



Policy Name:

Child Safe Code of Conduct

Contents

1. Definitions.....	1
2. Purpose.....	1
3. Scope.....	2
4. Principles.....	2
5. Responsibilities.....	2
6. Identifying different types of child harm and abuse.....	3
7. Acceptable and Unacceptable Conduct at the Canopy.....	4
8. Non-Compliance.....	6
9. Agreement to abide by the terms of the Child Safe Code of Conduct.....	7
10. Document Details.....	8
11. Change History.....	8
12. Acceptance Certificate.....	8

1. Definitions

The following definitions apply to this policy and help ensure consistent understanding across the organisation.

- 1.1. **Board Member:** A Board Member is a person who has been appointed or elected to sit on The Canopy's Board of Management.
- 1.2. **Child:** A Child is any person under the age of 18 years.
- 1.3. **Child Safe Environment:** A Child Safe Environment is one where children are safe from harm, feel respected and included, and where the NSW Child Safe Standards are actively applied.
- 1.4. **Manager:** A Manager is any staff member with formal responsibility for supervising others, managing a program, team, or site, or making decisions about events covered by this policy. This includes Executive staff where relevant.
- 1.5. **Staff:** Staff includes all employees of The Canopy, whether full time, part time, fixed term, or casual.
- 1.6. **Volunteer:** A Volunteer is a person who performs work or duties for The Canopy without pay, under an agreed role or arrangement.

2. Purpose

2.1 The Canopy's Child Safe Code of Conduct outlines the expectations our organisation has of all individuals to actively protect children and young people from all forms of harm and abuse.

2.2 Our Child Safe Code of Conduct identifies acceptable and unacceptable behaviours in our organisation in relation to child safety.

3. Scope

3.1. The Canopy's Child Safe Code of Conduct applies to all members of The Board, Chief Executive Officer, the Management Team, workers, students, volunteers, and sub-contractors of The Canopy.

3.2. The Canopy's Child Safe Code of Conduct aligns with the National Child Safe Scheme and is modelled from the NSW 10 Child Safe Standards developed by the Office of the Children's Guardian (OCG).

3.3. This Code of Conduct operates in conjunction with the suite of The Canopy's Child Safe Policy and Procedures, and organisational Statement of Commitment to Child Safety.

4. Principles

4.1. The Canopy believes children's safety is everyone's responsibility.

4.2. All personnel involved in child related support at The Canopy are accountable for ensuring children feel safe, are safe, respected and protected at all times.

4.3. All personnel involved in service provision and program delivery at the Canopy uphold all elements of the Child Safe Scheme and Child Protection legislation at all times.

5. Responsibilities

5.1. All personnel associated with The Canopy are responsible for promoting the safety, wellbeing and empowerment of children. This includes understanding and responding to children's unique vulnerabilities, diverse needs and cultural considerations.

5.2. The Board

5.2.1. The Board are responsible for embedding a culture of child safety into the organisation's leadership, governance, structure and operational systems.

5.2.2. The Board is responsible for ensuring all legal, regulatory, contractual obligations, and service delivery aligns with child safety.

5.2.3. The Board is influential in ensuring the organisational culture of The Canopy is one of Child Safety with organisational adherence to all aspects of Child Safe operations.

5.3. Chief Executive Officer

5.3.1. The Chief Executive Officer is accountable to the Board in ensuring all legislative, contractual and operational requirements of the Child Safe Scheme are upheld and actioned across all programs and services.

5.3.2. The Chief Executive Officer leads the championing of The Canopy's Child Safe Culture, holding responsibility for ensuring the Child Safe Code of Conduct is implemented and embedded in all programs and across all service areas.

5.4. Management Team

5.4.1 Members of the management team are expected to model appropriate child-safe behaviours and attitudes consistently, demonstrating commitment and compliance with child safe

practice, policies and systems.

- 5.4.2. Managers ensure practice, procedures, and policies reflect the Child Safe Standards and are operationalised across all services and programs. This includes systems of continuous improvement in child safe conduct.

5.5. Workers and Volunteers

- 5.5.1. Workers and volunteers of The Canopy have a responsibility to ensure their practice and service activities align with all child protection and child safe legislation and regulatory standards.
- 5.5.2. Workers and volunteers are expected to;
 - 5.5.2.1. Adopt values, attitudes, and behaviour that reflects child safe conduct.
 - 5.5.2.2. Fulfill their role according to legally binding, and ethically sound, child safe standards.
 - 5.5.2.3. Report all non-compliance, concerns, breaches, incidents, grievances or complaints to the management team of Chief Executive Officer.
 - 5.5.2.4. Engage in training and development opportunities as required.

