

A young woman with dark hair tied back, wearing round glasses and a pink hoodie, stands next to a wooden staircase. She is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. The background is slightly blurred, showing more of the staircase and some greenery.

Working together to

**KEEP CHILDREN
SAFE**

LIFE WITHOUT BARRIERS

Child safety is a shared responsibility, and working together as a community is essential to protecting children.

Recognising children's rights, promoting their best interests and listening to their voices should be a priority for all of us, so children can be safe from harm.

Our approach

At Life Without Barriers, we work hard to build a culture that prioritises the safety of children. We create opportunities to hear children's voices, talk openly about the risk of child sexual abuse, invest in training our staff and carers, and build systems that help us respond appropriately to risk or harm.

We're committed to the ongoing implementation of the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.

Our approach to the prevention of child sexual abuse is based on contextual prevention. Contextual prevention is "an umbrella term comprising prevention efforts that target factors external to the individual (potential victim or perpetrator), to create safer environments for children"¹ (Rayment-McHugh et al, 2024). This doesn't mean that we ignore individual factors associated with potential perpetrators or victims. Rather, it means that we recognise that focusing on Working With Children Checks and children's vulnerabilities is not enough, and that we need to pay attention to our environment.

The actions we take to reduce the risk of child sexual abuse include:

- Our Board and Executive making a public statement about the priority we place on child safety.
- Articulating a shared responsibility for child safety (sometimes referred to as "extended guardianship"), so that all staff and carers understand their responsibility to protect children, no matter their role.
- Asking all our staff and carers to sign up to our commitment to child safety, which includes clear behavioural expectations, being vigilant about the risk of child abuse, and speaking up about child safety concerns.
- Making our commitment to child safety prominent in our physical and online environments.
- Providing training to our staff and carers, so they understand how child sexual abuse occurs, how they can help prevent it and how to respond if they know or suspect that a child has been harmed.
- Challenging the "taboo" associated with child sexual abuse by normalising conversations about it.
- Prioritising opportunities to hear the voices of children and young people.

¹Rayment-McHugh, S., McKillop, N., Adams, D., Higgins, D. J. & Russell, D. H. (2024). Context matters: Conceptualising and operationalizing the contextual prevention of child sexual abuse. Child Abuse Review, 33(1), e2859. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1002/car.285>.



Our commitment: We Put Children First

Every day, Life Without Barriers offers support and care to children. We want each and every one of those children to feel as safe and respected as they should.

We Put Children First is our commitment to the safety and wellbeing of children. All staff and carers are required to be a part of this commitment, to recognise the difference between acceptable and unacceptable behaviours and understand the importance of speaking up about child safety concerns.

Our Stance on Child Safety and Wellbeing is our detailed guide to this commitment.

Training and support for staff and carers

Staff who work with children and young people, and our carers, undertake training in understanding, preventing and responding to child sexual abuse and harmful sexual behaviour. Training is supported by opportunities to reflect with supervisors, teams and communities of practice to deepen our collective understanding of the risk of child sexual abuse and the actions we can take to help prevent it.

Talking with children and young people

It's not enough to educate our staff and carers about child sexual abuse. We also need to talk to children and young people in an age-appropriate manner about sexual abuse.

We're using the **SAFE Book Series** (developed by the NSW Children's Guardian) to talk with children about their safety. The books support children's rights and explore protective behaviours that can help keep them safe.

For older children and young people, the Sexual Safety Series is a series of six videos for young people that aim to support safe and respectful relationships and prevent sexual abuse, assault and exploitation.

Listening to children's voices


A key part of creating a child safe and child friendly culture is actively creating opportunities to hear children's voices. We work to ensure that children and young people can participate in decisions that affect their lives, and have opportunities to speak up about any concerns they may have.

LIFE WITHOUT BARRIERS

Contact Us

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