

# PWDWA – Child Safe Policy



## 1. Introduction

People With disabilities WA is committed to creating and maintaining a safe, supportive, and inclusive environment for all children and young people. As a not-for-profit organisation serving people with disability in Western Australia, we recognise that safeguarding children—including those with disabilities—is both a moral duty and a legal obligation. This policy outlines our commitment to child safety, the procedures we follow to prevent and respond to harm, and our compliance with all relevant WA legislation and nationally endorsed guidelines.

## 2. Purpose

This policy aims to:

- Ensure that all PWdWA workers, volunteers, and contractors understand their responsibilities in protecting children and young people.
- Establish a framework that complies with Western Australian child safe legislation and the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.
- Explicitly address the safeguarding needs of children with disabilities and young people with disabilities.
- Provide clear guidelines for recruitment, training, reporting, and ongoing review to maintain a child safe culture within PWdWA.

## 3. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All PWdWA employees, contractors, and volunteers and any other persons engaged in our activities.

- All areas of PWdWA’s operations where there is direct or indirect interaction with children or young people.
- Service delivery contexts where children and young people with disabilities may participate.

## 4. Legislative Framework

PWdWA’s Child Safe Policy is developed in accordance with:

- Western Australian legislation, including the Working with Children Act and relevant child protection and reporting obligations.
- The National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, which provide a nationally consistent framework for safeguarding children and young people.
- Guidelines and best practice documents from relevant bodies (e.g. the Department of Communities, the Commissioner for Children and Young People WA) ensuring that our practices are up to date with state and national standards.

## 5. Definitions

**Child(ren) / Young Person:** Any person under 18 years of age. In this policy, “young people” may refer to adolescents who are approaching adulthood.

**Children with Disabilities / Young Person with Disabilities:** refer to individuals who experience physical, cognitive, sensory, developmental, or Psychosocial impairments that may limit their ability to perform certain activities or interact fully with their environment.

**Child Abuse:** Any action or failure to act that results in, or creates a substantial risk of, physical, emotional, psychological or sexual harm, neglect, or exploitation of a child.

**Safeguarding:** The policies, practices, and procedures designed to protect children and young people from abuse, harm, and exploitation.

**Child Safe Organisation:** An organisation that embeds a culture and practices designed to protect children and young people, as outlined in the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.

## 6. Policy Statement

PWdWA is dedicated to:

- Upholding a zero-tolerance approach toward all forms of abuse, neglect, and exploitation.
- Embedding child safety and safeguarding as core values within our organisational culture and practices.
- Ensuring that all staff and volunteers are appropriately screened, trained, and supervised in compliance with WA child safe legislation.
- Actively engaging children, young people, their families, and communities in the development and review of our child safety practices.
- Specifically recognising and addressing the additional vulnerabilities of children with disability and young people with disability through tailored safeguarding strategies.

## 7. Responsibilities

### 7.1 Management and Board

- Ensure that this policy is fully implemented and reviewed on a regular basis.
- Allocate appropriate resources for child safeguarding initiatives, including training and supervision.
- Ensure that all recruitment and appointment processes include robust child safety screening (e.g. Working with Children Checks).

### 7.2 All Staff, Contractors, and Volunteers

- Comply with the requirements of this policy and complete all mandatory child safeguarding training.
- Abide by PWdWA's Code of Conduct and report any concerns or suspicions regarding child abuse or neglect immediately.
- Maintain confidentiality and follow procedures for record keeping related to child safety incidents.

- Engage positively with children and young people, ensuring their voices are heard and their rights respected.

## 7.3 Reporting and Response

- All suspected or disclosed instances of abuse, neglect, or any safety concerns must be reported immediately via the designated internal reporting mechanisms.
- PWdWA will ensure that reports are handled promptly, confidentially, and in accordance with legal obligations.
- Appropriate support will be provided to children, young people, and affected staff, including referrals to external agencies if necessary.

## 8. Procedures

### 8.1 Recruitment and Screening

- All prospective employees, contractors, and volunteers will undergo comprehensive background checks, including mandatory Working with Children Checks, to ensure suitability for roles involving contact with children.
- Job advertisements and descriptions will clearly outline the organisation's commitment to child safety.

### 8.2 Training and Induction

- Mandatory child safeguarding training will be provided at induction and refreshed periodically.
- Specific training modules will address the safeguarding needs of children and young people with disability.

### 8.3 Reporting and Responding to Concerns

- A clear, accessible reporting system is in place for any concerns related to child safety.

- Staff are required to report any observed or suspected abuse or neglect without fear of reprisal.
- The designated Child Safety Officer will coordinate responses, conduct risk assessments, and liaise with external authorities as required.

## 8.4 Record Keeping and Monitoring

- All incidents and reports will be recorded securely and confidentially.
- Regular audits and reviews of child safety records will be conducted to identify trends and areas for improvement.

## 8.5 Continuous Improvement

- This policy will be reviewed annually (or as required by legislative changes) with input from staff, children, families, and external stakeholders.
- Feedback mechanisms (such as surveys and focus groups) will be used to ensure the policy remains effective and relevant.

## 9. Safeguarding Practices

PWdWA will implement specific safeguarding practices to address:

- Children with Disabilities: Tailored support measures, including accessible information, adapted communication strategies, and involvement of specialists where required.
- Young People with Disabilities: Empowerment strategies to encourage active participation in decisions affecting their safety, and ensuring they are listened to and taken seriously.
- General Safeguarding: Practices that create safe physical and online environments, promote cultural safety, and encourage ongoing education and training for all personnel.

## 10. Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years or following a significant incident, change in legislation, or organisational need.

## 10. Approval

Approved by: Kat Johns

Position: CEO

Date: 10/04/2025

Review Date: 10/04/2027