

# **Guidelines** for implementing the **Child Safe Standards** in Queensland

Publication date: September 2025



QUEENSLAND  
**Family & Child  
Commission**  

---

Child Safe Organisations



Queensland  
Government

## About this report

The Queensland Family and Child Commission (QFCC) is a statutory body of the Queensland Government. Its purpose is to influence change that improves the safety and wellbeing of Queensland's children and their families. Under the *Child Safe Organisations Act 2024*, the QFCC has been tasked by the Queensland Government to oversee the implementation of the Child Safe Organisations system and designated as the regulator.

## Accessibility

The Queensland Government is committed to providing accessible services to Queenslanders from all culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. If you have difficulty understanding this report, you can contact Translating and Interpreting Service National on 13 14 50 to arrange for an interpreter to effectively explain it to you. Local call charges apply if calling within Australia; higher rates apply from mobile phones and payphones.

## Contact for enquiries

### Queensland Family and Child Commission

Level 8, 63 George Street, Brisbane

PO Box 15217, Brisbane City East QLD 4002

**Tel:** (07) 3900 6000 – select **Child Safe Organisations** from the available options

**Email:** [cs0@qfcc.qld.gov.au](mailto:cs0@qfcc.qld.gov.au)

**Website:** [www.qfcc.qld.gov.au](http://www.qfcc.qld.gov.au)

## Copyright

Copyright © The State of Queensland (Queensland Family and Child Commission) 2025.

## Licence

These Guidelines are licensed by the State of Queensland (Queensland Family and Child Commission) under a Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) 4.0 International licence. You are free to copy, communicate and adapt these Guidelines, as long as you attribute the work to the State of Queensland (Queensland Family and Child Commission). To view a copy of this licence visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>. Content from these Guidelines should be attributed as: The State of Queensland (Queensland Family and Child Commission) *Guidelines for implementing the Universal Principle and Child Safe Standards in Queensland*.



## Disclaimer

The Child Safe Standards reflect the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, in response to recommendations from the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (the Royal Commission). To ensure national consistency, these Guidelines take their lead from the National Principles as outlined by the Australian Human Rights Commission.

While these Guidelines have been tailored specifically to reflect Queensland's unique context and legislative framework, we aim to drive national consistency in the design of child safe organisations and have drawn from the work of other Australian states and territories, particularly New South Wales, Victoria and Tasmania, which have already provided guidance to applying the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations within their jurisdictions.

These Guidelines build on their insights while incorporating Queensland-specific approaches to ensure they are relevant and practical for organisations operating in our state.

## Acknowledgement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

The Queensland Family and Child Commission (QFCC) acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Custodians across the lands, seas and skies on which we walk, live and work.

We recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait peoples as two unique peoples, with their own rich and distinct cultures, strengths and knowledge. We celebrate the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures across Queensland and pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.

The QFCC recognises the rich and resilient cultures that continue to sustain and strengthen Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We respect their right to self-determination and the critical importance of continuing connection to kin, Country and culture in the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

We recognise that self-determination, healing, dignity and respect are all fundamental elements needed to improve outcomes and relationships. As an agency, we are committed to embedding culturally safe and responsive design practices and delivery in our work.

## Acknowledgement of Children's Rights

The QFCC acknowledges the special rights of children which are recorded in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), guided by its four principles: the right of all children to survival and development; respect of the best interests of the child as a primary consideration in all decisions relating to children; the right of all children to express their views freely on all matters affecting them; and the right of all children to enjoy all rights of the UNCRC without discrimination of any kind.

## The voices of children and young people

The QFCC thanks everyone who contributed to this publication. We are especially grateful to the young people who shared their ideas, opinions and experiences.

We thank Samuel, Josh, Nooria, Jess, Rhea, Shraddha and Saanvi for their generosity in sharing their time and insights.

## ABSTARR Consulting

The QFCC acknowledges and thanks ABSTARR Consulting (ABSTARR) for its contribution to these Guidelines. ABSTARR is a 100 per cent Aboriginal owned business that is certified and registered with Kinaway Aboriginal Chamber of Commerce and Supply Nation. ABSTARR specialises in the art and science of decolonisation, which involves working with people, organisations and communities to implement and embed cultural safety, self-determination and wellbeing in the workplace.

ABSTARR's cultural safety expertise ensures that these Guidelines and accompanying resources effectively support organisations to implement the Universal Principle. The approach taken by ABSTARR to inform this work has prioritised the self-determination of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and has applied a strengths-based approach to acknowledge and privilege the strength and wisdom of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures as the grounds for achieving improved outcomes.

**Note:** *These Guidelines provide advice on how to interpret and embed the Child Safe Standards and Universal Principle provisions of the Child Safe Organisations Act 2024. They are not intended to provide guidance on the interpretation and application of other relevant legislation, and do not constitute formal legal advice.*

## Support

This document may cause distress for some people. If you need help or support, please contact any of these services:

**Lifeline** 13 11 14

**13YARN** 13 92 76

**Beyond Blue** 1300 22 4636

**Kids Helpline** 1800 55 1800 (for 5 to 25-year-olds)

  
Young people  
informed  
this project

# Contents

A note on terminology	3
Introduction	4
The Child Safe Standards	6
We are building a culture of safety and wellbeing for all children in Queensland	
Practical tips for organisations	8
<b>Standard 1 – Leadership and Culture</b>	<b>11</b>
Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in the entity’s organisational leadership, governance, and culture	
<b>Standard 2 – Voice of children</b>	<b>19</b>
Children are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously	
<b>Standard 3 – Family and community</b>	<b>27</b>
Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing	
<b>Standard 4 – Equity and diversity</b>	<b>35</b>
Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice	
<b>Standard 5 – People</b>	<b>43</b>
People working with children are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice	
<b>Standard 6 – Complaints management</b>	<b>51</b>
Processes to respond to complaints and concerns are child-focused	
<b>Standard 7 – Knowledge and skills</b>	<b>59</b>
Staff and volunteers of the entity are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and awareness to keep children safe through ongoing education and training	
<b>Standard 8 – Physical and online environments</b>	<b>56</b>
Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing and minimise the opportunity for children to be harmed	

<b>Standard 9 – Continuous improvement</b>	<b>75</b>
Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved	
<b>Standard 10 – Policies and procedures</b>	<b>83</b>
Policies and procedures document how the entity is safe for children	
<b>The Universal Principle</b>	<b>90</b>
Cultural safety indicators – Embedding cultural safety in Queensland’s Child Safe Standards	
<b>Appendix 1: Language and terminology</b>	<b>92</b>
<b>Appendix 2: Foundation documents</b>	<b>94</b>

## A note on terminology

<b>Children</b>	To apply the Standards properly, organisations should consider children and young people in the context of their age and developmental stage as well as their unique experiences and vulnerabilities. In these guidelines, the word <i>children</i> includes all people under the age of 18 years.
<b>Child Safe Entities</b>	Not every organisation involving children is required to comply with the Standards, but any organisation may choose to. Schedule 1 <sup>1</sup> of the Act lists which organisations must follow the Standards; these are called “child safe entities”. All organisations that work with children should review the Act to determine its applicability to their organisation. In these Guidelines, the term <i>child safe organisation</i> includes both those required to follow the Standards and those that choose to follow them.
<b>Child safety</b>	These Guidelines make frequent reference to <i>child safety</i> . In this context child safety refers to the preservation and protection of children’s safety, wellbeing and cultural safety in its broadest sense. It is not limited to a consideration of how an organisation meets its obligations under the <i>Child Protection Act 1999</i> or the <i>Criminal Code Act 1899</i> or to the responsibilities of the department that delivers child safety services in Queensland.
<b>Leadership and governance</b>	Organisational leadership includes people in positions of authority who guide the direction of the organisation and are responsible for its operations. They lead teams to help achieve the organisation’s goals. Depending on how the organisation is set up, leaders may have the power to make decisions, create policies and procedures, and share these across the organisation. This includes board members, CEOs, managers, and supervisors.

# Introduction

The Queensland Family and Child Commission (QFCC) is committed to making organisations safer for children. The QFCC is the regulatory authority responsible for overseeing the implementation of the *Child Safe Organisation Act 2024* (the Act) in Queensland.

As the regulator we work to protect children by educating and regulating quality, child safe organisations and services. We support organisations working with children to implement child safe practices guided by the Universal Principle and the Child Safe Standards.

These *Guidelines for implementing the Universal Principle and Child Safe Standards in Queensland* are part of the QFCC's work to help make organisations safer for children.

They are designed to help everyone, who works with children or provides spaces for them, to understand their role and how they can contribute to keeping children safe. They include practical advice, examples, and minimum requirements to help build a strong culture of safety and wellbeing.

## Organisations should:

Use the Self-Assessment Tool alongside these Guidelines to assess their readiness

Adapt their policies and practices to suit their own needs and communities

Reflect on what is working well and where they need to improve.

These Guidelines are based on expert advice and findings from the Royal Commission, the Australian Human Rights Commission, and others.

The Standards are not a simple checklist. They encourage organisations to think about how their day-to-day work protects children's rights and safety. Being a child safe organisation means committing to continuous improvement.

## Safety is important because...

“ Safety helps a young person grow up with a strong sense of agency. A feeling that their voices are being platformed and they are empowered to make an impact and a difference. You know that's a strong generation of young people to come up and speak on what they feel is right for the broader community.

— Josh



## When done well, the Child Safe Standards:

**Prevent harm** by creating safer environments that lower risks and increase protection

**Make child safety a shared responsibility** across leaders, staff, volunteers, families, and the wider community

**Support children to speak up** by creating a culture where they feel safe and heard

**Respect cultural safety** for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, supporting their identity and belonging

**Promote transparency and accountability** so child safety is always a priority and regularly reviewed

**Create consistency** so children are protected equally no matter where they access services.



Our first memories are so integral to who we become in the future and how we handle the challenges we encounter. Feeling safe even before your conscious memory develops is so important to your self-esteem and self-confidence. Having a safe childhood and growing up in safe environments really allows your brain to focus on who you are as a person and lets you follow your dreams. If school is safe, you can fully focus on your learning. But if you encounter unsafe situations your brain is more anxious, more stressed, more worried, so you have more obstacles to overcome.

— Rhea



# The Child Safe Standards

We are building a culture of safety and wellbeing for all children in Queensland.

## **Every child has the right to be safe.**

The Universal Principle and Child Safe Standards help create environments where Queensland's children can grow, learn, and thrive without harm. They are built on children's rights and provide a clear framework for keeping children safe.

Organisations must ensure cultural safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. This is known as the Universal Principle.

A child safe organisation should include the Universal Principle in every part of how they apply the Standards. It is just as important as the Standards themselves, and the QFCC can take action if it's not followed.

## **If an organisation is not culturally safe, it is not child safe.**

### **This is what children and young people said about feeling safe:**

You can be yourself

You feel welcomed

You can be fully yourself and don't have to mask anything

You have the autonomy to participate how you want to participate

You are treated with respect

You have a sense of ease

People see and accept you for who you are

You know that you are in a loving and supportive environment

Your needs are met

You feel included

You feel secure

You feel confident

You feel relaxed

Feeling safe is a warm feeling

Feeling safe is not just a physical feeling, it's a social, emotional and mental experience too.

# The 10 Child Safe Standards

	<b>1 Leadership and culture</b>	Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in the entity's organisational leadership, governance and culture
	<b>2 Voice of children</b>	Children are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously
	<b>3 Family and community</b>	Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing
	<b>4 Equity and diversity</b>	Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice
	<b>5 People</b>	People working with children are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice
	<b>6 Complaints management</b>	Processes to respond to complaints and concerns are child focused
	<b>7 Knowledge and skills</b>	Staff and volunteers of the entity are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and awareness to keep children safe through ongoing education and training
	<b>8 Physical and online environments</b>	Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing and minimise the opportunity for children to be harmed
	<b>9 Continuous improvement</b>	Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved
	<b>10 Policy and procedures</b>	Policies and procedures document how the entity is safe for children



# Practical tips for organisations

## 1 Commit to children's safety and wellbeing as a core value

- Publicly declare your organisation's commitment to the safety and wellbeing of children.
- Share this commitment with staff, volunteers, carers, children, families, and communities through policies, materials, and conversations.

