meet the individual needs of children with additional needs disability or developmental delay.
- create an inclusive program, which is adaptable and supportive of all children.
- ensure all children have the right to be treated equally and with respect.

In Relation to Standard 5: *People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.*

To ensure suitable educators and team members are employed in line with Child and Youth Safe recruitment practices, Adventure Patch will:

- Ensure new employees undertake an induction program which includes team members being made aware of their roles and responsibilities in relation to ensuring children are safe and well within our services.
- Ensure the commitment to adhere to Child and Youth Safe practices are clearly outlined in Position Descriptions and are part of the recruitment process for new employees.
- ensure all preferred candidates undergo appropriate pre-employment checks including reference checks, Working With Vulnerable People (WWVP) and where applicable National Police criminal history checks before an offer of employment is made.
- ensure all educators and team members maintain current WWVP status and this is recorded by Adventure Patch .

In Relation to Standard 6: *Processes to respond to complaints and concerns are child-focused.*

With a focus on responding appropriately to complaints and concerns, Adventure Patch will:

- ensure educators, team members and visitors follow and comply with the *Complaints and Grievances Policy* when matters are raised regarding Child Safety and Wellbeing
- follow the *Complaints and Grievances Policy* for procedures regarding receiving and managing informal and formal complaints.
- safeguard the interests of all children, their families, educators, team members and visitors, using procedures to ensure appropriate privacy and confidentiality practices are upheld.
- inform families about the processes for providing feedback and making complaints.

- investigate and document the grievance or complaint fairly and impartially as outlined in the Complaints and Grievances Policy
- keep appropriate records of any complaint investigation and outcome and store these records in accordance with our *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy* and *Record Keeping and Retention Policy*
- notify the relevant Regulatory Authorities within the stipulated timeframes for each if a complaint alleges the safety, health or wellbeing of a child is being compromised. Notification must include any incident where there is a reasonable belief that physical and/or sexual abuse of a child has occurred or is occurring at a service or any allegation that sexual or physical abuse of a child has occurred or is occurring at a service
- ensure the *Reportable Conduct Scheme Policy* is adhered to and ensure that all allegations based on reasonable grounds are reported, including allegations made against educators or team members who do not have direct contact with children, and conduct that allegedly occurred outside of their work.
- review complaints and grievances as recorded in the *Complaints and Grievance Management Register* to ensure a pattern of similar grievances is not occurring.
- ensure educators or team members will report any concerns they may have about inappropriate actions of any other employee that involves children or young people to management as per the *Reportable Conduct Scheme Policy*.

In Relation to Standard 7: *Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training.*

In order to demonstrate our commitment to education and training for our educators, team members and volunteers, Adventure Patch will:

- provide all educators and team members with professional learning for the Child and Youth Safe Standards
- ensure Child Protection training is valid and updated every 2 years and whenever significant changes are made to the child protection law or reporting requirements, to maintain skills and knowledge required by National Regulations and best practice.
- develop a culture of learning through reflective practice within our services to drive continuous improvement.
- ensure educators and team members participate in professional development to keep up to date with Child Protection 'refresher' and Child and Youth Safe Standards training ensuring currency and compliance.
- ensure a person's WWVP is read before the person is engaged as an educator, volunteer or team member at our services.
- ensure the approved provider has read a person's WWVP check before nominating that person as a nominated supervisor or person in day-to-day charge of the service.
- ensure visitors to our services are suitable and approved to work with children, including visitors engaged to provide professional development or allied health professionals.

In Relation to Standard 8: *Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.*

As we develop a commitment to providing a safe physical and online environment for children, Adventure Patch will:

- ensure risk assessments are completed to contribute to the development of identifying, preventing and reducing risks of child abuse and harm.
- strongly oppose any type of abuse against a child and endorse high quality practices in relation to protecting children.
- ensure all educators, team members and visitors understand their roles and responsibilities in protecting children from abuse and neglect and maintain up-to-date knowledge of child protection law.
- ensure educators and team members undertake child protection awareness training every 2 years and whenever significant changes are made to the child protection law or reporting requirements.
- assess and manage the risk of abuse to children as part of our daily practice.
- maintain our ICT infrastructure to ensure the latest security systems are in place to ensure best practice.
- obtain parent permission for children to use computers as part of the enrolment procedure.
- ensure that children are never left unattended whilst a computer or mobile device is connected to the internet.
- ensure personal mobile phones are not used to take photographs, video or audio recordings of children at services.
- unless a parent has given explicit permission for a particular reason (for example a child with additional needs), children will not be permitted to use their own computer or personal mobile device while in the care of Adventure Patch
- only use educational software programs and apps that have been thoroughly examined for appropriate content prior to allowing their use by children.
- provide parents and families with information about the apps or software programs accessed by children at services.
- ensure educators and team members participate in professional development regarding online safety.
- ensure educators and team members implement and adhere to the [Technology Policy](#).
- ensure privacy filters and parental control settings are turned on and used when children are accessing digital technologies online.

