



Policy Title: CHILD SAFETY AND WELLBEING

1. POLICY STATEMENT

Indigenous Allied Health Australia (IAHA) works generationally to create a future where all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are thriving in good health and social and emotional wellbeing, supported by ongoing connections to culture, spirit, and place. IAHA is therefore committed to ensuring the health, wellbeing and safety of every child that has contact with IAHA employees, contractors, consultants, volunteers and providers engaged by IAHA to deliver services to children and young people.

IAHA has zero tolerance for child abuse, neglect and exploitation of children and young people.

IAHA is committed to:

- Embedding the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.
- Creating a culture, adopting strategies and taking action to promote child wellbeing and preventing harm to children and young people.
- Supporting young people to succeed and thrive.

IAHA works alongside young people and children during our programs, campaigns, events, and decision-making structures. IAHA works with children and young people in a strengths-based way and seeks not only to prevent harm, but to actively empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people, including those with diverse and intersecting needs, backgrounds and experiences. A core feature of this policy is a shift towards not just engaging in programs for children and young people but to ensure that child safety, prevention, protection, wellbeing and our core values are always embedded in everything that IAHA does.

IAHA is committed to providing children and young people with physical and online environments free from threats, harm, abuse, mistreatment or exploitation. All staff, Board members, volunteers, members, partners, contractors and stakeholders of IAHA share responsibility for protecting everyone from abuse, harm, neglect, or exploitation. Beyond this, particular people have specific responsibilities, and they must carry out their duties without exception. IAHA has zero tolerance for the abuse, harm, neglect, or exploitation of children and young people.

IAHA takes a survivor-centric, harm minimisation and prevention approach in all that we do, complementing our vision of knowing, being and doing. IAHA recognises its cultural obligations as an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisation and acknowledges that culture and kinship systems vary in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities across Australia and it is IAHA's responsibility to work responsively.

2. PURPOSE

The Child Safety and Wellbeing policy demonstrates how IAHA meets its legislative and contractual requirements regarding the safety and wellbeing of children and young people and to:

- Provide information and support to children, young people, their families and communities to ensure they are aware of their rights and have access to information about child safety and wellbeing.
- Recognise the need to continually promote cultural safety and provide a safe and inclusive environment for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people including children and young people.
- Set out and define key terms around the safety and wellbeing of children and young people and develop guidelines and processes to eliminate, mitigate and manage risks.
- Establish specific roles and responsibilities of people working in and with IAHA.
- Ensure all children and young people regardless of age, disability, gender, racial or ethnic origin, religious beliefs, or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse, neglect and exploitation upheld.
- Ensure all children and young people can expect proactive intervention, support, and information from IAHA which could improve a situation or behaviours and make life safer for them, as well as being included in decisions that are made in relation to them.
- Support a positive and effective internal culture towards the safety and wellbeing of children and young people and facilitate the safe management of incidents and complaints.
- Ensure staff are aware of responsibilities with respect to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.
- Ensure staff are aware of responsibilities with respect to guardianship arrangements.
- Help protect people that interact with, or are affected by IAHA which includes its employees, Board Directors, members, students, volunteers, and visitors.

This policy applies to:

- Board Directors and members of IAHA.
- All employees, including managers and supervisors; full-time, part-time, casual, temporary, or permanent staff; trainees, job candidates; student placements, apprentices, contractors, sub-contractors, and volunteers.
- A representative of IAHA as delegated to act on behalf of IAHA; and
- Stakeholders and/or host employers that work with IAHA.

IAHA's commitment is consistent with national standards to increase the stringency of background checking of people working and volunteering with children and young people and the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations. This policy ensures that any person engaged in any activity or work with children and young people must obtain, maintain, and hold a current working with children or working with vulnerable people card or clearance relevant to the jurisdiction. The card or clearance legislative requirements vary according to the state or territory in which IAHA work is carried out. It is the responsibility of IAHA collectively to be aware of these requirements.

3. DEFINITIONS

CEO: IAHA Chief Executive Officer

Directors or Board: a member of the IAHA Board of Directors

Employee: IAHA staff member, irrespective of employment arrangements.

