

Policy CP:01

Child Protection



Area – Child Protection

Document Control

Responsible officer: Chief Executive Officer	Policy number: CP:01
Contact officer: Manager, Quality and Regulation	Policy area: Child Protection
Effective date: September 5, 2016	Review date: September, 2018

Scope

This policy provides a framework to guide all actions of the C&K Board, C&K staff, C&K Central, C&K branch services, C&K affiliate services, children, parents, volunteers, contractors and visitors.

This policy excludes C&K associate members.

Introduction

C&K recognises that children who are abused or neglected experience detrimental effects as a result, and often with long-term negative consequences. Safe, protective and healthy environments in which children live, learn and are cared for are fundamental to every child having the opportunity to achieve their educational and developmental potential. C&K's commitment to the care and protection of children emphasises the importance of early intervention, prevention and advocacy.

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1.0 C&K's Child Protection Commitment Statement

C&K acknowledges that protecting children's safety and wellbeing is everyone's responsibility. Our commitment to children's safety means that we will:

- a) Acknowledge all children have equal rights to be safe regardless of their gender, race, religious beliefs, age, needs, sexual orientation, or family, social or cultural background.
- b) Have zero tolerance of child abuse. All allegations and concerns regarding children's safety and wellbeing will be treated seriously and consistently.
- c) Foster a culture of openness that supports all persons to safely disclose concerns for children's safety and wellbeing.
- d) Report allegations and/or suspicions of child harm.
- e) Ensure children's safety is integral to all decision-making.
- f) Work with families and support them in their parenting role.
- g) Contact and work collaboratively with statutory authorities and family support agencies when there are significant concerns about a child's safety and wellbeing.
- h) Advocate the prevention of child abuse, and raise awareness of child safety and protection with children, families, colleagues and in the community.
- i) Implement robust recruitment and induction processes to engage only the most suitable people to work with children.
- j) Provide culturally safe and respectful programs and services for all children.
- k) Implement policies, procedures and training that provides employees and visitors with clear direction to respond appropriately to child protection matters.

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- l) Establish partnerships with early intervention and prevention services to improve outcomes for children and families.
- m) Implement practices that reflect the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- n) Actively work to empower children.
- o) Ensure there are child protection champions to provide appropriate support and advice to our people, such as Wellbeing and Inclusion Advisors.

2.0 Child Protection Principles

C&K's child protection practice is guided by the following principles:

2.1 Protecting children is everyone's responsibility

- a) All C&K people, whatever their position, acknowledge that child safety and protection is a core responsibility.
- b) Protecting children's safety and wellbeing is embedded in everyday practice and decision making.
- c) Immediately report all suspicions of child harm occurring external to C&K services to statutory authorities, in accordance with procedural steps.
- d) Immediately report and escalate all allegations of child harm occurring within C&K services, in accordance with procedural steps.
- e) Maintain an awareness and understanding of cross-cultural issues relating to child abuse and neglect in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse families.
- f) Seek guidance within C&K when needed to respond appropriately to child protection matters.
- g) Liaise and collaborate with early intervention and prevention services to improve outcomes for children and families.
- h) Strategies to improve children's safety and wellbeing are regular team meeting agenda items.
- i) Encourage and promote a culture where children, employees, students, volunteers, external contractors and visitors feel comfortable and supported when talking about child safety concerns.
- j) Our commitment to protecting children's safety and wellbeing will be outlined within core publications and on the C&K Website.

2.2 Clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children

- a) Services will provide inclusive and responsive environments for all children.
- b) Positive behaviour guidance strategies will be implemented that focus on children developing self-regulation. Behaviour guidance strategies implemented in accordance with C&K behaviour guidance procedures and will be developmentally appropriate, responsive to children's individual needs and their social and cultural heritages.
- c) Policies and procedures will provide clear direction regarding how employees, students, volunteers, external contractors and visitors will behave, respond and interact with children.
- d) All interactions with children will be calm, respectful and considered.
- e) Genuinely listen and respond appropriately to children's concerns.
- f) Support children who may be experiencing difficulty in their lives with sensitivity, warmth and security.
- g) All employees, students, volunteers, external contractors and visitors will complete a thorough

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induction, and participate in on-going professional development to maintain an awareness of their responsibilities and obligations regarding interactions with children.

