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## CHILD SAFETY AND WELLBEING POLICY

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**Responsible Officer:** Jacinda Armstrong, CEO

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### Introduction

Playgroup Tasmania believes that all children have the right to live safely – emotionally, mentally and physically. Playgroup Tasmania is committed to promoting and protecting the safety and wellbeing of all children at all times and in all circumstances and interactions with Playgroup Tasmania. Everyone has a role to play in keeping children safe from harm and creating child safe and child friendly communities. Playgroup Tasmania endorses the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and is committed to complying with the [Tasmanian Child and Youth Safe Organisations Act 2023](#).

The policy will inform the Board, staff, volunteers and community members of their obligations to act ethically towards children and outline their roles and responsibilities in ensuring the safety and wellbeing of children.

The policy will give guidance on the processes and procedures that aim to ensure children's safety and wellbeing across all areas of Playgroup Tasmania's work.

Playgroup Tasmania is committed to promoting and protecting the rights of children involved in its programs and will work to create and maintain a Child and Youth Safe Organisation (see Appendix 1) throughout all its operations.

The Playgroup Tasmania Child Safety and Wellbeing policy is part of the demonstration of our organisation's commitment to the safety and wellbeing of children.

### Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to inform the Playgroup Tasmania community (employees, volunteers, contractors, partner organisations and program participants of Playgroup Tasmania) of our:

- approach to providing services, creating a child safe and child friendly environment for all children and young people.
- commitment to a child safe culture across our organisation.

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- responsibilities to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children and young people who use our activities and programs.
- obligation to comply with the Tasmanian Child and Youth Safe Organisations Framework, including embedding the Universal Principle, the Child Safe Standards and abiding by the Reportable Conduct Scheme.

### Who does this Policy apply to?

This policy applies to the following members of the Playgroup Tasmania community.

Staff and Volunteers (including leadership and trainees)	Board Members	Playgroup Leaders	Contractors/Consultants and Registered Visitors (including employees of contractors)	Playgroup Parents and Caregivers	Playgroup Children
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

This policy applies to all activities run by Playgroup Tasmania Inc. This includes all activities in the organisation which involve, result in or relate to contact with children.

### Policy

This policy replaces and overrides all previous child safety, protection and wellbeing policies of Playgroup Tasmania.

Playgroup Tasmania has zero tolerance for child abuse in all its forms. All persons involved in the operations of Playgroup Tasmania are responsible for the care and protection of the children in attendance and have obligations to report actual or suspected child abuse or neglect, past and present. Child safety and wellbeing is a shared responsibility between Playgroup Tasmania, all employees, volunteers, contractors, partner organisations and members of the Playgroup Tasmania community.

Playgroup Tasmania is committed to promoting and protecting the rights of children involved in its programs and has adopted Tasmania's Child and Youth Safe Standards and Universal Principle for Aboriginal Cultural Safety (Appendix 1) throughout all its operations.

Playgroup Tasmania endorses the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Appendix 2) and is committed to ensuring the wellbeing and safety of children across Tasmania.

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All children regardless of their gender, race, religious beliefs, age, ability, sexual orientation, family or social background have equal rights of protection from abuse.

Playgroup Tasmania understands its obligations under the Child and Youth Safe Organisations Act 2023 and has developed and reviewed policies, procedures and practices to demonstrate commitment to the Universal Principle and the Child Safe Standards. Additionally, the organisation acknowledges its responsibilities under the Reportable Conduct Scheme; including notifying the independent regulator when concerns are raised about conduct related to child abuse involving a worker and conducting investigations (see Appendix 1).

Staff, volunteers and participants recognise that when at playgroup the parent or caregiver retains the responsibility for their child. The primary focus of playgroup activities is to create opportunities for young children, parents, families and communities to come together to learn and develop through informal play activities and social interaction.

### **Playgroup Tasmania champions the vital role playgroups play in child safety and wellbeing**

We support this through the following principles and practices. While some playgroups are facilitated by Playgroup Tasmania staff, many are led by parents and volunteers. This shared, community-driven approach is central to our impact

#### **Supporting Family Wellbeing**

- Family wellbeing contributes to child safety, and playgroups play a significant role in supporting family wellbeing. Playgroups are welcoming, non-judgemental spaces where families can connect, share experiences and access support early.
- All families have strengths that can be built upon to keep children safe and well. We take a strengths-based approach that builds confidence, supports peer learning and recognises parents as their child's first and most important educator.
- Playgroups promote practical, empowering approaches to parenting and share information on child development. This includes conversations, referrals, role modelling and accessible resources.

