

Aligning the safeguarding capabilities of your workforce to the Australian National Principles for Child Safe Organisations

The Institute of Child Protection Studies (ICPS) has developed a tool to help organisations that have conducted the Children’s Safety Survey see how your results align with the Australian [National Principles for Child Safe Organisations](#). The methodology for this survey, now part of the ICPS Children and Young People Survey, was originally developed to inform the work of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (2017). The National Principles reflect ten child safe standards recommended by the Royal Commission and cover not only child sexual abuse but also other forms of potential harm to children and young people.

National Principles

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.



The grid in the pages below can help you think about how well you are implementing the National Principles and identify areas in governance and practice in your organisation that need to become more child safe. We have matched questions from the four measures in the Safeguarding Capabilities Survey with principles that align very closely (purple), and with principles that align to some extent (lilac).

We hope this tool can help your organisation become more child safe.



 Most closely aligned with [National Principles for Child Safe Organisations](#)

 Aligned to some extent with [National Principles for Child Safe Organisations](#)

	National Principles									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Survey question: Organisational culture and awareness of policy and procedures										
My organisation makes sure I am aware of things that our organisation can do to protect children and young people from sexual abuse.										
My organisation provides sufficient training about sexual abuse that can be experienced by children and young people.										
My organisation regularly reviews child-safe policies, procedures, and practices to manage risks of abuse.										
Our organisation's child safe policies and procedures are readily/always available to clients, staff and volunteers.										
My organisation keeps issues of child safety high on the agenda (e.g., in supervision, team meetings).										
My organisation supports children and young people to know about personal safety.										
My organisation does not address the power imbalances that make it hard for children and young people to speak up about their safety concerns.										
My organisation examines the physical layout of our building and grounds to ensure that there are improved opportunities for oversight of adult-child interactions while remaining mindful of privacy.										
My organisation has policies that clearly identify the types of behaviours that could be perceived as grooming.										
My organisation values the opinions of children and young people to help inform child safety policies and procedures.										
My organisation has clear referral pathways to other agencies for support for children and young people who have experienced sexual abuse.										
My workplace has a culture that prioritises the protection of children and young people from sexual abuse.										
When children and young people seek help when they feel unsafe, adults in my organisation respond in developmentally appropriate ways.										
My organisation has a hierarchical structure that makes it difficult for employees to influence child safety policies and procedures.										
My organisation involves children and young people in strategies designed to protect them from abuse.										

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In my organisation, our managers routinely ask staff and volunteers about procedures related to child safety.										
My organisation assesses the risks for abuse in our specific context.										
My organisation is clear about when I need to listen and respond to children's views on sexual safety.										
My organisation helps me to understand the characteristics of children and young people that make them more vulnerable to sexual abuse.										
My organisation asks prospective staff/volunteers about their values and attitudes towards working with children and young people.										
In my organisation, adults - staff/volunteers build the sexual safety skills of children and young people.										
My organisation supports the education of children and young people about respectful relationships with their peers.										
My organisation has leaders that support staff to routinely ask children and young people about how they are feeling, and to follow up on any safety concerns.										
My organisation's expectations regarding appropriate and inappropriate behaviour of adults towards children and young people are unclear.										
My organisation actively promotes positive attitudes towards people including children and young people from different ages, genders, abilities, faiths, sexualities, and ethnic or cultural backgrounds.										
My organisation is transparent in the ways it plans to deal with instances of child sexual abuse.										
Adults in my organisation do not have the skills to talk about sex and sexual safety in developmentally appropriate and safe ways with children and young people.										
My organisation is timely in its response and support to children and young people who have experienced abuse.										
My organisation has a code of conduct that defines how adults should interact with children and young people.										
The leaders in my organisation do not understand the importance of safeguarding children and young people from sexual abuse.										
My organisation has procedures that make it hard for someone to abuse the trust of children and young people.										

