

### Content warning

This policy includes information relating to child abuse and safeguarding strategies to prevent child harm. C&K acknowledge that this content may trigger an emotional response. If reading this procedure causes distress or discomfort, reach out to your support network or access the [C&K Employee Assistance Program](#) at no cost.

**If you believe a child is in immediate danger or in a life-threatening situation, telephone 000.**

### Purpose

The Creche and Kindergarten Association Ltd (C&K) is committed to the safety and protection of children enrolled at our centres and programs. We believe that safe, protective, and healthy environments are essential for every child to learn, grow and reach their full potential. We prioritise children's rights and wellbeing by fostering culturally safe, inclusive, supportive, respectful learning and care environments; places where every child feels valued and empowered to speak up if they feel unsafe.

This policy applies to C&K board members, employees, students, volunteers, external contractors, and visitors. Collectively, for the purposes of this policy, these individuals are referred to as 'C&K Representatives'.

This policy implemented alongside the suite of *C&K Child Safety and Protection Procedures* and the [Child Safety and Protection Definitions and Indicator Guide](#)

### C&K Child Safety, Wellbeing and Protection Commitment Statement

Child protection and safeguarding is a shared responsibility at C&K, across leadership, governance, C&K Representatives, and families.

As a signatory to the [Queensland Statement of Shared Commitment](#), C&K recognises that every interaction counts in creating learning and care environments where children feel safe, secure and self-confident.

C&K embrace this safeguarding culture and enforce our zero tolerance for any abusive or inappropriate actions. We do this by creating inclusive, culturally safe, and nurturing environments where children are empowered to thrive through quality relationships and voice their perspectives with confidence, knowing that they will be heard and taken seriously.

C&K's commitment to child protection and safeguarding aligns with the [National Principles for Child Safe Organisations](#), [Queensland Child Safe Standards](#) and the [Universal Principle for Cultural Safety](#).

### The Universal Principle for Cultural Safety

*At C&K, we are committed to creating learning and care environments that uphold the cultural safety, identity and rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. Our learning communities are shaped, and will continue to be shaped by the culture, wisdom, and knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.*

We will:

- Actively support children to express their culture, language, and identity.

- Create culturally safe, inclusive environments where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families feel a strong sense of belonging.
- Acknowledge the vital role and knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in nurturing children's safety and cultural connection.
- Promote the meaningful participation and inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, families, and community.
- Equip C&K Representatives to acknowledge, respect and celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, guided by the [C&K Cultural Protocols](#) and the [C&K Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Continuous Cultural Capabilities Framework](#).
- Ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices are heard, respected, and reflected in decisions.
- Actively challenge bias and discrimination, fostering a culture of respect and inclusion.
- Build and sustain partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders, controlled organisations, services, communities, and families.

### Standard 1 - Leadership and Culture

*At C&K, child safety and protection are at the heart of our leadership, governance, and everyday practice. Our leaders, including Board members, Executive Managers, Senior Leaders and Centre Directors, are committed to modelling and continuously strengthening our safeguarding culture.*

We will:

- Publicly affirm our commitment to child safety through sector advocacy and the C&K Website.
- Foster a shared responsibility for safeguarding across all levels, ensuring children's safety, rights and best interests guide every decision.
- Uphold the [C&K Code of Conduct](#) and [C&K Parent and Community Code of Conduct](#), setting clear expectations for respectful, safe and professional interactions with children.
- Implement clear reporting procedures to guide C&K Representatives in responding to child protection concerns, incidents, complaints, and allegations.
- Maintain a strong reporting culture, where raising concerns about child safety is encouraged, taken seriously, and addressed without fear of reprisal.
- Promote continuous learning and improvement by sharing good practice and safeguarding insights across the organisation.
- Regularly review and strengthen procedures to proactively identify, assess, and mitigate risks to children.

