



# Children's Health and Safety

## Safeguarding Children Requirement | NQS2



### Purpose







#### Commitment to Safeguarding Children

This requirement informs all Goodstarters of their obligations to act ethically towards children and their responsibilities in ensuring the safety and wellbeing of children. It sets out the organisation's expectations, practices and approach in relation to the Child Safe Standards and National Principles for Child Safe Organisations. It also provides guidance on the processes, procedures and practices that aim to keep children safe and well, and to promote and protect their rights.







This policy must be considered when developing, designing and managing Goodstart's procedures, processes and programs to ensure they promote children's rights and include relevant child safety considerations.

Goodstart's Safeguarding Children Requirement is guided by the following principles and values:


- o Child abuse is not tolerated and must not happen
- o The best interests of the child and their protection from harm is paramount
- o Children's rights are understood and respected
- o All concerns, whether raised by adults or children, are treated seriously and acted on
- o Reporting child abuse, neglect or harm is mandatory and encouraged – it is never obstructed or prevented

KEY	
	This symbol shows the alignment with the relevant National Principle for Child Safe Organisations
	This symbol shows the alignment with the relevant ACT Child Safe Standards
	This symbol shows the alignment with the relevant New South Wales Child Safe Standard
	This symbol shows the alignment with the relevant Tasmanian Child and Youth Safe Standards
	This symbol shows the alignment with the relevant Victorian Child Safe Standards
	This symbol shows the alignment with the relevant WA National Principle for Child Safe Organisations



### Applicability of this requirement

Situation	Guidance
Child Safe leadership, governance and culture	      <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Goodstart's 'Safety Commitment' and 'Safeguarding Children commitment', Code of Conduct and Child Safe Behaviour Standards are the foundation of our child safe culture and for creating culturally safe environments for all Goodstarters.</li> <li>□ All Goodstarters are responsible for championing these core values that inform Goodstart's approach to child safety and wellbeing.</li> <li>□ Maintaining a genuinely child safe environment across all Goodstart centres, programs and events is the responsibility of all employees, students, volunteers and contractors, whether engaged in child-related work or otherwise.</li> <li>□ The Safeguarding Children Framework supports all Goodstarters to look, do, tell; and, prevent, identify and respond to child abuse, neglect and harm.</li> <li>□ The Safety, Health and Wellbeing Governance Framework facilitates the implementation of the Child Safe Standards and the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations at all levels of the organisation.</li> </ul>


