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**Child Safety Policy and Procedures**

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# Child Safety

## Policy Purpose

The intent of this policy is to promote our ethical, respectful, and safe service delivery for all children supported by Maydot Supports in line with the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.

## 

## Policy Statement

Maydot Supports is a child safe organisation, committed to providing a safe and secure environment for all children in our care.

Maydot Supports adheres to the [National Principles for Child Safe Organisations (humanrights.gov.au)](https://childsafe.humanrights.gov.au/sites/default/files/2019-02/National_Principles_for_Child_Safe_Organisations2019.pdf#:~:text=National%20Principles%20for%20Child%20Safe%20Organisations%201.%20Child,decisions%20affecting%20them%20and%20are%20taken%20seriously.%203.) to create a child safe organisation that creates a culture, adopts strategies and takes action to promote child wellbeing and prevent harm to children and young people. This includes:

1. Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture.

2. Children and young people are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.

3. Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.

4. Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice.

5. People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.

6. Processes to respond to complaints and concerns are child focused.

7. Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training.

8. Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.

9. Implementation of the national child safe principles is regularly reviewed and improved.

10. Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people.

Maydot Supports believes that every child has a right to be safe from harm at all times and that the wellbeing and best interests of children and young people are the responsibility of all workers and the community.

Maydot Supports will consciously and systematically:

• take a preventative, proactive and participatory approach on all child protection issues that relates to all work undertaken.

• value, embrace the voice, opinions and views of children and young people.

• take action to protect children from physical, sexual, emotional, and psychosocial abuse and neglect.by creating conditions that reduce the likelihood of harm to children and young people and increase the likelihood of identifying any harm

• responds to any concerns, disclosures, allegations or suspicions.

Maydot Supports workers have a responsibility to protect a child under their care and to promote that child’s best interest. While it may not be possible to eliminate risk entirely, much can be done to reduce opportunities for child abuse and assist personnel with the process of Mandatory Reporting.

Maydot Supports ensures continued compliance with New South Wales Child Protection Legislation [Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998  (the Care Act).](http://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/#/view/act/1998/157/chap3/part2)

## Definitions

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Term | Definition |
| Child | The NDIS Act 2013 (Cth) defines a, ‘child,’ as, ‘a person who is under 18 years of age.’  It should be noted that while a child is defined as such in the NDIS Act, other relevant state and territory legislation may split people under 18 into two groups. For instance, under the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 No 157 (NSW) a child is defined as, ‘a person who is under the age of 16 years,’ and a young person as, ‘a person who is aged 16 years or above, but who is under the age of 18 years.’  Providers should be aware of these differences. For the purpose of this policy and associated procedure, The NDIS Act 2013 (Cth) definition is the one applicable. |
| Employment Checks/working with children checks | State and territory legislation have established screening schemes and checks for people engaging in child related work. |
| Mandatory Reporting | Where a legislative requirement is placed on an individual  to report known and suspected cases of child abuse and neglect to a nominated government department or agency (typically the child protection authority). |
| NDIS Commission | NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission. |
| Participant | A person who meets the NDIS access requirements. |
| Policy | A statement of intent that sets out how an organisation should fulfil their vision, mission, and goals. |
| Procedure | A statement or instruction that sets out how a policy will be implemented and by whom. |
| Stakeholder | Person or organisation that can affect, or be affected by, or perceive themselves to be affected by a decision or activity. |
| Workers / Personnel | Anyone, paid or unpaid, who works for or with Maydot Supports. It includes members of the governing body, or any other similarly empowered committee constituted by Maydot Supports. |

## Child Safety Procedures

Maydot Supports has the following procedures in place to promote child safety:

* Governance Policies and Procedures
* Accessible Information for Children and Young People
* **Child Safety Recruitment, Screening and Onboarding**
* **Code of conduct, Support, Supervision and Training**
* **Safe Environment**
* **Appropriate use of Communication Systems**
* **Violence, Abuse, Neglect, Exploitation and Discrimination**
* **Child Abuse Allegations**
* **Internal Reporting**
* **Breaches**

## Governance Policies and Procedures

Governance arrangements facilitate implementation of the child safety and wellbeing policy at all levels. At Maydot Supports a child safe culture is championed and modelled at all levels of the organisation from the top down and the bottom up.

Our governance policies and procedures and organisational leadership models regularly reinforce attitudes and behaviours that value children and young people and a commitment to child safety, child wellbeing and cultural safety.

Maydot Supports ensures continued compliance with New South Wales for child safe organisations.

