

SAFE GUARDING POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Purpose and Scope

This policy and procedure outlines how In Touch Support Services actively prevents violence, abuse, neglect, exploitation or discrimination towards participants (including children). It applies to all In Touch Support Services staff and meets relevant legislation, regulations and Standards.

The purpose of this Policy is:

- To protect people who interact with or are affected by In Touch Support Services.
- To facilitate the prevention of physical and /or sexual abuse occurring within In Touch Support Services.
- To support a positive and effective culture towards Safeguarding.
- Set out and develop how In Touch Support Services manages Safeguarding risks.
- Ensure all parties are aware of their responsibilities for identifying possible incidents of neglect, grooming or abuse and for establishing controls and procedures for preventing such abuse and/or detecting such abuse when it occurs.
- To provide guidance to staff, volunteers, contractors and third parties as to actions to be taken where they suspect any abuse within or outside of the organisation and provide assurance that all suspected abuse will be reported and thoroughly investigated.

This Policy applies to:

- All staff, volunteers and any other person associated or working under contract with In Touch Support Services.
- All In Touch Support Services clients and their families, visitors, partners and contractors

Failure to comply with this Policy and related procedures may result in disciplinary action.

For guidance regarding responding to violence, abuse, neglect, exploitation or discrimination involving participants, see the *Participant Incident Management Policy and Procedure*.

Applicable NDIS Practice Standards

Violence, Abuse, Neglect, Exploitation and Discrimination

Outcome

Each participant accesses support free from violence, abuse, neglect, exploitation or discrimination.

Indicators

- Policies, procedures, and practices are in place that actively prevent violence, abuse, neglect, exploitation, or discrimination.

Policy

In Touch Support Services has a moral, ethical, and legal responsibility to ensure all participants are safe. It takes proactive steps to protect participants from harm. This policy and procedures outline how In Touch Support Services intends to protect people who interact with or are affected by In Touch Support Services.

- To facilitate the prevention of physical and /or sexual abuse occurring within In Touch Support Services.
- To support a positive and effective culture towards Safeguarding.
- Set out and develop how In Touch Support Services manages Safeguarding risks.
- Ensure all parties are aware of their responsibilities for identifying possible incidents of neglect, grooming, or abuse and for establishing controls and procedures for preventing such abuse and/or detecting such abuse when it occurs.
- To provide guidance to staff, volunteers, contractors, and third parties as to actions to be taken where they suspect any abuse within or outside of the organisation and provide assurance that all suspected abuse will be reported and thoroughly investigated.

In Touch, Support Services is committed to promoting and protecting the interests and safety of children, young adults, vulnerable people, and people at risk. We have zero tolerance for any form of physical and /or sexual abuse. Everyone working at In Touch Support Services is responsible for the protection of children, young adults, vulnerable people, and people at risk and reporting information about any form of physical and /or sexual abuse.

Procedures

In Touch Support Services Management Team must promote best practices, continuous improvement and a service delivery culture that promotes and supports participant safety. This is assessed in yearly Performance Reviews of Management Team staff.

Safe Recruitment and Selection

In Touch Support Services is committed to safe employment and recruitment practices that reduce the risk of harm to children, young adults and vulnerable people from people unsuitable to work with or have contact with them.

In Touch Support Services requires all employees, volunteers and contractors to go through the organisation's recruitment screening processes before commencing with In Touch Support Services.

Persons appointed to roles that involve working with children, young people and vulnerable people must meet the legal requirements to do so. In Touch Support Services will require applicants to provide the following before commencing with the organisation and at regular intervals during employment:

- Working with Children Check.
- Answering questions on safeguarding such as "Tell me about your experience with safeguarding" or "When have you been exposed to a situation where you had reasonable grounds to suspect abuse and what did you do", and
- Proof of any Safeguarding training undertaken.

In Touch Support Services will undertake thorough reference checking before commencement including, at least two (2) previous managers to determine the applicants' safeguarding experience.

Referees will be asked questions on the applicant's knowledge and experience on safeguarding and if the referee considers the person suitable to work with children or vulnerable adults.

Training

As per In Touch Support Services' *Human Resources Policy and Procedure*, all staff must undergo Induction, which includes training on supporting participant safety, promoting child-safe environments, maintaining professional boundaries, and preventing and responding to incidents or allegations of discrimination, violence, abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

In Touch Support Services will ensure appropriate Safeguarding training is available to its employees, volunteers, contractors, and any relevant persons connected to the organisation who require it.

All staff, volunteers, contractors, and third parties must undertake mandatory Safeguarding training during their induction.

For all employees who are working or volunteering with children, young persons, or vulnerable persons, this requires, as a minimum, to have the awareness that enables them to:

- Understand what Safeguarding is and their role in Safeguarding of children, young persons, or vulnerable persons.
- Link safeguarding practices to In Touch Support Services Safeguarding and Incident Reporting policies and procedures.
- Recognise a child, young person, or vulnerable person potentially in need of Safeguarding and take action.
- Recognising the indicators of abuse, including grooming behaviours.
- The process of when and how to report:
 - an incident.
 - potential incident.
 - if a child, young person, or vulnerable person's safety or welfare is at risk. or
 - the requirements and process for mandatory reporting.

In Touch Support Services will ensure staff, volunteers and contractors are trained to recognise, identify, mitigate and respond to risks in the online, offline, onsite and off-site environments. This includes the structural and physical environmental risks and how to communicate that information to children, young persons, vulnerable people and their families.

The Management Team is responsible for identifying and providing appropriate resources and ongoing training to assist staff to implement this policy. Staff must thoroughly understand this policy and procedure and undertake all required training to support them to implement it.

Staff member's knowledge of this policy and procedure and their obligation to protect children from harm will be assessed in annual Performance Reviews. Additional on-the-job and formal training will be provided where required.

Code of Conduct

In Touch Support Services Code of Conduct applies to all people working with In Touch Support Services paid staff, contractors, and volunteers (collectively referred to as staff members). The Code of Conduct is to be reviewed, agreed to, and signed by all staff members across the organisation regardless of their role or job description within In Touch Support Services.