#### **Building Connection and Community**

- Playgroups help keep children and families safe through connection to others in their community. Playgroups reduce social isolation and build strong, trusted relationships.
- Children and families engage with others in their local community through playgroup. These informal networks create a sense of belonging and mutual support.
- Playgroups offer access to information, resources and referral pathways. We provide a soft entry point into or out of the targeted service system when additional support is needed.

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### Promoting Child Voice and Participation

- Playgroup Tasmania seeks the ideas and opinions of children in developmentally appropriate ways. This includes observation, play-based engagement and adapting environments and activities in response to children's interests and cues.
- Children's voices are included in our program and policy development. We engage children in meaningful and age-appropriate ways to inform our submissions, government consultations, program design, and internal policy development. Their ideas, perspectives and lived experiences actively shape decisions that affect them.

### Encouraging Safe, Respectful Relationships

- Playgroups model and promote positive parenting strategies. Families see respectful, strength-based approaches in action and learn from each other through everyday interaction.
- Playgroups support informal, ongoing conversations with children about child safety and respectful relationships. These happen in age-appropriate ways through stories, songs, role play and shared routines. Our *All Come Out to Play* initiative is a clear example of how these conversations are embedded in everyday playgroup experiences.
- Playgroups create safe and nurturing environments where children's rights are respected, and conversations about feelings, boundaries and respect are part of everyday interactions. These everyday moments help build understanding and safety from the start.

### Focusing on Prevention and Early Support

- Early intervention and prevention are more effective than crisis response. Playgroups provide natural opportunities to check in with families, offer support and respond before issues escalate.

## Definitions

For definitions of the terminology used in this policy please refer to the separate document – Playgroup Tasmania Word List.

## Relevant Legislation and Standards

Tasmanian Government, “Child and Youth Safe Organisations Act 2023”

<https://www.legislation.tas.gov.au/view/html/asmade/act-2023-006>

Tasmanian Government, “Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act 1997” (updated 1 July 2022) [View - Tasmanian Legislation Online](#)

[Guide to Tasmania's child safety services - Department for Education, Children and Young People \(decyp.tas.gov.au\)](#)

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Tasmanian Government, Department of Justice: “Child and Youth Safe Organisations Framework” <https://www.justice.tas.gov.au/carcru/child-and-youth-safe-organisations-framework>

Tasmanian Government, Office of the Tasmanian Independent Regulator: Safeguarding / Regulation / Education” <https://oir.tas.gov.au>

National Principles for Child Safe Organisations  
<https://childsafe.humanrights.gov.au/national-principles>

Registration to Work with Vulnerable People (RWVP) in Tasmania  
**Regulations 2024** <https://www.legislation.tas.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/sr-2024-016>

Information and requirements <https://www.justice.tas.gov.au/rwvp>

Employer obligations <https://www.justice.tas.gov.au/rwvp/obligations/employer-obligations>

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child <https://www.unicef.org.au/united-nations-convention-on-the-rights-of-the-child>

United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities  
[Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities \(CRPD\)](https://www.unicef.org.au/united-nations-convention-on-the-rights-of-the-child)

## Responsibilities

The Playgroup Tasmania Board has responsibility and oversight of all policies. The Board leads and champions a child safe and child friendly organisational culture through their leadership, personal behaviours and setting Board level strategies, policies and direction.

The CEO of Playgroup Tasmania has ultimate responsibility for ensuring that appropriate and effective internal control systems are in place for all programs to promote child safety and wellbeing.

The CEO is responsible for:

- Ensuring all staff, contractors and volunteers are aware of relevant laws, organisational policies and procedures and the Playgroup Tasmania Child Safety and Wellbeing Code of Conduct.
- Ensuring all staff, contractors, volunteers and visitors to playgroups have the appropriate checks and registrations in place, including Registration to Work with Vulnerable People (RWVP) and National Police Checks when applicable.
- Ensuring that persons holding RWVP have Playgroup Tasmania listed on their registration and are aware of their obligations to notify us of changes to their registration.
- Checking the registration status of the above at least every six months.

