

P055 – Child Safety Policy

1. Purpose

This policy is designed to inform all employees of their obligations as District 360 employees in relation to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all employees and volunteers and supports District 360 Supports risk management strategy and good governance of organisational and individual risk.

The Management team will identify, mitigate and manage risk with the organisation. The office manager is responsible for reporting any breach of privacy and confidentiality to Management.

3. Policy Statement

District 360's policy is to ensure that children are safe from harm in their interactions with District 360.

In supporting child safety, District 360 is committed to upholding children's rights and ensuring:

- risks to children are identified and managed
- all staff undertaking child related work, including contracted staff, are appropriately screened and comply with relevant legislation, and

District 360 policy objective is to ensure that children are safe from abuse and harm in their interactions with our organisation. In supporting child safety, the organisation is committed to ensuring:

- a. risks to children are identified, assessed, treated and regularly reviewed
- b. all staff, including contracted staff, undertaking child related work are appropriately screened to ensure their suitability to work with children and are aware of their responsibilities
- c. District 360 is a child safe organisation.

4. Definitions

For the purposes of this policy:

5. a 'child' is an individual under the age of 18 years.
6. 'child-related work' is defined as work which involves engagement with a child, including:
 - a. physical contact
 - b. face-to-face contact
 - c. oral communication

- d. written communication, and
 - e. electronic communication (for example, email, instant messaging, social media and video chats).
7. **'abuse and harm'** is defined as any action, or lack of action, that significantly harms the child's physical, psychological or emotional health and development.
 8. **'children's rights'** is defined as a child's entitlement to thrive, develop and be safe, participate in decisions that affect them, be free from discrimination and to have their best interests as a primary consideration in all actions concerning them. The [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child](#), which Australia ratified in 1990, sets out children's rights in detail.

9. National principles for child safe organisations

The National Principles were developed by the Australian Human Rights Commission in consultation with representatives working with children. These principles drive the implementation of a child safe culture across all sectors working with children and young people to promote the safety and wellbeing of children and young people across Australia, preventing future abuse of children in institutional environments. The ten National Principles are:

1. Child safety and wellbeing 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 wellbeing.
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 for 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.

Further information on the National Principles, including key action areas and practical examples, is provided on the [Australian Human Rights Commission Website](#).

10. Principles

District 360 has a duty of care to children receiving District 360 services and must ensure services operate in a way to provide and protect the safety and wellbeing of children. Where District 360 provides direct support, employees have a responsibility to make sure child development, health and wellbeing needs are being met.

District 360 achieves this by ensuring employees go through a stringent recruitment, induction, training and supervision process as follows

Recruitment

- Selection criteria and advertisements which clearly demonstrate a commitment to child safety – this will need some background work to implement
- Actively encourage application from CALD and Aboriginal backgrounds
- Mandatory requirement to hold a current Working with Children's Check
- Mandatory requirement to hold a NDIS worker screening check
- Complete reference checks

Induction

Employees attend organisational and site inductions and learn about legislation and regulations to support and uphold the rights and safeguarding of customers with whom they work

Employees are provided with an employees handbook and code of conduct which describes appropriate behaviour to ensure the safety of children.

Training

Training and education is important to ensure employees /volunteers and customers understand we have a zero tolerance of child abuse and that child safety is everyone's responsibility. Some back ground – specific references to be added in induction

Organisational culture supports all employees/volunteers and customers to feel confident and comfortable in discussing allegations of child abuse or child safety concerns. Employees are trained to identify, assess and minimise risks of child abuse and to detect potential signs of child abuse and deal appropriately with allegations.

During employment employees are actively supported to follow relevant policies and work instructions, that they have access to relevant training including Cultural Awareness, Child Aware and Child First.

Supervision

Employees are engaged in regular and ongoing supervision to discuss, support and develop knowledge and skills to further protect children from abuse. Regular team meeting agenda item discussions identify safeguarding of customers and provide employees with opportunity to share and build the capacity of employees to address and respond to child safety issues that arise.

Children and families are linked to communities in a partnership model of support. All activities are based on strength based and child/ family focussed risk management in line with professional obligations and national regulations. We work to ensure all children, families, employees and volunteers know what to do and who to tell if they observe abuse or are a victim, and if they notice inappropriate behaviour.

District 360 recognises that children with disabilities have a greater risk of abuse than the general population and is committed to ensure employees are aware of risk factors, signs and responsibilities.

