



Child Safety & Wellbeing

Section 4



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4 Child Safety & Wellbeing Policy

DVAC is committed to the safety, wellbeing, and empowerment of all children and young people accessing our services including Aboriginal children & young people, Torres Strait Islander children & young people, those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, those who identify as LGBTQIA+ and children with disability. DVAC accepts responsibility to be aware of the safety needs of the children of adult clients.

A safe environment is one in which children and young people are free from harm or abuse of any type. DVAC and all our Association Members have a zero-tolerance approach to any form of child abuse. We support the rights of all children & young people and we will act immediately to ensure an environment is maintained where children, young people and all participants feel safe, respected, valued, and always empowered.

4.1 Purpose

This policy was written to demonstrate the strong commitment of DVAC, and all employees to child safety and wellbeing. DVAC has established and is maintaining child safe and child friendly environments.



4.2 Statement

DVAC works directly with children, young people and their primary care giver, predominantly women, to support them to be safe from harm and abuse in their homes and to ensure they are always safe from harm at DVAC and from any DVAC associated person. At DVAC we acknowledge and understand our obligations under Articles 1-54 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the child and recognises that all children and young people have the right to be treated with respect and care, and to be safe from all forms of abuse. DVAC is compliant with the Queensland Department of Child Safety, Youth & Women's Child Protection Guide, and comply with the Child Protection Act 1999, Child Protection Regulation 2011, Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000, the Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Regulation 2011, with the QLD Human Rights Act (2019) and with the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations. DVAC's Child Safe Charter of Commitment states that DVAC we will maintain an environment where children, young people and all participants feel safe, valued, respected, and always empowered. DVAC commits to continue to take measures to protect the safety and welfare of children and young people by ensuring that our environments are safe both physically and emotionally for children and young people as well as their primary caregiver. DVAC further commits to ensuring all our promotional material is easily accessible; that our policies, procedures, and practice guidelines are up to date and reflect the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations and that our culture reflects our commitment. At DVAC we understand that being a child safe organisation is about more than having the right policies and procedures in place. It requires conscious action and proactive behaviours to protect children from harm. It means creating a culture of safety that extends from participation and education through to ensuring all members feel safe and secure in reporting inappropriate behaviour.

4.3 Scope

This policy applies to:

- All [employees](#) while conducting DVAC duties.
- All children and young people (0 to under 18 years) of the adult clients with whom DVAC employees have contact in the course of their duties.
- Any children and young people who are receiving services from DVAC, even when their parent/s are not.
- All situations where employees, in the course of their duties, become aware of significant harm being experienced by a child or young person, in the context of:
 - the child's or young person's home/s
 - outside the child's or young person's home, for example at school or a camp
 - while receiving services from DVAC.

4.4 Definitions

Employees	Any paid and unpaid employees, board members, relevant sub-contractors and/or students
Child Abuse	<p>There are four different types of child abuse:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • physical abuse • sexual abuse • emotional abuse • neglect. <p>Child abuse can be a single incident or can be several different incidents that take place over time.</p>



