

## CCW Policy 3

### Child Safeguarding - Equity & Inclusion for Children & Young People

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Controlled Document

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<b>Reviewed by:</b>	Quality & Risk Child Safeguarding Committee		CELT		

## Audience

This policy applies to all CatholicCare Wollongong (We/Our/CatholicCare) employees including authorised carers, advisors, contractors, and consultants working on a permanent, temporary, and casual basis.

## Implementation responsibility

Implementation responsibility for this policy lies with all CatholicCare employees.

## Objective and Purpose

We recognise that to achieve our vision of advocating with and on behalf of children and young people and intervening to protect them from all forms of abuse, violence, injury, neglect, and exploitation, it is the intention of CatholicCare Wollongong that children and young people are empowered, valued, listened to and wherever possible, participate in decision making.

This policy sets out our commitment to being a Child Safe Organisation with a child safe culture embedded in all levels of our Agency. We have a zero tolerance towards the harm of children and young people. In doing this we will uphold the rights of all children to participate to their full capacity, regardless of their gender, race, ability, or cultural background.

CatholicCare Wollongong believes that all children and young people are entitled to fair and equal treatment, regardless of their background, and that diversity of experience enriches our agency environment. We recognise that all families are unique, and that children and young people learn in different ways and at different rates. To achieve this we:

- Adapt and respond to the diverse needs of children.
- Ensure all children and young people are treated equitably and with respect, regardless of their background, ethnicity, culture, language, beliefs, sexuality, gender, age, socioeconomic status, ability, additional needs, family structure or lifestyle.
- Create a sense of belonging for all children and young people, where diverse identities, experiences, skills, and interests are respected, valued, and given opportunity to be expressed.
- Respond effectively to children with additional vulnerabilities.

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The electronic version of this document is the approved and most current.

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- Comply with all relevant anti-discrimination legislation.
- Ensure all children have access to information, support, and trusted adults.
- Ensure children and young people are free from any forms of discrimination or harassment.

## When to use Equity and Inclusion strategies

Identification and promotion of equity and inclusion strategies in child safety should be utilised throughout all stages of engagement with children. This enables prioritising investments in areas with the greatest need and allocate resources based on evidence of effectiveness and impact in promoting equity and inclusion.

### Consequences of Policy Violations:

Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment or contract. The severity of the consequences will depend on the nature and impact of the violation, as determined by CatholicCare Wollongong.

## What is Equity and Inclusion

Equity means making sure everyone gets what they need to succeed, even if they need different things, so that everyone has a fair chance to do their best.

Inclusion means that every child and young person has access to, can participate meaningfully in, and can experience positive outcomes whilst under the care and service provision of CatholicCare Wollongong.

It recognises all children are vulnerable, but some are more vulnerable to abuse than others, or find it difficult to reveal or be understood when communicating they have been abused.

## Our Equity and Inclusion Principles.

These Principles set out the standards and values that guide the outcomes of employees understanding the need to provide equity and inclusion for our service users.

### For everyone

- **Respect for Diversity:** Valuing and respecting the diverse backgrounds, identities, and experiences of all children, families, and staff members.
- **Equal Opportunities:** Ensuring that every child has equal access to opportunities, resources, and support to thrive and succeed, regardless of their individual characteristics or circumstances.
- **Inclusive Practices:** Implementing inclusive practices that recognise and accommodate the unique needs, strengths, and preferences of all children, fostering a sense of belonging and participation for everyone.
- **Non-Discrimination:** Committing to a zero-tolerance policy towards discrimination, bullying, or exclusion based on race, ethnicity, gender, disability, religion, socio-economic status, or any other characteristic.

### Mutually beneficial

- **Social Skills development:** Children and young people, while working with CatholicCare employees, learn social skills such as empathy, respect and cooperation. This crucial for building positive relationships.

- **Reduction of prejudice and discrimination:** Children and young people, while working with and being included by CatholicCare employees in a diverse environment, are less likely to develop prejudice attitudes and more likely to advocate for equality and justice.
- **Positive Self Concept:** People that see their identities and culture in their environment develop a stronger sense of self-worth and confidence.

