



Child Safety & Wellbeing Policy

Background

Beaconsfield Neighbourhood Centre (BNC) is committed to the protection, safety and wellbeing of children in its care, supervision or authority.

Compulsory minimum standards apply in Victoria for organisations that provide services for children to help protect children from abuse and neglect. The Commission for Children and Young People are the oversight body for the Child Safe Standards. The Standards aim to drive cultural change in organisations so that protecting children from abuse is embedded in everyday thinking and practice.

The Standards were initiated in 2016 and changes which strengthen child safety in Victoria have since been made. Eleven new Child Safe Standards replace the previous seven standards and principles and must be complied with from 1 July 2022.

Purpose

The aims of this policy are:

- to ensure BNC is well prepared to protect children from abuse and neglect.
- to provide awareness of the Child Safe Standards throughout the organisation to help identify gaps and then improve existing policies and procedures.
- to ensure compliance with statutory requirements.

Policy Statements

To create and maintain a child safe environment, BNC complies with the following Child Safe Standards:

Child Safe Standard 1

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

- A child's ability to express their culture and enjoy their cultural rights is encouraged and actively supported at BNC.
- BNC acknowledges and appreciates the strengths of Aboriginal culture and understand its importance to the wellbeing and safety of Aboriginal children and young people. Census figures identify less than 1% of the local population are Aboriginal and so BNC actively supports and facilitates participation, inclusion and a culturally safe environment for all with a genuine readiness to focus on the needs of potential Aboriginal participants.
- Racism is identified, confronted, and not tolerated. Any instances of racism are addressed with appropriate consequences.

Child Safe Standard 2

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

- BNC makes a public pledge to uphold child safety through our Child Safety Statement of Commitment.
- Governance arrangements facilitate implementation of the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy at all levels.
- A Code of Conduct for staff and volunteers and a Member Code of Conduct provides guidelines for all participants on expected behavioural standards and responsibilities.
- BNC's Risk Management Policy focuses on preventing, identifying and mitigating risks to children and young people.

- Staff and volunteers understand their obligations on information sharing and recordkeeping.

Child Safe Standard 3

Children and young people are empowered about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.

- Children and young people are informed about all of their rights, including to safety, information and participation.
- The importance of friendships is recognised and support from peers is encouraged, to help children and young people feel safe and be less isolated.
- BNC offers access to relevant information in an age-appropriate way.
- Staff and volunteers are attuned to signs of harm and facilitate child-friendly ways for children and young people to express their views, participate in decision-making and raise their concerns.
- BNC has strategies in place to develop a culture that facilitates participation and is responsive to the input of children and young people.
- BNC provides opportunities for children and young people to participate and are responsive to their contributions, thereby strengthening confidence and engagement.

Child Safe Standard 4

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

- Families participate in decisions affecting their child through constant liaison with educators and information provided at enrolment in the service.
- BNC engages and openly communicates with families and the community about its child safe approach and relevant information is accessible with our Children's Room handbook as well as electronic communication and an open invitation for verbal feedback and discussion.
- Families and communities have a say in the development and review of BNC's policies and procedures with annual surveys for members and the opportunity to join the COM or Children's Room Subcommittee.
- Families, carers and the community are informed about BNC's operations and governance.

Child Safe Standard 5

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

- BNC understands children and young people's diverse circumstances, and provides support and responds to those who are vulnerable.
- Children and young people have access to information, support and complaints processes in ways that are culturally safe, accessible and easy to understand.
- BNC pays particular attention to the needs of children and young people with disability, children and young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, those who are unable to live at home, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex children and young people.
- BNC pays particular attention to the needs of Aboriginal children and young people and provides/promotes a culturally safe environment for them.

Child Safe Standard 6

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

- BNC has effective screening tools to assist the recruitment of suitable employees, contractors and volunteers to minimise the risk of inappropriate individuals entering the organisation.
- Recruitment, including advertising, referee checks and staff and volunteer pre-employment screening, emphasise child safety and wellbeing.
- Relevant staff and volunteers have current working with children checks or equivalent

background checks.

- All staff and volunteers receive an appropriate induction and are aware of their responsibilities to children and young people, including record keeping, information sharing and reporting obligations.
- Ongoing supervision and people management is focused on child safety and wellbeing.

Child Safe Standard 7

Processes for complaints and concerns are child focused.

- BNC has a Complaints and Grievance Policy and Reportable Conduct Scheme Policy which clearly outline the roles and responsibilities of leadership, staff and volunteers, approach to dealing with different types of complaints, breaches of relevant policies or the Code of Conduct and obligations to act and report.
- Effective complaint handling processes are understood by children and young people, families, staff and volunteers, and are culturally safe.
- Complaints are taken seriously, and responded to promptly and thoroughly.
- BNC has policies and procedures in place that address reporting of complaints and concerns to relevant authorities, whether or not the law requires reporting, and co-operates with law enforcement.
- Reporting, privacy and employment law obligations are met.

Child Safe Standard 8

Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training

- Staff and volunteers are trained and supported to effectively implement BNC's child safety and wellbeing policy.
- Staff and volunteers receive training and information to recognise indicators of child harm including harm caused by other children and young people.
- Staff and volunteers receive training and information to respond effectively to issues of child safety and wellbeing and support colleagues who disclose harm.
- Staff and volunteers receive training and information on how to build culturally safe environments for children and young people.

Child Safe Standard 9

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

- 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.
- The online environment is used in accordance with the organisation's Code of Conduct and Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and associated procedures.
- The BNC Risk Management Plan considers risks posed by organisational settings, activities, and the physical environment.

Child Safe Standard 10

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

- BNC regularly reviews, evaluates and improves child safe practices.
- Complaints, concerns and safety incidents are analysed to identify causes and systemic failures to inform continuous improvement.
- BNC reports on the findings of relevant reviews to staff and volunteers, community and families and children and young people.

Child Safe Standard 11

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

- BNC policies and procedures address all Child Safe Standards and are documented and easy to understand.
- Best practice models and stakeholder consultation informs the development of policies and procedures.
- Staff and volunteers understand and implement policies and procedures.

Roles and Responsibilities

Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Document and review policies and procedures with a child safety focus• Promote and model a child safe culture
Staff/Educators	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure the safety, participation, wellbeing and empowerment of children whilst undertaking duties• Undertake training and education to keep children safe
Parents/Families	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Comply with Member Code of Conduct

Associated Documents

Reportable Conduct Scheme Policy
Child Safety Statement of Commitment
Governance & Management Policy
Safety Screening Policy
Code of Conduct
Member Code of Conduct
Complaints & Grievance Policy
Privacy & Confidentiality Policy
Access & Equity Policy
Policy Development Policy

Document History

Version	Title	Author	Authorised	Date	Changes to Previous
1	Child Safe Standards Policy	Centre Coordinator	COM	Nov 2018	Original
2	Child Safety & Wellbeing Policy	Centre Coordinator	COM	May 2022	Yes