

Policy Name	Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and Procedure
Policy Type	Governance and Risk Management
Document Type	Policy and Procedure
Document Status	INTERIM (approved for operation)
Interim Approval	Interim Policy approved [insert date]. This Policy is in full effect from that date. Subject to community consultation and full revision within six months of endorsement. See clause 1.1.
Interim Approval Date	29 September 2026
Persons Applicable	All Njernda Workforce, including employees, volunteers, Board members, Elders, students on placement, contractors and subcontractors, and any other representative of the organisation. Visitors, families and other third parties must comply with the Child Safe Code of Conduct at Appendix 2 while on Njernda premises or taking part in Njernda activities.
Effective Date	29 September 2026
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Next Review Date	Full revision within six months of interim approval, following community consultation. Thereafter reviewed annually, or earlier on a notable change to the Child Safe Standards, the National Principles or relevant legislation; a significant incident or systemic issue; a change to Njernda services; or a regulator direction.
Policy Approver	Board of Directors
Policy Owner	Chief Executive Officer
Policy Steward	Compliance, Accreditation and Investigations Officer
Supporting Process	Risk Management
Publication	This Policy is publicly available on the Njernda website. The Child Safety Statement at Appendix 3 is displayed prominently at every Njernda site and in every area where children are present. A child friendly version and a plain language summary are also published.
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INTERIM POLICY. Approved for operation on 29 September 2026. This Policy is in full effect from that date and every obligation in it applies immediately. It is subject to consultation with children and young people, families, Elders, community and the Workforce, and to full revision and re-approval, within six months of endorsement. See clause 1.1.

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1. Policy Purpose

This Policy sets out how Njernda Aboriginal Corporation (Njernda) keeps children and young people safe, what we expect of everyone who works with or on behalf of Njernda, and how child safety is built into the way we work every day.

It gives effect to Njernda's obligations under the Victorian Child Safe Standards and the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, and it explains how Njernda meets each of the eleven Victorian Child Safe Standards. Appendix 1 shows where each Standard is addressed and what evidence supports it.

1.1 Status of this Policy

This is an interim Policy. The Board has approved it for operation so that Workforce have immediate guidance and so that Njernda meets its obligations under the Child Safe Standards without delay. **Every obligation in this Policy applies in full from the date of approval. Interim does not mean provisional, and no requirement in this Policy is deferred.**

As an Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation, Njernda will not settle a child safety policy without hearing from the community it serves. Njernda will therefore consult children and young people, families, Elders, community and the Workforce on this Policy and on the Child Safe Code of Conduct at Appendix 2, and will revise and re-approve it as version **2.0 within six months of the date of interim approval**. What the consultation changes will be reported back to those who took part, in formats they can understand.

The consultation and revision are a Board accountable action with a named owner and a due date, tracked in the Njernda quality improvement register and reported to the Board. This first revision takes the place of the first annual review under clause 6.17; the annual cycle runs from the approval of version 2.0.

2. Policy Statement

Njernda is committed to the safety, wellbeing, participation and empowerment of every child and young person who comes into contact with our services. All children have the right to be safe from harm and abuse. Keeping children safe is not one person's job at Njernda. It is everybody's.

Njernda has zero tolerance for child abuse and for any conduct that puts a child at risk. Every concern and every allegation will be taken seriously, acted on promptly, recorded, and reported to the authorities where the law requires it. Nobody who raises a child safety concern in good faith will be disadvantaged for doing so.

As an Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation, Njernda carries a particular responsibility to Aboriginal children and young people, their families, Elders and community. We are committed to environments where Aboriginal children are strong in culture and identity, where their voices are heard, and where racism is named and dealt with.

We recognise that some children face additional barriers to being heard and to being safe. Njernda pays particular attention to the safety of children with disability, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, children who are unable to live at home, and children who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, gender diverse, intersex or questioning.

This Policy is publicly available. The Board of Directors and the Chief Executive Officer publicly commit to it, champion it, and are accountable for it.

3. Scope

3.1 Who this Policy applies to

This Policy applies to all Njernda Workforce, in every Njernda service, program, site and activity, and in both physical and online environments. It applies whether or not a role involves direct work with children, because any member of the Workforce may come into contact with a child at a Njernda site or event.

Visitors, family members, external service providers and any other person attending Njernda premises or taking part in Njernda activities must comply with the Child Safe Code of Conduct at Appendix 2. Workforce are responsible for making visitors aware of these expectations, for supervising visitors where children are present, and for reporting any conduct of concern by a visitor in the same way they would report conduct by a Workforce member. Contracted and subcontracted providers, including labour hire, locums and agency staff, are Workforce for the purposes of this Policy, and child safety requirements are built into Njernda's contracting arrangements (see clause 6.16).

3.2 Reading this Policy with other Njernda documents

This Policy sets the organisation wide standard. Some Njernda services also hold their own policies and procedures dealing with the day-to-day care and supervision of children in that setting, and this Policy is to be read together with them.

In particular **Berrimba Child Care Centre** maintains its own policy suite under the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations and the National Quality Framework, covering matters such as arrivals and departures, supervision, excursions, sleep and rest, illness and medication, and incident notification to the Victorian Early Childhood Regulatory Authority. Berrimba Workforce must comply with this Policy **and** with the Berrimba policy suite. Where a Berrimba document sets a more specific or more demanding requirement for children in that service, the Berrimba requirement applies to that service. Nothing in a service level document reduces an obligation set by this Policy, by the Child Safe Standards, or by law.

The same principle applies to any other Njernda service that holds its own child related procedures. If you are unsure which document applies to a situation, ask the Chief Executive Officer.

3.3 Jurisdiction and the cross-border position

Njernda is based in Echuca and delivers its services in Victoria. Victorian law and the Victorian Child Safe Standards apply to everything Njernda does, and this Policy is written to those requirements.

Njernda serves a cross-border community and some clients live in New South Wales. A client living in New South Wales does not, by itself, make New South Wales law apply to Njernda. What matters is where a service is delivered and, for reporting, where the child is and where the harm occurred. New South Wales requirements are engaged in two situations:

- **A Njernda activity physically takes place in New South Wales**, for example a camp, an excursion, an outreach session or a home visit across the river. The manager responsible must consult the Chief Executive Officer before the activity proceeds, so that screening, supervision and reporting arrangements are confirmed in advance. See clause 6.19.
- **A child safety concern involves a child who lives in New South Wales, or harm that occurred there.** Reporting follows the child, not the service. See clause 6.11.

Children in Njernda's care may live in New South Wales. Njernda delivers kinship care, foster care and other out of home care programs under its Department of Families, Fairness and Housing funding, and a child placed in one of those programs may reside across the border. A placement is not a service delivery point, and it does not move Njernda's obligations to New South Wales. The placement remains a Victorian funded service: Victorian child protection, mandatory reporting and Reportable Conduct obligations continue to apply, and incidents are still reported to the Department through the Client Incident Management System (CIMS). What it does mean is that a report about that child may also need to go to the New South Wales authorities under clause 6.11, and that any Njernda activity carried out in New South Wales is subject to clause 6.19. The New South Wales legislation is listed at clause 9.3.

