



## Child Safe Policy and Code of Conduct

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<b>Date approved:</b>	August 2023	<b>Date Policy will take effect:</b>	August 2023	<b>Date of Next Review:</b>	August 2024
<b>Approved by:</b>	Chief Executive Officer				
<b>Custodian title:</b>	Head of People & Culture				
<b>Author:</b>	Children's Services Manager				
<b>Responsible Unit:</b>	People & Culture				
<b>Supporting documents, procedures &amp; forms of this policy:</b>	<a href="#">UOW Pulse Grievance Policy</a> <a href="#">UOW Pulse Privacy Policy</a> <a href="#">UOW Pulse Code of Conduct</a> <a href="#">UOW Pulse Whistleblower Policy</a> <a href="#">KidsUni Child Wellbeing Policy</a>				
<b>References &amp; Legislation:</b>	<a href="#">Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 (NSW)</a> <a href="#">Children's Act 2019 (NSW)</a> <a href="#">Crimes Act 1900 (NSW)</a> <a href="#">Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 (NSW)</a> <a href="#">Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 (Cth)</a> <a href="#">Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012 (NSW)</a> <a href="#">Children's Guardian Amendment (Child Safe Scheme) Bill 2021 (NSW)</a>				
<b>Audience:</b>	External				
<b>Expiry Date of Policy (if applicable):</b>	Not Applicable				

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## **1 Statement of Commitment to Child Safety**

UOW Pulse fundamentally believe all children have the right to a life that is free from harm. Our priority will always be the safety and wellbeing of children in our care. We want all children involved with UOW Pulse to have a safe and happy experience (Article 19, UN Convention on the Rights of the Child).

UOW Pulse has zero tolerance for child abuse. We will be proactive in meeting our reporting requirements around children who are at risk. We will treat all reports seriously and consistently in line with our robust policies and procedures.

We will create a reflective culture within our team, where we are continuously improving and we are brave in advocating for children. We encourage staff, families and children to speak up to make sure that our policies, practices, philosophy and decision making are always in the best interests of children. (Article 3, UN Convention on the Rights of the Child).

We support and respect children, their families and our team. We give all stakeholders the right to share in decision making in our organisation. We will listen to, and believe children because we understand the importance of children having a voice in their world. (Article 12, UN Convention on the Rights of the Child).

Every person involved with children at UOW Pulse has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role they play to ensure the wellbeing and safety of all children. Children's wellbeing is at the forefront of what we do, and the decisions that we make. We are committed to regularly training and educating our staff to identify, manage and report child abuse.

We are committed to having processes in place to identify risks to children's wellbeing early, and to remove or manage these risks to children promptly.

We have particular awareness of the needs of vulnerable children. We are committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, the cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for children with a disability or additional needs.

We have specific policies, procedures and training in place to support our leadership team, staff and volunteers to achieve these commitments. This included thorough human resources and recruitment processes to ensure that suitable people are present with children at UOW Pulse.

## **2 Introduction**

- 2.1. This policy and code of conduct, along with other related documents listed above, offers guidance to our staff, volunteers and visitors on how to behave when interacting and engaging with children in the UOW Pulse work environments outlined below:
  - 2.1.1. In attendance at a UOW Pulse place of work.
  - 2.1.2. Utilising UOW Pulse businesses or facilities.
  - 2.1.3. Participating in any activity as a representative of UOW Pulse (e.g. field trips, conferences, clubs and sporting activities).
  - 2.1.4. Carrying out functions or participating in events in connection with UOW Pulse, including at places external to University premises.

## **3 Scope**

- 3.1. This policy applies to all UOW Pulse staff and volunteers.

## **4 Purpose**

- 4.1. UOW Pulse have processes in place to be proactive in responding to children's wellbeing, and we have a culture of intolerance to the mistreatment of children. We will take all measures to keep children safe.

## 5 Definitions

Word/Term	Definition
Child	The definition of a child under this policy and Code of Conduct is any person who is not yet 18 years of age.
Staff	All persons employed by UOW Pulse.
Volunteers	A person who freely offers to assist with UOW Pulse run activities and events.
Working with Children Check	The Working with Children Check (WWCC) is a requirement for anyone who works or volunteers in child-related work in NSW.

