

Code of Conduct for Engaging with Children

1. Who does this Code apply to?

This Code applies to all members of Carinity's workforce, including employees, contractors, volunteers, and consultants ("**workers**") who work with children.

This Code does not apply to members of our governing body, the Carinity Council, or the Queensland Baptist Board, as they have their own Codes of Conduct.

2. How is this different to the general Code of Conduct?

All staff are expected to comply with our general **Code of Conduct** at all times. However, there are some extra requirements we have for staff who work with children, due to the unique needs and vulnerabilities of children.

3. What is expected of me?

As a Carinity Worker, you have a **Duty of Care** to all children accessing our services. That duty is to take all reasonable steps to protect children from risks of harm that can be reasonably predicted.

There are five key aspects of this duty of care:

- | | | |
|---------------------------|----------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Work Health and Safety | 2. Supervision | 3. Professional relationships |
| 4. Appropriate Behaviour | 5. Reporting | |

3.1. Work Health and Safety



We make our environment safe for children and colleagues, both from physical and psychosocial hazards.

As a Carinity Worker, we expect you to ensure that grounds, premises, and equipment are safe for children's use, and do not place the health and safety of yourself or your co-workers at risk.

You should be familiar with and comply with the emergency plans relevant to your service, including evacuation and lockdown procedures.

Carinity Workers should also be aware of psychosocial risks to health and safety, including risks of peer-to-peer harm among children (e.g. bullying or harassment), and mental health needs of children, and take active steps to prevent harm to children.

At all times, you should comply with Carinity's **Workplace Health and Safety Policy and Procedures**.

3.2. Supervision



We provide appropriate supervision to children using our services to protect them from harm.

We expect all of our staff to actively supervise children when "on duty", to ensure that no child is exposed to unnecessary risk of injury. At no time should a child be unsupervised.

Where possible, unless you have the permission of the child's parent or guardian, you should avoid situations where you are alone in an enclosed space with a child.

- Where you need to be one-on-one with a child, wherever possible (and appropriate, noting the nature of the conversation) you should ensure that this is in an open space in **view of others**.
- If you are in a room with a child or group of children, you should make sure that you are positioned in a way that promotes your safety and the safety of the child/ren.
- If you are travelling with a child, best practice is to always have two adults travelling with the child. If this is not possible, the

child's parents/carers must agree to the arrangements, and the child should always be sitting in the back seat.

We also expect our workers to provide appropriate supervision to children accessing online material in accordance.

3.3. Professional Relationships



We maintain professional relationships and boundaries with children at all times.

We expect all of our staff to be conscious of their position of power and influence when engaging with children and should not engage in any activity that may be interpreted as an abuse of that power.

(a) Physical contact with children should be kept to a minimum, and used only where necessary, appropriate, and acceptable. For example:

- for the safety of the child or others, or
- a brief congratulatory contact such as a
 - handshake,
 - hug, or
 - high-five.

Where possible, permission should be sought from the child prior to any physical contact or demonstrations.

In some circumstances, it may be necessary to engage in physical contact with a child to protect the safety of other workers or children. This could include the use of restrictive practices. Where this is the case, workers must act appropriately in all the circumstances, and comply with our policies and procedures.

(b) Relationships with children should always be professional. Carinity workers must not develop a relationship with a child that is, or could be interpreted as, being personal rather than professional.

Carinity workers must not:

- invite children to their home*;
- (if the child is not living at a Carinity service) attend a child's home without parental/guardian consent,
- attend social events with children unless you have the express permission of Carinity and the child's parents or caregivers,
- show favouritism between different children.

If you are concerned that a child is trying to establish a personal relationship with you, you should talk to your manager to develop a plan to manage the situation effectively and sensitively.

These requirements do not apply to circumstances where a child is directly related to a worker or was a close family friend of the worker prior to the child or worker commencing at Carinity. If this is the case, the worker should notify Carinity as soon as possible.

*This policy is also not intended to limit a Carinity worker's ability to host social gatherings for their own children and their friends, provided that the other children's parents and guardians have consented to the gathering.

(c) Personal social media and communications devices must not be used to communicate directly with children.

- You must not engage directly with children online or over the phone in your personal capacity, including by accepting invitations or friend requests from children on social media.
- Electronic communication with children and families should only occur through Carinity services (e.g. Carinity email accounts, Carinity phones, and Carinity social media accounts).
- Personal devices should never be used to take photographs or videos of children.

(d) Photographs and videos of children can only be taken with the permission of parents/carers, and can only be put in social media or newsletter communications if that is approved by the parent/carer.

(e) Conflicts of interest must be identified and managed to ensure that they do not influence your ability to perform your duties or compromise the integrity of Carinity.

