



Child Safe Policy

Policy 4.31 Child Safe Policy

5 August 2025

Purpose

Birrang is unwavering in its commitment to the safety and welfare of children and young people. Recognising the vulnerabilities of this demographic, the primary purpose of this Child Safety Policy is threefold:

Demonstrate Commitment: To show our dedication to ensuring that every child and young person within our services is safe, respected, and protected from harm.

Minimise Risks: To proactively put in place measures and guidelines that minimise the risk of abuse, misconduct, or misuse of power.

Formalise Procedures: To establish a consistent and compliant approach to reporting, responding, and reviewing child safety concerns in line with NSW legislation and best practice.

Alignment with the NSW Child Safe Standards

Birrang is committed to embedding the 10 Child Safe Standards as outlined by the NSW Office of the Children's Guardian. These standards guide our approach to child safety and are reflected throughout this policy and our broader organisational practices:

1. Child safety is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture.
2. Children participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.
3. Families and communities are informed and involved.
4. Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected.
5. People working with children are suitable and supported.
6. Processes to respond to complaints and concerns are child-focused.
7. Staff are equipped with knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children safe.
8. Physical and online environments minimise opportunity for harm.
9. Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is continuously reviewed and improved.
10. Policies and procedures document how the organisation is child safe.

Commitment to Child Safety

Birrang has a zero-tolerance approach to child abuse and harmful behaviour. Our Statement of Commitment to Child Safety is available on our website and displayed at all Birrang locations. We strive to create environments where children are:

- Safe and supported
- Empowered to participate
- Confident to raise concerns

Scope and audience

This policy applies to all individuals engaged with or impacted by Birrang's operations, including:

- Board Members

- Executive and Program Leadership
- Employees and Staff
- Volunteers
- Contractors and Partner Organisations
- Children and Young People
- Families, Carers, and the Wider Community

It covers all Birrang-led programs, services, activities, and interactions where children and young people are involved, ensuring a consistent, organisation-wide approach to child safety.

Responsibilities

Shared Responsibilities: Everyone at Birrang must uphold this policy and act in accordance with our Child Safe Code of Conduct.

Leaders and Managers: Must promote child safety, model appropriate behaviour, ensure training and compliance, and respond to concerns.

Staff and Volunteers: Must report concerns, participate in training, and support children's wellbeing.

Child Safety Contact Officer: The designated Child Safety Contact Officer is the **Program Manager – Child Safety and Wellbeing**. This officer is responsible for managing child safety concerns, coordinating responses, and ensuring compliance with reporting obligations.

Training and Induction

All staff, volunteers, and contractors must complete mandatory child safety training as part of their induction. Ongoing refresher training is required annually.

Training includes:

- Understanding child abuse and harm
- Recognising and responding to disclosures
- Reporting obligations under NSW law
- Birrang's internal policies and Code of Conduct

Completion of training is tracked and monitored by the Human Resources team.

Organisational Culture

Birrang acknowledges that a strong organisational culture is essential to child safety. We embed child safety through:

- Shared values, behaviours, and expectations
- Culturally inclusive and responsive practices
- Continuous learning and development
- Daily routines and leadership behaviours that reinforce our child-safe values

Active Participation of Children, Families and Communities

- All our child-related policies and procedures are easily accessible on our website and offline for everyone who accesses our services and events, including children, parents, carers and community members.
- Children, parents and carers from diverse backgrounds and circumstances are encouraged to provide feedback on our child-related policies and procedures, including our Child Safe Code of Conduct that describes acceptable and non-acceptable behaviours and our Child Safe Risk Management Plan.
- We provide opportunities for children to provide feedback to our management, board or committee on what makes them feel safe, supported and included.

Definitions of Harm and Abuse

General definitions

Psychological Abuse (also known as emotional abuse)

This includes bullying, threatening and abusive language, intimidation, shaming and name calling, ignoring and isolating a child, and exposure to domestic and family violence.

Physical Abuse

This includes physical punishment, such as pushing, shoving, punching, slapping and kicking, resulting in injury, burns, choking or bruising.

Sexual Abuse

This includes the sexual touching of a child, grooming, and production, distribution or possession of child abuse material.