This Code of Conduct sets expectations for how staff members at In Touch Support Services should behave around children, young people, and vulnerable people. This is important to help prevent them from being harmed.

In Touch Support Services Code of Conduct identifies positive safe behaviours that we encourage all staff to support. It also identifies behaviours that we consider unacceptable. Engaging in unacceptable behaviour is a breach of the Code of Conduct and may result in managerial or disciplinary action.

Managing Safeguarding Risk

In Touch Support Services will ensure that the safety of children, young persons or vulnerable persons is a part of its overall risk management approach.

In Touch Support Services management team is committed to identifying and managing risks at In Touch Support Services. In Touch Support Services management team will receive regular Safeguarding training.

In Touch Support Services will manage the risk of Safeguarding by:

- Having an action plan that sets out how it will manage Safeguarding.
- Having up-to-date and documented risk assessments.
- Maintaining a register of In Touch Support Services legal obligations for Safeguarding workplace health and safety in all jurisdictions in which it operates.
- Implementing policies, procedures, and systems that introduce controls to reduce the likelihood and consequence of incidents.
- Maintaining two reporting processes: the confidential reporting process, and the overt reporting process.
- Having an incident response plan.
- Undertaking audits of staff, volunteers, contractors and third parties to ensure adherence to In Touch Support Services' Safeguarding Policy and Code of Conduct.
- Monitoring and reviewing the effectiveness of its Safeguarding program.

Safe Online

In Touch Support Services takes the threats posed to vulnerable people through online interactions seriously and recognise that social media is changing how people communicate.

The use of In Touch Support Services IT access, online equipment and/or communication and gaming platforms are to be conducted by this Policy, in conjunction with the organisation's Code of Conduct.

Any discovery or suspicion of inappropriate, illegal content, contact, or coercion, such as child exploitation material, suspected grooming or sextortion, or other abuse, on any device or equipment connected in any way with In Touch Support Services, regardless of ownership, must be reported immediately to Management and if appropriate, to Police following the Incident Management procedure provided in this Policy. Staff, volunteers, or contractors are not to

- Post or share (either online or offline) any offensive material, harassing, discriminatory, embarrassing, intimidating, sexually explicit, bullying, hateful, racist, sexist, or otherwise inappropriate.
- Contact children, young people, or vulnerable persons for non-urgent contact or communication out of hours.
- Have outside contact with children, young people, and vulnerable people except for meetings where others are present, program-specific internet contacts through In Touch Support Services' email system, or brief telephone or texting contact for routine purposes such as scheduling.

Prevention

To protect participants from harm, In Touch Support Services will employ skilled staff who:

- respect the rights of people with disability (including children).
- are aware of current policies and legislation about abuse and neglect
- ensure children and young people know who to talk to if they are feeling unsafe and what will happen if they do speak up and
- support people and their families or guardians to access complaint mechanisms and raise any concerns they have about services.

All staff must undergo criminal history screening as per In Touch Support Services *Human Resources Policy and Procedure*.

In accordance with In Touch Support Services Service Access and Participant Rights and Responsibilities policies and procedures, staff must advise participants (including children) of their rights during intake, assessment, and review processes, including their right to be protected from harm. This information should be reinforced by staff throughout service delivery.

As per In Touch Support Services Service Delivery and Participation Policy and Procedure, staff must be introduced to participants before delivering supports, and clearly identify themselves to participants at each instance of service delivery.

In Touch Support Services must also provide a safe physical environment for the delivery of services, as per our *Work Health and Safety Policies and Procedures*.

Volunteers or contractors must not be left with sole supervision of individual participants or groups of participants and adequate staff-participant ratios must be maintained at all times.

All participants and their families are to be advised of In Touch Support Services obligations to report suspicions or allegations of abuse, at their initial contact with In Touch Support Services.

Agendas for Management Team meetings include a standing item on Continuous Improvement, including concerning participant safety. This must consider the Management Team's regular review of In Touch Support Services' *Risk Assessments, Risk Register and Complaints Register*.

Finally, In Touch Support Services must work closely with Official Community Visitors to promote participants' rights. See the *Feedback and Complaints Policy and Procedure* for more details.

Reporting of a Safeguarding Incident

Managing Safeguarding Incidents

All staff, volunteers, contractors, and third parties who have grounds to suspect abusive activity must report any suspicion or reasonable belief that an incident

- Has taken place.
- May be taking place. or
- Could take place.

All reporting must follow In Touch Support Services incident management and reporting procedures. Reports can be made through

- Director
- Any manager or supervisor.
- The organisation's incident management system.

The contact details to report all incidents or near misses are

Patrick Alldridge ph.: 07 3387 0184
email: info@intouchsupportservices.com.au

MAILING
PO Box 354,
Waterford, QLD 4133

If you believe a child, young person, or vulnerable person is in immediate danger, in a life-threatening situation, or safety or welfare is at risk telephone the Police on Triple Zero (000).

Internal Reporting: responding to Suspected Incidents.

All suspected, perceived, and potential incidents (including Mandatory Reporting) must also be reported through the In Touch Support Services Incident Management Procedure and recorded in the In Touch Support Services Incident Management System. They will be managed through an incident response plan.

A report is to contain:

- a) The name and contact details of the reporter.
- b) The name of the child, young person, or vulnerable person or, if a name cannot be obtained after reasonable inquiries, a description of the young person or vulnerable person.
- c) If, or to the extent, known to the reporter:
 - I. The date of birth.
 - II. Information about where the person lives.
 - III. The names of the parents (if applicable), guardian, or other appropriate persons.
- d) The grounds for the reporter's belief that the child, young person, or vulnerable person has been the subject of sexual abuse or is the subject of ongoing sexual abuse.
- e) If, or to the extent, known to the reporter:
 - I. The name of any person alleged to be responsible for the sexual abuse.
 - II. The person's contact details. and
 - III. The person's relationship to the child.

The contact details to report all incidents or near misses are:

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email: info@intouchsupportservices.com.au
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PO Box 354,
Waterford, QLD 4133

External Reporting

Any staff, volunteer, contractors or third parties who have grounds to suspect abusive activity must immediately notify In Touch Support Services management and, where required, contact appropriate authorities including, the Police on Triple Zero (000).