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- Ensuring all adults within the Playgroup Tasmania community are aware of their obligations to report any actual and suspected abuse and neglect of a child in accordance with these policies and procedures.
- Notifying the Independent Regulator within three business days of becoming aware of conduct related to child abuse involving an adult worker.
- Conducting investigations in relation to child abuse reports (or engage an investigator).
- Where relevant provide updates and findings to the Independent Regulator.
- Providing support for staff, contractors and volunteers in undertaking their child safety responsibilities.
- Ensuring that all staff and contractors abide by the Tasmanian Child and Youth Safe Standards and Universal Principle.

All staff, volunteers and contractors share responsibility for the safety and wellbeing of children and must:

- Participate in an induction process to ensure their understanding of their role as it relates to the Tasmanian Child and Youth Safe Organisations Framework, the Commonwealth Child Safe Framework and Playgroup Tasmania's child safety and wellbeing policies and procedures.
- Comply with all Playgroup Tasmania's child safety and wellbeing requirements and procedures.
- Seek clarification and/or advice from their Playgroup Tasmania supervisor if they are unsure about any aspect of their responsibilities
- Report any reasonable belief that a child's safety is at risk to the relevant authorities and fulfil any obligations under mandatory reporting legislation.
- Report to their Playgroup Tasmania supervisor any suspicion that a child's safety may be at risk (NB this does not negate the responsibility to report to the relevant authorities as outlined above).
- Provide an environment that is supportive of all children's emotional, cultural and physical safety.
- Encourage the communities in which they engage to be aware of and informed about child safety and wellbeing.

All staff and volunteers of Playgroup Tasmania must ensure that they:

- Abide by Playgroup Tasmania's policies and procedures.
- Promote child safety at all times.
- Assess the risk of child abuse and neglect within their area of control and eradicate or minimise any risk to the extent possible.
- Provide education about the prevention and detection of child abuse and neglect (including information about grooming), and pathways to advice and specialist support.
- Facilitate the reporting of any inappropriate behaviour or suspected abusive activities.

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### Playgroup Tasmania Inc Child Safe Organisation Commitments

#### **Aboriginal Cultural Safety (Universal Principle)**

Playgroup Tasmania is committed to being an organisation which is culturally safe for Aboriginal children. The organisation will work to create and maintain environments where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people feel safe to be themselves, their Aboriginality is respected, and their sense of identity is nurtured and encouraged.

#### **A commitment to child safety and wellbeing (Standard 1)**

The commitment of Playgroup Tasmania to the safety and wellbeing of children will be reflected in the policies and procedures of the organisation. Playgroup Tasmania has child safety and wellbeing being at the forefront of thought, value and actions of staff and volunteers of the organisation.

#### **Taking child participation seriously (Standard 2)**

Children's voices will be included in policy development and review. Playgroup Tasmania will actively involve children in an age-appropriate manner and provide child accessible versions of the child safety and wellbeing policy and other policies focused on the rights of children (e.g. complaints policy).

#### **Involving families and communities (Standard 3)**

Families and community members will be made aware of the child safety and wellbeing policy and will have meaningful opportunities to participate in policy development and review. Playgroup Tasmania will demonstrate transparency as it undertakes policy and procedure review and will be responsive to complaints (see Standard 6).

#### **Respecting equity and diversity (Standard 4)**

Playgroup Tasmania aims to be welcoming, friendly, equitable and inclusive of all children and families and will strive to represent the diversity within Tasmanian communities. The organisation will aim to provide information to children, families and the community which is easily accessible and culturally appropriate.

#### **Ensuring that staff are suitable and supported (Standard 5)**

Playgroup Tasmania will follow a stringent recruitment (including obtaining National Police Check, copies and checks of Working with Vulnerable People Registration and thorough referee checks) and induction process that outline the expectations of staff in creating a child safe and child friendly environment. Playgroup Tasmania staff and volunteers will undertake training in child safety and will be provided with up-to-date information in relation to reporting protocols (see Standard 7). Playgroup Tasmania staff and volunteers will be provided with access to support and debriefing where there has been concerns about the wellbeing of a child.

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### Child focused complaint systems (Standard 6)

Playgroup Tasmania recognises the importance of supporting each child's right to raise their concerns about the safety and wellbeing of themselves and others. Playgroup Tasmania has a feedback system that encourages open and honest feedback and complaints from all persons, including children.

### Staff knowledge, skills and awareness (Standard 7)

Playgroup Tasmania staff and volunteers will undertake an induction process that includes a focus on child safety and wellbeing.

