

## Guide Dogs NSW/ACT Child Safe Framework

**We are a child safe organisation.**

### **Vision**

Guide Dogs NSW/ACT (GDN, we, us or our) envisions a world that is inclusive and accessible for everyone with low vision or blindness. For children and young people, this means safe, inclusive and empowering services that support them to participate fully, build confidence and independence and live the life they choose.

### **Our Message to Children and Young People**

At Guide Dogs NSW/ACT, we want you to feel safe, welcome and confident to be yourself. You have the right to be heard, included and treated with respect. Your ideas, feelings and experiences matter, and you can always ask questions or tell someone if something does not feel right. We will listen, take you seriously and do our best to help. We want you to know that you belong here, and that your safety and wellbeing matter to us every day.

### **Our Commitment**

Every child and young person deserves to feel safe, included and able to participate with confidence. Being a child safe organisation is not only about preventing harm. It is also about creating everyday experiences where children and young people feel respected, valued, heard and supported to thrive.

We are committed to protecting and promoting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people who engage with our services, programs, events, communications and environments.

Our commitment to children and young people means:

- Child safety is everyone's responsibility at Guide Dogs NSW/ACT.
- We require all people working with or on behalf of Guide Dogs NSW/ACT to act in ways that help children and young people feel safe, respected and supported.
- We set clear expectations for behaviour, decision-making and reporting, and hold people accountable when those expectations are not met.
- We put the safety, wellbeing and best interests of children and young people at the centre of our work in the way we plan, make decisions, deliver services and respond to concerns.

- We create safe, inclusive, accessible and culturally safe environments where children and young people feel respected, heard and supported to participate.
- We recognise and respect diversity and that all children and young people, from diverse backgrounds and experiences; have equal rights to safety, dignity and respect
- We listen to children and young people, value their voices and perspectives, and make it easier for them to ask questions, speak up and raise concerns.
- We take all child safety concerns seriously, act quickly to identify and reduce risks, and have zero tolerance for child harm and abuse.
- We are accountable for our actions and committed to continuous improvement in our systems, culture and practice.

## Guiding Principles

These principles guide how we work with children and young people every day and what child safe practice looks like in action.

- We put children and young people first.
- We listen and respond with respect.
- We create inclusive, accessible and culturally safe experiences.
- We speak up and act on concerns.
- We build trust through safe, consistent and accountable behaviour.
- We keep learning and improving.

At Guide Dogs NSW/ACT, being child safe means noticing when a child may feel uncomfortable, explaining things in ways they can understand, making it easy for them to ask questions or raise concerns, and involving them in decisions that affect them. It also means speaking up, acting early when something does not feel right, and working together to create safe, welcoming and accessible experiences.

## Alignment

This framework aligns with the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, the Commonwealth Child Safe Framework, the ACT Child Safe Standards and the NSW Child Safe Standards.

This framework is supported by Guide Dogs NSW/ACTs broader governance, compliance and practice framework, including code of conduct, policies and procedures, guidelines, tools, resources and training.

**Our goal is for every child and young person who engages with Guide Dogs NSW/ACT to feel safe, heard, respected and empowered to live the life they choose.**