Reporting within the organisation may be directed through:

- a) Director.
- b) Any manager or supervisor.
- c) The organisation's Incident Management system.
- d) Contacting the appropriate authority directly, including the Police.

The contact details to report all incidents or near misses are listed above

Mandatory Reporting: Reportable Conduct

If the management is informed of a complaint or disclosure that may be reportable conduct under the applicable Reportable Conduct Scheme and which has not yet been reported to the appropriate authorities, management must determine if the circumstances constitute a reasonable belief of abuse and reportable conduct:

- a. If you believe a child, young person or vulnerable person is in immediate danger or a life-threatening situation telephone the Police on Triple Zero (000). If Management determines a reasonable belief that an individual has engaged in reportable conduct such as:
 - I. Any sexual offence, or sexual misconduct, committed against, with, or in the presence of a child (including child pornography offences).
 - II. Any assault, ill-treatment, or neglect of a child.
 - III. Any behaviour that causes significant emotional or psychological harm to a child; or
 - IV. Criminal offences such as the failure to reduce or remove the risk of a child becoming the victim of abuse and concealing child abuse. The complaint or disclosure must be reported to the appropriate authorities (refer to Appendix E: State and Territory Mandatory Reporting Contacts) within Three (3) days after becoming aware of a reportable allegation.
- b. If Management determines that there is not a reasonable belief and/or the conduct is not reportable conduct within the meaning of the applicable legislation, they are not required to report the complaint or disclosure, but the decision and the reasons for that decision must be documented in writing.
- c. A decision by Management not to report a complaint or disclosure to the appropriate authorities does not prevent any other staff member, volunteer, contractor or board member from reporting it to the appropriate authorities.

Management will notify the appropriate authorities (refer to Appendix E: State and Territory Mandatory Reporting Contacts) of:

- a. Any allegation of reportable conduct, or conviction of reportable conduct, against an employee of In Touch Support Services when the management becomes aware.
- b. If In Touch Support Services proposes to take disciplinary action against the employee, volunteer or contractor (and the reasons why it intends to take or not take any such action). and
- c. Any written submissions made to In Touch Support Services concerning any such allegation or conviction that the employee concerned wished to have considered in determining what (if any) disciplinary or other action should be taken about the employee, volunteer or contractor.

All incidents and the status of an investigation are to be store in our CMS and will record in

the In Touch Support Services incident management system.

Investigating an Incident

All incidents or suspected incidents will be investigated following the In Touch Support Services Incident Management procedure.

If appropriate authorities or the Police decide to investigate a reported incident, all employees, volunteers and contractors must cooperate fully. Management will ensure reporting, privacy and employment law obligations are met and notify the Insurer of any reporting of a safeguarding incident, including sexual or serious physical assault.

If it is decided that it will not conflict with any proceeding of the authorities or receiving clearance from authorities, the director or general manager will conduct an internal investigation and all staff, volunteers and contractors must co-operate fully.

All incidents and the status of an investigation are to be stored Client Management System (CMS) and will be recorded in the In Touch Support Services incident management system.

The In Touch Support Services will make every effort to keep any such investigation confidential.

External Investigation

Where an investigation is referred to appropriate external authorities (including the Police) all staff, volunteers, contractors and board members must cooperate with the external investigators.

A person who attends who is the subject of a complaint, whether related to activities of In Touch Support Services or not, must:

- a. Immediately inform management or the Safeguarding Officer.
- b. Cooperate with the appropriate authorities in their investigation of the complaint.
- c. Comply with Management's directions regarding that person's participation in In Touch Support Services' activities and interactions with children, young people and vulnerable people. and
- d. Keep Management informed of the investigation status into the complaint and its resolution.

All incidents and the status of an investigation is to be stored our CMS and will be recorded

in the In Touch Support Services incident management system

Incident Register

In Touch Support Services strictly maintains an Incident Register. The Incident Register is a thorough record of all Information about all incidents that come to the attention of any staff member at any time.

Details of all incidents to be recorded in the In Touch Support Services Incident Register, including

- Names and contact details of all people involved.
- Names of the person making the incident report.
- Dates.
- Timeframes.
- Details of the incident.
- Details of In Touch Support Services' management personnel who were notified.
- Details of any authorities who were notified.
- Actions taken and outcomes.

Managers are required to report incidents to the Director, Insurance provider, and any appropriate authority (as required by law).

Disciplinary Action

While an investigation is conducted, In Touch Support Services reserves the right to:

- Report the matter to appropriate authorities, including the Police or appropriate authorities as required under legislative requirements; and/or
- Stand the staff, volunteer or contractor down (with pay, where applicable).

After an investigation and a breach of the organisation's policies or Code of Conduct is identified In Touch Support Services reserves the right to:

- Take disciplinary action against those it believes are responsible, which may include dismissal.
- Terminate or cease involvement with In Touch Support Services.
- Take legal action.

Supporting Parties Affected by A Complaint

All staff, volunteers, and management are trained to understand their response to a child, young person, or vulnerable person's disclosure of abuse.

A complaint must be treated seriously, respectfully, and sensitively. Management must support a child, young person, or vulnerable person who makes a complaint or discloses.

In Touch Support Services will offer appropriate psychological first aid and support to anyone implementing any aspect of this policy while acting on behalf of In Touch Support Services.

In Touch Support Services will provide support to children, young persons or vulnerable people who are victims of abuse and their families, including accessing professional services by:

- Giving the child, young person, or vulnerable person your full attention.
- Maintaining a calm appearance.
- Letting the child, young person, or vulnerable person take their own time.
- Letting the child, young person, or vulnerable person use their own words – don't ask questions. Just listen.
- Reassuring the child, young person, or vulnerable person that it is right to tell.
- Accepting the child, young person, or vulnerable person will disclose only what is comfortable and recognise the bravery/strength of the child, young person or vulnerable person for talking about something difficult.
- Telling the child, young person, or vulnerable person what you plan to do next.
- Reporting to Management and appropriate authorities the incident without delay.