Njernda has no funded or scheduled service delivery point outside Victoria. Where a matter has a connection to another state or territory, the same principle applies, and Workforce are not expected to work it out alone. Contact the Chief Executive Officer.

3.4 Our regulators

Because Njernda delivers several types of service, more than one regulator oversees Njernda's compliance with the same eleven Child Safe Standards. Workforce do not need to work out which regulator applies. The Chief Executive Officer manages the regulatory relationships, supported by the Compliance, Accreditation and Investigations Officer.

Regulator	What they oversee for Njernda
Social Services Regulator (SSR)	The Child Safe Standards for social and family services and for any Njernda service without a specific sector regulator; the Reportable Conduct Scheme; and Working with Children Clearances. The SSR took on these functions from the Commission for Children and Young People and Working with Children Check Victoria in February 2026.
Secretary to the Department of Health	The Child Safe Standards as they apply to Njernda's health services.
Victorian Early Childhood Regulatory Authority (VECRA)	The Child Safe Standards and the Education and Care Services National Law as they apply to Berrimba Child Care Centre.
Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) and the National Boards	The conduct of registered health practitioners, including mandatory notifications.

4. Definitions

Term	Meaning in this Policy
Child	A person under 18. Some legislation uses a different age for a particular obligation, and where that is so this Policy says which. For example, the failure to disclose offence in section 327 of the <i>Crimes Act 1958</i> (Vic) concerns children under 16. References to a child include an unborn child where the context requires, because a report may be made to Child Protection about an unborn child under section 29 of the <i>Children, Youth and Families Act 2005</i> (Vic).
Workforce	All persons engaged by Njernda in any capacity, including employees (full time, part time and casual), contractors and subcontractors, labour hire and agency workers, Board members, Elders, volunteers, students on placement, and any other person who performs work for Njernda, paid or unpaid, whatever the duration.
Leaders	Board members, the Chief Executive Officer, managers and team leaders. The Child Safe Standards require leaders to champion and model a child safe culture and compliance with this Policy.
Person in a position of authority	A person who holds a position of authority within Njernda for the purposes of section 49O of the <i>Crimes Act 1958</i> (Vic): the Chief Executive Officer, Board members, managers and team leaders, and any other person with the power or responsibility to reduce or remove a risk to a child. The obligation in clause 6.6 attaches to the person, not to the job title.
Visitor	Any person attending Njernda premises or a Njernda activity who is not Workforce and is not a client, including family and community members, guests, and representatives of other organisations.
Child Abuse	Includes: • Sexual abuse: sexual offences against a child, sexual touching, sexual misconduct, grooming, and the production, distribution or possession of child abuse material. • Physical abuse: physical punishment such as pushing, shoving, punching, slapping or kicking, and any act causing injury, burns, choking or bruising. • Psychological or emotional abuse: bullying, threatening or abusive language, intimidation, shaming, name calling, ignoring or isolating a child, and exposing a child to family violence. • Neglect: failure to provide a child with the basic necessities of life, adequate supervision, or necessary medical care.
Harm	Damage to the health, safety or wellbeing of a child, including physical, emotional, sexual, psychological and cultural harm. Harm may be caused by an adult or by another child . It may arise from a single act or event, or cumulatively , from a series of acts or events over time, none of which would be serious on its own.
Njernda environment	Any physical or virtual place made available or authorised by Njernda, including Njernda premises whether owned, leased or rented; Njernda vehicles; Njernda online systems, accounts and platforms; programs, activities, camps and excursions run by Njernda; and any other location

Term	Meaning in this Policy
	made available to Njernda for use by Workforce, clients or community. This Policy applies in every Njernda environment.
Grooming	Building a relationship of trust with a child, and often with their family or carers, in order to sexually abuse the child or conceal abuse. Grooming a child under 16 is an offence under section 49M of the <i>Crimes Act 1958</i> (Vic).
Cultural safety	An environment that is spiritually, socially, emotionally and physically safe for Aboriginal children and young people, where there is no challenge to or denial of their identity, and where culture, family, community and connection to Country are respected and supported. Cultural safety is defined by the person receiving the service, not by the person providing it.
Racism	Conduct, whether intended or not, that demeans, excludes, stereotypes or disadvantages a person because of their race, culture, ethnicity or Aboriginality. It includes overt conduct and casual conduct.
Reasonable belief	More than a suspicion. A reasonable belief exists where a reasonable person in the same position, on the information available, would form the belief. It does not require proof, and it is not the role of Workforce to investigate before reporting.
Mandatory Reporter	A person in a profession prescribed by section 182 of the <i>Children, Youth and Families Act 2005</i> (Vic) who must report to Child Protection in the circumstances at clause 6.7.
Reportable conduct	Conduct by a Workforce member falling within a category set out in the <i>Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005</i> (Vic): a sexual offence, sexual misconduct, or physical violence committed against, with or in the presence of a child; behaviour causing significant emotional or psychological harm to a child; and significant neglect of a child.
Head of entity	The person responsible for notifying the Social Services Regulator under the Reportable Conduct Scheme. For Njernda this is the Chief Executive Officer, or the Chairperson of the Board of Directors where an allegation concerns the Chief Executive Officer.
Client Incident Management System (CIMS)	The Victorian Department of Families, Fairness and Housing incident management system that applies to services funded or registered under that Department, including Njernda's out of home care, family services and family violence programs. It requires client incidents to be identified, classified according to their impact, reported to the Department, reviewed and acted on. Reporting under CIMS is a separate obligation and runs alongside, not instead of, the reporting requirements in section 6 of this Policy. The incident classifications and reporting timeframes are set by the Department's current incident reporting guidance.
Child Safe Standards	The eleven Victorian Child Safe Standards made under the <i>Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005</i> (Vic), set out at Appendix 1.
National Principles	The National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, published by the Australian Human Rights Commission.
Explicit consent	A clear, informed and voluntary agreement given by a specific affirmative act, such as signing a form, ticking a checkbox or providing written confirmation. It cannot be implied, assumed or inferred from silence, and it can be withdrawn at any time.

Term	Meaning in this Policy
Information Sharing Schemes	The Child Information Sharing Scheme and the Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme, under the <i>Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005</i> (Vic) and the <i>Family Violence Protection Act 2008</i> (Vic), which permit prescribed organisations to share information to promote the wellbeing or safety of a child.

5. Policy

This section sets out Njernda's commitments under each of the eleven Victorian Child Safe Standards. Section 6 sets out the procedures that put these commitments into practice.