## 2 Commit to cultural safety as a core value

- Establish a definition of cultural safety that aligns with the expectations of families, children, staff, and stakeholders.
- Publicly declare your organisation's commitment to cultural safety.
- Share this commitment with staff, volunteers, children, families and communities through policies, materials and conversations.

## 3 Review your current policies and practices

- Conduct an internal review of your child safety and wellbeing policies, practices, and training programs.\*
- Identify gaps and areas for improvement, prioritising alignment with the Universal Principle and the Child Safe Standards.

## 4 Engage your leadership team

- Ensure your leaders are informed about the Standards and Universal Principle and champion children's safety and wellbeing across all levels of your organisation.
- Include child safety, wellbeing and cultural safety into governance structures, decision-making processes, and everyday practice.

## 5 Empower staff and volunteers

- Provide comprehensive induction and ongoing training to ensure all personnel understand their roles in upholding children's safety and wellbeing, trauma-informed care, and cultural safety.
- Foster a culture of accountability where staff feel confident identifying and addressing risks or concerns.

\*Using the Commission's Self-Assessment Tool for Implementing the Child Safe Standards and Universal Principle in Queensland will help you audit your current policies and practices and develop an action plan to become a child safe organisation.

## **6 Build equitable and justice-based practices**

- Tailor your approach to reflect the diversity of the children, families, carers, and communities you serve.
- Ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds, refugee and asylum-seeking groups, disability advocates, and other relevant stakeholders are provided with opportunities to contribute to appropriate solutions.

## **7 Prioritise transparency and accessibility**

- Make child safety and wellbeing policies and complaint processes visible and accessible to everyone involved with your organisation.
- Use child-friendly language and multiple formats (e.g., visual guides, audio, video, AUSLAN interpretation and translations into community languages) to ensure accessibility for all.
- Develop accountability measures and processes to hold leaders accountable to children, families, staff and communities. This may include annual reporting and evaluation, feedback opportunities, risk registers for leadership, and others.

## **8 Develop an Action Plan**

- Create an implementation plan and roadmap for implementing the Child Safe Standards, with clear timelines, realistic actions and measurable outcomes, with broad definitions of success. This includes definitions of success defined by staff, families, children, and communities.
- Schedule regular reviews to evaluate progress and adapt as needed to improve child safety and wellbeing practices.

## **9 Access resources and support**

- Explore tools, templates, and training programs provided by child safe entities and regulatory bodies.

## **10 Partner with the community**

- Collaborate with families, carers, local organisations, and community leaders to embed children's safety and wellbeing and cultural safety as a shared responsibility.
- Create opportunities for ongoing dialogue and feedback to improve trust and accountability.





# **Standard 1**

## **Leadership and culture**

Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in the entity's organisational leadership, governance, and culture<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> *Child Safe Organisations Act 2024* Section 9(a)

“ [Being safe] gives you the opportunity to sit present in a space and have the level of interaction that you feel comfortable with. There’s no pressure on you to be a particular way. There’s a sense of strength that’s felt when you’re feeling safe to yarn or to exist in a space.

– Josh



The safety and wellbeing of children is non-negotiable. Standard 1 focuses on creating an organisational culture where every decision, action, and process prioritises the safety and wellbeing of children. Strong leadership and clear governance lay the foundation for a proactive, accountable, and child-focused organisation.

### **Our vision for excellence**

Every organisation should be a model of children’s safety and wellbeing. Leaders set the tone and example by embedding children’s safety and wellbeing into policies, procedures, and culture and ensuring these are implemented and reviewed. Leaders actively and consistently foster an environment that is free of harm and structural violence and ensures there is a healthy reporting culture. The aim is to create an environment where everyone in the organisation understands the potential for unconscious bias, their role and responsibilities in protecting children and that they act accordingly. All members of an organisations are accountable for providing a safe environment for every child.

### **Why this Standard matters for Queensland**

In Queensland, where diverse communities enrich our society, a strong commitment to children’s safety and wellbeing ensures that all children thrive. Leaders that champion Standard 1 helps to both prevent harm and ensure that harm is reported and acted on. Appropriate implementation of Standard 1 fosters trust and confidence amongst children, families, and communities.



## Key Action Areas

- 1.1 The entity has a public commitment to children's safety and wellbeing.
- 1.2 A child safe culture is championed and modelled at all levels of the organisation, from the top down to the bottom up.
- 1.3 Governance arrangements facilitate implementation of the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy at all levels.
- 1.4 A Code of Conduct provides guidelines for staff and volunteers on expected behavioural standards and responsibilities.
- 1.5 Governance frameworks ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to be in leadership positions and have decision-making authority.
- 1.6 Risk management strategies focus on preventing, identifying and mitigating risks to children.

## Indicators

- ✓ The organisation can demonstrate it has publicly available and current documents such as a Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy, practice guidance, information sharing protocols, staff and volunteer codes of conduct, and risk management strategies.
- ✓ Leaders model and regularly reinforce attitudes and behaviours that value children and a commitment to children's safety. This commitment is clear in duty statements, performance agreements, and staff and volunteer review processes.
- ✓ Staff, volunteers, and children have a sound knowledge of their right to feel safe and be heard, and the accountabilities that accompany these rights.
- ✓ Leaders promote sharing good practice and learnings about children's safety and wellbeing.
- ✓ Transformational unlearning – Organisations provide opportunities for staff to self-reflect and challenge unconscious bias within their structures and workforce.
- ✓ Creating a strategic enabling environment – Leaders set clear priorities and accountability structures to apply cultural safety into daily operations.



## 1 Steps to embed this Standard

“

Being safe makes you feel seen, heard and valued which is really important. There are a lot of times in a lot of places where you don't have that feeling. You just feel invisible.

– Rhea

”

- Establish governance structures that enable organisational leadership to effectively monitor and act on risks to children's safety.

---

- Establish a clear reporting framework to ensure that any disclosures and suspicions of harm are reported and responded to within defined timeframes. The framework establishes clear roles and responsibilities for all staff, volunteers and leaders. Leaders are accountable for responding to all reports.

---

- Work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and stakeholders to identify appropriate progress and success indicators and evaluation methods.

---

- Make a commitment to children's safety and wellbeing that is visible across the organisation, and evident in key policies and procedures.

---

- Make a commitment to cultural safety that is visible across the organisation, and evident in key policies and procedures.

---

- Ensure these commitments are publicly available in physical and online environments where they can be seen and understood by children, families, carers, and anyone who engages with the organisation.

---

- Introduce a clear Code of Conduct outlining expected behaviours of staff and volunteers, at all levels of the organisation, when working with children.

---

- Ensure the Code of Conduct is publicly available, and children, families and carers understand what behaviours are expected of all staff and volunteers.

---

- Provide leaders, staff, and volunteers with regular training and support to understand and fulfil their responsibilities for children's safety and wellbeing, with reference to relevant policies, including the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy, Code of Conduct, Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy, and reporting disclosures framework. Training should include cultural safety training.



## 2 Some ways you could do this

**Public Commitment:** Display your organisation’s commitment to children’s safety, wellbeing and cultural safety prominently on your website, in annual reports, and within your physical spaces.

**Policy Development:** Develop a comprehensive Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy ensuring both include procedures for identifying and addressing risks, managing concerns, responding to complaints.

**Leadership Oversight:** Clearly define specific accountabilities to roles and/or committees within governance structures to monitor and report on children’s safety and wellbeing performance.

**Training and Induction:** Provide training for all staff and volunteers, emphasising the role of leaders in modeling and enforcing policies and the organisation’s role in creating a child safe culture.

**Accountability Measures:** Include children’s safety and wellbeing objectives in staff performance reviews, with clear consequences for breaches of policies or codes of conduct.

**Risk Management Framework:** Identify child abuse, harm and discrimination as key risks within your organisation and establish clear controls to mitigate harm, strengthen safeguarding measures, and uphold the Child Safe Standards.





## 3 Reflection

### Points for growth

- Does the leadership of the organisation actively champion children's safety and wellbeing in daily practices and decision-making?
- Does the leadership of the organisation actively challenge unconscious bias, racism and structural violence?
- Does the Code of Conduct set out clear behavioural standards?
- Are children's safety and wellbeing policies and procedures clear, accessible, and regularly updated?
- How effectively does the organisation identify, assess, and manage risks to children?
- Do staff and volunteers have clarity about how to report breaches of the Code of Conduct?

### Taking action

- Host regular leadership meetings focused on children's safety and wellbeing and governance updates.
- Include cultural safety (updates, improvements, risks etc) into the agenda as a focus area for leadership meetings.
- Engage with children, families, carers, and communities to seek feedback on the organisation's safety and wellbeing measures.
- Engage with communities and staff to seek feedback on safety measures, including cultural safety training outcomes.
- Use insights from audits or reviews to refine processes and improve organisational culture.
- Liaise with other like organisations to see how they have embedded Standard 1.



## 4 Measures of success

Children's safety and wellbeing are standing agenda items in all leadership and governance discussions.

All staff and volunteers have completed internal onboarding training regarding the operationalisation of relevant policies and governance approaches.

All staff and volunteers have completed cultural safety training.

Feedback from children, carers and families indicates trust in the organisation's approach to their safety.

There is clear documentation of risk assessments and actions taken to mitigate risks to children's safety and wellbeing and cultural safety.

There is clear documentation of actions taken in response to any issues related to children's safety which occur, inclusive of the actions taken to resolve the issue and prevent it occurring again.







# Standard 2

## Voice of children

Children are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Child Safe Organisations Act 2024 Section 9(b)

“

Children’s rights are not taught. Throughout all my years of school, in any pastoral care programs, assemblies or other activities I never heard anything about children’s rights.

– Samuel

”

Empowering children by informing them of their rights and including them in decision-making processes is fundamental to safeguarding their wellbeing. Standard 2 ensures that organisations foster an environment where children’s voices are not just heard, but actively shape outcomes that affect them.

### **Our vision for excellence**

Organisations have the ability, support and resources to create spaces where children are knowledgeable about their rights and confident in their ability to express concerns, provide input, and participate in meaningful ways. The adults who support children in these organisations understand and respect children’s agency and take steps to ensure they are treated as competent and capable. Adults tailor their approach based on the age, developmental stage, culture, socio-economic context and any other specific needs of the child. Decision-making processes should centre on the perspectives of children and demonstrate genuine respect for their voices.

### **Why this Standard matters for Queensland**

When children feel valued and are included in decisions, they are more likely to trust and engage with an organisation, reducing risks of harm. Children who understand their rights can advocate for themselves, keeping organisations accountable.



## Key Action Areas

- 2.1 Children have access to resources and tools that enable them to understand all of their rights, including to safety, information and participation.
- 2.2 The importance of friendships is recognised and support from peers is encouraged, to help children feel safe and be less isolated.
- 2.3 Where relevant to the setting or context, children are offered access to sexual abuse prevention programs and to relevant related information in an age-appropriate way.
- 2.4 Staff and volunteers are attuned to signs of harm and facilitate child-friendly ways for children to express their views, participate in decision-making and raise their concerns.

