

# Child Safety Policy

## Section 1 - Preamble

(1) Charles Darwin University ('the University', 'CDU') is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of children (understood as individuals under 18 years of age) who are involved in, or may be affected by, University activities.

## Section 2 - Purpose

(2) This policy outlines the University's commitment to child safety, the appropriate standards of behaviour towards children, and the processes in place to ensure that all children involved in, or affected by, University activities are kept safe.

- a. References to the Working with Children Clearance under NT legislation is taken to encompass the equivalent in any other Australian jurisdiction in which staff are employed.

## Section 3 - Scope

(3) This policy applies to all staff, students, contractors, volunteers, and authorised visitors, and encompasses all activities authorised by the University, or that could be perceived as being so authorised.

## Section 4 - Policy

(4) The University is an inclusive and welcoming environment that supports the engagement and participation of children as part of the University community.

(5) The University has a zero tolerance for child abuse, and is committed to child safety and acting in the best interests of children at all times.

(6) The University endorses the [National Principles for Child Safe Organisations](#), which include:

- a. establishing an environment of mutual trust where children feel safe and supported;
- b. listening, and being responsive, to children's concerns and needs;
- c. providing accessible information about physical and online safety, health and wellbeing, with signposting to avenues for support;
- d. providing a safe environment and safeguards to protect children from harm;
- e. providing opportunities for children to have a voice and be involved in the review and enhancement of arrangements involving children; and
- f. respect for the individual child, ensuring they feel welcome, listened to, and included.

(7) The University will actively respond to any suspected or alleged cases of child exploitation or abuse, and ensure that appropriate controls are in place and compliance is monitored on an annual basis.

## Child-related work

(8) Staff, students, contractors, volunteers and authorised visitors engaged in activities authorised by the University that involve, or could involve, contact with children, are required to hold a valid Working with Children Clearance.

(9) Child-related work may include, but is not limited to, provision of:

- a. community or leisure activities, where staff, students contractors or volunteers are likely to come into unsupervised, regular, direct contact with children;
- b. counseling or similar support services;
- c. education and training of students under eighteen (18) years of age;
- d. music or sports programs;
- e. registered childcare services operated by the University; and
- f. residential accommodation and related services.

(10) Costs of applying for, or renewing, a Working with Children Clearance will not be paid by the University, except in the case of renewals for current staff.

(11) Students participating in placements which involve direct contact with children, without the presence of a qualified supervisor, must obtain a Working with Children Clearance.

## Standards of behaviour for staff and students

(12) Staff and students who work, or have contact, with children, including in teaching and research, are expected to adhere to the following behaviours:

- a. treat all children with respect;
- b. listen, and appropriately respond, to the views and concerns of children;
- c. be aware of, and avoid, behaviours that could be perceived as child exploitation or abuse;
- d. comply with all relevant Australian State and Commonwealth legislation, and overseas legislation (where University activities take place outside Australia), including laws relating to child labour;
- e. disclose immediately all charges, convictions and other outcomes of an offence that relates to child exploitation or abuse, including those under traditional law, which occurred before, or occur during, teaching or research activity; and
- f. report immediately concerns or allegations of child exploitation or abuse, and policy noncompliance, in accordance with the [Child Abuse Allegation and Reporting Procedure](#).

(13) Unacceptable behaviours towards children include, but are not limited to:

- a. developing special relationships that could be seen as favouritism;
- b. exchanging personal contact details, such as phone numbers, social networking sites or email addresses with children or their families, unless required by specific work related circumstances;
- c. hiring children for domestic or other labour which is inappropriate given their age or developmental stage, which interferes with their time available for education and recreational activities, or which places them at significant risk of injury;
- d. engaging children in any form of sexual activity;
- e. inviting unaccompanied children into private residences, unless they are at immediate risk of injury or in physical danger;
- f. language or behaviour that is harassing, abusive, sexually provocative, demeaning or culturally inappropriate;

- g. sharing proximate sleeping quarters unless absolutely necessary, in which case the permission of the supervisor, and a parent or guardian where possible to do so, must be obtained and another adult be present (noting that this does not apply to an individual's own children);
- h. using computers, mobile phones, video cameras, cameras or social media to exploit or harass children, or access child exploitation material; and
- i. using physical punishment.

