

Policy name	Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
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* The status may be DRAFT, RATIFIED or REVIEWED (no change required).

Policy

Objectives	The purpose of this policy is to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people accessing, or associated with services provided by Ultimate Youth Services PTY LTD.
Context and scope	The Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy fulfils Ultimate Youth Services PTY LTD's obligations under various State legislations concerning Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse. The Victorian Child Safe Standards aim to drive cultural change in organisations so that protecting children and young people from abuse is embedded in the everyday thinking and practice of leaders and staff. This will assist the organisation to: • Prevent child abuse • Encourage reporting of any abuse that does occur • Improve responses to any allegations of child abuse
Definitions	For the purposes of this policy: A child is a person under the age of 18 years. Child abuse means any act committed against a child involving a sexual offense including an offense under section 49B(2) of the Crimes Act 1958, and the infliction on a child of physical violence, serious emotional or psychological harm, and the severe neglect of a child. Child Safe Officer is the person at Ultimate Youth Services who holds organizational-wide accountability for child safety and mandatory reporting.

	Duty of care is a legal obligation to take reasonable steps not to cause foreseeable harm to other persons or their property. Harm is damage to the health, safety, or well-being of a child or young person, including as a result of child abuse. It includes physical, emotional, sexual, and psychological harm. Harm can arise from a single act or event and can also be cumulative, that is, arising as a result of a series of acts or events over some time. LGBTIQA+ is used as the collective term for people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, or queer individuals, but also acknowledges allies who support and stand with the community. Mandatory reporting refers to the legal requirement of certain groups of people to report a reasonable belief of child physical or sexual abuse to child protection authorities Natural supports are people in a child's life who are not paid workers, such as family members and carers, elders, friends and trusted others. Staff includes any employee, consultant, contractor, or volunteer engaged by Ultimate Youth Services.
Policy Statement	STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFETY We have a ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY for all forms of child abuse, including physical, emotional, sexual, verbal as well as neglect. Ultimate Youth Services is committed to providing a safe and supportive environment for every child involved with our service. To ensure this, all staff, volunteers, and contractors are required to undergo thorough background checks and comprehensive training. We hold everyone accountable for child safety and emphasize the importance of immediately reporting any concerns. Additionally, we uphold a strict code of conduct for Child Safety, with a zero-tolerance policy for any form of Abuse. To embed this, Ultimate Youth Services will: - Embed a culture of child safety throughout the organization; - Quality service that promotes and supports child safety;

- Implement robust resources and recruitment practices for all staff, volunteers, consultants and contractors:
- Provide induction, training, and supervision to ensure everyone understands their obligations to protect the safety and wellbeing of children and young people, identify child abuse risks, and prevent, detect, and report any inappropriate behaviour, misconduct, or suspected child abuse;
- Ensure all safety concerns and allegations are treated seriously per the law and department policy, including contacting authorities as appropriate;
- Actively listen to and support and young people to promote their participation and empowerment
- Ensuring our work culture respects and supports all victim-survivors who come forward to report suspected poor behaviour.
- Commit to child safety and well-being across all levels of the organization.

All Ultimate Youth Services Board members, staff, volunteers, consultants, and contractors are required to uphold the Youth Projects Commitment to Child Safety and their responsibility to protect the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Ultimate Youth Services is responsible for the detection and prevention of child abuse and for ensuring that appropriate and effective internal control systems are in place. Our staff works to create a positive culture around reporting so that people feel comfortable raising concerns.

THE CHILD SAFETY OFFICER OF ULTIMATE YOUTH SERVICES IS RESPONSIBLE FOR:

- Identifying and managing risks of child abuse and harm;
- Dealing with and investigating reports of child abuse;
- Ensuring that all board members and employees are aware of relevant laws, organizational policies and procedures, and the organization's code of conduct;
- Ensuring that all within the Ultimate Youth Services community are aware of the obligation to report child safety concerns in accordance with laws, this policy, and associated procedures;

- Ensuring that all board members, staff, volunteers, and contractors are aware of their obligation to act in accordance with the Ultimate Youth Services Code of Professional Conduct;
- Providing support to board members, CEO and staff in undertaking their child safety responsibilities;
- Ensure that appropriate child safety training is in place and undertaken by staff on an annual basis.

