
Risk and Safety Policy

The Good Shepherd Child Contact Services

At The Good Shepherd Child Contact Services, the safety and wellbeing of children, parents, and staff is our highest priority.

We are committed to identifying, assessing, and managing risks to ensure that every supervised visit and changeover takes place in a safe, controlled, and child-focused environment.

This policy outlines our approach to maintaining physical, emotional, and cultural safety in all service activities.

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Prevent harm or injury to children, parents, and staff.
- Ensure that all venues, interactions, and procedures meet high safety standards.
- Provide clear processes for managing risks and responding to incidents.
- Support compliance with child protection and workplace safety laws.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All supervised visits and changeovers conducted by our service.
- All staff, contractors, and volunteers.
- All locations used for service delivery, including public, community, or private venues.

3. Our Commitment to Safety

We are committed to:

- Maintaining a child-safe culture in every aspect of our work.
- Following trauma-informed and family violence-aware practices.
- Ensuring that every contact location is risk-assessed and approved before use.
- Responding promptly to any emerging safety concerns or hazards.

4. Risk Assessment

Before every visit or changeover, staff complete a Risk Assessment Process that includes:

- Reviewing referral information and any court orders.
- Identifying family violence or child protection risks.
- Inspecting and approving physical locations for visibility, access, and safety.
- Ensuring separate arrival/departure times where necessary.
- Preparing emergency procedures and communication plans.

5. During Contact Visits

During supervised visits:

- Supervisors maintain active observation of all interactions.
- Any concerning behaviour is addressed immediately and, if needed, the visit is suspended.
- Children are never left unsupervised.
- Staff remain alert to emotional distress, conflict, or escalating behaviour.

6. Emergency and Safety Procedures

In any emergency (e.g., medical issue, threat, or violence):

1. Staff take immediate action to ensure safety.
2. Emergency services are contacted if required.
3. Parents and relevant authorities are informed as appropriate.
4. A detailed Incident Report is completed and reviewed by management.

7. Responsibilities

- Management ensures that all policies, procedures, and risk management plans are in place and regularly reviewed.
- Staff are responsible for following all safety protocols and reporting risks or incidents promptly.
- Parents are expected to cooperate with safety instructions and maintain respectful, non-confrontational behaviour.

8. Review and Continuous Improvement

Risk management procedures are reviewed regularly and updated in response to:

- Incident outcomes and debriefing sessions
- Legislative changes or new best-practice standards
- Feedback from staff, clients, or professional partners

Our goal is to maintain a service environment that is proactively safe, professionally managed, and emotionally secure for every child and family we support.
