

Policy Statement

Fighting Chance believes that children and young people have a fundamental right to be safe from harm and to grow up free of violence and exploitation. They have a right to develop physically, intellectually and socially in conditions of freedom and dignity.

Child protection requires a commitment from all levels of the community to ensure that children and young people are safe from harm. This includes a commitment to practices that minimise risks and the ability to respond appropriately to incidents where children are at risk of harm.

Children with a disability have the same rights and freedoms as all other children and Fighting Chance will take each child's best interests into account when providing services. Fighting Chance also recognises that some individuals within our services may have cognitive abilities that align with those typical of children, which can influence their communication, decision-making, and other daily functioning. Our child safe practices keep this in mind and intend to support their protection as well.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) and National Principles for Child Safe Organisations recommended by an Australian Royal Commission provides a foundation for Fighting Chance's approach. All Fighting Chance stakeholders have the responsibility to protect children "...from all forms of physical and mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse".

Objective

The purpose of this Policy is to demonstrate Fighting Chance's commitment to protect children from harm and abuse through the continued implementation of contemporary child safe practices and ongoing evaluation, pursuant to relevant legislation and guidelines.

Scope

Applies to all workers including Board Members, key management personnel, permanent and casual workers, as well as contractors and volunteers involved with Fighting Chance.

Definitions

Child: every person below the age of eighteen years.

Child Protection: *within the scope of this policy is defined as the responsibilities, measures and activities that Fighting Chance undertakes to safeguard children from both intentional and unintentional harm.*

CPO: *Child Protection Officer*

Child Abuse: *Child Abuse is defined as all forms of physical abuse, emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse and exploitation, neglect or negligent treatment, commercial or other exploitation of a child and includes any actions that results in actual or potential harm to a child. Child abuse may be a deliberate act or it may be failing to act to prevent harm. Child abuse consists of anything which individuals, institutions or processes do or fail to do, intentionally or unintentionally which harms a child or damages their prospect of safe and healthy development into adulthood.*

1.0 Child Protection Practices

We will ensure that:

- We promote a safe environment for children who receive services from Fighting Chance, treating them with respect and protecting them from harm at all times.
- A Child Protection Officer is appointed to act as champion for child safe practices within the organisation, and to lead the management and reporting of any disclosures of child abuse or neglect.
- We have a clear reporting framework in place and all stakeholders are aware of how to make a report, and who they can go to for further information and advice. Reports will:
 - Be easy to make for anyone
 - Be responded to in a timely and fair manner
 - Be recorded appropriately
 - Be forwarded to relevant authorities where necessary
 - Provide support for any children who report or are suspected of being exposed to concerning conduct
- All decisions regarding the welfare and protection of children are made based on the best interests of the child, and that the emphasis is on the child receiving the service being safe.
- The needs and rights of the child will be prioritised over the rights of the parents in child protection matters
- We use child safe recruitment practices including mandatory screening checks for adults who work for us
- Ensure that staff are trained and aware of their obligations when it comes to reporting concerning conduct and providing support to children and their families
- We keep the personal information of children private and confidential, and always seek consent to share information if required

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- Any fundraising activities involving children comply with relevant legislation
 - Any research project we conduct (either directly or in partnership with other bodies) that is likely to involve contact or working with children has policies, protocols and appropriate ethics approval that specifically address their protection
 - Ensure that this Policy will apply to, and be brought to the attention of, people contracted by Fighting Chance as consultants or to provide specific services where the consultancy or service involves contact or work with children. This will be done through attaching this document to the contract in such a way that it forms part of their terms and conditions
 - Ensure that this Policy will apply to, and be brought to the attention of any volunteers engaged with Fighting Chance, in a way such that it forms part of their Volunteer Agreement
 - The Child Safe Policy is available on the Fighting Chance website www.fightingchance.org.au
 - The Child Safe Policy is now available in enterprise welcome handbooks, issued after February 2025.

