

Child Safe Policy

1.0 YBSS Statement of Commitment to Child Safety and Wellbeing

Yumba Bimbi Support Services is committed to being a child safe organisation.

The protection of children and young people is a cornerstone in safeguarding and improving the lives of children and young people with a disability. While providing support and services under the NDIS, workers are uniquely placed to identify and respond to the needs and vulnerabilities of children or young people with a disability. Everyone has a responsibility to protect the wellbeing and safety of children or young people whom they have contact and report any case a child or young person is suspected to be at risk of significant harm.

Our organisation is committed to ensuring our practice is compliant with all relevant legislation for our state, as well as national legislation and regulations, including the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.

National Principles for Child Safe Organisations

The National Principle for Child Safe Organisations this policy is based on are as follows:

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.

When is a child or young person at risk?

A child or young person is at risk when they have suffered, or there is a likelihood they will suffer, harm. The relevant harm may be physical, emotional or psychological. A child or young person is also at risk where the parent or guardian is unable or unwilling to care for the person.

Reporting concerns about children and young people at risk

We are committed to providing a supportive and safe environment for staff and volunteers who disclose harm or risk to children and young people. All suspicions that a child or young person is at risk must be reported to key management and to the appropriate state/territory child protection hotline.

All concerns that do not meet the threshold of child at risk, but which involve a concern about the welfare or safety of a child are to be reported to key management.

The below table provides a reference for local state/territory authorities and legislation related to reporting children and young people at risk.

State / Territory	Local Authority	Relevant Local Legislation
QLD	Queensland Family and Child Commission (QFCC)	<i>Child Safe Organisations Act 2024 (Qld)</i>
QLD	Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services	Child Protection Act 1999 (Qld)

2.0 Child Safe Code of Conduct

What is a child safe environment?

Child safe environments are safe and friendly settings where children and young people are protected and feel respected, valued and encouraged to reach their full potential. To provide an environment safe for children and young people, we will:

- take a preventative, proactive and participatory approach on child wellbeing and safety issues
- seek out and embrace the opinions and views of children and young people on issues relating to our services that they consider important or impact them
- take action to protect children and young people from harm.

Working with children and young people

The standards and requirements identified below in our commitment to child safety identify the professional boundaries, ethical behaviours that are accepted and behaviours that are unacceptable. All staff are required to abide by and follow these standards and requirements.

The YBSS Child Safe Code of Conduct is a document outlining expected behaviours from all personnel of the organisation, and behaviours that are unacceptable, when interacting with children and young people.

The YBSS Child Safe Code of Conduct is applicable to all paid and unpaid personnel of the organisation and who are responsible for the safety and wellbeing of children and young people of the organisation. All personnel are expected to act in accordance with the Child Safe Code of Conduct in their physical and online interactions with children and young people.

As part of our commitment to child safety, all workers and volunteers in the organisation will:

- Act in accordance with child safety and wellbeing policies and procedures at all times.
- Behave respectfully, courteously and ethically towards children and their families and towards other staff.
- Listen and respond to the views and concerns of children, particularly if they communicate (verbally or non-verbally) that they do not feel safe or well.
- Promote the human rights, safety and wellbeing of all children in the organisation.
- Demonstrate appropriate personal and professional boundaries.
- Consider and respect the diverse backgrounds and needs of children.
- Create an environment that promotes and enables children's participation and is welcoming, culturally safe and inclusive for all children and their families.
- Involve children in making decisions about activities, policies and processes that concern them wherever possible.
- Contribute, where appropriate, to policies, discussions, learning and reviews about child safety and wellbeing.
- Identify and mitigate risks to children's safety and wellbeing as identified by risk assessments and Risk management policies and processes.
- Respond to any concerns or complaints of child harm or abuse promptly and in line with the Complaint management policy and Manage complaint process.
- Report all suspected or disclosed child harm or abuse as required by relevant state and federal legislation and the Report incident process.
- Comply with protocols on communicating with children.
- Comply with relevant state and federal legislation and policies and procedures on record keeping and information sharing.

All workers and volunteers in the organisation will not:

- Engage in any unlawful activity with or in relation to a child.

- Engage in any activity that is likely to physically, sexually or emotionally harm a child.
- Unlawfully discriminate against any child or their family members.
- Be alone with a child unnecessarily.
- Arrange personal contact, including online contact, with child participants for a purpose unrelated to work activities.
- Disclose personal or sensitive information about a child, including images of a child, unless the child and their parent or legal guardian consent or as a result of reporting requirements.
- Use inappropriate language in the presence of children, or show or provide children with access to inappropriate images or material.
- Work with children while under the influence of alcohol or prohibited drugs.
- Ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child harm or abuse.

