

ECEC Policy 34

Child Safe Recruitment, Induction and Training

Approval
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Controlled Document

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1 Purpose

CatholicCare is dedicated to ensuring the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children in our care by implementing recruitment, induction, and training procedures that comply with the Children (Education and Care Services) National Law, Education and Care Services National Regulations, NSW Child Safe Standards, the Working with Children Check Act 2025 (NSW) (WWCC Act 2025) and promote a child safe culture. CatholicCare recognises that the safety, wellbeing and best interests of children are paramount. This principle underpins all recruitment, induction, training and employment practices within the Early Childhood and School Aged Education and Care program.

This policy operates in conjunction with CatholicCare Wollongong's Recruitment and Selection framework, including WS Policy 2.1 – Recruitment & Selection and associated recruitment processes and checklists. It outlines additional child-safe requirements that apply specifically to Early Childhood Education and Care services.

2 Application

This policy applies to all persons engaged or proposed to be engaged in work within CatholicCare's Early Childhood Education and Care program, including Early Learning Centre and School Aged Education and Care employees, volunteers, students, contractors, Persons with Management or Control and agency personnel, where such work involves children or takes place at an education and care service.

This policy does not replace CatholicCare Wollongong's organisational recruitment processes, approval pathways or People & Culture procedures. Recruitment actions must continue to follow the CatholicCare Wollongong Recruitment Process and Recruitment & Selection Checklist, in addition to the requirements outlined in this policy.

3 Guiding principles

- We recruit staff and volunteers who uphold and promote a safe, supportive environment for children.
- We are committed to child safety and the wellbeing of every child in our care.
- We promote the paramount importance of child safety in all that we do and actively consider children's voices in all decisions that affect them.
- We apply CatholicCare's organisational governance, workforce policies and codes of conduct to all child-related roles, in addition to ECEC-specific legislative requirements.
- We ensure leadership and governance maintain clear policies, safe recruitment practices and accountability across the organisation. We foster a culture where child safety is embedded in everyday practices and responsibilities and where all staff and volunteers understand and uphold their child safety obligations. This policy follows the 8 steps to child safe recruitment:

1. Position Description
2. Job Advertisement
3. Shortlisting
4. Interviews
5. Referee checks
6. Background checks
7. Onboarding and induction
8. Ongoing employment practices

4 Paramourncy and Decision Making

The safety, wellbeing, rights and best interests of children are the paramount consideration in all recruitment, induction, training, supervision and employment decisions within the Early Childhood and School Aged Education and Care program. The paramourncy principle applies to all individuals working in Early Childhood Education and Care in NSW.

Where there is uncertainty, conflicting information, incomplete screening, or competing priorities (including staffing pressures or operational needs), decisions will be made in favour of protecting children.

5 Policy

5.1 Role descriptions include child safety requirements

Our position descriptions identify child safety as a key responsibility. They outline the expected behaviours and practices that promote and protect the safety, wellbeing and rights of children and make clear that staff are expected to demonstrate these behaviours in their work. This sets clear expectations from the outset about our service's commitment to child safety and may help deter applicants who are not aligned with these expectations.

Staff are expected to understand and meet their child safety responsibilities, uphold child safe behaviours and recognise where child safe behaviours are not being upheld. This includes mandatory reporting, adherence to professional boundaries, and compliance with relevant legislation and organisational policies and procedures.

Each position description clearly states that employees must actively uphold and maintain a child-safe environment, recognise risks of harm and report concerns promptly. Embedding child safety in position descriptions reinforces that safeguarding children is a core responsibility for all staff and volunteers.

5.2 Job advertisements

CatholicCare Wollongong is a child safe organisation and is committed to promoting the safety, wellbeing and rights of children. We proudly display our Child Safeguarding Statement and embed child safety principles into our recruitment and advertising practices.

Job advertisements include clear information about CatholicCare Wollongong's commitment to being child safe. From the outset, potential staff members are informed that we uphold children's rights, take the Child Safe Standards seriously, and require all persons working in child-related roles to hold a current Working with Children Check (unless exempt under legislation).

Advertising and application materials ask candidates to demonstrate their understanding of, and commitment to, child safety and safeguarding responsibilities. Child-safety-related questions are included as part of the application and selection process.

Job advertisements also advise that CatholicCare Wollongong will make reasonable enquiries into a candidate's suitability to work with children, consistent with legislative and regulatory requirements.

5.3 Pre-assessment of applications or shortlisting

We review all applications and supporting documentation to assess each applicant's qualifications, skills, relevant experience and suitability for the role. As part of this process, we consider evidence of an understanding of and commitment to child safety, including demonstrated knowledge of relevant child protection legislation, child safety responsibilities and alignment with our service's child-safe values and code of conduct. During this pre-assessment we consider any concerns or 'red flags' such as frequent or short-term employment in child related roles, unexplained gaps in employment history, inconsistencies in work history and other factors that may affect an applicant's suitability to work with children. Where these indicators are identified, we do not rely on the written application alone. Instead, these matters are carefully considered and where appropriate, clarified through further enquiry, such as discussion during interview or through referee checks to better understand the context.

