

Safeguarding Children & Young People Policy

1. Purpose

Starlight Children's Foundation exists to brighten the lives of seriously ill and hospitalised children, young people, and their families. In every State and Territory of Australia, we provide positive and enriching experiences that support their well-being and resilience. Our most important responsibility is to ensure Starlight programs are provided in a caring environment, nurturing and safe for all children and young people.

Starlight's National Board of Directors and Executive approves, endorses, and actively ensures our commitment to safeguarding children and young people from abuse and neglect or harm and risk of harm.

Starlight has zero tolerance for abuse and neglect or harm and risk of harm to children and young people. We are committed to the rights of all children and young people to feel safe and be safe when participating in our organisation's activities, and programs.

It is the responsibility of the entire Starlight team to:

- Protect children and young people from all forms of abuse, bullying, and exploitation when they are interacting with Starlight.
- Be alert to incidents of child abuse and neglect or harm and risk of harm occurring outside of Starlight programs that may have an impact on the children and young people we work with; and
- Ensure a culture of safety for children and young people that is understood and upheld by everyone who interacts with Starlight.

Every Starlight team member is expected to actively ensure a safe environment for children and young people, including:

- Adopting the practices and behaviours outlined under our Safeguarding Children and Young People (SCYP) Code of Conduct.
- Logging any breaches of the SCYP Code of Conduct, including their own breaches or those of others; and
- Reporting to the police or child protection agencies if they become aware of any abuse or neglect and harm or risk of harm to a child or young person, including where this is occurring outside of Starlight.

2. Who the Policy applies to

All Starlight team members are required to commit to and abide by these *Safeguarding Children and Young People (SCYP)* policies. Team members include our Board Directors, Executive team, People Managers, all paid team members, and all programs' volunteers, including interns (i.e., all volunteers interacting with children and young people).

3. Our Commitment

Starlight is committed to ensuring the safety of all children and young people who access our programs, including safeguarding them from abuse and neglect, and harm or risk of harm.

We communicate our commitment

Our *SCYP Policy* documents our clear commitment to safeguarding children and young people. We communicate this commitment through our recruitment, onboarding, learning

and development, team meetings, and by ensuring all team members have access to this policy.

We are clear about the behaviour we expect

The entire Starlight team is aware of and understands the behaviour we require to ensure a safe environment for children and young people. Throughout our recruitment process, including through advertising, position descriptions, and interviews, we communicate that a commitment to safeguarding children and young people is an integral part of being a Starlight team member.

Expected behaviours are included in our *SCYP Code of Conduct* which has been developed by the Starlight team and approved by the Starlight Executive. This code is readily available to all team members, including during onboarding and ongoing learning and development. All team members record their commitment to these standards of behaviour during their online onboarding.

We do everything we can to recruit people who share our commitment

Our recruitment policy and procedures help us to do everything we can to avoid a person joining the Starlight team who is unsuitable to interact with children or young people. We have recruitment procedures that ensure:

- Our safeguarding commitment is communicated to all applicants
- Face-to-face interviews are held which include safeguarding-related questions
- Two professional reference checks are undertaken
- Screening checks are undertaken including criminal record and working with children checks

Onboarding and training are part of our commitment

We provide all new Starlight team members with information during their onboarding about our commitment to safeguarding including our *SCYP Policy*, *SCYP Code of Conduct*, and *Reporting Policy*.

We have a process in place for ensuring all our team completes training. We support ongoing learning and development for our team, including annual professional boundaries training for all team members working directly with families and annual SCYP refresher training for all team members.

We encourage the involvement of children, young people, and their parents

We involve and communicate with children, young people, and their families to foster a safe, inclusive, and supportive environment. We provide information to children, young people, and their carers about:

- Our commitment to safeguarding children and their rights
- The behaviour we expect of the Starlight team and families when accessing our programs
- Our policy about responding to child abuse

We embed the principles of family-centred practice in our programs and regularly seek feedback from children, young people, and their families.

We value and respect diversity

We value and respect diversity, including:

- Recognising and responding to the individuality of the children and young people we interact with, including their strengths and vulnerabilities

- Valuing the strengths of each family, working collaboratively with them, and respecting their choices
- Ensuring an inclusive culture, including paying particular attention to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people, as well as children and young people with a disability and/or from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds including Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual plus other (LGBTQIA+) children and those unable to live at home.
- Upholding the *Children and Young People's Rights in Healthcare Services Charter 2011*, including the right for children and young people to be heard and involved in decisions that affect them.

