

NSCLC CHILD SAFE & WELLBEING POLICY	VERSION NO: 4
POSITION:	COM
COMMITTEE APPROVAL DATE:	22/03/2024
PRESIDENT SIGNATURE	Bec Bolger
REVIEW DATE:	ANNUALLY

North Shepparton Community & Learning Centre is a Community-Based Not For Profit Organisation that provides a neighbourhood House Licenced Children Service for children of Primary school aged and a registered training Organisation. North Shepparton Community & Learning Centre operates in regional Victoria and the community has a significant low socio economic community from varying cultures.

North Shepparton Community & Learning Centre acknowledges the Yorta Yorta People, the Traditional Owners of the land on which we operate. We acknowledge and respect their contributions, experience and knowledge as First Nations People. We pay our respects to their Elders, past and present.

Commitment to child safety

North Shepparton Community & Learning Centre is a Child Safe Organisation which welcomes all children, young people and their families.

We aim to create a child safe and child friendly environment, where children feel safe and have fun. We want children to be safe, happy and empowered. The North Shepparton Community & Learning Centre is committed to the principles of cultural safety and inclusion of all children from diverse back grounds, and children with disabilities, and we recognise that these principles support the safety of all children.

We are committed to providing environments where our children and young people are safe and feel safe, where their participation is valued, their views respected, and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives. Our child safe policies, strategies and practices are inclusive of the needs of all children and young people. We have no tolerance for child abuse and take proactive steps to identify and manage any risks of harm to children and young people in our environments.

We promote positive relationships between children and young people and adults and between children and young people and their peers. These relationships are based on trust and respect.

When child safety concerns are raised or identified, we treat these seriously and respond promptly and thoroughly. Particular attention is given to the child safety needs of Aboriginal children and young people, those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, children and young people with disabilities, those unable to live at home, children and young people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ+) and other students experiencing risk or vulnerability. Inappropriate or harmful behaviour targeting children and young people based on these or other characteristics, such as racism or homophobia, are not tolerated at our school, and any instances identified will be addressed with appropriate consequences.

Child safety is a shared responsibility. Every person involved in our Organisation has an important role in promoting child safety and wellbeing and promptly raising any issues or concerns about a child's safety.

We are committed to regularly reviewing our child safe practices, and seeking input from our children and young people, families, Staff, and Volunteers to inform our ongoing strategies.

All children and young people who come to North Shepparton Community & Learning Centre have the right to feel and be safe. The welfare of the children in our care will always be our first priority and we have a zero-tolerance approach to child abuse.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to demonstrate the strong commitment of management, Staff and Volunteers to child safety, and to provide an outline of how North Shepparton Community & Learning Centre prioritises the safety and wellbeing of children and what steps we will take to do this.

Scope

This policy applies to all Staff, Volunteers, Committee Members, children and other individuals involved in our Organisation. This policy applies to all activities including but not limited to classes, tutoring, family BBQs, one off events, and Outside School Hour's Programs, that are conducted at North Shepparton Community & Learning Centre

Definitions:

Child: The words child and children in this policy refer to children and young people up to the age of 18 years

Child abuse means:

- A sexual offence committed against a child
- An offence committed against a child under section 49M (1) of the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic), such as grooming
- Physical violence against a child
- causing serious emotional or psychological harm to a child
- Serious neglect of a child.

Harm is: damage to the health, safety or wellbeing of a child or young person, including as a result of child abuse by adults or the conduct of other children. It includes physical, emotional, sexual and psychological harm. Harm can arise from a single act or event and can also be cumulative, that is, arising as a result of a series of acts or events over a period of time.

Child connected work: means work authorised by the Organisations Governing Body and performed by an adult in an environment while children are present or reasonably expected to be present.

Child safety: encompasses matters related to protecting all children from abuse, managing the risk of child abuse, providing support to a child at risk of child abuse, and responding to incidents and allegations of child abuse.

Concerns and complaints

A concern refers to any potential issue that could impact negatively on the safety and wellbeing of children.

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction to North Shepparton Community & Learning Centre related to one or more of the following:

- Our services or dealings with individuals.
- Allegations of abuse or misconduct by a Staff Member, a Volunteer or another individual. associated with North Shepparton Community & Learning Centre
- Disclosures of abuse or harm made by a child or young person.
- The conduct of a child or young person at North Shepparton Community & Learning Centre.
- The inadequate handling of a prior concern.
- General concerns about the safety of a group of children or activity.

Roles and responsibilities

Committee

Our Committee is responsible for ensuring that a strong child safe culture is created and maintained, and that policies and practices are effectively developed, implemented and reviewed.

