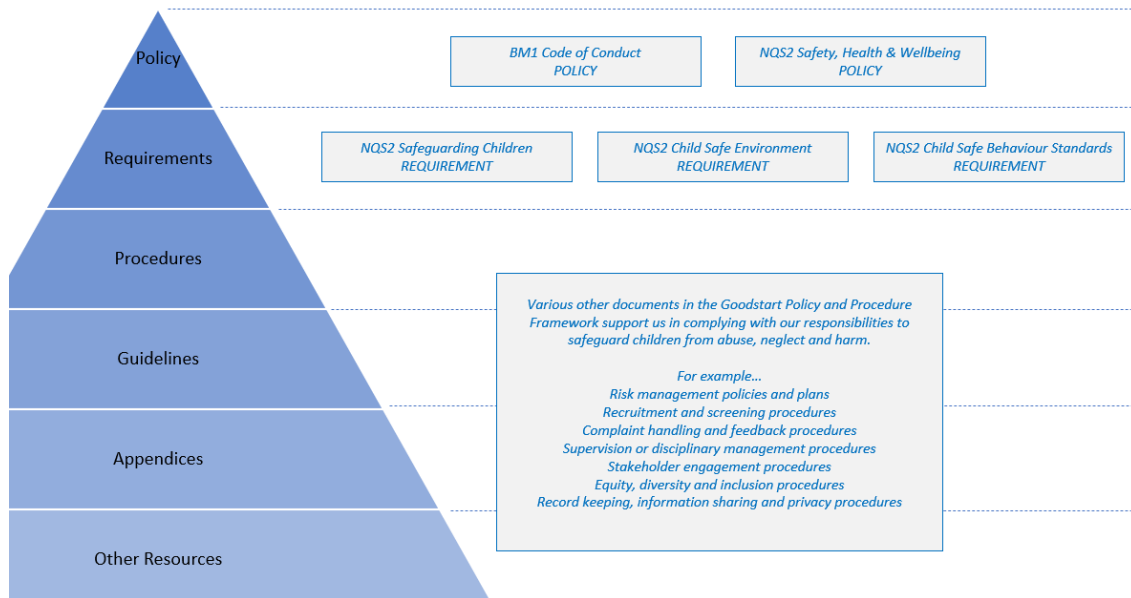


Safeguarding Children

Purpose of this requirement

At Goodstart we take any action necessary to ensure that all children can feel safe and be safe, and are safeguarded from sexual, physical, emotional, or psychological abuse, exposure to violence, harm, and neglect. This means we are committed to keeping children safe and protected, ensuring they gain a strong sense of wellbeing, optimism, and confidence so they have the learning and development and wellbeing outcomes they need for school and life. This is more than just meeting compliance responsibilities. Underpinned by the ['look, do, tell' framework](#), we amplify and promote the voice and rights of children, through the prevention, identification and response to child abuse, neglect, and harm

This requirement informs all Goodstarters of their obligations to act ethically towards children and their roles and 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.



Applicability of this requirement

A commitment to child safety and wellbeing



- The [Safeguarding Children Framework](#) supports all Goodstarters to: look, do tell; and, prevent, identify and respond to child abuse, neglect and harm.
- Goodstarters each make a personal [safety commitment](#) to keep all children and themselves and other Goodstarters safe and well.

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

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- 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.
- All Goodstarters are expected to abide by the [code of conduct](#) and the [child safe behaviour standards](#).
- The [Child Protection Advocate Program](#) focuses on advocacy, promoting awareness of safeguarding children and supporting our plan to implement the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.
- [Organisational risk assessment](#) and management processes are used to keep children safe.

Taking child participation seriously



- All Goodstarters have access to training to ensure they understand child rights-based approaches and are skilled at engaging with children (search for 'child rights' on the learning hub).
- Teachers and Educators will ensure children are informed about their rights and Goodstart's complaints processes, by embedding teaching on child rights within the program and ensuring child friendly posters about the [Convention on the Rights of a Child](#) and Goodstart's [Look Do Tell](#) model are displayed in each centre and accessible to children. Teachers and Educators are required to implement learning about protective strategies for staying safe and seeking help when needed within the learning program.
- Teachers and educators will ensure children's health needs are met in a timely, respectful and responsive manner and will establish a culture of consent by asking permission before supporting children with care routines.
- Teachers and Educators will encourage children to participate in decision-making on safety and wellbeing issues. The outdoor safety inspection, safe places to play package and room/area supervision procedure invite children's insight on the safety of their physical environments.

