

Play Australia

Child Safeguarding Policy

IPA Australia Incorporated | ABN 54 015 468 405 | Version 1.0, 1 June 2026

Play Australia (IPA Australia Incorporated, ABN 54 015 468 405) has zero tolerance for child abuse and puts the safety, rights and best interests of children first in everything we do.

1. Our commitment

Every child has the right to play, and every child has the right to be safe while they do it. As Australia's national peak body for children's play, we champion Article 31 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. We know we cannot do that credibly unless children are safe in every space we create, host or influence.

We commit to:

- a culture where child safety is everyone's job, led by our Board and CEO
- listening to children, believing them and acting on what they tell us
- the cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children
- the safety and full inclusion of children with disability, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and LGBTIQ+ children
- careful screening, training and supervision of everyone who works with us
- reporting every concern to the right authority, without delay
- learning from every concern and improving how we work

We support healthy risk in play. Healthy risk is a normal, valuable part of childhood. Harm and abuse are never acceptable. This policy is about preventing harm, not about removing challenge from children's play.

2. Purpose and scope

This policy sets out how Play Australia keeps children safe, meets its legal duties in every state and territory where it works, and responds when something goes wrong.

It applies to:

- Board (Committee of Management) members
- the CEO, staff and contractors, whether paid or unpaid
- volunteers, students on placement and interns
- consultants, facilitators, presenters and photographers engaged by us
- members and partners when they deliver activities in Play Australia's name

It covers all Play Australia activity: events and activities, training and professional learning, consultations with children, online and social media channels, and any time a person represents Play Australia.

Play Australia is a Victorian incorporated association and registered charity that works nationally. Where state or territory law sets a higher standard than this policy, the higher standard applies.

Our level of contact with children

Most of our work is with adults: members, practitioners, councils, researchers and governments. We do not generally have direct contact with children. Contact happens occasionally, for example when we run a children's consultation, host an activity at an event, or share content that children may see online.

This policy is scaled to that level of contact. Its core duties apply to everyone at all times: follow the Code of Conduct, and act on and report any concern about a child. The extra requirements for screening, event planning and supervision apply when a role or activity involves direct contact with children.

3. The law we follow

Our jurisdiction is Victoria, so we use the 11 Victorian Child Safe Standards as the framework for this policy, aligned with the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.

Law or framework	What it means for us
<i>Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005</i> (Vic): 11 Child Safe Standards	Our framework for keeping children safe. Organisations without a sector regulator are regulated by the SSR.
National Principles for Child Safe Organisations (10 principles)	Our national benchmark. Commonwealth grant agreements often require them.
Reportable Conduct Scheme, <i>Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005</i> (Vic)	Play Australia is not part of the Scheme. If a concern involves a worker from a partner organisation that is in the Scheme, we tell that organisation so it can meet its own duty to notify the SSR.
<i>Worker Screening Act 2020</i> (Vic) and each state and territory's screening law	Anyone doing child related work for us holds a valid check for the state or territory where the work happens.
National Working with Children Check reforms	All jurisdictions agreed in November 2025 to national reforms, including mutual recognition of negative notices ('banned in one, banned in all').
<i>Crimes Act 1958</i> (Vic): failure to disclose (s 327), failure to protect (s 49O), grooming (s 49M)	Every adult must tell police if they reasonably believe an adult has sexually offended against a child under 16. People in authority must act to reduce a known risk.
<i>Crimes Act 1900</i> (NSW): concealing child abuse (s 316A), failure to reduce or remove risk (s 43B), grooming (s 66EC)	Applies to our work in NSW. Similar offences exist in other states and territories.
<i>Children, Youth and Families Act 2005</i> (Vic) and other states' child protection laws	Anyone can report a child at risk. Staff who are mandatory reporters in another role keep that duty.
<i>Children's Guardian Act 2019</i> (NSW): NSW Child Safe Standards	Applies when we deliver child related activity in NSW.
<i>Privacy Act 1988</i> (Cth) and the Children's Online Privacy Code	The Code must be registered by 10 December 2026. We will update our online practice when it starts.
<i>Online Safety Act 2021</i> (Cth), including the social media minimum age of 16	Our social media content and engagement are aimed at adults, not children under 16.

Law or framework	What it means for us
UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, including Article 31 and General Comment No. 17	Children's rights to safety, participation and play shape how we apply this policy.

4. What we mean

Term	Meaning
Child	Anyone under 18 years of age.
Child abuse	Physical, sexual, emotional or psychological abuse, neglect, and exposure to family violence. It includes grooming.
Grooming	Behaviour by an adult that builds a relationship with a child, or with people around the child, to make sexual abuse easier or to hide it. It can happen in person or online.
Harm	Any detrimental effect on a child's physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing, whether caused by one act or a pattern over time.
Healthy risk in play	Challenge and uncertainty children choose in play, such as climbing, exploring or rough and tumble, that supports growth. It is not harm.
Disclosure	When a child, or someone else, tells us that a child has been harmed or is at risk.
Child related work	Work or volunteering that usually involves direct contact with children, as defined in the screening law of each state and territory.
Child Safety Officer	The person appointed by the CEO to lead child safety day to day and be the first contact for concerns.
Cultural safety	An environment where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children feel their identity and culture are respected and valued.

5. How we put the Standards into practice

Each of the 11 Victorian Child Safe Standards is met by a concrete practice at Play Australia.

Standard	What Play Australia does
1. Cultural safety for Aboriginal children	Acknowledge Country at events, involve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in planning, and act on racism straight away.
2. Child safety is embedded in leadership, governance and culture	Child safety is a standing Board agenda item. The CEO reports on it at every meeting.
3. Children are informed of their rights and participate	Children's consultations are designed with them, in plain language, and they know how to raise a concern.
4. Families and communities are informed and involved	Families get event safety information before events.

Standard	What Play Australia does
5. Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected	Events are planned for access and inclusion, including for children with disability.
6. People working with children are suitable and supported	Screening, reference checks, induction and supervision (section 7).
7. Complaints processes are child focused	A clear, simple way to raise concerns, open to children and adults (sections 10 and 11).
8. Staff and volunteers are equipped through ongoing education	Child safety training at induction for any events including children. r (section 12).
9. Physical and online environments minimise risk	Event risk assessments and online safety rules (sections 8 and 9).
10. Implementation is regularly reviewed and improved	Annual review of this policy and learning from every event.
11. Policies and procedures document child safety	This policy, the Code of Conduct and supporting procedures.

6. Who is responsible

The Board is accountable for child safety. Everyone who works with us is responsible for it.

Role	Responsibilities
Board	Approves this policy, monitors compliance through CEO reports, makes sure resources are in place, and holds the CEO to account.
CEO	Leads a child safe culture, and appoints the Child Safety Officer for event where children will be present, decides how Play Australia responds to each concern, reports serious concerns to the Board Chair within 24 hours.
Child Safety Officer	First contact for concerns, supports people making reports, keeps the child safety register, arranges training, checks screening records.
Staff, contractors and volunteers	Follow this policy and the Code of Conduct, complete training, act on and report every concern. Hold a valid screening check when doing child related work.
Event and program leads	Complete a child safety risk assessment, brief the team, and name the on site contact for concerns at each event.
Partners and members delivering in our name	Have their own child safe policy of an equal standard, or agree in writing to follow this one.

If a concern involves the CEO, report it to the Board Chair. If it involves the Child Safety Officer, report it to the CEO.

7. Recruitment, screening and induction

Most Play Australia roles do not involve child related work. When a role or activity does, no one starts until their screening check is verified and recorded.

1. Job and volunteer ads state our commitment to child safety.
2. Position descriptions say whether the role involves child related work.
3. Interviews for all roles include questions about values and attitudes to children.
4. At least two referee checks. For child related roles, include a question about suitability to work with children.
5. For child related work, verify the right check online for each state or territory where the person will work, and record the number and expiry date.
6. Induction for everyone covers this policy, the Code of Conduct and how to report.
7. People new to child related work are supervised closely during their first activities.

Where the work happens	Check required
Victoria	Working with Children Check
New South Wales	Working with Children Check
Queensland	Blue card
Western Australia	Working with Children Check
South Australia	Working with Children Check
Tasmania	Registration to Work with Vulnerable People
Australian Capital Territory	Working with Vulnerable People registration
Northern Territory	Working with Children Clearance (Ochre Card)

A check is a minimum, not proof that someone is safe. If a check is refused, suspended or revoked, the person stops child related work at once and must tell the CEO. The Child Safety Officer checks the register every quarter for expiring checks.

8. Code of Conduct

Everyone covered by this policy signs the Code of Conduct before working with children, and a breach may lead to removal from duties or termination.

Always

- treat children with respect and listen to them
- work in open, visible spaces, with at least two adults present where possible
- respect children's culture, identity, disability and privacy
- let children lead their own play and support healthy risk
- report any concern about a child's safety, including about a colleague

Never

- be alone with a child out of sight of other adults, unless it is part of an approved plan
- use physical punishment, or language that is humiliating, sexual or discriminatory
- give gifts, favours or special attention to a particular child
- contact a child privately in person, by phone, text, email, social media or gaming platform

- ask a child to keep a secret
- transport a child without written permission from a parent or carer and the CEO
- work with children under the influence of alcohol or drugs

Photos, video and online

- Get written consent from a parent or carer, and the child's own agreement, before taking or using an image.
- Use first names only, never with school, address or other identifying details.
- Take images only on Play Australia devices, store them securely and delete them when no longer needed.
- Never use images of children in swimwear, in a state of undress, or in distress.
- Children under 16 are not invited to engage with our social media accounts.
- Report online harm to the Child Safety Officer and, where serious, to eSafety (esafety.gov.au).

9. Events, programs and partners

When Play Australia runs an event or activity where children will be present, it has a written child safety plan before it starts.

The plan covers:

- a risk assessment of the site and activities, weighing play benefits against real hazards
- ratios and supervision, with parents or carers responsible for their own children at public events unless we have agreed otherwise in writing
- a named on site child safety contact, known to all staff and volunteers
- a clear, visible meeting point for lost children, and a lost child procedure
- toilets and change areas that protect children's privacy
- first aid and emergency arrangements
- photo and filming rules, with signs at the entry

When we work with venues, councils, schools or other partners, we agree in writing who is responsible for child safety. Partners working with children in our name must show us their own child safe policy and screening practice.

10. Responding to a concern or disclosure

If a child is in immediate danger, **call 000 first**. Every concern, including one where you have called 000, goes to the Child Safety Officer the same day.

Signs to look for

Changes in behaviour, fear of a particular person, unexplained injuries, sexual knowledge or behaviour unusual for the child's age, or an adult who seeks time alone with a child, gives gifts or asks for secrecy. One sign alone may mean nothing. Trust your instincts and raise it.

What to do

1. **Keep the child safe.** Call 000 if the child is in immediate danger.
2. **Listen and reassure.** Stay calm, believe the child, and tell them they did the right thing. Do not promise to keep it secret.
3. **Do not investigate.** Do not question the child in detail or confront the person involved.
4. **Tell the Child Safety Officer the same day.** If they are not available, tell the CEO.

5. **Report to the authorities.** Contact police or child protection. In Victoria, any adult who reasonably believes an adult has sexually offended against a child under 16 must tell police. This is a personal duty: you do not need anyone's permission.
6. **Write it down within 24 hours.** Record what you saw or heard, in the child's own words where possible, with the date and time. Sign it.
7. **Protect privacy.** Share information only with those who need it.

What Play Australia then does

- The CEO decides on immediate steps, such as standing a worker aside from child related work while the matter is assessed.
- If the concern involves a worker or volunteer from a partner organisation, the CEO tells that organisation so it can meet its own obligations, including the Reportable Conduct Scheme where it applies to them.
- The child and family are offered support and kept informed, as far as the authorities allow.
- The person accused is treated fairly and told of the outcome.
- Findings are used to improve our practice.

Who to contact

Service	Contact
Police, immediate danger	000
Victoria Child Protection, after hours	13 12 78
NSW Child Protection Helpline	132 111
Queensland Child Safety, after hours	1800 177 135
South Australia Child Abuse Report Line	13 14 78
Western Australia Central Intake	1800 273 889
Tasmania Advice and Referral Line	1800 000 123
ACT Child and Youth Protection Services	1300 556 729
Northern Territory Child Protection	1800 700 250
Social Services Regulator (Vic)	ssr.vic.gov.au
Kids Helpline, for children	1800 55 1800
Play Australia Child Safety Officer	Name and mobile to be added

Open question: confirm all numbers when adopting the policy and add the Child Safety Officer's name and mobile.

11. Complaints, records and privacy

Anyone, including a child, can raise a child safety concern or complaint with us, and we will take it seriously and respond.

- **How to raise it:** speak to any staff member or the Child Safety Officer, or email Play Australia. Children can tell any adult they trust at an event.
- **Our response:** we acknowledge complaints within 2 business days and tell the person what will happen next.

- **If you are not satisfied:** you can contact the SSR or the child safety regulator in your state or territory.
- **No retaliation:** no one will be disadvantaged for raising a concern in good faith.

Records

- The Child Safety Officer keeps a confidential child safety register of all concerns, reports and actions.
- Records are stored securely, with access limited to the CEO and Child Safety Officer.
- Records about child abuse allegations are kept for at least 45 years, in line with the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse recommendations and state records law.

Privacy and information sharing

We handle personal information under the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth). Privacy never stops us sharing information with police, child protection or a regulator to keep a child safe. Where we are a prescribed entity under Victoria's Child Information Sharing Scheme, we share information as that scheme allows.

12. Training, review and approval

Everyone in the organisation that will be in attendance at an event with children completes child safety training, and the Board reviews the policy every 18 months.

Training covers

- this policy, the Code of Conduct and how to report
- recognising grooming and signs of harm, in person and online
- responding well to a disclosure
- cultural safety and inclusion
- healthy risk in play and how it differs from harm

Review

The policy is also reviewed straight away after a serious incident or a change in the law. Children, families and staff are invited to give feedback as part of each review.

Related documents

- Child Safety Code of Conduct (sign off form)
- Event Child Safety Plan template
- Photo and Video Consent form
- Complaints Policy
- Privacy Policy
- Volunteer Policy
- [Victorian Government: new reforms strengthen child safety](#)
- [Commission for Children and Young People: changes to the regulator](#)
- [Ministerial Statement of Expectations for the Social Services Regulator, June 2026](#)
- [National Office for Child Safety: Working with Children Check reform](#)
- [Commonwealth Attorney General: national Working with Children Check reforms](#)
- [Corrs: Children's Online Privacy Code exposure draft](#)