**New South Wales**

As a NSW based organisation, our organisation implement the [Child Safe Standards](https://ocg.nsw.gov.au/child-safe-scheme/why-we-have-child-safe-standards)  through our systems, policies and processes to better prevent and respond to child abuse. We encourage our staff to refer to an implementation guide for guidance - refer [Implementing the Child Safe Standards | Office of the Children's Guardian (nsw.gov.au)](https://ocg.nsw.gov.au/child-safe-scheme/implementing-child-safe-standards).

## Accessible Information for Children and Young People Procedure

Maydot Supports ensures that children and young people are provided with information about their rights, keeping safe, and complaints management processes in accessible formats. Ie, In easy English formats.

Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance, and culture. Maydot Supports will ensure:

* Children and young people are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.
* Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.

As part of our ***Risk Management Policy and Procedure***, Maydot Supports will undertake risk management strategies to identify potential risk to children and young people and take steps to minimise this risk.

As part of our ***Quality Management Policy and Procedure***, Maydot Supports will continue to monitor compliance within the organisation through review and internal audit processes including but not limited to workers understanding of the Child Safe Policy, legal obligations, and awareness of reporting procedures. We will seek feedback also from participants and their families as part of our Quality management practices.

## Child Safety Recruitment, Screening and Onboarding Procedure

As per our ***Human Resource Management Policy and Procedure***, Maydot Supports internal recruitment processes of workers employ stringent screening measures to ensure inappropriate persons are not employed. As per State/Territory and NDIS requirements, Maydot Supports ensures all workers have acceptable worker checks. Additional screening measures are incorporated into selection processes for positions working with children, which include targeted interview questions.

Where Maydot Supports has identified that a prospective worker has previously committed a violent or sexually related offence, they will not, under any circumstances, be considered for child related employment or activities.

All workers must sign and agree to abide with the **NDIS Code of Conduct**, **Child Safe Code of Conduct** complete the mandatory online **‘Quality, Safety and You’ orientation** program, and undertake our induction program.

## Code of Conduct, Support, Supervision and Training Procedure

Our Maydot Supports Child Safe Code of Conduct provides guidelines for staff and volunteers on expected behavioural standards and responsibilities when interacting with children and young people.

All workers and volunteers of Maydot Supports will receive an appropriate induction on their responsibilities to children and young people, including record keeping, information sharing and reporting obligations and will sign our Child Safe Code of Conduct before they begin work.

All workers of Maydot Supports will undergo regular training to recognise, report and respond to children or young people who may be at risk of harm. This will occur a minimum of once every three years. Our ***Human Resource Management Policy and Procedure*** outlines our commitment to ongoing supervision and support which works to create and reinforce a child safe culture.

Our staff will also be encouraged to undertake the Australian Human Rights Commission [online learning course](https://childsafe.humanrights.gov.au/learning-hub/e-learning-modules) aimed helping organisations implement the [National Principles for Child Safe Organisations](https://childsafe.humanrights.gov.au/node/31).

## Safe Environment Procedure

Incidents of abuse are unlikely to take place in front of another person and the presence of a witness can assist in clarifying questionable allegations. For these reasons, whenever reasonably practicable, there should be two people present when working with or supervising a child.

No person employed or appointed by Maydot Supports will visit a child in their home, without the prior approval of Maydot Supports.

When transporting a child, the child is to be taken directly to and from arranged venues; there must be no spontaneous detour under any circumstances.

All personal counselling is to be carried out within sight of a witness.

Workers are expected to respect a child’s privacy during activities that require undressing, dressing, or changing clothes. Under no circumstances will Maydot Supports workers be alone in a room with a child while either is changing clothes.

Maydot Supports workers have the right to ask people who do not have a valid reason to be present at child-related activities to leave. Police may be contacted if such persons refuse to comply with any reasonable request to leave.

## Appropriate use of Communication Systems Procedure

Maydot Supports ensures that any use of Maydot Supports systems to access child pornography will not be tolerated and will be dealt with promptly, including reporting to police.

## Child Abuse Allegations Procedure

Reasonable grounds of Child Abuse can be assumed when:

* A child discloses that he or she has been abused
* Someone close to a child (e.g. sibling, relative, close friend) discloses on behalf of that child
* There is professional judgment that abuse has occurred or reasonable grounds to suspect that a child has been or is being abused or neglected.

In emergencies, if the child is in immediate danger, we will contact police on 000.