Member: Individual member of Indigenous Allied Health Australia

Trainee: is someone completing a traineeship through IAHA Group Training, for example students enrolled in the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Academy or other IAHA supported education and

training programs.

Contractor: a person or organisation that undertakes a contract with IAHA to provide services to, or for, or with IAHA. This can mean a Host Employer for the purpose of the academies.

Representative: A person delegated and approved by IAHA to speak, act, present, attend or observe on behalf of IAHA at various forums.

Stakeholder: a person, group, or organisation with the same and/or vested interests, activities, business, or projects as IAHA.

Visitor: A person or persons who are not an employee, board member or student of IAHA, that visit an IAHA Workplace.

Volunteer: an approved person who freely offers and is not paid, to work with IAHA and/or take part in IAHA activities.

Child/ren: Any person under the age of 18 years.

Young People: Any person between the age of 15 – 24 years.

Safeguarding: means protecting the welfare and human rights of people that interact with, or are affected by, IAHA, particularly those that might be at risk of abuse, neglect, or exploitation. This refers to any responsibility or measure undertaken to protect a person from harm particularly children and young people.

Abuse, harm, neglect, or exploitation: means all forms of physical and mental, emotional abuse, exploitation, coercion or ill-treatment. This might include, for example:

- i. Sexual or other harassment, bullying or abuse,
- ii. Sexual criminal offences and serious sexual criminal offences,
- iii. Threats of, or actual physical, verbal, and emotional violence or social abuse,
- iv. Cultural or identity abuse, such as racial, sexual or gender-based discrimination or hate crime,
- v. Coercion and exploitation causing harm or injury, and
- vi. Abuse of power and bullying
- vii. Exposure to an unsafe physical or online environments.

Bullying: is the inappropriate use of power by an individual or group, with an intent to injure either physically or emotionally. It is usually deliberate and repetitive. The bullying may be physical or psychological (verbal and non-verbal)

- i. Physically, bullying includes pushing, hitting, punching, kicking or any other action causing hurt or injury.
- ii. Verbal bullying includes insults, taunts, threats, and ridicule.
- iii. Psychological bullying includes physical intimidation and ostracism, and exclusion.

Cultural safety: The effective care of a person/family from another culture by a person who has undertaken a process of reflection on their own cultural identity and recognises the impact of one's own culture on their practice. Unsafe cultural practice is any action which diminishes, demeans, or disempowers the cultural identity and well-being of an individual.

Cultural Responsiveness: Cultural responsiveness is when the centrality of culture to people's identity is acknowledged, valued, and supported and working with individuals to determine what is culturally safe for them.

Survivor-centric approach: means considering and lawfully prioritising the needs, right and wishes of survivors.

Mandatory reporting: laws which require specified individuals to report known or suspected cases of specified types of child abuse and neglect to government authorities. The laws usually specify these individuals on the basis that they work in an occupation dealing with children in the course of their work. Each Australian state and territory has its own mandatory reporting law and in the NT all adults, regardless of occupation, are mandated to report. In line with IAHA's proactive approach to supporting children and young people this requirement has been adopted nationally.

WWVP, Working with vulnerable people or WWCC, Working with children clearance: in the context of this policy is obtaining a card or clearance to work with children and/or vulnerable people.

Card and clearance conditions and names vary across states and territory legislation. IAHA's work involves cross border activities, where the requirement for more than one card or clearance may be necessary.

- i. NT: Working with Children Clearance (WWCC), also known as an Ochre Card
- ii. ACT: Working with Vulnerable People (WWVP) Registration
- iii. Tasmania: Registration to Work with Vulnerable People (RWVP)
- iv. NSW: Working with Children Check (WWCC)
- v. Victoria: Working with Children Check (WWCC)
- vi. SA: Working with Children Check (WWCC)
- vii. WA: Working with Children Check (WWCC)
- viii. QLD: Blue Card (Blue Card Services)

Vulnerable: "vulnerable individual" is someone who is more prone to social, emotional, psychological, or physical difficulties because of things like their age, socioeconomic standing, variant abilities, or other identifying traits. Often vulnerability is pronounced by society rather than perceived by the individual. To safeguard social and emotional wellbeing and guard against potential injury or exploitation, vulnerable people may need special care, resources, or protection from other individuals, from organisations and from societal structures. A preferred strength-based term may be "empowerable individuals".