We maintain clear documentation of shortlisting decisions and suitable applicants including rationale for selecting suitable applicants to support transparency, accountability and compliance with child-safe recruitment practices.

5.4 Our interviews focus on experience in child-related roles

We use interviews to assess candidates' suitability to work with children. Interviews are structured around child-safe values and behaviour based questions that explore a candidate's integrity, attitudes toward children and knowledge of and commitment to child safety in line with the Child Safe Standards. We ask probing questions about a candidate's understanding of child safe requirements and their responses to child safety scenarios.

Candidates are interviewed by more than one person to support a balanced and objective assessment of suitability. During the interview any prior disciplinary matters, relevant employment history, 'red flags' identified during shortlisting or concerns affecting suitability to work with children are discussed.

An interview or screening discussion occurs regardless of the type or length of employment, including casual or short-term engagements. Where staff are engaged through a staffing agency, we seek assurance about the recruitment and screening processes undertaken by the agency, including the types of child-safety questions asked to assess suitability to work with children.

The interview process is documented, and records of outcomes and decisions are maintained to support transparency and accountability in child-safe recruitment.

5.5 We undertake robust reference checks

Each candidate must provide the details of two referees. At least one referee should be from their most recent or current role, and both must have directly supervised or managed the applicant in a professional capacity. If the applicant has never worked before, has recently left school or has exceptional circumstances such as a long, explained career break character references may be acceptable. Character references should not be from family members and professional references should be preferred. Reference checks conducted as part of the agency recruitment process must include child-safety related questions, in line with this policy.

During reference checks, we ask whether the referee has any concerns about the applicant working with children, whether the applicant has been subject to any disciplinary action or if the applicant has displayed any concerning or inappropriate behaviour. We use the reference check to clarify any issues or concerns identified during the shortlisting or interview process. Where written references are used, reasonable steps are taken to verify their authenticity.

We keep a record of every reference check (verbal or written) including the date the check was conducted, the name and role of the referee, their relationship with the candidate, a summary of the feedback provided, and any concerns raised and how they were addressed.

We store all records securely and manage them in line with our organisations record-keeping and privacy requirements. We ensure all records are accessible for internal review or regulatory purposes.

5.6 We undertake robust background checks

5.6.1 Pre-employment screening

Before engaging an applicant in child-related work we will ensure they hold a current Working with Children Check (WWCC) clearance issued under the WWCC Act 2025 (unless exempt) and verify it in the NSW Office of the Children's Guardian system. All persons aged 18 years and over engaged in child related work must hold a current Working with Children Check. Exemptions apply only where permitted under legislation (for example, persons under 18 years of age). WWCC verification is undertaken in accordance with CatholicCare Wollongong recruitment processes, with verification recorded prior to commencement.

We check the validity of qualifications, including checks with the National Training Register for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs). In addition, all applicants complete a 100-point identification check to verify identity.

We verify if an individual is a prohibited person through the National Quality IT System (NQA ITS) (Section 188) prior to making an offer of employment.

We confirm teacher accreditation status (where relevant).

We keep records of all pre-employment checks, including WWCC verification, National Criminal History Check, qualification checks, prohibited person checks, declarations, and accreditation confirmations. We store all records securely and manage them in line with our organisations record-keeping and privacy requirements.

Criminal history and probity checks are conducted in line with CatholicCare Wollongong recruitment procedures. These checks form part of CatholicCare's due diligence obligations and cannot be delegated to third parties.

5.6.2 Agency staff

Where staff are engaged through a staffing agency, we seek assurance that the agency has conducted appropriate background checks. This includes verifying WWCC's, checking relevant registers and confirming that child safety questions and screenings have been undertaken to assess the suitability of candidates to work with children. Agency staff must meet the same child safety standards and requirements as employed staff.

Before an agency staff member commences working with children we ensure they hold a current WWCC clearance and verify it in the Office of the Children's Guardians system. We check the National Quality IT System (NQA ITS) to ensure an individual is not a prohibited person (Section 188). CatholicCare Wollongong's People and Culture Team conduct these checks, even if the agency has advised us, they have already been conducted.

5.6.3 Volunteers

We ensure that volunteers who engage in child-related work also have a current WWCC. We conduct reasonable enquiries and undertake informal interviews or written assessments to confirm child-safe values and suitability. We undertake reference checks of volunteers consistent with those for employees.

