



CHILD SAFETY & WELLBEING POLICY

1 Purpose

St Vincent de Paul Society Queensland (the Society) is committed to the safety, wellbeing and dignity of all children and young people. This policy outlines our approach to creating a child-safe organisation, in accordance with the Queensland Child Safe Standards and the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (NCSS). It aims to inform all Members, volunteers and employees of their obligations to children and their roles and responsibilities in ensuring the safety and wellbeing of children.

2 Scope

This Policy applies to everyone who does work for the Society or Vinnies Housing (VH), including our Members, volunteers, employees, contractors, consultants, partners-any 'Worker' howsoever described. It applies to all activities in the organisation which involve, result in or relate to, contact with children and young people. This document uses the same definitions as [Safeguarding Policy April - approved by State Council 25 May 2024](#).

3 Policy Statement

The Society:

- recognises that effective safeguarding requires committed leadership, where leaders proactively engage safe people, utilise safe responses, safe supports and create safe environments for children and young people.
- will ensure the receiving, responding to and investigating of complaints of child harm or abuse relating to the Society are prioritised, with all Workers being aware of their mandatory reporting obligations as well as the [Safeguarding Policy April - approved by State Council 25 May 2024](#).
- **Child Participation:** The Society recognises that children and young people should have a voice in matters that affect them. We are committed to actively seeking, valuing, and incorporating their views into our policies, programs, and services.
 - **Feedback Mechanisms:** The Society will provide accessible, age-appropriate, and culturally safe channels for children and young people to give feedback, raise concerns, and make complaints. This includes anonymous feedback options, regular surveys, suggestion boxes, and facilitated group discussions.
 - **Consultation:** Children and young people will be consulted in the development and review of policies and programs that impact them, potentially through a child advisory group.
 - **Empowerment:** As required, Workers will be trained to encourage children's participation, respect their views, and support them to express themselves safely and confidently.
 - **Responsive Action:** Feedback from children and young people will be regularly reviewed and used to inform continuous improvement. Outcomes and changes resulting from their input will be communicated back to them in a child-friendly manner.
 - **Special Consideration:** The Society will ensure that children from diverse



backgrounds, including First Nations children, children with disabilities, and those from culturally and linguistically diverse communities, are supported to participate meaningfully.

- **Cultural Safety:** The Society is committed to creating environments that are culturally safe and respectful for all children and young people, with particular attention to First Nations children and families.
 - **Cultural Awareness:** All Workers will receive training in cultural safety, including understanding the histories, cultures, and contemporary experiences of First Nations peoples.
 - **Culturally Safe Practices:** The Society will ensure that its programs, services, and resources are culturally appropriate, respectful, and responsive to the needs of children from diverse backgrounds.
 - **Engagement with Communities:** The Society will actively engage with First Nations communities and other cultural groups to co-design and review policies, programs, and feedback mechanisms.
 - **Cultural Support:** Where possible children and families will be offered culturally appropriate support, including access to interpreters, cultural mentors, and liaison officers.
 - **Continuous Improvement:** The Society will regularly review its cultural safety practices, seeking feedback from children, families, and communities to ensure ongoing relevance and effectiveness.
- recognises the importance of robust people and culture processes including recruitment and screening processes, inductions, regular training in child safeguarding and continuous improvement initiatives
- will ensure that Workers are aware of and trained on the complaints process, their roles and responsibilities, reporting and privacy obligations, and responding to children who disclose abuse (including recognising the different ways that children may disclose)
- will ensure that Workers who report harm or risk to children and young people are supported.
- promotes and maintains a zero-tolerance regarding harm to children and vulnerable people. This will be achieved through various means, including its Safeguarding Office, Code of Conduct, Risk Management, Child Safe Organisations Framework, Complaints Handling Policies.
- will ensure continuous improvement in safeguarding policies and procedures by regular reviews in accordance with Policy, being guided by feedback and staying informed with emerging risks and trends
- will ensure that safeguarding policies, procedures and resources are documented with records of safeguarding related activities being maintained, including training sessions, risk assessments, incident reports and any interventions/actions taken.

4 Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
State Council & VH Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embed child safety in governance; approval of policies and ensuring compliance • Ensure a child safe culture. • Assign responsibilities to Advisory Committees for specific aspects of child safeguarding as required.



Safeguarding Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oversee SVDPQ's compliance with the Child Safe Organisations Act 2024, Review and recommend safeguarding related policies and frameworks. Monitor and report to State Council and the Board of Vinnies Housing on the effectiveness of the safeguarding framework Assist State Council and the Board of Vinnies Housing with safeguarding matters.
Chief Executive Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote ownership and drive accountability within the organisation for child safeguarding Lead a positive child safeguarding culture.
General Managers Diocesan Presidents & Executive Officers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement and resource safeguarding related policies, frameworks and initiatives. Integrate child safeguarding into related frameworks and processes including strategic, operational and program/project planning. Identify, monitor and review child safeguarding risks and escalate as required. Provide adequate resources to manage child safety initiatives
People Managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support workers with reporting and escalating child safeguarding concerns
Safeguarding Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure effective governance of child safeguarding Provide child safeguarding advice Provide a framework for child safeguarding education Drive integration of child safeguarding into related disciplines
Workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comply with policy and legislation. Uphold child safety standards and mandatory reporting

5 Related Documents

Category	Related Reference Document(s)
Policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safeguarding Policy Safeguarding Policy April - approved by State Council 25 May 2024 Code of Conduct SVDP Code of Conduct Child Safe Code of Conduct Risk Management Policy Risk Management Policy Complaints and Compliments Policy Complaints and Compliments Policy Information Sharing and Record Keeping Policy Confidentiality, Consent and Freedom of Information Policy Confidentiality, Consent and Freedom of Information Policy People and Culture Policies – Screening and Suitability, Blue Card Screening & Suitability Policy Cyber Security Policy Cyber Security Policy
Frameworks and Procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safeguarding Commitment Statement Link Child Safe Organisation Framework Link Cultural Safety Framework Risk Management Framework Safeguarding Reporting Procedure Employee Assistance Program



Legislation / Regulation	Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000 (QLD) Child Protection Act 1999 (QLD) United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
Standards	National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (NCSS) National Principles for Child Safe Organisations QLD Child Safe Standards

6 Document Control

5.1 Authorisation			
Approved by:			
Please contact the Responsible Manager for enquiries and proposed changes			
Owner:	Jennifer Barrett	Title:	GM Governance, Legal and Risk
Responsible Manager:	Lorraine Byrne	Title:	Safeguarding Manager
5.2 Review			
Review due 2 Years from last approval			
5.3 Record of Issues			
Version No	Issue / Re-issue Date	Nature of Amendment	
1.0	TBD	New Document	