Child Safe & Culturally Safe Policy

A simple guide for children and young people

This guide is about keeping you safe, respected and included. It explains your rights, how adults should treat you, and what you can do if something feels wrong.

Who is this for?

This guide is for every child and young person who joins our programs, activities, services or events. You have the right to feel safe and welcome. This is true whatever your culture, identity, language, ability, beliefs, family or background.

Your rights

- Feel safe and be protected from harm, abuse, bullying, racism, discrimination and neglect.
- Be listened to and taken seriously.
- Have a say in choices that affect you.
- Be treated fairly, kindly and with respect.
- Be yourself and feel proud of your culture and identity.
- Ask questions, say “no” and speak up without getting into trouble.
- Know how to get help or make a complaint.
- Have your privacy respected. Sometimes information must be shared to keep someone safe.

What does culturally safe mean?

Cultural safety means you can be yourself and feel proud of who you are. You should not be judged, left out or asked to hide your culture. We respect your name, language, family, community, traditions, beliefs and connection to Country. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people have the right to feel safe, strong and proud in their culture. Racism and discrimination are never okay.

What adults must do

- Listen to you and help when you raise a worry.
- Speak and act respectfully.
- Explain rules and choices clearly.
- Ask what you think and include you in choices where they can.
- Respect your personal space and boundaries.

- Never hurt, threaten, shame or scare you.
- Keep your personal information and images safe.
- Make activities welcoming and easier for everyone to join.
- Act when they see racism, bullying, abuse or unsafe behaviour.

Examples for young people

- **Speaking up:** An adult makes a joke that embarrasses you. You can say, “I don’t like that,” move away and tell an adult you trust.
- **Respecting your culture:** Someone says your name wrongly or makes a racist comment. You can correct them, ask for help and report it.
- **Your boundaries:** Someone wants to hug you or take your photo, but you do not want them to. You can say “no.” Adults should respect your choice.
- **Being included:** You might need an interpreter, a quiet space, wheelchair access or a different way of getting information. You can ask for what you need.
- **Your privacy:** Before staff share your photo, they should get the right permission and tell you how it will be used.
- **Helping a friend:** If a friend says they feel unsafe, listen and help them tell a trusted adult. Do not promise to keep it secret.
- **Staying safe online:** If someone sends an uncomfortable message or asks you to keep a chat secret, do not reply. Save the message if it is safe, block the person and tell a trusted adult.

If something feels unsafe

1. Trust how you feel. If something feels wrong, uncomfortable or unsafe, it is okay to speak up.
2. Tell an adult you trust, a staff member or the child safety contact.
3. You can bring someone who supports you. You can also use your preferred language or ask for another way to communicate.
4. If you do not feel heard, tell someone else. You will not get in trouble for making a genuine complaint.
5. If you or someone else is in immediate danger, call 000.

Examples of making a complaint

- **Say it in person:** “Something happened that made me feel unsafe. Can I talk to you?”
- **Write it down:** Give a note, email or message to an adult you trust or the child safety contact.

- **Ask for help:** A parent, carer, friend, Elder, interpreter or support person can help you make the complaint.
- **Report unfair treatment:** “I was treated differently because of who I am. I want someone to look into it.”
- **Report an adult’s behaviour:** “An adult said or did something that made me uncomfortable. I want help to make it stop.”
- **Help a friend:** “My friend says they feel unsafe. I am worried and think they need help.”
- **Ask what comes next:** “Who will hear about my complaint? What happens next? When will I get an update?”
- **Keep speaking up:** If no one listens, tell another trusted adult or ask to speak to someone else.

What happens after making a complaint?

- **We listen:** You can tell us what happened and what would help you feel safe.
- **We help keep you safe:** If needed, we act straight away to protect you or someone else.
- **We explain what comes next:** We tell you who is helping and when you may hear from us.
- **We may ask questions:** This helps us understand. You can have a trusted adult, support person or interpreter with you.
- **We respect your privacy:** We only tell people who need to know. Sometimes we must share information to keep someone safe.
- **We look into what happened:** We may speak with other people or check information. We try to be fair to everyone.
- **We keep you updated:** We explain progress or delays in a way you understand.
- **We take action:** If someone acted unsafely or broke the rules, the organisation decides what needs to happen.
- **You can speak up again:** If you are unhappy or do not feel heard, tell another trusted adult and ask for more help.
- **We check in:** We ask if you feel safe and help you find more support if you need it.

We all help create safety

You can help by being kind, including others, following safety rules and speaking up about unsafe behaviour. But remember: adults and the organisation are responsible for keeping the space safe.

Remember: *You have the right to be safe, heard, respected and connected to your culture.*

This is a simple guide to the full Child Safe & Culturally Safe Policy. Add your organisation's child safety contact details, ways to make a complaint and support services here.