

Y Whittlesea

Child Safety & Wellbeing Policy

1. Purpose

Y Whittlesea is committed to the safety, wellbeing, and support of all children and young people in our care. This policy outlines our commitment to creating and maintaining environments where children are safe, feel safe, respected, and empowered to thrive. It ensures compliance with the **Victorian Child Safe Standards (2022)** under the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic), the **National Principles for Child Safe Organisations**, and embeds cultural safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children with disability, and children from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

Our Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy works in conjunction with our Code of Conduct, Recruitment Policy, Child Safe Environment Policy, Reportable Conduct Scheme Policy and Complaints Policy, and other related policies to develop a strong child safe culture within our organisation and community.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all Y Whittlesea staff, educators, students, volunteers, contractors, board members, families, and visitors across our early years services.

3. Policy Statement

Y Whittlesea has zero tolerance for child abuse and neglect. We are dedicated to protecting children from physical, sexual, emotional, and psychological harm and neglect, and to promoting their wellbeing and empowerment. We recognise our responsibilities and statutory duty of care under the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic) and the Reportable Conduct Scheme.

We are committed to implementing inclusive and culturally safe environments for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children with a disability, and children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. We value diversity, equity, and respect for all children, families, and staff, and we do not tolerate discriminatory practices.

We are committed to:

- Creating a culture where child safety and wellbeing are embedded in leadership, governance, and daily practices.
- Ensuring that child abuse is prevented, allegations of child abuse are taken seriously and responded to appropriately.
- Empowering children to understand their rights, participate in decisions affecting them, and express concerns safely.
- Maintaining safe physical and online environments for children.
- Employing suitable, trained, and supported staff to uphold child safety in practice.
- Engaging families and communities in promoting child safety and wellbeing.
- Continuously reviewing and improving our policies, procedures, and practices to maintain a child safe organisation.
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4. Our Commitment to Child Safety and Wellbeing

Y Whittlesea is committed to creating and maintaining environments that promote the safety of all children and embed the Victorian Child Safe Standards. All educators, staff, students, and volunteers are responsible for promoting a culture of safety and wellbeing to minimise the risk of child abuse or harm, while promoting children's sense of security and belonging.

We uphold the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, recognising that children have the right to be safe, to be listened to, and to participate in decisions affecting them.

We will:

- Embed the 11 Victorian Child Safe Standards in all policies, practices, and environments.
- Promote cultural safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children through partnerships, Reconciliation Action Plan implementation, and respectful practice.
- Empower children to speak up about concerns or unsafe situations, and participate meaningfully in decisions affecting them.
- Ensure that staff recruitment, induction, supervision, and ongoing training prioritise child safety.
- Support families and communities to be informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.
- Maintain safe physical and online environments for children that minimise the risk of harm.
- Review and improve policies, procedures, and practices regularly to ensure the effectiveness of child safety measures.

5. Child Safe Standards Implementation

Standard 1: Culturally Safe Environments for Aboriginal Children

We will promote cultural safety by engaging with Aboriginal families and communities, implementing our Innovate RAP, incorporating Aboriginal perspectives and languages into programs, involving Elders and Traditional Owners, and ensuring staff participate in cultural safety training. We will challenge assumptions, reflect on our cultural competence, and embed inclusive and culturally respectful practices throughout our environments.

Standard 2: Embedding Child Safety and Wellbeing in Leadership and Culture

We will ensure child safety is embedded in leadership, governance, and culture through regular policy reviews, maintaining a Child Safety Code of Conduct, including child safety as a standing agenda item in meetings, and fostering a culture of openness and respect where children and adults feel safe to disclose risks of harm.

Standard 3: Empowering Children's Rights and Participation

We will empower children to understand their rights, participate in decisions affecting them, and raise concerns confidently. Educators will educate children about protective behaviours, respect children's consent, respond respectfully to children's participation, and involve children in program development and policy reviews where appropriate.

Standard 4: Families and Communities Informed and Involved

We will inform families about our Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy during enrolment and orientation, provide regular opportunities for feedback and participation in policy reviews and Quality Improvement Planning, and maintain open communication to build collaborative partnerships that support children's safety and wellbeing.

Standard 5: Equity and Diverse Needs Respected

We will uphold equity in policy and practice, ensuring inclusive programs that meet each child's needs. We will gather information on children's cultural background, abilities, and needs to provide responsive and supportive environments, and implement inclusive strategies to enable all children to participate fully in programs.

Standard 6: Suitability of People Working with Children

We will maintain rigorous recruitment, screening, and induction processes to engage suitable staff and volunteers, including WWCC, Police Checks, reference checks, and child safe inductions. We will provide clear role descriptions and expectations of child safe practice for all positions.

Standard 7: Child-Focused Complaints Processes

We will maintain child-focused complaints and feedback processes that are accessible to children, families, and staff. We will respond to all complaints and concerns promptly, fairly, and confidentially, complying with reporting obligations under the Reportable Conduct Scheme and notifying the regulatory authority within required timeframes where applicable.

Standard 8: Staff Education and Training

We will provide professional development to all staff on Child Safe Standards, child protection, cultural safety, and online safety. Staff will complete Child Protection training annually or as legislated, and participate in ongoing reflective practice to strengthen child safe practices.

Standard 9: Safe Physical and Online Environments

We will maintain safe environments through risk assessments, active supervision, equipment maintenance, and appropriate room setups. We will ensure digital environments are secure, supervise children's technology use, obtain consent for images, and implement our Cyber Safety Policy to protect children online.

Standard 10: Continuous Review and Improvement

We will review our Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy annually, include input from children, families, staff, and management, and ensure updates are documented with clear version control. We will reflect on complaints, incidents, and feedback as opportunities for improvement.

Standard 11: Policies and Procedures Demonstrating Safety

We will ensure all policies and procedures clearly document our commitment to child safety, are accessible to families and staff, are reviewed regularly, and are implemented in practice to maintain our child safe organisation.

6. Related Policies and Documents

- Child Safe Environment Policy
- Code of Conduct
- Recruitment Policy
- Reportable Conduct Scheme Policy
- Complaints Policy

7. Consequences of breaching this policy: All elements of this policy must be adhered to, and any breach will be dealt with in accordance with the [YMCA Whittlesea Disciplinary and Termination Policy](#).

8. Policy owner: The GM Early Years is responsible for keeping this policy current - including making amendments as required, and regular reviews as scheduled.

9. Document Control: Review of this policy will be undertaken every two years, or prior as required by law, in consultation with appropriate Y People.

Version:	Description of Amendment	Amended by	Date	Release Date
3.0				
2.0	Updated	RD/MR	10/7/2025	July 2025
1.0	Created	GZ	14/6/2019	July 2019