

# Child Safe Organisation Principles Booklet



A life of participation,  
opportunity and choice  
begins in the early years.

[autismqld.com.au](http://autismqld.com.au)

# Commitment to Child Safety

## Autism Queensland is committed to promoting and protecting the safety of children and young people.

Autism Queensland does not tolerate any form of harm against children or young people including physical abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, or psychological abuse.

Autism Queensland has an expectation that all employees, volunteers, carers, and the community who come into contact with the organisation will:

**Always act in the best interest of children and young people.**

**Actively encourage children and young people and their families to have a say about things that are important to them.**

**Act quickly on any child safety concerns or allegations of abuse.**

Autism Queensland has made a commitment to implement the **Child Safe National Principles**:

- 1** Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture.
- 2** Children and young people are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.
- 3** Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.
- 4** Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice.
- 5** People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.
- 6** Processes to respond to complaints and concerns are child focused.
- 7** Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training.
- 8** Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.
- 9** Implementation of the national child safe principles is regularly reviewed and improved.
- 10** Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people.

View Autism Queensland Child Protection school and non-school policies at [autismqld.com.au/policies](http://autismqld.com.au/policies)

If you would like to raise any concerns relating to the safety of a child or young person at Autism Queensland please contact Autism Queensland on **07 3273 0000**.

If you believe a child or young person is at immediate risk of harm or abuse phone 000.



# Child Safe Organisation Principle 1

Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance, and culture.

## How Autism Queensland Implements Principle 1:

- **The organisation makes a public commitment to child safety.**
  - Autism Queensland's (AQ's) public commitment to child safety is featured on its website and is displayed on-site in public and staff areas.
  - Autism Queensland [Child Safe Organisation Commitment](#).
- **A child safe culture is championed and modelled at all levels of the organisation from the top down and the bottom up.**
  - All child safety incidents are reported to the CEO and at Board level.
  - Safety & Wellbeing is one of five values of the organisation.
  - All team meeting agendas include Safety, incorporating child protection.
- **Governance arrangements facilitate implementation of the Child Safety and Wellbeing policy at all levels.**
  - Autism Queensland (AQ) has a full-time Client Safety & Wellbeing Manager dedicated to ensuring child safety and wellbeing is prioritised at all levels.
  - AQ has established a client safety and wellbeing (CS&W) working group that includes senior managers from across the organisation.
  - The purpose of the CS&W working group is to ensure Client Safety and Wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance, and culture at AQ.
- **A Code of Conduct provides guidelines for staff and volunteers on expected behavioural standards and responsibilities.**
  - AQ has implemented a child safety code of conduct.
  - AQ's Code of Conduct requires that all employees, contractors and volunteers adhere to standards of behaviour and responsibilities as outlined in the Code of Conduct and other policies and procedures.
- **Risk management strategies focus on preventing, identifying, and mitigating risks to children and young people.**
  - Formal documents reflect risk management strategies, eg. Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy, Risk Management Policy, Risk Register.
  - AQ completes robust risk assessments for all clients.
  - AQ has established child protection training for all staff which includes identifying abuse and assessing risk and protective factors.
- **Staff and volunteers understand their obligations on information sharing and record keeping.**
  - Child Protection training is one of a suite of mandatory training modules completed by all staff on commencement and annually.
  - All new staff attend an Induction program which includes an overview of child protection policy and procedures, including direction on documentation and mandatory reporting requirements.

# Child Safe Organisation Principle 2

Children and young people are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.

