

Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy



1. Purpose

The purpose of this Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy is to ensure that VEG Education, as a Registered Training (RTO#45732) provides environments where every child and young person is safe, respected, and supported to thrive.

This policy has been developed in line with the Standards for RTOs 2025, the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, and relevant Commonwealth, state, and territory child protection legislation.

This policy aims to:

- Embed a culture of child safety and wellbeing across all of VEG Education's operations, programs, and partnerships.
- Place the safety, rights, and wellbeing of children and young people at the centre of all decisions.
- Ensure staff, contractors, and volunteers meet their legal and ethical obligations to prevent, identify, and respond to harm, abuse or neglect.
- Uphold principles of equity, inclusion, and cultural safety, ensuring all children are safe and supported, regardless of background.
- Provide continuous training and supervision of staff and volunteers to strengthen capacity to create, maintain, and respond to child safe environments.
- Establish clear and consistent processes for reporting and responding to safety concerns and incidents.
- Maintain compliance with RTO Standards through systematic monitoring, review, and improvement of child safety practices.

2. Scope and Coverage

This policy applies to:

- All VEG Education staff, contractors, board members, and volunteers engaged in child-connected or child-related work.
- All environments in which VEG Education delivers education or support, including campuses, online learning spaces, excursions, and third-party provider sites.

It must be read alongside related VEG Education policies, including the Child Safety Code of Conduct, the Responding and Reporting Policy, and the Complaints and Grievances Policy.

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3. Definitions

Child: a person under the age of 18 years.

Child safety: protecting children from abuse, neglect, or harm, and responding to concerns or disclosures.

Child abuse: includes sexual offences, grooming, physical violence, serious emotional harm, or neglect.

Child-connected work: work authorised by VEG Education where children are present or likely to be present.

Child-related work: as defined in the Worker Screening Act 2020, includes work likely to involve direct (even if supervised) contact with children.

4. Statement of Commitment

VEG Education is a child safe organisation.

- We are committed to providing safe, inclusive, and supportive environments where children and young people:
 - are valued and respected
 - can participate and be heard
 - are protected from harm, abuse, and neglect.

We have zero tolerance for child abuse. We take all allegations seriously, and respond promptly, carefully, and in line with legislation and organisational policies.

We give additional attention to the needs of:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children
- children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- children with disability
- students unable to live at home or impacted by family/domestic violence
- international students
- children and young people who identify as LGBTIQ+ or are experiencing other vulnerabilities.

Child safety is everyone's responsibility. All staff, volunteers, contractors, and stakeholders must understand and act in alignment with this policy.

5. Responsibilities

Leadership Team

- Ensure compliance with the Standards for RTOs 2025 and all child safety obligations.
- Model and promote a strong child safe culture.
- Monitor risks, approve policies, and lead continuous improvement.
- Ensure complaints and concerns are taken seriously and acted on.

Staff and Volunteers

- Complete all child safety induction and annual training.
- Comply with the Child Safety Code of Conduct.
- Report any suspicion, disclosure, or evidence of harm immediately.
- Create safe, respectful, and inclusive environments.

General Manager / CEO

- Responsible for reviewing, endorsing, and implementing child safety frameworks.
- Ensure compliance is externally reviewed and continuously improved.
- Child Safety Code of Conduct
- The Code of Conduct clearly outlines expected and unacceptable behaviours.

6. Child Safety Code of Conduct

The Code of Conduct clearly outlines expected and unacceptable behaviours.

Expected behaviours include:

- Treating children with respect and listening to their concerns.
- Promoting inclusion, equity, and cultural safety.
- Ensuring one-to-one interactions occur in open or visible spaces.
- Using communication and digital platforms appropriately.
- Reporting concerns immediately to designated officers.

Unacceptable behaviours include:

- Ignoring concerns or disclosures of harm.
 - Engaging in abuse, grooming, or inappropriate relationships.
 - Making sexual comments, providing alcohol or drugs, or engaging in discriminatory behaviour.
 - Using technology to exploit or harass children.
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7. Risk Management

VEG Education actively monitors child safety risks in all learning environments, including physical classrooms, online delivery platforms, excursions, and third-party provider sites. Risks are entered into the Child Safety Risk Register, which is reviewed annually by the leadership team.

8. Cultural Safety

VEG Education is committed to building culturally safe and inclusive environments. We:

- Acknowledge and celebrate cultural diversity.
 - Incorporate diverse cultural perspectives into the learning environment.
 - Maintain zero tolerance for racism or discrimination.
 - Engage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in decision-making.
 - Provide culturally safe spaces for identity expression.
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9. Student Empowerment

Students are supported to understand their rights, know how to speak up, and feel confident raising concerns. Students are encouraged to participate in shaping child safety strategies, and respectful peer relationships are promoted across learning environments.

10. Recruitment, Induction, and Training

- All staff and volunteers engaged in child-related work must hold a valid Working with Children Check or equivalent clearance.
 - Recruitment processes assess identity, qualifications, history, and references, with a focus on suitability for child-connected work.
 - All new staff and volunteers undergo induction covering the Child Safety Policy, Code of Conduct, and mandatory reporting.
 - Ongoing annual training is required for all staff to reinforce knowledge and currency of best practice.
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11. Complaints Process

VEG Education upholds a clear reporting process consistent with legal obligations.

- All staff, students, and community members are encouraged to report concerns or complaints. Reports can be made in person, in writing, or anonymously.
 - Mandatory reporters must notify Child Protection or Police if a child is at risk of abuse or harm.
 - Serious incidents must also be reported to relevant regulators, including ASQA where applicable.
 - Reports are documented and investigated transparently, with protection against victimisation.
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12. Records Management

Accurate and secure record keeping is essential. All concerns, complaints, and actions taken must be documented following organisational procedures and legal requirements.

13. Monitoring and Continuous Improvement

Child safety practices are regularly audited as part of VEG Education's compliance systems. Input from students, families, staff, and volunteers is actively sought to strengthen our framework.

The CEO is responsible for ensuring the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy is formally reviewed and updated every two years, or sooner if required by law or regulation.