Committee Members will:

- Ensure effective child safety and wellbeing governance, policies, procedures, codes and practices are in place and followed
- Model a child safe culture that facilitates the active participation of children and young people, families and Staff in promoting and improving child safety, cultural safety and wellbeing
- Enable inclusive practices where the diverse needs of all children and young people are considered
- Reinforce high standards of respectful behaviour between children, young people and adults, and between children and young people.
- Promote regular open discussion on child safety issues within the community including at management meetings, and Staff meetings.
- Facilitate regular professional learning for Staff and Volunteers (where appropriate) to build deeper understandings of child safety, cultural safety, student wellbeing and prevention of responding to abuse
- Create an environment where child safety complaints and concerns are readily raised, and no one is discouraged from reporting an allegation of child abuse to relevant authorities.
- Ensure that appropriate child safety training for Staff and Volunteers is identified and completed.
- Champion and promote a child safe culture with the broader community
- Ensure that child safety is a regular agenda item at Committee Meetings **[Note** It is not necessary to discuss child safety at every meeting, but child safety should be discussed at some meetings to ensure that a culture of child safety is being embedded and Committee Members are informed and understand the issues]
- Undertake annual training on child safety, approve updates to, and act in accordance with the Child Safety Code of Conduct to the extent that it applies to Committee Members
- When hiring Employees, ensure that selection, supervision, and management practices are child safe.

Staff and Volunteers

All Staff and Volunteers will:

- Participate in child safety and wellbeing induction and training provided by North Shepparton Community & Learning Centre Inc., and always follow the child safety and wellbeing policies and procedures
- Act in accordance with our Child Safety Code of Conduct
- Identify and raise concerns about child safety issues in accordance with our Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy, including following the Four Critical Actions for Schools see attachment
- Ensure children and young people's views are taken seriously and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives
- Implement inclusive practices that respond to the diverse needs of students.

Specific Staff child safety responsibilities

The North Shepparton Community & Learning Centre has nominated Child Safety Champions to support the CEO to implement our child safety policies, procedures and practices, including Staff and Volunteer training.

The responsibilities of the Child Safety Champion are outlined in the Guidance for child safety champions as attached. In addition to these roles, our Child Safety Champion is also responsible for:

- Being the first point of contact for child safety concerns or queries and for coordinating responses to child safety incidents within their area of employment.
- The Children Services Coordinator, Training Coordinator and CEO are responsible for monitoring the compliance with the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy. Anyone in our community should approach any of these positions if they have any concerns about the Organisations compliance with the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy.
- All the above positions are responsible for informing the community about this policy, and making it publicly available

Other specific roles and responsibilities are named in other policies and procedures, including the Child Safe Code of Conduct, Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy.

Cultural safety for Aboriginal children Child Safe Standard 1:

Organisations establish a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children and young people are respected and valued.

How we address this at North Shepparton Community & Learning Centre Inc.:

North Shepparton Community & Learning Centre is committed to creating environments where Aboriginal culture is celebrated and Aboriginal children, families and community Members are welcomed and included.

Strategies to embed cultural safety for Aboriginal children include:

- Creating an inclusive and welcoming physical and online environment for Aboriginal children and their families.
- Encouraging and supporting students to express their culture and enjoy their cultural rights through curricular and co-curricular programs.
- Recognising the right of students and their families to identify as Aboriginal and not challenging their identity.
- Ensuring that racism within the Organisation is identified, confronted and not tolerated.
- An Acknowledgement of Country at all events.
- Consulting with families and Members of the Aboriginal community to identify opportunities to promote Aboriginal culture and practices at North Shepparton Community & Learning Centre.
- Providing opportunities for children to share their cultural identity and express their culture.
- Supporting children who wish to explore their culture, including consulting with their family and relevant Aboriginal Organisations
- Providing training for Staff and Volunteers on the strengths of Aboriginal culture and its importance to the wellbeing and safety of Aboriginal children
- Celebrating NAIDOC Week and acknowledging significant events including National Sorry Day and National Reconciliation Week
- Seeking feedback from Aboriginal children, families and communities on their experience at North Shepparton Community & Learning Centre, particularly how safe they feel expressing their identity including their culture.

Valuing diversity

We value diversity and equity for all children. To achieve this, we:

- Provide training for all Committee Members, Staff and Volunteers on understanding diversity and how to support inclusion and cultural safety.