## 6 Forms of Abuse

### 6.1. Physical Abuse

- 6.1.1. Physical punishment
- 6.1.2. Pushing, shoving, punching, slapping, kicking
- 6.1.3. Threats of abuse to create fear

### 6.2. Neglect

- 6.2.1. Lack of supervision
- 6.2.2. Not providing adequate nourishment
- 6.2.3. Not providing adequate clothing or shelter

### 6.3. Psychological Abuse

- 6.3.1. Bullying
- 6.3.2. Threatening language
- 6.3.3. Intimidation
- 6.3.4. Shaming
- 6.3.5. Ignoring and isolation of a child

### 6.4. Sexual Abuse

- 6.4.1. Inappropriate physical contact
- 6.4.2. Grooming
- 6.4.3. Inappropriate conversations of a sexual nature
- 6.4.4. Crossing professional boundaries

### 6.5. Ill-Treatment

- 6.5.1. Unreasonable, inappropriate, inhumane or cruel treatment of a child

## 7 Key Prevention Strategies

- 7.1. Child Safe National Principles improvement action plans.
- 7.2. Risk assessment and management processes in place in each business unit. These risk assessments are maintained in line with our WHS responsibilities.
- 7.3. Through vetting and on-boarding processes for new employees and volunteers.
- 7.4. Staff training and awareness, including this policy and code of conduct.
- 7.5. Clear and available grievance management processes.
- 7.6. Community engagement and consultation, including with children.
- 7.7. Child safety and wellbeing are standing agenda items for the UOW Pulse Ltd. board, senior management and business unit meetings.
- 7.8. Strong commitment to continuous improvement.
- 7.9. The appointment of a Child Safety Officer to offer support and guidance for staff and families and advocacy for children.

## 8 Children's Voices and Vulnerability

- 8.1. We understand that it is important for children to be listened to, and to have avenues to raise concerns. Children across UOW Pulse will be given opportunities to have a say in matters that affect them and their world.

- 8.2. We also understand that some children are more vulnerable to abuse. Some examples of children who may feel particularly vulnerable may include children who:
- 8.2.1. Are living with disability
  - 8.2.2. Come from specific religious or cultural backgrounds
  - 8.2.3. Are very young
  - 8.2.4. Have been exposed to trauma
  - 8.2.5. Feel vulnerable because of their gender identity or sexuality
  - 8.2.6. Come from diverse family backgrounds
  - 8.2.7. Live remotely

## **9 Ensuring appropriate adults are working with children in our organisation**

- 9.1. We will maintain Working with Children Check screening processes through the NSW Office of the Children's Guardian for all staff working in child-related roles across UOW Pulse.
- 9.2. In consultation with the Child Safety Officer, the UOW Pulse People and Culture Manager will determine which employees are required to have a check. The People & Culture team will maintain these records for all UOW Pulse departments, except Kids' Uni. Working with Children Check records for Kids' Uni will be maintained by the Head of Early Education.
- 9.3. All employees will be vetted by UOW Pulse as part of their recruitment process. Reference checks and document compliance checks will be completed. Kids' Uni and UniActive recruitment processes will include questions related directly to child protection.
- 9.4. UOW Pulse will support their team to be informed and confident to support children, and to respond appropriately to child protection matters. We will do this through:
- 9.4.1. Informative induction processes
  - 9.4.2. Training
  - 9.4.3. Clear, up to date and accessible policies
  - 9.4.4. A culture committed to continuous improvement and accountability