Involving families and communities



- 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.
- Families are surveyed regularly, and their insights are used to inform practice.
- Goodstarters engage with families and communities to build cultural safety and [inclusion](#) through [partnerships and respectful relationships](#).
- Parental consent is sought for relevant activities.

Respecting equity and diversity



- Policies are in place on [accessibility](#), [anti-discrimination](#), [cultural safety](#), [diversity and inclusion](#).
- 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.
- All Goodstarters take the [code of conduct](#) seriously - racism will not be tolerated.
- 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.
- Cultural competency training is available to all Goodstarters on identifying and responding to children and young people with diverse backgrounds and needs.
- All Goodstarters actively support and facilitate the participation and inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children with disability, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, children who are unable to live at home, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex children and their families.
- Child-friendly and culturally safe information is provided to children about [support and complaints processes](#).

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- Leaders help all staff and volunteers to acknowledge and appreciate the strengths of Aboriginal culture and understand its importance to the wellbeing and safety of Aboriginal children.

Ensuring that staff are suitable and supported



- Decisions about the employment of Goodstarters prioritises child safety. [Recruitment](#) policies are in place on advertising, selection criteria, pre-employment screening, referee checks and position descriptions.
- All Goodstarters must have a current Working with Children Check (WWCC) to make sure they are suitable to work with children.
- 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](#).
- All staff and volunteers receive an appropriate induction, so they understand their child safety and wellbeing responsibilities, the organisation’s child safety and wellbeing policies and procedures, external reporting obligations (e.g. mandatory reporting) and the Code of Conduct and Child Safe Behaviour Standards.
- All Goodstarters have a probationary period in accordance with the [management for performance](#) procedure.
- Centre Directors will roster according to ratio requirements.
- The [Look, Do, Tell](#) 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
- Staff supervision and people management practices are supported by regular communication about the Safeguarding Children and Child Safe Environment requirements, the [code of conduct](#) and the [child safe behaviour standards](#). This occurs in supervision meetings, at staff meetings, in newsletters and staff updates.

Child focused complaint systems



- Policies, procedures and systems are in place for receiving, responding to and investigating [complaints](#), including concerns or complaints relating to Goodstart conduct, misconduct or criminal conduct or harm caused to a child by another child that prioritise the safety and wellbeing of children.
- Child-friendly and culturally safe information is provided to children, families and communities about how they can raise concerns and how those concerns will be responded to and investigated.
- 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.
- All Goodstarters will keep confidential, except as otherwise required, every aspect of a complaint or concern.
- 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.
- Timely support and feedback is provided to children and young people, families, staff and volunteers who raise concerns or complaints using a [tiered response model](#).

Staff knowledge, skills and awareness



- All Goodstarters are required to complete mandatory training within three weeks of commencement and annually thereafter. The safeguarding children module [Child Protection: Your Commitment](#) 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.

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- All Centre Directors must have read and understood the [Safeguarding Children Responsibilities for Nominated Supervisors](#)
- Training is available on the learning hub for all Goodstarters on children’s rights, child development, child safety and wellbeing, record keeping, risk assessment and management, and creating culturally safe environments, recognising indicators of child harm, respond to child safety issues, and build a culturally safe environment.
- 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:
 - NSW staff who do or intend to 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 Regulatory Authority as per s162a of the Education and Care Services National Law and must complete Goodstart’s internal child protection training annually thereafter. A list of approved child protection courses can be found on the [NSW Department of Education’s website](#).
 - 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). For a list of recommended courses click [here](#). It is best practice to complete refresher training every 12-24 months.
- 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))
- 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 legislation in their state or territory.
- Goodstarters who disclose harm or risks to children are supported with EAP and professional supervision when required.