- Welcome and support participation of all children, including children with disability, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, those who are unable to live at home, LGBTIQ children and Aboriginal children and their families.
- Offer students and families through our enrolment forms the opportunity to provide information about themselves, including any specific needs to participate fully in our programs.
- Have zero tolerance of racism and other forms of discrimination and take action when discrimination or exclusion is identified.
- Deliver programming that reflects the diversity of our students, their interests and cultures.
- Strive to reflect the diversity of our community through representation in our Staff and Committee Members.
- Acknowledge and celebrate important cultural dates in our programs.
- Have a physical and online environment that actively celebrates diversity.
- Commit to ensuring our facilities and online activities promote inclusion of children of all abilities.

A commitment to child safety and wellbeing Child Safe Standard 2:

Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in Organisational leadership, governance and culture.

How we address this at North Shepparton Community & Learning Centre Inc.:

- Providing a public commitment to child safety.
- A child safe culture is championed and modelled at all levels of the Organisation from the top down and the bottom up.
- Governance arrangements facilitate the implementation of the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy, and all associated policies, at all levels of the Organisation.
- A Code of Conduct provides guidelines for Staff and Volunteers on expected behavioural standards, responsibilities and processes.
- Risk management strategies focus on preventing, identifying and mitigating risks to children and young people.
- Staff and Volunteers understand their obligations on information sharing and record keeping.

This can be seen through:

- All Staff must read and sign the Child Safe and Wellbeing Policy and the Child Safe Code of Conduct.
- All Volunteers must read and sign the Child Safe Code of Conduct.
- Staff and Committee are provided with Child Safety Standards professional development annually
- Staff and Volunteers are provided with professional development regarding their information sharing and record keeping obligations.
- New Members of Staff are inducted on child safety on commencement of their employment.
- Our commitment to child safety is on North Shepparton Community & Learning Centres website.
- Child safety and wellbeing is a standing item on the monthly Committee meeting agenda and in the Staff meetings.
- Risk management is completed for all incursions, excursions, trips and tours to ensure the safety of our young people and children
- Child safe policies and procedures are reviewed regularly and updated.

Taking child participation and empowerment seriously Child Safe Standard 3:

- Children and young people are empowered about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.
- How we address this at North Shepparton Community & Learning Centre Inc:
- Children and young people are informed about all of their rights, including safety, information and participation.
- The importance of friendships is recognised and support from peers is encouraged to help children and young people feel safe and be less isolated.
- Children and young people are offered access to sexual abuse related information, in an age-appropriate way.
- Staff and Volunteers are informed and attuned to signs of harm and facilitate child-friendly ways for children and young people to express their views, participate in decision-making and raise their concerns.
- Our Organisation has strategies in place to develop and imbed a culture that facilitates participation and is responsive to input from our young people and children.
- Our Organisation provides opportunities for children and young people to participate and is responsive to their contributions, thereby strengthening confidence and engagement.
- North Shepparton Community & Learning Centre values the voices of children and young people and will act on safety concerns raised by children or their families.

This can be seen through:

- Our commitment to the Respectful Relationships between children and young people supported within our programs
- We will encourage children to develop new friends through North Shepparton Community & Learning Centre programs and encourage children to be supportive of each other. We do not tolerate bullying or abusive behaviour between children and take action if this occurs.
- Our Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and our Child Safe Code of Conduct policy are easily accessible to young people, children and their families online and in print.
- Young people and children are explicitly taught about how adults and students are expected to behave within our Organisation and how to express safety concerns they may have for themselves, their friends or peers.
- Young people and children are taught how to seek help and access support services, or raise a complaint, for themselves, their friends or peers and have identified more than one trusted adult at the Organisation from whom to seek this help.
- We actively seek to understand what makes children and young people feel safe in our Organisation.
- We regularly communicate with children and young people, including child-led conversations on what makes them feel safe and unsafe.
- A suggestion box for children that is regularly emptied with suggestions assessed and acted on where appropriate. Children are provided with feedback on their suggestions.
- Consultation with children about any proposed significant changes to the physical environment, policies, procedures, programs or Staffing. Children's views are collected by Staff, provided to management and considered in the decision-making process.
- Information provided to children and families about North Shepparton Community & Learning Centre operations, Staffing and programs are made suitable for different age groups and diversity of the children.

Involving families and communities Child Safe Standard 4:

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

How we address this at North Shepparton Community & Learning centre

- Families participate in decisions that impact their child.
- Families and communities are given information about the Organisations child safety and wellbeing policies and relevant information is accessible.
- Families and communities are invited to have a say in the development and review of the Organisations policies, procedures and practices.
- Families, carers and the community are informed about the Organisations operations and governance.
- Recognising the important role of families and involves parents and carers when making significant decisions about their child.

