

1. Purpose

This Child Safety Code of Conduct sets out the expected behaviours, responsibilities and boundaries for all people working for or on behalf of Berry Street and Yooralla when engaging directly or indirectly with children and young people.

It supports the Berry Street Yooralla Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and translates organisational commitments into clear expectations that guide everyday practice.

The safety, wellbeing and rights of children and young people always take priority over organisational, professional or personal interests.

2. Plain English Version- Child Safety Code of Conduct

A Plain English version of the Child Safety Code of Conduct is available in **Appendix A**. It is provided to support understanding of the requirements of the Child Safety Code of Conduct. All staff and personnel must follow the Child Safety Code of Conduct. The Plain English version provided in Appendix A is a summary only.

3. Relationship to the Organisation-wide Code of Conduct

Berry Street Yooralla maintains an organisation-wide Code of Conduct that sets overarching expectations for ethical, professional and respectful behaviour.

This Child Safety Code of Conduct operates under and alongside the organisation-wide Code and provides specific guidance in relation to children's safety, wellbeing, rights and boundaries.

All personnel working directly or indirectly with children and young people must comply with both Codes of Conduct, relevant professional standards, and organisational policies and procedures. Where any inconsistency exists, the requirement that best protects children and young people applies.

4. Scope

This Code applies to all Board members, employees, carers, volunteers, mentors, students, agency staff, contractors, consultants and any other person engaged by or representing Berry Street Yooralla (collectively known as personnel).

There are no exemptions. Failure to comply with this Code may constitute misconduct and may result in an assessment and investigation for misconduct and disciplinary action including termination of engagement, and/or referral to external authorities.

5. Berry Street Yooralla Commitment to Child Safety

Berry Street has zero tolerance for child abuse or neglect. Through strong leadership, clear accountability and robust governance, we are committed to culturally safe, equitable, inclusive and trauma-informed environments.

This commitment is embedded through the Berry Street Yooralla Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and a comprehensive suite of policies, internal organisational procedures and practices, supported by training, monitoring and continuous improvement processes. Together, these ensure we prevent harm, respond effectively to concerns, and uphold the rights and wellbeing of children and young people.

We promote environments where children, families, carers and our workforce feel safe, supported and empowered to raise concerns, ask questions and report issues relating to child safety, and where those concerns are taken seriously and responded to appropriately.

Guiding Principles:

Our actions, systems and culture to ensure child safety is guided by the following principles:

- a) **Zero Tolerance for Abuse:** We have zero tolerance for child abuse in any form and zero tolerance for any Berry Street Yooralla person who fails to report suspected harm, risk, or misconduct.
- b) **Children Are Safe, Respected and Heard:** We create and maintain environments where every child is safe, respected, listened to, empowered, and where their views and experiences are actively sought, valued and acted upon.
- c) **Proactive Risk Management:** We identify, assess, and reduce risks to children's safety and wellbeing across all settings—physical, digital, and through our people, programs and systems.
- d) **Strong, Trauma-informed Responses to Concerns:** We respond immediately, compassionately and thoroughly to all concerns, disclosures, allegations and complaints involving the safety and wellbeing of children.
- e) **Compliance with Child Safety Standards:** We meet our obligations under the Victorian Child Safe Standards, the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.
- f) **Clear Policies, Safe Systems and Strong Governance:** We maintain robust policies, procedures, governance structures and reporting systems that protect children, support staff and volunteers, and ensure accountability.
- g) **Cultural Safety for Aboriginal Children:** We are committed to the cultural safety, participation, and agency of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, and to working in ways that uphold self-determination.
- h) **Inclusion, Equity and Accessibility:** We uphold the rights of all children—inclusive of children of any ability or disability, culture, gender expression, sexuality, family background or identity—and ensure equitable access to safe, inclusive experiences.
- i) **Safety and Empowerment of Children with Disability:** We ensure children with disability are empowered to participate, can safely express their views, and are supported through environments and communication approaches that meet their needs.
- j) **Safe Online and Digital Environments:** We maintain safe, age appropriate and monitored online and digital environments, reducing cyber risk and preventing online grooming, exploitation or harm.

- k) **Safe Recruitment and Workforce Practices:** We implement rigorous recruitment, screening, supervision and training to ensure our workforce is child safe, skilled, and culturally competent.
- l) **Continuous Improvement and External Accountability:** We regularly review, audit and improve our child safety practices, and invite external scrutiny to strengthen our systems and culture.
- m) **Shared Responsibility and Leadership Commitment:** Child safety is a shared responsibility, led by a visible, active and accountable leadership commitment across all levels of Berry Street Yooralla.

