

**1. Purpose**

This purpose of this policy is to:

- Provide a framework to support RSPCA NSW’s commitment to child safety, ensuring a shared understanding of and compliance with the organisation’s legal obligations; and
- Promote an organisational culture in which all children participating or visiting any of RSPCA NSW’s services feel safe, comfortable and empowered.

**2. Scope**

This policy applies to all RSPCA NSW Personnel who come into contact with a child (defined as an individual under the age of 18).

RSPCA NSW Personnel includes all persons engaged to work for RSPCA NSW, including employees, the Board of Directors, unpaid volunteers, students, contractors and volunteer or branch members.

This policy is intended to cover education activities and programs at RSPCA NSW sites or education activities off-site where RSPCA is the main organisation responsible. In all other situations RSPCA NSW Personnel will abide by the existing policies of schools and organisations visited.

**4. Policy**

RSPCA NSW is committed to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people who visit and volunteer at our sites. RSPCA NSW supports and respects all children, and endeavours to provide an environment that allows them to feel safe, happy and empowered.

RSPCA NSW adopts the 10 National Principles promulgated by the National Children’s Commissioner following the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (refer Appendix A) and to this end, has implemented the following measures to demonstrate our commitment to child safety.

<p><b>4.1 Child Safety Reporting Processes</b></p>	<p>4.1.1 All RSPCA NSW Personnel have an obligation to report any concerns about the safety or welfare of a child immediately, procedures of which are detailed at Appendix C and are designed to ensure the immediate safety and wellbeing of the child.</p> <p>4.1.2 RSPCA NSW records all allegations of abuse and safety concerns in accordance with this policy. If an allegation of abuse or a safety concern is raised, we provide updates to affected children and families on progress and any actions we take as an organisation where appropriate.</p> <p>4.1.3 The RSPCA Child Safe Policy will be publicly available on the website along with child-friendly material advising children of their right to make a complaint and to whom a complaint can be made, including relevant external bodies such as the Kids Helpline. The interactive television displays in the RSPCA NSW Education Centre will also include contact details for our Child Safety Officer and where a complaint can be directed.</p>
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<p><b>4.2 Child Safety Officer</b></p>	<p>4.2.1 RSPCA NSW has an appointed and appropriately trained Child Safety Officer to assist with reporting allegations of child abuse and safety concerns and coordinating a response.</p>
<p><b>4.3 Training</b></p>	<p>4.3.1 RSPCA NSW employees and volunteers are also required to familiarise themselves with the Child Safe Policy throughout the course of their employment with the organisation.</p> <p>4.3.2 Child safety training is provided to staff who hold roles within the Education team as soon as practicable after commencement in their role.</p>
<p><b>4.4 Recruitment and staffing</b></p>	<p>4.4.1 RSPCA NSW takes all reasonable steps to employ skilled people to work with children, ensuring that our recruitment practices clearly demonstrate our commitment to child safety and an awareness of our social and legislative responsibilities.</p> <p>4.4.2 RSPCA NSW utilises a range of selection activities throughout the recruitment process for employees and volunteers to ensure that we are recruiting the right people. This includes, but is not limited to, national criminal history checks, reference checks and, where necessary, a Working With Children Check (WWCC).</p> <p>4.4.3 Employees within the Education team (and other roles as determined necessary) are required to have undertaken WWCC which must remain valid and current throughout their employment.</p> <p>4.4.4 WWCC certifications of all personnel must be collated on the current HR system and checked annually by the HR team to ensure validity and compliance. This can be achieved by registration with the Office of the Childrens Guardian.</p>
<p><b>4.5 Risk Management</b></p>	<p>4.5.1 RSPCA NSW proactively manages the risks of abuse to children by having risk management strategies in place to identify, assess, and take steps to minimise child abuse risks, which include risks posed by physical environments, and online environments.</p> <p>4.5.2 An annual review of the Risk Matrix is conducted each year, the responsibility for which lies with the Child Safety Officer.</p>
<p><b>4.6 Children Participation &amp; Feedback</b></p>	<p>4.6.1 RSPCA NSW supports the active participation of children in our organisation. We listen to children’s views, respect what they say and will involve them when we make decisions as far as practicable, especially about matters that will directly affect them.</p> <p>4.6.2 Children and parents/ caregivers joining RSPCA NSW programs will be made aware of the availability of the Child Safe Policy on our website.</p> <p>4.6.3 We are committed to their involvement by seeking feedback including issuing surveys following each activity to parents/caregivers and children.</p>
<p><b>4.7 RSPCA NSW Child Safe Code of Conduct</b></p>	<p>4.7.1 RSPCA NSW has a Child Safe Code of Conduct (refer Appendix D) which RSPCA NSW Personnel must adhere to at all times.</p>

