

# Policy about stopping and dealing with child abuse and neglect



**Plain English**

# Policy about stopping and dealing with child abuse and neglect

This is a **policy** for The Disability Trust.

A **policy** has rules everyone at The Disability Trust must follow.

This policy talks about what we do to stop and deal with child **abuse** and **neglect**.

**Child abuse** means that someone treats a child in a very bad way.

They might do things like

- Hurt the child's body
- Do sexual things to the child
- Say very bad and mean things to the child.

**Neglect** means that the child is not looked after well.

The child might not get the basic things like enough food or clothes to wear.



In this policy child means any person under the age of 18.

The Disability Trust wants to give children with disability and their families the best services for what they need.

We will make sure all children that get services from us are safe.

We do what we can to make sure no abuse or neglect happens to them.

We also want children, their families and our staff to feel ok to speak up if something happened.

We will make sure that we support any child that has abuse or neglect happen to them in the best way.

We will do what we can to help the child get healthy and feel safe again.



We will look into all **allegations** and **incidents** of child abuse or neglect at The Disability Trust.

**Allegation** means someone says that abuse or neglect is happening or happened. This does not mean it is true.

**Incident** means that something happened.

We will make sure that all allegations and incidents are reported.

We will do what we can to make sure it will not happen again.



## Why we wrote this policy

We wrote this policy to show what The Disability Trust does to make sure no child that gets services from us is abused or neglected.

This policy shows how we must deal with allegations and incidents.

## Reportable incidents

There are some incidents that we must tell the **NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission** about.

The **NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission** makes sure that NDIS services do a good job.

The incidents we must tell them about are called **reportable incidents**.

**Reportable incidents** are when something bad happened to a child when it was getting services and supports from us.

A reportable incident might be when the child

- Dies
- Gets badly hurt
- Is abused or neglected.



A reportable incident is also when someone

- Does anything to a child that is against the law. This might be sexual things.
- Does sexual things to or in front of a child
- Uses a **restrictive practice** on a child that was not agreed to or is not ok in that state or territory.

**Restrictive practices** are things that take away your right to move freely.

The person who did something to the child could be

- A staff member
- Another person getting services from The Disability Trust
- Someone from the child's family
- The child's **guardian**
- Any other person.

A **guardian** is someone who looks after the child and can make decisions for the child.



## Reportable conduct

**Reportable conduct** means that someone from The Disability Trust did something to a child that we need to report.

NSW, Victoria and the ACT have rules about what a reportable conduct is.

In NSW a reportable conduct is when someone

- Does anything sexual to a child
- Treats a child in a bad way
- Neglects the child
- Does bad things to hurts the child's body or mind.



In Victoria a reportable conduct is when someone

- Does anything sexual to or in front of a child
- Does bad things to hurt the child's body or mind
- Hurts another person's body in front of the child
- Neglects the child.

In the ACT a reportable conduct is when someone

- Does or says bad things that hurt the child's mind
- Hurts the child's body
- Neglects the child
- Does anything sexual to or in front of a child
- Does not do all they can to keep a child safe.



# Mandatory reporting

There are some incidents and allegations that we must report to keep the child safe.

This is called **mandatory reporting**.

We must do mandatory reporting in NSW, Victoria, Queensland and the ACT.

In NSW we must report to the Child Protection Helpline if we think a child is not safe.

This might be if a child

- Is not looked after well
- Does not get the health care they need
- Does not go to school at all or not very often
- Could get hurt or has sexual things done to them
- Lives in a home where other people get hurt and the child might get hurt too.



We must also report if there was a **pre-natal report** and the birth mother does not make sure she gets the support she needs to keep the child safe.

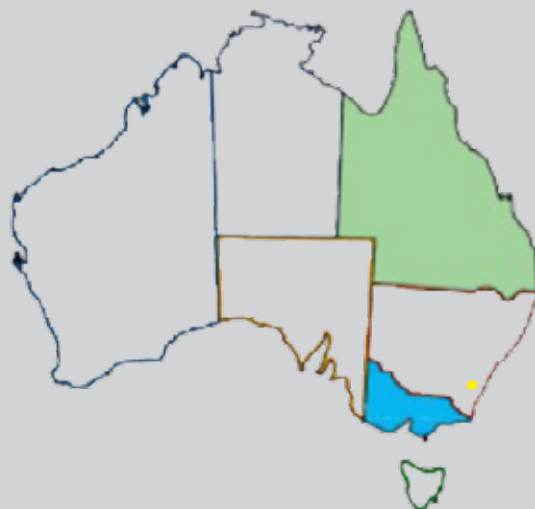
**Pre-natal report** means there is a high chance that the child might not be looked after well and be safe after birth.