5.1 Culturally safe environments for Aboriginal children and young people (Standard 1)

Njernda is an Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation. Cultural safety is not an addition to child safety at Njernda. It is the foundation of it. A child who is strong in culture and identity, connected to family and community, and confident that they will be believed, is a child who is safer.

- Aboriginal children and young people are encouraged and supported to express their culture and to enjoy their cultural rights, including connection to family, kin, community, Country and language. Cultural activities are built into our programs, not offered as an occasional extra.
- All Workforce are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to understand and value Aboriginal cultures and histories, including the ongoing impacts of colonisation, the Stolen Generations and past institutional practices, and to understand why cultural safety is central to a child's wellbeing. This is covered in induction and in ongoing training.
- Racism is not tolerated at Njernda. Racism directed at a child or young person, whether by a Workforce member, another child, a family member or a visitor, must be identified, confronted and addressed. Reports of racism are made to the Chief Executive Officer, recorded in the Incident Register, and dealt with through the applicable disciplinary, complaints or service response process. Consequences follow.
- Njernda actively supports and facilitates the participation and inclusion of Aboriginal children and young people, their families, Elders and community in our services and in decisions that affect them.
- All Njernda policies, procedures, systems and processes are designed to work together to create a culturally safe and inclusive environment that meets the needs of Aboriginal children and young people. Cultural safety is a required consideration whenever a Njernda policy is developed or reviewed.
- Njernda seeks the guidance of Elders and community in shaping its child safety practice, and reports back to community on how that guidance has been used.

5.2 Leadership, governance and culture (Standard 2)

- Njernda makes a public commitment to child safety through this Policy, which is published on the Njernda website, together with a child friendly version and a plain language summary.
- The Child Safety Statement at Appendix 3 is displayed prominently at every Njernda site and in every area where children are present, including receptions, waiting areas, clinical and consulting rooms, program and activity spaces, and Berrimba Child Care Centre. Managers are responsible for making sure it is on display and legible at their site, and this is checked as part of the annual review.
- Njernda embeds child safety into day to day practice rather than treating it as a document. Child safety is a standing item in team meetings and supervision, is considered whenever a Njernda service, program, activity or policy is designed or changed, and forms part of how performance is discussed. Every Workforce member is expected to be able to say what they would do if a child told them something today.
- The Board of Directors is accountable for child safety at Njernda. Child safety is a standing item on the Board agenda, and the Board receives a child safety report at least twice a year covering complaints, incidents, reportable conduct matters, training completion, screening compliance and improvement actions.
- The Chief Executive Officer is the head of entity for the purposes of the Reportable Conduct Scheme and is responsible for the day-to-day implementation of this Policy.
- The Child Safe Standards do not require a named child safety officer, and Njernda does not have one. **All child safety questions, concerns, complaints and disclosures go to the Chief Executive Officer.** The Chief Executive Officer may delegate support, investigation or follow up to another person, and does so in writing, but accountability for the response stays with the Chief Executive Officer and is not transferred by the delegation. Where a matter concerns the Chief Executive Officer, it goes to the Chairperson of the Board of Directors. These contact points are displayed at every site and provided at induction.
- Leaders at every level are expected to champion and model a child safe culture, to speak about child safety regularly, to respond well when someone raises a concern, and to make it easy rather than hard for people to speak up.
- Njernda maintains risk management strategies focused on preventing, identifying and mitigating risks to children, including a child safety risk register maintained within the Njernda risk management system (see clause 6.15).
- Workforce understand their obligations on information sharing and record keeping, which are set out at clause 6.14 and covered in induction and refresher training.
- Roles and responsibilities for child safety are set out in full at section 7.

5.3 Children are informed about their rights, participate in decisions, and are taken seriously (Standard 3)

Children are more likely to raise concerns when they feel confident, valued, heard and safe. Njernda listens to children and involves them in decisions about their care in a way that suits their age, development and wishes.

- Children are informed about all of their rights, including their right to safety, to information, and to take part in decisions that affect them. This information is provided in child friendly language and formats, and in ways that are culturally appropriate.
- Njernda recognises the importance of friendships and encourages support from peers, so that children feel safe and are less isolated.
- Children have access to information and, where appropriate to the service, to sexual abuse prevention programs and to sexual and reproductive health information that is age appropriate and culturally safe. Where Njernda does not deliver a relevant program directly, Workforce support families to access one.
- Workforce are attuned to signs of harm and to changes in a child's behaviour or presentation and facilitate child friendly ways for children to raise concerns and express their views.
- Njernda uses age-appropriate ways to seek children's views on our services and on their safety, including yarning, drawing, informal conversation and simple feedback tools, and acts on what children tell us. What changed as a result is reported back to children in a form they can understand.

5.4 Families and communities are informed and involved (Standard 4)

- Families participate in decisions affecting their child, having regard to the child's age, capacity and wishes.
- Njernda engages and openly communicates with families and with the Yorta Yorta and Wollithiga communities and the wider Aboriginal community about our approach to child safety and wellbeing, including through this Policy, service information, community forums and Njernda communications.
- Families and community have a genuine say in Njernda's child safety policies and practices. This Policy and the Child Safe Code of Conduct are consulted on with families, community and Elders, and are revised in light of what they tell us. This version is an interim Policy approved ahead of that consultation, which is committed to and dated at clause 1.1.
- Njernda's child safety information is accessible. It is written in plain language, made available in child friendly and easy read formats, and translated or interpreted where a family needs that.
- Families are told how to raise a concern or make a complaint, who to go to, what will happen next, and what support is available to them.

5.5 Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected (Standard 5)

Njernda recognises that some children are at greater risk of abuse and face additional barriers to being heard. Njernda pays particular attention to the needs of:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people.
- Children with disability, including children with communication support needs, who are at significantly higher risk of abuse and who may need alternative ways to disclose.
- Children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, including children and families with limited English.
- Children who are unable to live at home, including children in out of home care and kinship care.
- Children who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, gender diverse, intersex or questioning.

Njernda adapts its practice, communication and physical environments to meet these needs, and makes information and resources about child abuse prevention available in accessible formats, including interpreters, easy read material and communication aids.

5.6 People working with children are suitable and supported (Standard 6)

- Recruitment is child safe from the start. Advertising, position descriptions, interview questions and referee checks all emphasise child safety, and interviews for roles involving children include values based and behavioural questions.
- Njernda requires a current Working with Children Clearance under the *Worker Screening Act 2020* (Vic), a National Police Check, and satisfactory referee checks for all Workforce whose role may involve contact with children or access to children's personal information. A New South Wales Working with Children Check is a separate scheme and is only relevant where a Workforce member delivers services to children in New South Wales. Exemptions may apply, including for a person who holds a Victorian Working with Children Clearance and whose child related work in New South Wales totals no more than 30 days in a calendar year. Human Resources confirms the position with the Chief Executive Officer before any activity in New South Wales proceeds.
- Qualifications and professional registrations are checked as current and valid, including AHPRA registration where the role requires it.
- Ongoing supervision and people management have a clear child safety focus. Child safety is discussed in supervision and in performance conversations, and managers monitor practice rather than assuming compliance.
- Workforce are inducted, trained and supported to implement this Policy (see clause 5.8), and are supported after a distressing disclosure or incident, including through the Employee Assistance Program and cultural support.