3.0 Recruitment and Worker Screening

YBSS understands that when recruiting board members, staff and volunteers, we have ethical as well as legislative obligations. Yumba Bimbi Support Services will ensure that the safety of children, and risk of harm by workers is considered comprehensively throughout recruitment and employment to minimise the risk of child abuse.

All applicants being considered for work that is considered 'child related' will be required to meet all legal requirements, including evidence of a valid Working with Children Check and NDIS Worker Screening in accordance with the Human Resources Management policy.

The organisation will comply with and carry out Working With Children and young People Checks in accordance with state/territory requirements of the National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013 (Cth).

All Working With Children and Young People Checks will be validated online and verified by the Human Resources Department prior to a new worker or board member commencing in a child-related role.

Any existing worker who cannot renew their Working with Children and Young People Check must notify key management as soon as possible, and any worker or volunteer with a bar or interim bar will be removed from child-related employment immediately in line with the standards outlined in the National Principles for Child Safety.

Our recruitment practices will take account of risks and other factors that impact on children and young people, and worker selection, referee checks and background checks will reflect our commitment to ensuring child safety and wellbeing. We will review our recruitment and human resources management practices regularly to make sure that we are aligned with best practice approaches for the protection of children and young people.

4.0 Training and Development

The organisation will foster a culture where all personnel are committed to

child safety. All personnel will undertake training on the rights of children, and the prevention, identification and response to abuse and harm against children.

All staff will be made aware of their responsibilities to children and young people as part of their induction and ongoing training and development and will be required to acknowledge this policy alongside their record keeping, information sharing and reporting responsibilities.

Staff supervision and management will support employees to maintain a focus on child safety and wellbeing and to draw attention to breaches of the Code of Conduct within the organisation. We will provide a safe and supportive environment for workers to identify and disclose risk of harm to children and young people.

Continuous development and training, and refresher training, will occur every year.

Worker training will include:

- The importance of child safety in minimising risks of child abuse and harm in all organisational contexts;
- Organisational policies and procedures relating to child safe environments both online and offline;
- How to respect and protect the rights of diverse children, including children with disability, children who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex; children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- Promoting the cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and children from CALD backgrounds;
- How to identify and respond to indicators of child abuse;
- Their mandatory and voluntary reporting and duty of care obligations; and
- How to report concerns that an incident of abuse has occurred.

5.0 Respect for Diversity

Yumba Bimbi Support Services will seek to protect the rights of all children and ensure that services are delivered in a safe and inclusive manner.

The organisation respects the diverse needs of children and young people and seeks to provide services which are accessible to all children, and responsive to the safety needs of children with disability, children who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex, children from economic or socially disadvantaged backgrounds, and the cultural safety of children from CALD backgrounds, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

Yumba Bimbi Support Services does not tolerate discrimination. It is the responsibility of the governing body, managers and workers to adhere to adopt proactive approaches to reduce the risk of discrimination, and to adhere to the organisation's policies and procedures for the protection of the human rights of children and young people.

Yumba Bimbi Support Services will respond to instances of racism or any other form of harmful discrimination in accordance with Diversity and inclusion Policy, Human Resources Management policy.

6.0 Cultural Safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children

Workers must encourage and support children to express their culture and enjoy their cultural rights. Workers must actively support and facilitate participation and inclusion within the organisation by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their families.

Yumba Bimbi Support Services supports, guides and trains workers to understand, respect and value Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, and their right to a culturally safe service environment which values their safety and wellbeing. Yumba Bimbi Support Services actively supports and facilitates participation and inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their families.

Yumba Bimbi Support Services recognises and celebrates Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, their achievements, communities and cultures by:

We will recognise and celebrate Aboriginal peoples including:

- Acknowledgement of country at the commencement of all meetings and events
- Celebrating NAIDOC week and acknowledging other significant events such as National Sorry Day and National Reconciliation Week;
- Consulting with families and members of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community to identify opportunities to promote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and practices; and
- Seeking feedback from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, families and communities on their experience, including feedback on how they feel expressing their identity including their culture.

7.0 Involving Families and Communities

Yumba Bimbi Support Services recognises the important roles that families play and involves parents and carers when significant decisions are made about their child. The organisation will encourage feedback from families and communities and will incorporate feedback into the design and review of services.

