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to meet community needs

Jacaranda Community Centre

Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

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1 About This Policy

1.1 Purpose

- (a) This Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy demonstrates Jacaranda Community Centre's commitment to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. We are committed to creating and maintaining a child safe and child-friendly organisation where children and youths feel safe.
- (b) This Policy sets out general principles that guide the management of child and youth safety at Jacaranda Community Centre, in line with the [Children and Community Services Act 2004](#) and [the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations](#).
- (c) This Policy was developed to inform all leaders, staff and volunteers of their obligations to act appropriately towards children and provides guidance on processes and procedures that aim to ensure we provide a safe environment for children and the wellbeing of young people.

1.2 Scope

- (a) This Policy applies to all people who conduct work for Jacaranda Community Centre, whether or not it is in direct contact with child-related work, in a paid or unpaid capacity. The persons include;
 - (i) Board members;
 - (ii) staff;
 - (iii) volunteers;
 - (iv) interns;

1.3 Responsibilities

At Jacaranda Community Centre, we actively create and maintain strong child safe culture and have delegated roles and responsibilities to promote child wellbeing.

- (a) **Board members including the Chief Executive Officer are responsible for;**
 - (i) Making a public commitment to child safety and wellbeing.
 - (ii) Ensuring effective child safety and wellbeing governance, policies, procedures, code of conduct and practices are in place and followed.
 - (iii) Modelling a child safe culture that actively engages the organisation in promoting and improving child safety, cultural safety and wellbeing.
 - (iv) Modelling and reinforcing attitudes that value children.

- (v) Enabling inclusive practices where diverse needs of each client is considered. ([*Training – Duty of Care*](#))
 - (vi) Reinforcing high standards of mutual respect between staff and youth. ([*Respect Provision*](#))
 - (vii) Creating a culturally safe environment for Aboriginal children and youth.
 - (viii) Ensuring public commitment to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children is available and displayed for public access.
 - (ix) Understanding children's diverse circumstances and providing support.
 - (x) Implement risk management plans and conducting risk assessments, considering risks posed by service and physical environment. ([*Child Safe Risk Assessment*](#))
 - (xi) Ensuring all staff and volunteers do not consume or are under the influence of alcohol or be affected by drugs. ([*Alcohol & Drugs Policy*](#))
 - (xii) Keeping up to date and complying with any relevant changes in legislation and practices in relation to this Policy.
 - (xiii) Conducting recruitment and induction processes for staff in line with this Policy. ([*Induction Policy*](#))
 - (xiv) Validating Working with Children Check (refer [*to Definitions*](#)) of staff, volunteers, and students before commencing work.
 - (xv) Fulfilling legal obligations, including mandatory reporting and duty of care obligations.
 - (xvi) Ensuring confidential information is only shared with relevant authorities to the extent necessary to promote the wellbeing or safety of children is consistent with their best interest.
- (b) **Staff, volunteers, and interns are responsible for;**
- (i) Ensuring effective upholding and understanding of child safety and wellbeing governance, policies, procedures, code of conduct and practices.
 - (ii) Modelling a child safe culture that actively engages the organisation in promoting and improving child safety, cultural safety and wellbeing.
 - (iii) Undertaking any training relating to child safety which may be reasonably required to undertake in accordance with this Policy.
 - (iv) Enabling inclusive practices where diverse needs of each client is considered. ([*Training – Duty of Care*](#))
 - (v) Creating a culturally safe environment for Aboriginal children and youth.
 - (vi) Obtaining appropriate consent from children and, where necessary, their parents or guardians, for child participation.
 - (vii) Understanding children's diverse circumstances and providing support.
 - (viii) Fulfilling legal obligations, including mandatory reporting and duty of care obligations.
 - (ix) Ensuring confidential information is only shared with relevant authorities to the extent necessary to promote the wellbeing or safety of children is consistent with their best interest.

- (x) Reporting any concerns about child safety to the Chief Executive Officer immediately about any immediate risks to a child's safety, and working with relevant authorities to promote wellbeing.

