

Statement of Commitment to the Safety and Wellbeing of Children and Young People

Every child and young person has the right to feel safe and be safe from all forms of abuse (physical, emotional, psychological, sexual and cultural abuse) and neglect.

At The Benevolent Society, we work with children, young people and families to help them live their best lives. We want all children and young people to be safe. We want all children and young people to feel safe, happy, and respected.

We do everything we can to keep children and young people safe from harm. If you are a child or young person, this means that no one should hurt you in any way — not your body, your feelings, or your culture. You have the right to feel safe and be safe.

We know that children and young people sometimes need extra help to stay safe. We know that there are power differences between children, young people, and adults — especially adults who work with children.

As a human rights led organisation, our statement of commitment to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people (statement of commitment) guides the work we do. We support children, young people and their families with early childhood development and education; school and pre-school readiness; mental health and wellbeing; specialist family support, disability services; carer support; and foster care. Our statement of commitment is the foundation for being a child safe and child friendly organisation.

Every child and young person has the right to feel safe and be safe from physical, emotional, psychological, sexual and cultural abuse and neglect. We are committed to providing a culturally safe and accessible environment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from culturally and /or linguistically diverse backgrounds, children with a disability and children who identify as sexually or gender diverse.

Our statement of commitment helps guide the decisions and actions of our employees, volunteers and carers who work with, or come into contact with, children and young people.

Commitment Statement

The Benevolent Society is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people. We aim to provide a safe and supportive service environment for children and young people by ensuring:

- We have a culture of zero tolerance of child abuse. All allegations and safety concerns are treated seriously and consistently.
- We advocate for the importance of child safety and wellbeing.
- We regularly seek feedback and consult with children and young people to make sure their voices are heard and acted upon.
- We design our programs with the children/young persons voice at the centre.
- We review our physical and online environments to promote the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.
- We have strong systems and processes for preventing, identifying and responding to safety and wellbeing risks. This includes the prevention of all forms of harm, abuse and neglect of people who use our services. These systems and processes are documented and clearly communicated to our employees, students, volunteers and carers.
- We have a code of conduct for our Board, employees, volunteers and carers that explains expected standards of behaviour for interacting with all our clients, including children and young people.
- We regularly train and educate our board members, staff and volunteers on child abuse risks.
- We make sure our feedback and complaints processes are accessible to children and young people and responsive to their needs.
- We have effective child-focused policies and procedures for recruiting, selecting, training and managing employees, volunteers, students and carers.
- We review client safety and child protection policy documents to ensure they reflect current best practice, recommended guidelines and legislation.
- We continue to monitor our compliance with the National Principles for child safe organisations and the Universal Principle for the right to cultural safety.
- We recognise and acknowledge the unique needs of victims and survivors of child abuse, both historical and current, by providing them with the opportunity for redress within a supportive environment.
- We apply developmental, preventative, and corrective safeguards aligned to our Client Safeguarding Framework to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.

Guiding Principles

- We believe that keeping children and young people safe is everyone's responsibility. We create a culture of openness and trust so concerns about children and young people's safety can be raised.
- We understand and acknowledge that keeping children and young people safe is a shared responsibility. We are committed to working with families and communities to keep children and young people safe. We involve families, carers and communities in decision making processes to build a child safe culture.
- All children and young people have the right to feel safe and secure, to have opportunities to achieve their full potential, to actively participate in decisions about their lives, and to feel optimistic about their futures.
- We are fair and reasonable to all staff and volunteers. The decisions we make when recruiting, assessing incidents, and undertaking disciplinary action will be thorough, transparent, and based on evidence.
- We believe in empowered voices. We speak up if we have concerns about the quality and safety of our services. We help children, young people and their families feel safe to share their concerns and we listen to them.
- The Board and Management provide strong leadership to help protect children and young people from abuse and neglect.
- Our policies and procedures align with our vision and purpose. Our organisational values underpin this statement of commitment and reflect our child safe culture. Our values are:

Integrity

We are ethical, trustworthy and responsible. Those who come into contact with us will experience us as open, fair and reliable.

Respect

We show regard and appreciation for all people from all walks of life and honour human difference and diversity.

Collaboration

We work jointly with others. We believe that together we can tackle the things that prevent communities and society from being caring and just.

Effectiveness

We are focused on, and accountable for, performance and outcomes. Our efforts help us reach our Vision.

Optimism

We are hopeful that even the most complex issues can be solved. We work towards the best possible results for clients, families, and communities.

This Statement of Commitment was reviewed in October 2025 and approved by the Executive Director, Children, Youth and Families. For further information, please contact safeguarding@benevolent.org.au