NATIONAL PRINCIPLES FOR CHILD SAFE ORGANISATIONS GUIDANCE AND TEMPLATE

In this tool, you will find:

» An overview of the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations

» A template with examples for translating the National Principles into practice

» Links to additional resources

Related tools:

» Child Safety Obligations

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

This document provides information for CaFIS providers about their requirement to comply with child safety obligations as a Commonwealth grant recipient.

The Commonwealth extends its commitment to child safety by applying some or all requirements under the Commonwealth Child Safe Framework to grant recipients providing child-related services.

This guidance provides an overview of the requirement for organisations to adopt and implement the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.

A template is provided with examples to assist CaFIS providers translate the National Principles into practice. This tool is optional, but may be a useful resource.

KEY GUIDANCE

Commonwealth Child Safe Framework

The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse considered what institutions and governments should do to better protect children against child sexual abuse in institutional settings, and how to foster child safe organisational culture.

In response to the Royal Commission's recommendations the Australian Government developed the Commonwealth Child Safe Framework (the Framework).

As part of implementing the Framework, Commonwealth entities and grant recipients adopt and implement the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.

National Principles for Child Safe Organisations

The ten National Principles for Child Safe Organisations (the National Principles) were developed to provide a consistent approach to creating organisational cultures that foster child safety and wellbeing. Having a child safe culture will help to keep children and young people safe and reduce future harm in organisational settings. A child safe organisation:

- creates an environment where children's safety and wellbeing are the centre of thought, values and actions

- places emphasis on genuine engagement with, and valuing of children

- creates conditions that reduce the likelihood of harm to children and young people

- creates conditions that increase the likelihood of identifying any harm to children

- responds appropriately to any concerns, disclosures, allegations or suspicions.

The National Principles are set out in more detail on the following page with question prompts to assist CaFIS providers to think about how the National Principles might be translated into practice in your organisation..

Children and Family Intensive Support (CaFIS)

Principle 1: Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisation leadership, governance and culture

- Do you have a child safety champion at a senior level who can promote the importance of child safety?
- Is cultural safety a standing agenda item for executive team meetings?
- Are your child safety policies publicly available? (This demonstrates leadership by publicly acknowledging your commitment to child safety and wellbeing)

Principle 2: Children and young people are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously

- Have you consulted children and young people about the content and application of your organisation's policies that relate to children?
- Does your organisation have processes for informing children and young people of their rights in age-appropriate ways?
- Is it embedded in your policies that staff seek the views of children and young people in their work with families?

Principle 3: Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing

- Do you seek feedback from families about the services you provide?
- Have you consulted communities about your organisation's work as it relates to child safety and wellbeing?
- Can community members provide feedback on your child safety policies?

Principle 4: Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice

- Does your organisation promote equity and respect for diversity by having key documents, policies or resources in child-friendly formats, or in languages other than English?
- Are all aspects of your child safety strategy considerate of the needs of vulnerable children (eg Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children with disability)?
- Have you reviewed all existing policies and practices to ensure they are inclusive of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children?

Principle 5: People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice

- Do you have child safe recruitment and screening processes for staff working with children?
- Do relevant staff have current Working with Children Checks (or equivalent)?
- Are staff working with children inducted to understand their child safety obligations?

Principle 6: Processes to respond to complaints and concerns are child focused

- Do you have a child focused complaint handling policy?
- Do you regularly seek feedback from children about the services they have received?
- Have you embedded considerations for cultural safety in your complaint handling process?

Principle 7: Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training

- Are staff training requirements specified in your child safety policy?
- Are staff trained in mandatory reporting requirements?
- Do you offer cultural supervision to staff?

Principle 8: Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising opportunity for children and young people to be harmed

- Have you considered the physical safety of children and young people who will have contact with staff?
- Do you have strategies, policies or procedures in place to minimise physical risks to children?
- Do you have mechanisms in place to monitor inappropriate use of ICT equipment or to ensure online interactions with children and young people are appropriate?

Principle 9: Implementation of the National Principles is regularly reviewed and improved

- Do you have a process in place to undertake an annual risk assessment and review risk mitigation strategies?
- Do your policies have a review date specified?
- Do you have a process in place to report on your compliance with the Framework?

Principle 10: Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people

- Do you have a child safety policy?
- Do you have a charter of commitment to children and young people?
- Do you have a child-safe code of conduct?

Children and Family Intensive Support (CaFIS)

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> **Where to go for more information on this topic**
>
> National Office for Child Safety has resources and tools to help organisations use the National Principles
>
> https://childsafety.pmc.gov.au/what-we-do/national-principles-child-safe-organisations
>
> The Australian Human Rights Commission has practical tools and training resources about the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations
>
> https://childsafe.humanrights.gov.au/national-principles
>
> Keeping our kids safe: Cultural Safety and the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations
> https://childsafety.pmc.gov.au/sites/default/files/2021-06/final-keeping-our-kids-safe.pdf

RESOURCE TEMPLATE: NATIONAL PRINCIPLES FOR CHILD SAFE ORGANISATIONS

A commitment to child safety and wellbeing

Principle 1: Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisation leadership, governance and culture

Describe how the organisation puts into practice its commitment to child safety and wellbeing and how a child safe culture is modelled at all levels of the organisation

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Taking child participation seriously

Principle 2: Children and young people are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously

Describe strategies used by the organisation to enable children and young people to have their rights respected, participate in decision-making and have their voice heard

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Involving families and communities

Principle 3: Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing

Describe how the organisation puts into practice effective communication and participation strategies for engaging with and responding to the diverse needs of families and communities

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Children and Family Intensive Support (CaFIS)

Respecting equity and diversity

Principle 4: Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice

Describe how the organisation creates an environment where children and young people's diverse circumstances and needs are recognised, and all children feel safe, welcome and included

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Ensuring that staff are suitable and supported

Principle 5: People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice

Describe how the organisation puts into practice its recruitment and staff development policies, including screening, induction and supervision to ensure that staff and volunteers reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice

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Child focused complaint systems

Principle 6: Processes to respond to complaints and concerns are child focused

Describe how the organisation ensures that it has accessible and responsive complaints management processes that are focused on the needs of children and young people

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Staff knowledge, skills and awareness

Principle 7: Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training

Describe how the organisation promotes child safety and wellbeing by ensuring that staff and volunteers are provided with relevant knowledge and skills on an ongoing basis

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Children and Family Intensive Support (CaFIS)

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Safe physical and online environments

Principle 8: Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising opportunity for children and young people to be harmed

Describe how the organisation promotes child safety and wellbeing in physical and online environments in order to reduce the risk of harm

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Review of child safe policies and practices

Principle 9: Implementation of the national child safe principles is regularly reviewed and improved

Describe how the organisation continues to reflect on and improve its child safety and wellbeing policies and practices

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Documenting policies and procedures

Principle 10: Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people

Describe how the organisation documents and makes available its policies and procedures for ensuring the safety and wellbeing of children and young people

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