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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ The Child Protection Advocate Program focuses on advocacy, promoting awareness of safeguarding children and supporting our plan to implement the National Principles and Child Safe Standards.</li> <li>□ Goodstart has robust risk assessment and management processes in place to keep children safe including an organisational risk profile for Child Abuse, Neglect and harm. Quarterly measures are provided to the Audit and Risk Committee and the Board to provide insights about the effectiveness of Risk management strategies. Goodstart has risk assessments that focus on preventing, identifying and mitigating risk of child abuse, neglect and harm.</li> </ul> <p><b>Child safe code of conduct</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ The Child Safe Behaviour Standards and Code of Conduct applies to all employees, volunteers, students, agency staff, Board members and contracted service providers working in Goodstart facilities and event sites.</li> <li>□ The code of conduct establishes a clear set of rules and expectations for behaviour that is in line with Goodstart's child safe culture and values. Clear rules and expectations of how Goodstarters are expected to interact with children helps to prevent child abuse, neglect and harm and encourage reporting.</li> <li>□ The conduct of Goodstarters holding a working with children check is subject to the NQS2 Managing allegations or suspicions of harm involving a Goodstarter Procedure at all times. Even when not at work, Goodstarters must behave in line with the Code of Conduct and Child Safe Behaviour Standards.</li> <li>□ Any behaviour that is consistent with reportable conduct and or is a breach of the Child Safe Behaviour Standards and Code of Conduct will not be tolerated and may lead to disciplinary action, up to an including termination of employment.</li> </ul>
<b>Involving families and communities</b>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Goodstart Policies and Procedures detail how collaborative partnerships with families and communities are maintained and families are involved in decisions on their child's safety and wellbeing including learning and curriculum, cultural safety, inclusion and support needs.</li> <li>□ Goodstart's enrolment and orientation procedures outline the authorisation requirements for seeking parental consent for relevant activities</li> <li>□ Centres engage and consult with families and communities in making decisions surrounding their children, seek feedback on issues of safety and wellbeing through a variety of communication strategies which may include surveys, StoryPark posts, discussions or meetings, and/or parent information evenings.</li> <li>□ Child safety and wellbeing policies and procedures are made accessible to families and communities both in centres and on our website and are available in a variety of languages to support the sociocultural communities within Goodstart.</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Processes are in place to notify families about changes to policy and procedure updates within 14 days (as required under National Regulation 168).</li> <li>Families are invited to share feedback on services, practices, policies and procedures through informal discussions, formal feedback and complaint mechanisms. Insights, learnings and feedback are utilised to improve services.</li> <li>The BM9 Stakeholder consultation for the review and Development of Child Safe Policies and Procedures provides guidance about child, family and community consultation in the development and review of Goodstart's child safe policies and practices.</li> <li>Families are advised of any changes to Centre staff, including students and volunteers.</li> <li>Goodstart's website and annual reports provide Goodstarters, families and communities with details regarding Goodstart's Governance and operations.</li> </ul>
<b>Respecting equity and diversity</b>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Goodstart is dedicated to offering inclusive and culturally safe services to children, young people, and their families.</li> <li>Goodstart understands that some children are more at risk of abuse, neglect or harm than others or find it harder to speak up and be heard. This includes children with disability, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, children of diverse sexualities and genders and intersex children, and children who have experienced trauma. Goodstart actively supports and responds to children with diverse circumstances.</li> <li>Policies are in place on accessibility, anti-discrimination, cultural safety, diversity and inclusion.</li> <li>Training is provided to all Goodstarters on bullying, harassment and discrimination to counter discrimination and exclusion, as well as on creating safe environments that are welcoming for all children.</li> <li>All Goodstarters maintain culturally safe environments in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of all children and their families are respected and valued.</li> <li>Cultural responsiveness training is available to all Goodstarters on identifying and responding to children and young people with diverse backgrounds and needs.</li> <li>Child-friendly and culturally safe information is provided to children about support and complaints processes. Leaders help all staff and volunteers to acknowledge and appreciate the strengths of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and understand its importance to the wellbeing and safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.</li> </ul>
<b>Cultural Safety</b>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Goodstart is committed to establishing and embedding a culturally safe environments within our organisation, where our environments</li> </ul>


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	<p>and relationships support First Nations children to feel free to be themselves, their sense of self and identity is nurtured and encouraged and their Aboriginality is respected. Racism will not be tolerated. All instances of racism must be reported for consideration and management. Cultural awareness and responsiveness are important foundations to ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people experience safety within Goodstart.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Reconciliation is woven through everything that we do, and our 10 Year Reconciliation journey continues to build understanding of our shared history, to combat racism and to ensure that Australia's future generations grow up with connection to and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, people and history. Goodstart's commitment to reconciliation is visible across more than 654 communities with 100% of Goodstart centres on their reconciliation journey with Narragunnawali with a draft or published centre RAP.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Goodstart as an organisation, and at centres, recognises, participates and celebrates Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander achievements, cultures and events throughout the year including Annual NAIDOC week, National Reconciliation Week. Environments aim to reflect the lives and identities of the children, families and staff within the organisation, or centre through artwork, positive images, photos, role models and resources.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Goodstart's First Nations Employment strategy aims to increase the representation of First Nations educators and teachers to enhance our early learning programs and centres.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Staff are supported to enhance their cultural responsiveness and awareness of strategies to support cultural safety through a variety of multi modal resources including webinars, videos, webinars, fact sheets, information sheets available on the learning hub and reconciliation intranet page.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> At Goodstart the educational program (curriculum) and educator practice (pedagogy) is informed by the National Quality Framework (NQF) and Early Years Learning Framework including valuing and respecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and identities and connections to community and country.</li> </ul>
Ensuring that staff are suitable and supported	<div style="display: flex; align-items: center; gap: 10px;">       </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Goodstart maintains rigorous and consistent child safe recruitment, screening and selection processes in line with Goodstart's recruitment policies and procedures.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Goodstart Talent Acquisition Team undertake child safe recruitment training on an annual basis and engage a train the trainer model to ensure continuous awareness and knowledge of child safe recruitment practices.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> All Goodstarters must have a current Working with Children Check (WWCC) at all times, to make sure they are suitable to work with children. If, in the course of their employment they are not able to maintain their WWCC, the matter will be referred to the People</li> </ul>