## How Autism Queensland Implements Principle 2:

- **Children and young people are informed about all their rights, including the right to safety, information, and participation.**
  - AQ children's safety "*Who can I talk to*" posters are displayed in all client facing areas.
  - Self-advocacy skills are explicitly taught to AQ School students.
  - Children's rights resources are available to students, clients, and their families at all AQ services.
  - AQ contributes to the Children's Rights QLD Committee.
  - Children's Week celebrations at AQ focus on the rights of children and young people.
- **The importance of friendships is recognised and support from peers is encouraged, to help children and young people feel safe and less isolated.**
  - Personal, social and community health is explicitly taught via the HPE curriculum in the AQ School, including friendship and self-advocacy skills.
  - AQ group based services include an emphasis on building relationships and communities of support.
- **Where relevant to the setting or context, children may be offered access to sexual abuse prevention programs and to relevant related information in an age-appropriate way.**
  - AQ Group programs include a focus on safety in relationships.
  - "*Day for Daniel*" resources are utilised.
  - AQ staff complete training in safe relationships and sexual abuse prevention to enable them to adequately support children and young people.
- **Staff and volunteers are attuned to signs of harm and facilitate child-friendly ways for children to express their views, participate in decision-making and raise their concerns.**
  - Annual Child Protection training is mandatory for all staff and for volunteers as relevant.
  - Regular supervision of staff is provided, including monthly review of Child Protection incidents at all levels of management
  - Regular professional development is provided.
  - Children and young people are involved in goal-setting.
  - AQ has developed a collaboration framework.

# Child Safe Organisation Principle 3

Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.

## How Autism Queensland Implements Principle 3:

- **Families participate in decisions affecting their child.**
  - Families participate in goal-setting and reviews.
  - Families are invited to participate in decision-making processes.
  - AQ has developed and uses a specific Family Goal-Setting Tool.
- **The organisation engages and openly communicates with families and the community about its child safe approach and relevant information is accessible.**
  - Enrolment and client intake meetings include information relating to child safe approaches at AQ.
  - Strategic Planning processes are in place to better suit expanding/varying needs of communities.
  - Child Safe Organisation commitment statements and policies are publicly available on the AQ website and displayed in all physical locations.
  - AQ is actively involved in Child Protection Week.
- **Families and communities have a say in the development and review of the organisation's policies and practices.**
  - AQ has developed a Consumer Advisory Group.
  - Surveys are sent out to clients, families, and the community.
  - AQ website provides the opportunity for feedback.
- **Parents, caregivers, and the community are informed about the organisation's operations and governance.**
  - AQ Policies relating to privacy, child protection and complaints are publicly available on the AQ website.
  - AQ Child Safe Organisation Commitment Statements are available on the website and displayed on AQ premises.
  - Annual reports are publicly available on the AQ website.
  - Social media posts regularly share updates or changes relating to AQ operations and governance.
  - Stakeholder meetings address AQ's operations and governance processes in relation to child protection as relevant.



# Child Safe Organisation Principle 4

Equity is upheld and diverse needs are respected in policy and practice.

## How Autism Queensland Implements Principle 4:

- **The organisation, including staff and volunteers, understands children and young people's diverse circumstances, and provides support and responds to those who are vulnerable.**
  - AQ has a Client Diversity and Inclusion policy.
  - AQ values reflect the importance of diversity with Diversity & Inclusion being one of 5 AQ Values.
  - Values are a regular topic of discussion in leadership and strategic planning meetings, including at Board, team and individual supervision levels.
  - Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) training is provided an information available to AQ staff.
  - The Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) working group provides guidance, resources and training to the organisation regarding working with First Nations clients and communities.
  - AQ is dedicated to being responsive to the needs of the LGBTIQAP+ community.
- **Children and young people have access to information, support, and complaints processes in ways that are culturally safe, accessible, and easy to understand.**
  - Crisis support documents are publicly accessible.
  - LBTIQAP+ Support documents are publicly accessible.
  - AQ have easy read complaints process documents publicly available on its website.
- **The organisation pays particular attention to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children with disability, children from culturally diverse backgrounds, those who are unable to live at home, and lesbian, gay and bisexual transgender intersex children and young people.**
  - The Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) working group provides guidance, resources and training to the organisation regarding working with First Nations clients and communities.
  - AQ has developed a Client Diversity and Inclusion policy.
  - LGBTIQAP+ Working Group established to assist with recommendations on how AQ can be more inclusive.
  - Client Safety and Wellbeing Working Group established.
  - Client Safety & Wellbeing Manager position.
  - Governance processes ensure a safe inclusive culture is demonstrated in policies and strategy and reflected in practice across the organisation.
  - Review of AQ database and forms has occurred to provide better options for gender diverse clients.
  - Whole of organisation information is shared via weekly CEO communications.
  - Self-advocacy skills are taught to clients.

# Child Safe Organisation Principle 5

People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.