## **Working with Children Clearance**

### **Obligations**

(14) All staff, students, contractors, volunteers and authorised visitors are required to:

- a. carry their Working with Children Clearance document at all times while engaged in child-related work; and
- b. notify the University immediately of any change in circumstances which impacts a person's ability to maintain a valid Working with Children Clearance in accordance with the [Working with Children Clearance Procedure](#).
- c. All contractors are responsible for their organisation's compliance and must maintain a register of their employees' Working with Children Clearance status.

(15) Organisational units that engage a contractor, will monitor the contractor's compliance with this policy.

### **Consequence of not having a clearance**

(16) It is an offence under the Northern Territory [Care and Protection of Children Act 2007](#) to employ, or otherwise engage, a person to undertake child-related work, unless that person holds a valid Working with Children Clearance. A penalty may be imposed on individuals or organisations where there is failure to comply.

(17) The University will exclude current, new and prospective staff, students, contractors, volunteers or authorised visitors from engaging in child-related work if:

- a. their Working with Children Clearance is revoked; or
- b. they are denied a Working with Children Clearance.

(18) Commencement of employment or engagement will not take place until the relevant person has been issued with a Working with Children Clearance and the University has verified this, or an exemption has been granted by the relevant Northern Territory Government department, or by the relevant government department in the jurisdiction in which the person works.

### **University's obligations regarding students under 18 years of age**

(19) The University has obligations under the [Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000](#) and the [National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018](#) regarding the welfare of, and protections for, international students on student visas who are under 18 years of age. In particular, there may be requirements for welfare support and protections where a student's parents, legal custodian or eligible relative is no longer able to provide them, or during critical incidents or emergencies that disrupt welfare arrangements.

(20) Please refer to the [International Students - Welfare of International Students U18 Procedure](#) for more information.

### **Reporting suspected child abuse**

(21) Under the [Care and Protection of Children Act 2007](#), anyone engaged by the University to carry out child related work must report suspected or alleged cases of child exploitation or abuse to the Northern Territory Child Protection reporting line on 1800 700 250 or to the Northern Territory police force. The Director People and Culture must be

informed of such cases.

(22) Staff must report any behaviour that is suspected of being child exploitation or abuse or policy non-compliance, including new information regarding persons already reported, in accordance with the [Child Abuse Allegation and Reporting Procedure](#).

## **Confidentiality and records**

(23) Confidentiality is required for any matter that may give rise to misconduct allegations as a result of a breach of this Policy.

(24) Information and records pertaining to child safety and child abuse may only be divulged to those with direct involvement (either internally or externally), with the following exceptions:

- a. where the matter is subject to legal proceedings or other actions which require the presentation of records held by the University by way of subpoena or similar; or
- b. where there is a risk of harm to persons unless information or records are divulged; or
- c. where there is a clear public interest obligation to share information, such as a duty to disclose information to a professional accreditation board, or a duty to report under legislation.

(25) All records and documents considered part of child safety reporting must be stored on an appropriate, confidential University file. Records of reports must be kept in accordance with the University's [Records and Information Management Policy and Procedure](#).

## **Section 5 - Non-Compliance**

(26) Non-compliance with Governance Documents is considered a breach of the [Code of Conduct – Staff](#) or the [Code of Conduct – Students](#), as applicable, and is treated seriously by the University. Reports of concerns about non-compliance will be managed in accordance with the applicable disciplinary procedures outlined in the [Charles Darwin University and Union Enterprise Agreement 2025](#) and the [Code of Conduct – Students](#).

(27) Complaints may be raised in accordance with the [Complaints and Grievance Policy and Procedure – Employees](#) and [Complaints Policy – Students](#).

(28) All staff members have an individual responsibility to raise any suspicion, allegation or report of fraud or corruption in accordance with the [Fraud and Corruption Control Policy](#) and [Whistleblower Reporting \(Improper Conduct\) Procedure](#).

## Status and Details

<b>Status</b>	Historic
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<b>Responsible Executive</b>	Fiona Coulson Vice-Chancellor
<b>Implementation Officer</b>	Peta Preo Director People and Culture
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