This can be seen through:

- Our Organisation's approach to child safety being easily accessible on the Organisations website and availability to Organisation policies and procedures upon request.
- Staff provide families of identified children or young people with a collaborative input and are included as part of the decisions process of establishing the goals and strategies for their child's learning.
- Individual goals and strategies are reviewed at a minimum annually, or more frequently as required, with family input included in each review. The strategies identified are shared with the child or young person's immediate Staff Members and with the individual them self, in an age-appropriate manner.
- Families assist in decision making around behaviour support plans and interventions that may be required or advised by internal and external Allied Health Services.
- The Organisation conducts surveys, informal discussions and drop boxes to gain feedback and evaluate programs and practices in the Organisation.
- Parents, families and communities are welcome to provide feedback at any time through our contact email address, informal discussions and are encouraged to raise any concerns they have with us.
- Including information about our child safety approach, our operations and Committee and management structure, Parent, Volunteer and Staff Handbooks
- Including articles and information on child safety and wellbeing, and reminders about our policies and procedures in our newsletter for Vacation care.

Respecting equity and diversity Child Safe Standard 5:

Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy, procedures and practice.

How we address this at North Shepparton Community & Learning Centre Inc.

- The Organisation, Staff and Volunteers, understand that children and young people have diverse circumstances and provide support and responds to those who are vulnerable.
- Children and young people at the Organisation have access to information, support and complaints processes that are culturally safe, accessible and easy to understand.
- The Organisation pays particular attention to the needs of children and young people with disability, children and young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, those who are unable to live at home, and lesbian, gay, transgender and intersex children and young people.

- The Organisation pays particular attention to the needs of Aboriginal children and young people and provides a culturally safe environment for them.

This can be seen through:

- The Organisations Discrimination & Harassment Policy.
- The adoption of preferred pronouns and names for children and young people who identify as non-binary.
- A culture in which children and young people are free to identify as LGBTQI+ without fear of discrimination or bullying from Staff, Volunteers and peers.
- A comprehensive enrolment process through which families are invited to provide the Organisation with the necessary information to ensure each student's individual physical, social and learning needs are understood and accommodated as far as is reasonable.
- Staff professional learning on identifying and responding to children with diverse circumstances and needs.

Ensuring that Staff are suitable and supported Child Safe Standard 6:

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

How we address this at North Shepparton Community & Learning Centre:

- Recruitment, including advertising, referee checks and Staff and Volunteer pre-employment screening, emphasis child safety and wellbeing.
- Relevant Staff and Volunteers have current working with children checks.
- All Staff and Volunteers receive an appropriate induction and are aware of their responsibilities to children and young people, including record keeping, information sharing and reporting obligations.
- Ongoing supervision and people management is focussed on child safety and wellbeing.

This can be seen through:

- All Staff are required to have current registration with the Victorian Institute of Teaching, (VIT) or working with children's check (WWC).
- Volunteers are required to have a valid Victorian Working with Children Check card.
- The recruitment process for any role within the Organisation includes a check of an individual's suitability to work with or near children and young people and reflects child safe practices.
- Our job advertisements make explicit our Organisation's commitment to Child Safety and Wellbeing.
- All referees are asked a series of questions relating to the candidate's suitability to work with children, and the child safe standards.
- All candidates are asked a question around child safe standards at interview.
- New Staff must agree to the Child Safe Code of Conduct as part of signing a new contract.
- Staff and the Committee receive annual professional development on Child Safety, and all Staff must complete the mandatory report module and provide their certificate of completion to the CEO.
- VIT cards and WWC are copied and stored in a register for all Staff and Volunteers and renewals of VIT and WWC are monitored by the CEO

- The reporting of Working with Children Checks is online from the Department of Justice and we receive notifications online as people register.
- At commencement of employment, Staff are asked for a copy of their current WCC which is added to their paper file.
- New Staff and Volunteers receive induction on the Organisation's policies and procedures and obligations towards reporting information sharing, confidentiality and ensuring the safety of children and young people.
- Our policies and procedures ensure child safety and wellbeing.

Child-focused complaint systems Child Safe Standard 7:

Processes for complaints and concerns are child-focused

How we address this at North Shepparton Community & Learning Centre:

- Our Organisation has an accessible, child focused complaint handling policy which clearly outlines the roles and responsibilities of leadership, Staff and Volunteers, approaches to dealing with different types of complaints, breaches of relevant policies or the Code of Conduct and obligation to act and report
- Effective complaint handling processes are understood by children and young people, families, Staff and Volunteers, and are culturally safe.
- Complaints are taken seriously and responded to promptly and thoroughly.
- The Organisation has policies and procedures in place that address reporting of complaints and concerns to relevant authorities, whether or not the law requires reporting, and cooperates with law enforcement.
- Reporting, privacy and employment law obligations are met.