1.4 The National Principles

- (a) [The National Principles of a Child Safe Organisations](#) were developed by the National Children's Commissioner, and implement the key recommendations and safe standards of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sex Abuse. They provide a nationally consistent approach to creating child safe organisational cultures.
- (b) We support the National Principles and will endeavor to embrace them at Jacaranda Community Centre. This Policy aligns with the National Principles.
- (c) The National Principles require that:
 - 1. *Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture.*
 - 2. *Children and young people are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.*
 - 3. *Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.*
 - 4. *Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice.*
 - 5. *People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.*
 - 6. *Processes to respond to complaints and concerns are child focused.*
 - 7. *Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training.*
 - 8. *Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.*
 - 9. *Implementation of the national child safe principles is regularly reviewed and improved.*
 - 10. *Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people.*

1.5 Definitions

In this Policy:

- (a) **Child:** a person below the age of 18 years old.
- (b) **Child abuse** includes;

- (i) any act committed against a child involving a sexual of grooming offence
 - (ii) the infliction, on a child, of physical violence or serious emotional or psychological harm
 - (iii) the serious neglect of a child
- (c) **Child harm:** all forms of physical, emotional or sexual abuse or exploitation, neglect or harm.
- (d) **Child safety** includes matters related to protecting all children from child abuse, managing the risk of child abuse, providing support to a child at risk of child abuse, and responding to suspicions, incidents, disclosures or allegations of child abuse.
- (e) **Child-related work:** usually involves direct and indirect contact with a child, irrespective of whether that contact is supervised or not.
- (f) **Contact with a child:** physical contact, face-to-face contact, written communication, oral communication, or electronic communication. Contact does not include providing information to children on our website or through other means where there is no exchange of information or communication with a child.
- (g) **Cultural safety:** refers to the practice of creating an environment in which individuals feel secure and respected in their cultural identities.
- (h) **Disclosure:** in the context of this Policy, refers to a statement that a child or young person makes to another person that describes or reveals abuse.
- (i) **Duty of care:** obligation of all staff working with children to take reasonable steps to protect them from reasonably foreseeable harm.
- (j) **Mandatory reporting:** legal requirement to report a reasonable belief of child physical or sexual abuse to child protection authorities.
- (k) **Neglect:** failure to provide a child with an adequate standard of nutrition, medical care, clothing, shelter or supervision.
- (l) **Volunteer:** a person who performs work without remuneration or reward for the organisation.
- (m) **Working with Children Check:** a compulsory screening undertaken by the Western Australian Government responsible for determining if a person is eligible to work in the areas of child-related work.
- (n) **Workers** include;

- (i) Organisational employees, ongoing and non-going and including the Chief Executive Officer.
- (ii) Board members who are a member of the Organisation.
- (iii) Any persons contractually bound to undertake work for Jacaranda Community Centre and required to comply with policies.
- (iv) Unpaid personnel (such as interns or volunteers) undertaking work for the organisation.

2 Implementing the National Principles

2.1 A commitment to child safety and wellbeing

National Principle 1: Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance.

- (a) Jacaranda Community Centre is committed to ensuring the safety, wellbeing and human rights of children. Across our services, we endeavor to create environments where all children can feel safe.
- (b) We demonstrate this principle through;
 - (i) championing children's rights, and modelling best practice, in ensuring child safety and wellbeing.
 - (ii) ensuring this Policy is publicly assessable and available, promoting an environment of safety culture.
 - (iii) providing appropriate training and induction processes as to how this Policy can be applied in practice.
 - (iv) ensuring that all staff have the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children safe.
 - (v) maintain the safety and security of any of our facilities and environments which may be accessed by children (including online platforms).
 - (vi) where appropriate, involving children and their families in decisions affecting them.
 - (vii) when there are any allegations or complaints in relation to child safety, they are handled promptly and with care.
- (c) We value and respect children and young people and welcome them regardless of their abilities, age, sex, gender or social economic or cultural background.
- (d) Safeguarding children from harm and abuse is an essential responsibility for Jacaranda Community Centre. We are committed to ensuring that any child who comes into contact with us is properly safeguarded.

- (e) We believe that no child or young person should experience abuse or harm and we are committed to the protection of youth. This Policy is intended to provide guidance and overarching principles to those who represent us as volunteer or staff, to guide our approach to child protection and safeguarding.
- (f) It is our intention that a child safe culture should be embedded in all levels of our organisation, including but not limited to our leadership and governance as well as amongst all of our other workers.
- (g) When dealing with concerns about a child's safety or wellbeing, we are guided by a consideration of what is in the best interests of the child.

2.2 Taking child participation and consent seriously

National Principle 2: Children and young people are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.

- (a) Protecting and promoting children's right to participate is central to the National Principles and this Policy.
- (b) Jacaranda Community Centre is aimed at creating an environment where children are included and involved, which help in promoting children to feel, and be, safe.
- (c) Across our work, staff identify opportunities to seek the views of children and encourage their participation in decision-making.
- (h) We are committed to;
 - (i) examining our activities for opportunities to involve children.
 - (ii) providing appropriate advice and training on children's rights.
 - (iii) modelling good practice approaches to engaging with children.
 - (iv) informing children in an accessible and child-friendly way about their rights, and their purpose, process, and outcomes of each activity that they may be involved in.
 - (v) ensuring that the child, and where required their parents or guardians, have consented to a child's participation in an activity.
 - (vi) giving children opportunities to be involved at all stages of a project or activity where possible, including reviewing an activity or giving feedback on their involvement.