## Indicators

- ✓ The organisation has programs and resources to educate children on their rights including their right to safety and right to be listened to.
- ✓ The organisation is proactive in providing age-appropriate platforms to regularly seek children's views and encourage participation in decision-making.
- ✓ Staff and volunteers have a good understanding of children's developmental needs.
- ✓ Opportunities for children to participate are documented and regularly reviewed.
- ✓ The organisational environment is friendly and welcoming for children.
- ✓ Children participate in decision-making in the organisation, including in relation to safety issues and risk identification.
- ✓ Children can identify trusted adults and friends.
- ✓ Children are informed about their roles and responsibilities in helping to ensure the safety and wellbeing of their peers.
- ✓ **Operating on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander terms of reference** – Service delivery, and communication strategies and approaches for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are based on self-determination principles.
- ✓ **Accountability and continuous quality improvement** – Progress is measured using Aboriginal and Torres-Straight Islander defined success indicators, ensuring sustained improvement.
- ✓ **Sharing resources** – Organisations should dedicate resources to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led initiatives, research, and governance mechanisms, where appropriate.
- ✓ **Prioritising social and emotional wellbeing and health** – A holistic, strengths-based approach must be adopted to support the wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, families and staff.



## 1 Steps to embed this Standard

“ Participation experiences are not always well promoted or widely promoted. I hear about them but I’m on a bunch of different mailing lists. But it means the same group of young people are doing each consultation.”

– Jess



- Educate children on their rights through age-appropriate, accessible, and culturally relevant materials.
- Develop and maintain mechanisms for children to provide feedback and share their views safely.
- Train staff to facilitate child-friendly communication and to actively listen to children.
- Include children in policy and program design and evaluations, ensuring their input influences decisions.
- Embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander worldviews and perspectives about health, wellbeing and healing. This includes the Social and Emotional Wellbeing (SEWB) Model.

### **This is what children and young people said are features of good engagement:**

- You can provide real input and make a difference.
- People ask you questions and want to hear your answers not just talk at you.
- You have regular opportunities to participate and contribute ideas.
- Organisers have a good awareness of different needs and ask what people need in advance, so the experience is tailored to their needs.
- If you’re recruited for your lived experience, there is support available to keep you safe and you’re not retraumatised.
- Opportunities are flexible and recognise that children lead busy lives.
- There is enough time given to the engagement. It’s not rushed.
- We are engaged early in the process of co-design and there is an openness to exploring new ideas and ways of doing things.
- We can openly express our point of view.
- Accessibility considerations are the norm not the exception.
- Everyone in the room is culturally safe.
- Confidentiality is maintained.
- Participants have the freedom to decide if they will stay or leave at any time.
- Participants decide if they will be identified in reports or if they prefer to be anonymous or use an alias.
- All participants receive feedback on how their input was used.



## 2 Some ways you could do this

**Education on Rights:** Create child-friendly resources, such as posters or videos, to teach children about their rights in ways that are age-appropriate and culturally relevant.

**Accessible Feedback Mechanisms:** Set up suggestion boxes, surveys, or forums where children can safely share their views.

**Staff Training:** Train staff in active listening and child-centred communication techniques to create safe spaces for discussions and build children's confidence and skills to engage in participation activities.

**Inclusive Decision-Making:** Involve children in policy development, program planning, and evaluation to ensure their perspectives influence decisions.

**Clear Reporting Pathways:** Develop a child-friendly complaints process with clear steps on how feedback will be used and acted on.

**Family and Community Involvement:** Involve families and communities in educating children about their rights and how to participate in decisions affecting them.





### 3 Reflection

#### Points for growth

- Are children provided with accessible, clear and culturally relevant information about their rights?
- Does the organisation provide consistent, meaningful opportunities for children to participate in decision-making, program design, and evaluations?
- How do you ensure children feel safe and confident to share their opinions?
- Are staff equipped to engage with children respectfully and in ways that are trauma-informed, culturally safe and foster trust?
- Do children have a clear understanding about the complaint process in the organisation?

#### Taking action

- Conduct workshops or sessions with children to explain their rights and provide pathways for their participation in decision-making, program design, and evaluations.
- Review existing feedback processes to ensure they are inclusive, trauma-informed, strengths-based and child-focused.
- Establish advisory groups with children to co-design initiatives, programs, and policies.
- Regularly seek feedback from children to evaluate and improve services and programs.

“

The efficacy of youth advisory groups is quite limited in the sense that the recruitment and selection of youth advisors is quite restricted. I have experience as a young person. I'm from a diverse background and have experienced discrimination, racism and lots of issues relevant to young people. But I haven't been speaking at conferences or had experience communicating with people in high positions and that means I'm unlikely to be selected as a youth advisor. But that means you just keep selecting the same people who have the background and the profile. Meanwhile you take away the opportunity from people who have experienced lots of issues and just giving it to people who are saying the same things and diverse experiences aren't getting shared.

— Nooria

”



## 4 Measures of success

Children report feeling respected and heard within the organisation.

Evidence that key decisions and policies have been shaped by input from children.

Staff and volunteers demonstrate strong knowledge of, and practice child-centred communication.

Staff and volunteers are equipped with the necessary training and skills to provide culturally safe, trauma-informed and strengths-based care and support to all children.

Feedback mechanisms are regularly used with children, and result in actionable outcomes at all levels of the organisation.







## STANDARD 3

### Family and community

# Standard 3

## Family and community

Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Child Safe Organisations Act 2024 Section 9(c)



Cultural safety creates a sense of empowerment, that the injustices and intergenerational trauma have been recognised and acknowledged, as well as the invaluable knowledge and community skills First Nations peoples bring. An organisation that is culturally safe fosters space for the hardship and trauma carried by First Nations peoples but it also places value on their strengths and wisdom too.

— Josh



Child safety and wellbeing are strengthened when families and communities are informed, engaged, and active partners in promoting safe environments. Standard 3 emphasises building trust and collaboration with families and communities to create a united front to ensure children’s safety and wellbeing is a top priority.

### **Our vision for excellence**

Organisations should foster strong, transparent relationships with families and communities as valued contributors to the shared responsibility of protecting children. Open communication, trust and mutual respect are the foundation for collaborative and inclusive child-safe practices.

### **Why this Standard matters for Queensland**

In Queensland, where diverse communities play a vital role in supporting children, involving families ensures cultural, social, and community-specific needs are met. When families and communities are informed and engaged, children benefit from stronger networks of protection and support.



## Key Action Areas

- 3.1 Families have ample opportunity to participate in decisions affecting their child within their family or community.
- 3.2 The organisation engages and openly communicates with families and communities about its approach to child safety. This includes co-designing what safety and wellbeing mean in each cultural context.
- 3.3 Families and communities have access to relevant information, resources and tools to understand child safety approaches and strategies.
- 3.4 Families and communities have a say in the design, development and review of the organisation's policies and practices.
- 3.5 Families, carers and the community are informed about and involved in the organisation's operations and governance.

## Indicators

- ✓ The organisation is responsive to the needs of families and communities.
- ✓ The organisation creates opportunities for families and communities to be involved in how the organisation operates, including encouraging their child's participation and feedback.
- ✓ The organisation has clear and accessible information for families and communities about their organisation's operations and policies, including Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy, Code of Conduct, record keeping practices, and complaints and investigation processes.
- ✓ The organisation actively seeks feedback from families and communities on issues of children's safety and wellbeing, including in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and those from other diverse backgrounds, and incorporates this into their policies and practices. The organisation engages with and supports approaches that build cultural safety through partnerships and respectful relationships.
- ✓ **Negotiating values, motivations, and paradigm** – Policies and programs are co-designed with families and communities, particularly First Nations communities, to reflect their perspectives on child safety and cultural safety.
- ✓ **Creating a strategic enabling environment** – Culturally relevant and culturally safe communication strategies are in place that build trust with families and communities.



## 1 Steps to embed this Standard



Think about setting up a formal structure for young people to be able to talk to decision makers on a regular basis.

– Samuel



- Provide families and communities with clear, accessible and culturally relevant information about the organisation’s safety and wellbeing policies and practices.
- Create opportunities for families and communities to co-design and participate in the development and implementation of policies, practices and programs.
- Create opportunities for ‘family’, ‘parents’ and ‘primary carers’ to share feedback and participate in decision-making processes.
- Ensure that definitions of ‘family’ ‘parents’ and ‘primary carers’ are broad and reflect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander understandings of family and family units.
- Explore the key cultural and language groups in the community and identify ways of communicating appropriately with the broader community.
- Partner with community leaders and organisations to embed culturally safe practices.
- Deliver workshops or resources that educate families on recognising and responding to children’s safety and wellbeing concerns.
- Establish regular communication channels to keep families informed and engaged.



High school is a time where you grow so much as a human being. It’s a super unique time in life and if you give young people the opportunity to be part of change then there will probably be more people trying to change things or pushing for change in real life rather than everyone saying that’s not my problem... I’d say the most satisfying thing [about being involved in decision making and being listened to] is seeing a positive outcome. The thing I have done has always been to try and change something for the better, not for myself, but for the next cohort to have a slightly better life or environment.

– Samuel





## 2 Some ways you could do this

**Transparent Communication:** Provide clear, culturally appropriate and plain-language information about children’s safety and wellbeing policies through newsletters, community forums, and digital platforms.

**Feedback Channels:** Establish regular meetings, surveys, or feedback tools for families and communities to voice concerns and/or offer suggestions.

**Community Partnerships:** Collaborate with local organisations and leaders to ensure culturally appropriate practices to protect children’s safety and wellbeing and communicate in ways that are accessible to key cultural and language groups in the area.

**Educational Workshops:** Offer training for families and carers on recognising and responding to risks to children’s safety.

**Consistent Updates:** Share progress on child safety and wellbeing initiatives with families and communities to maintain transparency and trust.





## 3 Reflection

### Points for growth

- Are families and communities aware of your organisation's child safety and wellbeing policies and practices? If so, how are they made aware? What communication channels are used to ensure that all relevant families and communities have access to the organisation's policies and practices in clear and accessible formats?
- How do you involve families or community members in decision-making or feedback processes?
- Do your communication strategies reflect the diversity of the families and communities you serve?
- Have local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities been involved in the design and development of communication strategies, approaches, and communication and educational resources?
- Are you building partnerships with local organisations, leaders, Elders and Traditional Owners to strengthen understanding and capability to protect children's safety and wellbeing and cultural safety?
- Does your organisation use Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) data to understand the unique community context and the needs of the children in your community to inform program and service development and improvements?

### Taking action

- Conduct focus groups or surveys with families and carers to understand community needs and perspectives on children's safety and wellbeing, as well as cultural safety.
- Develop culturally relevant and trauma informed communication materials to reach diverse families, carers, and communities.
- Host regular family, carer, and community forums to share updates, address concerns, and encourage input.
- Collaborate with local community organisations, including local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and Elders, to co-design initiatives that promote children's safety and wellbeing and cultural safety.



## 4 Measures of success

Families and communities report feeling informed, included, heard and valued in children's safety and wellbeing initiatives.

Trusted partnerships with community stakeholder organisations are established and maintained.

Feedback from families, carers and communities directly informs policy and practice improvements.

Culturally safe resources and strategies are in place to engage with diverse families, carers, and communities.

Families, communities and other stakeholders report that the organisation engages with them in a culturally safe and trauma-informed way.







**STANDARD 4**

**Equity and diversity**

# Standard 4

## Equity and diversity

Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice<sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Child Safe Organisations Act 2024 Section 9(d)

“ The phrase cultural safety goes beyond awareness and sensitivity. To me it means enriching cultural respect, values and understanding in an environment. It is beyond just tolerating but is celebrating and embracing. It goes beyond representation. To be culturally safe I’d have no fear of judgement or discrimination. I know I’m culturally safe when my perspective and circumstances are reflected in policies, services and interactions.

— Nooria

”

Embedding equity into organisational policies and practices is essential for creating safe and inclusive environments for all children. Standard 4 challenges organisations to go beyond compliance and actively ensure that the unique needs of children from diverse backgrounds are recognised, respected, and met.

### **Our vision for excellence**

Organisations foster environments where every child feels valued, respected, supported and culturally safe. Equity is reflected in every policy, decision and action, ensuring that all children have fair access to a safe, nurturing environment and healthy future. Equity requires that the unique needs of every child are met, and that no child is disadvantaged due to their culture, disability, gender or any other aspect of their identity or context.