5.7 Complaints and concerns are child focused (Standard 7)

- Njernda has an accessible complaints process, described at clause 6.4, that children, families, community members and Workforce can use, and which is published alongside this Policy.
- Complaints and concerns are taken seriously, responded to promptly and thoroughly, and recorded, whether they come from an adult or a child. The process sets out roles, how each type of complaint is handled including breaches of the Code of Conduct, and Njernda's obligations to act and to report.
- Njernda meets its reporting, privacy and employment law obligations, and affords procedural fairness to the person a complaint is about, without allowing that to delay action needed to keep a child safe.
- The child and their family are supported through the process, kept informed in a way they can understand, and told the outcome.
- Harm caused to a child by another child is a child safety matter and is handled under this Policy, not only as a behaviour issue. See clause 6.20.
- Njernda will take all reasonable steps to protect from detriment any person who raises a child safety concern in good faith. Victimisation, harassment or adverse action against a person for raising a genuine concern will not be tolerated and may result in disciplinary action.

5.8 Workforce have the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children safe (Standard 8)

All Workforce complete child safety training at induction and refresher training at least every two years, or sooner following a significant change to this Policy or to the law. Training covers:

- This Policy and the Child Safe Code of Conduct, and what they require in practice.
- Recognising the indicators of harm, abuse, neglect, grooming and family violence, including indicators that present differently for children with disability or for very young children.
- Responding to a disclosure, including what to say and what not to say, and supporting a child who discloses.
- Reporting obligations, including mandatory reporting, the Reportable Conduct Scheme, failure to disclose and failure to protect, and AHPRA notifications.
- Cultural safety, and building environments that are safe for Aboriginal children and young people.
- Information sharing and record keeping obligations.
- Supporting colleagues who receive a disclosure or who are affected by an incident.

Training completion is recorded by Human Resources and reported to the Board. Completion is a condition of continued engagement.

5.9 Physical and online environments (Standard 9)

Njernda provides physical and online environments in which children feel, and are, safe. This applies in every Njernda environment as defined at section 4, including premises, vehicles, online systems, and programs, camps and excursions away from Njernda sites. In providing safe environments, Njernda does not compromise a child's right to privacy, access to information, social connections or learning opportunities.

- Njernda identifies and mitigates risks in its physical and online environments, considering the settings, activities and premises of each service. Risk assessments are documented and reviewed (see clause 6.15).
- Online environments are used in accordance with this Policy and the Child Safe Code of Conduct. Requirements for online communication, photographs and images are at clause 6.12.
- Requirements for transporting children are at clause 6.13.
- Njernda's procurement arrangements ensure the safety of children, including where facilities or services are contracted from third parties (see clause 6.16).

5.10 Review of child safety practices (Standard 10)

- Njernda regularly reviews and improves its child safety practices. A formal review is conducted at least annually, and after any significant child safety incident or systemic issue.
- Njernda analyses complaints, concerns and safety incidents to identify causes and systemic failures, rather than treating each matter in isolation.
- The Chief Executive Officer reports the findings and the resulting improvements to the Board of Directors, to the Workforce, and to children, families and community in a form each audience can understand.
- The review process is described at clause 6.17.

5.11 Policies and procedures (Standard 11)

- Njernda's policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children. This Policy, together with the documents listed at section 10, addresses all eleven Child Safe Standards and the risks specific to Njernda's services, settings and activities.
- Policies and procedures are documented and easy to understand. Child safety documents are written in plain language and made available in child friendly and accessible formats.
- Best practice models and consultation with children, families, community, Elders and Workforce inform the development and review of these documents, on the timetable set at clause 1.1.
- Leaders champion and model compliance with these documents.
- Workforce understand and implement these documents, supported by induction, training and supervision.
- Appendix 1 maps each Standard to where it is addressed and to the supporting documents and evidence.

6. Procedure

6.1 If a child is in immediate danger

If a child is in immediate danger, call **000** first. Then notify the Chief Executive Officer or, if the Chief Executive Officer is unavailable or the matter concerns them, the Chairperson of the Board of Directors. Do not wait for approval before calling emergency services.

6.2 Responding to a disclosure

If a child tells you that they, or another child, have been harmed:

- Listen. Stay calm. Let the child use their own words and do not interrupt or lead them.
- Tell the child you believe them, that they have done the right thing, and that it is not their fault.
- Do not promise to keep it secret. Explain, in a way the child can understand, that you need to tell someone whose job it is to help keep them safe.
- Do not investigate, do not ask leading or probing questions, and do not confront the person the child has named.
- Write down what the child said as soon as possible afterwards, in the child's own words, with the date, time and who was present. Do not add your own interpretation.
- Report immediately in accordance with clauses 6.3 and 6.5 to 6.11. Reporting is not optional and does not depend on whether you think the child will be believed.

6.3 Raising a concern or complaint

- Children, families, community members and clients who wish to raise a concern or make a complaint about child safety are encouraged to speak with any Workforce member they feel comfortable with, or to contact the Chief Executive Officer directly.
- Workforce must promptly refer any concern or complaint about child safety, however it reaches them, to the Chief Executive Officer.
- If the concern or complaint relates to the Chief Executive Officer, it must be referred to the Chairperson of the Board of Directors.

- A concern must be reported even if it is only a worry, even if you are not sure, and even if someone else may have already reported it. It is not the role of Workforce to decide whether a concern is substantiated.
- Reporting under this Policy does not replace a Workforce member's right to make a disclosure under the Njernda Whistleblower Protection Policy or to report directly to Police, Child Protection or a regulator.

6.4 Managing a complaint or concern

- The immediate priority is the safety and wellbeing of the child. Interim action, such as changing rosters, supervision arrangements or duties, must be taken where needed to remove or reduce risk while a matter is being dealt with.
- The Chief Executive Officer determines the response pathway, which may include an internal complaint process, a disciplinary process, a report to Police, a report to Child Protection, a Reportable Conduct notification, a notification to a regulator, or a combination of these. These pathways run in parallel and one does not remove the need for another.
- Where Police or Child Protection are involved, Njernda will consult them before taking any internal investigation step that could compromise their work.
- All child safety complaints, concerns, incidents and near misses are recorded in the Njernda Complaints Register or Incident Register as applicable.
- Records that may assist an investigation are identified and preserved and are kept securely even where a complaint is not substantiated. Njernda records the outcome of any investigation and the resolution of any complaint, including findings, reasons and actions taken.
- The child and their family are kept informed and are told the outcome, in a form they can understand, subject to privacy and legal constraints. Support is offered throughout, including cultural support and referral to counselling.
- The person the complaint is about is treated fairly, told the substance of the allegation at the appropriate time, and given a chance to respond, unless doing so would place a child at risk or compromise a Police or Child Protection process.

