

Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy

Policy Statement:

CatholicCare NT (CCNT) is a not-for-profit organisation providing services to:

- adults (individuals, couples and families)
- children and young people between the ages of 0 to 25 years.

Our organisation operates throughout the Northern Territory and provides a variety of programs focusing on Family and Community Services, Alcohol and Other Drug Services and Community Development Programs. Our Management Team and staff are committed to providing social services that strengthen individuals, families and communities, inclusive of children and young people.

All CatholicCare NT policies and procedures are based on our values of respect, honesty, connection, courage and fairness. These guide our work and ensure that we are true to our Mission. The policy of Safeguarding Children and Young People has a particular focus on these values. These values ensure that the service we offer in all CCNT programs is respectful, open and just.

We take seriously our commitment to ensure zero tolerance of child abuse and neglect, and the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people who access our activities, programs, services and facilities.

It is the responsibility of all CCNT staff, including all levels of management to:

- protect children and young people from all forms of abuse, bullying and exploitation by our staff
- be alert to incidents of child abuse and neglect occurring outside the scope of our operations and services that may have an impact on the children and young people to whom we provide services
- create and maintain a child safe culture that is understood, endorsed and implemented by all the staff, and others such as students, volunteers or those who access our programs and services.

We promote equity and respect diversity by:

- actively anticipating children's diverse circumstances and responding effectively to those with additional vulnerabilities
- giving all children access to information, support and complaints processes
- paying particular attention to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children with a disability, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, or Intersex (LGBTI) children and those who are unable to live at home.

Scope:

The Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy applies to all staff, students, volunteers and partner organisations involved with the delivery of CCNT programs, services and activities.

Organisation Policy: Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy	Date of Issue: December 2017	CatholicCare NT
ORG/SP/P030 V3.1	Date Reviewed: August 2023	Page 1 of 7

Definitions of abuse that may be referenced in this policy and procedure:

Bullying	<p>Bullying involves the inappropriate use of power by one or more persons over another less powerful person or group and is generally an act that is repeated over time. Bullying has been described by researchers as taking many forms which are often interrelated and include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verbal (name calling, put downs, threats) • Physical (hitting, punching, kicking, scratching, tripping, spitting) • Social (ignoring, excluding, ostracizing, alienating) • Psychological (spreading rumours, stalking, dirty looks, hiding or damaging possessions)
Emotional or Psychological Abuse	<p>Occurs when a child does not receive the love, affection or attention they need for healthy emotional, psychological and social development. Such abuse may involve repeated rejection or threats to a child. Constant criticism, teasing, ignoring, threatening, yelling, scapegoating, ridicule or continual coldness are examples. These behaviours continue to an extent that significant damage to the child's physical, intellectual or emotional wellbeing and development results.</p>
Family Violence	<p>This occurs when children are forced to live with violence that is being perpetrated between adults in their home. It can include witnessing violence or the consequences of violence. Family violence is defined as violence between members of a family, extended family or those fulfilling the role of family in a child or young person's life. Exposure to family violence places children and young people at increased risk of physical injury and harm and has a significant impact on their wellbeing and development.</p>
Grooming	<p>A term used to describe what happens when a perpetrator of abuse builds a relationship with a child with a view to abusing them at some stage. There is no set pattern in relation to the grooming of children. For some perpetrators</p>

	<p>there will be a lengthy period of time before the abuse begins. The child may be given special attention and what starts as an apparently normal display of affection, such as cuddling, can develop into sexually inappropriate touching and progress into more serious sexual behaviour. Other perpetrators may draw a child in and abuse them quickly while others do not groom children but abuse them without forming a relationship. Grooming can take place in any setting where a relationship is formed, such as leisure, music, sports, religious activities or in internet chatrooms, on social media or by using other forms of technology.</p>
Harm	<p>Harm to a child is any detrimental effect of a significant nature on the child's physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing. It is irrelevant how the harm is caused but can be caused by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical, psychological or emotional abuse or neglect • Sexual abuse or exploitation • A single act, omission or circumstance • A series or combination of acts, omissions or circumstances.
Neglect	<p>Is the persistent failure or deliberate denial to provide the child with the basic necessities of life. Neglect includes the failure to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, supervision, clean water, or medical attention to the extent that the child's health and development is, or is likely to be, significantly harmed. Categories of neglect include physical, medical, abandonment or desertion, emotional and educational. The issue of neglect must be considered within the context of resources reasonably available.</p>
Physical Abuse	<p>Occurs when a person subjects a child to non-accidental physically aggressive acts. The abuser may inflict an injury intentionally or inadvertently as a result of physical punishment or the aggressive treatment of a child. Physically abusive behaviour includes (but is not limited to) shoving, hitting, slapping, shaking, throwing, punching, biting, burning, kicking and excessive or physically harmful</p>

