

COONARA EARLY LEARNING CENTRE

STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFETY & WELLBEING

Our Service, educators and staff are committed to safety and wellbeing of all children and young people. We understand our responsibilities and statutory duty of care to comply with both the Victorian Child Safe Standards and the Reportable Conduct Scheme to build our capacity as a Service to prevent and respond to allegations of child abuse.

Our Service is committed to implementing our *Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy* and *Child Safe Environment Policy* based on Child Safe Standards in Victoria (2022), which accentuates our *zero tolerance* for child abuse and raises awareness about the importance of child safety in our Service and the community.

We adhere to our comprehensive *Child Protection Policy*, standing by our mandatory reporting responsibilities to protect children from physical, sexual, emotional and psychological abuse and neglect. Our reporting mechanisms are clear, accessible, and designed to protect the privacy and well-being of all parties involved.

We are committed to ongoing professional development for employees to maintain their ability to distinguish and respond to situations of abuse and neglect, ensuring employees are responsive to their responsibilities in keeping children safe. We ensure all staff, volunteers and students engaged at our Service are suitable to come into contact with children and young people through rigorous employment procedures and Working with Children Checks.

We work in collaboration with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and have confidence in educating children about their right to be safe. We believe in listening to and empowering children to express their view and thoughts on matters that directly affect them and raise any concerns regarding their safety or safety of others.

We are committed to maintaining a physically safe environment for children by conducting regular risk assessments, inspections and conducting evaluations and audits to identify and address potential hazards. We believe children have the right to develop a strong sense of identity by providing an inclusive, safe and supportive atmosphere where children build confidence, self-worth, and social skills through interactions and play.

We value diversity and cultivate empathy, respect, and care in all children, including Aboriginal children and those from diverse backgrounds whether cultural, linguistic, disabled, or encompassing gender identities. We encourage children to recognise stereotypes and diversities, gain a deeper grasp of cultural identity and learn about their rights and responsibilities as engaged citizens through connections with local communities.

Our commitment to child safety is embedded in every aspect of our Service and is reflected in our philosophy, policies, practices, and interactions. We value feedback, children's voice and communication with families and the community to assist with input towards the reviews of our policies and procedures, ensuring continuous improvement in child safe practices. The Service policies and procedures are developed with the children's voice to help keep all children safe from harm and abuse.

This Statement of Commitment to Child Safety is prominently displayed at our facilities and on our website, demonstrating our dedication to child safety and ensuring that it is accessible to all members of the community.