

Child Safe Policy

Approved by: Chief People Officer

Approval date: 2 July 2025

Next review due date: 2 July 2028

Acknowledgement of Country

In the spirit of reconciliation, TAFE NSW acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as 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 extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples today.

Section 1. Purpose

To guide the development and upkeep of exemplary child safety systems and processes including the Child Safe Standards across TAFE NSW physical and online campus environments.

Section 2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- a. All TAFE NSW employees and contractors, and third parties engaged by TAFE NSW
- b. TAFE Commission board members
- c. Tenants, lessees and service providers operating on or attending TAFE NSW premises.

For this policy, 'child' and 'children' refers to any child or young person from birth until the age of 18 years, regardless of differing definitions of 'child' in applicable legislation. In limited circumstances, this policy may be applied to an unborn child.

This policy provides for the protection and care of children in all interactions with TAFE NSW operations including but not limited to interactions as:

- a. students, inclusive of school-based students
- b. customers
- c. people who receive care or education.

Section 3. Policy statements

3.1 Statement of commitment

- 3.1.1 TAFE NSW is committed to being a child safe organisation and accordingly will adhere to all National Principles for Child Safe Organisations and the NSW Child Safe Scheme.
- 3.1.2 TAFE NSW does not tolerate any behaviour that puts children at risk or harms them.
- 3.1.3 Child safety is embedded in the leadership, governance and culture of TAFE NSW.
- 3.1.4 TAFE NSW recognises its obligation, responsibility, and accountability for the safety of children and is committed to:
- a. operating in accordance with the NSW Child Safe Standards in all interactions with children, including in online and in face-to-face learning environments, both inside and outside of approved TAFE NSW locations:
 - i. when delivering education or training to people under 18 years of age, and
 - ii. when providing childcare in TAFE NSW Children's Centres.
 - b. ensuring that child safety and wellbeing is embedded in our leadership, administration, and culture.

3.2 Children have a voice in decisions

- 3.2.1 TAFE NSW will:
- a. Identify and act on opportunities for children to take part in decisions that impact them.
 - b. Foster a culture where children feel safe and empowered to speak up.
 - c. Ensure TAFE NSW staff know how to recognise signs of harm, take these seriously, and find child-friendly ways to engage them in discussions about their safety.
 - d. Foster an inclusive culture for children of all abilities and backgrounds, where diversity and differences are welcomed.
 - e. Have measures in place to identify vulnerable and disadvantaged children, and children with an elevated risk of potential harm and ensure their needs are considered.

3.3 Child safety is a shared responsibility

- 3.3.1 Child safety is a shared responsibility. All TAFE NSW employees and contractors are deemed to be engaged in Child Related Employment.
- 3.3.2 Wherever possible, TAFE NSW is committed to involving the families and communities we serve in the way we work and engage with children and in the promotion of child safety.
- 3.3.3 All parents, carers and guardians of children attending TAFE NSW as students or at our Children's Centres will be provided with essential information about child safety including our:
- Code of Conduct
 - Child Safe Policy (this policy)

3.3.4 Additional and complementary policies and procedures for the care and protection of children aged 6 years and under, who attend TAFE NSW Children's Centres, including the [TAFE NSW Children's Centres Child Safe Code of Conduct](#), are to be read in conjunction with this policy, as well as the [Working with Children Clearance Procedure](#) where appropriate.

3.4 Working with children

3.4.1 TAFE NSW equips employees with the knowledge, skills and procedures to:

- a. provide a safe learning environment
- b. identify and respond to safety concerns
- c. treat all reports seriously.

3.4.2 TAFE NSW's risk management planning considers safety risks for children.

3.4.3 As an organisation, TAFE NSW will ensure employment screening, employee management and supervision, ongoing training, and other recruitment and employment practices are designed to prevent unsuitable people from working or seeking to work at TAFE NSW.

3.4.4 Mandatory, annual training in child safety is required of all TAFE NSW staff including casual, contract and contingent agency workers, regardless of their role. This is part of the TAFE NSW mandatory suite.

3.4.5 Staff, families and carers are informed about online safety risks including but not limited to bullying, grooming, and sexting.

3.4.6 Additional measures are taken in higher risk environments including offsite activities, student work placements and change rooms and TAFE NSW Children's Centres.

3.5 Receiving disclosures from children

3.5.1 TAFE NSW provides a clear and accessible process for children, families, carers, staff, and members of our community to raise and report child safety concerns, inclusive of:

- When a child or young person states that they, or someone they know has been harmed.
- When anyone in the TAFE NSW community suspects someone of causing or intending to cause deliberate or unintentional harm to a child
- Suspicions or concerns that a child has experienced or is at risk of harm from an adult or peer, including sexualised behaviour between children.
- Allegations of inappropriate relationships between adults and children
- Any other suspected or actual breach of child safety legislation or TAFE NSW Code of Conduct or other relevant policy or procedure.