### **Why this Standard matters for Queensland**

Queensland’s diverse population includes children from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds, refugee or asylum-seeking backgrounds, those living with disability and those who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer/questioning (LGBTIQ+). Organisations have a responsibility to ensure the unique needs of every child are not only acknowledged but actively addressed in ways that uphold their dignity and rights, recognising the potential intersectionality of these groups as children may identify with one or more diversity qualifiers.



## Key Action Areas

- 4.1 The organisation, including staff and volunteers, understands the diverse circumstances of each child, provides culturally safe and trauma-informed support, and responds to those who need extra support.
- 4.2 Staff are equipped with the necessary training and skills to provide trauma-informed and culturally safe supports and services to all children.
- 4.3 Children have access to information, support and complaints processes in ways that are culturally safe, accessible and easy to understand.
- 4.4 The organisation pays particular attention to supporting the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children with disability, children from CALD backgrounds, children who are refugees or asylum seekers, those who are unable to live at home, and LGBTIQ+ children.
- 4.5 Policies and practices embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge systems and perspectives about child safety.

## Indicators

- ✓ The organisation has specific policies in place that promote equity and respect diversity for the safety and wellbeing of all children.
- ✓ The organisation produces child-friendly material in accessible language and formats that promote inclusion, and informs all children of the support and complaints processes available to them.
- ✓ Board members, staff, and volunteers champion attitudes and behaviours that respect the human rights of all children, and are inclusive, well informed, and responsive to diverse needs.
- ✓ Board members, staff, and volunteers reflect on how discrimination and exclusion, whether intentional or unintentional, may work against a safe and inclusive culture, and they develop proactive strategies to address this.
- ✓ Staff and volunteers are trained to recognise and respond effectively to children with diverse needs.
- ✓ A Cultural Safety Framework and/ or Action Plan is in place to embed cultural safety, equity and diversity principles across policies, programs and governance structures.
- ✓ **Prioritising social and emotional wellbeing and health** – Physical and online environments should be designed with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander principles of health and wellbeing.
- ✓ **Creating a strategic enabling environment** – Organisations must ensure their spaces, policies, procedures and governance models are equitable and inclusive of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing, being and doing.
- ✓ **Sharing power and decision-making** – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, families, children and communities are directly involved in designing and evaluating child-safe spaces.



## 1 Steps to embed this Standard

“ True cultural safety means people are empowered to express their cultural identities. Given my refugee background, I see cultural safety as a critical foundation for inclusion and meaningful participation. In a culturally safe environment, we are encouraged to celebrate our differences. To hear people switching between their home languages and English sounds like acceptance and freedom. In these places culture isn't a barrier, it's a bridge.

– Nooria



- Review all policies and practices to ensure they address the diverse needs of children, carers, and families your organisation serves, and embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge systems and perspectives on safety.
- Implement targeted strategies to support all people, particularly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples; CALD peoples, refugee and asylum-seeking people; children with disability; those who identify as LGBTIQ+; and those who identify across various diversity identifiers.
- Provide staff with training to recognise and address unconscious bias and individual and institutional racism.
- Ensure all communication and materials are accessible, available in different formats, and are culturally appropriate.
- Develop partnerships with local and specialised organisations to enhance diversity awareness within your team and/or across your organisation.
- Implement cultural safety training for leadership and human resources teams to address unconscious bias and systemic barriers in recruitment practices.
- Review and improve employment policies and procedures to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation across the organisation. This might include prioritising lived experience and cultural knowledge in some leadership selection criteria.

“ I'm neurodivergent and so it's important to me that organisations embrace sensory needs and neurological differences are fostered. If I walk into a room and I feel that I can use my noise cancelling headphones, or stim, or unmask and be truly authentic then I feel safe. People know that this isn't a reflection on my ability to participate, just that I participate differently.

– Jess





## 2 Some ways you could do this

**Policy Review:** Regularly review policies to ensure they address the needs of children from diverse backgrounds, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, CALD, and those with disability.

**Training for staff:** Provide staff with ongoing cultural safety training, cultural awareness training and training in trauma-informed care.

**Education opportunities for children:** Provide children with educational opportunities to learn about different cultures, peoples and communities, to ensure safety among children.

**Tailored Resources:** Develop accessible and inclusive materials in multiple languages and formats, including the use of audio descriptions or AUSLAN interpretation.

**Community Consultation:** Partner with diverse community representatives to co-design strategies for children's safety and wellbeing.

**Recruitment Practices:** Ensure recruitment policies and practices are equitable and reflect a range of different worldviews. Actively recruit staff and volunteers from under-represented groups to reflect the diversity of the children served.





## 3 Reflection

### Points for growth

- Are your organisation's policies and practices inclusive of children from different backgrounds?
- How do you identify and address barriers that may limit participation or access?
- Have staff been trained to work respectfully, safely and effectively with children from diverse backgrounds?
- Do you regularly consult with communities or experts to ensure your approach is safe, inclusive and free of racism and discrimination?
- Does your staffing reflect the diversity represented in your community? Do staff feel that their voices are heard and that they can bring their whole cultural selves to work?

### Taking action

- Conduct an equity audit to identify gaps in your policies, practices, and training. This includes your recruitment policies.
- Establish a diversity, equity, and inclusion action plan that sets measurable goals for improvement.
- Regularly engage with children and families from diverse groups to co-design solutions to address their specific needs.
- Regularly engage with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and communities to provide leadership over the design, development and implementation of strategies, programs and policies that affect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families.
- Partner with community leaders or cultural advisors to review and improve your organisation's practices. This work should be led by leaders or cultural advisors with cultural authority.

“

If a place is culturally safe it becomes a space where you can be proud of where you've come from. You don't have to hide or blend in. People ask 'What's your cultural background' rather than asking where you're from. My experiences and feelings are respected and I'm not made to feel that I can't complain because I live this new privileged life which is not always the full story. I'm always being made to feel that I have to be grateful.

— Rhea

”



## 4 Measures of success

Organisational policies explicitly address and support diversity, equity, and inclusion for all children and staff and volunteers.

Staff and volunteers demonstrate awareness of, and sensitivity to, diverse needs in their daily practices.

Children from diverse backgrounds and their families and carers report feeling safe and respected in your organisation's environment.

Organisational materials and resources reflect diversity in language, imagery, and accessibility.

Staff report feeling that their voices are heard and that they can bring their cultural knowledge, worldviews, and perspectives to their work.

“

It might seem tokenistic but seeing evidence that queer people are welcome in a space or it's a little flag tells me that I can speak freely.

— Jess

”







# Standard 5

## People

People working with children are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice<sup>11</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Child Safe Organisations Act 2024 Section 9(e)

“ I love seeing my mob in a space doing deadly things. It’s having real people there with stories and lived experience.

– Josh

”

The suitability and capability of staff and volunteers is pivotal to creating safe environments for children. Standard 5 requires organisations to have robust recruitment, training, and ongoing support systems in place to ensure all personnel embody child safety and wellbeing values in their actions.

### **Our vision for excellence**

Organisations recruit and retain individuals who are not only qualified but deeply committed to upholding children’s safety and wellbeing, including cultural safety. Staff and volunteers are supported with ongoing professional development and clear guidance, empowering them to model safe and respectful practices in every interaction.

### **Why this Standard matters for Queensland**

In Queensland’s diverse organisational landscape, staff and volunteers need to be assessed as being appropriate for the context in which service delivery occurs, applicable to their region, sector, and suitability for engagement with children. Ensuring the suitability and preparedness of all personnel working with children is essential for mitigating risks, reducing the potential for harm to occur and promoting trust.



## Key Action Areas

- 5.1 Recruitment (including advertising, referee checks and staff and volunteer pre-employment screening) prioritises child safety as pre-requisites for employment.
- 5.2 Relevant staff and volunteers have current Working with Children Checks and background checks, and this is continuously monitored.
- 5.3 All staff and volunteers receive an appropriate induction and are aware of their responsibilities to child safety, record keeping, information sharing and reporting obligations.
- 5.4 The induction and onboarding processes include cultural safety training and trauma-informed care training.
- 5.5 Ongoing supervision and people management is focused on child safety, wellbeing and cultural safety.

## Indicators

- ✔ The organisation emphasises its commitment to children's safety and wellbeing (including cultural safety) when advertising for, recruiting, and screening staff and volunteers.
- ✔ Duty statements, selection criteria, and referee checks demonstrate children are valued and respected, and there is a commitment to children's safety and wellbeing, understanding of children's developmental needs and culturally safe practices.
- ✔ Employers, staff and volunteers in an organisation have completed background check requirements.
- ✔ Staff and volunteers understand the child safety policy and procedures and Code of Conduct of the organisation and meet their record keeping, information sharing and reporting responsibilities.
- ✔ Ongoing staff support, supervision, and performance management processes involve children's safety and wellbeing, and cultural safety elements.
- ✔ The organisation maintains suitable record keeping systems and protocols for staff and volunteers.
- ✔ The organisation has a range of tools and processes to monitor and mitigate risk, including risks associated with cultural safety.
- ✔ Transformational unlearning – The organisation provides regular and meaningful opportunities for their staff to challenge unconscious bias and discrimination within the organisation's structures and workforce.
- ✔ Negotiating values, motivations and paradigm – Policies and programs are co-designed with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and stakeholders to reflect their perspectives on child safety, complaints processes and reporting mechanisms.
- ✔ Operating on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander terms of reference – Complaints and reporting mechanisms are grounded in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge systems and ways of knowing, being and doing.
- ✔ Accountability and continuous quality improvement – Success is measured using a range of different success indicators, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander success indicators.



## 1 Steps to embed this Standard

- Implement rigorous recruitment and screening processes, including reference checks and Working with Children Checks.
- Develop and maintain role-specific position descriptions that include children's safety and wellbeing and cultural safety responsibilities.
- Provide induction and ongoing training on children's safety and wellbeing, cultural awareness, and inclusive practices.
- Establish clear supervision and performance management processes to monitor staff suitability and conduct, with specific reference to and the Child Safe Standards.
- Foster a workplace culture that prioritises children's safety and wellbeing through regular discussions and professional development opportunities.
- Implement a zero-tolerance policy to racism and ensure that this is communicated to all staff.
- Implement a safe and responsive mechanism for staff to report any concerns about the safety of children.

### This is what children and young people said about safe people:

Friendly but maintain professional boundaries

Listen

Open to different perspectives

Willing to learn and understand

Open to hearing your opinions and don't dismiss you because of your age

Interested in and cares about social issues

Inclusive

Proactive

Honest

Make you feel valued

Responsive

Respectful

Genuine

Authentic

Patient

Kind

Acknowledge your presence

Welcoming

Smile

Make eye contact

Use a friendly tone of voice

Have open body language



## 2 Some ways you could do this

**Screening Processes:** Conduct thorough background checks, including reference checks and Working with Children Checks, for positions directly working with or engaging with children.

**Detailed Role Descriptions:** Ensure all position descriptions outline children's safety and wellbeing responsibilities and expectations.

**Structured Induction Programs:** Embed children's safety and wellbeing training into onboarding processes for all new staff and volunteers.

**Ongoing Professional Development:** Schedule regular training sessions on best practice child safety, cultural awareness and trauma-informed care.

**Performance Monitoring:** Establish clear processes for regular supervision, mentoring, and performance evaluation of staff and volunteers.



People who have a good awareness and understanding of disability and different needs so when I'm with them I feel like I can authentically be myself and not think about neurotypical norms or having to explain myself.

— Rhea





### 3 Reflection

#### Points for growth

- Are all staff and volunteers screened appropriately before working with children?
- Do role descriptions clearly outline responsibilities for children's safety and wellbeing?
- Is there a structured training program that equips staff and volunteers to manage children's safety and wellbeing risks effectively?
- Is there a structured training program that equips staff and volunteers to ensure and enable the cultural safety of children, families and staff?
- How do you, as an organisation, provide ongoing support to staff and volunteers to ensure they maintain child safe practices?
- What processes are in place to support staff and volunteers to proactively raise children's safety and wellbeing and cultural safety concerns and for investigating, responding to or resolving related issues?
- Does the organisation have a clearly communicated zero-tolerance racism policy?