Working with children check: is the background checking process which is a prerequisite for individuals engaged in child-related work, which leads in appropriate cases to the issuing of a working with children card (WWCC) and/or clearance under different state or territory legislation and/or requirements.

Child related work or program: any activity, or group or series of activities, involving direct contact or engagement with children where that contact is a usual part of, or more than incidental to, the activity. At IAHA, this includes all Academy related work, IAHA Group Training roles, and community engagement programs involving persons under the age of 18.

4. RESPONSIBILITIES

All persons who work at or with IAHA have the responsibility to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children and young people in all IAHA work and activities and to report abuse, neglect or harm. In meeting IAHA's legislative and contractual requirements, IAHA will cover the costs for staff who work with children to attain the required checks or clearances to work with children. IAHA will also manage the update or renewal processes.

Individuals must comply with their obligations and responsibilities, outlined below.

4.1 The IAHA Board and Chief Executive Officer of IAHA are responsible for:

- Embedding the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations across all relevant IAHA business.
- Embedding and championing a culture of child safety at IAHA.
- Promote the sharing of good practice and learnings about child safety and wellbeing.
- Protecting the rights, safety and wellbeing of children and young people and all people that interact with or are affected by IAHA.
- Ensuring appropriate policies, guidelines and supports are implemented.
- Ensuring IAHA observes all relevant legislation and requirements for each state and/or territory in which it operates or carries out IAHA business.
- Ensure all Board members, employees and volunteers are trained in child safety and wellbeing practices and how to respond effectively to children and young people with diverse needs.
- Ensuring that IAHA always takes a survivor-centric approach and that all voices of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children and peoples are heard.
- Ensuring IAHA has effective and appropriate ways to manage safeguarding and wellbeing with appropriate legal compliance, including mandatory background / working with children checks and reporting requirements, required by each state and territory that IAHA works within.
- Ensuring all people involved in IAHA activities, programs, or services act in the best interests of children and young people. This includes:
 - Creating and maintaining a safe culture that is understood, accepted, and put into action by all individuals who work or volunteer for IAHA, or for those who access our programs and services.
 - Recognising our cultural obligations and acknowledging our need to be informed of cultural diversity, kinship systems and guardianship arrangements to work responsively with children and young people.
 - Ensuring children and young people are aware of their rights to safe physical and online environments.
- Ensure all employees, trainees, members, volunteers, representatives working with children and young people are trained:
 - to effectively implement this policy
 - in child safety and wellbeing practices,
 - to recognise the indicators of child harm, including harm causes by other children and young people
 - to respond effectively to issues of child safety and wellbeing and support people who disclose harm
 - in how to build culturally safe and responsive environments for children and young people
- Ensuring all employees, members, Directors, volunteers, and representatives of IAHA adhere to the IAHA Code of Conduct.

4.2 Executives, Managers and Team Leads must:

- Promote a positive culture towards the safety and wellbeing of children and young people and ensure that cultural safety is prevalent across the organisation.
- Implement this policy in their area of responsibility and leadership and ensure that employees, trainees, members, volunteers, and representatives have read and understand the policy.
- Consider risks in their area of responsibility and ensure appropriate measures are in place to prevent, mitigate, detect, and respond to risks and incidents.

- Identify and pursue opportunities for young people, their families and the community to have a say in programs, services and initiatives that impact them.
- Ensure that all who are engaging with IAHA in activities or programs involving children and young people, whether for paid or unpaid work, hold a current and valid Working with Vulnerable People Check or Working with Children Check card or clearance (as per the relevant state or territory requirements) where required.
- Not use language or display behaviours and conduct that are inappropriate, threatening, harassing, abusive, sexually provocative, demeaning, discriminatory or culturally unsafe.
- Not use physical punishment on children and young people,
- Not direct children and young people to undertake work or activities which are inappropriate given their age or developmental stage, which interferes education and success; or which creates a risk to their safety and/or wellbeing.
- Ensure that there are at least two individuals present at any task or program involving children and young people, wherever possible.
- Facilitate the reporting of any suspected abuse, neglect, or exploitation immediately, through the appropriate channels, including those legislated under mandatory reporting requirements, and provide support to those who report child safety and wellbeing issues.
- Ensure that any incident or complaint is dealt with immediately, in line with and following the IAHA Complaint Handling Policy and processes, including any serious incidents and/or injury or harm, to call 000 immediately.

