

# Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

## Purpose

The Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy outlines our commitment to the safety and wellbeing of children under the age of 18 and establishes the principles and standards to be applied by all employees. .

## Scope

This policy applies to all Wannon Water employees, student placement programs, contractors, consultants, and its Board of Directors. This includes unpaid volunteers working on behalf of Wannon Water, where there is a direct interaction with children.

## Policy statement

All employees and volunteers at Wannon Water who work directly with children and young people are responsible for understanding their role in ensuring the wellbeing and safety of those children and young people.

There are a broad range of scenarios, where Wannon Water may have direct interaction with children

They may include:

- Undertaking works where children are present, such schools, early learning/childcare facilities, and public learning facilities etc.
- Community engagement activities.
- Educational events.
- Work experience or student placement programs.

To deliver on our commitment to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people, Wannon Water will:

- Take a proactive approach to children's safety and wellbeing.
- Respect and value diversity in cultures, while keeping children safe.
- Foster a culture of open communication that people feel safe to disclose any risks of harm to children.
- Provide those working directly with children and young people with guidance on appropriate conduct and behaviour towards children and procedures for reporting.
- Provide those working directly with children with relevant training and education.
- Ensure children know who to talk with if they are feeling unsafe, and that they are comfortable and encouraged to access easy to understand information, support, and complaints processes.
- Report suspected abuse or neglect to relevant authorities.
- Regularly monitor and review policies and procedures to ensure they aligned with Child Safe Standards and relevant legislation.

## Responsibility

### Legislative responsibilities

Wannon Water takes our responsibilities seriously, these include:

**Failure to disclose:** Reporting child sexual abuse is a legislative requirement and responsibility of all adults in Victoria. All adults in Victoria who have a reasonable belief that another adult has sexually offended against a child under 16 are obligated to report and disclose this information to the authorities.

**Failure to protect:** People of authority in our organisation will commit an offence if they know of a substantial risk of child sexual abuse and have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, but negligently fail to do so.

**Mandatory Reporters:** Any personnel who are mandatory reporters must comply with their position duties and report a reasonable belief of child physical or sexual abuse.

*Approved 12 September 2023*

## Roles and responsibilities

Role	Responsibilities
Executive Team	Review and endorse this policy.
Managers	Monitor and support behaviours to ensure compliance with the requirements of this policy.
People & Wellbeing Manager	Ensure this policy continues to meet legislative provisions for all employees. Management of all child safety and wellbeing incident reports and investigations or refer to an appropriately trained delegate.
People & Wellbeing team	Process relevant employee checks, including Working with Children for all relevant roles. Arranging appropriate training and education for those working with direct interaction with children.
Employees, volunteers, and contractors	Complying with relevant Wannon Water policies, guidelines and processes related to this policy.

Further information on the [Standards](#) can be found on the Commission for Children and Young People.

## References

### Definitions

Term	Means
Child	Any person under the age of 18.
Contact with a child	Refers to physical contact, face-to-face contact, written communication, oral communication, or electronic communication.
Child harm	Means any forms of physical, emotional, or sexual abuse or exploitation, harm or neglect.
Child Safe Standards	The Victorian Child Wellbeing and Safety Amendment Bill 2021 requires all organisations that provide services or facilities to children to comply with 11 Child Safe Standards, to ensure that the safety of children is promoted, child abuse is prevented, and allegations of child abuse are properly responded to.
Indigenous	The term Indigenous is inclusive of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island peoples.
Employees	Includes Wannon Water Employees, Volunteers and Contractors engaged by Wannon Water.
Disclosure	Refers to the communication of a child safety incident, including a child telling someone they feel unsafe or have been harmed.
Mandatory Reporters	Refers to the legal requirement of some professionals such as doctors, nurses, police, and school teachers to make a report to child protection where they form a reasonable belief, that a child has been or is at risk of significant harm, as a result of physical or sexual abuse, and the child's parents have not protected or are unlikely to protect the child from that abuse.

### Supporting documents

- Code of Conduct Addendum
- Victorian Public Services Code of Conduct
- Child Safe Procedure
- Consequences of Misconduct
- Child Safety & Wellbeing Incident Report

### Legislation and standards

- Department of Families, Fairness and Housing - [Child Safe Standards](#)
- [Commission for Children and Young People](#).