	over-training. It also includes giving children harmful substances such as alcohol, other drugs, or poison. Certain types of punishment, whilst not causing injury, can also be considered physical abuse if they place a child at risk of being hurt.
Sexual Abuse	Occurs when an adult or a person of authority (eg: older) involves a child in any sexual activity. Perpetrators of sexual abuse take advantage of their power, authority or position over the child or young person for their own benefit. It can include making sexual comments to a child, engaging children to participate in sexual conversations over the internet or on social media, kissing, touching a child's genitals or breasts, or oral or sexual intercourse with a child. Encouraging a child to view pornographic magazines, websites and videos is also sexual abuse.
Sexual Exploitation	Occurs when children are forced into sexual activities that are then recorded in some way and/or used to produce pornography. Pornography can be in the form of actual photos or videos or published on the internet. Exploitation can also involve children who are forced into prostitution.

Responsibilities:

The Executive Management Team delegates the following responsibility as follows:

Executive Management Team will:

- develop and endorse the CCNT Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy
- promote their commitment to this policy and its expectations
- support policy review on an annual basis as a minimum, or at a time governed by legislation, regulations or organisational practice that result in a change to the policy and/or other related policy/guidelines
- ensure compliance with the policy through procedures such as supervision, team meetings, feedback, or other appropriate forums
- ensure adequate resources are allocated to allow for the development and effective implementation of this policy
- develop opportunities for regular discussion at all levels to support a culture of openness and continued improvement and accountability to child protection and participant welfare
- advocate and promote child rights, empowering and engaging children and young people in support of this policy and its expectations.

Managers will:

- ensure all involved staff understand their obligations in accordance with the

Organisation Policy: Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy	Date of Issue: December 2017	CatholicCare NT
ORG/SP/P030 V3.1	Date Reviewed: August 2023	Page 4 of 7

Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy and any related policy and procedures; including induction, completion of Safeguarding Children mandatory training, regular discussion and guidance at supervision and team meetings

- ensure the Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy is implemented and adhered to amongst relevant stakeholders
- ensure the development and implementation of internal policies, procedures and guidelines to support child protection practices in accordance with the expectation of the Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy
- ensure adequate resources are allocated to allow effective implementation of the Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy
- ensure staff are supported to initiate action to protect a child from abuse, neglect, grooming or exploitation
- ensure appropriate support, such as counselling and formal debriefing, is provided for any staff, students or volunteers who are involved in responding to a concern for the safety and wellbeing of a child or young person
- advocate and promote child rights, empowering and engaging children and young people in support of this policy
- proactively share resources and experience in the development of child safe initiatives as they are identified
- develop opportunities for regular discussion at all levels to support a culture of continuous improvement and accountability of child protection and participant welfare
- ensure that our staff are aware of the appropriate recruitment, screening and employment practice in relation to individuals with specific roles in working with children and families.

Line Supervisors and direct service staff will:

- maintain a full understanding of the commitments and expectations of this policy and other related policies and procedures relevant to safeguarding children and young people
- undertake any induction and training in relation to safeguarding children and young people
- seek guidance from a supervisor or manager if unclear about the commitments and expectations as set out in this policy
- take action to protect children and young people from all forms of abuse, bullying, neglect and exploitation
- assist in creating and maintaining a child safe culture and a culture of inclusion and safety.