5.6.4 Negative notices, disqualified persons and interim bars

We acknowledge that under the WWCC Act 2025:

- A disqualified person is legally barred from engaging in child-related work.
- Individuals subject to an interim bar notice must cease child-related work immediately.
- A negative notice prohibits employment and engagement in child-related work.

Upon receipt of notification from the Office of the Children's Guardian or other authorised agency or from an employee that a person engaged by the organisation is disqualified, issued an interim bar, or has received a negative notice, the organisation will immediately cease that person's involvement in child-related work and inform the NSW Early Learning Commission as required under Section 174AB of the Children (Education and Care Services) National Law (NSW) within 24 hours of becoming aware.

We inform all employees that they must notify their Approved Provider in writing if they receive a negative notice or if there is a change to the educator's accreditation or registration as a teacher (Section 174AA). Employees must provide this notice within 72 hours of the event or within 24 hours of becoming aware.

We also report to the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) if the employee is an accredited teacher.

Confidential records of these incidents shall be maintained and managed according to privacy and child protection legislation.

5.6.5 Prohibited Persons

We acknowledge that, under Section 182 and 183 of the Education and Care Services National Law (NSW) 2010, a prohibition notice can be issued to anyone involved in an education and care service if they pose a risk of harm to children. A prohibition notice prevents the person from:

- Providing education and care to children.
- Working or volunteering at an education and care service in any role.
- Engaging in any other activity related to education and care services.

A prohibition notice may be given to an approved provider if a related provider is subject to a prohibition notice and there is a systemic risk in relation to the approved provider or related provider, and issuing the notice is reasonably necessary to manage the risk.

5.7 We undertake child safe inductions

We recognise that making sure a staff member, agency staff member or volunteer is safe and suitable to work with children is an ongoing process. Prior to commencing child-related work, we enter the details of new employees, volunteers, students, temporary and agency staff into the National Early Childhood Worker Register.

All new staff members, agency staff and volunteers engaged in child-related roles participate in a structured induction process. This induction includes:

- Training on their legislative obligations under the National Law and Regulations, Children's Guardian Act 2019, Crimes Act and related child protection legislation.
- A comprehensive briefing on our Code of Conduct and child protection policies including Child Safe Environment Policy, mandatory reporting responsibilities, and expectations regarding professional boundaries and workplace behaviour, including restrictions on the use of personal devices.
- Orientation to physical environment, supervision requirements, and risk mitigation strategies to ensure children are safe at all times.
- Completion of required child safety and child protection training forms part of our induction process and is a condition of undertaking child-related work

New or inexperienced staff are supported through mentoring arrangements to build child safety capability. We provide appropriate supervision, instruction, feedback and regular oversight as they become familiar with the new role and responsibilities. All agency staff members are always supervised.

Permanent employees are subject to probation in accordance with CatholicCare organisation policies to assess suitability and alignment with our organisation's values and child safe commitments.

5.7.1 Child safe training for new staff

We ensure that all staff complete mandated child safety and child protection training as required by legislation and regulatory authorities. Completion of required training is a condition of undertaking and continuing child-related work.

We maintain accurate records of completed training and actively monitor compliance to ensure all workers remain current with required qualifications and child safety learning.

5.8 We have robust ongoing child-safe employment practices

Our staffing policy and procedures outline how we implement ongoing child-safe employment practices and continually monitor the suitability of all staff and volunteers to work with children.

We ensure all relevant staff complete mandatory child safety training and undertake refresher training in line with legislative requirements, regulatory guidance and sector best practice.

We conduct regular checks and make reasonable enquiries to confirm that all workers and volunteers continue to meet child safety and suitability requirements. This includes:

- maintaining accurate and up-to-date staff records, including documenting and responding to any notices, allegations, investigations or changes that may affect a person's suitability to work with children
- regularly verifying Working with Children Check (WWCC) details and checking the prohibited persons register through NQA ITS
- monitoring WWCC expiry dates and reminding staff that renewal applications can be made up to 3 months prior to expiry
- immediately removing any person from child-related work if their WWCC status is barred, interim barred, expired, cannot be verified or if they otherwise cease to hold a valid WWCC clearance or application number.

We have secure and confidential processes for managing and recording all checks, enquiries, training records and notifications related to staff suitability. These processes support transparency, accountability and compliance with child safety requirements.

5.8.1 Child safe training for new and existing staff

We ensure that all staff complete mandated child safety and child protection training, as required by legislation and regulatory authorities. Completion of required training is a condition of undertaking and continuing in child-related work.

We provide ongoing professional learning and refresher training to maintain and strengthen staff capability in recognising and responding to harm, neglect and grooming behaviours. This includes reinforcing knowledge of mandatory reporting obligations, professional boundaries, safe supervision practices and appropriate interactions with children.

Training is delivered at regular intervals and updated to reflect changes to legislation, regulatory guidance and emerging child safety risks.

