



Child Safety Standards Policy

Last updated April 2025

Policy number	HRDOC006	Version	[2]
Drafted by	Wendy Mason	Approved by Board on	23/06/2025
Responsible person	Wendy Mason	Scheduled review date	22/06/2027

1. Purpose

- This policy outlines the general principles, guidelines, and obligations of all PCA Families Board members, employees, volunteers, and contractors in promoting and providing a Child Safe environment, in accordance with the Victorian Child Wellbeing and Safety Act (Child Safe Standards) 2005.
- It sets out expectations that PCA Families will, at all times, uphold the right of children to be safe from any harm, abuse or exploitation and guides our team on how to behave with children.

2. Scope and Responsibilities

- This policy applies to all environments, including physical and online, where children are present (Standard 9: Child Safety Standards). At PCA Families this also applies to all activities, including peer support groups/retreats, playgroups, training and events etcetera delivered by Directors, employees, contractors, and volunteers (collectively referred to as employees in this document).
- The Board will proactively manage and prevent risks of abuse to children via the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee.
- The CEO will review and maintain this policy on an annual basis and/or following significant incidents if they occur. The Board is responsible for endorsing the reviewed Policy.
- The Senior Worker, Helpline is PCA Families' Child Safety Officer. This includes:
 - promoting and communicating the organisation's commitment to Child Safety;
 - ensuring its inclusion in workplace systems and processes; and
 - identifying, managing, monitoring, reviewing, and reporting risks related to Child Safety
 - encouraging feedback and participation of children regardless of background (e.g., Aboriginal, CALD, children with a disability, etc.).

3. Definitions

In the context of the Victorian Child Safety Standards, a child is defined as any person who is under the age of 18 years. This definition aligns with the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2025. This definition aligns with the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005.

Reportable Conduct

There are five types of 'reportable conduct':

- sexual offences committed against, with or in the presence of a child;
- sexual misconduct committed against, with or in the presence of a child;
- physical violence against, with or in the presence of a child;
- any behaviour that causes significant emotional or psychological harm to a child; or
- significant neglect of a child.

4. Statement of Commitment to Child Safety

PCA Families is strongly committed to child safety. Our commitment is that:

- we want children to be safe, happy, and empowered;
- we support and respect all children;

Policy review and amendments

This policy will be reviewed biennially or as required by the Permanent Care and Adoptive Families Board or an employee with delegated responsibility.

- we support all children to participate, ensuring they know their rights and important information that helps them to participate, keep them safe, and achieve their goals;
- we are dedicated to creating a culturally safe environment for all children, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from cultural and linguistically diverse backgrounds, children with disability and other children from vulnerable or marginalised groups. (Standard 1 & 5: Child Safety Standards);
- we are committed to preventing child abuse, identifying risks early and removing and reducing these risks;
- we have zero tolerance of child abuse, and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated seriously and consistently with our policies and procedures;
- we follow our legal and moral obligations to contact authorities when we are concerned about a child's safety; and
- we reduce the risk of child abuse by our employees through our operational policies, procedures and practices including recruitment, education and training, and supervision.

5. Policy

- PCA Families will ensure all employees are aware of their social and legislative responsibilities regarding the safety of children.
- PCA Families respects all children regardless of their background. This means:
 - involving children and/or their parents/carers in decisions where relevant, especially matters that directly affect them;
 - encouraging children to have their say about things that are important to them;
 - actively listening to the views of children and respecting what they have to say;
 - teaching children about what they can do if they feel unsafe, listening and acting on any concerns they or their parents/carers raise with us; and
 - providing children with important and relevant information through direct training, information sessions, activities and online.
- PCA Families is committed to handling all complaints and concerns in a manner that prioritises the safety and well-being of children. Our processes are designed to be child-focused, ensuring that children feel safe and supported when raising concerns or making complaints, children's voices are heard and respected, confidentiality is maintained and appropriate action is taken.
- PCA Families will ensure it takes reasonable steps to employ appropriately skilled people to work with children. Potential employees will be required to complete appropriate checks (e.g., Working with Children, Police Checks, Referee Checks) to minimise the risk of harm. Working with Children Checks and Police checks will be audited on an annual basis. Police Checks will be conducted on employees every three years to ensure compliance with the Health and Human Services Standards.
- PCA Families will provide continuous education and training for all staff and volunteers to ensure they are well-equipped to uphold child safety standards, recognise and respond to child abuse, and foster a safe and supportive environment for all children. (Standard 8: Child Safety Standards).
- Employees will be provided with on-going supervision to ensure they understand their role in child safety, develop their skills and monitor risk to protect children from harm and abuse. Employees working directly with carers or children will be provided with clinical group supervision.
- All PCA Families' employees have a responsibility to identify, assess, and take steps to minimise child abuse risks, which include risks posed by physical and online environments; (e.g., no PCA Families employees are to have contact with a child via personal social media channels).

Allegations of Abuse and Reportable Conduct

- PCA Families is committed to ensuring that all allegations of child abuse and misconduct are reported promptly and in accordance with the Reportable Conduct Scheme. All allegations of abuse are taken seriously.

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Our process includes:

- Where the allegation includes Reportable Conduct (refer to Reportable Conduct Scheme) the allegation will be reported to PCA Families Child Safety Officer and CEO.
- Where there is a reasonable belief of *Reportable Conduct*, the matter will be reported to the appropriate external body (the Police, Child Protection, Commission for Children and Young People as required and consistent with the Reportable Conduct Scheme). This will be completed within the relevant guidelines.
- Where an employee is unsure that *Reportable Conduct* has occurred, they are expected to bring it to the attention of their supervisor or manager as soon as they become aware of an incident has occurred to seek clarification.
- Where a PCA Families employee is the subject of *Reportable Conduct*, PCA Families will ensure a fair process is undertaken consistently with its policies and procedures, and ensure action is taken to safeguard the interests of the child and PCA Families.
- If an allegation of abuse or safety concern is raised, PCA Families will notify where appropriate parent/carer of the child, as soon as practicable, unless such notification would increase the risk of harm for the child or compromise a child protection or police investigation.

6. Related Documents

- [Understand your obligations to protect children | vic.gov.au](#) (External)
- [Victoria's new Child Safe Standards - Plain language guide](#) (External)
- [Reportable Conduct Scheme - DFFH Service Providers](#) (External)
- [Information Sheet 2_What is reportable conduct](#) (External)
- Confidentiality and Privacy Policy
- Complaints and Feedback Policy
- Code of Conduct

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