	<p>Under the <i>Child Protection Act 1999</i>, it does not matter how much a child is harmed, but whether a child:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • has suffered harm, is suffering harm, or is at risk of suffering harm • does not have a parent able and willing to protect them from harm. <p>Harm is defined as any detrimental effect of a significant nature on the child's physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing (section 9 of the <i>Child Protection Act 1999</i>). For harm to be significant, the detrimental effect on a child's wellbeing must be substantial or serious, more than transitory and must be demonstrable in the child's presentation, functioning or behaviour.</p>
Harm	<p>'Harm' is any detrimental effect of a significant nature on a child's physical, psychological, or emotional well-being. Exposure to domestic and family violence or related trauma is emotionally and psychologically harmful to children. 'By definition', therefore, the children and young people who receive our services have been harmed and may be at risk of harm.</p>
Sexual abuse	<p>Sexual abuse occurs when an adult, stronger child or adolescent uses their power or authority to involve a child in sexual activity.</p> <p>Sexual abuse can be physical, verbal, or emotional and can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • kissing or holding a child in a sexual manner • exposing a sexual body part to a child • having sexual relations with a child under 16 years of age • talking in a sexually explicit way that is not age or developmentally appropriate • making obscene phone calls or remarks to a child • sending obscene mobile text messages or emails to a child • fondling a child in a sexual manner • persistently intruding on a child's privacy • penetrating the child's vagina or anus by penis, finger, or any other object • oral sex • rape • incest • showing pornographic films, magazines or photographs to a child • having a child pose or perform in a sexual manner • forcing a child to watch a sexual act • child prostitution. <p>For more information about child sexual abuse and to download a copy of the booklet Child sexual abuse – Things you need to know.</p>
Emotional Abuse	<p>Emotional abuse occurs when a child's social, emotional, cognitive, or intellectual development is impaired or threatened. It can include emotional deprivation due to persistent:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • rejection • hostility • teasing/bullying • yelling • criticism • exposure of a child to domestic and family violence.
Neglect	<p>Neglect occurs when a child's basic necessities of life are not met, and their health and development are affected. Basic needs include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • food • housing • health care • adequate clothing • personal hygiene • hygienic living conditions • timely provision of medical treatment