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	<p>Team for advice. If an employee becomes disqualified during the course of their employment with Goodstart, the employee's manager and the People Team must immediately remove that employee. The employee may be suspended from duty with pay pending the outcome of an investigation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Please refer to Goodstart's Suitability to Work with Children Requirement and Procedure for guidance on working with children or vulnerable persons check.</li> <li>□ All QLD centres must, under the Working with Children (Risk Management Screening) Act 2000 and the Working with Children (Risk Management Screening) Regulation 2011 develop and implement a Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy.</li> <li>□ All staff, students, volunteers and contractors working with children will be provided appropriate training and induction along with information and resources, so they understand: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Goodstart's commitment to child safety and wellbeing</li> <li>○ the organisation's child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures and practices including the Code of Conduct and Child Safe Behaviour Standards.</li> <li>○ the nature and indicators of child abuse, neglect and harm including grooming so that they can identify abuse, harm and concerning behaviour</li> <li>○ Provide knowledge about how to respond to disclosures of abuse appropriately</li> <li>○ their mandatory reporting responsibilities and the processes that all Goodstarters must follow if there is an incident, allegation or concern for a child's safety or wellbeing.</li> </ul> </li> <li>□ Goodstart provides a comprehensive and transparent Management for Performance framework that ensures that staff supervision and people management practices include regular checks whether staff are following Code of Conduct and Child Safe Policies and for managing staff whose behaviour raises child safety concerns. Goodstart has service agreements with third party contractors that provide services to Goodstart, including for maintenance and cleaning services, and extra-curricular activities. When engaging third party providers to provide entertainment or services to children, Centre Directors are responsible for ensuring child safe practices including WWCC requirements, induction,, supervision requirements and training requirements.</li> </ul> <p><b>Reporting incidents or suspicions of child abuse, neglect or harm</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ All Goodstarters have a responsibility to champion and model a culture that promotes and protects that safety and wellbeing of children in everything we do.</li> <li>□ Staff students, and volunteers are advised of the existence and application of the current child protection law and their obligations to report all allegations and suspicions of child abuse neglect and harm.</li> <li>□ Robust procedures are in place to guide Goodstarters on their responsibilities to report any incidents, suspicions of child abuse, neglect or harm caused by another child, by someone external to Goodstart, child self harm or involving staff, volunteers, students or contactors.</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Goodstart mandates that all staff and volunteers including board directors, consultant, contractors and students have an obligation under our policies and procedures to report any reasonable suspicion of abuse, neglect or harm, regardless of jurisdictional requirements.</li> <li>□ The <u>Look, Do, Tell</u> model for safeguarding children supports the ongoing supervision, support and performance management of all Goodstarters. If you see or hear something that poses a risk to a child, you are expected to take action in the moment. Situational crime prevention techniques are employed such as 'natural surveillance' to further reduce the risk of harm to children. This includes design factors such as window walls to separate rooms and prep areas, landscaping, and the design of new centres.</li> <li>□ The failure to protect a child at risk of child sexual abuse offences and/or failure to report child sexual abuse is an offence under the Crimes Act (1900)</li> <li>□ Failure to report an incident, circumstance, allegation, disclosure or suspicion which relates to abuse, neglect or harm of a child is viewed by Goodstart as serious misconduct and as a result, may lead to disciplinary action.</li> </ul>
<b>Promoting Child focused complaints management</b>	<div>  </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Goodstart understands that feedback from children comes in a variety of forms, including complaints.</li> <li>□ Information outlining how a child, parent, carer or community member can make a report or complaint is provided in all Goodstart centres and is publicly available on Goodstart's website.</li> <li>□ All Goodstarters must comply with legal requirements and adopted procedures and report known, suspected or alleged child abuse, neglect or harm of a child, misconduct or inappropriate behaviour. Requirements and processes are outlined in the NQS2 Managing allegations or suspicions of harm involving a Goodstarter Procedure, NQS2 Protection children from child abuse, neglect or harm Procedure and the NQS2 Managing Children's Sexual Behaviour Procedure.</li> <li>□ All Goodstarters, including the Board, CEO, students and contractors will assist, to their fullest capacity, with any investigation carried out by a regulatory authority, statutory agency or with any internal investigative process in relation to allegations of child abuse, neglect or harm.</li> <li>□ Goodstart's robust Investigation Procedures including Safeguarding Children Panel and Child Interview Protocol support Goodstart's investigation process to ensure an immediate, appropriate and consistent response to allegations of child abuse, neglect and harm and that brings the child's experience forward.</li> <li>□ Goodstart's response to any report, complaint, incident or allegation will be child focused, prioritising the safety, interests and wellbeing of the child or children involved.</li> <li>□ Goodstart will:</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Ensure that processes for responding to alleged abuse and misconduct are fair and focus on the safety and wellbeing of the child/ren.