We recognise the important role of families and involve parents and caregivers when making significant decisions about their children.

We recognise the importance of cultural safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people.

- Our team is committed to creating an inclusive environment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, including: Team members encourage and support children to express their culture and enjoy their cultural rights.
- Team members actively support the participation and inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their families
- Leaders promote understanding and appreciation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, emphasising its importance to the wellbeing and safety of children.

Racism will not be tolerated, and any incidents will be addressed with appropriate consequences

Our team understands their responsibility for reporting child abuse

Our policy for responding to child abuse is approved and endorsed by the National Board and Executive team and applies to all Starlight team members. The policy states that:

- Team members must immediately report abuse or neglect and harm or risk of harm and any concerns with policies, practices, or the behaviour of colleagues
- Team members must meet any legislated mandatory reporting requirements
- Team members must follow a specified process when reporting abuse or neglect including who will receive reports
- Failure to report is serious misconduct

Team members understand Starlight's approach to logging breaches of *the SCYP Code of Conduct*, including reporting child abuse. Team members have access to the *Reporting Policy* and undergo training to help apply this in their role.

We will document any allegation, disclosure, or concern regarding child abuse and monitor responses to all allegations, disclosures, or concerns.

We maintain and improve our policies and practices

We are committed to maintaining and improving our policies, procedures, and practices to safeguard children and young people from neglect and abuse and harm or risk of harm. We have assigned responsibility for maintaining and improving our policies and procedures to our SCYP Representatives team, made up of team members from across the organisation.

We are proactive in ensuring our team and external providers follow appropriate practices and behaviours. We communicate with our team to ensure that they understand our policies and that the policies are effective in the workplace, including any changes that may impact their role and responsibilities. We require our team to disclose convictions or charges affecting their suitability to work with children and young people and we review police records and WWCC (Working with Children Check) checks periodically.

We pro-actively manage risks

We regularly review our programs to identify and document potential risks to children or young people. Our risk register is overseen by the National Board and is subject to regular reviews.

Our policies and procedures are accessible

Our policies and procedures support a culture that values the safety of children and young people. Our SCYP policies and procedures are accessible in forms that are easy to understand; have involved the Starlight team and others in their development; and are communicated to children, young people, and their families and the Starlight team. We regularly review our policies, gain the endorsement of changes, and ensure our team is aware of any changes and knows how to apply them in their role.

4. Communications and Training

We communicate our SCYP Policy with families and the Starlight team.

Families

- The Starlight website
- Information, including age-appropriate formats, is provided when joining our Wishgranting and Livewire Online programs and available when participating in our hospital- and clinic-based programs

Starlight Team

- During the recruitment and onboarding processes
- In our compulsory SCYP training
- During team meetings for our Programs and Volunteer teams
- When there are any updates or changes to this policy

5. Monitoring & Review

This Policy will be reviewed every two years. A review may be required due to legislative change, organisational change or insights gained from incidents.

Review and administration of this Policy is facilitated by the Head of People and Performance.

6. Related Documents

The following Starlight policies must be considered in relation to this document:

- Safeguarding Children and Young People (SCYP)
- Code of Conduct Policy
- Code of Conduct Procedures
- Reporting and Responding Policy
- Recruitment and Selection Policy
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Policy
- Reconciliation Action Plan

7. Related Legislation

In upholding this Policy, the following legislation must be considered by the Starlight team:

- Children and Young People Act 2008 (ACT)
- Working with Vulnerable People (Background Checking) Act 2011 (ACT)
- Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 (NSW)
- Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012 (NSW)
- Care and Protection of Children Act 2007 (NT)

- Child Protection Act 7999 (QLD)
- Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000 (QLD)
- Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017 (SA)
- Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Act 2016 (SA)
- Children, Young Persons, and their Families Act 7997 (Tas)
- Registration to Work with Vulnerable People Act 2013 (Tas)
- Working with Children's Act 2005 (Vic)
- Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)
- Children and Community Services Act 2004 (WA)
- Working with Children (Criminal Record Checking) Act 2004 (WA)

8. Approvals & Revisions

Approver Name:	Louise Baxter
Approver Title:	Chief Executive Officer (CEO)
Approval Date:	3 rd December 2024
Effective Date:	4 th December 2024
Review Date:	December 2026

Endorsed By:



For and on behalf of the Board
Courtenay Smith

Chair
Starlight Children's Foundation

Date: 10/12/2024



Louise Baxter

Chief Executive Officer
Starlight Children's Foundation

Date: 10/12/2024

Appendix A: Roles and Responsibilities

All Starlight team members must commit to this policy and the associated responsibility to safeguard children and young people.