This can be seen through:

- Our Organisation has a Child Safety, child focused complaint procedure, and a child safety reporting procedure for Staff, parents, children and any community Member and the community that is available via the website or at the reception.
- A verbal complaint or grievance will be acknowledged and recorded by the representative of the Organisation at the time of communication of the complaint or grievance.
- A written complaint or grievance will be acknowledged in writing by the Organisations representative within three working days.
- A timeline will be agreed upon for investigating and resolving the complaint or grievance.
- The Organisation ensures all Staff follow policy and procedures that align to privacy, reporting and legislation.
- Decisions about a complaint will be made with the best interests of the Child or young person at the core, ensuring the Organisation provides a safe and secure environment that promotes a positive climate.

Staff knowledge, skills and awareness Child Safe 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.

How we address this at North Shepparton Community & Learning Centre:

- Staff and Volunteers are trained and supported to effectively implement the Organisations Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy.
- Staff and Volunteers receive training and information to recognise indicators of child harm including harm caused by other children and young people and responding to disclosures.

- Staff and Volunteers receive training and information to respond effectively to issues of child safety and wellbeing and support colleagues who disclose harm.
- Staff and Volunteers receive training and information on how to build culturally safe, inclusive environments for children and young people and responding to racism.
- Staff and Volunteers receive training and information about children's rights.
- Staff and Volunteers receive training and information on record keeping risk assessment and external reporting obligations.

This can be seen through:

- The Organisations provision of annual Staff training with child safe standards and the requirement for all Staff to complete compulsory online training for mandatory reporting through child protection.
- A child safe standards update is a standing agenda item for Staff meetings and Committee meetings.
- Volunteers are kept up to date with policies and procedures relating to child safe and wellbeing.
- Staff receive training through presentations and professional reading on how to build culturally safe environments that are inclusive and engaging.

Safe physical and online environments Child Safe Standard 9:

Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.

How we address this at North Shepparton Community & Learning Centre:

- Our Staff identify and mitigate risks in the online and physical environments without compromising a child's right to privacy, access to information, social connections and learning opportunities.
- The online environment is used in accordance with the Code of Conduct and Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and practices.
- Risk management plans consider risks posed by Organisational settings, activities and the physical environment.

This can be seen through:

- Our range of policies, including but not limited to, the Codes of Conduct, NSCLC Acceptable Use of Electronic Media Policy, the Social Media Policy and the Child Safe and Wellbeing Policy, ensure our online and physical environments promote the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people
- Risk management processes occur for all incursions, excursions, and tours and are conducted by the Staff responsible for the activity.
- Risk management is conducted for all contracts, facilities and services provided by third parties to ensure they comply with our commitment to child safe standards.
- Our physical environment is well maintained, attractive and promotes positive wellbeing. The grounds are kept safe secure and the building minimize the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.

Review of child safe policies and practices Child Safe Standard 10:

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

How we address this at North Shepparton Community & Learning Centre:

- The Organisation regularly reviews, evaluates and improves child safe practices.
- Complaints, concerns and safety incidents are analysed to identify causes and systemic failures to inform continuous improvement.

- The Organisation reports on the findings of relevant reviews to Staff and Volunteers, community and families, and children and young people.

This can be seen through:

- Our Child Safe and Wellbeing policies and practices are reviewed on an annual basis or sooner as needed.
- All policies and procedures have a regular review period indicated in the document.
- Safety incidents are reported and reviewed by the Committee on a regular basis.
- Complaints, concerns, safety incidents or significant breaches of policies are tabled at the monthly Committee Meeting to understand what caused the problem and where improvements can be made.
- Reporting of information and findings is done to all stakeholders through a range of means such as Staff meetings, email communication, face to face meetings and parent meetings.

Documenting policies and procedures Child Safe Standard 11:

Policies and procedures document how the Organisation is safe for children and young people.

How we address this at North Shepparton Community & Learning Centre:

- Our policies and procedures address all Child Safe Standards.
- Our policies and procedures are documented and easy to understand.
- North Shepparton Community & Learning Centre uses best practice models from VRQA and DET and stakeholder consultation informs the development of policies and procedures.
- Our Committee and management champion and model compliance with policies and procedures.
- Staff and Volunteers understand and implement policies and procedures.

