

Code of Conduct – Child Safety Guidelines

1. Purpose

This Code of Conduct sets the expected standards of behaviour for all staff, contractors, students, and volunteers at Cairns Psychology Group. It ensures that our workplace and services are safe, respectful, and supportive of children, young people, families, and communities.

This Code aligns with:

- Child Safe Organisations Act 2024 (Qld)
- QFCC Child Safe Standards & Universal Principle
- Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (Qld)
- APS Code of Ethics (Psychologists)
- PACFA Code of Ethics (Counsellors & Psychotherapists)
- AASW Code of Ethics (Social Workers)
- Privacy Act 1988 (Cth) and Information Privacy Act 2009 (Qld)
- Mandatory reporting obligations under the Child Protection Act 1999 (Qld)

2. Scope

This Code applies to:

- Psychologists, provisional psychologists, and allied health professionals
- Counsellors, psychotherapists, and social workers
- Administrative staff, students, and volunteers
- Contractors and external providers engaged by the practice

It applies in all contexts: clinical practice, administration, supervision, outreach, telehealth, and community engagement.

Note: 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 Code and the child safety framework of Cairns Psychology Group when providing services under the practice name.

3. Our Commitments

- Children's safety and wellbeing are our highest priority.
- We maintain a **zero tolerance** approach to abuse, neglect, exploitation, racism, and discrimination.
- We uphold children's rights to be safe, respected, heard, and involved in decisions.
- We respect cultural identity and embed cultural safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

- We commit to professional, ethical, and lawful practice at all times.

4. Expected Behaviour

With Children and Young People

- Treat children with dignity, fairness, and respect.
- Uphold children's rights to be heard and to participate in decisions affecting them.
- Provide care that is trauma-informed, culturally safe, and developmentally appropriate.
- Maintain clear professional boundaries at all times.
- Ensure physical contact is appropriate, consent-based, and professionally justified.
- Never engage in grooming, favouritism, or any conduct that exploits power imbalances.

With Families and Communities

- Respect the role of parents/carers and work collaboratively.
- Communicate openly, honestly, and respectfully.
- Involve families in decisions where appropriate, respecting client confidentiality.
- Uphold cultural protocols and partner with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations.

With Colleagues and the Organisation

- Act with honesty, transparency, and integrity.
- Support a workplace free of bullying, harassment, racism, and discrimination.
- Respect confidentiality and privacy of clients and colleagues.
- Share knowledge and collaborate to ensure high standards of care.
- Raise concerns or breaches of policy in line with reporting obligations.

5. Prohibited Behaviour

Staff and representatives must **never**:

- Engage in any form of child abuse, neglect, exploitation, or harm.
- Form relationships with clients or children that are secretive, exclusive, or inappropriate.
- Provide therapy or support under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- Breach confidentiality except where legally required (e.g., duty of care, mandatory reporting).
- Use social media or personal communication channels to engage in dual relationships with clients.
- Offer or accept gifts, services, or favours beyond professional boundaries.
- Engage in sexual, financial, or other exploitative relationships with clients.

6. Cultural Safety

- Respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children's identities, kinship, and connection to Country.

- Challenge racism, unconscious bias, and systemic inequality.
- Ensure services are inclusive and co-designed with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices.

7. Professional Responsibilities

- Maintain current **Blue Card** and professional registrations (e.g., AHPRA, PACFA, AASW).
- Comply with professional codes of ethics and conduct (APS, PACFA, AASW).
- Provide evidence-based, ethical, and professional care.
- Uphold legal obligations including **mandatory reporting** of suspected harm under the Child Protection Act 1999 (Qld).
- Maintain accurate, secure, and timely client records in compliance with the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth) and Information Privacy Act 2009 (Qld).
- Engage in ongoing professional development and reflective practice.
- **Clinicians (Independent Practitioners)** – In addition to the above, are responsible for their own professional practice and regulatory compliance, while expected to align with Cairns Psychology Group's child safety framework when practising under the practice name.

8. Breaches of the Code

Breaches will be taken seriously and may result in:

- Additional training, supervision, or formal warnings
- Suspension or termination of employment or engagement
- Reporting to professional registration bodies (AHPRA, PACFA, AASW)
- Reporting to Queensland Police or other statutory authorities

All staff have a duty to report suspected breaches of this Code.

9. Acknowledgement

I acknowledge that I have read, understood, and agree to comply with the Cairns Psychology Group Code of Conduct, the relevant professional ethical codes, and Queensland law.

Signed: _____

Name: _____

Position: _____

Date: _____