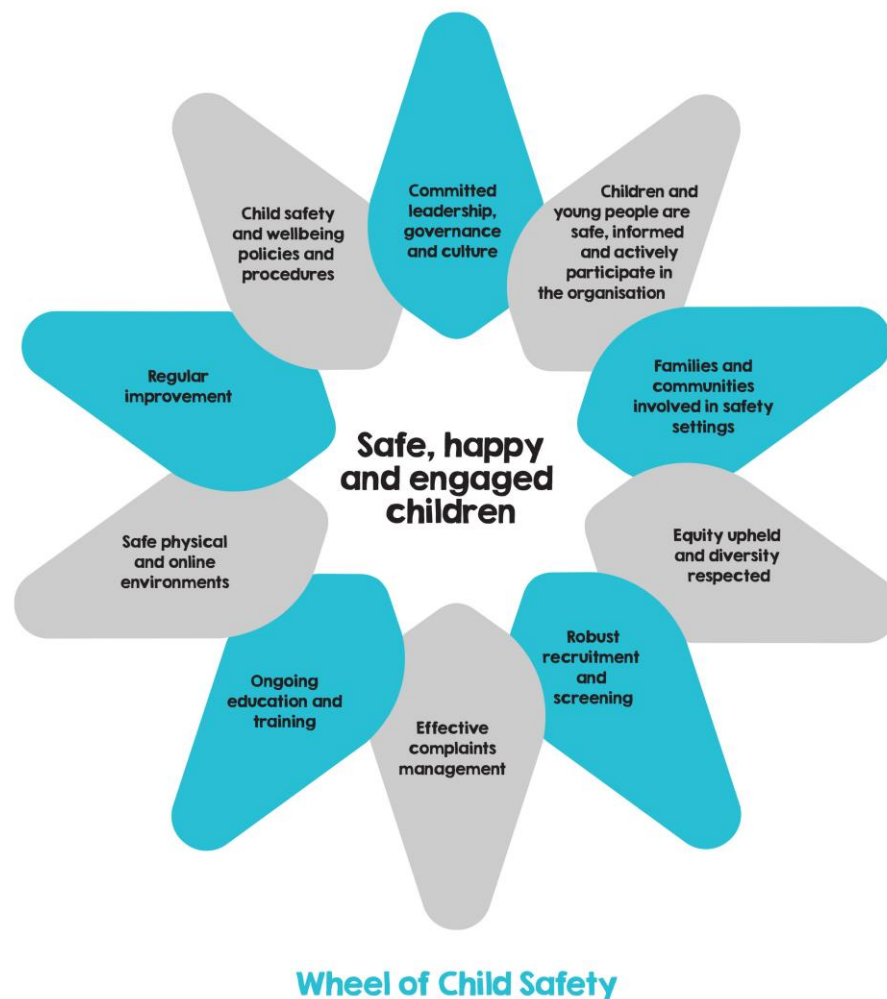


	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> adequate supervision.
A child-safe organisation	A child-safe organisation takes action to protect children from physical, sexual, emotional, psychological, and cultural abuse and from neglect. In a child-safe organisation, this commitment to protecting children is embedded in the organisation’s culture, and responsibility for acting is understood and accepted at all levels of the organisation as per the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.
Duty of Care	Duty of care as a concept is part of the larger legal concept of negligence. There are no precise legislated definitions for the concepts of “duty of care” and “negligence”. Essentially duty of care means being in a position where someone else is relying on you to be careful, and where, if you are not careful, it is reasonably predictable that the other person might suffer harm.

4.5 Child Safety & Wellbeing Procedures

The DVAC Child Safety & Wellbeing Policy and Procedures are based on the National Principles of Child Safe Organisations, the Queensland Department of Child Safety, Youth & Women’s QLD Child Protection Guide 2.1, and comply with the Child Protection Act 1999, Child Protection Regulation 2011, Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000, Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Regulation 2011, the QLD Human Rights Act (2019) and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the child

The procedure outlines our Child Safety & Wellbeing framework through the ten National Principles incorporating processes from the Department of Child Safety, Youth & Women’s QLD Child Protection Guide 2.1.



4.5.1 *Principle 1: Child Safe Culture*

DVAC puts into practice our commitment to child safety and wellbeing modelling a child safe culture at all levels of the organisation by:

- A public commitment to child safety and wellbeing and the promotion and protection of children’s rights by the organisation and our leadership. This is evidenced by:
 1. the DVAC Child Safe Charter of Commitment being visible in age appropriate poster format throughout our service sites, on our website and social media pages and in a child friendly version in the welcome pack to children & young people accessing our services.
 2. All programs within DVAC that support children & young people work from a child rights-based perspective ensuring that their experiences are valued, that they are the experts of their own story and understand their own rights.
- DVAC’s entire policy and procedure suite incorporates how to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children & young people in all aspects of the work done on and off site. This includes the Child Safety & Wellbeing Policy & Procedure.



- Governance arrangements that facilitate the implementation of Child Safety & Wellbeing Policy and Procedures. The following policies & procedures in the DVAC Section 2. Governance suite includes the Safety and Wellbeing of children & young people:
 - a) 2.5 Principles of Governance.
 - b) 2.9.10 Strategic & Operational Planning.
 - c) 2.7 Child Safe Charter of Commitment.
 - d) 2.9.3 Statement of Matter Reserved to the Board.
 - e) 2.9.4 Role of Service CEO.
 - f) 2.9.4.2 CEO KPI's.
 - g) 2.9.8.1 Board Performance.
 - h) 2.9.8.2 Recruitment (of Board members).
 - i) 2.9.8.4 Board Induction & Onboarding.
 - j) 2.9.8.5 Termination of Board Positions.
 - k) Section3 Risk Management
 - l) 2.9.15 Subcontracting/Brokerage Procedure.
 - m) 2.10 Code of Conduct.
 - n) 2.10.10 Child Safe Conduct.
- DVAC's Risk Assessment and Management policies & procedures include processes to ensure children & young people are safe while being supported:
 - a) 3.6 Risk Management Procedures
 - b) 3.6.4 Risk Management Framework
 - c) 3.6.4.1 Risk Management Framework Flowchart
 - d) 3.6.5 On site Risk
 - e) 3.6.5.1 Lockdown
 - f) 3.6.5.3 Bomb Threat
 - g) 3.6.6 Off-site Risk
 - h) 3.6.6.2 Risk at Events
 - i) 3.6.7 General Privacy Precautions
 - j) 3.7 Duty of Care Policy
 - k) 3.8.2 Acting on and Reporting Concerns of Child Abuse or Neglect
 - l) 3.8.3.1 Self Harm
 - m) 3.8.3.2 Suicide & Suicidal Intention
 - n) 3.11 Critical Incident Policy
 - o) 3.14.3 Auditing
 - p) 3.19 Crisis Response Policy
 - q) 3.21 Pandemic Response Policy
- Policies and guidance on record keeping, information sharing and external reporting in Section 5 Rights & Obligations.