6.5 Disclosure to Police

Any adult who forms a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed in Victoria by an adult against a child under 16 must disclose that information to Victoria Police. This is a criminal obligation under section 327 of the *Crimes Act 1958* (Vic) and it applies to every adult, not only to Mandatory Reporters. Failing to disclose without a reasonable excuse is an offence.

A limited number of exemptions apply. If you are unsure whether an exemption applies to you, report the matter to the Chief Executive Officer and seek advice. Uncertainty is not a reason to stay silent, and Njernda will support any Workforce member who reports in good faith.

6.6 Failure to protect, and grooming

Under section 49O of the *Crimes Act 1958* (Vic), a person in a position of authority in an organisation commits an offence if they know there is a substantial risk that a child under 16 under the care, supervision or authority of the organisation will become the victim of a sexual offence committed by an adult associated with the organisation, they have the power or

responsibility to reduce or remove that risk, and they negligently fail to do so. Managers, senior staff and Board members must act on risk. They must not wait for proof.

Grooming a child under 16 is a separate offence under section 49M of the *Crimes Act 1958* (Vic). Grooming behaviour must be reported in the same way as any other child safety concern, even where no abuse has yet occurred.

6.7 Mandatory reporting to Child Protection

Under section 182 of the *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* (Vic), Mandatory Reporters must report to Child Protection at the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing if, in the course of practising their profession or carrying out their duties, they form a reasonable belief that a child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, significant harm as a result of physical injury or sexual abuse, and the child's parents have not protected, or are unlikely to protect, the child from that harm.

Mandatory Reporters in Victoria include registered medical practitioners, nurses, midwives, registered psychologists, teachers, school principals, early childhood workers and teachers, out of home care workers, youth justice workers, people in religious ministry and other professions prescribed by section 182. Njernda's Workforce includes people in several of these categories. If you are unsure whether you are a Mandatory Reporter, ask the Chief Executive Officer.

Reports must be made as soon as practicable after forming a reasonable belief, and again on each occasion the reporter becomes aware of further reasonable grounds. The obligation sits with the individual and cannot be delegated to a manager, although Njernda will support you to make the report and asks that you tell the Chief Executive Officer that you have done so.

Any Workforce member, whether or not they are a Mandatory Reporter, may report to Child Protection where they form a reasonable belief that a child needs protection. Njernda encourages this. Child Protection can be contacted through the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing, and further information is available at <https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/mandatory-reporting>

6.8 Reportable Conduct Scheme

The Victorian Reportable Conduct Scheme is established under the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* (Vic) and has been overseen by the Social Services Regulator since February 2026. It applies to Njernda in respect of the services listed in Schedules 3 and 4 of that Act.

Reportable conduct by a Workforce member includes:

- A sexual offence committed against, with or in the presence of a child.
- Sexual misconduct committed against, with or in the presence of a child.
- Physical violence committed against, with or in the presence of a child.
- Behaviour that causes significant emotional or psychological harm to a child.
- Significant neglect of a child.

Where any Workforce member becomes aware of conduct that may be reportable, they must notify the Chief Executive Officer immediately. The Chief Executive Officer, as head of entity, is then responsible for:

- Notifying the Social Services Regulator within **three business days** of becoming aware of the reportable allegation, using the Regulator's online form.
- Providing more detailed information to the Regulator within **30 days**, including the outcome of any Police or Child Protection contact and any action taken.
- Conducting or overseeing an investigation and providing the findings and any action taken to the Regulator at the conclusion of the investigation.
- Notifying Victoria Police where the conduct may be criminal, before or alongside any internal investigation.

It is a criminal offence for a head of entity to fail to comply with the three day and 30 day notification obligations without a reasonable excuse. Where the allegation concerns the Chief Executive Officer, the Chairperson of the Board of Directors performs the head of entity function. Further information is available at <https://www.vic.gov.au/reportable-conduct-scheme>

6.9 AHPRA mandatory notifications

Workforce who are registered health practitioners under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law have additional mandatory notification obligations to AHPRA. A registered health practitioner must notify AHPRA if they form a reasonable belief that another registered health practitioner has engaged in notifiable conduct, which includes practising while intoxicated by alcohol or drugs, sexual misconduct in connection with the practice of the profession, placing the public at risk of substantial harm because of an impairment, or practising in a way that constitutes a significant departure from accepted professional standards. These obligations apply in addition to, and independently of, any child protection obligation. See <https://www.ahpra.gov.au/Notifications/mandatorynotifications/Mandatory-notifications.aspx>

6.10 Notifications for early childhood education and care

Berrimba Child Care Centre has separate notification obligations under the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations, including serious incident and complaint notifications to the Victorian Early Childhood Regulatory Authority within the timeframes set by those Regulations. Those obligations apply in addition to everything in this Policy and are set out in the Berrimba policy suite.

6.11 Children who live in, or harm that occurred in, another state or territory

Njernda serves a cross-border community, and some of the children who receive our services live in New South Wales.

- **Your Victorian obligations do not change because a child lives interstate.** If you are a Mandatory Reporter and you form a reasonable belief in the course of your work at Njernda, your obligation under section 182 of the *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* (Vic) still applies, and the failure to disclose obligation at clause 6.5 still applies. Make the Victorian report.
- **Also report to the jurisdiction where the child is.** Where the child lives in New South Wales, or the harm occurred there, contact the New South Wales Child Protection Helpline as well, because the New South Wales authorities hold the power to act for a child in that State. The same applies for any other state or territory.

- If you are unsure which authority to contact, report to both. Do not delay a report while the question is worked out, and do not treat uncertainty about jurisdiction as a reason not to report.
- **A child in a Njernda out of home care placement in New South Wales is still in a Victorian funded service.** Your Victorian obligations, and the Department's Client Incident Management System reporting requirements, apply in full. Report as you would for any other child in the program and follow the two points above as well. The CIMS timeframes are set by the Department's incident reporting guidance and run alongside, not instead of, the obligations in this Policy.
- Njernda maintains current contact details for Victorian Child Protection intake, the New South Wales Child Protection Helpline and Victoria Police, and displays them at every site alongside the Child Safety Statement.

6.12 Photographs, images and online communication

- Workforce must not take photographs or video of a child receiving services from, or otherwise engaged with, Njernda without the prior explicit consent of the child's parent or guardian, and the agreement of the child where they are old enough to give it.
- Where consent to capture images has been given, separate written consent must be obtained before any image is used on Njernda social media, in online material, or in any other publication.
- Images of children must be taken on Njernda devices, stored on Njernda systems, and never stored on a personal device or personal account. Any image held on a personal device in an emergency must be transferred to Njernda systems and deleted from the personal device immediately.
- Workforce must not communicate privately with a child online or on any social media platform. Any online communication with a child must be through Njernda systems and must include the child's parent or guardian, even where the child initiated the contact.
- Workforce must not accept or send friend requests, follow requests or direct messages to or from a child in a personal capacity.
- Where a Njernda program uses an online platform with children, the platform must be risk assessed and approved before use, and supervision arrangements must be documented.