4.3 Employees, members, trainees, representatives, contractors and volunteers must:

- Read, understand, adhere to, and comply with the standards and practices outlined in this policy.
- Hold and maintain a current and valid Working with Vulnerable People Check or Working with Children Check or clearance relevant to their role within IAHA and the jurisdiction(s) in which they work.
- Familiarise themselves with the relevant laws, the IAHA Code of Conduct, other relevant policies and procedures of IAHA, that apply to this policy and the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.
- Report any incident to their manager immediately
- Report any incident when it is reasonable to suspect that a person's safety or welfare is at risk to the appropriate authority, including understanding and complying with reporting requirements specifically for that State or Territory, and/or professional registration. If there is an immediate risk to life or safety, notification of the Police and/or calling 000 is required.
- Provide online and physical environments that are supportive of everyone's cultural, emotional, and physical safety and wellbeing.
- Treat everyone with dignity, courtesy, and respect, and empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people to have a say in matters affecting them
- Not use physical punishments, language and behaviours that is inappropriate, threatening, harassing, abusive, sexually provocative, demeaning, discriminatory or culturally inappropriate.

4.4 All Contractors and stakeholders must work with IAHA to:

- Implement the provisions of this policy and IAHA's procedures, including compliance with IAHA's Code of Conduct in their dealings and work with IAHA where required, and
- Report any suspicion immediately to the appropriate persons within IAHA, that an incident may have taken place or is taking place or could take place. If a person is in immediate danger Police and/or 000 must be called immediately.

5. WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE – SPECIFIC GUIDANCE

- Adhere to the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations in all IAHA business with children and young people.
- Ensure appropriate assessments and checks of employees, volunteers and representatives are conducted before any work or activity is undertaken with children and young people for IAHA business.
- Advise children and young people of their right to a safe physical and online environment.
- Advise children and young people of the right to make a complaint or express concern if they do not feel safe. This must include details of who the child or young person should contact.
- Avoid working alone with a child/ren or young person wherever possible.
- Do not enter into any other social, business or other non-IAHA-related arrangements with a vulnerable adult, child/ren or young person. This does not include already established personal relationships such as with close family members.
- Do not exchange gifts except in defined circumstances where prior approval to do so is given by the IAHA CEO or Chair and/or Board, as this could be considered as a bribe or inducement and give rise to allegations of improper conduct or a breach of IAHA's Code of Conduct.
- Avoid physical contact unless it is to prevent accident or injury or provide medical assistance. The consent of the affected person and, where appropriate, consent from those with caring or guardianship responsibility should be obtained before treatment is given.
- Ensure all employees, trainees, members, volunteers, representatives working with children and young people must hold a current working with vulnerable people (WWVP) or working with children check (WWCC) or clearance in the relevant state and/or territory.
- Do not use language or behaviour towards children and young people that is inappropriate, threatening, harassing, abusive, sexually provocative, demeaning, discriminatory or culturally inappropriate.
- Ask children and young people to advise if there are anything additional supports IAHA can provide to make the child or young person feel safe and/or provide feedback to IAHA on any issues relating to safety and wellbeing.
- Seek support from a manager of IAHA Executive or Board member, as relevant, if you have concerns about child safety or wellbeing, or require additional guidance.