Staff and volunteers will have the opportunity to access periodic training on child's rights, child development, the organisation's policies and procedures, recognising signs of harm or abuse, responding to disclosures, understanding and responding to harmful behaviours by a child towards another child, record keeping, risk assessment and management, external reporting obligations and creating culturally safe environments.

Staff will have the opportunity to engage in ongoing professional development and information exchange in relation to child safety and wellbeing.

### Safe physical and online environments (Standard 8)

Risk assessments and management processes of the physical environments accessed by children will be undertaken. Staff and volunteers will be required to use online environments in line with Playgroup Tasmania's Code of Conduct.

### Review of child safe policies and practices (Standard 9)

The Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy will be reviewed on a regular basis, at a minimum every 2 years. The Policy will also be reviewed where there has been changes to legislation or standards, or where an incident has occurred that prompts a need to review the policy.

### Documenting policies and procedures (Standard 10)

The Child Safety and Wellbeing policy will be made available: online, in staff induction materials, in each playgroup's resource toolkit and displayed at playgroup venues where possible. A plain English version will be provided in the future.

## Related Documents

Child and Youth Safe Organisations Framework (Tasmania) (Appendix 1)

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Appendix 2)

United National Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Appendix 3)

Playgroup Tasmania Child Safety and Wellbeing Reporting Policy and Procedure (CSW-PI-003)

Playgroup Tasmania Child Safety and Wellbeing Incident Report form (CSW-Fm-002)

Playgroup Tasmania Child Safety and Wellbeing Code of Conduct (CSW-PI-002)

Playgroup Tasmania Child Safety and Wellbeing Signed Declaration (CSW-Fm-001)

Playgroup Tasmania Child Safety and Wellbeing Reportable Conduct Process Chart

Playgroup Tasmania Child Safety and Wellbeing Staffing and Volunteer Procedures (CSW-Pr-001)

## Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

### Appendix 1 – Child and Youth Safe Organisations Framework (Tasmania)

#### The Child and Youth Safe Standards and Universal Principle

The below standards are complemented by a Universal Principle embedding **Aboriginal Cultural Safety** which applies across all ten Child and Youth Safe Standards. This means organisations must provide an environment that ensures Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children's right to cultural safety is respected.

**STANDARD 1.** Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture

**STANDARD 2.** Children and young people are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously

**STANDARD 3.** Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing

**STANDARD 4.** Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice

**STANDARD 5.** People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice

**STANDARD 6.** Processes to respond to complaints and concerns are child focused

**STANDARD 7.** Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training

**STANDARD 8.** Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed

**STANDARD 9.** Implementation of the Child and Youth Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved

**STANDARD 10.** Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people

NB – The Tasmanian Child and Youth Safe Standards are the same as the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations. For further information see:

<https://childsafe.humanrights.gov.au/national-principles>

#### The Reportable Conduct Scheme

The Reportable Conduct Scheme in Tasmania requires leaders of specific organisations to:

- notify the Independent Regulator upon becoming aware of conduct related to child abuse involving an adult worker (this is called reportable conduct), and
- conduct investigations

The definition of worker includes paid workers, volunteers and contractors.

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The scheme:

- specifies timeframes for when certain actions have to be taken
- doesn't replace existing reporting obligations
- strengthens organisations' ability to respond in a child-centred way through the provision of oversight by the Independent Regulator.

For further information see: [Reportable Conduct Scheme | Office of the Independent Regulator](#)

### Appendix 2 - United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

Playgroup Tasmania supports the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) under which every child has the right to:

1. Be treated fairly no matter what
2. Have a say about decisions affecting them
3. Live and grow up healthy
4. Have people do what is best for you
5. Know who you are and where you come from
6. Believe what you want
7. Privacy
8. Find out information and express yourself
9. Be safe no matter where you are
10. Be cared for and have a home
11. Education, play and cultural activities
12. Help and protection if you need it.

For further information see:

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx>

### Appendix 3

### United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Playgroup Tasmania supports the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities under which every person with a disability has the right to

- a) Respect for inherent dignity, individual autonomy including the freedom to make one's own choices, and independence of persons
- b) Non-discrimination
- c) Full and effective participation and inclusion in society
- d) Respect for difference and acceptance of persons with disabilities as part of human diversity and humanity
- e) Equality of opportunity
- f) Accessibility
- g) Equality between men and women

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- h) Respect for the evolving capacities of children with disabilities and respect for the right of children with disabilities to preserve their identities.

For further information see: <https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/disability-rights/united-nations-convention-rights-persons-disabilities-uncrpd>