The organisation will proactively communicate with families and communities and inform them of its policies and practices to protect child safety. Yumba Bimbi Support Services will provide information to families and communities through accessible means to ensure that they are involved in decisions about their child.

We distribute this information by:

- Making our child safe policy and an easy read version publicly available on our website
- Providing a Participant Handbook during the onboarding period which contains information on our approach to child safety, our management structure and our complaints management system;
- The Yumba Yarn which updates families on our latest news.

Yumba Bimbi Support Services involves families and communities by:

- Creating an inclusive environment for all families;
- Ensuring information is easy to understand and accessible;
- Seeking input on decisions affecting children and young people;
- Providing opportunities to provide feedback on our policies and procedures;
- Providing opportunities for feedback on the quality of service delivery;
- Ensuring transparent complaints handling and discipline processes.

8.0 Taking Child Participation and Empowerment Seriously

Yumba Bimbi Support Services is a child-centred organisation that actively seeks to include children's views and ideas in organisational planning and delivery of services. Yumba Bimbi Support Services regularly engages with children about what they should do if they feel unsafe. Yumba Bimbi Support Services engages with children in the following ways:

- Involving children in informal discussions;
- Providing children with access to information about their rights and the prevention of child abuse;
- Consultation with children about any proposed changes;
- Online polls;
- A suggestion box; and
- Surveying children and young people

9.0 Assessing and Managing Child Abuse Risk

Child safety risks are included in the organisation's risk management policy and processes. This includes risks in physical and online environments relevant to the service type/s provided by the organisation, people in contact with children, and any specific vulnerabilities of the children.

All workers will be trained in identifying, assessing and managing these risks, and detecting signs of abuse. Training should also include protective factors that reduce the risk of abuse, and ways to promote these protective factors in the context of the organisation.

Where a risk is identified and not appropriately managed, management and the governing body may be held legally liable, as this may constitute a 'failure to protect'.

Yumba Bimbi Support Services will consider child safety as a part of its risk

management approach. Risks of abuse to children will be identified and managed in all services and activities. Yumba Bimbi Support Services will manage risks to children by:

- Including child safety risk assessment as a regular consideration of the risk management process;
- Monitoring and recording all legal requirements for the protection of children by workers and other stakeholders
- Establishing policies, procedures and action plans that seek to minimise the likelihood of incidents of child abuse and monitoring their effectiveness;
- Implementing, maintaining and reviewing the effectiveness of incident reporting and complaints management systems;
- Training workers and stakeholders to understand their obligations towards child safety and encouraging the reporting of incidents; and
- Engaging all stakeholders to take measures to reduce risks and prevent instances of child abuse.

10.0 Online and social media safety

Online spaces provide additional challenges to maintaining the safety of children and protecting them from harm.

Social media also poses a variety of risks to children. [The Online Safety Amendment \(Social Media Minimum Age\) Bill 2024](#) stipulates that children under the age of 16 do NOT create or maintain social media accounts. We understand that this legislation mainly places responsibilities of compliance on technology companies and platform providers, rather than individuals. Nevertheless, our organisation will continue to work to keep children safe online through education, monitoring, and collaborative efforts with parents, carers, and support networks. Workers will be trained to maintain age restrictions ensure children are not accessing age-inappropriate platforms or engaging with online spaces designed for older users.

Even if they do not use social media, children may still be at risk when they access virtual spaces (such as private messaging apps and video games). As such, we acknowledge the importance of maintaining robust risk management systems to protect children.

Each child's risk management plan will include risks relating to online activity. These risks include:

- exposure to inappropriate content
- overfamiliar relationships between children and people in positions of power (e.g. children interacting with teachers on social media)
- cyber bullying
- the sharing of inappropriate images
- physical health challenges, such as headaches
- mental health challenges, such as depression and social isolation
- data breaches and data misuse
- grooming

Our risk management plans will include an overview of each risk, as well as mitigation and management strategies. In addition, our risk management plans and strategies will be developed in conjunction with workers, the child, other professionals and advocates, as well as the child's support network. This will help ensure that all relevant parties are empowered to provide early help if online incidents occur.