(f) Gifts and benefits should only be accepted in accordance with our **Gifts and Benefits Procedure**. Bribes should never be accepted, and should be reported immediately to your manager.

3.4. Appropriate behaviour



We do not attend work under the influence of drugs or alcohol, and we do not smoke tobacco onsite. We do not use the internet inappropriately.

(a) Illicit Drugs and alcohol should not be consumed on any Carinity site. We expect all of our workers to ensure that your capacity to complete your duties are not impaired by drugs or alcohol.

Workers will be deemed to be “impaired” by alcohol if their Blood Alcohol Level is over the legal driving limit. Workers will be deemed to be “impaired” by illicit substances if the substance is found in their system or results indicate that they were in the worker’s system during work hours.

If a manager reasonably suspects that a worker is impaired by alcohol or illicit substances, they can require that the worker complete a random breath or urinalysis test. If the test comes back with a non-negative result (or if the worker refuses to complete the test), the worker will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

(b) Tobacco products (including vapes and e-cigarettes) cannot be smoked or consumed on any Carinity site.

At no time should you purchase or provide tobacco, drugs or alcohol for/to a child, or encourage a child to do so.

(c) Appropriate language must be used at all times when speaking with children. You must always treat children with respect and without favouritism. There is no place for rudeness, derogatory remarks, inappropriate familiarity, or offensive comments.

(d) Electronic devices must be used appropriately. You must not use Carinity networks and devices to access or circulate:

- sexual or pornographic content,
- violent material,
- racist material,
- malicious or slanderous material, or

- subversive/illegal material,

and you must not access these things on a personal device during your working hours.

3.5. Reporting



We report safety concerns as required, and we are open and honest about concerns raised against ourselves.

We expect all Carinity workers to report any allegation of harm that has been made to or about them, and any risks to health and safety.

(a) Mandatory reporting requirements apply to some of our workers, including our teachers and child protection employees.

(b) Reportable Conduct Scheme (RCS) – under the RCS, all workers are required to report allegations or disclosures of reportable conduct.

Details about worker obligations in both circumstances are outlined in our **Child Safe Reporting Policy**.

(c) WHS and Risk Reporting – all workers are responsible for reporting new or emerging risks to health and safety. You should be aware of and comply with our **Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy**, and the **Risk management framework** for your service area.

4. What about the new Child Safe Standards?

Carinity is a Child Safe Organisation under the *Child Safe Organisations Act 2024*. This means that we are required to comply with the 10 Child Safe Standards and the Universal Principle:

Universal Principle - Provide an environment that upholds the right to cultural safety of children who are Aboriginal persons or Torres Strait Islander persons

1 Child safety is embedded in **Leadership, Governance, and Culture**

6 **Complaints Management** systems are child focussed

2 **Voice of Children** - children are heard and involved in decisions

7 Worker **Knowledge & skills** supported with regular training and education

3 **Family and Community** are informed and involved in child safety

8 **Physical and online environments** are safe for children

4 **Equity and Diversity** are valued and respected

9 Implementation of these standards is **regularly reviewed and improved**

5 **Carinity workers** are suitable and supported

10 **Policies and procedures** document how Carinity is safe for children

All Carinity workers should be aware of any comply with our **Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy**, which outlines how we uphold these standards.

5. What happens if I breach this Code?

We treat breaches of the Code seriously. If you have breached this Code of Conduct in your actions, words, or behaviours, there may be serious consequences.

We want to work with you to help address any misunderstandings or structural issues which may have led to your breach. In some cases, this may mean developing a plan to help you improve, or we may simply issue a formal warning.

However, there are some behaviours that we will not tolerate in any form, including criminal conduct, abuse, bullying, developing a personal relationship with a child, failing to report child protection matters, or harassment. If you have engaged in any of these behaviours, we are required by law to take disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

6. What else do I need to be aware of?

This Code operates alongside our **Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy**. It is a requirement that you read, understand, and comply with this policy at all times. Failure to do so will result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

We also have multiple other policies and procedures in place to protect the safety and wellbeing of children at Carinity. These are listed in the **Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy**, and you are required to comply with them at all times.

If you have any questions or concerns about this Code or any of the associated policies, you should speak to your manager.

7. Acknowledgement

I acknowledge and accept the **Carinity Code of Conduct for Engaging with Children** and commit to upholding Carinity's values. I understand that living these values applies not only within my workplace but also in how I represent Carinity externally, whether engaging with service users, colleagues, volunteers, contractors, or partner organisations

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Name: _____

Once you have signed, please photograph/scan this acknowledgement, and send it to your manager.