#### Taking action

- Audit recruitment and screening processes to ensure compliance with best practice standards.
- Develop a comprehensive induction program that embeds children's safety and wellbeing values.
- Review policies, including the staff and volunteer Code of Conduct, to ensure there is a clear position on what behaviour is and is not acceptable.
- Implement regular supervision and performance reviews to reinforce child-safe behaviours.
- Create a safe and supportive space where staff and volunteers can discuss challenges and seek guidance on children's safety and wellbeing matters and cultural safety matters.

“

If I don't see enough diverse people around then I don't feel safe. It sends a message that this isn't a safe place for people like me.

— Nooria

”



## 4 Measures of success

All personnel working with children have undergone rigorous reference checks, hold mandatory clearances to work with children, and complete induction training before working with children.

Staff and volunteers report feeling confident and supported in their roles regarding children's safety.

Clear and documented processes exist for addressing concerns about the suitability of staff or volunteers.

Ongoing professional development opportunities are regularly accessed by personnel.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff are empowered to bring to work their own cultural values and ways of knowing, being and doing. These values and ways of working are respected and genuinely considered equal in value.



For me it comes back to boundaries and feeling like they want to listen to me and care about my ideas and opinions.

Sometimes adults can be quite insensitive. They need to know who they're talking to and have an awareness of culture and diverse backgrounds.

— Shraddha







# Standard 6

## Complaints management

Processes to respond to complaints and concerns are child-focused<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Child Safe Organisations Act 2024 Section 9(f)

“ Young people need to have the agency and the ability to speak up and feeling safe is an enabler to that. If they’re not feeling safe, they’re not going to speak up about the issues impacting them. You need to feel safe to speak up.

– Nooria

”

Effective, child-focused complaint and concern processes are essential for protecting children. Standard 6 ensures organisations have systems in place that are transparent, accessible, and designed to empower children to raise concerns safely and confidently, knowing they will be taken seriously.

### **Our vision for excellence**

Organisations create a culture where children, families, carers, staff and volunteers feel safe and supported to speak up about concerns. Complaints are managed in a timely, transparent, trauma informed, and respectful way with the child’s wellbeing and safety at the centre of every response.

### **Why this Standard matters for Queensland**

A child-focused approach to complaints ensures that children in Queensland feel heard and supported, regardless of their background. Addressing concerns effectively builds trust and ensures organisations fulfil their obligations to prevent harm and improve safety practices.



“ To be frank I wouldn’t go to anyone [for help or to report something] in an organisation where I felt unsafe. In the past I have tried to reach out if something wasn’t right for myself or someone else and it was just treated lightly. No action was taken, and I was practically blamed for the situation. I went back many times and was failed every time. Then I just gave up.

– Nooria

”

## Key Action Areas

- 6.1 An accessible, child focused complaint handling policy exists, which clearly outlines the roles and responsibilities of individuals at each level of the organisation and their approach to dealing with different types of complaints, breaches of relevant policies or the Code of Conduct and their obligation to act and report.
- 6.2 Policies and procedures are in place that address reporting of complaints and concerns to relevant authorities, whether or not the law requires reporting, and co-operates with authorities who have a responsibility to investigate.
- 6.3 Where appropriate, ensure there are First Nations-led complaints handling and reporting mechanisms (e.g., involving First Nations Liaison Officers and trusted community Elders in the process).
- 6.4 Ensure investigations into complaints do not retraumatise children.
- 6.5 Effective complaint handling processes are understood by children, families, staff and volunteers, and are culturally safe.
- 6.6 Complaints are taken seriously and responded to promptly and thoroughly.

## Indicators

- ✔ Staff and volunteers are well-informed about their roles and responsibilities, reporting and privacy obligations, and processes for responding to disclosures.
- ✔ Staff and volunteers feel empowered and supported to draw attention to breaches of the Code of Conduct within the organisation.
- ✔ The complaints handling policy prioritises the safety and wellbeing of children and recognises the role of families and communities in understanding and using the policy.
- ✔ Policies and procedures demonstrate regard for fairness to all parties in a complaint process or investigation including support and information as appropriate.
- ✔ Staff and volunteers have a good knowledge of the different ways children express concerns or distress and disclose harm, and can respond using trauma-informed approaches.
- ✔ Information about all complaints and concerns, including breaches of relevant policies or the Code of Conduct, is recorded and analysed, including in relation to processes, timeframes and record keeping practices. Systemic issues are identified and mitigated through this process.
- ✔ Children know who to talk to if they are feeling unsafe and know what to expect in response.
- ✔ Timely feedback is provided to children, carers, families, staff and volunteers who raise concerns or complaints.
- ✔ **Sharing resources** – The organisation dedicates resources to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led complaints mechanisms, personnel and processes, where appropriate.
- ✔ **Prioritising social and emotional wellbeing and health** – An holistic, strengths-based approach is adopted to support the wellbeing of children, staff and families through the complaints process.
- ✔ **Accountability and continuous quality improvement** – Progress, restoration and successful outcomes are measured using a range of different success indicators, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander success indicators.



## 1 Steps to embed this Standard

“

You need a proper process that has an outcome, and it doesn't keep getting referred on. It's not just conversations, it's action. Tangible things happen once something is reported, and it's not just brushed off with “Oh we're sorry this happened to you”. The appropriate action is not just a band-aid solution like putting out a statement. It's putting in place measures to make sure it doesn't happen again.

– Rhea

”

- Develop and maintain a child-friendly complaints policy that is accessible to children, carers, families, staff, and volunteers.
- Ensure complaint processes are easy to understand, trauma-informed and tailored to the needs of all people, including people from CALD backgrounds, refugee and asylum seekers, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, and those with a disability or who identify as LGBTIQ+.
- Train staff to handle complaints sensitively, with a focus on supporting and protecting children and ensuring that no child or person is retraumatised throughout the process.
- Establish clear pathways for reporting, escalating, and responding to concerns, including feedback loops to ensure outcomes are communicated.
- Monitor and review complaint trends to identify systemic issues and drive continuous improvement.

“

Someone who upholds confidentiality and doesn't go and tell your parents without telling you first.

– Samuel

”



## 2 Some ways you could do this

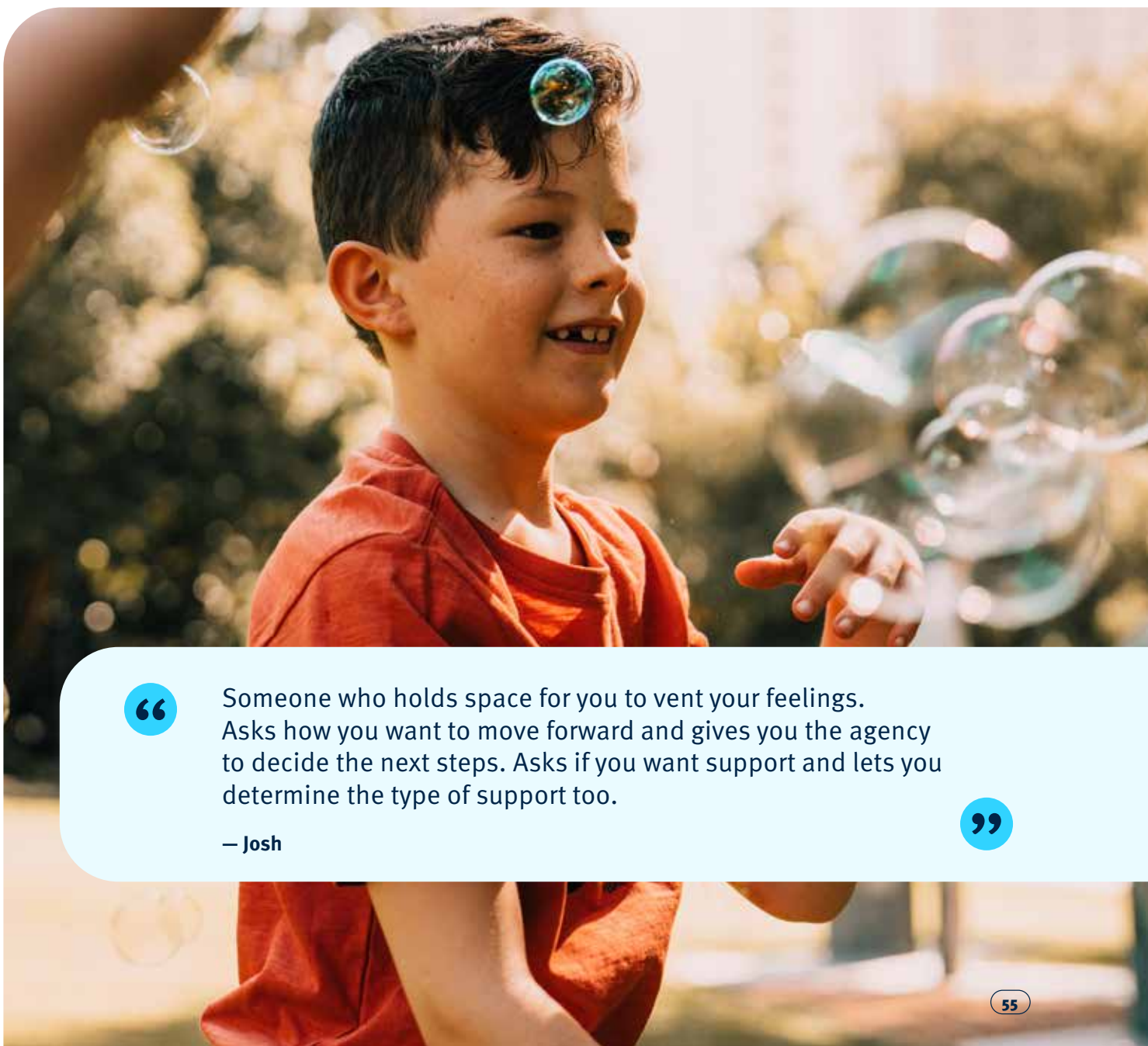
**Develop Child-Friendly Policies:** Ensure complaint-handling policies are written in plain language and are accessible.

**Clear Reporting Pathways:** Outline how complaints can be raised, including anonymous options, and ensure all staff know how to respond to and escalate concerns.

**Trauma-Informed Training:** Train staff to respond sensitively to disclosures, ensuring children's safety and wellbeing is prioritised.

**Feedback Loops:** Inform complainants about the outcomes and actions taken because of their feedback.

**Systematic Review:** Regularly audit complaint trends to identify patterns and areas for improvement in processes.



Someone who holds space for you to vent your feelings. Asks how you want to move forward and gives you the agency to decide the next steps. Asks if you want support and lets you determine the type of support too.

— Josh





## 3 Reflection

### Points for growth

- Are complaint processes clearly documented, child-friendly and accessible for carers and families?
- How do you ensure children feel safe and confident in raising concerns?
- Are staff adequately trained to manage complaints in a trauma-informed, sensitive and child-focused manner?
- Does your organisation utilise complaints as a learning opportunity, to improve policies and practices?
- Are all staff trained to understand when a child is expressing concern about something?
- Does your organisation use and empower First Nations-led approaches to complaints and reporting?

### Taking action

- Consult with children, carers, and families to test whether your complaints process is accessible and easy to understand.
- Consult with First Nations organisations, communities, staff and stakeholders to ensure that the complaints and reporting mechanisms are safe, culturally appropriate and prioritise the physical, spiritual, cultural and emotional wellbeing of the child.
- Implement role-specific training on handling complaints with a trauma-informed approach.
- Review past complaints to identify trends and areas for improvement in your processes.
- Regularly communicate updates on how your organisation handles and resolves complaints to build transparency and trust.