CHILD SAFETY AND WELLBEING POLICY

All Leaders and Staff must ensure that they:

- Promote child safety and well-being at all times;
- Assess the risk of child abuse within their area of control and eradicate/minimize any risk to the extent possible;
- Educate other staff about the prevention and detection of child abuse; and
- Report any inappropriate behaviour or suspected abusive activities.

Leaders and staff should be familiar with the types of abuse that might occur within their area of responsibility and be alert for any indications of such conduct.

All staff members and people associated with the organisation share the responsibility for the prevention and detection of child abuse, and must;

- Familiarise themselves with the relevant laws, Ultimate Youth Services's policy and procedures, and code of conduct in relation to child safety, and comply with all requirements;
- Report any reasonable belief that a child's safety is at risk to the relevant authorities (including police and/or the state-based child protection service;
- Report any suspicion that a child's safety may be at risk to their supervisor (or, if their supervisor is involved in the suspicion, to the Child Safety Officer; and
- Provide an environment that is supportive and inclusive of all children and young people's wellbeing and physical safety.

Personal Conduct:

- 1) Refrain from all forms of harassment and discrimination based on gender, race, religious belief, political affiliation, pregnancy, disability, sexual orientation or illness.
- 2) Treat everyone with courtesy, respect, kindness, consideration, and sensitivity.
- 3) Respect everyone's rights to privacy and keep personal information in confidence.

Children and young people's empowerment and participation

Ultimate Youth Services staff encourage children and young people to participate and express their views and ideas in our organizational planning and delivery of services. We listen to their suggestions, actively encouraging all children and young people who use our services to have a say about things that are important to them.

We teach children and young people about what they can do if they feel unsafe. We listen to and act on any concerns raised with us by children or their natural supports.

We respect the rights of children and young people and provide them with information about their rights including the right to be and feel safe. We actively seek to understand what makes children and young people feel safe in our organization. Regularly communicating with children about what they can do if they feel unsafe.

Ultimate Youth Services values the voices of children and young people and will act on safety concerns raised by children and young people or their natural supports. Ultimate Youth Services supports children and young people's participation in the following ways:

- Regular discussions with children and young people, including a child-led conversation on what makes them feel unsafe;
- Seeking feedback from children through our client surveys and feedback avenues. Suggestions are assessed, acted on where appropriate, and feedback provided;
- Consultation with children and young people about any proposed significant changes to the physical environment, policies, procedures, programs, or staffing. Children and young people's views are collected by staff, provided to leaders, and considered in decision-making;

- Information provided to children, young people and families about Ultimate Youth Services operations, staffing, and programs are made suitable for different age groups and diversity of children and young people.

Families and Communities

Ultimate Youth Services recognizes the important role of families and natural support for children and young people and involves these supports when making significant decisions about their children. Parents, families, and communities are welcome to provide feedback at any time and are encouraged to raise any concerns they have with us.

Ultimate Youth Services provides information to families and communities about our child-safe policies and practices through:

- Publishing this Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and Code of Professional Conduct on our website and office space;
- Include information about our child safety approach, our operations, and management structure in the information that is provided to children, young people and families as part of the services they receive from Ultimate Youth Services;
- Include articles and information on child safety and well-being and reminders about our policies and procedures in our wider community communication platforms.

Creating culturally safe environments for all Aboriginal children and young people and their families

Ultimate Youth Services is committed to creating environments where Aboriginal culture is celebrated and Aboriginal children, young people, families, and community members are welcomed and included.

Strategies to embed cultural safety for Aboriginal children include:

- Acknowledgement of Country at all internal meetings and events;
- Consulting with families and members of the Aboriginal community to identify opportunities to promote Aboriginal culture and practices across Ultimate Youth Services programs and services;

- Providing opportunities for children and young people to share their cultural identity and express their culture, at Ultimate Youth Services activities and events;
- Supporting children and young people who wish to explore their culture, including consulting their families and relevant Aboriginal Organizations;
- Providing training for staff on the strengths of Aboriginal culture and its importance to the well-being and safety of Aboriginal children and young people.
- Celebrating NAIDOC Week and acknowledging significant events including National Sorry Day and National Reconciliation Week;
- Seeking feedback from Aboriginal children, young people, families, and communities on their experience at Ultimate Youth Services, particularly how safe they feel expressing their identity including their culture.