6. PROMOTION OF THE SAFETY AND WELLBEING OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

- IAHA is committed to being proactive in promoting health, social and emotional wellbeing of all people.
- IAHA makes all reasonable efforts, through its recruitment procedures for specific activities, to ensure that all members, employees, trainees, volunteers, contractors, stakeholders, and representatives whose role involves activities with children and young people, that they have no known history of harmful behaviours, and are suitable for the position in line with this policy and legislative requirements. This process may also entail a police check to be conducted.
- This policy is available to employees, contractors, consultants, volunteers, children and young people and the broader IAHA community.
- IAHA provides access to support services such as counselling and cultural support for IAHA employees, trainees, and volunteers if/when the need arises. Refer also to the IAHA Employee Assistance Program Policy and Social and Emotional Wellbeing Policy.

7. REGULATED EMPLOYMENT AND WWVP/WWCC REQUIREMENTS

- All individuals involved in work specifically relating to children and young people or community engagement programs or activities hosted or run by IAHA, must have a valid working with children and or vulnerable people check or clearance according to the relevant state and/or territory where the work is being carried out.
- All individuals involved in IAHA business working with children and young people must complete the Child Safe Organisations online training. IAHA will maintain a register of staff who have completed this training.
- It is the responsibility of the hiring manager to ensure that the requirement of a current and valid working with children and or vulnerable people check or clearance is mandated through all recruitment processes.

The table below will navigate you through the different requirements as each state and/or territory has different guidelines.

Figure 7.1

Name of Government Department	Direct Link to Government Screening Unit
NT – Northern Territory Government Safe NT	Working with children clearance: apply and renew NT.GOV.AU https://nt.gov.au/emergency/child-safety/apply-for-a-working-with-children-clearance
ACT – Access Canberra	Working With Vulnerable People - Access Canberra https://www.accesscanberra.act.gov.au/business-and-work/working-with-vulnerable-people
Tasmania – Department of Justice	Registration to work with vulnerable people https://www.justice.tas.gov.au/rwvp
NSW- Office of the Children’s Guardian	Working with Children Check Office of the Children's Guardian https://ocg.nsw.gov.au/working-children-check
Victoria- Service Victoria	Working with Children Check vic.gov.au https://www.vic.gov.au/working-with-children-check
SA - Department of Human Services (DHS) Screening Unit	SA.GOV.AU - Screening checks https://www.sa.gov.au/topics/rights-and-law/rights-and-responsibilities/screening-checks
Queensland – Blue Card Services	Blue Card Services Your rights, crime and the law Queensland Government https://www.qld.gov.au/law/laws-regulated-industries-and-accountability/queensland-laws-and-regulations/regulated-industries-and-licensing/blue-card-services
WA - Department of Communities	Working with Children Check

8. MANAGING RISKS TO THE SAFETY AND WELLBEING OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

IAHA's approach to managing risks to children and young people includes:

- Following a holistic approach and view of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and wellbeing that considers and responds to the physical, emotional, spiritual, cultural, and ethical wellbeing of individuals and community.
- Ensuring that our core values are embedded in our communication, relationships and practice.
- Ensuring that IAHA is compliant with and/or up to date with the laws relating to children and young people, as well as vulnerable people in its operations and business activities and in all jurisdictions in which it works.
- Ensuring that all employees and volunteers, will adhere to this policy and any other relevant IAHA policies and procedures, when and where required.
- Conducting due diligence checks when necessary, with employees, trainees, members, volunteers, board and representatives and proactively overseeing conduct and behaviours.
- Implementing an incident and complaints response plan and processes, and risk management framework and register.
- Monitoring and reviewing IAHA's relevant policies and procedures, annually or as the need arises, to ensure compliance, relevance and cultural safety and responsiveness to the needs of children and young people.

9. MANAGING INCIDENTS AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Harassment, abuse, neglect, and exploitation of children and/or young people are all actions considered to be serious misconduct and by law an offence, where IAHA reserves the right and will have obligations to:

- i. Take disciplinary action, which may include immediate dismissal;
- ii. Take civil legal action;
- iii. Report the matter to the State or Territory Child Protection Agency (or equivalent), under Mandatory Reporting Guidelines; and/or
- iv. Report the matter to the relevant law enforcement or child protection taskforce.

