



Policy – Child Safe

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3.0	May 2025	May 2022	GMICC (GQR)	ELT

Review History

Version No.	Version Date	Summary of Changes	Author
1.0	April 2016	Policy Created	CEO
2.0	December 2017	Updated to include the Reportable Conduct Scheme Child Safe Standards Reporting flow chart	Quality and Risk
3.0	May 2022	Review to comply with Child Safe Standards	GQR

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Target Audience

This policy applies to all IPC Health Board members, employees, contractors, students on placement volunteers and clients (and their carers)

Scope

All activities at IPC Health which involve, result in or relate to contact with children and young people.

Definitions

The Act	Child Safety and Wellbeing Act 2005
Child Abuse	Any act committed against a child involving: Physical violence Sexual offences Serious emotional or psychological abuse Serious neglect
Child	A person who is under the age of 18 years
Child Safety	In the context of the child safe standards, child safety means measures to protect children from abuse
Commission	Commission for Children and Young People
Cultural abuse	Actions and attitudes that deliberately ignore, denigrate or attack the culture of a person or community
Cultural safety for Aboriginal children	the child being provided with a safe, nurturing and positive environment where they are comfortable with being themselves, expressing their culture... their spiritual and belief systems, and they are supported by the carer... (who) respects their Aboriginality and therefore encourages their sense of self and identity'
Children with disability	A disability can be any physical, sensory, neurological disability, acquired brain injury or intellectual disability or developmental delay that affects a child's ability to undertake everyday activities. A disability can occur at any time in life. Children can be born with a disability or acquire a disability suddenly through an injury or illness. Some disabilities may be obvious while others are hidden
Reportable Conduct Scheme	Allegations against workers or volunteers of child abuse and misconduct involving children

Policy statement

All children who are clients of IPC Health have a right to feel and be safe.

IPC Health is committed to providing a safe environment where every person has the right to be treated with respect and is safe and protected from harm.

We are committed to the safety and well-being of all children accessing our services. The welfare of children in our care will always be given the highest priority. We strive to provide an environment that children feel valued and safe. We recognise that each child is different and experiences the world differently.

We welcome all children regardless of their circumstances

IPC Health encourages and respects the views of children who access our services. We understand the diverse circumstances of children, as well as their right to fair treatment

We listen to and act upon any concerns that a child or their families raise with us. We ensure that children and their families know their rights and how to access the client feedback procedures available to them.

IPC Health is committed to zero tolerance of child abuse and will take all concerns and allegations of abuse and safety concerns very seriously.

Policy principles

Children

1. All children will feel safe and valued
2. All children will be treated with respect
3. IPC Health is committed to cultural safety for children of Aboriginal, culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds. We uphold the right of children to enjoy and feel connected to their culture and community, be safe from harm arising from racism, and have access to culturally safe services and organisations.
4. Children with disability will feel safe and encouraged to participate equally. We recognise that each child is different and experiences disability and the world differently

Staff, Contractors and Volunteers

All Board Members, employees/volunteers and students on placements must agree to comply with IPC Health Appropriate workplace behaviors policy

All employees/volunteers will be guided by this policy on how to behave with children accessing our services

Clients/carers

Show respect and be polite to everyone you meet while using our services including maintaining a safe environment for children and young people using our services.

Recruitment and induction

IPC Health takes all reasonable steps to employ appropriately skilled staff.

All employees/volunteers engaged in work with children will undergo a Working with Children check.

All employees/volunteers undergo police checks and reference checks, as per The Act, 2005. Staff and volunteers are inducted into their roles, so they understand their responsibilities to children and how to create a safe environment for them including our child safety practices and complaints process as well as reporting, record keeping and information sharing obligations.

Training and Supervision

IPC Health ensures that employees/volunteers who work with children have ongoing supervision, support and training so that their capacity is developed and enhanced to build culturally safe environments, recognise indicators of harm, and respond as required to harm including mandatory reporting

Fair procedure for employees/volunteers

IPC Health procedures are fair and just. Decisions regarding recruitment, incidents, disciplinary action will always be thorough, transparent and based on evidence.

Reporting

Allegations of abuse and safety concerns are reported in the client record and incident reporting system(VHIMS), including all updates to the investigation. The IPC Health Escalation Framework and Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse procedure are followed.

If an allegation of abuse or safety concern is raised, the children and families are kept updated on the progress and any actions that may be taken.

Physical and online environments

IPC Health staff will not have personal/ online contact with a child or their family outside of a valid organisational context, unless transparent to the organisation and/or part of an approved program.

Privacy

All collection and use of personal information at IPC Health will be in accordance with the IPC Health Privacy and Confidentiality of Client Information policy and procedures.

Legislative responsibilities

IPC Health takes our legal responsibilities seriously including:

Failure to disclose:

Reporting child sexual abuse is a community-wide responsibility. All adults in Victoria who have reasonable belief that an adult has committed a sexual offence against a child under 16 have an obligation to report that information to the police

Failure to protect:

IPC Health staff will commit an offence if they know of a substantial risk of child sexual abuse and have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, but negligently fail to do so.

Risk Management

All IPC health employees/volunteers are responsible for identification, reporting and managing risks, according to the IPC Health risk management policy and procedure.

Allegations, concerns and complaints

All allegations will be taken seriously and investigated thoroughly and quickly and reported according to legislative requirements.

We will work with the children, families, employees/volunteers /contractors to ensure they are supported through the process.

All IPC Health employees/volunteers have a responsibility to report an allegation of abuse, if they have reasonable belief that an incident has occurred (see Legislative responsibilities) and where required will follow the IPC Health escalation framework and Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse procedure

Allegations against IPC Health workers or volunteers of child abuse and misconduct involving children will be managed in accordance with the Reportable Conduct Scheme and IPC Health Mandatory Reporting for Health Professionals Procedure .

Associated frameworks, policies, procedures and guidelines

Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse procedure
Mandatory Reporting of Health Professional's procedure
Orientation, induction and probation of new employees policy and procedure
Working with Children check policy
Police check policy
Discipline Procedure
Appropriate Workplace Behavior Policy
Performance Improvement procedure
Client Feedback Policy
Escalation framework
Privacy and Confidentiality of Client Information Policy

Associated standards

The Child Safe Standards 2021
Human Services Standards (VIC) 2015
Quality Improvement Council Standards 7th Ed, V1.1

Associated legislation

Child Safety and Wellbeing Act 2005
Child Safety and Wellbeing Amendment Bill 2015
Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)
Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)
Commission for Children and Young People Act 2012 (Vic)
Child Wellbeing and Safety Amendment (Child Safe Standards) Act 2015
Reportable conduct scheme
Worker Screening Regulations 2021 (Vic)
Worker Screening Act 2020 (Vic)

References

Commission for Children and Young People

- <https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/>

Department of Health and Human Services

- <http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/plans,-programs-and-projects/projects-and-initiatives/children,-youth-and-family-services/creating-child-safe-organisations>
- <http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/policies,-guidelines-and-legislation/child-safe-standards-resources>