- h) When required interpreting services will be utilised so families from linguistically diverse backgrounds can access and understand policies and procedures.

2.3 Recruitment, training and supervision

- a) Recruitment interviews, particularly with Children's Services people, will include questions to ascertain applicant understanding of and commitment to child protection.
- b) Before an appointment is confirmed, applicants must satisfy rigorous pre-employment checks, relevant to the position for which they have applied.
- c) All new employees, students, volunteers, external contractors and regular visitors complete a comprehensive induction that includes C&K's child protection policy, procedures and expectations.
- d) All employees, students, volunteers, external contractors and visitors are required to complete mandatory child protection training during induction and then annually, to maintain an understanding of their legislative and C&K responsibilities and obligations.
- e) Managers will supervise and provide feedback to employees, students, volunteers and external contractors, noting any specific issues or concerns regarding children's safety and wellbeing.
- f) Employees less than 18 years of age, students, volunteers, external contractors and visitors will be supervised by an employee at all times and will never be placed in sole charge of children for any length of time.
- g) Undertake responsibilities in accordance with the *ECA Code of Ethics*, and C&K values, policies and procedures.

2.4 Reporting and escalating allegations of child harm

- a) All allegations and serious concerns regarding children's safety and wellbeing will be treated seriously and consistently.
- b) Employees, students, volunteers, external contractors and visitors are required to immediately report all reasonable suspicions of significant child harm occurring external to C&K services to statutory authorities.
- c) Employees, students, volunteers, external contractors and visitors are required to immediately report and escalate all allegations / suspicions of child harm occurring within C&K services.
- d) Reporting procedures will be outlined in mandatory training, posted on the C&K Website and the internal intranet and summarised in the Family and Employee Handbooks.
- e) C&K will work collaboratively with government and / or non-government child protection agencies.
- f) Allegations of child harm will be investigated in accordance with HR policies and procedures.

2.5 Advocacy and prevention

- a) We will work collaboratively with organisations that support children and families.
- b) Services and employees will participate in child protection advocacy activities.
- c) Services and employees will regularly communicate and share information with families regarding C&K's commitment towards child protection.
- d) Services and employees will work alongside families and support them in their parenting role.

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- e) Employees will respect, acknowledge and honour the diversity of children and families recognising the complex challenges that impact upon families.
- f) Child protection and safety matters will be prioritised within work plans and Quality Improvement Plans.
- g) Risk management strategies will be implemented to protect children’s safety and wellbeing.
- h) Data will be collected and analysed to implement initiatives and improve organisational child safety practice.

2.6 Empowering children

- a) Acknowledge that children have the right to feel safe and to say what they think should happen and have their opinions taken into account.
- b) Programs will encourage children’s agency and welcome them to express their thoughts and feelings.
- c) All child disclosures of alleged harm will be heard, actioned and treated seriously.
- d) Educators will appropriately incorporate personal safety concepts within the curriculum.
- e) Educators will provide programs that support children’s physical, emotional, social, intellectual, cultural and familial safety.
- f) Whenever possible, C&K will appropriately involve children in the development and review of child safety and protection policies and local level protocols.
- g) C&K will raise awareness in the community about children’s rights.
- h) C&K will facilitate professional development opportunities that increase awareness of children’s rights and empowerment.

3.0 Accountability

The Chief Executive Officer is accountable for ensuring this policy and related documents are implemented.

4.0 Review

This policy will be reviewed biennially.

Acknowledgements and references

- Moores (2016). *The Child Protection Tool Kit – What every not-for-profit organisation must do now.*
- State of Victoria, Department of Health and Human Services (November 2015). *An overview of the Victorian Child Safe Standards.*

Revision Record

Version	Approval Date	Authorised by	Effective Date	Review Cycle	Next review date
1.0	January 2014	C&K Board	February 2014	Annual	February 2016
2.0	July 2014	C&K Board	September 2016	Biennial	July 2018