6.13 Transport

- Where Njernda transports children, wherever possible two adults will travel with the children. Where that is not possible, an alternative arrangement must be agreed in advance between Njernda and the child's parent or guardian and recorded.
- Where a child is the only passenger travelling with a single adult, the child must travel in the rear seat unless a lawful restraint requirement makes that impossible, and the trip, route and times must be recorded. Detours and unplanned stops must not be made.
- All children under 16 travelling in a motor vehicle in Victoria must be restrained in a suitable, properly fitted and fastened restraint appropriate to their age and size, meeting Australian and New Zealand Standard AS/NZS 1754. In a vehicle with two or more rows of seats, a child under four must not travel in the front row, and a child aged four to under seven must not travel in the front row unless all other seats are occupied by children under seven.

- Every child must be accounted for at the start and at the end of every journey, and a headcount recorded. No vehicle is to be left until this has been done.
- Njernda's Motor Vehicle and Driver Safety Policy applies in addition to this clause. Current restraint requirements are published at <https://www.vicroads.vic.gov.au>

6.14 Information sharing and record keeping

- Njernda shares information about a child where the law permits or requires it, including under the Child Information Sharing Scheme and the Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme, and applies the Family Violence Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework where relevant.
- Concern for a child's safety takes priority over privacy. Privacy obligations do not prevent a report to Police, Child Protection or a regulator, and must never be used as a reason not to report.
- Njernda creates and keeps clear, accurate, contemporaneous records of child safety concerns, reports, decisions, actions, and outcomes.
- Child safety records are stored securely, with access limited to those who need it, and are retained in accordance with Njernda's records management requirements and any longer retention period required by law or by a funding or regulatory obligation.
- Records must not be altered or destroyed once a concern has been raised.
- Workforce handle personal and health information in accordance with the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth) and the *Health Records Act 2001* (Vic), and the Njernda Privacy and Confidentiality Policy.

6.15 Risk management

- Njernda maintains child safety risks in its risk registers, assessed and treated through the Njernda risk management system.
- Each service that works with children completes a documented child safety risk assessment covering its settings, activities, premises, transport arrangements and online environments, reviewed at least annually and whenever an activity, site or program changes.
- High risk activities, including camps, overnight stays, excursions, one to one work, transport and home visits, require a specific documented risk assessment and approval before they proceed.
- Risk treatments are assigned an owner and a due date and are tracked to completion.
- Child safety risks are reported to the Board of Directors as part of the organisational risk reporting cycle.

6.16 Procurement and third parties

- Where Njernda contracts a third party to provide facilities or services that involve, or may involve, contact with children, child safety requirements are built into the procurement process and the contract.
- Contracts must require compliance with this Policy and the Child Safe Code of Conduct, current Working with Children Clearances and police checks for their relevant workers, and immediate notification to Njernda of any child safety concern or incident.

- Njernda verifies these requirements before engagement and monitors them during the contract term.

6.17 Review and continuous improvement

- The Compliance, Accreditation and Investigations Officer coordinates an annual review of Njernda's child safety practices against the eleven Child Safe Standards, drawing on complaints and incident data, training and screening records, risk assessments, audit findings, and the views of children, families, Workforce, Elders and community.
- Complaints, concerns and incidents are analysed collectively to identify causes, patterns and systemic failures, not only to resolve individual matters.
- The review produces a written report from the Chief Executive Officer to the Board of Directors with findings and improvement actions, each with an owner and a due date, tracked through the Njernda quality improvement register.
- Findings and improvements are communicated to Workforce, and to children, families and community in accessible and child friendly formats.
- An out of cycle review is conducted after any significant child safety incident, substantiated reportable conduct finding, or regulator direction. The first full revision of this Policy is the post consultation revision required by clause 1.1, due within six months of interim approval.

The annual review under this clause examines child safety practice. This Policy is also reviewed annually. Where either review shows that this Policy or a related document needs to change, the change is made at the time rather than waiting for the next scheduled review.

6.18 Gifts, physical contact, devices and professional boundaries

Workforce must not give gifts, benefits or items of value of any kind to an individual child outside of formally approved program activities and must not receive gifts from a child or their family other than culturally appropriate tokens of thanks disclosed to a manager.

Where gifts or in-kind items such as gift bags, vouchers, prizes or participation rewards are provided to children as part of an approved event or program, they must be:

- Sanctioned in advance by an authorised Njernda manager.
- Provided transparently and with equal opportunity to all participating children.
- Documented in accordance with Njernda's procedures.

Workforce must maintain professional boundaries at all times. It is not acceptable for Workforce to have contact with, or take part in the lives of, children they work with outside Njernda activities without a valid reason and the knowledge of their manager. Pre-existing family and community relationships are recognised and must be disclosed to a manager so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

The following apply whenever Workforce are working directly with children:

- Personal mobile phones and personal devices are not used or kept on the person while working directly with children, other than where a manager has agreed they are needed for emergency contact.
- Physical contact with a child is limited to what the situation requires, is appropriate to the child's age, culture and wishes, and is not out of sight of other adults where that can be avoided.

- First aid is administered in a place visible to other adults wherever possible and is recorded.
- Any contact with a child outside Njernda activities, and any care arrangement involving a child who receives Njernda services, must be disclosed to a manager and recorded.

6.19 Activities delivered outside Victoria

Njernda occasionally runs an activity outside Victoria, most often just across the river in New South Wales, and sometimes further afield for a camp or excursion. Before any such activity proceeds, the manager responsible must consult the Chief Executive Officer and confirm in writing:

- Whether a Working with Children Check in that jurisdiction is required for any Workforce member involved, or whether an exemption applies.
- The reporting pathway that applies in that jurisdiction, and how Workforce will contact it while away.
- The documented risk assessment for the activity required by clause 6.15, including supervision ratios, accommodation and sleeping arrangements where the activity involves an overnight stay, transport, and the plan if a child discloses harm while away.
- Parent or guardian consent, emergency contacts and any health or cultural requirements for each child attending.

This Policy and the Child Safe Code of Conduct apply to Njernda Workforce wherever an activity takes place.

6.20 Harm between children, including harmful sexual behaviour

Children can be harmed by other children. Bullying, physical aggression, racism and sexual behaviour that is outside what is developmentally expected are child safety matters under this Policy and are not to be dealt with only as behaviour management.