Valuing diversity

Ultimate Youth Services values diversity and equity for all children and young people. To achieve this, we:

- Provide training for all staff on understanding diversity and how to support inclusion and cultural safety;
- Welcome and support participation of all children and young people, including children and young people with disability, children and young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, those who are unable to live at home, LGBTIQA+ children and young people, and Aboriginal children and young people and their families;
- Offer children, young people and families through our intake forms the opportunity to provide information about themselves, including any specific needs to participate fully in our programs;
- Have zero tolerance of racism and other forms of discrimination and take action when discrimination or exclusion is identified;
- Deliver programs that reflect the diversity of our clients, their interests, and cultures;
- Strive to reflect the diversity of our community through representation in our staff;

- Acknowledge and celebrate important cultural dates across our programs and services;
- Have a physical and online environment that actively celebrates diversity
- Commit to ensuring our facilities and online activities promote the inclusion of children of all abilities.

Alignment with CODE OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

Ultimate Youth Services has a Code of Professional Conduct. All staff must comply with the Code of Professional Conduct at all times. Breaches of the Code of Professional Conduct may result in disciplinary action including termination of a person's involvement with the organization.

All third-party contractors are also expected to abide by the Code of Professional Conduct, and where they are engaging with children and young people will have to sign an agreement to comply with the code, before delivering any services.

The Code

- 1) Conduct myself professionally and responsibly:
 - With regard to the relevant legislation, regulations, governing rules, and ethics of my profession
 - Act with diligence and integrity
 - Ensure that my conduct protects and promotes the reputation of Ultimate Youth Services, team members, volunteers, clients and partners
- 2) Be accountable for my actions or omissions.
- 3) Treat everyone that I interact with in the course of my employment with dignity, courtesy respect, and non-judgement.
- 4) Promote and uphold the rights and well-being of people who use Ultimate Youth Services at all times and:
 - Ensure that clients are treated in a way that preserves both their dignity and independence
 - Promote just and equitable access to internal and external services
 - Communicate in an open, respectful, and effective way to promote the health, safety, education, and well-being of clients
 - Respect a person's right to privacy and confidentiality

- Honour diversity and inclusion

- 5) Work to create a positive work environment by not being discriminatory towards others, nor engage in bullying behaviour or make disparaging comments about team members or clients.
- 6) Work in collaboration with my team members to ensure the delivery of high-quality, safe and compassionate services.
- 7) Communicate with my fellow team members in a respectful, open, and supportive manner.
- 8) Strive to improve the quality of training, care, and support through continuing professional development.

Professional Conduct:

- 1) Take responsibility for my health and safety as well as that of others in my workplace.
- 2) Be aware of the ever-changing knowledge required within my area of work, including both professional and ethical standards.
- 3) Comply with all laws, regulations, and policies relevant to my workplace.
- 4) Perform duties outlined in my position description with integrity, due diligence, and to the best of ability.
- 5) Provide service of the highest quality and utmost professional standards to all clients free from discrimination or judgment, regardless of; illness, medical status, criminal record, or offending behaviour.
- 6) Ensure that all relationships developed and maintained are of a professional nature, be it with current, past or prospective clients, co-workers or other relevant business acquaintances.
- 7) Recognise that individuals have the right to make their own decisions.

STEWARDSHIP OF ORGANISATION RESOURCES:

- 1) Use company technical and physical resources properly, responsibly, and for legitimate purposes only.
- 2) Maintain the integrity and security of all company intellectual property.
- 3) Maintain the security, integrity, and confidentiality of all Ultimate Youth Services 's commercial and other information.

PROTECTION AND PROMOTION OF THE ORGANISATION'S REPUTATION:

- 1) Promote Ultimate Youth Services whenever possible in my professional dealings with others.
- 2) Refrain from engaging in any activity that may compromise Ultimate Youth Services 's integrity or reputation.

DEALING WITH CONFLICT OF INTEREST:

- 1) Ensure that my financial and other interests and actions do not conflict or seem to conflict with the obligations and requirements of Ultimate Youth Services - or advance my own interests over those of Ultimate Youth Services.
- 2) Notify my manager as appropriate, of the existence of an actual or potential conflict of interest.

BREACH OF THE CODE

Team members who fail to comply with the Code of Professional Conduct, any lawful directive, professional requirement policy or procedure of Ultimate Youth Services as read in conjunction may be required to explain their actions, If the conduct is contrary to the Code, it may result in disciplinary action. Seek advice from an appropriate manager where a colleague's behaviour is perceived to be in breach of the Code, and report any suspected corrupt, criminal, or unethical conduct to the relevant body or manager.