2.2.1 Consent for the involvement of activities

- (a) Staff ensure they obtain children's consent for their participation in any activities and operations.

- (b) At the commencement of an activity, children will be asked whether they consent to participate. This occurs in a manner suitable for the children's capacity and maturity, and relevant to the type of activity being undertaken.
- (c) To be valid, consent must be;
 - (i) Informed – children, where required parents or guardians, should receive clear and age-appropriate information about the activity.
 - (ii) Voluntary – a child's refusal to be part of an activity should always be respected.
 - (iii) Current and negotiable – children must know they can withdraw from an activity at any time.
- (d) If a child does not agree to be involved in an activity, or only agrees to participate in part of an activity, arrangements are made for their withdrawal.
- (e) Their objection to full or partial participation is then recorded and stored with any material collected for that activity, project, or operation. The participant can request Jacaranda to delete any such information from activity's records.
- (f) For children aged 15-17 years, the usual position is that a child can provide their own consent ([Children's Consent Form](#)) – the parent or guardian's consent is not required. However, in some circumstances, depending on the nature of the activity, the child's ability to consent and their vulnerability, a parent or guardian may also be requested to provide their consent.
- (g) For children aged under 15 years, their parent or guardian must provide written consent on their behalf to participate in an activity ([Parents/Guardians Consent Form](#)), unless the circumstances make it unviable, inappropriate or unsafe for such consent to be obtained.
- (h) Where a written consent can be obtained from a child's parents or guardian, then a child may give their consent orally or in writing.
- (i) If consent is not being obtained from a child's parents or guardians, then the child must provide written consent ([Children's Consent Form](#)). They may withdraw their consent at any time.
- (j) Written consent requests for children, and those for their parents or guardians, are tailored for each specific activity, and are usually accompanied by age-appropriate and clear explanations of an activity's purpose, and how any information about the child, or provided by child, will be used in the future.

- (k) If children will be filmed, recorded or photographed during an activity, express consent permitting the filming, recording, or photographing must be provided in advance by the child, and where required, the parent or guardian. Children who do not consent to their image being taken may still participate and will be given the required care.
- (l) Consent is not required for children to attend public events that are open to the general public.

2.3 Involving families and communities

National Principle 3: Families and communities are informed, and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.

- (a) Open and respectful communication with the families and communities about our child safe policies is an important part of ensuring children can participate fully in our activities.
- (b) The consent requests from [Clause 2.2.1](#) include clear and accessible information about any activity for which consent is being obtained. This information includes;
 - (i) the activity's purpose
 - (ii) how information about the participating child or family, including information received as part of the activity, will be used
 - (iii) whom to contact if there are any concerns about the use or collection of the information
- (c) In some circumstances where appropriate, parents, guardians, or community leaders, may be invited to participate in an activity with children.
- (d) Families and communities can access information about Jacaranda Community Centre's child safety and wellbeing including this Policy and the [Child Safe Code of Conduct](#).
- (e) Activities involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are conducted in accordance with the National Office of Child Safety's [Keeping Our Kids Safe](#). This publication ensures guidelines for a culturally safe environment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

2.4 Respecting equity and diversity

National Principle 4: Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice.

- (a) We recognise that children come from diverse backgrounds with diverse needs and circumstances.
- (b) While all children are vulnerable to harm in certain contexts, some children have specific vulnerabilities due to their age, backgrounds or circumstances.
- (c) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, children who are unable to live at home, children with a disability, and LGBTIQ+ identifying children are among those groups whose rights and particular needs must be, and are, considered when we involve them in activities.
- (d) When engaging with children, Jacaranda Community Centre takes steps to create a culturally safe and inclusive physical, online, and social environments, including by;
 - (i) making all spaces safe and welcoming for children
 - (ii) choosing external venues that are culturally safe for children, and accessible for children with disability
 - (iii) employing staff and engaging volunteers and interns that children feel comfortable with, for example with similar cultural backgrounds or experiences
 - (iv) conducting activities in an age-appropriate and culturally appropriate way, including in accordance with the [Keeping Our Kids Safe](#) resource where activities involve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children
 - (v) Staff are able to access resources on how to respond to children with diverse needs or from vulnerable groups, and how to be culturally sensitive and trauma informed.
- (e) We actively encourage, support and facilitate the participation of children and their abilities to express their culture and exercise their cultural rights.
- (f) We adopt measures to ensure that racism is identified, confronted, and not tolerated. Any instances of racism are addressed with appropriate consequences.