- Report it the same way as any other concern, to the Chief Executive Officer, and record it in the Incident Register. Do not wait to see whether it happens again.
- Take immediate action to separate and supervise the children involved so that no child is left at risk while the matter is considered.
- Treat both children as children. The child who has been harmed is supported, kept safe and listened to. The child who caused the harm is responded to in a way appropriate to their age and development, with support and specialist referral where that is needed. Neither child is written off.
- Where the behaviour may amount to a criminal offence, or where a child under 16 may have been the victim of a sexual offence, clause 6.5 applies and the Chief Executive Officer determines Police involvement. Do not decide this alone.
- Inform the families of both children, unless doing so would place a child at risk or would compromise a Police or Child Protection process.
- Review the relevant risk assessment under clause 6.15, since harm between children usually points to something about supervision, setting or activity design.
- Berrimba Child Care Centre applies its own behaviour guidance and National Law notification requirements in addition to this clause.

7. Roles and Responsibilities

Who	Responsibilities
Njernda Aboriginal Corporation (organisational obligations)	• Maintain a publicly available Policy and Code of Conduct and display the Child Safety Statement at Appendix 3 prominently at every site and in every area where children are present. • Empower and equip the Workforce by providing child safety training at induction, refresher training at least every two years, and further training from time to time following a change to the law or the Standards, a significant incident or systemic issue, a change to Njernda services, or a need identified through supervision, audit or the annual review. • Deliver that training in a way that is culturally safe and practical, and release Workforce to attend it. • Embed a culture of child safety into day to day practice, so that it shapes how Njernda plans services, runs programs, recruits, supervises, procures, meets and decides, rather than sitting in a document. • Make it safe and straightforward for children, families, community and Workforce to raise concerns, act on what they raise, and resource the child safety functions in this Policy, including training, screening, accessible materials and the annual review. • Meet its obligations to regulators, review this Policy and its child safety practices, and tell Workforce, children, families and community what changed as a result.
Board of Directors	• Approve this Policy and hold overall accountability for child safety at Njernda, championing and modelling a child safe culture. • Keep child safety as a standing Board agenda item, receive child safety reports at least twice a year, and receive the annual review report under clause 6.17 and monitor improvement actions. • Where an allegation concerns the Chief Executive Officer, the Chairperson performs the head of entity function.
Chief Executive Officer	• Head of entity for the Reportable Conduct Scheme, including the three day and 30-day notifications, and overall responsibility for implementing this Policy. • Single point of receipt for all child safety concerns, complaints and disclosures. May delegate support, investigation or follow up in writing, but retains accountability for the response. • Determine the response pathway for each child safety matter and ensure interim safety action is taken. • Ensure the community consultation and full revision required by clause 1.1 is completed within six months of interim approval. • Manage relationships with regulators and report to the Board on child safety.
Managers and team leaders	• Include child safety in supervision and performance conversations, and ensure their team completes screening and training.

Who	Responsibilities
	Complete and review child safety risk assessments for their service, keep the Child Safety Statement on display and legible at their site, and act on risk within their authority or escalate promptly.
All Workforce	- Comply with this Policy and the Child Safe Code of Conduct, and complete induction and refresher training. - Maintain a current Working with Children Clearance and police check and notify Human Resources immediately of any change to their status or of any charge or finding that may affect their suitability. - Report concerns, disclosures and reportable conduct promptly, meet individual mandatory reporting, failure to disclose and AHPRA obligations, and keep accurate records.
Human Resources	- Run child safe recruitment, screening and onboarding. - Maintain the register of Working with Children Clearances, police checks, registrations and qualifications, monitor expiry dates, and maintain and report training completion records.
Compliance, Accreditation and Investigations Officer	- Coordinate the annual review under clause 6.17, and maintain the Complaints Register and Incident Register and analyse them for patterns and systemic issues. - Maintain child safety obligations in the compliance register and support investigations. - Policy Steward: maintain the document, coordinate consultation and review with Senior Strategic and Policy Liaison Officer and keep legislative references current.

8. Breaches of this Policy

A breach of this Policy or of the Child Safe Code of Conduct is treated seriously and may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment or engagement, the ending of a volunteer or student placement, or the termination of a contract. Njernda will also report a breach to Police, Child Protection, the Social Services Regulator, VECRA, AHPRA or another regulator where the law requires or permits it.

Where a breach is alleged, Njernda will take immediate action to ensure children are safe while the matter is dealt with.

9. Legislation and Standards

9.1 Commonwealth

- Privacy Act 1988* (Cth)
- Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, as applied in Victoria
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Cth)

9.2 Victoria

- *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* (Vic), including the Child Safe Standards, the Reportable Conduct Scheme and the Child Information Sharing Scheme
- *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* (Vic)
- *Crimes Act 1958* (Vic), including sections 49M, 49O and 327
- *Worker Screening Act 2020* (Vic)
- *Social Services Regulation Act 2021* (Vic)
- *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010* (Vic) and the Education and Care Services National Regulations
- *Family Violence Protection Act 2008* (Vic), including the Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme
- *Health Records Act 2001* (Vic)
- *Equal Opportunity Act 2010* (Vic)
- *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* (Vic)
- *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004* (Vic)
- Road Safety Road Rules 2017 (Vic)

9.3 New South Wales

These Acts do not apply to Njernda's services delivered in Victoria, including services delivered to clients who live in New South Wales. They are listed because they are engaged where Njernda delivers an activity in New South Wales, or where a report concerns a child who lives there, including a child placed in a Njernda out of home care program across the border. See clauses 3.3, 6.11 and 6.19.

- *Children's Guardian Act 2019* (NSW), including the NSW Child Safe Standards and the NSW Reportable Conduct Scheme
- *Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012* (NSW)
- *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998* (NSW)

9.4 Standards and frameworks

- Victorian Child Safe Standards
- National Principles for Child Safe Organisations
- Family Violence Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework (MARAM)
- National Quality Framework and National Quality Standard
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

10. Related Documents

- Child Safe Code of Conduct (Appendix 2 to this Policy)
- Code of Conduct Policy
- Complaints Management Policy and Complaints Register
- Incident Management Policy and Incident Register
- Risk Management Policy and Master Risk Register
- Recruitment, Selection and Onboarding Policy
- Workforce Screening and Pre-Employment Checks Procedure
- Privacy and Confidentiality Policy

- Records and Information Management Policy
- Information Sharing Policy
- Social Media and Acceptable Use Policy
- Motor Vehicle and Driver Safety Policy
- Site Security Policy
- Whistleblower Protection Policy
- Procurement Policy
- Berrimba Child Care Centre policy suite
- Njernda Quality Management Framework

Appendix 1: The Child Safe Standards and where this Policy meets them

Victoria has eleven Child Safe Standards. Standard 1 is specific to Victoria and has no equivalent in the National Principles. Standards 2 to 11 correspond to National Principles 1 to 10, shown below as NP. This table supports Standard 11.