In Victoria we must report to Child Protection if we think that a child might get hurt or abused in a sexual way.

In Queensland we must report to Child Safety if we think that a child might get hurt or abused in a sexual way and the parent is not keeping the child safe.

In the ACT we must report to Child and Youth Protective Services if we think a child

- Is or was hurt in a sexual way
- Has injuries that are not from an accident.



## Making sure children feel good and supported

We know it is important that children feel safe and good when they are with us.

This also helps to make sure no abuse or neglect can happen.

We will do what we can so that children feel

- Welcome
- Safe
- Respected.

We want to have services for children that work well for them.

We will make changes to our services if it helps the child.

We will often check to make sure our services and programs run well for children and are keeping them safe.



We know that family is very important for a child to feel safe.

We try our best to work with the family and in the family home.

If we can not give our services in the family home we will try to give the service with the same staff in a place that feels like a home.

The Disability Trust follows all rules and laws about caring for children outside their home when

- That is what the family and child choose
- The child must be taken out of the family home for some time.

We respect that all families are different.

We want to support children in a way that helps them be who they are.

We are always happy to talk to families about what their child needs.

We will try to offer services as quick as we can or give contact information for other services.



We support children to be part of making decisions that are about them.

We also support children to tell us what they want and need.

We make sure that the places where we give services and supports to children are safe.

We have special rules for services where children and adults might mix.

We try to keep children and adults away from each other as much as we can or if we think that children might not be safe.

When we give services to children we make sure that everything works for their age.

We might look at

- What games and play are good for them
- How much time they need to rest and relax
- What are good foods and drinks for their age.

Our staff must treat all children with respect and in a way that works for the child's age.

It is not ok for staff to talk to children in a mean or bad way.



## Making sure staff are safe to work with children

We make sure that all our staff are ok and safe to work with children.

Before we hire any staff we

- Do a face to face interview with the person
- Talk to at least 2 former workplaces in referee checks
- Ask for the Working with Children Check for that state
- Do a NDIS Worker screening check.

We will not hire the person if anything from that list is not ok.

We tell our staff that they must stop working with children straight away if there is any issue with their

- Working with Children Check
- Blue card in Queensland
- Working with vulnerable people check in the ACT.



If staff do not follow that rule we will make sure they stop working with children at our services straight away.

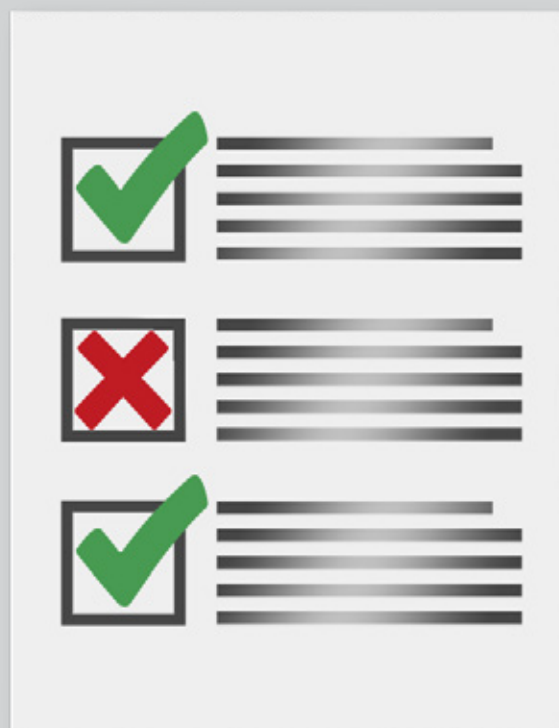
We might even have to let go of the staff member.

If we ask our staff for a police check they then have to give us a new police check every 5 years.

If something comes up in the police check we will look into it and decide if the person is safe to work with children.