Recruitment and employment of staff and volunteers

Ultimate Youth Services undertakes a comprehensive recruitment and screening process for all workers, students, volunteers, and contractors which aims to:

- Promote and protect the safety of all children and young people under the care of the organization;
- Onboarding the most compatible people who share Ultimate Youth Services 's values and commitment to protecting children and young people; and
- Prevent a person from working at Ultimate Youth Services if they pose a risk to children and young people.

Ultimate Youth Services requires all staff and volunteers to pass the organization's recruitment and screening processes before commencing their engagement with Ultimate Youth Services.

Ultimate Youth Services requires applicants to provide police check and Working with Children Checks in accordance with the law and as appropriate before they

commence working and during their time with Ultimate Youth Services at regular intervals. Once engaged, staff and volunteers must review and acknowledge their understanding of the Child Safe Code of Conduct, policy, and procedure.

Supporting staff and volunteers

Ultimate Youth Services is committed to ensuring that all staff receive training to understand their responsibilities concerning child safety and to support their engagement with children and young people. Ultimate Youth Services assists its staff to incorporate child safety considerations into decisions and to promote a safe environment where children and young people are empowered to speak up about issues that affect them.

All Ultimate Youth Services staff are required to complete annual child safety training. All Youth project leaders are required to complete more advanced child safety training to continually strengthen the organization's child safety practices and processes.

Staff will receive regular supervision to support their engagement with children and young people and for compliance with our Child Safety Code of Conduct, Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy, and Child Safe Procedure.

Issues or concerns about behaviour with children and young people will be raised immediately and addressed in line with the Ultimate Youth Services 's Code of Conduct, complaint handling policy, and disciplinary policy.

Complaints and reporting

All reports of child abuse and child safety concerns will be treated seriously, whether they are made by an adult or a child and whether they are about the conduct of an adult or a child. All complaints and child safety concerns will be responded to promptly and thoroughly.

Ultimate Youth Services has a complaint-handling policy and child-safe procedure that includes information for staff and volunteers about how a complaint or child safety concern will be responded to. An easy-to-understand complaints information sheet will be provided for children, young people, families, and the community to know about the complaint process and the support available to those making a complaint and those involved in the complaint process.

If a complaint includes an allegation or incident of child abuse or harm, then staff at Ultimate Youth Services must report it following the complaint handling policy and child-safe procedure. Ultimate Youth Services staff are required to prioritize

children and young people's safety in any response and to report all potentially criminal conduct to Victoria Police. Under the complaint handling and disciplinary policies, staff may be subject to actions to support child safety including:

- Being stood down during an investigation or terminated following an investigation
- Having their duties altered so they do not engage with children at Ultimate Youth Services
- Not allowing unsupervised contact with children and young people at Ultimate Youth Services
- Removing their access to Ultimate Youth Services IT system and facilities.

Child Safety Person

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) has been appointed as the Child safety officer with the specific responsibility for responding to child safety-related complaints and concerns.

The CEO will inform the Board of any client safety-related complaints and concerns. If a person does not feel comfortable making a report to the Child Safety officer, they may report their concerns to the Chair of the Board.

Record Keeping

Ultimate Youth Services is committed to making and keeping complete and accurate records about all child-related complaints or safety concerns.

All child safety complaints, concerns, incidents, and near misses will be recorded in our incident register.

Records that may assist with the investigation of a complaint or safety concern will be identified and kept as part of the record of an investigation. Records will be kept even if an investigation does not substantiate a complaint.

We will record and keep the outcome of any investigations, and the resolution of any complaints. This includes findings made, reasons for decisions, and actions taken.

Records will be stored securely and kept by Ultimate Youth Services in accordance with the Control of Documents and Records Policy.

Privacy

All personal information considered or recorded will be kept confidential to the extent reasonably possible unless there is a risk to someone's safety.