6. Child Safe Culture and Behavioural Expectations

- All people covered by this Code are expected to model behaviours that promote safety, dignity, trust and accountability. This includes acting in ways that build trust with children, families and communities, demonstrating professionalism, and reinforcing a visible and active child safe culture across all services.
- Personnel are expected to consistently act in the best interests of children and young people; respect children's rights, identity, gender expression, culture, and lived experience; listen to and take children's views and concerns seriously; uphold equity and inclusion; challenge and report unsafe behaviour; comply with all relevant laws and policies; and raise child safety concerns immediately, even if unsure and act in the best interests of children and young people at all times.

This includes:

- Respecting children's rights, identity, gender expression, culture and lived experience
- Listening to and taking children's views and concerns seriously
- Upholding equity and inclusion
- Challenging and reporting unsafe behaviour
- Complying with all relevant laws, policies and procedures
- Raising child safety concerns immediately, even if unsure.

7. Professional Boundaries

- Professional boundaries exist to protect children and young people, support safe and ethical practice, and maintain trust in relationships between adults and children.
- All interactions with children must be child-focused, appropriate to the context, and conducted in a manner that is transparent, ethical and meets expected standards of behaviour and acceptable relationships with children, their families and carers. This applies in face-to-face, online and digital environments.
- Personnel must keep relationships with children professional and appropriate, avoiding dependency, secrecy or favouritism. Information may only be shared where it is necessary, age-appropriate and in the child's best interests. Any physical contact must be necessary, respectful and aligned with the child's needs and where appropriate their consent.

- Personnel must not share inappropriate personal information with children, seek emotional support from them, ask children to keep secrets about safety or wellbeing, initiate unsanctioned contact outside approved settings, communicate via personal phone numbers or social media accounts, or misuse positions of trust or power.
- Information sharing and confidentiality obligations are outlined further in Section 12 of this Code.

8. Appropriate Behaviour

- Appropriate behaviour supports children to feel safe, supported and empowered and reflects respect, professionalism and an understanding of children's developmental needs.
- Appropriate behaviour includes respectful and inclusive communication; supporting children's participation, choice and independence; respecting cultural, family and community connections; modelling positive relationships; engaging families and carers where safe and appropriate; and actively supporting Aboriginal children's cultural rights and calling out racism.

9. Unacceptable Behaviour

- Unacceptable behaviour is any action or failure to act that places a child at risk or undermines their safety, dignity or wellbeing.
- This includes physical, sexual, emotional or psychological abuse; neglect; humiliation; intimidation or bullying; sexually suggestive conduct; inappropriate physical contact; racist, ableist, homophobic, transphobic or culturally unsafe behaviour; use of threats or punishment to control behaviour; and exposing children to violence, conflict or inappropriate material.

10. Digital and Online Safety

- Children and young people must be safe in digital and online environments as well as in physical settings.
- Personnel must use only Berry Street Yooralla-approved systems to communicate with children and ensure online interactions are professional, transparent and accountable.
- Private or secret online interactions, connections via personal social media accounts, and sharing images or information without authorisation are prohibited.

11. Reporting and Acting on Concerns

- Every person covered by this Code has a responsibility to act to protect children and young people from harm.
- All concerns, suspicions or allegations of child abuse, harm or misconduct must be reported immediately in accordance with organisational procedures and, where required, to external authorities. Proof is not required to raise a concern.
- Failure to act or report may place children at significant risk and may constitute a breach of this Code and the law.

12. Complaints and Feedback

- Berry Street Yooralla encourages children, young people, families and communities to raise concerns or provide feedback about safety or wellbeing.
- Accessible, culturally safe and child-friendly pathways are provided, and all complaints and feedback are taken seriously, documented, assessed and responded to appropriately and without retaliation.

13. Records, Privacy and Information Sharing

- Children and young people have the right to privacy and confidentiality. Information about them is handled respectfully and shared only where lawful, necessary and in the child's best interests.
- Berry Street Yooralla shares information in accordance with privacy legislation and information sharing schemes. Where there is a conflict between confidentiality and child safety, the safety and wellbeing of the child take precedence.

14. Workforce Suitability, Screening and Training

Berry Street Yooralla maintains a child safe workforce through robust recruitment, screening, supervision and training.

Personnel must maintain required Working with Children Checks and other screening aligned to their role, participate in induction and ongoing training, and engage in supervision to support safe practice.