4.5.2 *Principle 2: Rights*

DVAC will implement the following strategies to enable children & young people to have their rights respected, participate in decision-making, and have their voices heard.

- Programs or resources to educate and engage with children & young people about their rights, safe environments, protective strategies for staying safe and seeking help when needed.
- Information and training provided to employees and volunteers to ensure they understand child rights-based approaches and are skilled at engaging with young people.
- Actively seeking feedback children and young people and encourages their participation in decision-making, including on safety and wellbeing issues as per the DVAC Rights & Obligations policy & Procedure suite.
- Processes to regularly review opportunities for children and young people's participation.
- Policies as outlined in section 5.11 Feedback & Complaints and practices for seeking children's consent for relevant activities.

DVAC is committed to actively encouraging feedback and engagement to ensure that we are always current with client and community needs by:

- Asking clients including children & young people to fill in surveys/feedback forms either in-service or on-line through the DVAC website after attending the service or receiving support off-site or via the phone.
- Facilitate client feedback that is accessible and meaningful for each program for children & young people, at least annually.
- facilitate focus groups with family members or the wider communities we support at least annually.
- Asking stakeholders including children & young people to fill in surveys/feedback forms either in-service or on-line through the DVAC website after attending the service or attending meetings or training off-site or having exchanged information via the phone or email.
- Asking family members or the wider communities we support to fill in surveys/feedback forms either in-service or on-line through the DVAC website from

Service Managers and Team Leaders are responsible for ensuring that feedback is actively sought from clients, family members and the wider communities we support. Team Leaders are responsible for documenting and sharing the learnings and feedback with the wider Organisational Leadership Group.

4.5.3 *Principle 3: Communication & Participation*

DVAC places at the centre of our client work their experiences by implementing effective communication and participation strategies for engaging with and responding to their diverse needs and the needs of families and communities.

- DVAC's child safety and wellbeing policies and procedures are made clear and accessible to families and communities by posting information on the DVAC website and social media pages, posters in the service sites, age appropriate flyers and brochures



- DVAC seeks the input of families and communities on the organisation's approach to child safety and wellbeing, including when reviewing policies and procedures by organising focus groups, or feedback opportunities.
- DVAC engages with families and communities to build cultural safety and inclusion through partnerships and respectful relationships.
- DVAC has the following Policies and practices for seeking parental consent for relevant activities. See 5.10.4 Consent for Children & Young People.

4.5.4 *Principle 4: Equity & Diversity Needs*

DVAC creates an environment where children & young people's diverse circumstances and needs are recognised, and all children & young people feel safe, welcome, and included by:

- Implementing policies on accessibility, anti-discrimination, cultural safety, diversity, and inclusion. See 5.5 Access & Diversity Policy.
- Strategies used at all levels of the organisation to counter discrimination and exclusion, including guidance on creating environments that are safe and welcoming for all children.
- Considering and addressing the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children with disability, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, children who are unable to live at home, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex children and young people by making sure they are represented in the feedback DVAC receives from clients, the community, regular focus groups and programs.
- Providing and supporting training for employees on identifying and responding to children and young people with diverse backgrounds and needs.
- Providing accessible, child-friendly, and culturally safe information to children and young people about the support and complaints processes available on the DVAC website, on DVAC social media pages and at the DVAC service sites through educational and informational material, posters, brochures and flyers.

4.5.5 *Principle 5: Suitability & Support*

DVAC puts into practice its recruitment and employees development policies including screening, induction, and supervision to ensure that employees and volunteers reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice:

- Policies and guidance on recruitment, including advertising, selection criteria, pre-employment screening, referee checks and duty statements that includes Child Safety & Wellbeing statements and information.
- Systems for ensuring that all relevant employees have current working with children checks or equivalent background checks. See HR Policy on Staff recruitment and selection.
- Induction training for all employees and volunteers on their child safety and wellbeing responsibilities, the organisation's child safety and wellbeing policies and procedures, external reporting obligations (e.g. mandatory reporting) and the Code of Conduct.
- Policies and strategies for ongoing supervision, support and performance management of employees and volunteers. See section 7 HR Policy and Procedures.



