



Commitment to
Child Safe Principles



At Telethon Kids, our vision is simple: **HAPPY, HEALTHY KIDS.**

We bring together community, researchers, practitioners, policy makers and funders, who share our mission to improve the health, development and lives of children and young people through excellence in research.

We interact with children in various ways and in different capacities. It can be directly through participation in research studies or more indirectly through the application of our research into policy and practice. It includes the delivery of clinical services, our outreach and education programs, our interactive Discovery Centre and through our community engagement activities.

We recognise and respect the rights of children and young people and are committed to ensuring we provide an environment in which children are protected from harm, but that we actively promote their safety, engagement and well-being.

Our child safe principles, aligned with the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, are underpinned by our commitments to:

INFORM

We will ensure all children and families engaging with us have the information they need to make informed choices about the research or services they participate in.

INVOLVE

We will involve children, young people and/or their families in decisions impacting the way they engage with us and actively seek insights from the community that may inform our child safe policies and practices.

CELEBRATE DIFFERENCE

We will celebrate diversity and difference in the children and young people we engage with, while ensuring that diverse circumstances and needs are considered and provided for.

PROTECT

We will ensure that our processes and practices not only protect children and young people from harm, but actively promote their safety, engagement and well-being.

REFLECT AND RESPOND

We will reflect on our processes and actively seek feedback to continuously improve and evolve the way we protect children and young people we engage with.

Further detail of our commitment to child safe principles is provided below:

<p>Governance, Leadership and Culture</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ We are committed to ensuring our interactions with young people are safe and secure.▶ Our 'Up for the Challenge' Strategic Plan outlines our vision, mission and values and includes our commitment to improving the lives of children and young people.▶ Our Code of Conduct sets out our expectations for staff standards of behaviour and includes alignment with our values.▶ Our Board approved Risk Appetite Principles expressly state that we have no appetite for activities or behaviours which compromise the safety, health or well-being of others.▶ Our research governance processes and protocols are designed to promote research integrity and the safety of young participants.▶ Our staff and volunteers receive support and supervision to ensure they understand and comply with their obligations, including those relating to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.▶ Risk considerations and assessments are also integral to our planning for events, community engagement initiatives and other interactions with children and young people.
<p>Information, rights and decision-making</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ We ensure that children, young people and their families are provided with the information they need to provide their informed consent to participate in our research and activities. This includes translational summaries to clearly explain the intent of our research in clear and understandable language.▶ We use visual schedules to explain research projects / services where appropriate to help children and families understand the services they are receiving and to encourage an appropriate level of choice and control.▶ Our research participants can elect to withdraw from participation at any time.▶ A number of our researchers specialise in understanding the developmental needs of children and young people, and we have research teams dedicated to investigating, understanding and sharing evidence-based best practice in areas of: anxiety and depression, bullying, cyber-bullying and cyber-safety, mental health, playgroups and school attendance.▶ In areas of the Institute where we work directly with children, we ensure our organisational environment is friendly and welcoming (e.g. CliniKids is designed and appropriate for children with autism) and that our policies and procedures include guidance to support children through the decision-making process as applicable.

Family and community involvement

- ▶ Families participate in decisions impacting their child through an **informed consent** process for research participation as well as **transparent information, terms and conditions** for participation in our other events and initiatives.
- ▶ **Translational summaries** and **visual schedules** (as described above) further support informed participation in decision-making.
- ▶ We have in place a number of mechanisms designed to encourage children and their families to have input into the Institute's policies and practices, including our **community and consumer engagement programs** and our **CONNECT** program.
- ▶ Our **external facing website** provides families and communities with a wealth of information regarding the Institute's processes and policies, as well as providing linkages to official publications such as the Annual Report, Strategic Plan and Impact Report.
- ▶ The website also provides information about some of our other services designed directly for children including CliniKids and our Schools Program.

