



CatholicCare Sydney Child Safe Action Plan

CatholicCare
SYDNEY

Statement of Acknowledgement

In the spirit of reconciliation, CatholicCare Sydney acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of country throughout Australia and their connections to land, sea and community. We pay our respect to Elders past and present and to the children of today who are the Elders of the Future. We also extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

- **In the City Office** – The Gadigal people of the Eora nation.
- **In Lewisham** – The Gadigal and Wangal peoples of the Eora nation.
- **In Bankstown and Lakemba** – The Darug (Daruk) peoples.
- **In Liverpool, Cabramatta and Fairfield** – The Traditional Custodians of the land are the Cabrogal Clan of the Darug Nation. It is also acknowledged that this land was accessed by peoples of the Tharawal and Gandangara Nations.
- **In Sutherland** – the Dharawal Peoples.

Our Purpose

As the social services agency of the Catholic Church in Sydney, we deliver high quality care and wellbeing outcomes for all members of the wider community who seek our services.

Our Vision

A thriving inclusive society where everyone finds support, purpose and belonging.

Our Mission

Following the example of Jesus, we promote human dignity, strengthen families, connect communities and welcome those on the margins of society.

Our Values



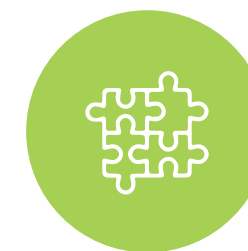
Collaboration



Compassion



Courage



Empowerment



Inclusion

Cover Artwork Artist Acknowledgement

This artwork was created by Max, a wonderful and inspiring 4-year-old artist. Thank you, Max, for sharing your creativity with us and helping us understand what feeling safe looks like through your eyes.

CatholicCare Sydney's Child Safe Statement of Commitment

CatholicCare Sydney is unwavering in its commitment to safeguarding babies, children and young people. We uphold a **zero-tolerance approach to child abuse** and are dedicated to creating environments where every child feels safe, respected, and supported to thrive, with their safety, rights, and wellbeing at the centre of everything we do.

We recognise that the impacts of abuse are profound and enduring. We honour the voices and experiences of survivors by embedding a proactive, preventative approach to safeguarding and by continuously strengthening our systems, culture, and practice to prevent harm and respond effectively.

We are particularly committed to protecting babies, children and young people who may experience increased vulnerability due to systemic inequalities, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children with disability, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and children and young people who identify as LGBTIQ+. We are intentional in ensuring our approach is inclusive, culturally responsive, and grounded in respect for diversity and lived experience.

At the heart of our safeguarding approach is a deep respect for children and young people. We listen to them, actively seek to understand their perspectives, and create meaningful opportunities for their participation in decisions that affect them. We endeavour for their voices inform our practice and drive continuous improvement across the organisation.

We recognise and accept our responsibility to ensure that all staff and volunteers who work with children and young people are safe, skilled, and accountable. We implement rigorous screening and pre-employment checks in line with legislative requirements, uphold clear behavioural expectations through our Code of Ethics and Conduct, and invest in mandatory and ongoing professional learning to build capability and ensure alignment with the Child Safe Standards.

Our policies and procedures provide clear and consistent guidance for how we listen to, respond to, and act on concerns, including complaints, allegations of abuse, and safeguarding breaches, ensuring responses are timely, transparent, and child-centred. We embed safeguarding into everyday practice through strong governance, systems, and processes that promote child safety across all services, supported by ongoing monitoring, evaluation, and review, driving continuous improvement.

This commitment is shared across CatholicCare Sydney, with our Board, Executive Leadership Team, employees, and volunteers collectively accountable for creating and maintaining safe, inclusive environments, fostering a culture of openness, transparency and shared responsibility, embedding proactive organisation-wide safeguarding conversations, and upholding all legislative, regulatory, and Child Safe Standards obligations which informs ongoing organisational transformation.

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Scope of the Child Safe Action Plan

Purpose and Timeframe

CatholicCare Sydney (CCS) has developed this Child Safe Action Plan (CSAP) to set out the strategies, actions and accountabilities that will be implemented across the Agency over a three year period. The CSAP provides a structured and measurable approach to strengthening child safe practices and embedding the Office of the Children’s Guardian’s (OCG) Child Safe Standards.

Strategic Intent

The CSAP is designed to drive sustained cultural change and to influence organisational systems so that the safety, wellbeing and rights of children and young people are embedded, upheld and prioritised across all CCS services. It reflects CatholicCare Sydney’s commitment to continuous improvement and to creating environments in which children and young people feel safe, respected, listened to and empowered.