District 360 is committed to:

- the wellbeing of each child
- the provision of a safe and secure environment for all
- providing an open, welcoming environment in which everyone's contribution is valued and respected
- encouraging parents/guardians, families, volunteers and community members to support and participate in service delivery
- respecting the inherent worth and dignity of each child
- supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to maintain and strengthen connection to their culture and community, which includes providing a culturally safe environment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children including contribution to, monitoring and review of a Cultural Plan; and
- supporting the rights of individuals who identify as having a specific cultural or linguistic affiliation by virtue of their place of birth, ancestry, ethnic origin, religion, preferred language, language(s) spoken at home, or because of their parents' identification on a similar basis. District 360 provides a culturally safe environment for CALD children.

District 360 also recognises the right of a child to:

- live free from abuse including neglect or exploitation
- realise their potential in every area of their life
- have control over their own lives as developmentally appropriate
- take part in decisions that affect their lives
- be given information and to communicate in a way that suits their needs; and
- raise concerns or complaints and provide feedback

11. Responsibility

1. Responsibility for Implementation, Compliance Monitoring, Measuring and Continual Improvement

Where children are supported at District 360 all employees are provided training in the relevant requirements, e.g. mandatory training on safeguarding rights, emergency procedures, first aid, medical conditions and notifications to child protection. If an accident or illness occurs relating to the safety of a child being supported directly by District 360, employees will follow the D360S_P017 Emergency and Critical Incident Policy in relation to reporting requirements.

In Victoria, any adult who forms a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child under 16 has an obligation to report that information to police. Failure to disclose the information to police is a criminal offence. Employees will follow the Management of Customer Incidents policy in relation to reporting requirements including the provisions of the [Reportable Conduct Scheme](#). For protective concerns about the safety and wellbeing of children and young people who are not Yooralla customers, the expectation of disclosing information to the police based on a reasonable belief also applies.

In Western Australia, mandatory reporters of child sexual abuse under the Children and Community Services Amendment (Reporting Sexual Abuse of Children) Act 2008 are:

- doctors
- nurses and midwives
- teachers
- police officers.

However, any person who has a belief that a child is being subjected to any form of abuse or neglect should report these concerns to the Department.

Protective concerns include the following:

- receipt of a disclosure from a child about abuse or neglect
- observation of signs of abuse or neglect; and
- employees being made aware of possible harm via involvement in the community external to their professional role.

Where disclosure/allegation/concern is identified by a District 360 employee, management and Child Protection will be notified as appropriate and logged through Brevity following due reporting process outlined above being completed if:

- it is regarding a family or employee.
- it is about their manager to their manager's manager and/or to the General Manager.
- it is about the General manager report information to the CEO.
- it is about the CEO report information to Directly to the NDIS quality and safeguards commission.

12. Other relevant District 360 Supports policies

Staff, especially managers and supervisors, are encouraged to read this policy in conjunction with other relevant District 360 Supports policies, including;

- Safeguarding Policy
- Code of Conduct Policy
- Duty of Care Policy
- Privacy and Confidentiality Policy

Relevant Forms;

- F017 Client Service Feedback and Complaints Survey Form
- F037 Complaints, Compliments and Feedback Form

Relevant legislation:

Western Australia

- The Children and Community Services Amendment Bill 2021
- <https://www.parliament.wa.gov.au/parliament/bills.nsf/BillProgressPopup?openForm&ParentUNID=C5BD5CB15CCDE402482586E7001D5F02>
- [https://www.parliament.wa.gov.au/Parliament/Bills.nsf/C5BD5CB15CCDE402482586E7001D5F02/\\$File/Bill%2B20-2.pdf](https://www.parliament.wa.gov.au/Parliament/Bills.nsf/C5BD5CB15CCDE402482586E7001D5F02/$File/Bill%2B20-2.pdf)

Victoria

- Children Youth and Families Act 2005
- <https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/in-force/acts/children-youth-and-families-act-2005/121>
- <https://content.legislation.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-10/05-96aa121%20authorised.pdf>

13. More information

If you have a query about this policy or need more information, please contact the management team at info@district360.com.au

14. Review details

Approval Authority	Tanya Johnston
Responsible Officer	Cindy Pike
Approval Date	12 March 2022
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Next Review Date*	12 March 2023
Last amended	

** Unless otherwise indicated, this procedure will still apply beyond the review date.*

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