2.5 Ensuring staff, volunteers, and interns are suitable and supported

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

- (a) Jacaranda Community Centre has a responsibility to make sure all staff, volunteers, and interns are suitable and supported for any work they undertake that involves children. This includes;
 - (i) emphasising child safety and wellbeing when advertising and recruiting for positions involving contact with children
 - (ii) ensuring that new and existing staff, volunteers, and interns understand contact with children is an inherent requirement of their position
 - (iii) supervision and support for employees or unpaid personnel in positions that involve contact with children
 - (iv) this Policy and the [Child Safe Code of Conduct](#) is provided, agreed upon and understood by all workers
 - (v) Providing workers with resources and training to understand child safety obligations, including through the [National Principles E-Learning Modules](#)
- (b) In accordance with the [Working with Children \(Screening\) Act 2004](#), we require that any worker has a current, “not prohibited” [Working with Children Check](#).
- (c) If they are not already in possession of a current WWCC, they may need to obtain one before the commencement of activities with children.

2.6 Child-focused complaint systems

National Principle 6: Processes to respond to complaints and concerns are child-focused.

- (a) All complaints about child safety are taken seriously and dealt with promptly, whether they concern workers or someone else.
- (b) Providing opportunities for complaints and feedback ensures that children, young people and their families feel valued and respected and enables us to improve the quality of our service. Children, young people and their families are informed that they can provide feedback or make a complaint when deemed appropriate.
- (c) When conducting activities involving children, workers inform those involved (in an accessible and age-appropriate manner) on how they may give feedback or raise concerns about any aspect of their participation.
- (d) We aim to provide accessible and responsive complaints management processes that are focused on the needs of children and young people. We do this by;
 - (i) all workers must comply with [Child Safe Code of Conduct](#)
 - (ii) complaints regarding breaches of the [Child Safe Code of Conduct](#) can be made to the Chief Executive Officer who will cause these complaints to be investigated
 - (iii) allegations of criminal conduct may be referred to the police

- (e) Compliments, complaints or feedback can be provided verbally or in writing to and worker either by in-person, telephone, email or post.
- (f) We will handle all complaints and feedback received from children, young people or families promptly, sensitively and fairly. We will ensure;
 - (i) to listen to the complaint/feedback
 - (ii) if received verbally, the person receiving the complaint will make a record of it
 - (iii) if a worker receives a complaint, they must forward it to the Chief Executive Officer as soon as possible
 - (iv) to be advised of the time expected for an outcome
 - (v) to document and store decisions and actions taken in response to complaints and feedback.

2.6.1 Responding to disclosure, allegations or suspicions of child abuse or harm

- (a) Understanding reporting obligations is particularly important if the activity involves contact with vulnerable children, for example children in out-of-home care, immigration detention and other detention environments.
- (b) If a worker becomes aware of an incident of allegation of abuse or harm of a child, the first priority is to ensure the child's safety, and to mitigate the risks of further harm.
- (c) Where any child makes a disclosure relating to harm or abuse to an adult, it is important for that adult to;
 - (i) Listening – moving to a suitable environment where possible; being calm and patient; letting the child use their own words; and avoid quizzing them about details
 - (ii) Reassuring – letting them know their views are taken seriously; that it is okay to express their trauma; addressing any concerns about child safety; and reassuring them they are not at fault
 - (iii) Respecting – acknowledging the child's bravery and strength; avoid making any false promises; explaining that, for them to be safe, their experiences will need to be recorded in accordance with our [Confidentiality Clause](#).
- (d) Further guidance on how to respond to a child who discloses child abuse is available from [Responding to Children and Young People's Disclosures of Abuse](#).

2.6.2 Reporting procedure following disclosure, allegations or suspicions of child abuse or harm

- (a) A worker who receives a disclosure or allegation of a child being abused or harmed during or in the course of their employment will;
 - (i) record the details; and
 - (ii) immediately report the matter to the Chief Executive Officer
- (b) Where a child is at immediate risk of serious harm, any adult present should call 000.
- (c) The Chief Executive Officer may facilitate contact with the police and/or relevant child protection agencies if they assess that the child is at immediate risk and it is appropriate to do so.
- (d) Other than this process, the details of the disclosure or allegation of child abuse or harm are treated as confidential, disclosed only as required by law or as required to protect child's safety.