See Appendix D How to Respond to a Person Who Discloses further information.

Privacy and Information Sharing

A complaint must remain strictly confidential to the extent permitted by law. In Touch Support Services expects all employees, volunteers, and contractors to maintain confidentiality.

All personal information identified or recorded will respect the privacy of the individuals involved unless there is a risk to someone's safety. In Touch Support Services has policies and procedures to protect any personal information.

However, information should be shared with appropriate authorities (including Police) if a child, young person or vulnerable person is deemed to be at risk of harm, in immediate danger, or a crime has been committed.

Whistle-Blower Protection

People within In Touch Support Services must have the confidence to come forward to speak or act if they have any concerns or incidents of behaviour that contradict any behaviour outlined in the Code of Conduct.

The In Touch Support Services Whistle-blower Policy describes the protections available to whistle-blowers, what matters are reportable, how employees, volunteers and contractors can report concerns without fear of harm, and how In Touch Support Services will support and protect them.

Breaches

Any breach of this policy may result in disciplinary action, including but not limited to the termination of involvement, engagement or employment with In Touch Support Services.

Continuous Improvement

In Touch Support Services management must review this policy to ensure it remains compliant with the law and relevant to the developing needs of children, young persons and vulnerable people.

- a. Annually (or more frequently if required due to changes in legislation); and
- b. After every complaint of abuse

Any person may, and is encouraged to, provide feedback about the policy. Either in writing, verbally or in any other way, management will consider this feedback in making changes to improve the safety of children, young persons and vulnerable people.

After every complaint of abuse or breach of this policy, management will act to prevent recurrence. Actions may include:

- a. Seeking advice from the appropriate authorities or individuals with appropriate professional expertise on abuse and safety.
- b. Reviewing this policy.
- c. Reviewing risk assessments and activity guidelines.
- d. Providing closer supervision of persons or activities.
- e. Further education and training.
- f. Advising the appropriate authorities regarding a person's suitability to work with children, young persons or vulnerable people and/or
- g. Disciplinary procedures

Governance

In Touch Support Services Director will ensure safeguarding to prevent abuse and neglect has adequate risk governance, processes and resources by

- Making sure safeguarding governance training is provided for all board members by an expert in Safeguarding.
- Making sure safeguarding is a standing item for all board meetings.
- Ensuring policies and procedures address all the appropriate national vulnerable person's standards and/or principles and are reviewed by the Board at least annually. Records of such reviews are to be minutes.
- Consulting with stakeholders, staff, volunteers, vulnerable people, their families, contractors, partners, insurers, peak bodies and others as appropriate to inform the development of In Touch Support Services 's policies and procedures relating to safeguarding.
- Providing and/or facilitating safeguarding training, including induction and regular refresher training, for all employees, contractors, and volunteers to access, understand and apply these policies and procedures.

Safe Guarding Roles and Responsibilities

Director

- Protecting all people who interact or are affected by In Touch Support Services.
- Responsible for detecting and preventing abuse to children, young persons, or vulnerable persons.
- Responsible for ensuring Safeguarding governance, policies and procedures are in place.
- Responsible for ensuring appropriate and effective internal control systems are in place.
- Ensuring that In Touch Support Services observes all relevant Safeguarding laws and regulations
- Ensuring Safeguarding is a standing item at all management meetings.

General manager

- Dealing with and investigating reports of abuse.
 - Ensuring all staff, volunteers and contractors know relevant laws, organisational policies and procedures, and the organisation's Code of Conduct.
 - Ensuring that all In Touch Support Services staff, volunteers and contractors are aware of their obligation to report suspected abuse of a child, young person or vulnerable person by following these policies and procedures.
 - Ensure that In Touch Support Services has effective and appropriate ways to manage Safeguarding and legal compliance.
 - Ensure that reports to external parties are made where required.
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- Be the first point of contact for all safeguarding matters.
 - Help staff, volunteers, contractors and board at In Touch Support Services understand their obligations to protect children, young people and vulnerable people and promote their rights.
 - Receive and escalate complaints, concerns and incidents for appropriate action.
 - Provide updates at board meetings.
 - Work with the board to assess safeguarding risks within the organisation and develop strategies and action plans to minimise the risks.
 - Ensure In Touch Support Services undertakes correct screening of people by following current safeguarding laws and legislation and that appropriate records are maintained.

Managers

- Promote a culture of safety for children, young persons and vulnerable people.
- Implement this Policy in their area of responsibility.
- Assess the risk of abuse to children, young persons and vulnerable people within their area and ensure controls are in place to prevent, detect and respond to incidents.
- Facilitate the reporting of any suspected abuse, neglect or exploitation.
- Ensure that there is appropriate Safeguarding training in place for staff.

Staff volunteers and contractors

- Provide an environment that supports all children, young persons and vulnerable people's emotional and physical safety.
- Familiarise themselves with In Touch Support Services policy, procedures, Code of Conduct and relevant laws in relation to Safeguarding protection.
- Report any reasonable belief or incident that a child, young person or vulnerable person's safety or welfare is at risk to responsible persons in the organisation or authorities (such as the Police and/or the child protection service).
- Fulfil their obligations as mandatory reporters.

Supporting Documents

Documents relevant to this policy and procedure include:

- *Participant Incident Management Policy and Procedure*
- *Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and Procedure*
- *Human Resources Policy and Procedure*
- *Feedback and Complaints Policy and Procedure*
- *Physical Accessibility Policy and Procedure*
- *Work Health and Safety Policy and Procedure*
- *Service Access Policy and Procedure*
- *Participant Rights and Responsibilities Policy and Procedure*
- *Service Delivery and Participation Policy and Procedure*
- *Risk Register*
- *Risk Assessment*
- *Complaints Register*
- *Staff Code of Conduct*
- *eSafety Commissioner Resources*
 - *The relevant laws of the Commonwealth State or Territory.*
 - *The Safeguarding Code of Conduct.*
 - *The Whistle-blower Policy.*
 - *The Privacy Policy*
 - *The Employment Practices Policy, including induction and training procedures.*
 - *Grievance and Disciplinary procedures.*
 - *Risk Management Policy*

Monitoring and Review






This Policy and Procedure will be reviewed at least annually by the Management Team. Reviews will incorporate staff, participant and other stakeholder feedback.