All staff must follow the rules in our **code of conduct** and the NDIS code of conduct.

A **code of conduct** says what staff can and can not do at work and how they must treat others.



## Knowing when child abuse and neglect happens

We give children and their families information and support so that they know what abuse and neglect is.

We make sure they understand if abuse or neglect happens to them.

We also make sure that they feel ok to speak up about things.

This might be things that make them feel unsafe or not ok.

We will support them to speak up in ways that work for them.

All staff get information and training to be able to tell if child abuse or neglect is happening.

We make sure all staff know what to do when child abuse or neglect happens.



## What to do if child abuse or neglect happens

The Disability Trust will look into any allegation or incident of child abuse or neglect right away.

We will think about what the risks are for anyone who is part of the incident or allegation.

The most important thing for us is to make sure that the child is safe and healthy.

We also need to look out for our staff and other children getting services from us.

Staff will call the police if anyone is in danger right now.

Staff will call an ambulance if needed.

If staff know about an allegation or incident of child abuse or neglect they must tell their manager.

The manager needs to make sure the incident or allegation is dealt with the right way.



If the incident or allegation is about a staff member the manager will tell **senior management** right away.

**Senior management** means the bosses that run The Disability Trust.

The staff member might not be allowed to work while we look into what happened.

If the staff member did something against the law we will tell the police.

We will contact the child's family or guardian right away about the incident or allegation unless it is about them.

If we report the allegation or incident to the police we will let the child and the family know

- About their rights
- What the next steps are.



## Working together with other organisations

The Disability Trust will look into any allegation or incident to see if we have to report it to another organisation.

We will tell the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission about reportable incidents and what we will do.

For allegations and incidents with reportable conduct we will tell

- The Office of the Children's Guardian in NSW
- The Commissioner for Children and Young People in Victoria
- The Ombudsman in the ACT.

We will work together with any other organisation to make sure we deal with an allegation or incident in the right way.



## How to support the child and others

The Disability Trust will deal with allegations and incidents of child abuse in a way that works best for the child.

We will keep the child and their family up to date about what we find out when we look into the allegation or incident.

We will support the child and the family to be part of dealing with what happened.

We will give the child and their family information in a way everyone can understand about

- Their rights
- How to make a complaint
- Supports they can get.



We will get the child and their family the support they need like

- A support person not from The Disability Trust
- An advocate who helps them speak up
- An interpreter who helps them with information in their language.

If the child only sometimes gets support from The Disability Trust the organisation that supports the child more might take over looking into the allegation or incident.

This is unless the allegation or incident is about that organisation.

We will ask the family or guardian first if that is ok.

We will support any staff or other people that get services from us if they saw what happened.



# How we look into allegations and incidents

When we look into an allegation or incident we follow the rules from

- The Disability Trust
- The NDIS about reportable incidents.

What we do about an allegation or incident has to do with how bad a child was hurt and if there is the risk that it could happen again.

If the incident or allegation was reported to the police we will wait until the police say it is ok for us to look into it.

We will look into all allegations and incidents in a way that is

- The same every time
- Fair
- As fast as possible.



We aim to keep all information as private as we can.

We will give support to everyone who is affected by the incident or allegation.

We will look into what we can do better so that the incident or allegation can not happen again.



## Information about the allegation or incident

We keep all information about an allegation or incident in a safe place on a computer at The Disability Trust.

We also keep information there about all the things we did to deal with the allegation or incident.

Any information on paper about the allegation or incident will be kept in a safe place.

We will destroy this information in a safe way when the law tells us to.

Only staff that need to know about the allegation or incident can see the information.

We will make sure to keep all personal information safe.



## Making sure what we do works

We will check all information about any allegations and incidents often.

We will report to senior management and the board what we find out.

We will use the information to think about ways to

- Get better at how we deal with allegations and incidents
- Make sure no child abuse or neglect happens at The Disability Trust.

We will look at this policy every 3 years to see what we can do better.

We will ask people that are part of this policy what they think about it.

This might be children and families using our services or staff.



Council for Intellectual Disability made this policy Plain English. **CID** for short.

You need to ask CID if you want to use any pictures in this document.

You can contact CID at [business@cid.org.au](mailto:business@cid.org.au).