## **10 Management of Allegations, Complaints and Reporting**

- 10.1. All complaints, allegation and reports can be made in accordance with the UOW Pulse Grievance Policy.
- 10.2. Given the serious nature of child wellbeing concerns, complaints relating to child wellbeing or safety should be directed to:
- 10.2.1. UOW Pulse CEO and/or
  - 10.2.2. UOW Pulse People & Culture Manager, or
  - 10.2.3. UOW Pulse Child Safety Officer (Head of Early Education)
- 10.3. The following steps will be taken under the guidance of the UOW Pulse CEO if a complaint or allegation is made relating to child safety or wellbeing:
- 10.3.1. Clarify the basic details of the allegation.
  - 10.3.2. Protect the child/ren from ongoing or immediate danger where possible.
  - 10.3.3. If necessary, UOW Pulse may stand staff down from their employment, pending an outcome of an investigation into the alleged misconduct or wrongdoing.
  - 10.3.4. Immediately report allegations to appropriate Government agencies:
    - 10.3.4.1. NSW Police
    - 10.3.4.2. Department of Communities and Justice
    - 10.3.4.3. Office of the Children's Guardian (for allegations related to Kids' Uni)
    - 10.3.4.4. Department of Education (for allegations related to Kids' Uni)
    - 10.3.4.5. NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission (for allegations related to Kids' Uni Early Intervention)
  - 10.3.5. Protect the alleged offender from victimisation.
  - 10.3.6. Follow the child protection authority or police instructions.
  - 10.3.7. Manage communication while internal and/or external investigations take place.
  - 10.3.8. Implement disciplinary action as required at the end of an investigation.

- 10.4. Any incidents, disclosures or reports that are of a serious or criminal nature will be reported to NSW Police immediately.
- 10.5. Confidentiality is critical when an allegation is made. Please refer to the UOW Pulse Privacy Policy, Grievance Policy and Whistleblower Policy for more information on our commitment to confidentiality.
- 10.6. Allegations, reports or concerns can be raised by children and will be taken seriously, investigated and reported accordingly.
- 10.7. All Kids' Uni staff are mandatory reporters and are required by law to report children who are at risk of harm.
- 10.8. All adults in NSW are required to report information to police if they know, believe or reasonably ought to know that a child has been abused (Crimes Act 1900).
- 10.9. All community members have a responsibility to keep children safe by acting as advocates for them. It is important to speak up on behalf of children if you see or hear something that indicates that a child is at risk of harm. At any time concerns can be raised anonymously by calling The Child Protection Helpline on 13 21 11.
- 10.10. Reporter Safeguarding
  - 10.10.1. In order to create a culture of speaking up and to encourage reporting, the Children's Guardian Act 2019 includes whistleblower protection. Section 64 of the Act protects whistleblowers who provide information about a reportable allegation in good faith.
  - 10.10.2. UOW Pulse is equally committed to fostering a culture of honest and ethical behaviour. UOW Pulse recognises the importance of ensuring a safe, supportive and confidential environment where people feel confident about reporting wrongdoing and are supported and protected throughout any process. Refer to UOW Pulse Whistleblower Policy for further guidance.

## **11 Awareness and Support: UOW Pulse Staff and Community**

- 11.1. This policy will be shared with all new staff at induction and they will be required to tick off that they have read it.
- 11.2. The contact details for the Child Safety Officer will be made available through this policy to ensure that questions, clarifications, allegations and reports can be received from the UOW Pulse community easily and confidentially.
- 11.3. The UOW Pulse Child Safety Officer, People and Culture Manager, or another delegated training provider, will conduct training around this policy for the UOW Pulse team. This will raise awareness and understanding of current legislation and the expectations of our organisation.
- 11.4. Child Safety is a standing agenda item for management and team meeting at all levels of the organisation. All parties are encouraged to ask questions and contribute to the continuous improvement of child safe policies and practices within UOW Pulse.
- 11.5. Families and children engaging in our services will be provided with information relating to our commitment to child safety and complaints management.
- 11.6. Where relevant, public documents representing UOW Pulse will contain statements and/or information around our commitment to child safety. This may include but not be limited to job advertisements, job descriptions, annual report, promotional materials, presentations, information booklets, staff induction materials, enrolment forms.
- 11.7. Our commitment to Child Safety will be displayed in areas across UOW Pulse that are frequented by children and their families.

## **12 Child Safe Code of Conduct – Expected Behaviours**

- 13.1. This code outlines positive behaviours that are expected to be adhered to by staff and volunteers at UOW Pulse at all times. It also outlines concerning behaviours that can place children at risk. The concerning behaviours will not be tolerated within our organisation and may result in the need for investigations, reporting and disciplinary action.

