

Optimum Intake Dietitians Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

1. Clearly demonstrate Optimum Intake Dietitians' commitment to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.
2. Inform leaders, staff, contractors, and volunteers of their obligations to act ethically toward children and their roles and responsibilities in ensuring child safety and wellbeing.
3. Provide guidance on processes and procedures to ensure children's safety and wellbeing across all areas of the organisation's work.

Scope

This policy applies to:

1. **Who:** All individuals who conduct work for Optimum Intake Dietitians in a paid or unpaid capacity, including the Director, leadership team, clinical and administrative team members, contractors, consultants, volunteers, interns, students and trainees.
2. **What:** All activities involving or relating to contact with children, whether physical or online.

Responsibilities

1. Director and Leadership Team Members:

- Approve and oversee the implementation of child safety policies and procedures.
- Ensure resources are allocated to support child safety initiatives.
- Promote a culture of child safety and wellbeing.

2. Child Safety Officer:

- Act as the primary point of contact for child safety concerns.
- Conduct annual risk assessments and ensure compliance with child safety policies.
- Lead staff training and maintain records of compliance.

3. Staff, Volunteers, and Contractors:

- Adhere to the Child Safety Code of Conduct.
- Attend mandatory child safety training and report any concerns about child safety or wellbeing.

Definitions

- Child/Children: A person under the age of 18 years.
- Child Harm or Abuse: Includes physical abuse, emotional or psychological abuse, sexual abuse, and neglect.
- Mandatory Reporting: The legal obligation to report suspected abuse or harm to relevant authorities.
- Cultural Safety: An environment that is spiritually, socially, and emotionally safe for individuals, free from discrimination and cultural harm.

Relevant Legislation and Standards

1. Legislation:

- National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.
- Relevant state and territory child protection laws.
- Privacy and confidentiality legislation.

2. Standards:

- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- National Standards for Out-of-Home Care.

Related Organisational Policies and Procedures

- Child Safety Code of Conduct.
- Incident Reporting and Management Procedure.
- Risk Assessment and Management Process.
- Record Keeping, Information Sharing, and External Reporting Policies.
- Charter of commitment to Children and Young People
- Online Safety Checklist

Policy Status and Review

- Approval: Approved by the Director of Optimum Intake Dietitians.
- Policy Effective Date: January 2025
- Review Cycle: Reviewed annually by the Child Safety Officer.
- Contact: For more information, contact the Child Safety Officer at Courtney.baleato@optimumintake.com.au

Implementation of the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations

1. Commitment to Child Safety and Wellbeing

Optimum Intake Dietitians is committed to embedding child safety into leadership, governance, and culture by:

- Making a public commitment to child safety.
- Implementing a Child Safety Code of Conduct.
- Conducting annual risk assessments.
- Ensuring governance structures support child safety policies and practices.

2. Taking Child Participation Seriously

Children are informed about their rights and participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously by:

- Providing child-friendly resources on safety and protective strategies.
- Encouraging children's feedback through regular engagement sessions.
- Training staff to understand and apply child rights-based approaches.

3. Involving Families and Communities

Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing by:

- Sharing child safety policies and procedures in accessible formats.
- Seeking input from families during policy reviews.
- Building cultural safety through partnerships with diverse community groups.
- Policies and practices for seeking parental consent for relevant activities.

4. Respecting Equity and Diversity

Equity is upheld, and diverse needs are respected in policy and practice by:

- Providing training on anti-discrimination and cultural safety.
- Developing policies and access to resources that address the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children with disabilities, and children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- Creating environments that are safe and welcoming for all children.
- Display poster/leaflets on 'Speaking up for Children'.

5. Ensuring Staff Are Suitable and Supported

People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice. Staff suitability and support are ensured by:

- Conducting rigorous recruitment processes, including working with children checks.
- Providing induction and ongoing training on child safety responsibilities.
- Implementing performance management practices that include child safety.

6. Child-Focused Complaint Systems

Processes to respond to complaints and concerns are child focused. Complaints are managed in a child-focused manner by:

- Having accessible, culturally safe complaints handling processes.
- Providing training to staff on responding to disclosures.
- Prioritising the safety and wellbeing of children during investigations.

7. Staff Knowledge, Skills, and Awareness

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

- Annual training on recognising harm and responding appropriately.
- Ongoing professional development opportunities.
- Supporting staff who report child safety concerns.

8. Safe Physical and Online Environments

Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed by:

- Conducting regular risk assessments of all environments.
- Implementing secure communication protocols for online interactions.
- Educating children and families about online safety.
- Conducting online safety checklists.
- Visitors to the organisation are appropriately logged and supervised.
- Staff are required to hold a valid working with children check certificate

9. Reviewing Child Safety Policies and Practices

Implementation of the national child safety principles is regularly reviewed and improved by:

- Engaging children, families, and staff in review processes.
- Analysing complaints and incidents to identify systemic improvements.
- Reporting review outcomes to stakeholders.

10. Documenting Policies and Procedures

Child safety policies and procedures are documented and accessible by:

- Ensuring documents are available in multiple formats.
- Regularly auditing compliance and understanding among staff.
- Consulting stakeholders to assess awareness and confidence in the policies.

This policy is a living document and will be reviewed annually to ensure it reflects best practices and complies with legal requirements.