### About the team

- **Enhanced Communication and Engagement:** By establishing effective communication and inclusive engagement with clients, we create a welcoming and respectful environment. Teams that encourage open dialogue and active participation from service users, leads to better collaboration and shared decision-making for all.
- **Increased Service User Advocacy and Empowerment:** Equity-focused teams empower service users especially children and young people, to advocate for their rights and access the resources they need. By providing information, support, and encouragement, teams help children and young people become more self-advocating and informed service users.

### Give and take

- **Enhance learning environment:** Richer learning environment where children and young people working alongside of CatholicCare employees can learn from each other's diverse backgrounds and perspective.

### Leader Led

- **Commitment from Leadership:** Leadership buy-in is essential for the successful implementation of inclusive policies. Leaders should demonstrate a commitment to equity and inclusion by setting clear goals, allocating resources, and holding themselves and others accountable for progress.
- **Embedding Inclusive Practices:** Embed inclusive practices into policy implementation processes to ensure that equity and inclusion principles are upheld in day-to-day operations when especially working with Children and Young People.

### Context matters

- By understanding the specific needs and experiences of different Children and Young People, their environments, communities, and various sectors and domains, we can develop more targeted and effective interventions to address inequities.

## Consideration and response

CatholicCare Wollongong will:

- Ensure that all children and young people feel respected at all times,
- Treat all children and young people with respect, without judgement or bias,
- Provide support to children and young people who have diverse needs,
- Ensure that all children and young people are aware of and understand how to escalate any concerns that they may have, and
- Foster an environment where children and young people feel safe to express their identities and experiences.
- Promote inclusivity and diversity in all interactions with children and young people.
- Never prioritise an adult's beliefs over that of a child or young person where their beliefs may differ.

## Definitions

Term	Definition
CatholicCare Executive Leadership Team (CELT)	CELT considers and provides advice to the Chief Executive Officer on high level strategic issues and significant policy and operational matters impacting on CatholicCare Wollongong. It comprises of Executive Managers of CatholicCare Wollongong.
Quality Systems Committee (QSC)	A diverse team that oversees & contributes to the promotion, development, and implementation of systems to ensure continuous improvement in the provision of high-quality client-centric services that achieve positive outcomes for Service Users.
Child Safeguarding Committee	A diverse team that has membership of all service programs that work with Children and Young People. Membership also includes People & Culture Representative and Quality & Risk. There is also representation from Professional Standards at Office of the Bishop and Catholic Education Office Child Protection.
Employees	A person employed by CatholicCare Wollongong, or a person who volunteers for CatholicCare Wollongong, but excludes authorised carer
Contractors	Contractors are individuals or companies who are engaged to perform a specific service or task for a Service User or CatholicCare Wollongong, usually for a fee or other agreed compensation.
Authorised carer	A person authorised by CatholicCare as a foster or relative kinship carer who, for a period of time, takes on the responsibilities of parents to provide a safe, nurturing and secure family environment for children and young people needing care.
Department of Community & Justice	The Department of Communities and Justice works with children, adults, families and communities to improve lives and help people realise their potential.
Office of the Children's Guardian (OCG)	An independent statutory authority in NSW Government, promoting, regulating, and overseeing the quality of child safe organisations in NSW to uphold children and young people's right to be safe
Consultants	A person or agency engaged or on a temporary basis to provide advice and recommendations to a service program.
Advisors	A person who gives others advice or guidance.

