



## Policy E32 Child Safe Policy

### **Purpose:**

To ensure that all people under the age of 18 years who attend Murray ACE are in a safe and secure environment.

This policy informs our RTO community of everyone's obligations to act safely and appropriately towards children and guides our processes and practices for the safety and wellbeing of students across all areas of our work.

### **Scope:**

The Centre Manager, Training Coordinator and all trainers are responsible for ensuring that Murray ACE is a safe and secure environment for all students as well as those under the age of 18. Also see Duty of Care policy. We take proactive steps to identify and manage any risk of harm to students in our RTO environment. When child safety concerns are raised or identified, we treat these seriously and respond promptly and thoroughly.

### **Guidelines:**

- All Murray ACE trainers and staff must have a current Working with Children Check or be currently VIT registered.
- All Murray ACE trainers and staff must have a current police check. A current police check is one that is less than 5 years old and must be for a working environment, not a volunteer.
- All volunteers at Murray ACE must have current police check and a current Working with Children Check.
- No Murray ACE staff, visitors, volunteers are to be alone with a person under the age of 18 years. If a private talk needs to happen between a staff member, trainer, or volunteer with a person under the age of 18 years, it must be in an open space or in line of sight of another adult.
- Particular attention is given to the child safety needs of Aboriginal students, those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, international students, students with disabilities, those unable to live at home, children and young people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ+) and other students experiencing risk or vulnerability. Inappropriate or harmful behaviour targeting students based on these or other characteristics, such as racism or homophobia, are not tolerated at our RTO, and any instances identified will be addressed with appropriate consequences.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children must have their culture acknowledged and identified. All Murray ACE staff are trained in the culture of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Murray ACE acknowledges the traditional owners of the land in the Swan Hill area as Latji Latji, Tati Tati, Wamba Wamba, Barapa Barapa and the Wadi Wadi clans.
- Murray ACE is committed to providing a safe and friendly environment that is culturally inclusive and free from racial discrimination and harassment.



- Murray ACE recognises the importance of culturally and/or linguistically diverse people who use Murray ACE. Murray ACE promotes the cultural safety of children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds by:
  - Ensuring Murray ACE demonstrates a zero tolerance of discrimination.
  - Having policies and procedures that address cultural inclusion, sensitivity, and competency.
  - Provide all staff and trainers training on cultural sensitivity and competency.
  - Being respectful and welcoming to all people
  - Asking children and families about their culture and cultural support needs
  - Recognising occasions with are important to different cultural and dietary requirements.
  - Ensuring that the Murray ACE physical environment reflects a positive and welcoming approach to diverse cultures, through decoration and artwork.
  - Employing staff that are representative of the diversity of the local community.
  - Employing staff who display cultural sensitivity and cultural competency.
  - Actively seeking out and talking to families to find out how they would like to be involved. This is done through our contacts with Sunraysia Mallee Ethnic Community Council (SMECC) and Clontarf Foundation Swan Hill.
  - Asking families about their preferred format for the provision of information, including translation or interpreting into community languages and audio-visual forms
  - Ensuring complaint and grievance processes are easily understood and provided in culturally relevant and sensitive ways.
- Children with a disability have an increased risk of being abused. Children with a disability have the right to participate in decision-making that affects them. Murray ACE takes seriously the responsibility that we must uphold the legal and human rights of children with a disability to ensure they are safe when in our care. Each child is different and will experience their disability and the world differently. Murray ACE ensures that its staff and trainers do not stereotype or make assumptions. Murray ACE recognises that it can be difficult for a child with a disability to make themselves heard or understood. Murray ACE keeps children with a disability in our organisation safe by:
  - Ensuring that no abuse or harm is tolerated, and diversity is welcomed.
  - Pre-empt unsafe situations via our risk assessment processes.
  - Having a Code of Conduct for staff, trainers and volunteers that clearly outlines boundaries about staff, trainers, and volunteer’s interaction with children with a disability.
  - Having a robust complaint process that encourages feedback.
  - Assisting children with a disability to build their self-esteem and confidence.
  - Communicating directly with children who have a disability about how safe they feel.
  - Being inclusive of all students and their families



### **RTO staff and volunteers**

All staff and volunteers will:

- Participate in child safety and wellbeing induction and training provided by the RTO and always follow the RTO's child safety policies and procedures
- Act in accordance with our Child Safety Code of Conduct.
- Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures.
- Ongoing training and education are essential to ensuring that staff understand their roles and responsibilities and develop their capacity to effectively address child safety and wellbeing matters.
- All staff will participate in a range of training and professional learning to equip them with the skills and knowledge necessary to maintain a child safe environment.

### **Community engagement**

- To support community engagement, at Murray ACE we are committed to providing the community with accessible information about our RTO's child safe policies and practices and involving them in our approach to child safety and wellbeing.
- Newsletters and our website will inform the community about any significant updates to our child safety policies and procedures and strategies or initiatives that we are taking to ensure student safety.
- PROTECT Child Safety posters will be displayed across the RTO.

### **Reporting guidelines**

Murray ACE has a system in place for the reporting of child harm or abuse. Certain instances must be reported to the Commission for Children and Young People.

Reportable incidents include:

- Sexual offences
- Sexual misconduct
- Physical violence
- Significant psychological or emotional harm
- Significant neglect

At Murray ACE if a trainer, staff member or volunteer believes that an incident should be reported the process is as follows:

- The trainer, staff member or volunteer fills in an incident report and hands it to the Centre Manager or Training Coordinator.
- The Centre Manager or Training Coordinator speaks to the person/people involved in the incident.
- The Centre Manager or Training Coordinator report the incident to the Commission for Children and Young People and, if a criminal offence has taken place, report the incident to Victoria Police
- The Commission for Children and Young People must be notified within three business days of the Centre Manager or the Training Coordinator becoming aware of the incident.



- Incidents that have taken place outside of Murray ACE can also be reported if it involves a student, staff member, trainer, or volunteer of Murray ACE.
- The Centre Manager or the Training Coordinator must notify the Commission for Children and Young People if they have a reasonable belief that misconduct has occurred. There is no need for proof.
- The Centre Manager or the Training Coordinator must provide an update on any investigations by themselves or Victoria Police to the Commission for Children and Young People after 30 days.
- Reports can be made on the Commission’s website at the following address:  
<https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/>
- Murray ACE maintains a Duty of Care folder that can be used by trainers and staff to direct students external care if required. This includes:
  - The ALGEE action plan
  - A step-by-step guide to making a report to Child Protection or Child FIRST
  - Local Health Services Directory
  - Local Counselling Services Directory
  - Swan Hill Headspace contact details.
  - Obligation to report suspected child abuse.
  - A guide to asking RUOK?
  - Mental Health and related services in the Swan Hill, Gannawarra and Buloke LGAs
  - Fact sheet on the Safety of Children with a Disability
  - Fact sheet on the Safety of Children from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds
  - Fact Sheet on the Cultural Safety for Aboriginal Children

## Review Record

### Related Documents or links

[About Child Safe Standards | vic.gov.au \(www.vic.gov.au\)](http://www.vic.gov.au)

[CCYP | The 11 Child Safe Standards](#)

## Date Endorsed by Committee of Management

Date of Review	Name & Position	
10/06/2021	Ann Murray – Training Coordinator and Compliance Officer	<b>New document</b>
15/02/2023	Ann Murray – Training Coordinator and Compliance Officer	<b>Updated with new child safe reporting guidelines</b>
16/07/2024	COM Meeting	<b>Endorsed by COM</b>