This can be seen through:

- The Organisations policies and procedures are reviewed regularly and address all the standards.
- The policies are available to Staff, students and parents and carers.
- The Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy sets out the Organisations expectations, practices, and approach in relation to each of the Child Safe Standards.
- Our Code of Conduct sets out expectations for behaviour and responsibilities of Staff and Volunteers.
- The Organisations risk assessment address risks of child abuse and harm.
- The complaint handling policy and processes address how the Organisation will respond and all internal and external reporting obligations.
- The Organisational recruitment, human resources and Volunteering policies have a clear child safety focus.
- The Organisations policies and procedures are role modelled by all Staff, Committee and Volunteers and the Organisations community is supported to ensure they are embedded into day-to-day operations.
- Professional learning and updates are provided throughout the year to ensure Staff and Volunteers understand the implementation of the policies and procedures.

Code of Conduct

North Shepparton Community & Learning Centre has a Child Safe Code of Conduct. Staff, Volunteers and the Committee must comply with the Code of Conduct at all times. Breaches of the Code of Conduct may result in disciplinary action including termination of a person's involvement with the Organisation.

All third-party contractors are also expected to abide by the Child Safe Code of Conduct, and where they are engaging with children will have to sign an agreement to comply with the code, prior to delivering any services.

Recruiting Staff and Volunteers

North Shepparton Community & Learning Centre puts child safety and wellbeing at the centre of recruitment and screening processes for all Staff and Volunteers as outlined in the NSCLC Employees Recruitment Policy and NSCLC Safety Screening Policy. We only recruit Staff and Volunteers who are appropriate to engage with children. Members of the Committee must also be screened.

We require a Working with Children Check, Police Checks and Referee Checks for all Staff and Volunteers who have a role with children or have access to children's personal information. We require Staff to have appropriate qualifications for their roles and check to make sure these qualifications are valid. Members of the Committee must hold a valid Working with Children Check and a national Police Check is required.

Supporting Staff and Volunteers

North Shepparton Community & Learning Centre is committed to ensuring that all leaders, Staff and Volunteers receive training to ensure they understand their responsibilities in relation to child safety and to support their engagement with children. North Shepparton Community & Learning Centre assists its leaders, Staff and Volunteers to incorporate child safety considerations into decisions and to promote a safe environment where children are empowered to speak up about issues that affect them.

North Shepparton Community & Learning Centre Committee Members, Staff and Volunteers are required to complete annual child safety training. Training will be recorded in an individual's files.

Staff and Volunteers will receive supervision to support their engagement with children and for compliance with our Code of Conduct and Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy.

Issues or concerns about behaviour with children will be raised immediately and addressed in line with our Code of Conduct and Complaint Handling Policy.

Complaints and reporting

All reports of child abuse and child safety concerns will be treated seriously, whether they are made by an adult or a child and whether they are about the conduct of an adult or a child. All complaints and child safety concerns will be responded to promptly and thoroughly.

North Shepparton Community & Learning Centre has a Complaint Handling Policy that includes information for Staff and Volunteers about how a complaint or child safety concern will be responded to. An easy-to-understand complaints information sheet will be provided for children, families and the community to know about the complaint process and the supports available to those making a complaint and those involved in the complaint process.

If a complaint includes an allegation or incident of child abuse or harm, then Staff and Volunteers at North Shepparton Community & Learning Centre must report it in accordance with the Complaint Handling Policy. North Shepparton Community & Learning Centre Staff and Volunteers are required to prioritise children's safety in any response and to report all

potentially criminal conduct to Victoria Police. Under the complaint handling and disciplinary policies, Staff and Volunteers may be subject to actions to support child safety including:

- Being stood down during an investigation or terminated following an investigation
- Having their duties altered so they do not engage with children at North Shepparton Community & Learning Centre
- Not allowing unsupervised contact with children at North Shepparton Community & Learning Centre
- Removing their access to the North Shepparton Community & Learning Centre IT system and facilities.
- Complaints can be emailed to manager@nscllc.com.au or you can speak with the CEO of the Organisation or the senior Staff Member of your area.

If there is concern for the immediate safety of a child, immediately call 000.

Child Safety Person

North Shepparton Community & Learning Centre has senior Staff Members with responsibility for responding to any child safety related complaints or concerns.

Child Safety Persons are introduced to children so they know and understand who the appointed officers are, and how and when they may contact them. Photos and names of the child safety persons are displayed on our noticeboard and within the reception of North Shepparton Community & Learning Centre.

If a person does not feel comfortable making a report to a Child Safety Person, they may report their concern to a Member of the North Shepparton Community & Learning Centre Committee.