When reporting in New South Wales we will make contact with the following state government department and adhere to their processes.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **State / Territory** | **Process** |
| **New South Wales** | We will report concerns about suspected risk of harm directly to the FACS Child Protection Helpline in one of two ways:  Phone 132 111 (TTY 1800 212 936), if the suspected risk of significant harm is imminent or high.  Send an [eReport](https://reporter.childstory.nsw.gov.au/s/)  if there is suspected risk of significant harm that is not imminent or high. |

Refer also to our ***Violence, Abuse, Neglect, Exploitation and Discrimination Policy and Procedure***.

## Internal Reporting Procedure

The worker will then immediately contact the Maydot Supports and complete an Incident Report, and the Maydot Supports will notify the NDIS Commission of a reportable incident as per our ***Incident Management Policy and Procedure.***

If a disclosure of abuse is made, the person who receives the disclosure will maintain appropriate support to the one making the disclosure. This will include:

* Treating each allegation seriously and not attempting to deny the allegation or minimise its impact on the alleged victim so that the matter is not overlooked
* Not pushing the child to disclose details of the alleged assault or attempting to investigate the allegation
* Ensuring the child understands that their disclosure is being taken seriously; that what has happened is not their fault and that they are correct in disclosing the incident
* Not making contact with the alleged perpetrator. If Maydot Supports personnel are already providing counsel to the alleged perpetrator, it may be advisable for another person to assume this responsibility for the duration of any investigation
* If the alleged assault has taken place recently, clothing worn by the child should be retained and handed to the police for forensic examination.
* Maintaining confidentiality at all times.

Any disclosures by a child, reports of suspected abuse and all details of the subsequent investigation will be documented, and the documents will be held by the owner in a secure location where a breach of privacy cannot occur.

Maydot Supports reserves the right to carry out disciplinary procedures in accordance with its policies and procedures.

Where an allegation is made, the accused person will be removed from all children’s activities and programs pending the outcome of all investigations.

To build Maydot Supports capacity in handling complaints involving children and creating child safe cultures, we will also refer to the [Complaint Handling Guide: Upholding the rights of children and young people (the Guide).](https://www.childsafety.gov.au/resources/complaint-handling-guide-upholding-rights-children-and-young-people)

The Guide provides practical advice to organisations on how to develop, implement and maintain a complaint-handling system that prioritises child safety and promotes the rights of children and young people to have a voice in decisions that affect them.

## Breaches Procedure

A breach of this policy is grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. Ignorance of these procedures will not generally be accepted as an excuse for non-compliance. Only in extreme circumstances and where such ignorance can be demonstrated to have occurred through no fault of the individual concerned will Maydot Supports accept such an argument.

## Child Safety Forms

* NDIS Code of Conduct Agreement
* Child Safe Code of Conduct
* Incident Management Form
* Incident Register

## Child Safety Legislation and References

* [*The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child*](https://www.bing.com/ck/a?!&&p=809acbdc8906399aJmltdHM9MTcyMDA1MTIwMCZpZ3VpZD0xYjliYTQ1Zi1kZWY2LTY2NzYtMjQzNi1iNmFlZGYxYzY3MzImaW5zaWQ9NTIyMg&ptn=3&ver=2&hsh=3&fclid=1b9ba45f-def6-6676-2436-b6aedf1c6732&psq=a)%09The+United+Nations+Convention+on+the+Rights+of+the+Child&u=a1aHR0cHM6Ly93d3cudW5pY2VmLm9yZy5hdS91bml0ZWQtbmF0aW9ucy1jb252ZW50aW9uLW9uLXRoZS1yaWdodHMtb2YtdGhlLWNoaWxk&ntb=1)
* [*National Principles for Child Safe Organisations*](https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/childrens-rights/national-principles-child-safe-organisations) *2019*
* [*Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998*](http://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/#/view/act/1998/157/chap3/part2)*(the Care Act) –* ***New South Wales***
* [Australian Human Rights Commission Child Safety online learning course](https://www.bing.com/ck/a?!&&p=3351e58996f5f9dbJmltdHM9MTcyMDA1MTIwMCZpZ3VpZD0xYjliYTQ1Zi1kZWY2LTY2NzYtMjQzNi1iNmFlZGYxYzY3MzImaW5zaWQ9NTIwMQ&ptn=3&ver=2&hsh=3&fclid=1b9ba45f-def6-6676-2436-b6aedf1c6732&psq=k)%09Australian+Human+Rights+Commission+Child+Safety+online+learning+course&u=a1aHR0cHM6Ly9jaGlsZHNhZmUuaHVtYW5yaWdodHMuZ292LmF1L2xlYXJuaW5nLWh1Yi9lLWxlYXJuaW5nLW1vZHVsZXM&ntb=1)