

Introduction

The policy outlines Learning Links commitment to embedding a culture of safety for children and young people throughout our organisation. We aim to meet and maintain the *National Principles for Child Safe Organisations* and the *NSW Child Safe Standards* by:

- Providing a safe environment
- Empowering children and young people
- Educating staff and the community about child protection responsibilities
- Responding appropriately to child safety concerns

The principles and standards are complementary in addressing the necessary elements for child safe practices.

Policy

As a Child Safe organisation, Learning Links is committed to the safety and wellbeing of children and expects that all children and young people who participate in its programs will have a safe and happy experience.

Learning Links is committed to the *National Principles for Child Safe Organisations*:

1. Child safety and well-being is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture.
2. Children and young people are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.
3. Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and well-being.
4. Equity is upheld, and diverse needs respected in policy and practice.
5. People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.
6. Processes to respond to complaints and concerns are child focused.
7. Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training.
8. Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.
9. Implementation of the National Child Safe Principles is regularly reviewed and improved.
10. Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people.

Staff in child-facing roles are required to undertake Child Protection Training and understand their legislated responsibilities to ensure the wellbeing of children accessing Learning Links programs and support at its service centres, online and in external locations.

As a Child Safe organisation, Learning Links is committed to meeting the following requirements:

- Develop Child Safe Policies
- Reflect Child Safe practices and values in the Code of Conduct
- Ensure effective staff recruitment and training
- Understand privacy considerations
- Have a plan for managing risk
- Encourage children and young people to participate
- Effectively deal with concerns or complaints about behaviours towards a child or young person.

This policy is a statement of our commitment to:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring adherence with the NSW Reportable Conduct Scheme • Ensuring adherence with the NDIS Reportable Incident Procedure.
Eligibility	<p>The policy applies to all Learning Links staff including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteers, students, and trainees • Contractors • Consultants <p>It particularly applies to staff interacting with and/or working directly with children, to management staff responsible for those staff, and to staff in recruitment of those workers. It applies to all activities that involve, result in or relate to contact with children and young people.</p> <p>The policy impacts on all those aged under 17 years.</p>
Children's Participation	<p>Our organisation supports the active participation of children and young people in the programs, activities, and services we conduct.</p> <p>We create an environment that supports children's wellbeing and development and facilitates their meaningful participation by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting children's safety and wellbeing in both physical and online environments • Being alert to children at possible risk of harm and following the procedures for either mandatory reporting or reportable conduct. • Responding to disclosures made by children or young people and following the procedures for either mandatory reporting or reportable conduct. • Involving children in decision making, especially about matters that will directly affect them. We listen to children, respect their opinions, and take them seriously.
Recruitment	<p>Our organisation maintains a rigorous and consistent recruitment, screening, and selection process.</p> <p>All roles within the organisation are assessed to determine the inherent risks and the associated worker screening requirements. This includes relevant interview questioning, confirming Working with Children Check status, NDIS Worker Screening Checks, and thorough reference checking of all preferred applicants for roles that engage or work with children and young people.</p> <p>The induction of new staff includes a focus on child protection and child safety and wellbeing.</p>
Complaints Management and Reporting	<p>We adhere to all legislation related to managing complaints, reporting concerns for a child's safety and well-being, and reporting allegations of staff misconduct.</p> <p>Mandatory reporters use the ChildStory Reporter website to determine risk of significant harm and to report when advised. Staff follow the Child Safe Mandatory Reporting Policy.</p> <p>All staff report to their supervisor any concerns related to reportable conduct of staff or contractors. Staff follow the steps outlined in one or more of the following procedures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mandatory Reporting Procedure • Reportable Conduct Procedure • NDIS Reportable Incident Procedure <p>We have a Feedback and Complaints Policy and Procedure and two nominated Child Safety Officers to manage complaints, including those made against staff working with</p>

	<p>children. We want staff and clients to be confident that we will deal with complaints honestly, fairly, and transparently.</p> <p>All complaints or concerns about a child’s wellbeing must be reported, documented and responded to.</p> <p>We respect the privacy rights of children, their parents and our staff.</p> <p>We have safeguards regarding the collection, use and disclosure of personal information and only advise those people required to be aware of a child protection matter.</p>
<p>Training, Support and Supervision of Workers</p>	<p>All staff working in roles in regulated services involving direct contact with children are required to undertake and achieve accredited training in “Identify and Respond to Children and Young People at Risk” and attend refresher training every two years or as needed.</p> <p>Other staff in roles involving direct contact with children are required to undertake and achieve accredited online training conducted by the NSW Office of the Children’s Guardian (OCG) Child Safe Organisations eLearning modules.</p> <p>Education Specialists working in NSW Department of Education Schools complete training conducted by the Department on an annual basis.</p> <p>All other staff receive information on keeping children safe, relevant to their role.</p> <p>Child Protection and Child Safety are standing agenda items in all team meetings.</p>
<p>Communication</p>	<p>This policy is placed on Learning Links website and promoted through a communications plan.</p> <p>This policy will be available in various forms, where possible, to cater for diverse language backgrounds or special needs.</p> <p>We are committed to keeping staff, children and the community updated regarding child protection issues and responsibilities.</p> <p>Child Safe information is shared with staff in several ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional Learning webinars and resources • Team Meetings • Staff Briefings • Child Safe Course modules on the KAJABI platform • Induction information and sessions for all new staff, volunteers and students on placement • Emails <p>Scheduled information sessions</p>
<p>Related Documents</p>	<p>Related documents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Safe Mandatory Reporting Policy - https://www.learninglinks.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/QI-Child-Safe-Mandatory-Reporting-Policy-3.pdf • Child Safe Mandatory Reporting Procedure - https://www.learninglinks.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/QI-Child-Safe-Mandatory-Reporting-Procedure.pdf • Learning Links Child Safe Organisation Role-based Training Requirement Matrix for Staff and Volunteers
<p>Review</p>	<p>This policy and guidelines will be reviewed every two years and will incorporate current information, legislation and feedback as required.</p> <p>Policy Date: 15 October 2021 Policy Review: 15 October 2023 Review by: GM, Service Quality, Risk and Compliance Approval: CEO</p>