Safe physical and online environments



- 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.
- Active and robust risk assessment and management processes keep children safe in physical and online environments. Risk management processes proactively identify safeguarding risks and ensure appropriate controls are implemented to ensure that risks are mitigated and minimised. Safeguarding controls must strategic (effective) and at the same time operationally appropriate/easy to activate. Examples of risk management in practice include ensuring that relevant safeguarding considerations are explored when:
 - Managing visitors to the centre
 - Completing documented risk assessments (e.g., SAFER)
 - Planning centre activities
- Information is provided to children, young people and families about physical and online safety and appropriate conduct in physical and online environments.
- Volunteers or students are not permitted to work unsupervised within Goodstart centres and volunteers are not permitted to carry out personal care tasks for children.
- The online environment is used in accordance with the [code of conduct](#) and the [child safe behaviour standards](#) and the [acceptable and safe use of digital technology](#) requirement.
- The [child safe environment requirement](#) identifies how the organisation promotes cultural safety and will keep children safe in physical and online environments.
- [Visitor management](#) procedures are in place to ensure that visitors to the centre are appropriately logged and supervised.
- To protect children from risks of child abuse and harm third party contractors working with children must read and agree to comply with the Code of Conduct and Child Safe Behaviour Standards.

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Review of child safe policies and practices



- The [document review and control procedure](#) sets out the requirements to ensure that the organisations child safety and wellbeing policies and procedures, are reviewed and updated on a regular basis in consultation with any relevant stakeholders. This ensures that content is relevant and compliant with all local, state and federal regulatory requirements.
- 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.
- 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.
- Opportunities are regularly provided for the Safeguarding Children Steering Committee and Child Protection Advocates to regularly review child safe practices.

Documenting policies and procedures



- [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](#)
- Mandatory training is provided of the child safe policies and procedures.
- 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.

Definitions

Domestic or family violence: The use of violence or abuse to hurt, control or bully someone else in an intimate personal, family or informal carer relationship. Children and young people can be adversely affected by violence whether they witness it, hear it or are exposed to the consequences of emotions post the violence. They do not need to be directly involved to be impacted.

Emotional/psychological harm: The intentional use of inappropriate comments or behaviour towards a child which results in significant emotional harm or trauma to a child. This includes, verbal abuse, threatening a child or using manipulative behaviour, hostility towards or rejection of a child, deliberately making a child feel unimportant or embarrassed, blaming a child or exposure to domestic and family violence or stories and/or media about violence. Evidence of psychological harm could include the child displaying patterns of out of character behaviour, regression in behaviour, distress, anxiety, physical symptoms or self-harm.

Ill treatment: Seriously inappropriate, cruel or inhumane treatment of a child such as making excessive or degrading demands of a child; a pattern of hostile or degrading comments or behaviour towards a child; and using seriously inappropriate forms of behaviour management towards a child. This includes handling children aggressively such as pulling or grabbing children, particularly by their arms, legs or neck, swinging or picking up children by their arms or repeatedly swearing, yelling, screaming, scolding or intimidating children verbally or physically.

Inappropriate behaviour guidance: Inappropriate, unacceptable and damaging methods of attempting to control children's behaviour, such as yelling at a child, deliberately embarrassing a child, handling a child in an inappropriate way, withholding food or drink from a child, unreasonably restraining a child (this may include restraint in a high chair), excluding children from events, consistently moving children to the office or other space away from the play areas and/or moving children to another room as punishment.

Physical assault: The intentional use of physical force against a child that results in, or has a high likelihood of resulting in, a serious injury to the child. This includes hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, pinching, spitting, scratching, strangling, scalding, burning, poisoning, suffocating, physically restraining a child with unreasonable force (this may include forcefully holding or pinning a child, pinning a child's arms down/back, tying up or sitting on a child, physically forcing a child to sleep or rest) and making threats to physically harm a child through words or gestures regardless of whether the person actually intended to apply any force.

