



CLIENT-801 Child Safe (Policy)

Client Services

Applies to	Date last reviewed and version No.	Next review date
All VACCA Board Members, and all VACCA staff and VACCA suppliers	April 2023 Version 2.0	April 2024

1.0 Purpose

Ensuring child safety is part of the VACCA Best Interests of the Child Principle of Practice. Many of the children we work with have experienced significant levels of trauma as a result of abuse.

The responsibility to keep children safe is taken very seriously at VACCA. This policy provides a clear expectation of our commitment to child safety and wellbeing and its zero tolerance to any form of child abuse. We will take action on behalf of children to ensure they are protected.

VACCA also recognises children and young people as a person affected and/or impacted by family violence in their own right. As such we will ensure that staff align to the MARAM Framework's legislative responsibilities.

We must not act in a manner which causes harm or loss to a child. This can include harm or loss caused by actions as well as inactions; for example, harm caused by a delay in decision-making or service response.

The purpose of this policy is to support VACCA Board Members, staff and suppliers to understand their commitment in ensuring that children are provided with a safe environment free of abuse and that every child is able to feel and be safe.

All Board Members, staff and suppliers will be familiar with and follow the policy.

2.0 Definitions

Refer to VACCA's Definitions [page](#) for complete list of VACCA definitions.

Term	Definition
children	All children and young people under the age of 18 years.
child abuse	Constitutes any act against a child involving: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • physical violence • sexual abuse or grooming • emotional or psychological abuse • neglect or, the omission or neglect of culture.
child safety	Not being physically or psychologically abused or hurt, living in a home that is safe and not dangerous and feeling safe. For an Aboriginal child being safe also means having caregivers who: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understand, respect and value the child's Aboriginal culture • help the child to feel good about their Aboriginal culture help the child stay connected to their culture in all parts of the child's life.
VACCA staff	includes ongoing employees, fixed term employees, students, volunteers and agency staff.
VACCA suppliers	includes tradespeople and/or consultancies.
MARAM	The Family Violence Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework (MARAM) aims to establish a systems-wide shared understanding of family violence. The MARAM Framework provides policy guidance to organisations that have responsibilities in assessing and managing family violence risk, including those that have been prescribed under regulation as Framework organisations.

3.0 Policy Statement

VACCA is committed to ensuring that every child is provided with an environment that is both culturally and physically safe and free of all forms of abuse. In strengthening this commitment, we have adopted and embedded the 11 Child Safe Standards into every aspect of the services we provide.

Through our services, we aim to ensure the best possible care and support for children. In doing so, we place the safety of children above all else.

We are committed to ensuring that there is a significant focus on cultural safety and wellbeing through VACCA's Best Interests of the Child Principle of Practice and our Cultural Therapeutic Ways practices focusing on culture, self-determination and trauma informed approaches. These practices are essential in building resilience, healing and enhancing a child's safety.

The safety of children is a shared responsibility, and we are committed to working with and empowering individuals, families and communities to strengthen the safety of all children.

We encourage and support every person to raise concerns should they suspect the safety of a child is at risk.

VACCA is committed to providing guidance, training and education to ensure that all concerns regarding child safety are heard, validated and appropriately actioned in accordance with our values, standards and legal requirements and obligations.

We have in place processes to identify early risks to children, remove and reduce risks, or adjust services to meet specific needs. Refer to [GOV-210 Risk Management Framework](#) for further information.

We keep children safe through our [HR-600 Code of Conduct](#), and other human resources practices including child safe recruitment processes, training and supervision and processes for incident reporting.

VACCA services and programs:

- actively work to protect children from all forms of abuse,
- are provided in a culturally safe environment,
- are delivered in a manner that empowers and strengthens the capacity of individuals, families and communities to safeguard their children,
- work with parents, families and communities to address the impact of intergenerational trauma,
- support self-determination by appropriately consulting and engaging with children and families on decisions that directly affect them, and
- proactively engage with communities on matters regarding the safety of children.

Child Safety Commitment Statement

All children involved in any VACCA activity, service, event or program have the right to feel and be safe. Accordingly, VACCA commits to:

- doing all in our power to safeguard children from all forms of abuse,
- providing safe environments where children are respected, nurtured and cared for,
- recognising children and young people as a person affected by family violence in their own right,
- upholding the law including reporting abuse or allegations of abuse to the appropriate authorities, and
- ensuring our policies, practice and decision-making processes, prioritise the safety of children.

Child Safety Commitment

At VACCA we empower children to stand up and speak out against abuse. We will provide them with education about their rights and information on what abuse may look like in its various forms. It is every child's right to live free of violence, abuse and to feel culturally and physically safe.

VACCA's staff are committed to ensuring that child safety is at the forefront of our decisions, and we will appropriately respond to concerns raised in line with our vision, purpose, internal policies and legal requirements. We will ensure that clients are informed and appropriately supported.

VACCA's Child Safety Coordinator can be contacted via email regarding any child safety concerns at, childsafety@VACCA.org .

Further information on VACCA's commitment to Child Safety including our statement of commitment can be found at VACCA.org.

Further information on Child Safe Standards can be found at, Commission for Children and Young People.

Further information on Mandatory Reporting Requirements can be found at Department Families, Fairness and Housing.

4.0 Monitoring and Review

Monitoring of this policy will be conducted regularly by the Continuous Quality Improvement Unit, through case reviews and investigations outcomes. The policy will be reviewed for updates every 12 months or when a change to legislation occurs.

5.0 Key Legislation and Related Documents

Board Members, staff and suppliers are required to comply with all relevant legislation, standards and policies including, but not limited to the following:

Accreditation Standards	Child Safe Standards, DHHS Human Services Standards 2015, DHHS (DFFH) Rainbow Tick Standards, 3rd Edition, GLHV @ARCSHS La Trobe University, 2020
Legislation	<i>Child Safety and Wellbeing Act 2005 (VIC)</i> <i>Children, Youth & Families Act 2005 (VIC)</i> <i>Family Violence Protection Act 2008 (VIC)</i>

Related documents and resources

CLIENT-800 Best Interests of the Child Policy
CLIENT-802 Child Safe Procedure
HR-600 Code of Conduct
CORP-308 Supplier Policy
GOV-210 Risk Management Framework
VACCA Outcomes documents

6.0 Review and Approval

Frequency	Document Owner	Date Approved
Every 12 months	Client Services Practice	April 2023