6. Identifying different types of child harm and abuse

- 6.1. Child abuse takes many forms. It can include psychological, physical and sexual abuse, grooming, misconduct and lack of appropriate care as defined below.
- 6.2. **Psychological and Emotional abuse** – any behaviour towards a child that is likely to damage a child's self-esteem or social competence. This includes bullying, threatening and abusive language, intimidation, shaming and name calling, ignoring and isolating a child and exposure to domestic and family violence.
- 6.3. **Physical abuse** – the intentional or reckless use of physical force against a child that results in harm to the child's health, development or dignity, or which has a high likelihood of resulting in such harm. This can include accidental and non-accidental physical actions such as pushing, shoving, punching, slapping, kicking, hair pulling, burning, choking, exclusion from others. This includes the threat of abuse where the child reasonably fears it may occur.
- 6.4. **Sexual abuse** – any act that exposes a child to, or involves a child in, any sexual processes deemed by community standards as 'adult' in a sexual nature, irrespective of the child or young person's age and development. This can include both sexual offences (a child-related criminal offence of a sexual nature) as well as sexual misconduct (conduct with, towards, or in the presence of a child that is sexual in nature but not a sexual offence). This includes the sexual touching of a child, grooming, and production, distribution or possession of pornography and child abuse material.
- 6.5. **Grooming** - any intentional process where a person manipulates a child or group of children and sometimes those looking after them, including parents, carers, teachers and trusted people. They do this to establish a position of 'trust' so they can then later sexually abuse the child.
- 6.6. **Misconduct** - This is inappropriate behaviour that may not be as severe as abuse yet could indicate that abuse and harm is occurring. Eg; telling stories guised as jokes that contain violent or sexual themes, showing a child content of a violent, sexual, or personal nature on a mobile phone, having conversations with a child of a personal nature that is outside their role at The Canopy, not protecting a child or young person from accidents and injury when supervising family time visits, recreational activities and/or therapeutic activities in

the home. Misconduct by any staff member at The Canopy is deemed a breach of our organisation's Child Safe Code of Conduct.

- 6.7. **Neglect** – behaviour by a person responsible for the care of a child (such as a carer or staff member if the child is in their care) that constitutes a failure to act in ways consistent with keeping children safe. This includes not providing adequate supervision, nourishment, clothing, shelter, education or medical care, or advocating for such within the context of specific program provision.

7. Acceptable and Unacceptable Conduct at The Canopy

The list of acceptable and unacceptable behaviours below are in relation to interactions of all staff and volunteers with children who interact with our organisation's services, locations or activities.

7.1. Acceptable Conduct at The Canopy

- 7.1.1. All personnel associated with The Canopy are required to declare their commitment to Child Safe Conduct through the following positive child safe behaviours;

I will:

1. Take all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse and harm.
2. Uphold the rights of the child and always prioritise their needs.
3. Actively promote cultural safety and inclusion.
4. Complete all induction and child safe training.
5. Respect the privacy of children and their families by keeping client information confidential and secure. This includes following the 'need to know' principle and only discussing client information with relevant people according to internal and external reporting procedures.
6. Report all conflicts of interest regarding any relationship with a child or family that is outside a professional role. This includes any formal or informal relationships developed with a child and their family in existence outside The Canopy's service settings.
7. Ensure children's safety and wellbeing remains of paramount focus in any decision-making.
8. Listen to and value children's views, wants and opinions, and respond in a child safe manner.
9. Welcome and include all children and their families and carers by being inclusive, demonstrating consistent commitment to the child's rights and needs.
10. Actively promote safe and inclusive practices for all children, including those with diverse needs, circumstances and backgrounds, including children with disability.
11. Adhere to the organisation's child safe policies, procedures and practices.
12. Prioritise children's safety and wellbeing when providing transport support for a child and family. This includes adhering to all aspects of The Canopy's Motor Vehicle Policy and Procedure.
13. Take all reasonable steps to protect children from harm and abuse, raise concerns with the management team if risks to child safety are identified and report and act on any concerns or allegations, according to legislative and program specific reporting requirements.

14. Listen actively, demonstrate care and compassion, and take a child seriously if they disclose harm or abuse before following the correct reporting procedure for responding to the disclosure.
15. Ensure breaches of the Child Safe Code of Conduct and any instances of concerning behaviour from adults are reported to Supervisors and Managers immediately.

