



CHILD SAFE ANNUAL STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE 2021-2022

Statement of Commitment to Child Safety

Connect Child and Family Services Ltd is committed to the full implementation of the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations. We support children's rights to safe environments within their communities and we work in partnership with families and other organisations to achieve this. Child safety is more than just physical protections and encompasses a child's right to inclusive and equitable opportunities.

Connect is focused embedding child safety into our organisational culture, reflecting this in our policies and procedures, and ensuring our employees understand and implement child safe practices, regardless of their role.

Description of the entity's interaction with children as part of its operations

Connect Child and Family Services operates a diverse range of programs which all involve direct interactions with children, this includes early childhood education and care, facilitated playgroups, early interaction and disability support and transition to school groups. To ensure employees are suitable for these roles, we have implemented strong screening measures during recruitment. During induction procedures all employees are made aware of Connect's Child Protection Policy and Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy. All staff are aware of Connect's Child Safety Risk Assessment and we will be involved in its review.

The outcome of the entity's child safety risk assessment and actions taken to mitigate these risks

The overall risk rating of Connect's Child Safety Risk Assessment is medium. The mitigations for these risks is a robust framework of Policies and Procedures that place children's safety and wellbeing at the centre and provide clear guidance for all staff.

Compliance with the Framework and any measures to improve compliance going forward

Requirement 1: Undertake risk assessments annually

Rating: Compliant

- Child safety and wellbeing is considered and included in the Connect Child and Family Services Risk Management Framework.
- Connect conducts an annual risk assessment for child safety and wellbeing, to review and update the level of responsibility for, and contact with children, to re-evaluate risks related to child safety, and to review current controls and treatments to manage identified risks. The outcomes of the risk assessment are reported to the Connect's Board Finance and Risk Committee.
- Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy outlines the requirement for an annual risk assessment for child safety.

Requirement 2: Establish and maintain a system of training and compliance

Rating: Compliant

- The Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and Child Protection Policy outlines training requirements for employees.
- Connect Child and Family Services requires all permanent staff to complete mandatory reporter training each year.
- Connect Child and Family Services has a procedure for our recruitment processes including child safety screening requirements, including WWCC, Police Checks and two referee checks (including the most recent employer).

Requirement 3: Adopt and implement the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations

Rating: Implementing

- Connect Child and Family Services has adopted the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations and is implementing the principles. Our approach is based on continuous improvement, and we will review our Child and Wellbeing Policy and Child Safety Risk Assessment as required over the next 12 months. Our Child Safety Action Plan will inform prioritisation of implementation actions.
- In 2022-23, Connect is working to develop and implement strategies to elevate the voices of the young children who participate in our programs to ensure their views and experiences are included in our reviews.
- Connect has strong processes for the recruitment, screening and training of our people who work with children. Child safety is embedded into our processes and we maintain a register for tracking WWCC and police checks. All permanent staff must complete mandatory reporter training.
- Connect's Complaints Policy will be updated to include how children are able to make their complaints known in age appropriate way.
- Inclusion is a focus of our implementation of National Principles for Child Safe Organisations and we will develop documentation that guides our employees approach to this.
- Connect has identified areas for further training across the whole organisation, including Family Partnership training, Cultural Safety Training and Consent for Young Children training. This will be prioritised over the next 12 months.

Requirement 4: Annual reporting

Rating: Compliant

- Connect has implemented a process for annual reporting, with the first Annual Statement of Compliance being published in May 2022. This process will be used to inform future annual reporting.
- The Annual Statement of Compliance is approved by the CEO and reported to the Connect Child and Family Services Board.

Child Safety initiatives undertaken in the reporting year

Connect established an internal working group to conduct a self-assessment against the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations. This working group intentionally consisted of employees from various areas and levels of the organisation to assess the fullest picture of our current practices and risks in relation to Child Safety. From this initial assessment Connect has been able to shape its Charter of Commitment, Code of Conduct, Child safety and Wellbeing Policy, Child Safety Risk Assessment and Child Safety Action Plan. This forms our current Child Safety Framework.