## How Autism Queensland Implements Principle 5:

- **Recruitment, including advertising, referee checks, and staff and volunteer pre-employment screening, emphasise child safety and wellbeing.**
  - Blue card requirements stipulated in advertising.
  - Referee checks (minimum of 2) are a mandatory requirement of the recruitment process.
  - A Recruitment policy is in place which outlines screening requirements (*Blue Card Working with Children Check and NDIS Worker Screening Clearance*).
- **Relevant staff and volunteers have current working with children checks or equivalent background checks.**
  - Employees, volunteers or contractors cannot start at AQ until a Blue Card or teacher registration has been approved and sighted.
  - AQ require for all employees/volunteers working within NDIS services to complete NDIS Quality and Safeguards modules prior to starting.
  - AQ Human Resources Team keeps an up-to-date log of all employees, volunteers, and contractors' Blue Card and registration status.
- **All staff and volunteers receive appropriate induction and are aware of their responsibilities to children and young people, including record keeping, information sharing, and reporting obligations.**
  - All AQ employees are required to complete an online Child Protection module within the first month of commencement and an annual refresher.
  - AQ Induction program includes information relating to all staff and volunteers' responsibilities to children and young people which includes information sharing and reporting obligations.
  - Client Safety and Wellbeing training sessions include roles and responsibilities relating to children, record keeping, information sharing, privacy, and reporting obligations.
  - AQ team meetings include Safety, addressing Child Protection as an agenda item.
- **Ongoing supervision and people management is focused on child safety and wellbeing.**
  - Child Safety is an agenda item in all team meetings and supervision sessions.
  - Senior managers attend the AQ Client Safety and Wellbeing working group and any child safety and wellbeing initiatives, and decisions are fed back directly to AQ staff.
  - Weekly CEO communications include relevant information relating to client safety and wellbeing.

# Child Safe Organisation Principle 6

Processes to respond to complaints and concerns are child focussed.

## How Autism Queensland Implements Principle 6:

- **The organisation has an accessible, child focused complaint handling policy that clearly outlines the roles and responsibilities of leadership, staff and volunteers, approaches to dealing with different types of complaints, breaches of relevant policies or the Code of Conduct and obligations to act and report.**
  - AQ complaints handling policy includes key principles detailing the AQ approach to managing complaints.
  - AQ complaints handling policy clearly outlines roles and responsibilities when dealing with complaints.
- **Effective complaint handling processes are understood by children and young people, families, staff, and volunteers, and are culturally safe.**
  - AQ easy read complaints policy is available on the AQ website.
  - Documents sent to clients and carers contain information on how to make a complaint.
  - Dedicated email address for complaints and feedback to be lodged is available on the AQ website.
  - AQ children's safety "Who can I talk to" posters are displayed in all client facing areas.
- **Complaints are taken seriously and responded to promptly and thoroughly.**
  - Any complaint relating to a client is directed to the CEO and prioritised for prompt investigation and response.
  - The CEO reports to the Board monthly on all client protection matters.
  - Complaints are acknowledged within 48 hours and responded to once there is an outcome. Updates are also provided when required.
- **The organisation has policies and procedures in place that address reporting of complaints and concerns to relevant authorities, whether or not the law requires reporting, and cooperates with law enforcement.**
  - *AQ Complaints & Feedback Management Policy* includes information regarding external reporting.
  - AQ has a robust process with oversight by senior managers and the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) to ensure external reporting occurs in a timely manner.
  - *Incident Management Policy & Procedure* outlines reporting requirements.
  - *AQ Code of Conduct* provides information regarding responsibilities.
  - *AQ Child Protection Policies* include reporting requirements.



# Child Safe Organisation Principle 7

Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training.