## Positive behaviours

### Our staff and volunteers will:

- Treat all children and young people with respect and take all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse.
- Act with integrity to raise concerns in line with our grievance policy if risks to child safety are identified (*and in line with the Kids' Uni Child Well Being Policy for Kids' Uni staff*).
- Reduce risk by limiting time alone with a child, either in person, or online. If you are alone with a child try to remain in public spaces and avoid enclosed spaces such as offices or change rooms.  
(*in line with the Kids' Uni Child Well Being Policy, Kids' Uni Early Education and Care staff must ensure that they are never alone with children. Adults need to always be within sight and sound of other adults.*)
- Report and act on any concerns or observed breaches of this Policy or Code.
- Listen to children, value their opinions and ideas and, most importantly, take a child seriously if they disclose harm or abuse and follow through reporting processes.
- Engage in appropriate physical contact that supports children's safety and wellbeing and that is undertaken in open, public areas such as:
  - Assisting to develop, or demonstrating, sports skills or techniques.
  - Responding to or preventing an injury.
  - Hand shaking, high fives or a tap on the back to offer encouragement or congratulations.(*Kids' Uni staff also need to refer to the Kids' Uni Well Being policy for guidance around appropriate physical contact and providing personal care*)
- Respect the privacy of children and families by only discussing child protection information with relevant people to follow reporting procedures.
- Work within a team, despite any differences, to ensure that the needs and safety of children are always put first.
- Create inclusive environments and ethos so that all children and families feel culturally safe, included and able to raise concerns.
- Declare secondary employment to UOW Pulse and avoid conflict of interest by maintaining professional relationships with children and families who they meet through working at UOW Pulse. This includes, but is not limited to, not contacting children and families outside of work, not creating babysitting arrangements, not connecting with families or children on social media.
- Seek appropriate consent from families and/or children to take photographs, videos or other images of children.
- Be proactive in ensuring that children are safe in public and/or shared spaces across UOW Pulse, by enacting this policy and code of conduct, by being aware of what other adults and members of the public are doing in UOW Pulse spaces, and by speaking up to stop inappropriate behaviour.

## Concerning behaviours

### Our staff and volunteers will not:

- Condone or participate in illegal, unsafe or abusive behaviour towards children, including physical, sexual or psychological abuse, ill-treatment, neglect or grooming.
- Ignore or disregard any concerns, suspicions or disclosures of child abuse.
- Engage in unwarranted and inappropriate touching involving a child. For example:
  - Corporal punishment, such as smacking or other forms of physical discipline.
  - Initiating, permitting or requesting unacceptable physical contact with a child or young person, such as massages or kisses.
  - Facilitating situations which unnecessarily result in close physical contact with a child or young person, such as wrestling or tickling.
  - Undertaking a task of a personal nature for a child if they can do it for themselves, such as changing clothes.  
*(Kids' Uni staff also need to refer to the Kids' Uni Well Being policy for guidance around appropriate physical contact and providing personal care )*
- Verbally assault a child or create a climate of fear or intimidation.
- Offer children and young people alcohol, cigarettes or other drugs.
- Show children pornographic images, or use sexual language or gestures in the presence of children.
- Encourage a child to communicate in a private setting (e.g. text messages or social media) where open or group communication is possible through other means.
- Create situations where they are alone, either in person or online, with a child when there is no professional reason to do so.  
*(in line with the Kids' Uni Child Well Being Policy, Kids' Uni Early Education and Care staff must ensure that they are never alone with children. Adults need to always be within sight and sound of other adults.)*
- Use a computer, mobile phone, camera or other device to exploit or harass a child.
- Engage in grooming behaviours such as showing favour, or offering gifts or excess attention to a particular child.
- Travel alone in a vehicle with a child unless there is a professional reason to do so and there is a written risk management plan in place that has been signed by People and Culture Manager.



### 13 Staff/Volunteer Declaration

<p>I have read this Code of Conduct and I agree to abide by its terms.</p> <p>I understand that breaching this code of conduct may result in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- UOW Pulse undertaking disciplinary action, which may include termination of employment or engagement; and</li><li>- Police or other government agency investigations and criminal charges.</li></ul>	
Name	
Signature	
Date	

### 14 Version Control Table

Version Control	Date Released	Approved By	Amendment
1	March 2022	CEO	Policy created.
2	August 2023	CEO	Updated position titles of People & Culture Manager and Head of Early Education. Updated induction process. Minor grammatical changes.