



Child Safe Standards Policy

Purpose

This policy explains how Family Bridge Australia implements the Child Safe Standards to promote child safety and wellbeing across our services.

As an organisation working with children and families, Family Bridge Australia complies with the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic) and the Victorian Child Safe Standards. The Standards require organisations to implement policies and practices that keep children safe, prevent child abuse and respond appropriately to concerns or allegations of harm.

This policy outlines Family Bridge Australia's commitment to child safety and our approach to implementing the Child Safe Standards across all areas of our service delivery.

In this document, the term 'child' refers to children and young people under the age of 18 years.

The Child Safe Standards

Standard 1: Organisations establish a culturally safe environment where the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children and young people are respected and valued.

Standard 2: Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture.

Standard 3: Children and young people are empowered about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.

Standard 4: Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.

Standard 5: Equity is upheld and diverse needs are respected in policy and practice.

Standard 6: People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.

Standard 7: Processes for complaints and concerns are child-focused.

Standard 8: Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training.

Standard 9: Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising opportunities for children to be harmed.

Standard 10: Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved.

Standard 11: Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people.

Application of this Policy

This policy applies to all individuals engaged by Family Bridge Australia, including:

- Directors and management
- Employees
- Contractors and consultants
- Volunteers and student placements
- Any individual delivering services on behalf of Family Bridge Australia.

All staff and representatives must comply with this policy and the Child Safe Code of Conduct when performing duties associated with Family Bridge Australia.

Our Commitment to Child Safety

Family Bridge Australia is committed to providing a safe environment where children feel safe, respected and supported.

We are committed to:

- Identifying and reducing risks to children in all service environments
- Responding appropriately to allegations or concerns regarding child abuse
- Recruiting suitable staff and ensuring appropriate screening processes
- Providing staff with training and support to maintain child safe practices
- Encouraging children, families and staff to speak up about concerns
- Supporting the cultural safety of Aboriginal children
- Creating a welcoming environment for children from multicultural backgrounds, children with disability and LGBTIQ+ children
- Embedding inclusive practice in our services
- Listening to children and ensuring their voices are heard.

Implementation of the Child Safe Standards

Family Bridge Australia implements the Child Safe Standards across all areas of service delivery, including supervised contact, supervised changeovers and family support services.

Standard 1: Cultural Safety for Aboriginal Children

Family Bridge Australia respects the unique identities and cultural rights of Aboriginal children. We work to ensure culturally safe environments and encourage cultural connection.

Standard 2: Leadership and Governance

Child safety is embedded in the governance, policies and leadership practices of Family Bridge Australia.

Standard 3: Child Participation

Children are supported to express their views and participate in decisions affecting them where appropriate.

Standard 4: Family and Community Involvement

Families are informed about our services, policies and complaints processes.

Standard 5: Equity and Diversity

Our services respect diversity and ensure inclusion of all children regardless of background, identity or ability.

Standard 6: Staff Suitability

Family Bridge Australia conducts screening including Working With Children Checks, Police Checks and Reference Checks.

Standard 7: Complaints and Concerns

We provide accessible processes for children, families and staff to raise complaints or concerns.

Standard 8: Training and Education

Staff receive training and guidance on child safety, supervision practices and responding to concerns.

Standard 9: Safe Environments

We ensure physical and online environments are safe and appropriate for children.

Standard 10: Continuous Improvement

We regularly review policies and procedures to improve child safety practices.

Standard 11: Documented Policies

Family Bridge Australia maintains documented policies and procedures outlining child safe practices.

Roles and Responsibilities

Directors

Oversee implementation of the Child Safe Standards and ensure compliance across the organisation.

Staff and Contractors

- Follow this policy and the Child Safe Code of Conduct
- Take reasonable steps to protect children from harm
- Report suspected child abuse or safety concerns.

Management

- Promote awareness of child safety policies
- Respond appropriately to breaches or concerns
- Ensure staff receive appropriate training.

Definitions

Child: A person under 18 years of age.

Child abuse: Includes physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect.

Complaint: An expression of dissatisfaction with services provided by Family Bridge Australia.

Cultural safety: An environment that respects and protects the identity and culture of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Family violence: Behaviour that is abusive, threatening, coercive or controlling within a family relationship.

MARAM Framework: Victoria's Family Violence Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework.

Reportable conduct: Conduct that involves sexual offences, sexual misconduct, physical violence, emotional harm or neglect towards a child.

Related Legislation, Standards and Resources

[Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 \(Vic\)](#)

[Family Violence Protection Act 2008 \(Vic\)](#)

[Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 \(Vic\)](#)

Victorian Child Safe Standards:

<https://www.vic.gov.au/child-safe-standards>

MARAM Framework:

<https://www.vic.gov.au/family-violence-multi-agency-risk-assessment-and-management>

Department of Families, Fairness and Housing : Child Safe Standards:

<https://www.dffh.vic.gov.au/publications/child-safe-standards>

Aboriginal Cultural Safety Framework:

<https://www.dffh.vic.gov.au/publications/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-cultural-safety-framework>

DFFH Strategic Plan:

<https://www.dffh.vic.gov.au/publications/dffh-strategic-plan>

Anti-Racism Action Plan:

<https://www.dffh.vic.gov.au/publications/anti-racism-action-plan-2024-2027>

Aboriginal Children's Forum:

<https://www.dffh.vic.gov.au/aboriginal-childrens-forum>

Dhelk Dja Agreement:

<https://www.vic.gov.au/dhelk-dja-partnership-aboriginal-communities-address-family-violence>

Young Voices:

<https://www.vic.gov.au/young-voices>

Client Voice Framework:

<https://www.dffh.vic.gov.au/publications/client-voice-framework-community-services>