## How Autism Queensland Implements Principle 7:

- **Staff and volunteers are trained and supported to effectively implement the organisation's child protection policy.**
  - All staff are required to attend an induction session that includes information relating to AQ child protection policies.
  - All senior managers are required to support and guide staff to implement the child protection policies which includes regular discussion in team meetings, case discussions and supervision sessions.
- **Staff and volunteers receive training and information to recognise indicators of child harm including harm caused by other children and young people.**
  - All staff and volunteers at AQ are required to complete the child protection training module which explains risk and protective factors, indicators of abuse, and AQ processes.
  - All staff working with children complete *NAPCAN*, *In Safe Hands*, or *ISQ* external training.
- **Staff and volunteers receive training and information to respond effectively to issues of child safety and wellbeing and support colleagues who disclose harm.**
  - AQ staff and volunteers receive training and information on a regular basis relating to issues relating to child safety within individualised training sessions, supervision, team meetings, and external resources and training.
  - All AQ staff working with children and young people are required to complete internal and external training through *NAPCAN* or *In Safe hands* to ensure they can respond and support effectively when there are disclosures of harm.
- **Staff and volunteers receive training and information on how to build culturally safe environments for children and young people.**
  - AQ staff receive training and information on a regular basis through external training, internal training, and within supervision.
  - AQ celebrates culturally significant dates including NAIDOC week.

# Child Safe Organisation Principle 8

Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.

## How Autism Queensland Implements Principle 8:

- **Staff and volunteers identify and mitigate risks in the online and physical environments without compromising a child's right to privacy, access to information, social connections and learning opportunities.**
  - AQ ensures all online environments are safe and in line with *Australian Privacy Principles*.
  - AQ completes regular risk assessments of the environment to ensure safety and wellbeing for all clients.
  - AQ staff access external training options to keep knowledge around online risks current.
- **The online environment is used in accordance with the organisation's *Code of Conduct* and *Child Safety and Wellbeing* policy and practices.**
  - AQ ensures all online environments including telehealth sessions are managed in line with *Child Protection, Privacy, Code of Conduct, and Client Diversity and Inclusion* policies and procedures.
- **Risk management plans consider risks posed by organisational settings, activities, and the physical environment.**
  - AQ complete risk assessments and management plans for all clients which include assessment of activities, environment, and behaviours.
  - Physical environments are maintained regularly and outdoor environments including playground equipment monitored regarding current safety standards.

# Child Safe Organisation Principle 9

Implementation of the national child safe principles is regularly reviewed and improved.

## How Autism Queensland Implements Principle 9:

- **The organisation regularly reviews, evaluates, and improves child safe practices.**
  - AQ has established a client safety and wellbeing working group that regularly reviews, evaluates, and ensures improvement in child safe practices.
  - AQ Board reviews the organisation's child safe practices.
- **Complaints, concerns, and safety incidents are analysed to identify causes and systemic failures so as to inform continuous improvement.**
  - All complaints and safety incidents are analysed with a view to identifying risks and areas for improvement.
  - The AQ Board reviews and analyses client safety complaints and incidents monthly.
  - Reviews and updates of policies and procedures are triggered if staff or client feedback indicates any concerns.
- **The organisation reports on the findings of relevant reviews to staff and volunteers, communities and families, and children and young people.**
  - AQ reports on findings to anyone directly involved.
  - AQ engages their Advisory Committee on a regular basis.

# Child Safe Organisation Principle 10

Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people.

## How Autism Queensland Implements Principle 10:

- **Policies and procedures address all national child safe principles.**
  - *National Child Safe Principles* are included in AQ *Child Protection* policies as well as the *Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy*.
  - Client & Child Protection policies, which include the *National Child Safe Principles* are referenced and linked in multiple other policies and procedures at AQ.
- **Policies, procedures, and documents are easy to understand.**
  - AQ has clear step by step procedures included in child protection policies.
- **Best practice models and stakeholder consultation informs the development of policies and procedures.**
  - The development and review of AQ policies and procedures is guided by the NDIS Quality & Safeguarding framework and audit processes.
  - AQ School is accredited and audited by the Non-State Schools Accreditation Board (NSSAB).
  - AQ has developed a consumer advisory committee (AQAC).
  - AQ engages in stakeholder surveys on a regular basis to guide the development of policy and procedure across all areas.
  - AQ has various working parties to create / update policies relating to clients.
- **Leaders champion and model compliance with policies and procedures.**
  - AQ senior managers are part of the Client Safety and Wellbeing Working Group and ensure they are modelling compliance in all aspects of their work.
  - AQ ELT models compliance in all aspects of their work including regular CEO updates reminding all staff and volunteers of this.
- **Staff and volunteers understand and implement policies and procedures.**
  - All staff are trained to understand and implement policies and procedures.
  - All staff are expected to understand and implement policy and procedures and managers ensure this is occurring.
  - Policies and procedures are reviewed in response to feedback to ensure ease of understanding.