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If I voiced concerns about my organisation's child-safe policies and procedures, I would not be taken seriously.										
Survey question: Confidence to act										
I am confident in talking with children and young people about their sexual safety.										
I am confident providing appropriate support to children and young people who have experienced sexual abuse.										
I'm confident in developing safety plans for children and young people.										
I am able to provide appropriate and responsive support to children and young people in instances of sexual abuse.										
I feel confident talking in developmentally appropriate and safe ways with children and young people about their peer relationships.										
I am capable of educating children about personal safety skills with the goal of keeping them safe from sexual abuse.										
I do not feel confident in my ability to reassure a child or young person after they disclose sexual abuse.										
I am unsure what to do if I see developmentally inappropriate sexualised behaviour in a child or young person.										
I lack confidence in how to look out for the sexual health and safety of children and young people with disabilities/additional needs.										
I am unsure how to help children and young people to identify people they can trust.										
I am confident in my ability to support children and young people's respectful relationships with each other.										
I can support children and young people to speak up about people and situations that make them feel concerned.										
I am confident in being able to fulfil my mandatory reporting obligations.										
I am confident in my ability to assess potential risks to the sexual safety of children and young people if our organisation undertakes a new type of activity (e.g. an excursion).										

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I don't really know what is expected of me to create a child safe environment.										
I would be able to talk to a colleague if I saw him/her act in a way that was just outside of what my organisation has said is OK.										
I routinely include the perspectives of children and young people in addressing and preventing risk of sexual abuse.										
Survey question: Attitudes to prevention and agency of children and young people										
Children and young people who have been sexually abused all react in the same way to what has happened to them.										
It is solely the parents' responsibility to teach their child(ren) how to stay safe in different situations.										
Children and young people who get sexually abused have usually acted promiscuously or somehow 'asked' for it.										
My organisation believes that children and young people must be primarily responsible for protecting themselves.										
The only way to keep children and young people safe is to just do what adults in the organisation think is best.										
Children and young people don't know enough about sexual abuse to have anything relevant to say on the topic.										
Children and young people do not need to be taught about appropriate and inappropriate sexual behaviour as it could increase their curiosity and make them more vulnerable to sexual abuse.										
Governments are responsible for making child safe policies – individual organisations should not have to develop their own policies based on their own identification of risks and opportunities.										
Teaching children and young people about their bodies, and privacy issues just confuses them and makes them anxious and fearful.										
The only real way to prevent sexual abuse of children and young people in organisations is to screen staff and volunteers via working with children checks.										
It is more important to understand the intention of a colleague's behaviour than to assess whether it is consistent with, or in breach of, organisational policy.										
If they have been sexually abused, a child or young person will tell you if you just ask.										

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When sexual abuse occurs, protecting the organisation's reputation is more important than a child or young person's wellbeing	■					■	■			
If a child or young person asks you not to tell anybody about their abuse, it is necessary to maintain their confidentiality and not tell anyone.		■				■				■
I don't need to think about the risks of sexual abuse, provided my organisation has good child safe policies and procedures.							■	■	■	■
Survey question: Situational prevention knowledge and education										
An important step in preventing sexual abuse is the design of rooms, buildings and play areas to enable observation and eliminate blind spots.	■							■		■
High staff turnover can mean children and young people will be less comfortable speaking up about their sexual safety concerns.	■				■		■			
Defining acceptable and unacceptable behaviour of adults can help prevent sexual abuse.					■		■			■
Some risks of sexual abuse can be reduced when staff know what to do.					■		■	■		
Many people, not just the child or young person who was abused themselves, can be affected by sexual abuse.			■							
CSA is more likely to occur when there are opportunities for adults to build close relationships with children or young people spend time interacting out of sight of (or with low supervision from) other adults.					■			■		
Sexual abuse prevention education can effectively equip young people to know what behaviours are safe and unsafe when interacting with peers and adults.					■		■			
Mental ill-health affects almost all survivors of child sexual abuse.							■			
Most children and young people who have been sexually abused face long-term consequences.							■			

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