IAHA strongly encourages all employees, trainees, members, volunteers, representatives, contractors, or stakeholders to take appropriate action as soon as practicable to do so, should there be a suspicion of an incident taking place, that has taken place or could take place. Reporting can occur by contacting:

- i. In the first instance, the IAHA Manager or their delegate that is managing the IAHA activity or program involving the incident,
- ii. If the relevant Manager is involved in the incident or unavailable, contact the IAHA CEO or delegate.
- iii. If the IAHA CEO is involved in the incident or unavailable, contact the IAHA Chairperson and/or a Board Director.
- iv. In circumstances where IAHA is conducting business on location at an educational institution, such as a school, it may be more appropriate to contact the Executive teacher or leader managing the site.

All complaints and incidents lodged are treated seriously with respect, professionalism, and consistent with the strictest privacy and confidentiality requirements, unless use and/or disclosure is otherwise required or authorised by or under law. Refer also to the IAHA Privacy & Confidentiality and Whistleblower Policies.

The IAHA Complaints Handling Policy and the IAHA Grievance Policy clearly outlines the reporting, monitoring and assessment of complaints and incidents. The IAHA Code of Conduct also clearly states the expectations of behavior of all representatives of IAHA, including with respect to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. The IAHA Records & Information Management and Security Policy details the requirements for appropriate record-keeping.

Internal reporting does not replace mandatory reporting or related requirements for certain types of harm, abuse and neglect. For more information please visit the [Australian Institute of Family Studies website](#).

10. REVIEW OF THIS POLICY

Unless required earlier, this policy will be reviewed by the Chief Executive Officer or delegate every 12 months, at a minimum. Should there be legislative changes or amendments to child safety and wellbeing practices, this policy must be reviewed and updated as required.

11. FURTHER INFORMATION OR ASSISTANCE WITH THIS POLICY

If you require further information or assistance with this policy, the first point of contact is your manager or usual IAHA contact point.

General questions about this policy can be addressed to: admin@iaha.com.au

Urgent issues or enquiries can be addressed to the Chief Operating Officer of IAHA Chief Executive Office via admin@iaha.com.au

12. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS / REFERENCES

National Principles for Child Safe Organisations
United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
IAHA Statement of Commitment to Child Safety and Wellbeing
IAHA Accessibility and Inclusion Policy
IAHA Workplace Harassment & Bullying Policy
IAHA Code of Conduct
IAHA Complaint Handling Policy
IAHA Grievance Policy
IAHA Privacy and Confidentiality Policy
IAHA Records & Information Management and Security Policy
IAHA Risk Management Policy
IAHA Social Emotional and Wellbeing Policy
IAHA Whistleblower Policy
IAHA Workplace Health & Safety Policy
IAHA Employee Assistance Program Policy
Representing IAHA Policy
IAHA Anti-Racism and Anti-Discrimination Policy

13. RELATED LEGISLATION

Australian Capital Territory

[Working with Vulnerable People \(Background Checking\) Act 2011](#)

New South Wales

[Child Protection \(Working with Children\) Act 2012 No 51](#)

Northern Territory

[Care And Protection of Children Act 2007](#)

South Australia

[South Australia Government Children & Young People \(Safety\) Act 2017](#)

The above legislation will be repealed and replaced with:
Children and Young People (Safety and Support) Act 2025

Tasmania

[Registration to Work with Vulnerable People Act 2013](#)
[Registration to Work with Vulnerable People Regulations 2024](#)

Western Australia

[Working with Children \(Screening\) Act 2004](#)
[Working with Children \(Screening\) Regulations 2005](#)

[Australian Law Reform Commission, Adult Safeguarding Laws](#)

Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC):
[Governance Toolkit: Safeguarding Vulnerable People](#)
[Charity Fundraising: and people in vulnerable circumstances](#)

[Australian Human Rights Commission, National Principles, Child Safe Organisations](#)

14. DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT

Effective Date:	29 February 2024
Recommended by the FARC:	1 May 2023
Endorsed by the Board on:	24 February 2026
Reworked/redeveloped:	23 February 2026
Review Date by Board:	1 February 2027



Signed by the IAHA Chief Executive Officer

Date: 24 February 2026



Signed by the IAHA Chairperson

Date: 24 February 2026