We maintain accurate records of completed training and actively monitor compliance to ensure all workers remain current with required qualifications and child safety learning.

5.8.2 Performance development

We integrate child safety into our ongoing performance development processes to ensure all staff and volunteers consistently meet and demonstrate understanding of their child safety responsibilities.

Key elements include:

- **Reaffirming responsibilities:** Staff confirm their understanding of child safety obligations, including professional boundaries, safe supervision and mandatory reporting during annual reviews or performance discussions.
- **Monitoring practice:** Supervisors observe and provide feedback on staff behaviours to reinforce child-safe practices and address any concerns.
- **Supporting development:** Performance discussions identify professional learning opportunities, including training in positive relationships with children, reframing behaviours and responding to child safety risks.
- **Addressing concerns:** Any issues regarding staff conduct or compliance with child safety requirements are addressed promptly to maintain a safe environment.

Embedding child safety in performance development reinforces safe practices, supports professional growth, and ensures safeguarding children is a shared responsibility.

5.9 We have a meticulous approach to record keeping

We maintain clear, accurate and up-to-date records that demonstrate compliance with child-safe recruitment and ongoing child-safe employment obligations.

Prior to commencing child-related work, we enter the details of new employees, volunteers, students, temporary and agency staff into the National Early Childhood Worker Register, as required. The register is kept current and reflects any changes to a worker's status or details.

Records related to recruitment, clearance verification, reasonable enquiries, induction and training are maintained confidentially and securely, consistent with the requirements of the WWCC Act 2025 and the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 (NSW).

Our record keeping practices include maintaining:

- staff records that document each worker's Working with Children Check (WWCC) details, verification dates and any updates or changes to their status.
- evidence of reasonable enquiries undertaken before and during employment, including confirmation that a person is not subject to a prohibition notice and records of referee checks conducted.
- documentation of actions taken where concerns, allegations or notifications arise regarding a staff member's suitability to work with children. These actions are recorded in the service's register for child protection concerns in line with regulatory requirements.
- accurate National Early Childhood Worker Register records that are updated when a worker commences, changes roles, takes leave, ceases engagement or updates their personal or

professional details (including WWCC status, teacher registration, qualifications, training, contact details or name).

- records of regular reviews of staffing and recruitment policies and procedures to ensure they remain current, reflect legislative requirements, respond to service needs and feedback and promote best practice in child-safe employment.
- documentation of policy and procedure updates, including the rationale for changes to support accountability and transparency.

All records are stored securely, with access restricted to authorised personnel to maintain confidentiality while ensuring regulatory compliance and audit readiness.

5.10 Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed periodically to ensure its effectiveness and relevance. Any necessary updates or modifications to ensure compliance with legislative and standard requirements will be communicated to all employees, contractors, and representatives of CatholicCare Wollongong.

Other situations may include:

- Following an incident, to identify gaps and strengthen data protection measures.
- Adoption of new tools or systems.
- Mergers, restructuring, or shifts in services that impact on current processes.
- As part of routine evaluations to ensure policies remain effective and aligned with best practices.
- If client/s provide feedback or complaints, prompting a review for improvement.
- When inefficiencies or errors are identified.

The agency will formally review this Policy every three years as part of the policy's known life cycle period or as updates are identified.

All workers are required to reaffirm their understanding of child safety obligations and the WWCC requirements at annual reviews or as part of their performance management supporting ongoing vigilance and improvement in child-safe practices.

5.11 Consequences of Policy Violations:

Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment or contract. The severity of the consequences will depend on the nature and impact of the violation, as determined by CatholicCare Wollongong. People and Culture will review each case individually to determine appropriate actions based on the circumstances.

6 Related Policies and Procedures

- WS Policy 2.1 – Recruitment & Selection
- CatholicCare Wollongong Recruitment Process Flowchart

- Recruitment & Selection Checklist – Children & Youth Services
- Code of Ethics and Conduct
- Child Safeguarding Code of Conduct

7 Related documents and resources

- Child Protection and Mandatory Reporting Policy
- Child Safe Incident Reporting and Response Procedures
- NSW Office of the Children’s Guardian: [Child Safe Standards](#)
- [NSW Office of the Children’s Guardian: WWCC Act 2025 Guidance and Resources](#)
- NSW Early Learning Commission: [Child safe recruitment and employment practices webpage](#)
- [Children \(Education and Care Services\) National Law \(NSW\) No 104a of 2010](#)
- [Education and Care Services National Regulations \(NSW\) \(2025 SI 601a\)](#)

8 Policy created/reviewed

Date	Major, Minor or Administrative	Description of Revision(s)
April 2026	Major	New policy for ECEC in line with updated Child Safe Recruitment legislation effective from 24 April 2026. This policy is to be used in conjunction with CCW Recruitment policies and procedures.