



Child Safe Policy

Our commitment to child safety

At Geelong Nannies, the safety and well-being of children is our highest priority. We strive to ensure that all children are safe, happy, and empowered. We wholeheartedly support and respect every child, as well as our team members.

Our dedication to child safety includes:

- **Zero Tolerance for Child Abuse:** We take all allegations and safety concerns seriously and address them consistently with our comprehensive policies and procedures.
- **Legal and Moral Obligations:** We rigorously adhere to our responsibilities to contact authorities if we have concerns about a child's safety.
- **Prevention and Risk Management:** We are committed to preventing child abuse by identifying risks early and taking steps to remove or reduce these risks.
- **Robust Recruitment Practices:** Our recruitment processes are designed to ensure the safety of all children.
- **Staff Training and Education:** We provide training and education for our staff on recognizing and mitigating child abuse risks.

We respect and support the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and children with disabilities. Our specific policies, procedures, and training programs are designed to help our team members uphold these commitments.

If you believe a child is at immediate risk of abuse phone 000.

Our children

This policy is intended to empower children who are vital participants in our organisation.

We promote diversity and tolerance in our organisation, and people from all walks of life and cultural backgrounds are welcome. Specifically we:

- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children
- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
- ensure that children with a disability are safe

Our team members

This policy guides our team members on how to behave with children in our organisation.

All our team members must agree to abide by our code of conduct, which specifies the standards of conduct required when working with children. All team members, as well as children and their families, are given the opportunity to contribute to the development of the code of conduct.

Recruitment

We take all reasonable steps to recruit skilled and safe people to work with children. We follow a selection criterion, which clearly demonstrate our commitment to child safety and an awareness of



our social and legislative responsibilities. Our organisation understands that when recruiting team members, we have ethical as well as legislative obligations.

All team members engaged in child-related work, are required to hold a Victorian Working with Children Check and to provide evidence of this Check. These checks are verified by our organisation through the official website when team members are recruited to ensure they are clear. We ensure every team member registers Geelong Nannies as their organisation and we will be notified of any breach. In addition, we manually verify the status of each active carers 'Working With Children Checks' are clear on a monthly basis. Please see the [Working with Children Check](http://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au) website (www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au) for further information.

We carry out reference checks and police record checks to ensure that we are recruiting safe team members. Police record checks are used for the purposes of recruitment and continuing safety, we ensure they are updated every 12 months.

If during the recruitment process a person's records indicate a criminal history then the person will be given the opportunity to provide further information and context. Our organisation will then decide if this criminal record impacts the safety of our clients, their children, their homes and their property.

Fair procedures for personnel

The safety and wellbeing of children is our primary concern. We are also fair and just to personnel. The decisions we make when recruiting, assessing incidents, and undertaking disciplinary action will always be thorough, transparent, and based on evidence.

We record all allegations of abuse and safety concerns using our incident reporting form, including investigation updates. All records are securely stored.

If an allegation of abuse or a safety concern is raised, we provide support to those involved where applicable.

Privacy

All personal information considered or recorded will respect the privacy of the individuals involved, whether they be team members, parents or children, unless there is a risk to someone's safety. Everyone is entitled to know how this information is recorded, what will be done with it, and who will have access to it.

Legislative responsibilities

Our organisation takes our legal responsibilities seriously, including:

- **Failure to disclose:** Reporting child sexual abuse is a community-wide responsibility. All adults in Victoria who have a reasonable belief that an adult has committed a sexual offence against a child under 16 have an obligation to report that information to the police.¹
- **Failure to protect:** People of authority in our organisation will commit an offence if they know of a substantial risk of child sexual abuse and have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, but negligently fail to do so.²

¹ A person will not commit this offence if they have a reasonable excuse for not disclosing the information, including a fear for their safety or where the information has already been disclosed.

Further information about the failure to disclose offence is available [here](https://www.justice.vic.gov.au/node/1813/failure-to-disclose-offence#:~:text=The%20failure%20to%20disclose%20offence%20applies%20to%20you%20if%3A,child%20under%2016%20in%20Victoria): <https://www.justice.vic.gov.au/node/1813/failure-to-disclose-offence#:~:text=The%20failure%20to%20disclose%20offence%20applies%20to%20you%20if%3A,child%20under%2016%20in%20Victoria>

² Further information about the failure to protect offence is available [here](https://www.justice.vic.gov.au/node/1813/failure-to-protect-a-new-criminal-offence-to-protect-children-from-sexual-abuse): <https://www.justice.vic.gov.au/node/1813/failure-to-protect-a-new-criminal-offence-to-protect-children-from-sexual-abuse>



- Any personnel who are **mandatory reporters** must comply with their duties.³

Risk management

In Victoria, organisations are required to protect children when a risk is identified (see information about failure to protect above). In addition to general occupational health and safety risks, we proactively manage risks of abuse to children. Although as a nanny agency, we are not able to control the environment that the nanny works in or who else has contact with the children whom the children's parents approve of. However, what we can control as an agency is our monthly verification of carers' Working With Children Checks and yearly police checks, in addition to our screening and recruitment process for each nanny on our team.

Regular review

This policy will be reviewed every two years and following significant incidents if they occur. We will ensure that families and children have the opportunity to contribute. Where possible we do our best to work with local Aboriginal communities, culturally and/or linguistically diverse communities and people with a disability.

Allegations, concerns and complaints

Our organisation takes all allegations seriously and has practices in place to investigate thoroughly and quickly.

We work to ensure all team members know what to do and who to tell if they observe abuse or are a victim, and if they notice inappropriate behaviour.

We all have a responsibility to report an allegation of abuse if we have a reasonable belief that an incident took place (see information about failure to disclose above).

If an adult has a **reasonable belief** that an incident has occurred, then they must report the incident. Factors contributing to reasonable belief may be:

- a child states they or someone they know has been abused (noting that sometimes the child may in fact be referring to themselves)
- behaviour consistent with that of an abuse victim is observed⁴
- someone else has raised a suspicion of abuse but is unwilling to report it

³ Mandatory reporters (doctors, nurses, midwives, teachers (including early childhood teachers), principals and police) must report to child protection if they believe on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection from physical injury or sexual abuse.

See the DFFH website for information on making a report to child protection [here](https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/making-report-child-protection): <https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/making-report-child-protection>

⁴ For example behaviour, please see information about child safe standards [here](https://www.vic.gov.au/about-child-safe-standards): <https://www.vic.gov.au/about-child-safe-standards>