It is the responsibility of each team member to:

- Ensure they understand the commitments and expectations of this policy, including creating and maintaining a culture that is safe and inclusive.
- Meet the expectations of all SCYP policies including the Code of Conduct Policy and Reporting Policy and support their colleagues to do the same.
- Actively participate in safeguarding children and young people training to ensure they understand and can follow Starlight's policies and procedures.
- Seek the guidance of their manager if they are unclear about anything related to this policy or any other SCYP policies including the Code of Conduct Policy; and
- Act if they or a colleague breach any of the SCYP policies, including the Code of Conduct, or if they become aware of a child or young person experiencing abuse.

Safeguarding Governance

Our organisation has a safeguarding children and young people governance structure with robust systems in place which support team members, children, young people, and families to report safeguarding concerns and facilitate effective risk-based and informed decisions that ensure accountability to children and young people.

Our governance structure defines the roles and responsibilities associated with providing oversight, management, and implementation of our commitment to safeguarding children and young people.

Some Starlight team members have additional responsibilities, as outlined in the table below.

Starlight Board of Directors	• Advocate and promote child rights, empowering and engaging children and young people in support of this Policy and its expectations.
Starlight Executive	• Develop opportunities for regular discussion at all levels of the organisation to support a culture of openness and continuous improvement and accountability to child protection and member welfare. • Promote the commitment to this Policy and its expectations. • Advocate and promote child rights, empowering and engaging children and young people in support of this Policy. • Ensure adequate resources are allocated to allow for the development and effective implementation of this Policy. • Support policy review on a triennial cycle or at a time governed by legislation, regulations, or new insights that promote a change to the Policy and all relevant policy or procedural guidelines.
SCYP Lead	Maintain accreditation with the Australian Childhood Foundation (ACF) by; • Acting as a key contact for communication between Starlight and ACF concerning the Safeguarding Children and Young People Program. • Coordinating with the ACF on any changes to accreditation requirements. • Conducting self-assessments of all areas of operation to ensure compliance with the Safeguarding Children and Young People Program requirements. • Coordinating the annual review process with the ACF to ensure SCYP policies and procedures are being maintained and implemented. • Leading monthly and quarterly Safeguarding team meetings.

	• Reporting practices, providing monthly dashboard and analysis for Executive and Board Members. • Coordinate with SCYP Representatives to ensure agreed timely response and follow up to all Safeguarding Children and Young People logs.
SCYP Representatives, SCYP Lead, (Executive Sponsor: Head of People and Culture, Head of Programs)	• Develop, implement, and endorse the SCYP Policy. • Develop opportunities for regular discussion throughout the organisation to support a culture of continuous improvement and accountability around safeguarding children and young people. • Ensure appropriate recruitment, screening, and employment practices for the Starlight team. • Develop and implement the SCYP Code of Conduct Policy. • Proactively share resources and experience in the development of child-safe initiatives as they are identified. • Support team members involved in matters of concern for the safety and well-being of a child or young person.
People Managers Forum	• Ensure your team understands their obligations under this Policy and the <i>SCYP Code of Conduct</i>. • Ensure the <i>SCYP Policy</i> and <i>SCYP Code of Conduct</i> are implemented and adhered to across Starlight. • Support team members when logging <i>SCYP Code of Conduct</i> breaches or when acting to protect a child or young person from abuse or neglect and harm or risk of harm. • Pro-actively implement the <i>SCYP Policy</i> and <i>SCYP Code of Conduct</i>, for example ensuring it is a regular team meeting discussion point.