The scope of this CSAP has been informed by the three core strategies prescribed by the OCG, which underpin all actions in the Plan:



Building awareness of the importance of child safety and making it a visible and shared responsibility across CatholicCare Sydney



Building organisational capability to effectively implement and sustain the Child Safe Standards



Improving safety outcomes for children and young people engaged in CCS services

Development and Consultation

The CSAP has been developed through a comprehensive process of internal and external consultation to ensure it is evidence-based, compliant and fit for purpose. This process included:

- Completion of the OCG Child Safe Self-Assessment
- Development and mapping of actions against the Child Safe Standards, National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, National Catholic Safeguarding Standards, and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)
- Consultation across CCS divisions through the Child Safe and Child Centred Practice (CS&CCP) Committee to identify risks, strengths, gaps and existing initiatives
- Collaborative agreement on responsible leads, measures, timelines and outcomes for each action
- Endorsement by the Executive Leadership Team, with commitment to ongoing review and refinement

CatholicCare Sydney’s Child Safe Action Plan

Action Areas

Through the implementation of this CSAP, CatholicCare Sydney aims to provide dynamic child safeguarding outcomes through these 4 actions areas:



CHILD Framework

The CatholicCare Sydney CHILD Framework provides a single, integrated approach to how we lead, practice, make decisions, and improve outcomes for babies, children, and young people. It brings together Child Safeguarding, Child Protection, and Child-Centred Practice within one rights-based framework, underpinned by children's participation, safety, wellbeing, and voice.

Developed to move beyond compliance-focused approaches, the framework aligns with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, and the NSW Child Safe Standards. It ensures a consistent and integrated approach across the organisation, embedding children's rights and wellbeing into culture, governance, and service delivery.

At its core, the CHILD Framework promotes a shift from viewing children as passive recipients of services to recognising them as active participants and rights holders whose voices influence decisions that affect them. It aims to ensure children are not only safe, but also heard, respected, included, and empowered.

The framework is guided by five principles:

Rights – All babies, children and young people are rights holders.

Relationships – Safety, healing, belonging and development occur through trusted relationships.

Proactive Prevention – Child Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

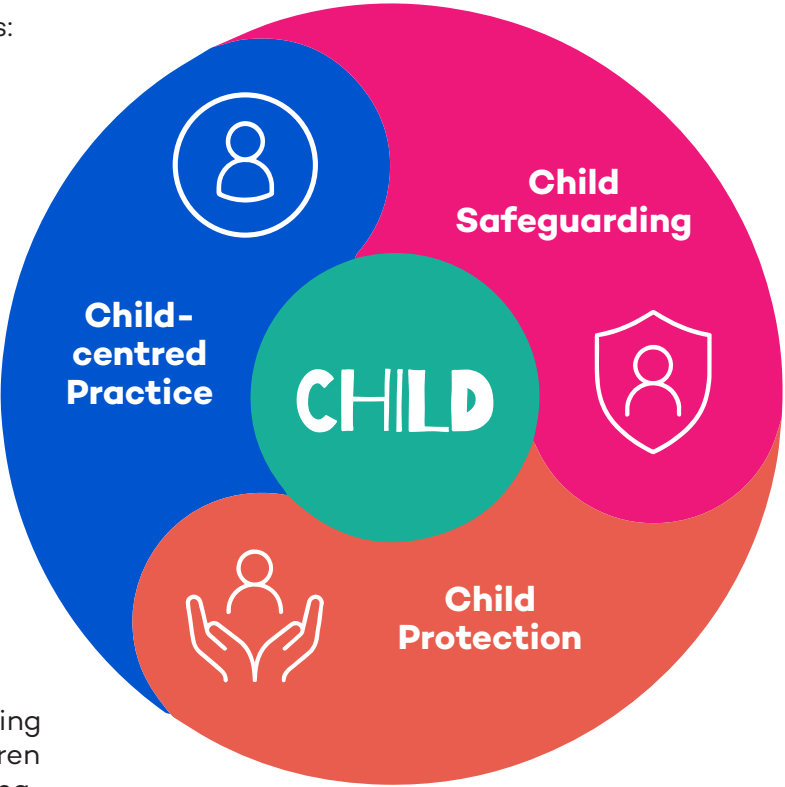
Responsive Practice – Protective actions are timely, effective and compassionate.

Participation – Children's views are sought, heard and influence decisions.

These principles reinforce that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and that children should be at the centre of decision-making.

Implementation of the CHILD Framework supports organisation-wide cultural transformation by strengthening leadership, governance, workforce capability, and continuous improvement. Its intended outcomes include enhanced safety and wellbeing, stronger child participation, improved practice consistency, better outcomes for children and families, informed decision-making, and increased trust and confidence among stakeholders.

Ultimately, the CHILD Framework reflects CatholicCare Sydney's commitment to ensuring every child feels safe, heard, confident, capable, and included, with children's rights, safety, participation, and wellbeing embedded in every decision and service delivered.



Foundations for this Action Plan

- National Principles for Child Safe Organisations
- National Catholic Safeguarding Standards
- Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse
- Final Report - Preface and Executive Summary
- Final Report - Volume 6: Making Institutions Child Safe
- Final Report - Volume 16: Religious Institutions
- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child



More information

If you would like more information on how CatholicCare Sydney is keeping children and young people safe, please visit our safeguarding space on our website: catholiccare.org/safeguarding

Or email: info@catholiccare.org

If you would like to provide feedback please contact us through: catholiccare.org/contact

If you need
additional support,
please contact:

Lifeline Australia:	13 11 14
YARN:	13 92 76
Kids Helpline:	1800 55 1800
Parent Line:	1300 1300 52

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