4.5.6 *Principle 6: Child Focused Complaints Processes*

DVAC has detailed Child Focused Concerns and Complaints Process. The 5.11 Feedback & Complaints Policy and procedures all outline the commitment DVAC has taken to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children and young people and that their voices are always heard by employees and the organisation.

DVAC employees are required during the first meeting with a child or young person to introduce them to the Supervisor where possible by a face to face introduction or alternatively as a minimum providing contact details and information about their supervisor. Additionally, staff will give the client a feedback and complaints information flyer with the supervisors contact details on as well as information about the complaints process.

DVAC has the following age appropriate feedback, concerns, and complaints resources:

- How to Complain poster for children & young people,
- Children & Young Persons Complaint Form,
- The 'My Rights at DVAC' poster for children & young people

DVAC has developed all the material for children and young people with children and young people accessing our support ensuring minority groups are represented.

DVAC furthermore has a detailed [Duty of Care](#) that outlines the process for receiving and responding to disclosures about child abuse or neglect.

4.5.7 *Principle 7: Ongoing Child Aware Training & Education for Employees*

Awareness of harm and risk of harm

DVAC employees are required to:

- When conducting a safety assessment with a client, always ascertain whether there are children or young people living in the home and include in the assessment the safety risks pertinent to the children/young people, as well as considering their needs
- Be 'child-aware' – when in contact with parents under stress, explore whether their capacity to provide safe care for their children is affected
- Remain open to the possibility that a child or young person is experiencing neglect or abuse in addition to that associated with family violence by a perpetrator.

Be aware of types of parental or carer actions which are likely to cause harm:

- Physical abuse, e.g. beating, shaking, burning, biting, or grabbing hard enough to leave a mark, throwing a child or strangulation. Non-accidental injuries may result from excessive physical discipline.
- [Emotional abuse](#) or neglect, e.g. constant criticism, belittling, teasing, withholding praise and affection, constant yelling. It can include failure to provide the psychological nurturing necessary for a child's physical and emotional growth and development.
- Neglect, e.g. the ongoing failure to provide a child with the basic necessities of life and adequate supervision needed.
- [Sexual abuse](#) or exploitation, e.g. sexual innuendo, sexual exposure, showing pornographic images, sexual touch, and invasive acts.



Be aware that harm or risk of harm can arise from the actions or inaction of other persons in the child's life, as well as parents or relatives of the child or young person:

- Another carer of the child or young person.
- The child or young person themselves (e.g. self-harm).
- Another child or young person (e.g. an older sibling).
- Another adult not related to the child or young person.
- A DVAC employee.
- Another service provider.

These Child Safety & Wellbeing policy and procedures are supported by mandatory induction and training procedures. These include, for all DVAC employees:

- At induction, being made aware of the policy and their roles and responsibilities in implementing them.
- Being offered internal and external ongoing professional development to support the application of the policy & procedures.
- Encouragement to access additional training about identifying and responding to child protection issues.
- Regular practice development meetings to improve child aware processes.
- At program meetings and internal and external supervision.

4.5.8 *Principle 8: Promoting Safe physical & Online Environments*

DVAC is very mindful of the impact of potential harm in the service environment including our on-line spaces. DVAC has a detailed Media monitoring of any comments made on our social media pages and ensuring they are managed to maximise the safety of children and young people who may be interacting with the service or each other through our social media pages and our programs. DVAC furthermore, has clear procedures for staff that outlines how they ensure that children & young people are safe physically, emotionally, and online while engaging in a DVAC program. Our processes are informed by Online safety information for children and Young People such as:

<https://www.esafety.gov.au/kids/i-want-help-with>
<https://www.esafety.gov.au/educators/toolkit-schools>

Our processes include:

- Ensuring the Safety of DVAC services online
- Client use of own device using DVAC Programs
- Client not accessing DVAC WiFi
- Kids not using external material when doing programs with DVAC

DVAC is committed to training all employees who work within this scope on online environments and safety for Children and Young people, and this training is accessible via the e-safety commissioner and integrated into the foundational training plan for staff.