In Touch Support Services' feedback collection mechanisms, such as [participant satisfaction surveys, will assess:

- participant awareness of their rights and the extent to which they feel able and supported to exercise them.
- participant satisfaction with In Touch Support Services complaints processes; and
- the extent to which participants feel safe and protected in their dealings with In Touch Support Services.

In Touch Support Services' *Continuous Improvement Plan* will be used to record improvements identified and monitor the progress of their implementation. Where relevant, this information will be considered as part of In Touch Support Services service planning and delivery processes.

Safe Guarding Policy and Procedure (Easy read)

	<p>This information is written in an easy to read way. We use pictures to explain some ideas.</p> <p>Some words are written in bold. We explain what these words mean.</p>
	<p>You can ask for help to read this document.</p> <p>A family member, friend or support person may be able to help you.</p> <p>Let us know if you would like us to help you</p>
	<p>This Easy Read information is a shorter version of another document.</p> <p>You can ask us (or organisation name) for a copy of the longer document.</p>
	<p>This information is about Safeguarding that outlines how In Touch Support Services actively prevents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • violence, abuse, neglect • exploitation or discrimination • towards participants (including children)
	<p>In Touch, Support Services is committed to promoting and protecting the interests and safety of children, young adults, vulnerable people, and people at risk. We have zero tolerance for any form of physical and /or sexual abuse.</p>



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Referees will be asked questions on the applicant’s knowledge and experience on safeguarding and if the referee considers the person suitable to work with children or vulnerable adults.



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- are aware of current policies and legislation about abuse and neglect
- ensure children and young people know who to talk to if they are feeling unsafe and what will happen if they do speak up and
- support people and their families or guardians to access complaint mechanisms and raise any concerns they have about services.

In Touch Support Services will provide support to children, young

	<p>persons or vulnerable people who are victims of abuse and their families, including accessing professional services by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Giving the child, young person, or vulnerable person your full attention. • Maintaining a calm appearance. • Letting the child, young person, or vulnerable person take their own time. • Letting the child, young person, or vulnerable person use their own words – don't ask questions. Just listen. • Reassuring the child, young person, or vulnerable person that it is right to tell. • Accepting the child, young person, or vulnerable person will disclose only what is comfortable and recognise the bravery/strength of the child, young person or vulnerable person for talking about something difficult. • Telling the child, young person, or vulnerable person what you plan to do next. • Reporting to Management and appropriate authorities the incident without delay.
	<p>Patrick Alldridge ph.: 07 3387 0184 email: info@intouchsupportservices.com.au <u>u</u> MAILING PO Box 354, Waterford, QLD 4133</p>

DOCUMENT CONTROL

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1	26.07.2024	Susan Connell
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APPENDIX A – SAFEGUARDING DEFINITIONS

TERM	DEFINITION
Abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All forms of physical and mental abuse, exploitation, coercion or ill-treatment. This might include, for example: physical abuse. emotional abuse. threats of, or actual violence, verbal, emotional or social abuse. sexual harassment, bullying or abuse. sexual criminal offences. cultural or identity abuse, such as racial, sexual or gender-based discrimination or hate crime. coercion and exploitation. abuse of power; and neglect.
Adult	A person who is not a child.
Child or young person	A person under the age of 18 years.
Child abuse	Is emotional abuse, neglect, physical abuse and/or sexual abuse (all as defined) to a child.
Child Safe Organisation	<p>An organisation that consciously and systematically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> creates conditions that reduce the likelihood of harm to children. creates conditions that increase the likelihood of identifying and reporting of harm. responds appropriately to disclosures, allegations and suspicions of harm.
Complaint	<p>Includes any allegation, suspicion, concern or report of a breach of this Policy or In Touch Support Services Code of Conduct. It also includes disclosures made to In Touch Support Services that may be about or relate to abuse in an In Touch Support Services context.</p> <p>In Touch Support Services may receive a complaint:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Directly or through a redress scheme (should one exist). From anyone – a child, adult survivor, parent, trusted adult, independent support person, staff member, volunteer or community member. About an adult allegedly perpetrating child sexual abuse or about a child exhibiting harmful sexual behaviours; or In writing, verbally or as a result of other observations, including behavioural indicators. <p>A complaint may become a 'report' to an external authority or agency.</p>
Disclosure	A process by which a child, young persons or vulnerable person conveys or attempts to convey that they are being or have been sexually abused, or by which an adult conveys or attempts to convey that they were sexually abused as a child.