## 4 Measures of success

Clear, documented complaints policies and procedures are in place and accessible.

Staff demonstrate confidence and competence in identifying and managing child-focused complaints.

Feedback from children, carers, and families confirms they feel safe and supported when raising concerns.

Complaint data is regularly reviewed and informs potential systemic reform and policy and process improvements.

All children feel safe to report concerns and complaints and feel that the resolution process results in meaningful change.

The resolution process results in meaningful systemic change, not just individual case resolution.

All staff report feeling safe, capable and supported to raise issues and complaints.

First Nations staff report that the complaints processes are culturally safe.







## STANDARD 7

### Knowledge and skills

# Standard 7

## Knowledge and skills

Staff and volunteers of the entity are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and awareness to keep children safe through ongoing education and training<sup>13</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Child Safe Organisations Act 2024 Section 9(g)

“ We need adults who have cultural competence. Who understand about different disabilities. Who are prepared to educate and respond when they see something happening that isn't right.

– Rhea

”

Staff and volunteers are the backbone of child safe organisations. Standard 7 ensures that they are not only screened and qualified, but also receive ongoing education, training, and capacity building support to build the knowledge, skills, and awareness required to proactively safeguard children in all interactions.

### **Our vision for excellence**

Organisations foster a culture of continuous learning and continuous quality improvement where staff and volunteers are empowered with the latest knowledge and best practice in children's safety and wellbeing, cultural safety and trauma-informed care. Training is tailored to specific roles and equips staff and volunteers to identify risks or harm, respond appropriately, and create environments where children feel safe and supported.

### **Why this Standard matters for Queensland**

Queensland's organisations serve children from a wide range of cultural and social contexts. Comprehensive, ongoing training ensures that staff and volunteers are equipped to navigate diversity, respond to evolving risks, and maintain a consistent standard of care, no matter the setting.



## Key Action Areas

- 7.1 Staff and volunteers are trained and supported to effectively implement the organisation's Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy.
- 7.2 Staff and volunteers receive training and information to recognise indicators of child harm including grooming.
- 7.3 Staff and volunteers receive training and information to respond effectively to issues of children's safety and wellbeing and support colleagues who disclose harm.
- 7.4 Staff and volunteers receive training and information on how to build culturally safe environments for children.
- 7.5 Staff have adequate access to educational opportunities for truth-telling about Australia's history.

## Indicators

- ✔ The organisation provides regular opportunities to educate and train staff on child safety and wellbeing policies and procedures and evidence-based practice.
- ✔ The organisation provides a supportive and safe environment for staff and volunteers who disclose harm or risk to children.
- ✔ Staff and volunteers receive training on the rights of children in relation to records created about them and their use, retention, and disposal.
- ✔ Staff and volunteers recognise the range of indicators of child harm, including indicators of harm.
- ✔ Staff and volunteers respond effectively when issues of children's safety and wellbeing rise.
- ✔ Transformational unlearning – The organisation provides regular and meaningful opportunities for staff to learn and unlearn.
- ✔ Negotiating values, motivations and paradigm – The organisation provides regular and meaningful opportunities for staff to self-reflect on their own values, motivations, biases and privileges, and challenge racism in all its forms.
- ✔ Operating on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander terms of reference – Staff have access to opportunities to learn about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, cultural protocols and knowledges, and the organisation embraces Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander worldview.
- ✔ Accountability and continuous quality improvement – Success is measured using a range of different success indicators, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander success indicators.



## 1 Steps to embed this Standard

“

An organisation that is child safe is explicitly thinking about not re-traumatising children. The people who work there need to know that there are kids in every room who have gone through something, had a tough time. But when you're young you may not be able to express or explain that and you need adults who can understand those body cues and respond appropriately. Children need education on body cues – ‘How do you feel when you're safe and when you're not safe’.

– Jess

”

- Develop or add to an induction program that embeds the Child Safe Standards for all new staff and volunteers.
- Complete a training needs analysis to understand the child safety and cultural safety learning and development needs of staff and volunteers tailored to their roles and responsibilities.
- Create or identify tailored training modules that address role-specific responsibilities and child safety, cultural safety and wellbeing scenarios.
- Provide ongoing education on identifying and responding to risks, including identifying abuse, neglect, and harm, and responding to disclosures.
- Incorporate cultural awareness training, focusing on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, people from CALD backgrounds, refugee and asylum-seeking communities, children with disability and those who identify as LGBTIQ+.
- Schedule refresher courses and regular updates to keep staff informed about changes in legislation and best practice standards, and to keep knowledge and skills up to date.

“

Adults need to understand how to respond to racism. When I've experienced racism and discrimination the response was always focused on me forgiving the person who hurt me. It was expected that I would be kind and forgive rather than educating the other person about what racism is and why these words or actions are wrong.

– Rhea

”



## 2 Some ways you could do this

**Training Calendar:** Develop a training schedule that includes induction, role-specific modules, and regular refresher courses.

**Interactive Learning:** Use workshops, role-playing, and scenario-based training to enhance understanding and application of the Child Safe Standards.

**Cultural Safety Education:** Integrate training in cultural safety and anti-racism.

**Cultural Awareness Opportunities:** provide opportunities for cultural immersion and learning.

**Certification Tracking:** Maintain a system to monitor training completion and compliance across the organisation.

**Feedback-Driven Improvement:** Regularly gather feedback from staff to improve the relevance and effectiveness of training.





## 3 Reflection

### Points for growth

- Does your organisation's induction process adequately prepare new staff and volunteers to uphold the Child Safe Standards?
- How do you identify training needs and tailor education to specific roles?
- Are staff and volunteers confident in recognising and responding to children's safety and wellbeing concerns?
- How does your organisation ensure cultural and social awareness are embedded in training programs?

### Taking action

- Conduct a training needs analysis to identify gaps in knowledge and skills across your team.
- Partner with external experts to deliver high-quality, role-specific child safety and wellbeing training.
- Introduce practical workshops or simulations to enhance learning and build confidence in responding to real-world scenarios.
- Create an accessible training calendar and ensure mandatory participation for all staff and volunteers.



## 4 Measures of success

All staff and volunteers have completed induction and ongoing training specific to children's safety and wellbeing and cultural safety.

Training records show high participation rates and regular refreshers.

Staff and volunteers report feeling confident and supported in their roles related to children's safety and wellbeing and cultural safety.

The organisation has a process to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of training programs based on feedback and outcomes.







## STANDARD 8

# Standard 8

## Physical and online environments

Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing and minimise the opportunity for children to be harmed<sup>14</sup>

## Physical and online environments

<sup>14</sup> Child Safe Organisations Act 2024 Section 9(h)

“

(Child friendly spaces have) fidgets or colouring on the tables and it's never explicitly addressed, it's just available for people to access if they want to. It shouldn't be self-aggrandising for the adults who put that in place. It should just be.

— Jess

”

Creating safe environments, both physical and online, is a cornerstone of children's safety and wellbeing. Standard 8 requires organisations to actively identify, assess, and mitigate risks in all spaces that children access. This ensures their wellbeing is prioritised and opportunities for harm are significantly reduced.

### **Our vision for excellence**

Organisations provide environments where children feel secure, safe, respected, and supported. Physical and online environments must prioritise the physical, social, spiritual, emotional, and cultural safety and wellbeing of all children. This requires a holistic, strengths-based approach to safety and wellbeing. It includes designing physical spaces to minimise risks and maintaining online platforms that are safe, well-monitored, and aligned with the Child Safe Standards.

### **Why this Standard matters for Queensland**

In Queensland, children interact with organisations in diverse settings—from community spaces to online forums. Ensuring these environments are intentionally designed with safety in mind not only protects children but also builds trust among families, carers, and communities.



## Key Action Areas

- 8.1 The organisation takes a holistic, strengths-based approach to safety and wellbeing, ensuring that all aspects of a child's wellbeing – physical, social, spiritual, emotional, and cultural – are prioritised.
- 8.2 Staff and volunteers 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.
- 8.3 The online environment is used in accordance with the organisation's Code of Conduct and Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and practices.
- 8.4 Risk management plans (including the Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy) consider risks posed by organisational settings, activities, and the physical environment.
- 8.5 Organisations that contract facilities and services from third parties have procurement policies that ensure the safety of children.

## Indicators

- ✔ The organisation's risk management strategy addresses physical and online risks, including risks arising from child to child and adult to child interactions and the state and nature of physical spaces.
- ✔ The organisation's policies promote the use of safe online applications for children to learn, communicate, and seek help.
- ✔ The organisation considers ways in which the physical environment might promote cultural safety.
- ✔ Staff and volunteers are proactive in identifying and mitigating physical and online risks.
- ✔ Staff and volunteers access and use online environments in line with the organisation's Code of Conduct and relevant communication protocols.
- ✔ Children, their carers and families are informed, in culturally appropriate ways, about the use of the organisation's technology and safety tools.
- ✔ Third party contractors for the provision of facilities and services have appropriate measures in place to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children, including their cultural safety.
- ✔ Prioritising social and emotional wellbeing and health – Physical and online environments should be designed with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander principles of health and wellbeing at their core.
- ✔ Creating a strategic enabling environment – Organisations consider how ensure their spaces reflect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural identities, including signage, artwork and language representation.
- ✔ Sharing power and decision-making – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities have involved in designing and evaluating child-safe spaces.



## 1 Steps to embed this Standard

“

It's important to note that showcasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags and artwork should be the last step in your organisation's commitment to cultural safety.

– Josh

”

- Develop and commit to a holistic and strengths-based concept of safety and wellbeing that incorporates physical, social, spiritual, cultural and emotional wellbeing.
- Conduct regular risk assessments of physical environments to identify and mitigate potential hazards.
- Ensure the organisation has developed a specific child and youth risk management strategy, and it is regularly updated and reviewed.
- Develop clear policies for supervising children in all physical settings, including outdoor spaces.
- Implement technology usage policies that address online safety, including monitoring, secure data handling, and appropriate communication practices.
- Provide staff and volunteers with training on maintaining safety in both physical and online environments.
- Engage children, carers, and families to gather feedback on how safe they feel in your spaces and online platforms, including consideration of their cultural safety.

### Children and young people said a safe place is:

accepting

considerate

stimulating

accommodating of different needs and identities

representative of different cultures, identities and abilities and respects diversity

designed in consultation with young people

has non-hierarchical spaces

designed for the people who use it and their needs



## 2 Some ways you could do this

**Safety Audits:** Conduct regular audits of physical spaces to identify and mitigate risks, including playgrounds, classrooms, and communal areas.

**Technology Policies:** Implement clear guidelines for safe online interactions, including monitoring tools and data security measures.

**Supervision Guidelines:** Establish clear protocols for supervising children in both physical and online spaces.

**Emergency Response Plans:** Develop plans for responding to incidents in physical and digital environments, such as cyberbullying or accidents.

**Stakeholder Engagement:** Gather feedback from children, carers, families, and staff about the safety of your physical and online environments and act on concerns raised.

“

Don't blame the young person if something happens to them online. Adults need to understand that coercive control happens online too and if you look at the actions of a young person in isolation of the actions of the adult then you're blaming the victim.

— Jess

”





### 3 Reflection

#### Points for growth

- Are physical environments designed or adapted to minimise risks of harm to children, including risks to cultural safety?
- Does your organisation use or refer to holistic and strengths-based concepts of safety and wellbeing that incorporate physical, social, spiritual, cultural, and emotional wellbeing?
- Do your staff and volunteers follow established protocols to monitor and supervise children?
- How effectively are online platforms monitored and managed to prevent harm, such as cyberbullying or inappropriate content?
- Are there clear guidelines for how children and staff should interact online?

#### Taking action

- Schedule routine safety audits for physical spaces and address identified risks promptly.
- Implement or refine a Code of Conduct that includes online interactions.
- Use cybersecurity tools and filters to protect children in online spaces while ensuring access is age-appropriate and safe, including culturally safe.
- Consult with experts in physical and digital safety to ensure your risk management strategies are intentional and appropriate for your organisation.