Appendix B: Safeguarding Definitions

Term	Definition
Bullying	Bullying involves the inappropriate use of power by one or more persons over another less powerful person or group and is generally an act that is repeated over time. Bullying has been described by researchers as taking many forms which are often interrelated and include: • <i>Verbal</i> (name-calling, put-downs, threats). • <i>Physical</i> (hitting, punching, kicking, scratching, tripping, spitting). • <i>Social</i> (ignoring, excluding, ostracising, alienating); and/or • <i>Psychological</i> (spreading rumours, stalking, dirty looks, hiding or damaging possessions).
Child or young person	Starlight children and young people include: • Those children and young people interacting with a Starlight program. The target age range for most children and young people is 4 to 18 years; however, we do reach children as young as newborns through to their 22nd birthday. • Those who have interacted with a Starlight program in the past and are still below the upper age limit of our program delivery (i.e., their 22nd birthday) • Siblings and those living with the Starlight family e.g., foster children and cousins • Volunteers under the age of 18 years
SCYP Code of Conduct	The <i>Safeguarding Code of Conduct</i> aims to identify and prevent behaviour that may be harmful to children and young people participating in Starlight programs. The <i>Safeguarding Code of Conduct</i> outlines what is, and what is not acceptable behaviour or practice when working with or engaging with children and young people.
Emotional or psychological abuse	Emotional or psychological abuse occurs when a child does not receive the love, affection, or attention they need for healthy emotional, psychological, and social development. Such abuse may involve repeated rejection or threats to a child. Constant criticism, teasing, ignoring, threatening, yelling, scapegoating, ridicule, rejection, or continual coldness are all examples of emotional abuse. These behaviours continue to an extent that results in significant damage to the child's physical, intellectual, or emotional well-being and development.
Family Violence	Family violence occurs when children are forced to live with violence between adults in their homes. It is harmful to children. It can include witnessing violence or the consequences of violence. Family violence is defined as violence between members of a family or extended family or those fulfilling the role of the family in a child or young person's life. Exposure to family violence places children and young people at increased risk of physical injury and harm and has a significant impact on their well-being and development.
Grooming	Grooming is a term used to describe what happens when a perpetrator of abuse builds a relationship with a child to abuse them at some stage. There is no set pattern concerning the grooming of children. For some perpetrators, there will be a lengthy period before the abuse begins. The child may be given special attention and, what starts as a normal display of affection, such as cuddling, can develop into sexual touching or masturbation and then into more serious sexual behaviour. Other perpetrators may draw a child in and abuse them relatively quickly. Some abusers do not groom children but abuse them without forming a relationship at all. Grooming can take place in any setting where a relationship is formed, such as leisure, music, sports, and religious activities, or in internet chatrooms, via social media, or by other technological channels.
Harm	Harm to a child is any detrimental effect of a significant nature on the child's physical, psychological, or emotional well-being. It is immaterial how the harm is caused. Harm can be caused by: • Physical, psychological, or emotional abuse or neglect. • Sexual abuse or exploitation. • A single act, omission, or circumstance; and

Term	Definition
	A series or combination of acts, omissions, or circumstances.
Neglect	Neglect is the persistent failure or deliberate denial to provide the child with the necessities of life. Such neglect includes the failure to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, adequate supervision, clean water, medical attention, or supervision to the extent that the child's health and development are, or are likely to be, significantly harmed. Categories of neglect include physical neglect, medical neglect, abandonment or desertion, emotional neglect, and educational neglect. The issue of neglect must be considered within the context of resources reasonably available.
Physical abuse	Physical abuse occurs when a person subjects a child to non-accidental physically aggressive acts. The abuser may inflict an injury intentionally or inadvertently because of physical punishment or the aggressive treatment of a child. Physically abusive behaviour includes (but is not limited to) shoving, hitting, slapping, shaking, throwing, punching, biting, burning, excessive and physically harmful overtraining, and kicking. It also includes giving children harmful substances such as drugs, alcohol, or poison. Certain types of punishment, whilst not causing injury can also be considered physical abuse if they place a child at risk of being hurt.
Sexual abuse	Sexual abuse occurs when an adult or a person of authority (e.g., older) involves a child in any sexual activity. Perpetrators of sexual abuse take advantage of their power, authority, or position over the child or young person for their benefit. It can include making sexual comments to a child, engaging children to participate in sexual conversations over the internet or on social media, kissing, touching a child's genitals or breasts, and having oral sex, or intercourse with a child. Encouraging a child to view pornographic magazines, websites, and videos is also sexual abuse. Engaging children to participate in sexual conversations over the internet is also considered sexual abuse.
Sexual exploitation	Sexual exploitation occurs when children are forced into sexual activities that are then recorded in some way and/or used to produce pornography. Such pornography can be in the form of actual photos or videos or published on the internet. Exploitation can also involve children who are forced into prostitution.
Starlight team members	Board Directors, Executive team, People Managers, all paid team members, and all programs' volunteers, including interns (i.e., all volunteers interacting with children and young people).