

AGENCY Procedure: Centacare NENW Child Safety Code of Conduct

PURPOSE:

This document sets out the standards of conduct, professional and personal behaviour Centacare NENW requires its members to uphold when working with children and young people.

SCOPE:

This Child Safety Code of Conduct applies to all of Centacare NENW's governing body, management, staff, volunteers and contractors. It outlines the obligations, responsibilities and standards of behaviour Centacare NENW requires of all members to uphold.

All staff members at Centacare NENW support the safety, participation, wellbeing and empowerment of children under the age of 18 by:-

- Being aware of any risks to children and proactively taking steps to mitigate these risks where appropriate intervening to protect children from any harm.
- Actively listening and responding to the concerns of any child.
- Actively promoting cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children from minority backgrounds including:-
 - Aboriginal children (for example, by never questioning an Aboriginal child's self-identification);
 - Children with culturally and or linguistically diverse backgrounds (for example, by having zero tolerance of discrimination);
 - Children with special needs (e.g. when engaged with Centacare services);
 - Children who are same sex attracted, intersex or gender diverse.
- Maintaining an open, safe, and supportive environment for all children to learn, grow and interact.
- Taking effective measures to safeguard a child or children from harm where there are reasonable grounds for suspecting child abuse.
- Ensuring that allegation of child abuse or child safety concerns are reported in accordance with Centacare NENW's Child Safety Procedure.

- Ensuring that children and their families that have been assessed to be at risk will have their privacy protected as far as practicable by disclosing only necessary information to individuals who have a need to know.

All members of the Centacare NENW Community are committed to:-

- Never misuse electronic devices.

For example to:-

- Never access inappropriate material (e.g. pornography, violence, illicit drug use) and expose children to such material;

Never use electronic devices to exploit or harass a child;

- Never publish online any information that may identify a child, such as photos, videos, full name, age, email address, telephone number or residence without parental / guardian / carer consent.
- Never act in a way that may put children or young people at risk of abuse.
- Never take photographic or video footage of any child or young person without their consent and the written consent of their parent/carer.
- Never develop any 'special' relationships with a child that could be perceived as favouritism or manipulating child.
- Never engage in interactions with a child that involve unnecessary physical contact (e.g. sitting on laps).
- Never engage in any form of sexual conduct with a child, including making comments or sharing material that is sexually suggestive.
- Never engage in actions that have the potential to cause a child serious physical, emotional or psychological harm:-
 - Restricting a child's movements;
 - Shaming, belittling, degrading, humiliating, bullying or emotionally abuse a child.
- Never to expose a child to an open discussion of a mature or adult nature nor inappropriate language.
- Never offer a child or young person alcohol, cigarettes or other drugs.
- Never verbally assault a child or young person or create a climate of fear.

- Never subject a child or young person to unauthorised restrictive practices such as using exclusionary time-out as punishment.
- Never exchange personal contact details with children or young people or have unauthorised contact with children outside of the scope or the organisational service.
- Never to express personal views on culture, race or sexuality in the presence of a child.
- Never to discriminate against any child based on culture, race, ethnicity, disability, gender identity or sexual orientation.
- Never work with children whilst under the influence of alcohol or illicit drugs.
- Never violate a child's confidentiality by releasing identifiable information of the child, such as full name, age, email address, telephone number or residence without parental/guardian/carer consent.
- Never ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed abuse of a child.

Any person found to be breaching this Code of Conduct will face disciplinary action relative to the seriousness of the breach, and may be subject to criminal proceedings. This may include termination of employment with Centacare New England North West. Complaints about a breach of this Code of Conduct must be reported to the Centacare New England North West Complaints Officer.

Making a complaint:

Centacare NENW will ensure that all children and young people are informed of the Agency's Complaints Procedure, and that any issues will be addressed in a consistent and timely manner without fear of retribution.

Centacare NENW considers all matters of misconduct as a serious matter. If you have any concerns of potential breaches of this procedure, refer to our complaints procedure CBPRO – Child Safe Complaints Management. All complaints can be made to the Centacare NENW Grievance Officer.

Reporting suspected abuse of risk to a child:

If there are reasonable grounds to believe a child is at immediate and significant risk, Centacare Staff will report this to the following service as appropriate:-

- 1) Department of Community and Justice (DCJ), Child Protection Helpline: 13 2111.
- 2) Emergency Number: 000.

Breaches of this Code of Conduct

Any person found to be breaching this Code of Conduct will face disciplinary action relative to the seriousness of the breach and may be subject to criminal proceedings. This may include termination of employment.

All staff, volunteers, families and community members are required to speak up if they have concerns about the safety of children. Complaints about a breach of this Code of Conduct must be reported to the direct line manager in the first instance.

Centacare NENW Internal Reference Documents:-

- [CB PRO025 - Centacare NENW Child Safety Procedure.docx](#)
- CBPRO – Child Safe Complaints Management Procedure

External Reference Documents / Legislations:-

- [Children Legislation Amendment \(Wood Inquiry Recommendations\) Act 2009](#)
- [Children and Young Persons \(Care and Protection\) Act 1998](https://reporter.childstory.nsw.gov.au/s/article/NSW-legislation-and-the-MRG) (available at <https://reporter.childstory.nsw.gov.au/s/article/NSW-legislation-and-the-MRG>)
- [Child Protection \(Working with Children\) Act 2012](https://reporter.childstory.nsw.gov.au/s/article/NSW-legislation-and-the-MRG) (available at <https://reporter.childstory.nsw.gov.au/s/article/NSW-legislation-and-the-MRG>)