<p><b>4.8 Non-Compliance with this policy, Child Safe Code of Conduct, or other child safety obligations</b></p>	<p>4.8.1 All RSPCA NSW Personnel are required to conduct themselves in accordance with this policy, the Child Safe Code of Conduct, relevant legislation, and demonstrate child safe behaviours at all times.</p> <p>4.8.2 Any breach will be taken seriously and may result in RSPCA NSW taking disciplinary action up to termination of employment, volunteering services or branch membership.</p>
<p><b>4.9 Privacy</b></p>	<p>4.9.1 All personal information considered or recorded will respect the privacy of the individuals involved, whether they be employees, volunteers, parents or children, unless there is a risk to someone's safety.</p> <p>4.9.2 RSPCA NSW has safeguards and practices in place to ensure any personal information is protected in accordance with the <i>Commonwealth Privacy Act 1988</i>.</p>
<p><b>4.10 Review</b></p>	<p>4.10.1 The Child Safe Policy will be reviewed every two years and incorporate comments and suggestions from our range of stakeholders (including RSPCA NSW Personnel, children and families).</p>

**The National Principles:**

1. Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture.
2. Children and young people are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.
3. Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.
4. Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice.
5. People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.
6. Processes for complaints and concerns are child focused.
7. Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training.
8. Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.
9. Implementation of the National Child Safe Principles is regularly reviewed and improved.
10. Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people.

## APPENDIX B – COMPLAINT HANDLING & REPORTING PROCESS

All RSPCA NSW Personnel have an obligation to report any concerns about the safety or welfare of a child immediately.

The procedures detailed below are designed to ensure the immediate safety and wellbeing of the child, and that steps are taken to fulfil the organisation’s legal obligations, noting that ***the paramount reporting requirements are when any RSPCA NSW Personnel has an awareness that an adult poses an immediate risk of abuse to a child under the organisation’s supervision or a reasonable belief that a child is in need of protection as a result of physical injury or sexual abuse, they should phone 000.***

Incident	Procedure
<p>1. Inappropriate behaviour between children</p>	<p>1.a If participant/s are in RSPCA NSW program – person witnessing incident to contact relevant program staff member to make report directly to parent/caregiver on the same day as report was made</p> <p>1.b If participant/s are in external/visiting group – RSPCA NSW Personnel to report to adult supervising or in charge, or parent/caregiver</p> <p>1.c Verbally notify the Child Safety Officer</p> <p>1.d Complete the Child Safe Incident Form and send to the Child Safety Officer</p>
<p>2. Disclosure of child abuse</p> <p>Examples include but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A child states they or someone they know has been abused (noting that sometimes the child may be in fact be referring to themselves)</li> <li>- Behaviour consistent with that of an abuse victim is observed e.g. overly compliant, violent behaviour toward peer, bullying, clingy etc</li> <li>- Someone else has raised a suspicion of abuse but is unwilling to report it</li> <li>- Observing suspicious behaviour</li> <li>- A reluctance by the child to be alone with the adult</li> </ul>	<p>2.a Verbally notify the Child Safety Officer</p> <p>2.b If the child is present, take the child to a designated safe space (e.g. meeting room or another space if requested by the child) and prioritise their comfort and safety.</p> <p>2.c Do not leave the child alone, ask a colleague to sit with them if you need to leave the room to report. Wherever possible, have a second adult present at all times. Additionally, if the child requests to have another child present, ensure the second child is comfortable with this.</p> <p>2.d Allow the child to talk about the incident/s if they wish but do <u>not</u> try to interview or investigate.</p> <p>2.e Anyone who has reasonable grounds to suspect that a child is at risk of being neglected or physically, sexually or emotionally abused should make a report to the Family and Community Services (FACS) Child Protection Helpline.</p> <p>2.e Remember that allegations of child abuse must be handled by a professional. Call FACS Child Protection Helpline on 132111 (24 hours a day 7 days a week) if you suspect child abuse.</p> <p>2.f Complete the Child Safe Incident Form and send to the Child Safety Officer</p>
<p>3. Inappropriate behaviour by an adult towards or around a child (e.g. swearing at a child or in the presence of a child)</p>	<p>3.a Verbally notify the Child Safety Officer</p> <p>3.b Complete the Child Safe Incident Form and send to the Child Safety Officer</p>