In Relation to Standard 9: *Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved.*

With a focus on regular review of Child and Youth Safe Standards policies and procedures, Adventure Patch will:

- ensure our *Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy* is reviewed each year as part of our cycle of self-evaluation each year.
- welcome input and plan consultation from children, families, educators and team members as part of the policy review process.
- reflect on what current practices and actions regarding Child Safety and additional actions will be included in the QIP.
- review the effectiveness of the *Complaints and Grievances Policy* and procedures to ensure all complaints and grievances have been handled fairly and professionally.
- track complaints to identify recurring issues within our services.

- reflect and review complaints provided to Adventure Patch as opportunities for learning and improvement.
- keep a complaints/grievance register to record details of complaints such as complainant details, investigation details and further action taken.
- ensure each policy has a recommended review date stated in the 'Review' section of the policy document and changes are clearly documented through version control.

In Relation to Standard 10: *Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people.*

To ensure our policies and procedures demonstrate how the organisation is safe for children, Adventure Patch will:

- ensure all policies and procedures will be made available for families and educators to view.
- ensure all policies developed will be made in consultation with management, team members, educators and families of children attending our services.
- ensure policies include clear, simple statements and are presented in a logical format.
- ensure Risk Assessments are completed to address risks of child abuse and harm, including a supervision risk assessment.
- ensure information about our *Complaints and Grievance Policy* is easily accessible to all families.
- ensure the name and telephone number of the person to whom complaints can be made is clearly visible at the entrance to our services.
- discuss the issue with the complainant within 24 hours of receiving the verbal or written complaint.
- investigate and document the grievance or complaint fairly and impartially.
- notify the Regulatory Authority within 24 hours if a complaint alleges the safety, health or wellbeing of a child is being compromised. Notification must include any incident where there is a reasonable belief that physical and/or sexual abuse of a child has occurred or is occurring at a service or any allegation that sexual or physical abuse of a child has occurred or is occurring at a service.
- provide information relating to Child and Youth Safe practices within our *Recruitment Policy* to ensure our recruitment and screening processes play a vital role in protecting children from harm.

Related policies

<p>Arrival and Departure of Children Policy Child Protection Policy Child Safe Environment Policy Code of Conduct Complaints and Grievances Policy (Families) Governance and Management Policy Educator Staffing Arrangements</p>	<p>Interactions with Children Policy Providing a Child Safe Environment Policy Privacy and Confidentiality Policy Recruitment Policy Education & Care Record Keeping and Retention Policy Recruitment Policy Staffing Arrangements Policy</p>
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Resources

- Office of the Independent Regulator Tas [Office of the Independent Regulator \(oir.tas.gov.au\)](http://oir.tas.gov.au)
- Commission for Children and Young People Act 2016
- The Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act 1997 (Tas)
- Child and Youth Safe Organisations Framework
- Child and Youth Safe Organisations Act 2023(Tas).
- Youth Justice Act 1997 (Tas)
- Registration to Working with Vulnerable People Act 2013 (TAS)
- Australian Children’s Education & Care Quality Authority. (2014).
- Commission for children and young people. *Being a child safe organisation* <https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/child-safety/being-a-child-safe-organisation/>
- Commission for children and young people. *Creating a Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy* <https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/assets/resources/New-CSS/Creating-a-Child-Safety-and-Wellbeing-Policy.docx>
- Commission for children and young people. *A guide for creating a Child Safe Organisation* <https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/assets/resources/New-CSS/A-guide-for-creating-a-Child-Safe-Organisation-190422.pdf>
- Commission for children and young people. *Short Guide to the Child Safe Standards* <https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/assets/resources/New-CSS/Short-guide-to-the-Child-Safe-Standards.pdf>
- Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics. (2016).
- [Education and Care Services National Regulations](#). (Amended 2023).
- Family Law Act 1975
- Guide to the National Quality Framework (2017). (Amended 2023)
- Reporting abuse and neglect: <https://aifs.gov.au/cfca/publications/cfca-resource-sheet/reporting-child-abuse-and-neglect>
- Revised National Quality Standard. (2018).
- The Commission for Children and Young People Act 1998*
- The Commission for Children and Young People Act 2012*
- UNICEF Australian. UN Convention on the Rights of the Child <https://www.unicef.org.au/our-work/information-for-children/un-convention-on-the-rights-of-the-child>

Review History

Policy Reviewed By:	Tim Short	CEO	November 2023
POLICY REVIEWED	New	NEXT REVIEW DATE	November 2024
Modifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Policy 		
POLICY REVIEWED	PREVIOUS MODIFICATIONS	NEXT REVIEW DATE	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 		

Signed

CEO:	
Manager:	S. NOTTUS