Record keeping

North Shepparton Community & Learning Centre is committed to making and keeping full and accurate records about all child-related complaints or safety concerns.

All child safety complaints, concerns, incidents and near misses will be recorded in the incident reporting system.

Records which may assist with the investigation of a complaint or safety concern will be identified and kept as part of the record of an investigation. Records will be kept even if an investigation does not substantiate a complaint.

We will record and keep the outcome of any investigations, and the resolution of any complaints. This includes findings made, reasons for decisions and actions taken.

Records will be stored securely and kept by North Shepparton Community & Learning Centre for at least 45 years.

Information sharing

North Shepparton Community & Learning Centre may share relevant information to promote the safety and wellbeing of children, where it is appropriate and in their best interests. North Shepparton Community & Learning Centre will keep information about complaints confidential, except where it is necessary to share information to respond properly to a complaint or to prioritise child safety.

We may also need to share information about incidents or complaints with external authorities to comply with the law or to prioritise safety. More information is available in our complaint handling policy.

Risk management

We recognise the importance of identifying and managing risks of child harm and abuse in the physical and online environments operated by North Shepparton Community & Learning Centre.

We conduct regular risk assessments and have a risk management plan to address the risk of child abuse and harm at North Shepparton Community & Learning Centre. The risk management plan will be developed in consultation with our Staff, Volunteers, parent representatives and children. We will ensure that any risk controls put in place balance the need to manage harm with the benefits of participating at North Shepparton Community & Learning Centre. The Committee is responsible for approving the risk management plan.

Any contractors or other providers of services will always be supervised by a Member of Staff while working with us to ensure child safety. See also Code of Conduct above.

Non-compliance with this policy and the Code of Conduct

North Shepparton Community & Learning Centre will enforce this policy, the Code of Conduct and the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy. Potential breaches by anyone will be investigated and may result in restriction of duties, suspension or termination of employment or engagement or other corrective action.

Review

North Shepparton Community & Learning Centre will review all child safe practices and policies annually. We also review relevant practices and policies in response to a child safety incident or 'near miss'. Findings from reviews will be reported to the people involved in our Organisation and also inform our approach to continuous improvement of our child safety practices.

Reviews are overseen by the Committee and will be informed by consultation with children, families and Staff.

Related Documentation

Associated Policies/Procedures

NSCLC Employees Recruitment Policy
NSCLC Employees Recruitment Procedure
NSCLC Safety Screening Procedure
NSCLC Safety Screening Policy
NSCLC Complaints Handling Policy
NSCLC Disciplinary Policy
OSHC Educators Recruitment, Induction & Orientation Policy
OSHC Educators Recruitment Procedure
OSHC Educators Induction Procedure
OSHC Educators Orientation Procedure
RTO Staff Recruitment Induction and Orientation Procedure
RTO Staff Recruitment and Induction Policy
NSCLC Bullying and Harassment policy
NSCLC Child Safe Code of Conduct.
NSCLC Child Safety Responding & Reporting Obligations Policy
NSCLC Making a Report or Referral Procedure
NSCLC Reportable Conduct Policy
NSCLC Child Safety Reporting Procedure flow chart.
NSCLC Child Safety, Child Focused Complaint Procedure
NSCLC Duty of Care Policy

Documentation

Appendix A: NSCLC Child Safe Code of Conduct

Source

Commission for Children and Young People's Act 2012

Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005

Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic) (including reporting to Child Protection)

Children's Protection Act 1993.

Crimes Act 1958 (Vic) (including Failure to Protect and Failure to Disclose offences)

Wrongs Act 1958 (Vic) (including Part XIII – Organisational liability for child abuse)

Child Safe Standards

Education and Care Services National Law (Victoria)

Education and Care Services National Regulations, Reg 168, Reg 84

Child Employment Act 2003

Working with Children Act 2005

Privacy Act 1988(Cth)

Australian Privacy Principles (Commonwealth)

Information Privacy Principles (Victoria)

Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Act)

A guide for creating a Child Safe Organisation

<http://www.ccyp.vic.gov.au>

APPENDIX A: NSCLC CHILD SAFE CODE OF CONDUCT

I WILL:

- Treat all children and young people with respect.
- Listen to and value children and young people's ideas and opinions.
- Welcome all children and their families and carers by being inclusive.
- Actively promote cultural safety.
- Listen to and value children and young people's ideas and opinions and respond to them appropriately.
- Welcome parents and carers to participate in decisions about their child and any other matters about their safety.
- Report any conflicts of interest (such as an outside relationship with a child, babysitting arrangements or any other formal or informal relationships with a child that exist outside this Organisational setting).
- Adhere to all relevant Australian and Victorian legislation and our child safe policies and procedures.
- Work within a team to ensure that the needs of the child (and their family) remain the paramount focus.
- Take all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse (such as completing all induction and compulsory training, and working in an open transparent manner).
- Act with integrity by raising concerns with management if risks to child safety are identified, including cultural, environmental and operational risks.
- Report and act on any concerns or observed breaches of this Code of Conduct.
- Take all reasonable steps to protect children from racism by identifying any instances of racism and addressing the immediately.
- Respect the privacy of children and their families by keeping all information regarding Child Protection concerns confidential and only discussing information with the relevant people by following the Organisation's reporting procedures.
- Inform parents and carers if there are situations that need to be safely managed.
- Take a child seriously if they disclose harm or abuse.
- Ensure breaches of this Code are reported immediately.
- Uphold the rights of the child and always prioritise their needs.
- Treat all children and young people with respect, regardless of race, colour, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, language, religion, political or other opinion, health status, national, ethnic or social origin, culture, property, ability or other status.
- Work with children in an open and transparent way (so that other adults always know what work you are doing with children).
- Dress in clean, appropriate clothing and following any dress code standards or guidelines (including avoiding clothing that is revealing or that includes offensive language or pictures).
- Treat all workers, families and children with respect by listening to their needs, remaining calm and using positive, non-offensive language.
- Have Zero tolerance of racism.
- Have zero tolerance to Abuse.
- Not misuse any digital devices or use unacceptable behaviour in relation to Children this includes while using social media, email, instant messages, SMS and any other app

I WILL NOT:

- Condone or participate in illegal, unsafe or abusive behaviour towards children, including physical, sexual or psychological abuse, ill-treatment, and neglect or grooming.
- Ignore or disregard any concerns, suspicions or disclosures of child abuse.
- Exaggerate or trivialise child abuse issues.
- Use hurtful, discriminatory or offensive behaviour or language with children.

- Fail to report information to police if I know a child has been abused.
- Engage in unwarranted and inappropriate touching involving a child.
- Persistently criticise and/or denigrate a child.
- Deliberately prevent a child from forming friendships.
- Verbally assault a child or create a climate of fear.
- Offer children and young people alcohol, cigarettes or other drugs.
- Show children pornographic images.
- Encourage a child to communicate with me in a private setting.
- Share details of sexual experiences with a child.
- Use sexual language or gestures in the presence of children.
- Disrespect colleagues, families or children by yelling, swearing or engaging in any sort of abusive or intimidating behaviour and by not making threats of harm or racial, cultural or sexist slurs.
- Use digital devices to groom a child.

I understand the following types of behaviour may be of concern:

- Being alone with a child when there is no professional reason for doing so.
- Showing favour to one child over others.
- Having secrets with a child.
- Babysitting, mentoring and/or tutoring a child out of work hours.
(Without managerial approval for this kind of secondary employment)

All Staff, Volunteers, families and community Members are encouraged to speak up if they have concerns about the safety of children. Complaints about a breach of this Code of Conduct must be reported to the senior Employees of your section as listed below.

- Children Services Employees to notify Children Services Director
- Training and Program Employees to notify Training Coordinator
- All other areas to notify NSCLC CEO

These people can be notified by calling the office on 03 58215770 or their individual emails listed below

childcare@nsclc.com.au

trainingcoordinator@nsclc.com.au

manager@nsclc.com.au

Some breaches of this Code of Conduct may need to be reported to the Victorian Police, the Department of Child protection.

Our Complaint Handling Policy provides more information about our reporting obligations to external authorities as well as describing protections and confidentiality provisions for anyone making a report. The policy can be found by asking at the front desk.

Staff and Volunteers who breach our Code of Conduct may also be subject to disciplinary action. This can include increased supervision, appointment to an alternative role, suspension or termination from the Organisation. Detailed descriptions of breaches are found in our Disciplinary Policy. This can be found by asking at the front desk.

PLEASE NOTE:

An adult in child-related work in an Organisation will commit an offence if they know another adult there poses a serious risk of abusing a child (under 18 years), and they have the power to reduce or remove the risk, and they negligently fail to do so. All adults in Victoria are required to report information to police if they know, believe or reasonably ought to know that a child (under 18 years) has been abused.

If you believe a child is at immediate risk of abuse phone 000.

I agree to abide by this Code of Conduct during my employment/placement with North Shepparton Community & Learning Centre.

I understand that breaches of this Code of Conduct may lead to disciplinary action or termination of my position within North Shepparton Community & Learning Centre.

Name:

Signature:

Date: