

Policy title	Child safety and wellbeing policy
Policy number	EP006
Owner	Managing Director
Date effective	01 July 2025
Date of next review	30 June 2028

1 Purpose

In keeping with its vision and values, Estuari is committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of all children engaged with or affected by its operations and programs. Estuari supports the rights of children and will act to ensure a child-safe environment is maintained.

Estuari is a child-safe organisation and has zero tolerance for child abuse. Estuari People value, respect and listen to children, and are committed to supporting child safety and wellbeing in our work.

We recognise that we work in contexts where children experience heightened vulnerability or where children’s circumstances give rise to additional vulnerability, further emphasising our obligations to proactively keep children safe, strong and well.

This policy articulates the responsibility of all Estuari People to ensure that children’s right to safety, protection and well-being is respected at all times.

2 Scope and audience

This policy applies globally to:

- All Estuari People, being all directors, employees, contractors, consultants, volunteers, and members of Estuari, irrespective of location.
- Suppliers (including contractors, sub-contractors and sole traders) and partner organisations who provide services or work with Estuari in connection with any Estuari activity or collaboration which involves direct or indirect contact with children.

3 Policy statement

3.1 Principles

- Principle 1:** We are committed to ensuring that all children of all abilities, identities, backgrounds and circumstances are safe, strong and respected in all that we do. We will be proactive in ensuring our practice is culturally respectful, inclusive and accessible for all children, families and communities.
- Principle 2:** We are committed to supporting child wellbeing, resilience and safety and protecting children in our work. We apply a holistic view of children’s safety and wellbeing, and an understanding of child safe practices aligned with the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.
- Principle 3:** We value, respect and listen to children. The best interests and the views of children are central to our decision making and actions. We are committed to upholding the rights of the

child and to applying, so far as practicable, the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Principle 4: We have zero tolerance for any form of child abuse. We are committed to working in partnership with children, families and communities to support early intervention, reduce vulnerability and prevent harm to children.

Principle 5: We act in accordance with Australian legal standards and obligations and the relevant laws of other countries in which we operate, in the context of international legal conventions, declarations and agreements relating to children's rights and protection

3.2 Approach

The above principles will be achieved by the following:

- (a) Fostering a child safe culture across the entire organisation by embedding this policy and associated child safety and wellbeing procedures and governance arrangements that facilitate their implementation.
- (b) Embedding the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.
- (c) Making our commitments to keep children safe and well, as detailed in this Policy, Child Safe Code of Conduct, Child Safety and Wellbeing Handbook and our Charter of Commitment to Children and Young People publicly visible and accessible to all.
- (d) Actively seeking children's participation in our work including design, implementation, monitoring and review and child friendly feedback and complaints processes.
- (e) Providing opportunities for children to engage in activities that are inclusive, meaningful, safe, and build resilience.
- (f) Supporting and empowering families and carers to meet children's needs.
- (g) Minimising the risk of abuse, neglect and exploitation of children in their daily life including support for families in contact with our activities.
- (h) Paying particular attention to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children with disability, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, those who are unable to live at home, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex children and young people.
- (i) Building and maintaining culturally safe environments and practices for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families.
- (j) Actively supporting children's connection to culture, family and community.
- (k) Embedding robust child safe recruitment and supervision practices to effectively manage the risk of employing or engaging persons who may pose a danger to the safety or wellbeing of children in our work, including but not limited to an organisational statement in advertised position descriptions, robust screening process in regard to working with children clearance (WWCC), police checks, statutory declarations, reference checks and child focused interview questions.

In general, Estuari requires a WWCC for any person undertaking any role that has direct contact with children. It is Estuari policy that no Estuari Person in a role requiring a WWCC can commence in their role until the WWCC is completed and they have been cleared (approved to work with children) by the regulator.

- (l) Ensuring all Estuari People and in-scope suppliers and partners are informed about their responsibilities to keep children safe, strong and well.
- (m) Ensuring all Estuari People and in-scope suppliers and partners sign and comply with the Estuari Code of Conduct.
- (n) Providing Estuari People and in-scope suppliers and partners, with the knowledge and skills to keep children safe and minimise risks to children, including training, resources and dedicated child safety roles.
- (o) Requiring in-scope suppliers and partners to apply child safe practice in their work with Estuari.
- (p) Undertaking child safety risk assessments of all programs and activities that may have direct contact with children or include access to any records relating to children.
- (q) Ensuring child safety and wellbeing risks are assessed as part of the procurement process when Estuari is considering contracting another organisation or individual, and through the partnership protocol if considering partnering with another organisation.
- (r) Embedding robust processes for reporting child safety and wellbeing concerns internally and externally in compliance with our legislated and contractual obligations and whenever it is in the best interests of a child. Reporting processes are outlined in the Child Safety and Wellbeing Handbook. The Estuari Whistleblower policy details options for anonymously reporting as a whistleblower.
- (s) Ensuring all reports of child exploitation, neglect or abuse, or a breach of this policy and the Conduct are treated seriously.

4 Further support

If you require more detail or operational knowledge in relation to this policy and any of these topics, please refer to the Estuari Child Safety and Wellbeing Handbook or contact the safeguarding focal point at safeguarding@estuari.org

5 Referenced external documents

- Australian Human Rights Commission (n.d.) [National Principles for Child Safe Organisations](#), accessed 28 June 2025.
- Unicef (n.d.) [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child: Child-friendly version](#), accessed 28 June 2025.

6 Definitions

Term	Definition
Carer or caregiver	A person who has responsibility for a child including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A foster or kinship out of home carer ▪ An Estuari Person in that capacity ▪ A supplier or contractor in that capacity
Child	A person under the age of 18 years.
Child abuse	Child abuse is sometimes also referred to as ill-treatment or neglect. It is an act, a failure to act, or pattern of behaviour over time by a person that results in serious harm or an imminent risk of serious harm to a child. This includes the following in relation to a child: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Physical harm ▪ Sexual abuse ▪ Emotional/psychological harm, including exposure to domestic and family violence ▪ Exploitation ▪ Neglect.
Child exploitation	Using a child for profit, unlawful labour, sexual gratification, or some other personal or financial advantage, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Possessing, controlling, producing, obtaining, transmitting and distributing child abuse material ▪ Face to face and online grooming including for the purposes of sexual exploitation, criminal activity or to radicalise to violent extremism ▪ Coercing another person to commit an act or acts of exploitation against a child.
Child protection	An action or intervention designed to protect an individual child from harm, particularly arising from child abuse. It includes procedures which detail how to respond to concerns about a child.
Child safeguarding	All the actions an organisation takes to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children engaging with or impacted by the organisation, including strategies to protect children from harm.
Code of conduct	Estuari Code of Conduct
Contact	See definitions for ‘Direct contact’ and ‘indirect contact’
Direct contact (with a child)	Includes face to face contact and all direct communication including telephone or online (text, voice calls, voice messages, video messages, gaming, social media, video chat etc.). It applies to roles where the contact is reasonably expected to occur as a normal part of the activity or work environment and is more than incidental.
Emotional / psychological harm	Inappropriate verbal or symbolic acts toward a child and/or a pattern of failure over time to provide a child with adequate non-physical nurture and emotional availability. It includes acts of commission (things that are done) or omission (things that are not done) with a high probability of damaging a child's self-esteem, social competence or psychological wellbeing. It can include a range of behaviours such as excessive criticism, withholding affection, exposure to family and domestic violence, intimidation or threatening behaviour.
Estuari People	All directors, employees, contractors, consultants, volunteers, and members of Estuari, irrespective of location.
Grooming	Actions deliberately taken to befriend and influence a child (and/or parents and caregivers) with the objective of exploitation. It may occur in person, over phone or online, over a brief or extended time period.
Indirect contact (with a child)	Includes access to children’s data, as well as any contact that is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Incidental

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Brief ▪ Usually supervised by a caregiver for children of an age requiring supervision
Informed consent	Consent given by a child, parent or guardian with an informed understanding of the implications, purpose, potential use and/or consequences.
In-scope supplier	Suppliers who may in the course of their work with Estuari have direct or indirect contact with children, including access to children’s records.
Neglect	The continued failure by a parent or caregiver to provide a child with the conditions required for their physical and emotional development and wellbeing, including providing sufficient attention and responsiveness, and meeting essential needs such as food, clothing, shelter, medical and dental care, education and adequate supervision appropriate to the age and needs of the child.
Partner / partner organisation	A person or organisation engaged by Estuari to work with Estuari or to provide services to or in connection with projects, irrespective of global location. This includes all of the person or organisation’s personnel.
Personnel	An employee or other person providing services.
Physical harm	Non-accidental or reckless acts that result in physical injury or pain. Includes but is not limited to injuries which are caused by excessive discipline, shoving, hitting, slapping, shaking, throwing, punching, kicking, biting, burning, strangling and poisoning.
Sexual abuse	<p>The involvement of a child in sexual activity that they do not fully comprehend or are unable (due to their age or development) to give informed consent to. It includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sexual comments ▪ Watching children engage in, or having children observe, sexual acts ▪ Grooming ▪ Fondling, masturbation, oral sex, vaginal or anal penetration ▪ Voyeurism, exhibitionism ▪ Exposing the child to sexual content ▪ Involving the child in child abuse material.
Strong (safe, strong and well)	A strong child is empowered and resilient, knows their rights, will speak up and have their voice heard, and has a strong sense of culture, identity and belonging.
Supplier	Sometimes referred to as contractor, includes any organisation or person (other than an Estuari Person) who provides Estuari with goods or services, including subcontractors, agents, related entities and consultants.
Volunteer	A person who provides voluntary service to or for Estuari.
Wellbeing (well)	Sometimes referred to as ‘quality of life’, wellbeing is a combination of a person’s physical, mental, emotional and social health factors, strongly linked to happiness and life satisfaction. It includes a positive sense of self, connectedness to others, self-efficacy, agency and resilience.
Working with children clearance (WWCC)	A pre-employment screening check for people seeking to engage in child related work conducted by the relevant state or territory regulator. It screens applicants’ criminal and professional conduct (depending on jurisdiction) and is designed to prevent people who pose an ‘unjustifiable risk’ to children from working directly with children. Screening checks are applied differently across the country as they are regulated at the State/Territory level.



7 Version history

Version	Date of approval	Summary of updates
1.0	01 July 2025	Approved.