	<p>This may take many forms and might be verbal or non-verbal. Non-verbal disclosures using painting or drawing, gesticulating, or through behavioural changes, are more common among young children, children and vulnerable people with cognitive or communication impairments. Children, in particular, may also seek to disclose sexual abuse through emotional or behavioural cues, such as heightened anxiety, withdrawal, aggression or inappropriate sexual behaviour.</p> <p>Disclosures can be intentional or accidental, and they might be prompted by questions from another person or triggered by a memory of the abuse. A disclosure may also become a 'complaint' when made to In Touch Support Services or a 'report' when made to an external authority or agency.</p>
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<p>Emotional or Psychological Abuse</p>	<p>Serious psychological harm can occur where the behaviour of their parent or caregiver damages the confidence and self-esteem of the child, young persons or vulnerable person, resulting in serious emotional disturbance or psychological trauma.</p> <p>Although it is possible for 'one off' incidents to cause serious harm, in general it is the frequency, persistence and duration of the parental or carer behaviour that is instrumental in defining the consequences for the child or young person.</p> <p>This can include a range of behaviours such as excessive criticism, withholding affection, exposure to domestic violence, intimidation or threatening behaviour.</p>
<p>Grooming</p>	<p>Behaviours that manipulate and control a child, their family and other support networks, or institutions with the intent of gaining access to the child, obtaining the child's compliance, maintaining the child, young persons or vulnerable person's silence, and avoiding discovery of sexual abuse.</p> <p>Grooming can take place in person and online and is often difficult to identify and define. This is because the behaviours involved are not necessarily explicitly sexual, directly abusive or criminal in themselves, and may only be recognised in hindsight.</p> <p>Some grooming behaviours are consistent with behaviours or activities in non-abusive relationships, and can even include desirable social behaviours, with the only difference being motivation. Perpetrators can groom children, other people in children's lives, and institutions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grooming may take a number of forms. • Building trust. • Favouritism. • Gaining the trust of the child's or young person's parents or carer/s. • Isolation - from family and/or, friends. • Intimidation and secrecy 'Testing the waters' or boundary violation. • Shaping the persons perceptions.
<p>Harm</p>	<p>A detrimental effect to a child, young person or vulnerable person's safety or well-being caused by abuse.</p>
<p>Mandatory Reporting</p>	<p>Where a legislative requirement is placed where there is the organisation forms a reasonable belief that a report needs to be made to report regarding known and/or suspected cases of child abuse and neglect to the appropriate state based authority. This may be a nominated government department or agency (typically the Police and/or child protection authority).</p>
<p>Neglect</p>	<p>Is when a parent, guardian caregiver cannot regularly give a child, young person or vulnerable person the basic things needed for his or her growth and development, such as food, clothing, shelter, medical and dental care, adequate supervision, and enough parenting and care.</p>
<p>Person at Risk</p>	<p>Person aged 18 years and over who:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) has care and support needs. b) is being abused or neglected, or are at risk of abuse or neglect; and c) is unable to protect themselves from abuse or neglect because of their care and support needs.
<p>Physical Abuse</p>	<p>Is a non-accidental injury or pattern of injuries to a child, young persons or vulnerable person caused by a parent, caregiver or any other person. It includes but is not limited to injuries which are caused by excessive discipline, severe beatings or shakings, cigarette burns, attempted strangulation and female genital mutilation.</p> <p>Injuries include bruising, lacerations or welts, burns, fractures or dislocation of joints. Hitting child, young persons or vulnerable people around the head or neck, or using a stick, belt or other object to discipline or punishing a child or young person (in a non-trivial way) is a crime.</p>

<p>Reasonable grounds for belief</p>	<p>A reasonable belief is a belief based on facts that would lead a reasonable person to think that reportable conduct may have occurred.</p> <p>A reasonable belief is more than suspicion. There must be some objective basis for the belief. However, it does not require certainty. For example, a person is likely to have a reasonable belief if they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • observed the conduct themselves • heard from a child that the conduct occurred • received information from another source (including another person who witnessed the reportable conduct or misconduct). <p>The head of the organisation does not need to share the person's reasonable belief regarding the allegation.</p>
<p>Reportable Conduct</p>	<p>Conduct that must be reported under legislation that obliges designated institutions to report allegations of institutional child sexual abuse to an independent statutory body.</p>
<p>Reportable conduct scheme</p>	<p>A scheme established under legislation by a State or Territory to monitor, investigate and report on reportable conduct.</p>
<p>Risk of Significant Harm</p>	<p>A Vulnerable person is at risk of significant harm if the circumstances that are causing concern for the safety, welfare or wellbeing of the vulnerable person are present to a significant extent. Significant means serious enough to warrant a response by a statutory authority irrespective of a family's consent.</p>
<p>Safeguarding</p>	<p>Protecting the welfare and human rights of people that are, in some way, connected with your organisation its work – particularly people that may be at risk of abuse, neglect or exploitation.</p>
<p>Sexual Abuse</p>	<p>Any act which exposes a child, young person or vulnerable person to, or involves a child, young person or vulnerable person in, sexual processes beyond his or her understanding or contrary to accepted community standards. Sexually abusive behaviours can include the fondling of genitals, masturbation, oral sex, vaginal or anal penetration by a penis, finger or any other object, fondling of breasts, voyeurism, exhibitionism, and exposing the child, young person or vulnerable person to or involving the child, young persons or vulnerable person in pornography. It includes grooming, which refers to actions deliberately undertaken with the aim of befriending and establishing an emotional connection with a child, to lower the child, young persons or vulnerable person's inhibitions in preparation for sexual activity with the child, young persons or vulnerable person.</p>
<p>Vulnerable person</p>	<p>Vulnerable people are defined as a people aged under 18 or other individuals who may be unable to take care of themselves or are unable to protect themselves against harm or exploitation.</p> <p>While all people must be protected from harm, there are additional legislative and ethical considerations for protecting vulnerable people. Vulnerable people can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • children and seniors • people with impaired intellectual or physical functioning • people from a low socio-economic background • people who are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders • people who are not native speakers of the local language • people with low levels of literacy or education • people subject to modern slavery, which involves human exploitation and control, such as forced labour, debt bondage, human trafficking, and child labour.
<p>Whistle-blower</p>	<p>Anyone who makes or attempts to make a report of Reportable Conduct under this Policy, and is, or has previously been, an employee, volunteer, contractor, third party, child, young person or vulnerable person in the care of In Touch Support Services or is a relative or dependent of such persons.</p>

<p>Working with Children Check</p>	<p>A pre-employment screening program which ensures child-safe working environments in Australia.</p> <p>Pre-employment screening of adults and volunteers who come in contact with children is mandatory and legislated for across most States and Territories in Australia. However, there is no national framework setting out the requirements for obtaining a Working with Children Check (or Police Checks) - and each State and Territory has their own procedures and requirements</p>
<p>Young person</p>	<p>A teenager who is a child.</p> <p>Note: This term is used in recognition that a teenager may not identify as being a 'child' (notwithstanding the definition).</p>

APPENDIX B: INDICATORS OF ABUSE

Employees and management play an important role in protecting customers from further harm by recognising the indicators of abuse and responding to them. The presence of one or more indicators does not mean that abuse has occurred but does require the Employee to be vigilant on the customer's behalf.

Indicators of abuse are not always obvious, and while customers or others may suspect that abuse has occurred, there might not be any evidence to confirm the suspicion. Indicators are variable people who are familiar with clients and have a strong positive relationship with them. They are often best placed to recognise behavioural changes, which may suggest that someone is being abused.