We need more peer-led awareness training to raise awareness about how to stay safe online. Programs developed and led by young people that are relevant and responsive to the reality of young people's experiences online.

— Josh





## 4 Measures of success

Physical environments meet safety standards and are regularly assessed for risks.

Policies for online safety are documented, implemented, and monitored effectively.

Children report feeling safe in both physical and online environments.

Incidents of harm or breaches are rare and are responded to swiftly and effectively when they occur.



Education about online safety is really important. Like knowing how to stay safe, how to know when something is wrong, how to get support.

– Shraddha







## STANDARD 9

### Continuous improvement

# Standard 9

## Continuous improvement

Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved<sup>15</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Child Safe Organisations Act 2024 Section 9(i)

“

Organisations often focus on one-off incidents rather than determining if there is a systemic issue which needs to be addressed more widely.

– Rhea

”

There is no finish line. We need to review and improve our organisational practices on a regular basis and stay up to date with best practice. Standard 9 ensures that organisations proactively create the space and time to interrogate feedback and information gathered from children, families, staff and volunteers and a variety of other performance data to identify and address systemic issues so they are continuously improving. Ensuring children’s safety is a core priority means building an organisational culture that is responsive to challenges and new situations and is willing to learn and change.

### **Our vision for excellence**

Continuous improvement is a dynamic process where constant reflection on what is working and where challenges or gaps exist is prioritised. A culturally safe organisation ensures that progress and outcomes are set, measured and monitored based on a range of different success indicators, not just the normalised standards and methods. This includes definitions of success and evaluation methods that are determined with and by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders. Continuous quality improvement processes contribute to a culture of accountability and a commitment to ongoing quality assurance and improved practices.

### **Why this Standard matters for Queensland**

In Queensland, organisations need to evolve and improve their practice to respond to changing circumstances, environments, systemic issues, and the diverse needs of children and communities.



## Key Action Areas

- 9.1 The organisation regularly reviews, evaluates and improves child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures and practices.
- 9.2 Complaints, concerns and safety incidents are analysed to identify causes and systemic failures to inform continuous improvement.
- 9.3 The organisation reports on the findings of relevant reviews to staff and volunteers, the community, families and children.
- 9.4 Appropriate mechanisms are in place to measure progress and success using diverse evaluation methods, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander success indicators.
- 9.5 Implementation and accountability policies embed shared responsibility and accountability.

## Indicators

- ✔ The organisation seeks the participation of children, carers and communities in its regular reviews of child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures, and practices.
- ✔ Child safety and wellbeing indicators are included in documentation used for reviews.
- ✔ Review outcomes are considered and implemented to improve child safe and culturally safe practices.
- ✔ Regular analysis of complaints demonstrates improvement in child safe practices.
- ✔ Transformational unlearning – Leaders commit to regular, transparent reviews of governance and policy frameworks, ensuring they actively identify implementation of each Standard and the Universal Principle.
- ✔ Creating a strategic enabling environment – The organisation establishes and updates clear, measurable cultural safety priorities, with progress reviewed annually in collaboration with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders.
- ✔ Accountability and continuous quality improvement – Community consultations are embedded in governance processes to ensure that cultural safety standards are continuously evaluated and strengthened.



## 1 Steps to embed this Standard



It's really important that if you are going to survey young people then you actually do something with the information not just report the data in an annual report. You need to respond to what you've been told.

– Samuel



- Employ systems that allow for regular review of all policies and procedures related to spaces, risk, and compliance associated with the Child Safe Standards.
- Ensure data from evaluations, complaints, and customer surveys are reflected in the refinement and development of policies and practices.
- Provide regular updates to staff and volunteers as changes occur as a result of review and improvements.
- Engage children, carers, and families to gather feedback on potential improvements to the ways in which the Child Safe Standards are embedded across the organisation.
- Systemic tools are embedded in practices across the organisation to allow for regular review of training, resources, and program delivery to ensure best practice.
- Embed cultural safety reviews into annual risk management, strategic planning and quality improvement cycles.



If someone showed me how they have handled problems in the past and the approach they have taken then I might feel more willing or encouraged to reach out.

– Nooria





## 2 Some ways you could do this

**Establish Regular Reviews:** Schedule periodic reviews of child safety and wellbeing policies and procedures, incorporating feedback from staff, children, carers, and families.

**Use Feedback Mechanisms:** Develop formal channels for staff, volunteers, children, carers, and families to provide input on the effectiveness of child safety and wellbeing practices.

**Data-Driven Improvements:** Analyse incident and complaint data to identify trends and areas for improvement in policies, procedures and practice.

**Audit Compliance:** Conduct internal and external audits to ensure alignment with the Child Safe Standards and identify gaps.

**Continuous Learning:** Use findings from reviews and audits to inform updates to training programs, resources, and practices.

**Actionable Reports:** Create clear action plans based on review findings, assigning timelines and accountability for addressing identified areas.

**Embed a Culture of Improvement:** Regularly communicate updates and improvements to all staff and stakeholders to reinforce a culture of accountability and growth.

**Evidence of Continuous Improvement:** Your organisation's action plan should institute regular self-assessment dates across the organisation, with a specific data capture program to ensure a scaled approach to improvements.

**Integration of First Nations Knowledges:** Integrate First Nations perspectives into governance, ensuring that implementation and decision-making includes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation.

**Data Transparency:** Disaggregate child safety data by cultural background and ensure it informs policy updates.





## 3 Reflection

### Points for growth

- Are systems in place to record and evaluate concerns and incidents that inform current practices?
- Do staff and volunteers follow established protocols to provide feedback on policies and procedures?
- How effectively are feedback loops utilised and consistently completed?
- Are there mechanisms in place to hold leadership accountable for ensuring standards are embedded?
- Are there clear timelines for audit and review processes across all areas of practice?
- Are the governance structures actively creating space for First Nations involvement?
- How are information and data sources used to make improvements in policies and practices?
- How do you evidence continuous improvement? Who is deciding whether improvement is made? And for whom?
- Are review processes transparent?
- Are child safety and wellbeing commitments being translated into real, lived change for children and families?

### Taking action

- Systems are in place and are readily accessible to all staff to record concerns and incidents related to current practices.
- Training on updates to system and practice improvements are regularly offered.
- Feedback systems are available to all staff and incorporate opportunities for children, carers, and families to engage.
- Organisational leaders invite regular, purposeful action to reflect on feedback and determine where improvements are needed.
- Evidence of continuous improvement is accessible and in line with the organisation's action plan.
- Cultural safety is embedded into governance policies.
- Review, adapt and improve policies, strategic plans and procedures periodically, based on findings.
- Annual public reporting on child safety progress, including both qualitative and quantitative data from a diverse range of families, children, staff and volunteers.



## 4 Measures of success

Staff and volunteers readily know and review practices and regularly consider opportunities for improvement.

Feedback from children, families, staff and volunteers is regularly reviewed and used to trigger child safety and implementation audits.

The voices of children are evident in changes and improvements.

Policies, practices, and procedures are reviewed and updated regularly to respond to feedback, changes, or risks.

“

Feedback loops are something that's really important. Make sure you let participants know what you used and why other ideas weren't used. That makes young people feel like their ideas were valued not just taken.

— Josh

”







# Standard 10

## Policies and procedures

Policies and procedures document how the entity is safe for children<sup>16</sup>

STANDARD 10

Policies and procedures

<sup>16</sup> Child Safe Organisations Act 2024 Section 9(i)

“ A lot of youth participation is used as a badge of honour for organisations. “Look at us we’re deadly because we’re doing youth engagement” as opposed to really doing genuine engagement where space is held for young people.

– Josh

”

The way in which organisations conduct their work and deliver services has the potential to impact children in numerous ways, both directly and indirectly. Standard 10 ensures that staff at all levels of the organisation understand their individual responsibility to ensure transparency of all aspects of service delivery in a child safe organisation.

### **Our vision for excellence**

Organisations implement strategies to embed record management systems that reflect culturally safe and trauma-informed policies and procedures, equipping staff and volunteers with a working knowledge and application of organisation-wide methods.

### **Why this Standard matters for Queensland**

The unique community settings of Queensland contribute to the need for diversity in workplace practices that require localised guidance for staff, volunteers, children, carers, and families regarding processes to respond to and prevent children’s safety, cultural safety and wellbeing issues.



## Key Action Areas

- 10.1 Policies and procedures embed all Child Safe Standards and the Universal Principle.
- 10.2 Policies and procedures are well-documented, accessible, and easy to understand.
- 10.3 Best practice models and stakeholder consultation informs the development of policies and procedures. This includes First Nations-led practice models and consultation with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, organisations and communities.
- 10.4 Leaders champion and model compliance with policies and procedures.
- 10.5 Staff and volunteers understand and implement policies and procedures.

## Indicators

- ✔ The organisation's Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy is comprehensive and addresses the Universal Principle and the 10 Child Safe Standards.
- ✔ The organisation's Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and procedures are documented in a language and format that is easily understood and accessible to all staff, volunteers, families, carers and children.
- ✔ Audits of the organisation's policies and procedures provide evidence of how the organisation is child safe and culturally safe through its governance, leadership, and culture.
- ✔ Practice within the organisation is consistent across the board and compliant with child safe policies and procedures, including culturally safe work practices.
- ✔ Interviews or surveys of children, carers, families, and community members demonstrate confidence in and awareness of the organisation's policies and procedures on promoting a child safe culture. Surveys of board members, executives, staff, and volunteers demonstrate high levels of understanding of the policies, procedures and practice requirements of the organisation.
- ✔ Transformational unlearning – Leadership communicates regularly and clearly about the organisation's progress and implementation of the Child Safe Standards and Universal Principle, ensuring transparency about learning and unlearning outcomes.
- ✔ Creating a strategic enabling environment – The organisation establishes and updates clear, measurable cultural safety priorities, with progress communicated regularly in collaboration with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders.



## 1 Steps to embed this Standard

“

Young people are experts in their own lives and in their own stories, but they are also learning and changing. You need to check back in to see if those opinions and ideas are still the same. Consent needs to be sought to use content from past consultations. If the young person has a new perspective, then you shouldn't use their old ideas.

– Josh

”

- Implement policies and procedures that are accessible to all stakeholders, with awareness of language and application.
- Create comprehensive guidelines for the implementation and use of all policies and procedures, with particular reference to safeguarding children.
- Ensure policies and procedures address all the Child Safe Standards and the Universal Principle.
- Staff and volunteers can readily and easily access documentation.
- Utilise external and internal feedback mechanisms to inform the development, implementation, and improvement of policies and procedures.

“

Cultural safety within an organisation looks much less of an achieved state that a person, place or organisation reaches, and more an ongoing commitment to the cultural wellbeing of children, young people, families or employees. It may be more useful to frame it as cultural responsiveness. This honours the ongoing nature of cultural safety.

– Josh

”





## 2 Some ways you could do this

**Develop Comprehensive Policies:** Ensure all policies address the requirements of the Universal Principle and the Child Safe Standards and include clear procedures for safeguarding children.

**Accessibility and Clarity:** Write policies in plain language and ensure they are easily accessible to all stakeholders, including children, families, carers, and diverse groups.

**Ongoing Consultation:** Engage children, families, carers, staff, and cultural advisors in the development and review of policies to ensure they are relevant and inclusive.

**Policy Awareness:** Educate all staff and volunteers on the location, content, and application of child safety and wellbeing policies as part of induction and ongoing training.

**Feedback Loops:** Establish mechanisms for stakeholders to provide feedback on policies and procedures, and ensure this feedback informs updates.

**Version Control:** Maintain a record of policy revisions to ensure transparency and demonstrate continuous improvement.

**Monitor Application:** Implement systems to monitor the consistent application of policies in practice and address deviations promptly.