4.5.9 *Principle 9: Review Process for Child Safe Principles*

The 3.13 Quality Improvement Policy guides how DVAC continuously assess our organisation and the services we offer to ensure that we are providing the best possible quality support to clients, including children & young people and people of diverse backgrounds and identities. That paired with our Feedback & Complaints Policy ensures that DVAC has constant eyes on the work any of our employees do with children & young people and that their experiences and opinions are valued and incorporated into service improvement strategies.

4.5.10 *Principle 10: Policies & Documents Demonstrating the Organisation is Safe*

As outlined in previous principles all DVAC's policies, procedures, feedback documents, educational material and information outline demonstrates our commitment to ethical, professional, and safe processes and services for children and young people that focuses on their expertise and wellbeing.

4.6 References

- [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the child](#)
- [Child Protection Act 1999,](#)
- [Child Protection Regulation 2011,](#)
- [Working with Children \(Risk Management and Screening\) Act 2000,](#)
- [Working with Children \(Risk Management and Screening\) Regulation 2011](#)
- [The QLD Human Rights Act \(2019\)](#)
- [National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.](#)
- [Child sexual abuse – Things you need to know.](#)
- [QLD Child Protection guide 2.1.](#)

4.1 Review Schedule

Version	Date Endorsed	Review Date	HSQF Standard	Approved by	Content reviewed/ purpose
1	9.11.2020	11.09.2023	3,4,5	CEO	Complete policy & procedure review to include Child Safe Organisation National Principles.

4.2 Supporting Documents

- **Section 2 Governance**
 - 2.5 Principles of Governance.
 - 2.9.10 Strategic & Operational Planning.
 - 2.7 Child Safe Charter of Commitment.
 - 2.9.3 Statement of Matter Reserved to the Board.
 - 2.9.4 Role of Service CEO.
 - 2.9.4.2 CEO KPI's.
 - 2.9.8.1 Board Performance.



- 2.9.8.2 Recruitment (of Board members).
- 2.9.8.4 Board Induction & Onboarding.
- 2.9.8.5 Termination of Board Positions.
- 2.9.14 Risk Management.
- 2.9.15 Subcontracting/Brokerage Procedure.
- 2.9.8.3 Blue Cards
- 2.10 Code of Conduct.
- 2.10.10 Child Safe Conduct.

- **Section 3 Risk & WHS**

- 3.6 Risk Management Procedures
 - 3.6.4 Risk Management Framework
 - 3.6.4.1 Risk Management Framework Flowchart
 - 3.6.5 On site Risk
 - 3.6.5.1 Lockdown
 - 3.6.5.3 Bomb Threat
 - 3.6.6 Off-site Risk
 - 3.6.6.2 Risk at Events
 - 3.6.7 General Privacy Precautions
 - 3.6.8 Blue Card Procedure
- 3.7 Duty of Care Policy
- 3.8.2 Acting on and Reporting Concerns of Child Abuse or Neglect
 - 3.8.3.1 Self Harm
 - 3.8.3.2 Suicide & Suicidal Intention
- 3.11 Critical Incident Policy
- 3.13 Quality Improvement Policy
- 3.14.3 Auditing
- 3.19 Crisis Response Policy
- 3.21 Pandemic Response Policy

- Section 5 Rights & Obligations.

- 5.11 Feedback & Complaints
- 5.10.4 Consent for Children & Young People
- 5.5 Access & Diversity Policy

- [DVAC Child Safe Charter of Commitment](#)

- <https://www.esafety.gov.au/kids/i-want-help-with>
- <https://www.esafety.gov.au/educators/toolkit-schools>