	PHYSICAL INDICATORS	BEHAVIOURAL SIGNS
Elder Abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Injuries such as bruises, cuts, or broken bones • Malnourishment or weight loss • Poor hygiene • Symptoms of anxiety, depression, or confusion • Unexplained transactions or loss of money • Withdrawal from family members or friends 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See financial abuse, neglect, physical abuse, emotional abuse
Financial Abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restricted access to or no control over personal funds or bank accounts • No records or incomplete records kept of expenditure and purchases • Missing money, valuables or property • Appearance, clothing / other items are of poor condition • Forced changes to wills or other legal documents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stealing from others • Borrowing money • Begging • Missing out on outings / events that they used to be able afford to go to
Emotional or Psychological Abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speech Disorders • Weight loss or gain • Avoiding home (particularly if the abuser is in the family home) • Running away or continually staying at friend's houses • Fear of the dark, not wanting to go to bed, bedwetting or nightmares • Lying or stealing • Lack of trust in adults • Poor self-image or self-esteem • Poor academic performance • Poor peer relationships • Secretive, demanding or disruptive behaviour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feelings of worthlessness about life and self; extreme low self-esteem, self-abuse or self-destructive behaviour. • Extreme attention seeking behaviour and other behaviours (e.g. bullying disruptiveness, aggressiveness) • Excessive compliance • Depression, withdrawal, crying
Grooming		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talks a lot about a particular adult or older child, or wants to spend a lot of time with them or meet them alone • Is in a relationship with a much older person • Is skipping school or sporting activities • Is spending less time with friends or changes friendship groups suddenly

		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Spends more time alone in their room• Has unexplained gifts like new toys, clothes, jewellery or electronics and doesn't want to talk about where the gifts came from• Doesn't want to talk about what they've been doing or lies about it• Stops telling you about their day or asking for your advice.
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<p>Neglect</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hunger and weight loss • Poor hygiene • Poor hair texture • Inappropriate or inadequate clothing for climatic conditions • Inappropriate or inadequate shelter or accommodation • Unattended physical problems or medical needs • Health or dietary practices that endanger health or development • Social isolation. • Pressure marks that indicate being left in one position for too long • Developmental delay • Sallow or sickly appearance • Abnormally high appetite, stealing or hoarding food • Smelly or dirty appearance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requesting, begging, scavenging or stealing food • Constant fatigue, listlessness or falling asleep • Direct or indirect disclosure • Extreme longing for company • Anxiety about being alone or abandoned • Displaying inappropriate or excessive self-comforting behaviours
<p>Physical Abuse</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facial, head and neck bruising or injuries • Drowsiness, vomiting, fits (associated with head injuries) • Unexplained or poorly explained injury • Other bruising and marks may suggest the shape of the object that caused it • Bite marks or scratches • Unexplained burns or scalds • Unexplained fractures, dislocations, sprains 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explanation inconsistent with the injury: explanation varies • Avoidance or fearfulness of a particular person or employee • Sleep disturbances (e.g. nightmares, bed wetting) • Changes in behaviour (e.g. out of character aggression, withdrawal, excessive compliance)
<p>Sexual Abuse</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct or indirect disclosure • Sexual act described by the person • Trauma to the breasts, buttocks, lower abdomen or thighs • Difficulty in walking or sitting • Injuries (e.g. tears or bruising), pain or itching to genitalia, anus or perineal region • Torn, stained or blood stained underwear or bedclothes • Unexplained sexually transmitted infections • Unexplained accumulation of money or gifts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repeat use of words e.g. “bad”, “dirty” • Self-destructive behaviour, self-mutilation • Sudden changes in behaviour or temperament, e.g. depression, anxiety attacks, withdrawal, agitation, anger, violence, absconding, seeking comfort and security • Inappropriate advances to others • Sleep disturbances, refusing to go to bed, going to bed fully clothed • Eating disorders • Refusing to shower or constant showering • Changes in social patterns, refusing to attend usual places (work, respite)

APPENDIX C: RECOGNISING CHILD ABUSE

Child abuse includes:

- a) Any act committed against a child involving:
- b) A sexual offence; or
- c) Grooming.

The infliction, on a child, of

- a) Physical violence; or
- b) Serious emotional or psychological harm.
- c) Serious neglect of a child.

People in contact with children and their families should be aware of the indicators of child abuse. Recognising indicators of child abuse is part of forming a responsible suspicion that harm to a child has occurred, is occurring or that there is a risk of harm.

Sexual offenders exploit the dependency and immaturity of children. They may use a range of tactics including force, threats, and tricks to engage children in sexual contact and to try to silence them. They may also try to gain the trust and friendship of parents or caregivers to obtain access to children. They may be family members or close family friends.

Possible indicators of child sexual abuse, which may be present either individually or in combination, include:

- a) Direct or indirect disclosures.
- b) Describing sexual acts.
- c) Age-inappropriate behaviour and/or persistent sexual behaviour.
- d) Bleeding from the vagina or external genitalia or anus.
- e) Injuries such as tears or bruising to the genitalia or anus.
- f) Injuries to the breasts, buttocks, lower abdomen and thighs.
- g) Self-destructive behaviour, drug dependency, suicide attempts, self-mutilation.
- h) Overtly sexual themes in artwork, play or writing.
- i) Changes in eating habits such as anorexia or over eating.
- j) Going to bed fully clothed.
- k) Regression in developmental achievements.
- l) Unexplained accumulation of money or gifts.
- m) Sexually transmitted diseases.
- n) Persistent running away from home; and/or

Other symptoms of child stress, which may be indicators of child abuse, include:

- a) Poor concentration at school.
- b) Sleeping or bedtime problems such as nightmares or bedwetting.
- c) Marked changes in behaviour including tantrums, aggressiveness, withdrawal, complaints of stomach aches and headaches with no obvious physical cause.
- d) Indicators in parents, caregivers, siblings, relatives, acquaintances or strangers.
- e) Exposing a child to pornography or using a child for pornographic purposes.
- f) Intentionally exposing a child to the sexual behaviour of others.
- g) Inappropriate nakedness of either a child or an adult in a child's presence such as inappropriate exposure of genitals.
- h) Having committed or being suspected of child sexual abuse.
- i) Forbidding a child to engage in age-appropriate activities.
- j) Coercing a child to engage in sexual behaviour with other children.
- k) Verbal threats of sexual abuse.
- l) Denial of an adolescent's pregnancy by the family; and/or
- m) Domestic violence or physical child abuse.