</li> <li>○ In the event that employee poses a serious risk of abusing a child, remove, or reduce the risk to the child</li> <li>○ Where there is an allegation against a Goodstarter, notify the relevant authorities and conduct an investigation</li> <li>○ Provide support or make referrals for support to alleged victims, their families and affected employees by helping everyone involved to understand their rights and the process that will be followed in response to allegations of reportable conduct, and assistance in accessing counselling or other support as required.</li> <li>○ Undertake timely reviews of this policy, organisational procedures and/or relevant child abuse, neglect and harm risk management plans following an incident.</li> </ul> <p><b>Confidentiality and record management</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Confidentiality will be maintained for all records and information relating to safeguarding and child protection matters. Safeguarding and safety records will be maintained in secure electronic files and access will be strictly controlled.</li> <li>□ Goodstarters must create and keep accurate records relevant to child safety and wellbeing including recording incidents, responses and decision affecting children. Records must be created and maintained in accordance with policies and procedures.</li> <li>□ Policies on reporting to external regulatory authorities, record keeping and information sharing, and systems to ensure the organisation meets its reporting requirements and employment law and privacy obligations are in place.</li> <li>□ Complaint handling and investigation procedures detail show families will be kept informed and provide guidance on how to do this while complying with confidentiality and privacy obligations.</li> </ul>
<b>Staff knowledge, skills and awareness</b>	<div style="display: flex; align-items: center; gap: 10px;">       </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ All Goodstarters, are required to complete mandatory training within three weeks of commencement and annually thereafter. Students, volunteers and contractors who work with children are required to complete mandatory training before their first visit and annually thereafter. The Safeguarding Children: Together we Prevent, Identify and Respond to Child Abuse, Neglect and Harm modules includes training on recognising signs of abuse, neglect and/or harm, responding to disclosures, understanding and responding to harmful behaviours by a child towards another child as well as external reporting obligations.</li> <li>□ Relevant workforce areas will receive more specialised safeguarding training relevant to their role and responsibilities. This includes training about protective behaviours, child safety risk management, identifying and responding to risk of significant harm and responding to allegations of serious misconduct and reportable conduct. All employees must undertake training that has been identified as required for their role.</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> All Centre Directors must have read and understood the Safeguarding Children Responsibilities for Nominated Supervisors.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Under the National Law (S162A), each Nominated Supervisor and each Person in Day-to-Day Charge of the service must successfully complete any Child Protection Training required by or under the law of their state or territory: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o NSW and Qld staff who act in the role of a responsible person (nominated supervisor and persons in day-to-day charge) must first have completed one of the child protection courses approved by the NSW or Qld Regulatory Authority as per s162a of the Education and Care Services National Law. A list of approved child protection courses for NSW can be found on the NSW Department of Education's website, and for Qld on the Qld Early Childhood Education and Care website.</li> <li>o In South Australia, this training is called Responding to risks of harm, abuse and neglect - education and care (RRHAN-EC). The type of RRHAN-EC training needed depends on the person's role. If a person has more than one role, they need to do enough training to suit all of those roles. Staff and volunteers can use this decision-making tool to find out what training is needed based on their role (select ECW for Early Childhood Worker). It is best practice to complete refresher training every 12-24 months.</li> </ul> </li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> All centre staff and volunteers must be aware of the existence and application of the current child protection law in their jurisdiction (Section 84 of the Education and Care National Law (2010)).</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> All centre staff and volunteers must be aware of the existence and application of Goodstart's policies and procedures relating to child protection and where these policies and procedures have a higher expectation of staff and volunteers than required by the mandatory reporting legislation in their state or territory.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Additional training and resources are available on the learning hub for all Goodstarters on children's rights, child development, child safety and wellbeing, record keeping, risk assessment and management, creating culturally safe environments, recognising indicators of child harm, responding to child safety issues. Staff may also be required to complete other training as directed by their manager or supervisor.</li> </ul>
<b>Safe physical and online environments</b>	<div style="display: flex; align-items: center; margin-bottom: 10px;">  </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Goodstart's Safety Management System (SMS) is a comprehensive framework which sets out how we manage safety, health and wellbeing risks at all levels of the organisation and meet our legislated workplace health and safety responsibilities. Safeguarding children is a fundamental objective and obligation of our Goodstart's SMS.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Centre risk assessment and management processes will identify, and address child safe risk factors associated with the unique online and physical environments in which our services are provided, these plans are communicated to staff and volunteers. Goodstart services</li> </ul>