Equity and diversity

- ▶ We understand the diverse circumstances and needs of children and young people and provide support to those who are vulnerable.
- ▶ Internally, we recognise and support equity and diversity through a range of initiatives, including: the Chronic Conditions Special Interests Group, Gender Equity Diversity and Inclusion ('GEDI') Council, LGBTQIA+ Special Interests Group, Inclusions Coordinator, Inclusivity Guide and 'For the Record' Videos.
- ▶ We also perform dedicated research, and provide support materials and resources which focus on the needs of **diverse groups**, including but not limited to: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children with a chronic illness or disability, children with autism, children with mental health disorders, gender diverse children and children from the LGBTQIA+ community.
- ▶ We ensure that all research involving children and young people is subject to rigorous **research governance** processes which consider the appropriateness of research design, ethics and consent.
- ▶ We also have dedicated teams, frameworks and guidance materials which ensure research involving Aboriginal children and families is performed in an appropriate and culturally sensitive manner. These include:
 - Our **Commitment to Aboriginal Children and Families** which provides a guiding statement for our work with Aboriginal communities, and
 - Our **Kulunga Aboriginal Unit** which provides support, advice and community navigation for research focused on the health and well-being of Aboriginal children and families.
 - Our **Aboriginal Research Standards** which ensure our approach to planning and delivering research involving Aboriginal communities involves an appropriate level of community consultation.
- ▶ We also ensure that our education and outreach programs (e.g. school excursions, incursions and school holiday programs) consider **children with special needs** and that any additional needs or support requirements are accommodated.

Recruitment and training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Our commitment to child safety and wellbeing is emphasised as part of our recruitment process where we clearly articulate our vision of Happy, Healthy Kids when we advertise for new roles. ▶ We perform background checks, including police checks, for all prospective candidates as part of our standard screening and evaluation processes. ▶ We require current Working with Children clearances for all Institute representatives (including volunteers and third parties) who engage with children as part of their role. ▶ Our staff and volunteers receive induction training as part of the onboarding process and receive ongoing support, supervision and performance management to ensure their roles and responsibilities are appropriately performed. ▶ Our staff also receive cultural awareness training as part of our onboarding process. ▶ Staff are also invited to attend regular seminars hosted by subject matters specialists talking on a range of different topics, including those relating to child safety and well-being.
Complaints and feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ We have a formalised feedback and complaints process accessible through our website and proactively seek feedback via a number of other mechanisms to ensure we identify and integrate opportunities for ongoing improvement. ▶ We have a Grievance Handling Policy for staff members wishing to raise a grievance or concern, and a Whistleblower Policy also exists for people wishing to raise concerns, with strict confidentiality requirements embedded in the process. ▶ We also have a Safeguarding Policy and Procedure to outline the process by which safeguarding incidents may be identified, investigated and resolved. ▶ Our Confidentiality Policy and Privacy Policy is also in place to ensure appropriate protocols are applied.
Physical and online safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Our workplace health and safety policies and procedures are designed to encourage a safe workplace and our formal hazard and incident reporting mechanisms ensure identified safety matters are reported and addressed. ▶ Our research governance processes and protocols are designed to promote research excellence and ensure the safety of young participants. ▶ We perform formal risk assessments for research projects and events involving children and young people to ensure potential risks are considered and appropriate mitigation strategies are implemented. ▶ We have a number of subject matter specialists in the field of online safety and cyber bullying and many of our research projects have focused on understanding ways to minimise and manage the associated risks. We also have resources available through our external website which provides information and support in this space. ▶ We make sure that personal information relating to children affiliated with the Institute is retained and used in accordance with Australian Privacy Principles, and our staff and volunteers are bound by our <i>Privacy Policy and Confidentiality Policy</i>.

<p>Policies and procedures</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Our comprehensive policies and procedures, guidance and handbooks outline expectations regarding behaviour and conduct of people working for, or representing the Institute, including the ways in which we seek to protect the health, wellbeing and safety of young people where applicable. ▶ Our policies and procedures are written in plain language to ensure they are easy to understand and are regularly reviewed to ensure they remain current. ▶ Staff and volunteers receive induction training, as well as ongoing support and supervision to ensure they are informed and able to comply with all policies and procedures applicable to their role.
<p>Continuous improvement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ We strive to continuously improve our practices to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children and young people through ongoing review of our child safe mechanisms, policies and procedures. ▶ We also analyse complaints, feedback and safety incidents to identify themes / systemic trends which may warrant processes to be revised. ▶ Review findings are fed back into formal actions, and learning shared as appropriate to facilitate continuous improvement.