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Term	Definition
Inclusion	Every child and young person have access to, can participate meaningfully in, and can experience positive outcomes
Additional Needs	A broad term which includes families and children or young person experiencing disability, a medical condition, a developmental concern, an emotional need, family displacement, domestic violence and family separation.
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	<p>A person of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent who identifies as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and is accepted as such by the community in which he [or she] lives.</p> <p>Membership of the Indigenous people depends on biological descent from the Indigenous people and on mutual recognition of a particular person's membership by that person and by the elders or other persons enjoying traditional authority among those people.</p>
Culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD)	Refers to individuals and groups who are from diverse racial, religious, linguistic and/or ethnic backgrounds.
Disability	<p>in relation to a person, refers to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) a sensory, physical or neurological impairment or acquired brain injury, or any combination thereof, that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. is, or is likely to be, permanent, and</li> <li>ii. causes a substantially reduced capacity in at least one of the areas of self-care, self-management, mobility or communication, and</li> <li>iii. requires significant ongoing or long-term episodic support, and</li> <li>iv. is not related to ageing, or</li> </ul> </li> <li>b) an intellectual disability, or</li> <li>c) a developmental delay</li> </ul>
LGBTIQA+	A broad term to inclusively refer to all people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or have an intersex variation, as well as to represent other members of the communities who use different terms to describe their diverse sexuality and/or gender.
Unconscious bias	Implicit assumptions and beliefs about particular groups of people that affect the way individuals in that group are perceived and judged, often in a negative way. It is difficult to change, because people are not often aware of bias, which is why unconscious bias training is valuable to help individuals learn how to decrease the impact of unconscious bias on their decision-making.

## Induction and ongoing training

- Upon commencing employment with CatholicCare, employees will undergo an induction process that includes training on the principles and guidelines outlined in this policy. Furthermore, ongoing training and educational resources will be made available to ensure that employees maintain a thorough understanding of these principles and guidelines throughout their tenure with CatholicCare.
- Regular updates and reminders may also be provided to keep employees informed about changes in best practice.

## Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

This policy will be reviewed periodically to ensure its effectiveness and relevance. Any necessary updates or modifications to ensure compliance with legislative and standard requirements will be communicated to all employees, contractors, and representatives of CatholicCare Wollongong.

The agency will formally review this Policy every three years as part of the policy's known life cycle period.

## References

### Legislation

- Anti-Discrimination Act 1977
- Care and Protection Act 1998
- Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 (NSW)
- Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Regulation 2012
- Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) (Child Employment) Regulation 2015
- Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012
- Child Protection (Working with Children) Regulation 2013
- Children's Guardian Act 2019
- Crimes Act 1900
- Disability Inclusion Act 2014 (NSW)
- Education and Care Services National Regulations (2011 SI 653)
- Family Law Act 1975 (Commonwealth)
- National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013
- NDIS (Quality & Safeguards Commission and Other Measures) Act 2018

### Standards

- Council of Australian Governments – National Principles for Child Safe Organisations
- Early Childhood Australia's Code of Ethics
- Office of the Children's Guardian – NSW Child Safe Standards
- Office of the Children's Guardian – NSW Child Safe Standards for Permanent Care
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
- National Catholic Safeguarding Standards
- NSW Charter of Rights for Children and Young People in Out of Home Care
- NQF – My Time, My Place: Framework for School Aged Children for Australia

- NQF – Being, Belonging and Becoming: The Early Learning Years Framework for Australia
- NQF – Education and Care Services National Laws and National Regulations
- Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority (ACECQA)
- Department of Social Services - Families and Children Activity Administrative Approval Requirements
- NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission – NDIS Practice Standards

### Agency Policies

- Code of Ethics and Conduct
- CCW Policy 1 Child Safeguarding
- CCW Policy 2 Child Safeguarding Risk Management
- CCW Policy 4 Child Safeguarding Complaint Management
- CCW Policy 5 Child Safeguarding Disciplinary and Misconduct
- CCW Policy 6 Child Safeguarding Training and Development
- CCW Policy 7 Child Safeguarding Mandatory Reporting of Harm, Abuse, & Neglect of a child (MRG).
- CS Policy 9 - Preventing and Responding to Harm and Abuse of Vulnerable People
- WS Policy 2.1 - Recruitment and Selection
- WS Policy 2.8 - Position Descriptions
- WS Policy 4.1 - Performance Planning and Review
- WS Policy 5.1 - Training & Development

### Forms, record keeping, other documents

- [NSW Significant Dates - Reconciliation](#)