## 3 Reflection

### Points for growth

- Are policies and procedures accessible for a broad range of stakeholders?
- Do staff and volunteers know how to access policies and procedures?
- Is terminology used in policies and procedures clearly articulated to ensure engagement and understanding from all stakeholders?
- Is there a collective understanding across the organisation as to what a child safe entity is and means? How do you measure this?
- Is there a clear understanding of what is required across all tiers of an organisation, from governance down?
- Are there clear guidelines for how children, carers, families, and staff are invited to provide feedback on policies and procedures?

### Taking action

- Engage people from diverse language groups and with diverse abilities to assess the accessibility of all documentation.
- Implement guidelines that stipulate the requirements for implementation and review of all policies and procedures across the organisation and involving community, carer, and family perspectives.



Cultural safety within an organisation looks much less of an achieved state that a person, place or organisation reaches, and more an ongoing commitment to the cultural wellbeing of children, young people, families or employees. It may be more useful to frame it as cultural responsiveness. This honours the ongoing nature of cultural safety.

– Josh





## 4 Measures of success

There is a clear understanding of and engagement with policy and procedure documents by staff and stakeholders.

Policies and procedures are accessed regularly by staff and stakeholders.

Changes to language and accessibility are implemented to ensure cultural safety and diverse elements are embedded.



Knowing there is a policy and who you need to go to. But more importantly being able to choose who you report to. Someone you trust and feel comfortable with, not someone you're told to go to.

— Jess



# The **Universal Principle**

The Universal Principle<sup>5</sup> requires child safe entities to provide an environment that promotes and upholds the right to **cultural safety** of children who are Aboriginal persons or Torres Strait Islander persons.

## Cultural safety indicators

### Cultural safety in Queensland's Child Safe Standards

Ensuring cultural safety in child safe practices is essential for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families. The following eight cultural safety indicators provide guidance to organisations on how to apply cultural safety across the 10 Child Safe Standards.

1

**Transformational unlearning** – Organisations must challenge unconscious bias, racism, and discrimination within their structures and workforce.

2

**Negotiating values, motivations, and paradigm** – Policies and programs should be co-designed with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to reflect their perspectives on child safety.

3

**Prioritising social and emotional wellbeing and health** – A holistic, strengths-based approach must be adopted to support the wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, staff, and families.

4

**Sharing power and decision-making** – Decision-making processes should be led or co-led by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to ensure genuine partnerships.

5

**Sharing resources** – Organisations should dedicate resources to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led initiatives, research, and governance mechanisms, where appropriate.

6

**Creating a strategic enabling environment** – Leadership must set clear priorities and accountability structures ensure cultural safety into daily operations.

7

**Operating on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander terms of reference** – Service delivery to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children should be grounded in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge systems and self-determination principles.

8

**Accountability and continuous quality improvement** – Progress should be measured using Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-defined success indicators, ensuring sustained improvement.

<sup>5</sup> *Child Safe Organisations Act 2024* Section 11

To assist organisations in this process of defining and applying cultural safety, the QFCC draws on two key definitions of cultural safety from the Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care (SNAICC) and Dr Gregory Phillips of ABSTARR Consulting (ABSTARR).

### **SNAICC defines cultural safety as:**

**... the child being provided with a safe, nurturing and positive environment where they are comfortable with being themselves, expressing their culture... their spiritual and belief systems, and they are supported by the carer... [who] respects their Aboriginality and therefore encourages their sense of self and identify.<sup>6</sup>**

ABSTARR provides a definition of cultural safety which includes:

1. Individual awareness, competencies, and responsiveness of and to ‘the other’.
2. Individual awareness, competencies, responsiveness to ‘the self’ – reflexivity.
3. Institutional policies, procedures, procurement - rebalancing of power and money.
4. Continual learning – continuous quality improvement, not content measures alone.
5. Paradigm shift – ‘Aboriginal programs’ are not about ‘fitting Aborigines into a white system’ (deficit and charity) but about changing the system so all fit in (strength-based).

**There are two important evidence-based assumptions within Phillips’ (2015) definition of cultural safety:**

Cultural safety is a euphemism for addressing racism and unconscious bias in individuals and the enabling environment. Therefore, it requires more than learning about and including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, children and cultures.

---

It is the responsibility of non-Indigenous people and organisations to enable cultural safety and change the system so that all people fit in. It is not about “fixing” Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander “problems” or “fitting” Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and children into a white system.

---



Cultural safety is a committed consideration to the experiences and realities of what it is to be First Nations, the cultural load that is carried, as well as the familial and community responsibilities for activism and advocacy. Cultural safety encapsulates a shared commitment to the issues faced by First Nations peoples. It means staying informed and taking the time to embark on their own journey of learning and understanding.

– Josh

## What does this look like in practice?

**As we continue to develop our approach and consult with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, communities, and organisations – we know that in a culturally safe environment:**

- Discrimination is called out and addressed properly, respectfully and completely, and there are policies in place to ensure the organisation is accountable for racism and discrimination
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples define and measure cultural safety
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples – including staff and stakeholders – have a voice and decision-making powers about issues that affect them
- Individuals develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes to recognise and address biases, stereotypes and tendencies towards racism and discrimination
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families feel a sense of belonging, dignity and justice
- There is clear leadership, governance and culture that ensure cultural safety is a component of child safeguarding
- First Nations communities, Elders and leaders are engaged regularly and meaningfully to ensure policies are culturally appropriate, responsive, and safe
- Organisations have mechanisms in place to ensure accountability and continuous quality improvement.

## Children and young people tell us they feel culturally safe when:

People take the time to listen rather than talk.

People stand in solidarity and provide support.

Places and people feel validating and nonconfrontational.

Safe spaces are actively facilitated.

The importance of diversity and culture is appreciated in words and actions.

People avoid assumptions and take responsibility for their own learning and understanding.

Racism is called out.

Cultural safety is ongoing.

# Appendix 1

## Language and terminology

The table below helps to explain and provide context for the key terms used throughout these Guidelines to support your organisation to understand and implement the Universal Principle and Child Safe Standards.

Key Term	Explanation
Action plan	The Child Safe Organisations Action Plan is a template designed to help organisations plan the actions they need to take to prepare for the introduction of the Universal Principle and the Child Safe Standards. Being able to demonstrate and evidence how you are implementing the Standards will show that you are working towards compliance as well as how you are strengthening child safe practices you may already have in place. The action plan template is provided in the Self-Assessment tool for implementing the Universal Principle and Child Safe Standards in Queensland available on the Commission’s website.
CALD	For this document’s purposes, culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities refer to migrants and international communities, both established and newly emerging, who have access to existing supports, resources and means.
Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy	A Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy outlines the ways in which organisations action and prioritise the safety and wellbeing of children. Rules and expectations regarding child safe practices are outlined for staff, volunteers and community members with the aim of establishing a child safe environment.  Refer to Appendix 2 for more information.
Code of Conduct	This is an internally created document, tailored for each organisation, outlining a set of rules, responsibilities and expectations of proper practice for individuals and the organisation as a whole. Each position at the organisation is mandated to follow these rules.  Refer to Appendix 2 for more information.
Compliance	Undertaking actions through an outlined process in accordance with the Standards, in this case in direct reference to complying with the Universal Principle and the Child Safe Standards.
Cultural Safety	Dr Gregory Phillips’ (2015) identified these five key elements to define cultural safety: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Individual awareness, competencies, and responsiveness of and to ‘the other’.</li> <li>2. Individual awareness, competencies, responsiveness to ‘the self’ – reflexivity.</li> <li>3. Institutional policies, procedures, procurement - rebalancing of power and money.</li> <li>4. Continual learning – continuous quality improvement, not content measures alone.</li> <li>5. Paradigm shift - ‘Programs’ should change the system so all fit in (strength-based).</li> </ol>

Key Term	Explanation
Harm	<p>One of the purposes of the Act is to protect children from harm (Section 31(a)). Harm is damage to the health, safety, or wellbeing of a child or young person, including as a result of abuse by adults or the conduct of other children. It includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physical violence</li> <li>• Sexual abuse, grooming and sexual misconduct</li> <li>• Emotional and psychological harm</li> <li>• Neglect.</li> </ul>
Staff	<p>Within the Act, staff are referred to as workers of an entity (Chapter1, Part 2, s8). A worker is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• an employee of the entity</li> <li>• a volunteer</li> <li>• a contractor, subcontractor or consultant</li> <li>• an individual supplied by a provider of labour hire services</li> <li>• an executive officer of the entity, or another person concerned with the entity's management</li> <li>• a trainee or person undertaking work experience</li> <li>• a minister of religion, religious leader or officer of the religious body</li> <li>• an individual operating as sole trader</li> <li>• an honorary officer under Schedule 3 of the <i>Child Protection Act 1999</i>.</li> </ul>
Working with Children Check	<p>In the context of Queensland, the Working with Children Check is administered by Blue Card Services. A Blue Card (or Exemption Card) is required to undertake paid or voluntary work in any child-related sector or organisation. The blue card system is regulated by two pieces of legislation: the <u><i>Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000</i></u> (the WWC Act) and the <u><i>Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Regulation 2020</i></u>.</p>

# Appendix 2

## Foundation documents

Listed below are foundational documents for organisations to develop and maintain. These documents are often required under multiple Standards. Organisations that develop and embed these documents will be well-positioned to be compliant with the Universal Principle and the Child Safe Standards.

Foundation Document	Baseline requirements
Public commitment to children’s safety and wellbeing	<p>It should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explain how an organisation prioritises the safety of children, and will not tolerate child abuse and harm</li> <li>• Affirm an organisation’s commitment to listen to and empower children within the organisation</li> <li>• Be displayed for public access in the physical and/or online environment</li> <li>• Include specific reference to the safety of children from diverse backgrounds</li> <li>• Include a public commitment to the cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.</li> </ul>
Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy	<p>It should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set out your organisation’s expectations, practices, and approaches in relation to each of the Universal Principle and the Child Safe Standards</li> <li>• Be displayed for public access in the physical and/or online environment</li> <li>• Cover acceptable and unacceptable child to child, and child to adult interactions</li> <li>• Describe your organisation’s commitment to equity, inclusion and cultural safety and how the organisation recognises, responds and respects these factors.</li> </ul>
Code of Conduct	<p>It should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set out the expectations regarding the behaviour of staff and volunteers with children and promoting and maintaining children’s safety and wellbeing, including cultural safety</li> <li>• List acceptable and unacceptable behaviours</li> <li>• Explain professional boundaries, ethical behaviour, expected standards of behaviour, and acceptable and unacceptable relationships.</li> </ul>

Foundation Document	Baseline requirements
Complaints Handling Policy	<p>It should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be child-focused and describe the policy and procedure in an easily accessible way to children and their families</li> <li>• Include procedures for keeping families and carers informed and provide guidance on how to do this while complying with obligations regarding confidentiality and privacy</li> <li>• Set out approaches for dealing with different types of complaints including concerns, suspicions, disclosures, allegations and breaches of the Code of Conduct</li> <li>• Set out actions to be taken when the complaint is about a worker</li> <li>• Set out approaches to responding to harm caused to children, including children displaying potentially harmful sexual behaviours</li> <li>• Set out what support and assistance will be provided for those making a complaint</li> <li>• Refer to relevant regulatory requirements applicable to the organisation</li> <li>• Refer to relevant legislative requirements in Queensland</li> <li>• Be linked to a Code of Conduct</li> <li>• Require that all staff and volunteers cooperate with relevant external authorities, including police.</li> </ul>
Risk management strategy	<p>It should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify, assess, and take steps to minimise the opportunity for children to be harmed</li> <li>• Focus on preventing child harm, including peer-to-peer harm</li> <li>• Consider increased risk with specific roles and activities, and children with heightened vulnerability e.g. children with disability</li> <li>• Be outlined in policies and procedures and included in training for staff and volunteers</li> <li>• Contain procedures for review.</li> </ul>



QUEENSLAND  
**Family & Child  
Commission**  
Child Safe Organisations



Queensland  
Government