

## Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy

MercyCare is a leading Catholic provider of aged care, family, community, health and disability services. MercyCare is committed to provide the safest environment possible for children and young people. All children and young people matter to MercyCare.

It is the responsibility of **all MercyCare people** including governance, executive, staff and volunteers to:

- Protect children and young people from all forms of abuse, bullying and exploitation by our people
- Be alert to incidents of child abuse and neglect occurring outside the scope of our operations that may have an impact on the children and young people to whom we provide a service
- Report any abuse or neglect of which they become aware to our management and/or to external authorities responsible for child protection or police - regardless of whether that abuse is being perpetrated by people within or outside our organization, including those from the child's family, extended family, their family's extended network or strangers
- Create and maintain a child safe culture that is understood, endorsed and put into action by all our people.

### Commitment

- *Safeguard children and young people* from abuse, neglect through this policy, and communicate this commitment to all our people
- *Ensure our people know the behaviours we expect* for child safety through our **Safeguarding Children and Young People Procedure**
- Recruit people who keep our children safe through our Recruitment and Selection Procedure that ensures appropriate checks/screening are taken
- Ensure that we vet, monitor and supervise all contractors, subcontractors and agency staff who will be involved with children through our **Contractors, Subcontractors and Agency Staff Onboarding Procedure**
- *Train and induct our people on our safeguarding policies* and ensure that our people undertake the safeguarding children online training according to our **Mandatory Training Policy**. We support ongoing education and training for our employees and WP's to maintain best practice in child safety
- Embrace diversity and encourage the involvement of children, young people and their parents in developing a safe, inclusive and supportive environment. We provide information and services about safeguarding children to children and carers, in a manner that is culturally safe for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people from culturally

and linguistically diverse backgrounds, people with disabilities and the LGBTQI+ community

- *Ensure our people understand their responsibility for reporting child abuse* and follow the **Responding to Child Abuse Reports and Allegations Procedure**
- *Maintain and review our policies and procedures* to ensure that are safeguarding policies continue to represent best practice – as outlined through the **Safeguarding Children Internal Review Procedure** and the **Policy Management Policy**.

### Responsibility

- Board – Approve and endorse MercyCare's commitment to Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy and note all related procedures
- CEO – responsible for MercyCare's organisational adherence to this policy including the delegation of operational responsibilities as appropriate
- Executive Leadership Team – approves the policy; monitors compliance; use data to inform service delivery, planning and improvement at a strategic level
- Managers – promote and provide a child safe environment and positive reporting culture to service user's, employees, volunteers and contractors; ensure compliance to this policy and use data to inform service delivery, planning and improvement at a service level

- People Services – provide a robust recruitment framework for line managers to ensure suitable employment and volunteer selections are made; monitor and ensure ongoing screening requirements and reviews occur
- Employees, volunteers and students – understand and comply with this policy; seek guidance from a line manager if there is any lack of clarity about commitments; take action to protect children and young people from all forms of abuse, bullying and exploitation; assist to create and maintain a child safe culture and a culture of inclusion and safety.

## Consultation

MercyCare will consult with appropriate stakeholders in the development and review of Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures.

MercyCare will communicate this policy to:

- Service users - via the MercyCare website, in accessible formats and as part of enrolment information
- Employees, volunteers and contractors – during recruitment and induction processes, mandatory training, via the MercyCare policy centre and whenever there are changes.

## Evaluation and Improvement

To assess compliance to the requirements of this policy and continually improve, MercyCare will undertake evaluation processes and consider:

- best practice requirements
- results of audits, reviews and surveys
- incident outcomes
- feedback from service users, employees and volunteers
- identified risks and how they are managed
- performance against objectives and targets.

## Internal References

- Mandatory Training Policy
- Policy Management Policy
- Incidents: Internal Escalation Requirements
- Contractors, Subcontractors and Agency Staff Onboarding Procedure
- Recruitment and Selection Procedure

- Responding to Child Abuse Reports and Allegations Procedure
- Safeguarding Children and Young People Procedure
- Annual Review Procedure – Safeguarding Children and Young People
- Guidelines for Engaging with Parents, Carers, Children and Young People – Safeguarding Children and Young People
- Service User's Rights and Responsibilities
- Definitions of Terms and Acronyms.

## Legislation and Standards

- Children and Community Services Act 2004
- Children and Community Services Regulations 2006
- Children and Community Services Legislation Amendment and Repeal Act 2015
- Working with Children (Criminal Record Checking) Act 2004 (WA)
- Working with Children (Criminal Record Checking) Regulations 2005
- Child Care Services Act 2007
- Disability Services Act 1993 (WA)
- National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013
- Aged Care Act 1997
- Quality of Care Principles 2014 – Aged Care
- Privacy Act 1988
- EQUIP6 Standards
- Service level accreditation and non-accreditation standards.

Approved by:  
**Chief Executive Officer, MercyCare**  
Date Approved: 09/07/2019