3.5.2 Our child safe practices mean children know who they can talk to if they do not feel safe.

3.5.3 Our child safe practices mean children can speak up and be taken seriously when they do.

3.5.4 The process, timeframes, and potential outcome of complaints and investigations are clearly communicated and met.

Section 4. Responsibilities

4.1 Employee responsibilities

- 4.1.1 As all TAFE NSW employees are deemed to be engaged in child-related employment, they must all hold a valid NSW Working with Children Clearance (WWCC). This is an essential qualification. Any restriction placed on a clearance or inability to hold or exercise a clearance will impact an employee's ability to meet essential qualifications for their employment with TAFE NSW.
- 4.1.2 Employees must positively disclose any investigation, charge or verdict which could impact their ability to hold a WWCC clearance. Failure to positively disclose a matter which may impact on an employee's ability to hold an WWCC clearance may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of their employment.

4.2 NSW Mandatory Reporting requirements

- 4.2.1 The NSW Mandatory Reporting requirements relates to children up to the age of 16 years of age.
- 4.2.2 All TAFE NSW employees are Mandatory Reporters.
- 4.2.3 Mandatory Reporters are required by law to report suspected child abuse and neglect to government authorities.
- 4.2.4 Mandatory Reporters include people who deliver education services wholly or partly, to children as part of their professional work or other paid employment, and those in management positions in these services.
- 4.2.5 In NSW, Mandatory Reporting is regulated by the [Children and Young Persons \(Care and Protection\) Act 1998](#) and mandatory reporters are guided by the [NSW Mandatory Reporter Guide](#).
- 4.2.6 If any employee becomes aware of a child under the age of 16 years old who has experienced or is at risk of significant harm, they must make a [Mandatory Report](#) through one of the following options:
- calling the Child Protection Helpline on 13 21 11
 - filing an eReport through the [Child Story Reporter](#) website.
- 4.2.7 Employees who become aware of that a child under 16 has experienced or is at risk of significant harm must make a report, even if the risk does not arise in connection with the child's interactions with TAFE NSW or a TAFE NSW employee. For example, if a child disclosed that a family member was abusing them, this would require the TAFE NSW employee to make a mandatory report, even though the risk is not in connection with TAFE NSW. A Mandatory Reporter can make use of the [Mandatory Reporting Guide](#) to determine if a matter disclosed requires a Mandatory Report.

4.3 NSW Reportable Conduct Scheme responsibilities

- 4.3.1 The Reportable Conduct Scheme is governed by the [Children's Guardian Act 2019](#) and is administered by the Office of the Children's Guardian.
- 4.3.2 The Reportable Conduct Scheme governs how TAFE NSW responds to reportable allegations against a child up to the age of 18 years old and where the risk or actual harm arises from a TAFE NSW employee or other person to whom this policy applies.
- 4.3.3 The Children's Guardian Act 2019 defines reportable conduct as any of the below:
- a. a sexual offence
 - b. sexual misconduct
 - c. ill-treatment of a child
 - d. neglect of a child
 - e. an assault against a child
 - f. an offence under s 43B (failure to protect) or s 316A (failure to report) of the [Crimes Act 1900](#)
 - g. behaviour that causes significant emotional or psychological harm to a child.
- 4.3.4 Unlike the Mandatory Reporting requirements, Reportable Conduct reports to the Office of the Children's Guardian will be made centrally through the TAFE Integrity Unit on behalf of TAFE NSW. TAFE NSW staff can report concerns to the Integrity Unit by emailing integrity@tafensw.edu.au.

Section 5. Governance information

Governance	Details
Legislation, regulations, and standards	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 b. Children's Guardian Act 2019 c. Child Protection (Working With Children) Act 2012 d. Crimes Act 1900 e. National Vocational Education and Training Regulator (Outcome Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations) Instrument 2025 f. Child Safe Standards (NSW)
Related documents	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. TAFE NSW Code of Conduct b. Working with Children Clearance Procedure c. TAFE NSW Children's Centres Child Safe Code of Conduct
Accountable Officer	Chief People Officer
Responsible Officer	Director, Workplace Relations
Content Manager number	PROJ25/345
Next review date	2 July 2028

Section 6. Document history

No.	Effective	Approved by	Amendment
1.0	30 June 2025	Chief People Officer	<p>Created to support transparency of contemporary child safe policy and practice at TAFE NSW.</p> <p>Supersedes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Protecting and Supporting Children and Young People Policy - Allegations against Employees in the Area of Child Protection Policy - Working with Children Policy