CCNT’s commitment includes:

- ensuring staff, students, volunteers and stakeholders involved in our delivery of services to children and young people understand their role and the behaviour expected in relation to safeguarding children and young people from abuse and neglect
- staff having clear position descriptions that include relevant safeguarding children requirements
- a Code of Conduct that is approved and endorsed by the Executive Management Team, who are the governance body for CCNT. The Code of Conduct outlines CCNT’s expectations of behaviour towards children and young people. Our staff are provided with a copy of the Code of Conduct and have access to the document on the intranet. All

Organisation Policy: Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy	Date of Issue: December 2017	CatholicCare NT
ORG/SP/P030 V3.1	Date Reviewed: August 2023	Page 5 of 7

- staff are required to sign that they have read and are committed to the Code of Conduct
- appropriate measures are in place to minimise the likelihood that we will recruit a person who is unsuitable to work or be involved with children or young people. Recruitment procedures ensure:
 - our safeguarding children commitment is communicated to potential applicants
 - face to face interviews (where possible) are held which includes safeguarding children-related questions
 - two professional reference checks are undertaken
 - screening checks are undertaken, including identity, criminal record, working with children and qualifications/credentials.

New staff are provided with information during their induction about CCNT’s commitment to Safeguarding Children and Young People as expressed in this Policy, Code of Conduct and Child Exploitation etc. There is a process for ensuring all staff complete Safeguarding Children training and any ongoing education and training to support staff to maintain currency regarding safeguarding information.

We involve and communicate with children and young people and their families to develop a safe, inclusive and supportive environment. We provide information to children and their carers eg: brochures, posters, handbooks, guidelines about:

- CCNT’s commitment to safeguarding children and their rights
- the behaviour we expect from our staff and from children, young people, parents and carers
- CCNT’s policy about responding to child abuse.

Processes are established for encouraging two-way communication with children and families. We seek participant feedback and have a process to manage responses received.

Our policy for responding to child abuse is approved and endorsed by the Executive Management Team and applies to all staff. The Policy states that:

- staff must immediately report abuse or neglect and any concerns with policies, practices or the behaviour of other staff
- staff must meet any legislated mandatory reporting requirements
- staff must follow a specified process when reporting abuse or neglect, including who will receive reports
- failure to report is serious misconduct.

Staff are given a copy of, and have access to, the policy and procedure and understand the implications of the policy for their role. We document any allegations, disclosure or concern regarding child abuse and monitor responses to all allegations, disclosures or concerns.

CCNT expect all within our organisation, regardless of their role or level of responsibility, to act to safeguard children from such harm by:

- adopting the practices and behaviour that CCNT has set as a standard when carrying out their roles
- reporting any abuse or neglect of which they become aware to CCNT management and/or to external authorities responsible for child protection and the police, regardless

Organisation Policy: Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy	Date of Issue: December 2017	CatholicCare NT
ORG/SP/P030 V3.1	Date Reviewed: August 2023	Page 6 of 7

of whether that abuse is being perpetrated by staff, students or volunteers within our organisation, or by those outside our organisation including those from the child's family, extended family, their family's extended network or strangers.

CCNT is committed to providing a safe environment for the children and young people to whom we provide services. This commitment is endorsed, approved and relevant to all staff and management within our organisation.

By order of
The Management Team of **CatholicCare NT**

Represented by:

Signed: 

Name: Jayne Lloyd

Position: Director

Date: August 2023

References

Legislation

- *Northern Territory Care and Protection of Children Act 2012*
- *Criminal Code Act 2008*
- *Domestic and Family Violence Amendment ACT 2009*

Associated Documents

This document should be read in conjunction with:

- CCNT Policy/Procedure: Mandatory Reporting of Child Harm and Exploitation (ORG/SP/P007)
- CCNT Policy/Procedure: Duty of Care (ORG/SP/P003)
- CCNT Organisation Form: Child Protection Reporting Form (ORG/SP/F037)
- CCNT Policy/Procedure: Domestic and Family Violence Principles, Intervention and Mandatory Reporting (ORG/SP/P006)
- CCNT Policy/Procedure: Discrimination and Harassment (ORG/HR/P033)
- CCNT Guidelines: Code of Conduct (ORG/HR/G001)
- CCNT Policy/Procedure: Recruitment (ORG/HR/P004)

Organisation Policy: Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy ORG/SP/P030 V3.1	Date of Issue: December 2017 Date Reviewed: August 2023	CatholicCare NT Page 7 of 7
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