Workers, parents and carers are responsible for teaching children online safety. Key principles of online safety include:

- only sharing information the child would be happy for their grandparents, parents and teachers to see
- understanding that people online can lie about their identities
- remembering that any post, once published online, cannot always be taken back; even if a post has been removed, it may have already been saved and shared
- adults ensuring that children do not access any age-inappropriate social media platforms
- understanding the importance of secure passwords
- blocking people that exhibit negative behaviours, such as cyberbullying
- considering that content can always be shared, even if it is sent in a private message.

In addition to the above, it is vital to have appropriate online privacy settings and child safety filters in place and discuss with the child the reasons these are in place.

All staff at our organisation will be trained to:

- support compliance with age restrictions on social media platforms and to advocate for the safe use of online spaces
- support children to engage with online spaces in a safe manner
- be engaged, open and supportive in relation to online activities
- understand the devices and platforms children are using
- set reasonable rules around social media use
- understand the needs and preferences of each child in relation to online activities
- understand and manage the risks and legal frameworks associated with children being online
- respond to the misuse of digital devices and to unacceptable online behaviours in line with disciplinary policies
- maintain clear processes for reporting online safety issues or breaches of acceptable use in line with incident reporting requirements
- manage complaints and incidents in a compliant manner.

11.0 Reporting, Investigating and Responding to Child Abuse Concerns

Yumba Bimbi Support Services takes seriously all concerns, complaints and allegations of abuse or suspected abuse against any child or young person in the service. They will be handled sensitively, investigated in a timely manner,

and with the safety of the child as the primary consideration.

All suspicions that a child or young person is at risk must be reported to key management in a manner consistent with Manage incident Process.

YBSS has an obligation to notify the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission in a manner consistent with the treatment of Reportable Incidents as outlined in the Preventing and responding to alleged abuse, neglect and discrimination policy

Voluntary Reporting

In some situations, there may not be a legal requirement to report situations of child harm or abuse. However, it is good practice to report these instances as part of voluntary reporting to reduce the risks to children of potential abuse or neglect.

All stakeholders who reasonably believe a child or young person connected to the organisation is at risk of abuse can immediately report their suspicion to:

- The General Manager/s
- The CEO
- Emergency services in instances when there is concern of immediate danger, or that a criminal offence has occurred;
- Yumba Bimbi Support Services governing body;

12.0 Roles and Responsibilities of Governing Body, Management and Workers:

All members of the governing body, management, staff and volunteers must sign and act in accordance with the Yumba Bimbi Support Services Code of Conduct as part of their induction into the organisation and commit to always keeping children safe within the organisation and acting in their best interests.

Governing body (the Board):

The Board has ultimate responsibility to foster an organisational culture which promotes child safety and protects the wellbeing of children. The Board will:

- establish policies and procedures which reflect the requirements of the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations and **Qld Child Safe Standards**. Policies and procedures will be effective in enabling all workers to understand their obligation to act to safeguard children and prevent and respond to child abuse.
- responding efficiently to any serious incident, suspicion or allegation. Monitor the risk profile of Yumba Bimbi Support Services and ensure mitigation strategies are effective in managing
- Ensure appropriate and effective internal control systems are in place for the detection and prevention of child abuse and neglect.
- The governing body must be aware of their legal liability for failure to

disclose abuse or failure to reasonably protect based on known risks.

Management:

Management will:

- Provide a Child Safe Statement of commitment and intent.
- Foster a proactive leadership approach to promote openness and transparency.
- Conduct and review risk assessments to identify and manage any risk to the safety and protection of children
- Embed cultural safety principles of inclusiveness and acceptance to offer greater protection for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from a culturally, linguistic, or diverse background and children with a disability
- Provide induction, training and ongoing information in recognising and responding to suspicion, allegation or disclosure of child abuse, neglect and grooming.
- Provide all team members, children and families with regular information to increase awareness of child abuse and neglect indicators including grooming behaviours as a lead indicator for intervention.
- Ensure our information management systems and practices are secure to protect children and their information.
- Ensure vigilance is applied in pre-empting harm that may occur.
- Facilitate the reporting of any inappropriate behaviour or suspected abusive activities.
- Be familiar with the types of abuse that might occur within their area of responsibility and be alert for any indications of such conduct.
- Respond to all feedback, complaints, risks and incidents in a manner that is consistent with the YBSS Continuous Quality improvement policy

Workers:

All workers will:

- Commit to the provision of services that is supportive of all children's emotional and physical safety
- Act in accordance with the Code of Conduct
- Be aware of and comply with their obligations relating to reporting concerns, allegations and incidents of child abuse, including internal and external reporting.
- Maintain dignity, privacy and confidentiality at all times.