Legislative Responsibilities

Ultimate Youth Services takes its legal responsibilities seriously, including:

- **Failure to Disclose:** All adults in Victoria who have a reasonable belief that an adult has committed a sexual offense against a child have an obligation to report that information to Victoria Police.
- **Mandatory reporting:** Any board members and staff who are mandatory reporters must comply with their mandatory reporting obligations. The following are mandatory reporters in Victoria:
 1. Registered medical practitioners
 2. Nurses
 3. Midwives
 4. Registered teachers and early childhood teachers
 5. School principals
 6. School counsellors
 7. Police officers
 8. Out-of-home care workers (excluding voluntary foster and kinship carers)
 9. Early childhood workers
 10. Youth justice workers
 11. Registered psychologists
 12. People in religious ministry.
- **Failure to Protect:** Mandatory reporters may commit an offense if they know of a substantial risk of child sexual abuse and have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, but fail to do so
- **Reportable conduct:** The head of our organization must be made aware of any allegations of physical and sexual abuse, sexual misconduct, significant emotional or psychological harm, or significant neglect by an employee or volunteer towards a child. We are also legally required to notify the Commission for Children and Young People of the allegation
- **Duty of Care:** If a child is abused by an individual associated with our organisation, our organisation is presumed to have breached its duty of care unless it can prove that it took 'reasonable precautions' to prevent the abuse in question.

Risk Management

We recognize the importance of a risk management approach to minimizing the potential for child abuse or harm to occur and use this to inform our policy, procedures, and activity planning in addition to general occupational health and safety risks. We will proactively manage risks of abuse and harm to all children and young people using our services through the development of risk management plans and controls.

Ultimate Youth Services 's People & Culture team will issue a reminder four to six weeks prior to the expiration of the employee, volunteer, student, or contractor's Working with Children Check. It is a mandatory requirement that individuals in roles requiring a valid Working with Children Check must hold a current and valid clearance in order to continue performing those duties. If the clearance has expired, or while awaiting the issuance of a new working with children check, individuals may only continue in their role under direct supervision, in accordance with relevant legislative and policy requirements.

Mandatory Reporting Requirements

All staff whether or not they are legally compelled by law to make a report to child protection if they form a belief on reasonable grounds that a child requires protection due to any of the following circumstances:

- Physical abuse of, no non-accidental or unexplained injury to, a child
- A disclosure of sexual abuse by a child or witness, or a combination of factors suggesting the likelihood of sexual abuse
- Emotional abuse and ill-treatment of a child impacting on the child's stability and development
- Neglect, poor care, or lack of appropriate supervision, where there is a likelihood of significant harm to the child, or the child's stability and development
- Family violence or parental substance misuse, psychiatric illness, or intellectual disability- where there is a likelihood of significant harm to the child or the child's stability and development
- Where a child's actions or behaviours may place them at risk of significant harm and the parents are unwilling or unable to protect the child

- Where a child appears to have been abandoned, or where the child's parents are deceased or incapacitated, and no other person is caring properly for the child, must report the issue to the Child Safe Person (CEO)
- Particular occupations are required by law to report any suspicion of abuse and neglect of a child.

Non-compliance with this policy and the Code of Conduct

Ultimate Youth Services will enforce this policy, the Child Safe Code of Conduct, and other Child safety and wellbeing policies and procedures. Potential breaches by anyone will be investigated and may result in restriction of duties, suspension or termination of employment or engagement, or other corrective action.

Reviewing this Policy

Ultimate Youth Services will review all child-safe practices and policies at least every two years. We also review relevant practices and policies regarding a child safety incident or 'near miss'.

Findings from reviews will be reported to the people involved in our organization and also inform our approach to continuous improvement of our child safety practices. Reviews are overseen by CEO, provided to the Board, and will be informed by consultation with children, young people, families, and staff.

Procedures and Related Documents

Procedures that relate to this policy	PR-SD13-01 Child Safety-Mandatory Reporting Procedure PR-PC03-01 Child-Related Screening Checks Procedure PR-PC03-02 Police Records Check Procedure
Related policies	PL-QM02 Mandatory Notifications Policy PL-PC03 Resourcing and Recruitment Policy
Relevant legislation or standards	Child, Youth and Families ACT 2005 (Vic) Child Wellbeing and Safety Amendment (Child Safe Standards) Bill 2015 (Vic) Crimes Amendment (Protection of Children) Act 2014 (Vic)



EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Document Change History

* Valid values for this column are: DRAFT, RATIFIED, REVIEWED (no revision)

Version	Status*	Comments	Prepared by	Ratified by	Date Ratified
1	Ratified		Aaron Garth	Aaron Garth, CEO	16.09.2020