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Restraint: The application of physical force for the purpose of restraining a child's body. Restraint does not include holding a child without force in order to comfort the child or holding a child's hand to safely escort them from one area to another. Occasionally, there may be circumstances where a child becomes an imminent risk to themselves and may need to be removed from the situation or physically restrained to prevent harm to themselves. Children should be physically restrained only in emergency situations when a child is in a clearly unsafe situation such as attempting to scale a fence or run onto a road, behaving in ways that are destructive to themselves. Any force used must be reasonable in all of the circumstances and no more force should be used than is absolutely necessary. If the force used is unreasonable, or is more than is needed, the act could be physical assault.

Sexual misconduct: There are four categories of sexual misconduct:

- **Crossing professional boundaries** - behaviour that can be construed as involving an inappropriate and overly personal or intimate relationship with and/or conduct towards and/or focus on a child or group of children. This includes intimate relationships with children, staff members taking children to their house or in a personal vehicle, seeing children outside of work when no family connection exists (including foster care arrangements), engaging with children through personal social media accounts, phone, email or other electronic communication. It also includes inappropriate kissing and being overly affectionate toward children.
- **Sexually explicit comments and other overtly sexual behaviour** - behaviour which includes, but is not limited to: sexualised behaviour and sexual behaviour towards children, inappropriate conversations of a sexual nature, unwarranted and inappropriate touching involving a child, personal correspondence and communications with a child in relation to the adult's romantic or sexual feelings for a child, watching children undress in circumstances where supervision is not required or is clearly inappropriate.
- **Grooming behaviour** - a behaviour or pattern of behaviour that demonstrate that the staff member is grooming the child for sexual activity and where there is no other reasonable explanation for the behaviour. Grooming behaviour can include but is not limited to: persuading a child or group of children they have a 'special' relationship by spending inappropriate special time with the child, showing special favours, inappropriately giving gifts or asking the child to keep the relationship to themselves as well as grooming the adults that have contact with that child in order to avoid detection.
- **Sexual offence:** Criminal offences involving a sexual element that are 'committed against, with or in the presence of a child'. This includes, indecent assault, sexual assault, sexual intercourse and attempted sexual intercourse, possession/dissemination/production of a child pornography or child abuse material, using children to produce pornography, grooming or procuring children under the age of 16 years for unlawful sexual activity and non-consensual sexual activity.

Significant neglect: An intentional or reckless failure to meet the basic needs of a child, where the adult understood the needs of the child, and had the opportunity to meet those needs but failed to do so. This includes, inadequate supervision, failure to keep a child safe, failure to meet a child's physical needs including the provision of adequate and appropriate food, clothing, shelter or physical hygiene needs, failure to ensure that a child's formal education needs are being met and failure to provide adequate nurturing, affection encouragement and support to a child.

Supervisory neglect: an intentional or reckless failure to adequately supervise a child that results in the death or harm to a child or involves a gross breach of professional standards and has the potential to result in death or harm to a child

Staff and Volunteers: A paid staff member or paid or unpaid volunteer or student, engaged at a Goodstart centre or other work location, for the purpose of educating and caring for children or providing support or services for Goodstart.

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.

Related documents

BM1 Child Safe Behaviour Standards Requirement; Behaviour Guidance Procedure; BM1 Code of Conduct Policy; BM6 Disciplinary Management Requirement; NQS2 Visitors to the Centre Procedure; BM8 Recruitment and Selection Policy; NQS5 Relationships with Children Policy, Developing and Implementing Plans to Guide Behaviour Guideline, NQS2 Incident Management Procedure, Safe Practices for Positively Guiding Behaviour Requirement; NQS2 Incident Management Process Flowchart APPENDIX; NQS2 Corrective Action Review Template APPENDIX; NQS2 Corrective Action Review PROCEDURE; BM6 Investigation Process Appendix; BM6 Investigation Requirement; NQS2 Incident Severity Rating and Communication Matrix Appendix

Related policies

[NQS2 Safety, Health and Wellbeing Policy](#)

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Related legislation and standards

- The [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child](#).
- Relevant Commonwealth, state or territory legislation or regulations, for example legislative requirements for working with children checks and mandatory reporting.
- [National Principles for Child Safe Organisations](#), [New South Wales Child Safe Standards](#) and the [Victorian Child Safe Standards](#).
- Victorian [Reportable Conduct Scheme](#), ACT Reportable Conduct Scheme, NSW Reportable Conduct Scheme.

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