2.0 Child Protection Officer's Responsibilities

Fighting Chance will at all times have an appointed Child Protection Officer, whose responsibilities will be:

- act as champion for child safe practices within the organisation, including annual review of policies and practices
- lead the management and reporting of any disclosures of child abuse or neglect, internally and externally
- ensure the Executive Leadership Team is kept up to date on legislative requirements and regulations, and best practice relating to child safety and protection
- working with the Fighting Chance Learning and Development Lead to coordinate childsafe training for relevant staff.

Refer: PRO-SER-030 Child Safe Procedure

2.0 Children in Fighting Chance Services

Fighting Chance predominantly provides services to adults, however there are instances where children join our services. These include:

- Support Coordination services (open to ages 7 years and above)
- Plus Clinical services (open to ages 9 years and above)
- Child participants (open to ages 15 years and above), including work experience or work placement as a participant

- Student volunteering (open to 15 years and over) - work experience or work placement as an employee, or volunteer fundraising on our behalf.

We also acknowledge that regardless of age, there are many participants in our services with child-like vulnerabilities, for whom child safe practices will provide additional protections.

Local Managers will have oversight and final approval of children enrolling in our services.

2.0 Worker Screening

Fighting Chance undertakes employment checks to verify identity and ensure workers are competent to undertake their position and do not pose a risk to the health and safety of any participants, including children.

All workers (and any volunteers or contractors who may encounter Fighting Chance participants) are required to hold a valid Working With Children Check.

Records of pre-employment checks will form part of a workers employment record and be maintained on workers Employment Hero profile.

Refer POL-HR-001 Worker Screening and Certification Policy.

3.0 Images and stories containing children

All staff, volunteers and contractors engaged in making or using photos or case studies in any communications or media must comply with this Child Safe Policy in order to ensure that:

- photos and stories of children do not infringe their dignity or personal rights;
- photos and stories are not accompanied by detailed information which could enable the children to be fully identified or easily located;
- permission is obtained from the child's parent or guardian (where possible) before taking and (always) before using a child's image in marketing or communications promotional materials. If media consent is not already provided, it must be sought, and provided to the Head of Marketing and Communications and updated on the participant's record on the Client Management System.

4.0 State based authorities

Child safety is governed by State based authorities, as follows:

State	Where to find out more information	Mandatory Reporter
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NSW	http://www.community.nsw.gov.au/	Yes
QLD	https://www.communities.qld.gov.au/	No
VIC	https://services.dffh.vic.gov.au/child-protection	No
South Australia	https://www.childprotection.sa.gov.au/	Yes
ACT	https://www.communityservices.act.gov.au/ocyfs/children/child-and-youth-protection-services	Yes

5.0 Exceptions

None. Failing to observe this policy and any supporting policies, procedures or codes of conduct may lead to disciplinary action and/or reporting the matter to relevant State-based authorities or the NDIA.

6.0 Related Documents

- [POL-HR-004 Professional Standards and Code of Conduct Policy](#)
- [POL-OPS-003 Privacy and Confidentiality Policy](#)
- [POL-GOV-001 Whistleblower Policy](#)
- [POL-HR-001 Worker Screening and Certifications Policy](#)
- [POL-MAR-001 Social Media Usage Policy](#)
- [PRO-SER-030 Child Safety Procedure](#)
- [PRO-MAR-001 Social Media Usage Procedure](#)
- [NDIS Code of Conduct](#)
- [United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child](#)
- Disability Inclusion Act 2014

6.0 Monitor & Review

This Policy will be reviewed annually in accordance with Fighting Chance’s quality assurance and continuous improvement process. The Child Protection Officer will report on the outcome of the review and make recommendations for amendment, alteration or substitution if considered necessary.

Document Version Control

Date	Summary of Amendments	Author
30/08/2022		General Manager, Shared Service
20/02/2025	The Child Safe Policy has undergone its annual review. A Child Safe Policy statement has been added to the Fighting Chance welcome handbooks, and the full policy is now available on the external Fighting Chance website.	Enterprise Heads, Q&CI