

Parent Policy: Policy Statement 1 – Rights

Scope: Whole of Organisation

Owner: Executive Manager – People & Safeguarding

1. Purpose

Barkuma is committed to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people within our organisation and its programs. This purpose of this policy is to ensure an organisational framework and culture exists which aim to keep children safe, protect their rights, prevent, identify, and report child harm or risk of harm.

This policy is to inform all leaders, staff and volunteers of their obligations to act ethically towards children and their roles and responsibilities in ensuring the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. This policy provides guidance on processes and procedures that aim to ensure children's safety and wellbeing across all areas of Barkuma's work.

2. Scope

This policy applies to board members, employees, volunteers, students, contractors & consultants for all activities which involve or relate to contact with children.

3. Definitions

Child / Children / Young Person: a human between the ages of birth & 18 years of age.

Mandatory reporting: the legislative requirement for certain groups of people to report suspected cases of harm or risk of harm to authorities.

Voluntary reporting: refers to a notification made from moral obligation rather than legislative obligation.

Cultural Safety: refers to an environment which is safe (physically, socially, emotionally, and spiritually) for people.

4. Relevant Legislation & Standards

- ✓ Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Act 2016
- ✓ Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017
- ✓ National Principles for Child Safe Organisations

5. Related Organisational Policies & Procedures

- ✓ NDIS Code of Conduct
- ✓ Barkuma Code of Conduct
- ✓ Child Protection Procedure
- ✓ NDIS Quality & Safeguards Commission
- ✓ Complaints Procedure
- ✓ Risk Management Procedure
- ✓ Safeguarding Manual

6. Policy Status and Review

3-year schedule – new compliance statement required with DHS each time policy is reviewed/updated.

7. The National Principles

Principle 1: Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture – this is supported by this policy and:

- ✓ Barkuma's Code of Conduct, Mission and Values.
- ✓ Staff understand the importance of modelling a child safe culture.
- ✓ Safe Environments for Children & Young People – “Through their eyes training”.
- ✓ Child Abuse Report Line (CARL) reporting.
- ✓ Risk assessment process CIEMS
- ✓ Barkuma's Risk register
- ✓ Safeguarding Team– reporting roles to Quality & Safeguard Commission.

Principle 2: Children and young people are informed about their rights, participate in decision affecting them and are taken seriously – this is supported by this policy and:

- ✓ Children & Young People that engage with Barkuma have their rights respected, are encouraged to participate in decision making about their goals and aspirations.
- ✓ This occurs during registration meetings with the young person and their family.
- ✓ Models of Practice demonstrate the commitment in supporting young people to be active decision makers in their life.
- ✓ Safe Environments for Children & Young People – “Through their eyes training”.
- ✓ Barkuma's Client Voice program.

Principle 3: Families & communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing – this is supported by this policy and:

- ✓ Barkuma is committed to an inclusive environment for all people. We communicate with families and communities.
- ✓ Our policies and procedures seek parental consent for children & young people under the age of 18.
- ✓ Registrations meetings are held with parents/guardians of children and young people.
- ✓ Barkuma Buzz Magazine

Principle 4: Equity is upheld, and diverse needs respected in policy practice – this is supported by this policy and:

- ✓ Barkuma is committed to inclusion and diversity, and this is embedded throughout the organisation's culture and reflected in our values.
- ✓ Code of conduct
- ✓ Privacy and confidentiality
- ✓ Reconciliation Action Plan
- ✓ Online training including Equity and diversity topics.
- ✓ Advocacy referrals

Principle 5: People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice – this is supported by this policy and:

- ✓ Barkuma has a robust recruitment, induction, and supervision framework.
- ✓ Code of conduct
- ✓ Monthly Supervision & support
- ✓ DHS & NDIS worker screening clearances
- ✓ Training & professional development

Principle 6: Processes to respond to complaints and concerns are child focused – this is supported by this policy and:

Responding to harm or risk of harm

Barkuma acknowledges that identification of harm or risk of harm of children and young people can occur in several different ways, including employees, clients and volunteers identifying risk factors, witnessing a harmful event, recognising indicators of harm, receiving reports from third parties and self-disclosure from children.

We aim to ensure that children and young people are safe from harm and risk of harm. Section 17 of the Safety Act defines 'harm' to mean physical or psychological harm (whether caused by an act or omission), including harm caused by sexual, physical, mental or emotional abuse or neglect.

Mandated notifiers in our organisation are workers who:

- ✓ provide services to children and young people
- ✓ hold a management position in the organisation the duties of which include direct responsibility for, or direct supervision of, the provision of those services to children and young people.

Mandated notifiers have a legal obligation to notify the Child Abuse Report Line (CARL) on 13 14 78 as soon as practicable if they have a reasonable belief that a child or young person is or may be at risk of harm. If the child or young person is at immediate risk,

report to South Australia Police (SAPOL) on 000. In cases involving Aboriginal children and young people, support is provided by Yaitya Tirramangkotti - an Aboriginal team, via the CARL number.

Even if not a mandated reporter, any person can report harm or risk of harm to a child or young person. The individual who identifies the harm or risk of harm is encouraged to make the report to authorities and can request the support from another worker to do so if required.

Information about making appropriate reports of harm or risk of harm is available from the South Australian Department of Child Protection website: <https://www.childprotection.sa.gov.au/reporting-child-abuse>.

All adult workers (even if not a mandated notifier) have a legal obligation to report child sexual abuse to the police and to protect a child from sexual abuse. Failure to meet these obligations may be considered a criminal offence.

Following a report being made to CARL or SAPOL workers must make an internal report to management.

We will be guided by the Department for Child Protection and/or SAPOL after a report has been made as to whether we can conduct an internal investigation.

If a worker is reported to CARL or SAPOL for causing harm or risk of harm to a child or young person, they will be removed from any role that involves working with any child or young person until authorities have concluded their investigation.

Following a report to CARL or SAPOL we will support the child or young person by:

- ✓ referring the child, young person, or their family to other appropriate services
- ✓ continuing to provide a service to the child, young person and their family and monitor their circumstances.

We will document all information received regarding the report and store this securely in a separate file.

Additionally, Barkuma will also:

- ✓ Barkuma's complaints review process is focussed on the best outcome for the people we serve.
- ✓ Barkuma are committed to ensuring that complaints and disputes are effectively handled and seen as opportunities for improvement.
- ✓ Safeguarding Team– reporting roles to Quality & Safeguard Commission.

Principle 7: Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children & young people safe through ongoing education and training – this is supported by this policy and:

- ✓ Safe Environments for Children & Young People – “through their eyes” certificate required to commence employment – with a refresher course every three years.
- ✓ CARL Reporting – all staff are aware of their obligation to report harm or risk of harm to the Child Abuse Report Line – 13 14 78.
- ✓ Internal training (National Disability Services) modules – Zero tolerance – abuse and neglect.

Principle 8: Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed – this is supported by this policy and:

- ✓ Child safety is promoted in both online and physical environments.
- ✓ Code of conduct
- ✓ IT Security
- ✓ Service Agreements
- ✓ Supplier & Contractor Management
- ✓ Client Protocols internet electronic mail

Principle 9: Implementation of the national child safe principles is regularly reviewed and improved.

- ✓ Barkuma commit to review this policy in accordance with the review schedule as set out in the quality document review schedule.

Principle 10: Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people.

- ✓ Documents relating to child safety and wellbeing are referenced within this policy.
- ✓ The Child Safety & Wellbeing Policy will be communicated to all staff via our Communications Team “At a glance” platform.