Personnel are also required to promptly disclose any change in circumstances that may impact their suitability to work with or be around children and young people, including but not limited to:

- Changes to Working with Children Check status
- Criminal charges or convictions
- Intervention orders (or similar legal orders)
- Conduct or behaviour that may present risk to children.

Berry Street Yooralla will respond to such disclosures in accordance with organisational policies and procedures to ensure safety and wellbeing of children and young people. Failure to disclose relevant information may be treated as a breach of this Code.

15. Related Policy and Procedure

The Child Safety Code of Conduct is supported by a range of related policies and procedures, which together provide a comprehensive framework for safeguarding children and responding to concerns at Berry Street Yooralla.

All personnel are responsible for familiarising themselves with relevant policies and procedures and for acting in accordance with their child safety obligations.

16. Breaches of this Code

Breaches of this Code are taken seriously and may result in investigation, corrective or disciplinary action, termination of engagement and/or referral to external authorities.

Berry Street Yooralla will act immediately to ensure the safety of children where concerns arise.

17. Version control

Version Number	1.0
Approved by:	Berry Street Yooralla Board
Approved date:	17 th June 2026
Review date:	17 th June 2028
Process Owner:	Director Quality Risk & Safeguarding
Manager Responsible:	Executive Director, Quality and Risk
Version notes:	
Version 1.0	Code of Conduct created: Post Merge Berry Street Yooralla, incorporating both entities and replacing individual Code of conduct in relation to child safety of the respective organisations.

Appendix A- Plain English Child Safety Code of Conduct

This is a plain English version of the Child Safety Code of Conduct.

It is provided to support understanding of the requirements of the Child Safety Code of Conduct. All staff and personnel must follow the Child Safety Code of Conduct.

This document is a summary only. You must read and follow the full Berry Street Yooralla Child Safety Code of Conduct and related policies.

If you are unsure about your responsibilities, or find anything unclear, you must ask for help. Speak with:

- Your supervisor or manager, or
- A Berry Street Yooralla Child Safety Officer

You can also email childsafety@berrystreet.org.au

It is your responsibility to understand and follow the requirements of the Code.

1. Our Commitment to Children and Young People

- We have zero tolerance for child abuse or neglect.
- The safety, wellbeing and rights of children always come first.
- We create environments where children feel safe, are listened to, and are respected and included.
- Everyone has a role in keeping children safe.

2. Who This Applies To

This applies to everyone working with or for Berry Street Yooralla, including employees, volunteers, carers, students, contractors, consultants and board members. There are no exceptions.

3. What You Must Do

- ✓ Act in the best interests of children at all times
- ✓ Respect children's rights, identity, culture and experiences
- ✓ Listen to children and take them seriously
- ✓ Treat all children fairly and inclusively
- ✓ Follow all policies, laws and procedures
- ✓ Speak up and report concerns immediately, even if unsure

3. Professional Boundaries

- ✓ Keep relationships professional, safe and appropriate
- ✗ Do not form special or secret relationships
- ✗ Do not share personal problems or seek support from children
- ✗ Do not contact children outside approved channels
- ✓ Ensure any physical contact is appropriate and respectful

4. Appropriate Behaviour

- ✓ Speak respectfully
- ✓ Support children's choices and independence
- ✓ Respect culture and diversity
- ✓ Include all children and challenge discrimination

5. Unacceptable Behaviour

- ✗ Any form of abuse or neglect
- ✗ Bullying, threats or humiliation
- ✗ Sexualised or inappropriate behaviour
- ✗ Discrimination or culturally unsafe behaviour

6. Online and Digital Safety

- ✓ Use approved systems only
- ✓ Keep communication professional and visible
- ✗ Do not use personal social media or private messaging

7. Reporting Concerns

- ✓ Report concerns immediately
- ✓ Follow procedures and report externally if required

8. Complaints and Feedback

- ✓ Everyone is encouraged to raise concerns
- ✓ All concerns are taken seriously

9. Privacy and Information Sharing

- ✓ Respect privacy
- ✓ Share information only when necessary and lawful
- ✓ Child safety comes first

10. Your Responsibilities

- ✓ Maintain required checks
- ✓ Attend training
- ✓ Report any changes affecting suitability

11. Breaches of the Child Safety Code

Breaches may result in disciplinary action, termination or referral to authorities.

*Child safety is everyone's responsibility at Berry Street Yooralla.
If something doesn't seem right, report it immediately*