



SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE PEOPLE DIOCESE OF WAGGA WAGGA STANDARDS FOR A CHILD SAFE ORGANISATION

OVERVIEW

The Catholic Diocese of Wagga Wagga commits to the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, being:

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.

Standards for a Child Safe Organisation

The Diocese of Wagga Wagga acknowledges the following standards as its reference point for achieving child safe environments in all of its agencies. The Diocese commits itself to work towards a comprehensive implementation of each standard and the accompanying indicators.

1. Child safety is embedded in diocesan leadership, governance and culture.

DESCRIPTION

The diocese's approach and commitment to child safety encompasses the need for it to be set from the top, and embedded into all aspects of its practice and business.

INDICATORS

- a) The organisation can demonstrate they have publicly available and current documents such as a child safety and wellbeing policy, practice guidance, information sharing protocols, staff and volunteer codes of conduct and risk management strategies.
- b) The organisational leadership models and regularly reinforces attitudes and behaviours that value children and young people and a commitment to child safety, child wellbeing and cultural safety. This commitment is clear in duty statements, performance agreements and staff and volunteer review processes.
- c) Staff, volunteers, children and young people have a sound knowledge of children's rights, including their rights to feel safe and be heard, and the accountabilities that accompany these rights.
- d) Leaders promote sharing good practice and learnings about child safety and wellbeing

2. Children and young people are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously

DESCRIPTION

Children and young people have a right to express their views freely in all matters affecting them. Including the voice of children and young people in risk assessments and program planning, where appropriate, can reduce the likelihood of abuse occurring.

INDICATORS

- a) The organisation has programs and resources to educate children and young people on their rights including their right to safety and right to be listened to.
- b) The organisation is proactive in providing age-appropriate platforms to regular seek children's and young people's views and encourage participation in decision-making.
- c) Staff and volunteers have a good understanding of children and young people's developmental needs.
- d) Opportunities for participating are documented and regularly reviewed.
- e) The organisational environment is friendly and welcoming for children and young people.
- f) Children and young people participate in decision-making in the organisation, including in relation to safety issues and risk identification.

- g) Children and young people can identify trusted adults and friends.
- h) Children and young people are informed of their roles and responsibilities in helping ensure the safety and wellbeing of their peers.

3. Families and communities are informed and involved.

DESCRIPTION

Families and communities have a significant role to play in the upbringing and development of children in their care. The diocese works in partnership with families and communities to keep them informed and involved in matters relating to the child's safety, learning and wellbeing.

INDICATORS

- a) The organisation is responsive to the needs of the families and communities, including to cultural safety.
- b) The organisation creates opportunities for families and communities to be involved in how the organisation operates, including encouraging their children's participation and feedback.
- c) The organisation has clear and accessible information for families and communities about the organisation's operations and policies, including child safety and wellbeing policy, code of conduct, record keeping practices and complaints and investigation processes.
- d) The organisation seeks feedback from families and communities on issues of child safety and wellbeing and incorporates this into their policies and practices.
- e) The organisation engages with and supports approaches that build cultural safety through partnerships and respectful relationships.

4. Equity is promoted and diversity respected.

DESCRIPTION

The diocese is committed to a fair and equitable environment for all where the individual needs of children are respected and addressed. Encouraging children to be aware of the diverse needs of those around them is a priority of staff and volunteers.

INDICATORS

- a) The organisation has specific policies in place that promote equity and respect diversity for the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people.
- b) The organisation produces child-friendly material in accessible language and formats that promotes inclusion and informs all children and young people of the support and complaints processes available to them.
- c) Board members, employees and volunteers champion attitudes and behaviours that respect the human rights of all children and young people, and are inclusive, well informed and responsive to diverse needs.
- d) Board members, staff and volunteers reflect on how discrimination and exclusion, whether intentional or unintentional, may mitigate against a safe and inclusive culture and develops proactive strategies to address this.
- e) Staff and volunteers are trained to recognise and respond effectively to children and young people with diverse needs.

5. People working with children are suitable and supported.

DESCRIPTION

It is a priority of the diocese to follow stringent screening processes, to ensure that the best possible staff and volunteers are employed to work with children. This standard includes comprehensive processes for screening, recruitment, induction, supervision and support.

INDICATORS

- a) The organisation emphasises its commitment to child safety and wellbeing when advertising, recruiting and screening for staff and volunteers.
- b) Duty statements, selection criteria and referee checks demonstrate children and young people are valued and respected, commitment to child safety and wellbeing, understanding of children's developmental needs and culturally safe practices.
- c) Employers, staff and volunteers in an organisation have completed background check requirements.
- d) Staff and volunteers understand the child safety policy and procedures of the organisation and meet their record keeping, information sharing and reporting responsibilities.
- e) Ongoing staff support, supervision and performance management processes involve child safety elements.