APPENDIX D: HOW TO RESPOND TO A PERSON WHO MAKES A DISCLOSURE

DO	MESSAGES TO PERSON	DON'T
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find a private place where the person feels comfortable to talk • Use a calm, reassuring tone • If they have trouble communicating, consider whether another trusted person needs to be present who can accurately record the communication • Talk to the person in language that is appropriate to their age and stage of life and understanding • Let them tell their story in their way, using their own words, in their own time without re-telling it in your words • Be open and non-judgmental • Support the person in telling their experience without probing or pressing for details • Consider any cultural sensitivity that may be involved and whether there is another staff member who might have the cultural knowledge to handle the matter better (particularly when involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people). Ask them what they prefer first. Sometimes, speaking about abuse with someone from their cultural community can be perceived as shaming for the person 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is not their fault • It was right to tell • Abuse is not OK –no matter what • Assess whether you or they will be at risk by informing them or their parents/carer that you will be following up on the matter • If appropriate, explain that it is part of your job to inform people who may be able to assist when someone has been harmed or is potentially at risk of harm • If appropriate, explain what will happen now, being careful not to commit actions beyond your control • Acknowledge their concerns about “what will happen next” and “what may happen to the alleged perpetrator” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Express disbelief, shock or disapproval • Probe for additional information they are unwilling to provide • Ask leading questions (i.e. questions that suggest answers or multiple-choice questions) • Investigate the allegation yourself • Make the person tell others • Make promises not to tell anyone or other promises you can't keep • Try to “close down” the conversation – this conveys the message that they have done something wrong and that it is not alright to tell • Make negative comments or pass judgment about the alleged perpetrator – the person may have complex feelings about the alleged perpetrator, including love, and may feel loyal to them

APPENDIX E: STATE AND TERRITORY MANDATORY REPORTING CONTACTS

If you believe a child is in immediate danger, in a life-threatening situation or requires medical assistance contact Triple Zero (000). If you have concerns on the safety and welfare of a child, contact the following.

Queensland

Telephone numbers to make a report during business hours (8.45am -5.00pm), Monday to Friday,

- Child Safety Enquiry Unit: 1800 811 810.
- Brisbane and Moreton Bay Phone: 1300 682 254.
- Far North Queensland Phone: 1300 684 062.
- North Queensland Phone: 1300 706 147.
- South East (Logan, Gold Coast and Bayside) Phone: 1300 679 849.
- South West (Darling Downs) Toowoomba Phone: 1300 683 390.
- South West (West Moreton) Ipswich Phone: 1800 316 855.
- Sunshine Coast and Central Queensland Phone: 1300 703 762.
- **After Hours** Child Safety After Hours Service Centre on 1800 177 135.
- NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission 1800 8000 110
<https://www.ndiscommission.gov.au/participants/your-rights-ndis-participant>
- Office of the public guardian community visitor Phone: 1300 653 187
Email: publicguardian@publicguardian.qld.gov.au SMS: 0418 740 186

APPENDIX F: MANDATORY REPORTING CONTACTS AGEING AND DISABILITY

If you believe a child is in immediate danger, in a life-threatening situation or requires medical assistance contact Triple Zero (000). If you have concerns on the safety and welfare of a child, contact the following

Queensland

- Elder Abuse Hotline - Prevention Unit 1300 651 192.
- NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission 1800 8000 110
<https://www.ndiscommission.gov.au/participants/your-rights-ndis-participant>
- Office of the public guardian community visitor Phone: 1300 653 187
Email: publicguardian@publicguardian.qld.gov.au SMS: 0418 740 186

APPENDIX G: REPORTING ABUSE OR SAFETY-RELATED MISCONDUCT

<p>WHO CAN REPORT</p>	<p>Anyone</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Child b) Adults family, friend, guardian c) Staff member or volunteer d) Any other witness
<p>WHAT TO REPORT</p>	<p>You must report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Abuse or safety related matters including potential grooming b) Current or historical disclosures of abuse c) Current or historical allegations, suspicions or observations d) Breaches of the safeguarding policy or code of conduct e) Behaviours that could be deemed as grooming or in appropriate
<p>HOW TO REPORT</p>	<p>Reporting can be done</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Verbally in person or over the phone b) Via email or in writing c) The organisation's Incident Management system
<p>WHO TO REPORT</p>	<p>Reporting within the organisation may directed through [include relevant positions as outlined in the policy]:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The Director. b) The General Manager. c) Any Manager or Supervisor. d) Call In Touch Support Services on 07 3387 0184 or emailing at info@intouchsupportservices.com.au e) Contact the appropriate authority directly, including the Police and State and Territory Mandatory Reporting Contacts <p>All safeguarding incidents <u>must</u> be recorded in the Incident Management system</p>
<p>WHAT HAPPENS NEXT</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Offer support to the person involved b) Initiate process to ensure the safety of the person and others c) Where possible remove the person from the situation d) If appropriate stand the staff, volunteer or contractor accused of the incident down (with pay, where applicable) e) Report the matter to the appropriate authority including the Police. and State and Territory Mandatory Reporting Contacts f) Wait for clearance from authorities to commence an in internal investigation

APPENDIX H: STATE AND TERRITORY RESOURCES

The following links provide information about child safe requirements, initiatives and resources for each state and territory.

Queensland

- Queensland Family and Child Commission.
- Office of the Public Guardian.
- Queensland Working with Children Check.

APPENDIX I: OTHER RESOURCES

- **Child Safe Organisations** [Home | Child Safe Organisations \(humanrights.gov.au\)](#).
- **Australian Charities and Not-For Profits Commission** [Governance Toolkit: Safeguarding vulnerable people | ACNC](#)