### Standard 2 - Voice of Children

*At C&K, we are committed to ensuring children are informed about their rights, actively participate in decisions that affect them and are always taken seriously. We recognise that children's voices are essential to creating safe learning and care environments.*

We will:

- Provide calm, welcoming and inclusive environments where every child feels safe, respected and empowered to speak up, especially when unsafe or distressed.
- Recognise children as active citizens with the right to express their views, participate meaningfully in decisions, and have their voices genuinely heard, valued, and acted upon.
- Respond sensitively to children's cues and disclosures of harm, ensuring they are believed, supported, and protected.
- Share responsibility for positive, safe, and respectful relationships with children.
- Embed personal safety and protective behaviours in age-appropriate ways, equipping children with the knowledge, language, and confidence to recognise unsafe situations and seek help.
- Teach and model consent in age-appropriate ways, helping children understand bodily autonomy, boundaries, and respectful interactions.
- Support peer relationships, incorporating friendship, empathy, and peer connection.

### Standard 3 - Family and community

*At C&K, we recognise child safety and wellbeing are best achieved when families and communities are informed, empowered, and actively engaged. We are committed to fostering respectful, inclusive, and transparent relationships with families and community stakeholders to create safe, nurturing environments for every child.*

We will:

- Make this policy accessible to families and community members via the C&K Website.
- Build and maintain trusting relationships with families through clear, honest, and ongoing communication that promotes openness and transparency.
- Recognise families as partners in safeguarding children, ensuring their perspectives inform decision making.
- Seek and value feedback from children, families and communities when reviewing child safety and protection policies and procedures.
- Maintain a supportive and collaborative culture with families, acknowledging their primary responsibility for their child's upbringing and their unique knowledge of their child's needs and safety.
- Work in partnership with community groups and services, including early intervention to improve outcomes for children.

### Standard 4 - Equity and diversity

*At C&K, we are committed to creating environments where equity is upheld and the diverse needs of children and families are respected, celebrated, and embedded in our policies and everyday practice. Guided by our Inclusive Education Policy, we affirm that every child has the right to access and participate in quality early childhood education and care.*

We will:

- Create culturally safe environments where all children feel respected, valued, and free to express their identity.
- Actively support participation of all children, respecting diverse religions, cultural backgrounds, genders, abilities, and life circumstances, while minimising barriers to inclusion.
- Develop and implement responsive, evidence-based strategies that prioritise the safety, wellbeing, and inclusion of children with complex needs, including children who have experienced trauma.
- Implement culturally safe practices that promote inclusion and participation of children from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse backgrounds.
- Embed continuous reflection and improvement, encouraging C&K Representatives to challenge bias, examine assumptions, and strengthen inclusive practices.

### Standard 5 - People

*At C&K, we are committed to ensuring every individual employed is suitable, supported, and accountable in protecting children's safety. We recognise that a strong child safe culture is built through the people we recruit, train, supervise, and develop.*

We will:

- Embed C&K's child safety commitment throughout recruitment and onboarding processes.
- Undertake rigorous screening and selection, requiring all employees to complete a National Police Check before commencing employment and ensuring all C&K Representatives hold a valid Working with Children Check, with ongoing monitoring for compliance and currency.
- Conduct thorough background checks prior to employment offers, to confirm suitability for uphold child safety.
- Maintain a culture of accountability through regular supervision and performance review that prioritises child safety.
- Acknowledge that responding to child safety concerns and harm may cause distress and discomfort, particularly those who are survivors of child abuse. C&K representatives are encouraged to access the C&K Employee Wellbeing Framework, and reach out to their personal support network and/or the C&K Employee Assistance Program.

### Standard 6 - Complaints management

*At C&K, we are committed to maintaining transparent, child-focused complaint management process. We recognise effective complaint management is essential to safeguarding children and fostering a culture of trust, accountability, and continuous improvement. Our approach ensures children's voices are heard and their safety remains the paramount consideration.*

We will:

- Provide clear pathways for feedback, concerns, and lodging complaints.
- Report all child safety and protection incidents, concerns, complaints, and allegations in accordance with C&K procedures and legislation.
- Foster safe and inclusive environments where children feel empowered to speak up and know their concerns will be taken seriously.
- Remain attuned and respond to children's cues that may indicate distress or harm, responding with empathy and care, and proactive action.
- Uphold principles of procedural fairness, confidentiality and respect for all individuals involved in the complaint management process.
- Ensure culturally responsive practices implemented throughout the complaint management process. Analyse complaint data to identify trends to strengthen practice and drive continuous improvement.
- Provide C&K Representatives with clear guidance to effectively management complaints.
- Communicate complaint outcomes appropriately, ensuring stakeholders understand how concerns were reviewed, addressed and how feedback informs ongoing improvement.

