

Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

1. Purpose

Cairns Psychology Group is committed to ensuring the safety, wellbeing, and cultural safety of all children and young people who engage with our services. This policy outlines our governance, practices, and responsibilities in line with the **Child Safe Organisations Act 2024**, the **10 Child Safe Standards**, and the **Universal Principle**.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All clinicians(independent practitioners). I.e.: psychologists, provisional psychologists, and allied health professionals.
- Administrative staff, students, and volunteers.
- Contractors and external providers engaged by Cairns Psychology Group.
- Children, young people, and families engaging with our services, both in person and online.

3. Practice Structure

- Cairns Psychology Group directly oversees administrative staff and practice management.
- **Clinicians engaged with Cairns Psychology Group are independent practitioners.** They are accountable for their own professional practice and regulatory compliance. While independent, clinicians are expected to align with this policy and the child safety framework of Cairns Psychology Group when delivering services under the practice name

4. Our Commitment

- Children's safety and wellbeing is our top priority.
- We have **zero tolerance** for abuse, neglect, racism, exploitation, or discrimination.
- We uphold children's rights to be heard, participate in decisions, and have their best interests prioritised.
- We commit to working with families, carers, and communities as partners.
- We embed **cultural safety** for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families.

5. The Universal Principle – Cultural Safety

We recognise that cultural safety for **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children** is fundamental to child safety.

- We commit to creating spaces where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families feel **safe, valued, included, and respected**.
- We engage with local First Nations organisations, Elders, and communities to strengthen cultural safety.
- We actively challenge and address racism, unconscious bias, and systemic barriers.

- We recognise that cultural identity, kinship, and connection to Country are protective factors for wellbeing.

6. Child Safe Standards in Practice

Standard 1 – Leadership and Culture

- Leaders model child safety and cultural safety in governance and decision-making.
- Child safety is a standing agenda item at management meetings.

Standard 2 – Voice of Children

- Children are informed of their rights through child-friendly resources.
- We provide safe ways for children to give feedback (feedback forms, suggestion box, direct discussions).

Standard 3 – Family and Community

- Families are engaged in treatment planning and feedback.
- We maintain open communication and cultural partnerships with communities.

Standard 4 – Equity and Diversity

- We respect and support children from **diverse cultural, linguistic, disability, gender, and socio-economic backgrounds**.
- Services are adapted to meet the individual needs of each child (disability, cultural, gender, language).

Standard 5 – People

- All staff and clinicians hold valid **Blue Cards** and undergo screening, reference checks, and credential verification.
- Recruitment processes emphasise commitment to child safety.
- Staff performance includes review of child safety responsibilities.

Standard 6 – Complaints Management

- Accessible, child-friendly complaints process.
- Complaints can be raised verbally, in writing, anonymously, or online.
- Clear timeframes, confidentiality, and updates for complainants.
- Visual flowcharts displayed for children and families.

Standard 7 – Knowledge and Skills

- Staff receive induction and ongoing training in **child safety, trauma-informed care, and cultural safety**.
- Regular refreshers ensure staff maintain current knowledge and skills.

Standard 8 – Physical and Online Environments

- Clinics are safe, welcoming, and monitored.
- Online/telehealth follows strict privacy and consent protocols.
- Risk assessments conducted and documented.

Standard 9 – Continuous Improvement

- Annual review of this policy and supporting documents.
- Feedback from children, families, and staff is collected and acted upon.
- Complaints and incident data inform improvements.

Standard 10 – Policies and Procedures

- This policy is supported by related procedures, including:
 - **Code of Conduct**
 - **Recruitment and Screening Policy**
 - **Complaints Handling Policy**
 - **Risk Management Strategy**
 - **Information Sharing and Recordkeeping Procedures**

7. Roles and Responsibilities

- **Directors and Practice Managers:** Ensure governance, accountability, and resourcing for child safety.
- **Clinicians (independent practitioners):** Responsible for their own professional practice and compliance with their professional boards, while expected to align with Cairns Psychology Group's child safety framework.
- **Administration and Support Staff:** Follow procedures that ensure safety in daily operations.
- **Children and Families:** Encouraged to provide feedback, raise concerns, and participate in safety planning.

8. Reporting Concerns and Mandatory Reporting

- All staff are legally required to report concerns about child harm or risk of harm.
- Suspicions of abuse, neglect, or misconduct must be reported to:
 - **Queensland Police,**
 - **Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services,** or
 - Relevant professional registration body.
- Internal reporting procedures ensure concerns are escalated promptly to leadership.

9. Accessibility

- This policy is published on our website and available in our clinic.
- Child- and family-friendly summaries will be developed using plain language and visual aids.
- Alternative formats (translations, large print, AUSLAN, audio) will be provided upon request.

10. Review

This policy will be reviewed annually, or earlier if legislative or practice changes occur.

Next review due: October 2026

Approval

Signed on behalf of Cairns Psychology Group:

Name: _____

Position: _____

Date: _____