2.6.3 Reporting concerns about other adults

- (a) Where any person has a concern regarding the conduct of an adult involved with the organisation, which poses or may pose a safeguarding risk to children such as;
 - (i) harming a child either physically or emotionally;
 - (ii) exposing a child to behavior which may cause physical or emotional harm, or;
 - (iii) engaging in criminal activity concerning a child;

This must be raised in the first instance so that the next appropriate steps may be agreed and actioned upon. We recognise that there could be circumstances where a person may need to report a matter that has taken place in a setting outside of the person's engagement with the organisation.
- (b) Usually, any appropriate steps following a safeguarding referral in respect of an individual connection to the organisation will include either;
 - (i) further initial enquires
 - (ii) escalation to the applicable authority for assessment and/or police for investigation
 - (iii) instigation of an appropriate disciplinary, formal investigation processes and suspension of any person concerned within the organisation
 - (iv) a referral to any relevant regulatory bodies.
- (c) Any person within the organisation who has allegations made against them shall be informed properly in a formal meeting and relevant next steps shall be taken.

- (d) Any person within the organisation who has allegations made against them will be treated fairly. All enquiries, investigations and decisions taken shall be just and fair, with the safety of any child concerned at the center of the process.
- (e) Any person from within the organisation who makes an allegation against another person in the organisation shall be listed to, taken seriously and shall be treated fairly and justly throughout the process of enquiries, investigations and decision-making.

2.7 Staff knowledge, skills and awareness

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

- (a) All workers are required to read and understand this Policy and [the Child Safe Code of Conduct](#).
- (b) The [Child Safe Code of Conduct](#) outlines a standard of behavior and responsibility that all workers must adhere to whilst under the course of their employment term.
- (c) This Policy provides an outline of child safety and wellbeing, resources and modules to be completed by staff ([National Principles E-Learning Modules](#)) to ensure they understand proper procedures.

2.8 Safe physical and online environments

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

- (a) We believe in promoting child safety and wellbeing in physical and online environments in order to reduce the risk of harm. We adequately ensure that our physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing for children.
- (b) A [Risk Assessment](#) is conducted which addresses both physical and online risks and how to mitigate them. Each evaluation includes an analysis and mitigation measures in response to the identified risks for effective child safety.
- (c) When a child is in the building, staff ensure that children are never left unsupervised – ensuring an adult is present at all times.

- (d) Physical contact with children is not to be initiated by staff or by the child. Where a child initiates physical contact, and for the child's benefit it is appropriate to reciprocate, appropriate social etiquette must be followed.
- (e) Either via physical or online, staff will ensure to follow the process of informed consent to ensure we can gather and use personal/sensitive information for Jacaranda Community Centre's operations.
- (f) Staff will not store photos or videos of children involved in any activities on personal devices, or send them to others outside the organisation
- (g) At Jacaranda Community Centre, we engage to comply the [Privacy and Responsible Information Sharing Act 2024](#) and will protect children's rights to privacy. We accomplish this by ensuring;
 - (i) children, and where required their their parents or guardians, have consented to the collection and use of their personal or sensitive information ([Consent Forms](#))
 - (ii) information is not used for any purpose other than that for which consent has been provided
 - (iii) personal and sensitive information including images of children are not made public or passed to third parties without the child's consent, and where required, their parents or guardians
 - (iv) even when consent has been provided, having regard to all circumstances, personal information is not publicly distributed if it is not in the best interests of the child
 - (v) all information about children is de-identified prior to being made public, whether online or in written publications, unless the child, or where required their parent or guardian, have consented to being identified in that publication.

2.9 Review of this Policy

National Principle 9: Implementation of the national child safe principles is regularly reviewed and improved.

- (a) Jacaranda Community Centre reviews this regularly to ensure effectiveness and utility in creating a child safe environment. The review includes;
 - (i) an assessment of whether Jacaranda Community Centre is implementing the [National Principles for Child Safe Organisations](#) adequately
 - (ii) an analysis of complaints, concerns and safety incidents involving children to identify causes and systematic failures
 - (iii) collation and evaluation of feedback from activities and operations including children and families where appropriate.

- (b) In addition, relevant child safety and wellbeing policies, codes and procedures are reviewed and updated at this time, considering any relevant law and policy changes.

2.10 Documenting policies and procedures

National Principle 10: Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people.

- (a) This Policy is publicly available and provided.
- (c) Related policies, codes and procedures designed to assist to meet the obligations stated under this Policy include;
 - (i) [Policy and Procedures Manual](#)
 - (ii) [Child Safe Code of Conduct](#)
 - (iii) [Child Safety and Wellbeing Risk Assessment](#)
 - (iv) [National Principles E-Learning Modules](#)
 - (v) [Consent Forms](#)

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