### Child Safe Standard 7 - Knowledge and skills

*At C&K, we are committed to ensuring C&K Representatives have the required child safety knowledge and awareness. We recognise that ongoing professional development, reflective practice, and training are essential to building and sustaining a child safe culture.*

We will:

- Deliver mandatory training to ensure C&K Representatives can identify, report, and respond to children who are or may be at risk of experiencing harm, including physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse (including grooming), and neglect.
- Provide clear guidance and training on appropriate and inappropriate interactions with children, including examples of inappropriate conduct and discipline.
- Provide training for teachers and educators on positive behaviour support and fostering respectful, safe, and nurturing interactions.
- Offer ongoing professional development on how to create inclusive, culturally safe environments for children and families, with a focus on meeting the

needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children with disability and children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

- Embed C&K's child safety commitment across onboarding and performance review processes.
- Promote reflective practice and peer learning, encouraging C&K Representatives to share insights, raise concerns and contribute to a culture of continuous improvement in child safety.

### Standard 8 - Physical and online environments

*At C&K, we are committed to creating physical and online environments that promote the safety, wellbeing, and inclusion of all children.*

We will:

- Apply the C&K Risk Management Framework to proactively identify, assess and mitigate safety risks.
- Conduct regular safety checks, ensuring risks are reported and addressed in line with C&K procedures.
- Safeguard privacy of children and families, by handling personal and sensitive information in line with the C&K Privacy Policy and relevant legislation.
- Facilitate environments that support active supervision, while respecting children's need for privacy, autonomy and quiet retreat.
- Practise safe and responsible use of digital technologies, in accordance with C&K procedures, including the use of encrypted, password-protected C&K-issued electronic devices and C&K-approved online platforms.
- Actively supervise and closely monitor children's use of digital technologies.
- Implement the National Model Code for Taking Images or Videos of Children while Providing Early Childhood Education and Care, which includes:
  - Prohibiting the recording, use, sharing, transmission, uploading or storage of children's images on personal electronic devices, online platforms, and storage systems.
  - Prohibiting the use or possession of personal electronic devices while working directly with children unless prior authorisation has been granted for essential purposes.
- Use de-identified images of children, where possible and appropriate, for internal and external purposes.
- Teach children about their digital footprint in age-appropriate ways, helping them understand how and why their image may be used, stored, and accessed.

### Child Safe Standard 9 - Continuous improvement

*At C&K, our implementation of the Queensland Child Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved.*

C&K will:

- Review child safety incidents and complaints to identify root causes, contributing factors and implement preventative measures.

- Prioritise child safety in centre Quality Improvement Plans.
- Monitor and report on implementation of the [Queensland Child Safe Standards](#) through evaluation, reflective practice and performance data.
- Encourage open dialogue and feedback from children, families, and C&K Representatives, valuing their feedback as vital to continuous improvement.
- Apply evidence-based approaches and sector standards to inform policy updates and training.
- Promote a learning culture across the organisation to strengthen child safety practices.

### Child Safe Standard 10 - Policies and procedures

*At C&K, policies and procedures document how to safeguard children.*

C&K will:

- Ensure accessibility of C&K child safety and protection policies and procedures via the C&K intranet and website.
- Align C&K child safety policies and procedures with the [National Principles for Child Safe Organisations](#), the [Queensland Child Safe Standards](#) and relevant legislation.
- Regularly review and monitor the effectiveness of policies and procedures, drawing on evidence-based best practice and feedback from children, families, and C&K Representatives.
- Deliver training to ensure C&K Representatives understand their child safety obligations, including mandatory reporting.
- Use policies and procedures to guide consistent responses to child safety concerns, including disclosures, allegations, incidents, and breaches of conduct, ensuring timely, sensitive, and lawful action.
- Promote a culture of policy literacy, regularly supporting C&K Representatives to understand, apply and reflect on child safety and protection procedures in daily practice

### References and Resources

- ACECQA - [NQF Child Safety Guide](#)
- ACECQA - [NQF Online Safety Guide](#)
- Australian Human Rights Commission - [National Principles for Child Safe Organisations](#)
- Commonwealth of Australia - [Keeping our Kids Safe: Cultural Safety and the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations](#).
- Queensland Family and Child Commission – [Queensland Child Safe Standards](#)