Victorian Child Safe Standard	Where this Policy addresses it, and the supporting evidence
1. Organisations establish a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children and young people are respected and valued.	Clauses 2, 5.1, 5.5, Appendix 2. Evidence: cultural safety training records; Elder and community consultation records; racism incident records; program records.
2. Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture. (NP 1)	Clauses 2, 5.2, 6.15, section 7, Appendix 3. Evidence: Board agendas and minutes; Board child safety reports; risk registers; published Policy; site checks confirming the Statement is displayed.
3. Children and young people are empowered about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously. (NP 2)	Clause 5.3. Evidence: child friendly rights material; child consultation and feedback records; program records.
4. Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing. (NP 3)	Clause 5.4. Evidence: consultation records; family information material; community forum records.
5. Equity is upheld and diverse needs are respected in policy and practice. (NP 4)	Clauses 2, 5.5. Evidence: accessible and translated resources; interpreter use records; service adaptation records.
6. People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice. (NP 5)	Clauses 5.6, 6.16, 6.19, section 7. Evidence: position descriptions; interview records; screening register; induction records; supervision records.
7. Processes for complaints and concerns are child focused. (NP 6)	Clauses 5.7, 6.3, 6.4, 6.20. Evidence: Complaints Register; complaint files; complaints information in accessible formats.
8. Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training. (NP 7)	Clause 5.8, section 7. Evidence: training plan and content; completion records; induction records; records of additional training provided after an incident or a change in the law.
9. Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed. (NP 8)	Clauses 5.9, 6.12, 6.13, 6.15, 6.16, 6.18, 6.19, 6.20. Evidence: risk assessments; consent records; approved platform list; transport records; contracts.
10. Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved. (NP 9)	Clauses 5.10, 6.17. Evidence: annual review report; incident and complaint analysis; quality improvement register; Board reporting.
11. Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people. (NP 10)	Clauses 3.2, 5.11, section 10, this Appendix. Evidence: this Policy; Berrimba Child Care Centre policy suite; related policy suite; policy register; consultation records; version control.

Appendix 2: Child Safe Code of Conduct

Everyone at Njernda is responsible for the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. All Workforce must act in accordance with this Code in their physical and online interactions with children under 18. Visitors and third parties attending Njernda premises or activities are also required to comply with it.

Workforce must

- Act in accordance with the Njernda Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and all relevant legislation always.
- Behave respectfully, courteously and ethically towards children, their families, community and other Workforce.
- Listen and respond to the views and concerns of children, particularly where a child communicates, in words or otherwise, that they do not feel safe or well.
- Create an environment that is welcoming, culturally safe and inclusive for all children and their families, and that enables children's participation.
- Support Aboriginal children and young people to express their culture and enjoy their cultural rights and challenge racism whenever it occurs.
- Consider and respect the diverse needs of children, including children with disability, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, children unable to live at home, and children who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, gender diverse, intersex or questioning.
- Demonstrate appropriate personal and professional boundaries, and disclose any pre-existing personal, family or community relationship with a child receiving services.
- Involve children in decisions about activities, policies and processes that concern them wherever possible.
- Identify and mitigate risks to children's safety and wellbeing as required by Njernda's risk management arrangements.
- Respond promptly to any concern or complaint of child harm or abuse, in line with Njernda's complaints procedure.
- Report all suspected or disclosed child harm or abuse as required by law and by the Njernda Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy.
- Seek advice from their manager, the Chief Executive Officer or Human Resources where they are unclear about a child safety concern or obligation.
- Comply with Njernda's requirements on communicating with children, including online, and on record keeping and information sharing.
- Keep physical contact with a child to what the situation requires, appropriate to their age, culture and wishes, and not out of sight of other adults where that can be avoided.
- Treat harm caused to a child by another child as a child safety matter and report it, rather than handling it only as a behaviour issue.

Workforce must not

- Engage in any unlawful activity with, or in relation to, a child.
- Engage in any activity likely to physically, sexually, emotionally, psychologically or culturally harm a child.
- Engage in behaviour towards a child that is aggressive, threatening, demeaning or otherwise psychologically harmful, including yelling, humiliating, belittling, intimidating, or using language that causes fear or distress.
- Use, condone or ignore racist language or conduct, or any conduct that demeans a child's culture or identity.
- Unlawfully discriminate against any child or their family.
- Be alone with a child unnecessarily, or out of sight of others where this can reasonably be avoided.
- Engage in personal contact, including online contact, with a child they work with for a purpose unrelated to Njernda's activities.
- Take, keep or share images of a child except in accordance with clause 6.12 of the Policy.
- Disclose personal or sensitive information about a child, including images, unless the child and their parent or legal guardian consent, or unless required or permitted by law or by Njernda's policies.
- Use inappropriate language in the presence of a child or show or provide a child with access to inappropriate images or material.
- Give gifts or benefits to an individual child outside approved program activities or develop a special relationship with a particular child that could be seen as favouritism.
- Use or keep a personal mobile phone or personal device on their person while working directly with children, unless a manager has agreed it is needed for emergency contact.
- Work with children while under the influence of alcohol or prohibited drugs, or while otherwise impaired.
- Ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child harm or abuse.

If you think this Code has been breached

Act to prioritise the best interests of the child, take prompt action to ensure the child is safe, and report the concern immediately to your manager or the Chief Executive Officer, or to the Chairperson of the Board where the concern involves the Chief Executive Officer. Then follow Njernda's complaints procedures and any reporting obligation that applies to you under section 6 of the Policy.

Appendix 3: Njernda Child Safety Statement

This Statement is displayed prominently at every Njernda site and in every area where children are present and is published on the Njernda website. It may be reproduced as a poster and in child friendly and easy read formats.

Children are safe here

Njernda Aboriginal Corporation is committed to the safety, wellbeing and empowerment of every child and young person who comes to us.

- We have zero tolerance for child abuse. Every concern is taken seriously and acted on.
- Children have the right to be safe, to be heard, and to take part in decisions that affect them.
- Aboriginal children have the right to be strong in culture and identity. Racism is not accepted here.
- Children with disability, children from all cultural backgrounds, children unable to live at home, and children who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, gender diverse, intersex or questioning are welcome, respected and protected here.
- Everyone who works or volunteers at Njernda is checked, trained and expected to follow our Child Safe Code of Conduct.
- Families, Elders and community help shape how we keep children safe.

If something is not right, tell us

If you are worried about a child, or if something has happened to you, talk to any Njernda staff member you feel comfortable with, or contact our Chief Executive Officer. The Chief Executive Officer is the person to go to for any child safety concern at Njernda.

Chief Executive Officer: _____ **Phone:** _____

If your concern is about the Chief Executive Officer, contact the Board Chairperson instead.

Board Chairperson: _____ **Phone:** _____

In an emergency, call Victoria Police on 000. You can also contact Child Protection at the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing.

You will be listened to. You will be believed. You will not get in trouble for speaking up.