Grooming

This is a process where a person manipulates a child or group of children and sometimes those looking after them, including parents, carers, teachers and leaders. They do this to establish a position of 'trust' so they can then later sexually abuse the child.

Misconduct

This is inappropriate behaviour that may not be as severe as abuse but could indicate that abuse is occurring and would often be in breach of an organisation's Child Safe Code of Conduct. This could include showing a child something inappropriate on a phone, having inappropriate conversations with a child or an adult sitting with a child on their lap.

Lack of Appropriate Care

This includes not providing adequate and proper supervision, nourishment, clothing, shelter, education or medical care.

What the policy covers

Transporting children

Best practice is to always have two adults travelling with children. If this is not possible, a suitable arrangement must be made between the organisation and the parents of the children. If a child is alone with an adult in a car they must sit on the back seat, unless otherwise approved by parent or guardian. Every child should be accounted for at the end of a journey.

Social media use and online communication

Staff and volunteers must never communicate privately with children online or on social media. Any necessary online communication should include the child's parent or carer in the correspondence.

Photography and the use of images

Photos and videos of children can only be taken with the permission of parents or carers. Parents and carers must also approve any images used on our social media channels. It is unacceptable for staff or volunteers to take photos or videos of children, other than their own, on personal devices, or to share images without permission.

Physical contact

Physical contact with children should be kept to a minimum. Everyone involved in the organisation is expected to have healthy physical boundaries with children.

Gifts and benefits

Staff and volunteers must never give gifts to children, or bestow benefits of any kind to a child, unless they have direct permission from the child's parents or carers.

Secondary employment

Staff members must declare any secondary employment and make sure there are no conflicts of interest associated with the employment.

Staff and volunteers are not allowed to babysit children in our care unless they know the family or carer outside the organisation. If this is the case, they must let the organisation know that this arrangement is in place so it can be documented.

Out of hours contact with children

Staff and volunteers must let us know about any out-of-hours contact they have with children in our care. It is unacceptable for staff or volunteers to participate in the lives of children outside the organisation without a valid reason. Professional boundaries with the children in our care must be maintained at all times.

Illness and injury management

Injuries must be reported to the first aid officer on duty and first aid administered in a safe space within lines of sight of other adults.

Participation of Children, Families, and Communities

We actively involve:

- Children, by seeking their feedback on what makes them feel safe
- Families and carers, by encouraging two-way communication
- Communities, by being culturally safe and responsive

All policy documents are accessible on our website and in printed form.

Reporting and Response Procedures

Birrang's Child Safe Reporting Policy (4.32) includes:

- Internal and external reporting processes
- Anonymous reporting options
- Protection from victimisation or retaliation
- Timely and fair investigation procedures
- Referral to authorities (e.g., Police, Office of the Children's Guardian)

Legislative Framework

This policy aligns with the following:

- Children's Guardian Act 2019

- Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012
- Child Protection (Working with Children) Regulation 2013
- Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998
- Crimes Act 1900
- Disability Inclusion Act 2014
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
- NDIS Act 2013

Related Documents

4.30 Child Safe Code of Conduct

- Guides the day-to-day behaviours of adults interacting with children at the organisation.

5.4 Induction and Orientation of New Staff and Volunteers

- Sets out what is involved in the recruitment process and the procedures to be followed before a person is considered for a role at the organisation. This includes the verification of their Working with Children Check. It also outlines what is involved in the induction process for new recruits and any further training requirements.

Child Safe Risk Management Plan

- Describes the specific risks at the service that could affect children's safety and identifies the protective strategies used to lower each risk.

Statement of Commitment to Child Safety

- Our public commitment to prioritising child safety across our organisation.

Child and youth input will be sought for relevant updates.

Publication

This policy is publicised via:

- Birrang Website
- Staff and volunteer inductions
- Printed versions at all sites
- Human Resources Management System (HRMS) documents
- Staff meetings and community events

POLICY REVIEW AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Birrang continuously enhances its services to guarantee optimal results for Participants through ongoing Quality Improvement. Our committee members will systematically reassess Birrang's Policies and Procedures. This review will occur at least once a year, and following any significant incidents, to reflect updates in Legislation, best practice guidelines, community perspectives, amendments in the National Disability Insurance Scheme Guidelines, and the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission's compliance standards. Additionally, in any policy revision directly affecting them, children and young people's input will be integral.