**APPENDIX C – CHILD SAFE INCIDENT REPORT FORM**

<b>Child Safe Incident Report Form</b>	
<p>The paramount reporting requirements are when any RSPCA NSW Personnel has an awareness that an adult associated with RSPCA NSW poses an immediate risk of abuse to a child under the organisation’s supervision or a reasonable belief that a child is in need of protection as a result of physical injury or sexual abuse, they should phone 000.</p>	
<b>Date of Incident:</b>	
<b>Time of incident:</b>	
<b>Location of incident:</b>	
<b>Name of child involved:</b>	
<b>Does the child identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander?</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, Aboriginal <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, Torres Strait Islander <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unknown
<b>Name(s) and contact details for any RSPCA NSW Personnel involved in the incident (if applicable):</b>	
<b>Name(s) and contact details for any witnesses to the incident (if applicable):</b>	
<b>Please categorise the incident</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Risk of child abuse <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sexual offence <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Physical violence <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Serious neglect <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Serious emotional or psychological abuse
<b>What did you see and/or what were you advised?</b>	
<b>Details of any injuries and whether the child received medical attention:</b>	
<b>What measures were taken to reduce or remove abuse risks?</b>	
<b>Name and signature of person completing this form:</b>	Name: _____ Signed: _____  Date: _____

## APPENDIX D – RSPCA NSW CHILD SAFE CODE OF CONDUCT

### 1. Obligations of RSPCA NSW Personnel:

#### I WILL:

- Treat all children and young people with respect;
- Listen to and value children and young people’s ideas and opinions;
- Speak in an encouraging and positive manner;
- Use language suitable for the age group;
- Welcome all children and their families and carers by being inclusive;
- Value the rights, religious beliefs and cultural practices of all children;
- Actively promote cultural safety and inclusion;
- Ensure safe animal interactions;
- Follow organisational policy and guidelines for the safety of children as outlined in the Child Safe Policy;
- Raise concerns with management if risks to child safety are identified, including cultural, environmental and operational risks;
- Take a child seriously if they disclose harm or abuse;
- Report any conflicts of interest (such as an outside relationship with the child) in accordance with this policy;
- Report and act on any concerns or observed breaches of this Code of Conduct; and
- Record and act on any concerns of abuse against a child.

#### I WILL NOT:

- Condone or participate in illegal, unsafe or abusive behaviours towards children including physical, sexual or psychological abuse, ill-treatment, neglect or grooming;
- Ignore or disregard any concerns, suspicions or disclosures of child abuse;
- Use hurtful, discriminatory or offensive behaviour or language (verbal or written);
- Have conversations of a sensitive or adult nature when there are children within close proximity;
- Have any physical contact with a child or young person unless it is to:
  - Administering First Aid (must be qualified First Aider);
  - Give a high-five or handshake that is wanted by the child or young person; or
  - Remove a child or young person from a dangerous situation;
- Take photos of children or young people without written permission from their parent/guardian and verbal consent from the child/young person;
- Encourage a child to communicate with me in a private setting;
- Offer children and young people alcohol, cigarettes or other drugs;
- Show favour to one child over others; or
- Be alone with a child

## 2. Conflict of Interest

When RSPCA NSW Personnel are conducting a child-related activity and they have a relationship with a child/children that is participating in the activity, this does not exempt Personnel from adhering to this Code of Conduct.

If RSPCA NSW Personnel have a relationship with a child/children participating in an RSPCA NSW run child-related activity, they are also not exempt from adhering to this Code of Conduct for the entire duration of the child/children's involvement in the activity.

## 3. Breaches

If any RSPCA NSW Personnel are found to breach this Code of Conduct, they may be subject to disciplinary or management action up to termination of employment, volunteering role or branch membership.

## 4. Personnel Acknowledgment

I understand and agree to uphold the terms of the RSPCA NSW Child Safe Code of Conduct at all times during my employment or association with RSPCA NSW.

Print Name	Role	Signature	Date
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## Endorsement

<b>Policy Name</b>	RSPCA NSW Child Safe Policy
<b>Status</b>	Draft for review
<b>Date Issued</b>	April 2023
<b>Policy Contact Officer</b>	Human Resources, RSPCA NSW
<b>Related Documentation and Legislation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012 (NSW)</i></li><li>• <i>Child and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 (NSW)</i></li><li>• <i>Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth)</i></li><li>• <i>Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1988 (NSW)</i></li><li>• <i>Privacy and Personal Information Protection Regulation 2005 (NSW)</i></li><li>• <i>Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (NSW)</i></li><li>• <i>Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011 (NSW)</i></li></ul>
<b>Date</b>	
<b>Next Review</b>	