7.2 Unacceptable Conduct at The Canopy

7.2.1. The Canopy considers the following conduct and behaviour unacceptable in relation to children who are interacting with our services;

7.2.2. I won't:

1. Condone or participate in illegal, unsafe, harmful or abusive behaviour towards children, including psychological, physical or sexual abuse, ill-treatment, grooming, neglect, misconduct or lack of appropriate care.
2. Ignore or disregard any concerns, suspicions or disclosures of child abuse.
3. Exaggerate or trivialise child abuse issues.
4. Persistently criticise or denigrate a child.
5. Use hurtful, discriminatory or offensive behaviour or language with children.
6. Verbally assault a child, persistently criticise, and/or denigrate a child.
7. Create a climate of fear.
8. Deliberately prevent a child from forming friendships and maintaining connection with their families and community.
9. Engage in unwarranted and inappropriate touching involving a child.
10. Be alone with a child without supervision, outside of my professional or adequate risk management strategies in place.
11. Have contact after work hours with children outside of my professional role.
12. Encourage a child to communicate with me in a private setting, including online or on social media.
13. Offer children, young people, and/or their family's alcohol, cigarettes or other drugs.
14. Give personal gifts or benefits of any kind to a child unless direct permission has been given from your supervisor or manager.
15. Share details of sexual experiences with a child.
16. Use sexual language or gestures in the presence of children.
17. Show sexual, violent or other inappropriate images to a child.
18. Take videos or images of children interacting with the organisation or under the care of the organisation on a personal device without permission from the organisation.
19. Share videos or images of children on social media without consent.
20. Fail to report information to a manager, member of the Board, police or other relevant authorities if I know a child has been harmed or abused (see reporting obligations outlined in the Child Safe Reporting Policy).

7.3. Concerning behaviours

7.3.1. **Concerning behaviours** are behaviours that on their own may not constitute a breach of our Child Safe Code of Conduct but when viewed together as a collective pattern of conduct, may indicate grooming behaviour.

7.3.2. These include:

- 7.3.2.1. Gravitating towards one specific child, demonstrating a more favourable view of one child over others, developing a 'special' bond with a specific child or group of children.
- 7.3.2.2. Participating in the lives of children outside of a professional role and that of standard service delivery from The Canopy.
- 7.3.2.3. Crossing professional boundaries with the children in our care.
- 7.3.2.4. Spending unnecessary time alone with children.
- 7.3.2.5. Being 'child centric', which means showing a preference for spending non work-related leisure and recreational time with children rather than adults.

7.4. Response to Concerning behaviours

7.4.1. If a staff member or volunteer shows patterns of concerning behaviour but do not commit a criminal offence, this may result in increased supervision and/ or additional training. If these behaviours of concern continue, the staff member or volunteer may be subject to disciplinary action, including appointment to a different role, suspension or termination from the service.

8. Non Compliance

- 8.1. Engaging in unacceptable behaviour is a breach of our Child Safe Code of Conduct will result in disciplinary action and may result in criminal charges.

8.2. Internal and external reporting obligations

- 8.2.1 All personnel associated with The Canopy will follow internal and external reporting obligations set out in the Child Safe Reporting Policy and Procedures, Incident and Risk Management policies and procedures, and other relevant organisational documents.

8.3. Criminal offences for not acting to protect children

- 8.3.1. Some breaches of this Child Safe Code of Conduct may need to be reported to NSW Police, the Office of the Children's Guardian (OCG) and/or the Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ).

8.4. Penalties for staff or volunteers who breach The Canopy's Child Safe Code of Conduct

- 8.4.1. Staff or volunteers who breach The Canopy's Child Safe Code of Conduct but do not commit a criminal offence will still be subject to disciplinary action. This can include increased supervision, appointment to a different role, additional training, suspension or termination from the service.

9. Agreement to abide by the terms of Child Safe Code of Conduct

I have read and agree to abide by the terms of this Child Safe Code of Conduct

Name of staff member or volunteer

Role in organisation

Signature and date

X

10. Document Details

Document ID:	POL-042
Version:	2.0
Finalised date:	July 2026
Review date:	April 2028
Author – branch/unit/area:	Project Officer
Audience:	• Board • All Employees • Volunteers and Contractors
Related Legislation, Standards and Frameworks:	• National Child Safe Scheme • NSW Child Safe Standards • Privacy Act 1988 • Child and Young Person (Care and Protection) Act - Care Act • UN Convention Of Children's Rights
Status:	Mandatory
Related Governance:	• Child Safe Reporting Policy • Code of Ethics • Data Breach Response Policy • Risk Management Framework • Social Media Guidelines • Motor Vehicle Policy
Replaces:	N/A – New Policy

11. Change History:

Date	Change Description	Reason for Change	Author	Issue No:
22.04.2026	New Policy	Governance uplift to align with National Principles for Child Safety National Child Safe Scheme 10 Child Safe Standards	S. Hicks	1.0
07.07.2026	New template	New template	S. Hicks	2.0

12. Acceptance Certificate:

This policy is approved by: ☒ Tier 1 – Board Approved Policy <i>Requires formal approval by the Board.</i> ☐ Tier 2 – CEO Approved Policy <i>Approved and authorised by the CEO.</i> ☐ Tier 3 – Executive Approved Procedure / Guideline <i>Approved by relevant Executive Staff.</i>	Approved Date: July 2026 Signed:  Name/Position: Gen Wilcox, CEO
---	---