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	<p>are required to undertake risk assessments and manage child safe risks including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Indoor and outdoor environments</li> <li>○ Centre based Child Abuse, Neglect and Harm Risk Assessment (reviewed at least annually)</li> <li>○ Managing visitors to the centre</li> <li>○ Planning centre activities including excursions, extracurricular activities, or transporting children</li> <li>○ Sleep and rest activities (reviewed at least annually)</li> <li>○ During and following investigations into child abuse, neglect and harm</li> </ul> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Information is provided to children, young people and families about physical and online safety and appropriate conduct in physical and online environments.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Policies, Procedures and Guidelines are in place to guide Goodstarters in engaging, supervising and managing students, volunteers, visitors and contractors. Additionally, students, volunteers and contractors who are working with children must read and agree to comply with the Code of Conduct and Child Safe Behaviour Standards which includes expectations of child safe practices.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Students, volunteers and contractors working with children must also complete the Safeguarding Children: Together we Prevent, Identify and Respond to Child Abuse, Neglect and Harm modules which includes training on recognising signs of abuse, neglect and/or harm, responding to disclosures, understanding and responding to harmful behaviours by a child towards another child as well as external reporting obligations.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Goodstart is an early adopter of the National Model Code to promote a child safe culture when it comes to taking, sharing and storing images or videos of children early education and care. Policies and Procedures are in place to set expectations and provide guidance to ensure that the online environment is used in accordance with policies and procedures including the Code of Conduct, Child Safe Behaviour Standards and BM9 Taking images or Videos of Children and Acceptable Use of Electronic Devices (Model Code) Requirement.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The child safe environment requirement details clear guidelines to support all centres to provide a child safe environment for children.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Only Goodstart-issued electronic devices should be used when taking images or videos of children while providing education and care, including when children are transported by, or on transport arranged by Goodstart. Personal electronic devices that can take images or videos (such as tablets, phones, digital cameras, smart watches) and personal storage and file transfer media (such as SD cards, USB drives, hard drives, and cloud storage) should not be in the possession of any person while providing education and care and working directly with children, including when children are transported by, or on transport arranged by Goodstart. Any exceptions to this should be for limited, essential purposes (defined in the Taking Images of Videos of Children and Acceptable Use of Electronic Devices (Model Code) Requirement) that are authorised in writing (or through another means if written authorisation is not</p>
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	reasonably practicable) by the Centre Director or Line Manager, and where that access does not impede the active supervision of children.
<b>Review of child safe policies and practices</b>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> The Stakeholder Consultation for the Review and Development of Child Safe Policies and Procedure sets out the requirements to ensure that Goodstart's child safety and wellbeing policies and procedures, are reviewed and updated on a regular basis in consultation with relevant stakeholders. This ensures that content is relevant and compliant with all local, state and federal regulatory requirements.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Processes in place to notify families about changes to policy and procedure updates within 14 days (as required under National Regulation 168) and opportunities are provided for families to provide feedback through this process.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Complaints, incidents, and concerns are recorded and regularly analysed in order to identify causes or systemic weaknesses and implement improvements, through centre scorecards, area dashboards, operations dashboards and high-level KPI measures for safeguarding children to track performance over time.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Opportunities are regularly provided for the Safeguarding Children Steering Committee and Child Protection Advocates to regularly review child safe practices.</li> </ul>
<b>Documenting policies and procedures</b>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Policies and procedures are in place that demonstrate how the organisation ensures child safety and wellbeing (such as a Code of Conduct, Risk assessment and management processes, and policies on record keeping, information sharing and external reporting).</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Mandatory training is provided for the child safe policies and procedures.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Child safety and wellbeing policies and procedures are made accessible to families and communities both in centres and on our website. Processes are in place to notify families about changes to policy and procedure updates within 14 days (as required under National Regulation 168) and opportunities are provided for families to provide feedback through this process.</li> </ul>

## Responsibilities

This requirement is to be implemented by: All Goodstarters, who work in a paid or unpaid capacity. This includes board members, executive leadership, staff, volunteers, students, trainees, contractors and consultants. The requirement applies to all activities which involve, result in or relate to contact with children.

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