6. Processes to respond to complaints of child sexual abuse are child focused.

DESCRIPTION

The diocese is committed to ensuring complaints of child sexual abuse are responded to appropriately. It has clear and specific processes relating to complaints and allegations. Diocese personnel ensures a response that is a child focused, independent and includes consultation and/or investigative partnership with external stakeholders.

INDICATORS

- a) Staff and volunteers are well-informed about their roles and responsibilities, reporting and privacy obligations and processes for responding to disclosures. They feel empowered and supported to draw attention to breaches of the Code of Conduct within the organisation and to challenge these behaviours.
- b) The complaints handling policy prioritises the safety and wellbeing of children and young people and recognises the role of families and communities in understanding and using the policy.
- c) Policies and procedures demonstrate regard for fairness to all parties to a complaint or investigation including support and information as appropriate.
- d) Staff and volunteers have a good knowledge of the different ways children and young people express concerns or distress and disclose harm.
- e) Information about all complaints and concerns, including breaches of relevant policies or the Code of Conduct, is recorded and analysed, including in relation to processes, timeframes and record keeping practices. Systemic issues are identified and mitigated through this process.
- f) Children and young people know who to talk to if they are feeling unsafe and know what will happen.
- g) Timely feedback is provided to children and young people, families, staff and volunteers who raise concerns or complaints. This includes reporting back on incidents, concerns and complaints

7. Staff are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children safe through continual education and training.

DESCRIPTION

The diocese is committed to the ongoing professional development of staff and volunteers on child safety matters. Ongoing interactive training modules are foundational to this commitment

INDICATORS

- a) The organisation provides regular opportunities to educate and train staff on child safety and wellbeing policies and procedures and evidence-based practice.
- b) The organisation provides a supportive and safe environment for staff and volunteers who disclose harm or risk to children and young people.
- c) Staff and volunteers receive training in the rights of children and young people in relation to records being created about children and young people and their use.
- d) Staff and volunteers recognise the range of indicators of child harm.
- e) Staff and volunteers respond effectively when issues of child safety and wellbeing or cultural safety arise.

8. Physical and online environments minimise the opportunity for abuse to occur.

DESCRIPTION

The diocese is committed to a proactive approach in keeping current with the online environment and providing systems to ensure that an infrastructure exists to support a safe online environment. Policies surrounding the use of ICT for staff and young people are published and reviewed on a regular basis.

INDICATORS

- a) The organisation's risk management strategy addresses physical and online risks, including risks arising from child to child and adult to child interactions and the state and nature of physical spaces.
- b) The organisation's policies promote the use of safe online applications for children and young people to learn, communicate and seek help.
- c) The organisation considers ways in which the physical environment might promote cultural safety.
- d) Staff and volunteers are proactive in identifying and mitigating physical and online risks.
- e) Staff and volunteers access and use online environments in line with the organisation's Code of Conduct and relevant communication protocols.
- f) Children and young people and their families are informed, in culturally appropriate ways, about the use of the organisation's technology and safety tools.
- g) Third party contractors for the provision of facilities and services have appropriate measures in place to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.

9. Implementation of child safe standards is continuously reviewed and improved.

DESCRIPTION

The diocese is committed to a variety of regular internal and external review processes which ensure that child safety policies and processes remain current and effective.

INDICATORS

- a) The organisation seeks the participation of children and young people, parents and community in its regular reviews of child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures and practices.
- b) Child safety and wellbeing indicators are included in documentation used for reviews.
- c) Review outcomes are considered and implemented to improve child safe practices.
- d) Regular analysis of complaints demonstrates improvement in child safe practices.

10. Policies and procedures document how the diocese is child safe.

DESCRIPTION

Whole of diocese child protection policies and procedures provide guidance, support and clear processes for the protection of children

INDICATORS

- a) The organisation's child safety and wellbeing policy is comprehensive to address all 10 National Child Safe Principles.
- b) The organisation's child safety and wellbeing policy and procedures are documented in a language and format that is easily understood and accessible to staff, volunteers, families and children and young people.
- c) Audits of the organisation's policies and procedures provide evidence of how the organisation is child safe through its governance, leadership and culture.
- d) Practice within the organisation is consistent across the board and compliant with child safe policies and procedures, including culturally safe work practices.
- e) Interviews or surveys of children and young people, families and community members demonstrate confidence and awareness of the organisation's policies and procedures in promoting a child safe culture.
- f) Surveys of executive, staff and volunteers demonstrate high levels of understanding of policies, procedural and practice requirements of the organisation.